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**Birthin' Babies, Catchin' Husbands, and
Bustin' Chains: Women's Portrayal of Women
during the Civil War Era in Southern Historical
Fiction
(1892 – 2002)**

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DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad, who made me believe I could do anything I set my mind to;
To Gerald, who gave me the support and space to pursue those dreams;
To Jacob and Josh, who only ever doubted my ability to parallel park;
and to all who, despite the odds, decide for themselves who they are and what they'll do
in the relatively short time we linger here. As literature and history show, and pandemics
make all-too visceral, each of us is but a pixel in the great mosaic of the universe.

The insignificance and significance of who we are and what we do is everything.

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PREFACE

While writing a historical fiction novel situated in Vienna of the early 1900s and featuring a young, aspiring actress, I found myself continually questioning how literature reflects those factors which influence a woman's journey to self-actualization. Long after my book's publication, the questions it triggered continued to preoccupy me. Who and what determines the boundaries of a woman's existence? What hinders it and what facilitates it? In embarking on my dissertation research, I hoped to discover not only how women writers throughout history have portrayed women but also learn about the writing tools women writers have applied and the authorial choices they have made. Historical fiction novels about women who lived in the American South during the US Civil War seemed particularly suited to investigate such questions. Women during the Civil War era found themselves literally and figuratively in the midst of battle, physically far removed from the men who had traditionally dominated their everyday existence. Ironically, this period of social upheaval has provided fertile ground for more than a century of women writers to explore what is and can be expected of a woman.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Thirteen years following the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention that feminist-wave theorists regard as the beginning of first-wave feminism, the United States found itself in the midst of one of the bloodiest conflicts in its history. From 1861–1865, the Southern states fought to secede from the North and Southern farms and plantations became vacant of men. While the majority of white men left for battle, black¹ men were either hired out or impressed to work for the Confederate war effort. Those who were able, seized the opportunity to flee North to freedom. The disappearance of men combined with new and challenging demands for survival to force women into new social roles. The few black women who, despite the odds, were able to flee, often joined the Union war effort. Those who remained in the South were expected to assume more physically demanding roles on the plantations and farms.² White women from the privileged plantation class broke from the “Cult of True Womanhood” to enter the public sphere and perform tasks such as nursing the wounded and overseeing property. Some even joined in the armed conflict. Meanwhile, the so-called “plain folk” women rolled up their sleeves to work the fields, and eke out a meager existence while managing their households. As the war progressed, all Southern women, regardless of race or class, became increasingly vulnerable to rape, pillage, plunder, illness, and starvation. From the smoke of the battle-ridden South arose a “New Woman” (decades before its coinage in 1894) whose life was no longer dictated by the mores and rules set forth by the patriarchal antebellum society.

This dissertation will address how female historical fiction writers have portrayed Southern women of the Civil War era by comparing eight Southern historical fiction novels spanning publication dates of 110 years, beginning with Frances E. W. Harper’s *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted* (1892) and ending with Paulette Jiles’s *Enemy Women* (2002). Using the three waves of feminism as a framework of reference, this dissertation also analyses how female representations in such novels have changed or remained the same over time.

1. Why Women

“I would have girls regard themselves not as adjectives but as nouns.”

—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Our Girls” (Winter 1880)

In *The Man-Made World; or, Our Androcentric Culture*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1911) argued that in a world structured according to androcentrism, masculinity acts as the normative and all things outside of masculinity are defined as *other*. The work of German philosopher Cornelia Klinger supports this view. Klinger, along with many other feminist scholars, believes that the traditional male dualistic view of the world has to be challenged because the preservation of one side of the dualistic equation requires the hierarchical subservience of the other side. The equation is not equal because everything is either A or not A. The second half of the dualistic equation is robbed of a name and distinguishing qualities of its own; B only exists in its relation to A as non-A.

In a patriarchal view of the world, that which is emphasized and preserved for posterity of women’s historical role, for example, is not her own trials and tribulations but her role in relation to men’s. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese writes, “We do not experience our gender in the abstract, but in relation to others. To be a woman is to be a woman in relation to men”

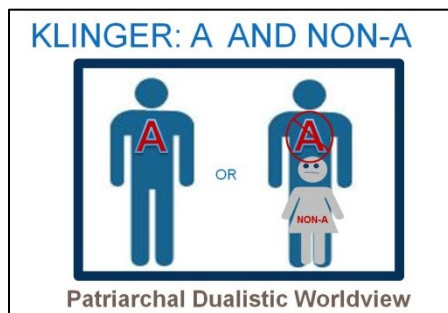


Figure 1: Graphic depiction of Cornelia Klinger’s Dualistic Worldview (by D. Gartlehner)

(*Within the Plantation* 29). In literature, when female characters exist, they exist in supporting roles in a man’s version of a man’s world. Yet, interpretations of history, the world, people, and life experiences can profoundly differ depending on the viewpoint.

Depictions of the 1863 draft riot during the US Civil War demonstrate how greatly representations can vary. For four long days, men and women in New York City participated in one of the most violent and racially-charged protests in US history.³ *The Illustrated London News*’s depiction shows many men and one screaming woman and a dead dog. While the dog has obviously sacrificed his life for the cause, the woman is shown, not demonstrating against the unjust draft laws of the Civil War but rather agonizing over an injured man. In Evelyn Scott’s *The Wave*’s rendition of the same historic event, however, women not only play a key role in the riots, they protest both the draft and the greater injustices incurred by the ruling patriarchy by assuming “the privilege men called their right” (302). In *The London Illustrated News*’s version of history, the role that women play is incidental; in Scott’s version, it’s fundamental. To better understand history,

we have to understand the full scope of the events. By skewing the historical narrative to one group's viewpoint, we limit our understanding of people and historical events. For this reason, expanding the literary canon to marginalized groups is essential to fostering a greater understanding of humankind.

With the birth of second-wave feminism in the 1960s and '70s, as more women enrolled in colleges and universities throughout the US, a struggle ensued to expand the American literature canon. Not surprisingly, the canon that was set by mainly white male scholars was comprised of mainly white male authors.⁴ Harold Bloom, author of the still influential text *Western Canon*, unapologetically justified the canon's lack of diversity. By valiantly resisting "the backward reach" of "canonical crusades" which sought to elevate "a number of sadly inadequate women writers ... as well as some rudimentary narratives and verses of African-Americans" (540), Bloom claimed to have kept "better writers" from being driven out. In his insightful book *Canon vs. Culture* (2001), Jan Gorak contends that scholars who advocated the exclusion of marginalized groups from the canon to preserve "literary value" and "literary excellence" never bothered to specify what criteria determined such characteristics (8).

According to Lois Tyson, women writers were often excluded from the literary canon because such writers supposedly lacked the universality (80) with which white male writers were presumably endowed. Apparently, by excluding more than 50% of the population universality could be better achieved. By dismissing efforts to diversify the canon by labeling the advocates of those marginalized the "School of Resentment," Bloom and other gatekeepers compromise the canon's quality by limiting its scope to the worldview of one dominant but minority group holding power.

Attempts to widen historical perspectives are vital because family background, social belonging, personal experience, class status, and most definitely race and gender can shape interpretations of historical narratives. Hélène Cixous, the French feminist and literary critic (b. 1937), underscores in her 1975 classic, *The Newly Born Woman*, the importance of women writing, lest they be "written over, written out, edited, selected, controlled, censored, cut up, packaged, suffocated" by someone writing them (qtd. in Ives 158). Women have long recognized the problem of silencing women in literature and history. In 1913, Ellen Glasgow criticized the fiction of the 1800s that only offered an "imperfect transcript of life that paints man as a human being and woman as a piece of faintly covered

waxwork” (“Feminism”). In 1986, Gerda Lerner contended that while “[n]o man has been excluded from the historical record because of his sex, ... all women were” (5).

While history texts have largely excluded women from the historical narrative, literature has offered women the opportunity to write themselves back into the cultural and historic narrative. Feminist scholar Adrienne Rich asserted that literature is particularly important for women because it provides clues about: “how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us, how the very act of naming has been till now a male prerogative, and how we can begin to see and name – and therefore live – afresh” (35). As women recognized the struggle they would have in making progress in an academic world populated by white males set on promoting other white males, women began their own publication presses to highlight works by women. Because out-of-print books cannot be studied, and therefore not canonized, female scholars aimed to rediscover “lost” texts by women and other marginalized groups. The effort to advance literature by including books by and about women is not just about canonizing women, it is also about improving the canon’s quality.

Scholars Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope argue that until female heroism is explored to the extent of male heroism, the myth of the hero cannot be fully realized. “Female heroism is important,” they write, “not only as a way of reclaiming women’s heritage, but also as a corrective to the male bias implicit in traditional discussions of the hero. Until the heroic experience of all people... has been thoroughly explored, the myth of the hero will always be incomplete and inaccurate” (*The Female Hero* 5). Inherent in Pearson and Pope’s argument is the idea that something about the female hero is intrinsically different than the male hero. Literature studies that focus solely on women as contributors and subjects can therefore not only help to expand the literature canon to include women, but can also probe aspects of individual identity formation that may be unique to women due to social conditioning and norms, biological characteristics, and historical influences. Both women and men are exposed to a patriarchal cultural conditioning since birth that exposes them to distinctive social and cultural rearing according to gender. The Civil War as a time of social and civic upheaval offered a natural opportunity for the patriarchal world, as it existed, to be called into question and challenged.

2. Why Southern Women during the Civil War

From April 1861 until May 1865, Americans engaged in the deadliest war in US history, the US Civil War. Recent research by historian David J. Hacker estimates that the Civil War resulted in around 650,000 - 850,000 deaths. The war drew entire populations into the battlefields. In a letter included in his memoir and penned on April 6–7, 1862 following the Battle of Shiloh, Union General Ulysses Grant, wrote that he saw an open field: “so covered with dead that it would have been possible to walk across the clearing, in any direction, without a foot touching the ground” (ch. 25). It was a war in which diseases and starvation killed more soldiers than bullets did. Though the war would affect all Americans regardless of gender, it would do so in very different ways.

Women were not showered with gifts of adoration as they marched through Virginia basking in the glory of a victory at Manassas, nor were they lying in agony on pus-stained tables next to stacks of amputated limbs as surgeons rinsed their bone saws in vats of bloody water. No, women were those left behind.⁵ Though race and class often determined their roles during the conflict, one thing united them all; no matter what their race or class, women were never publicly allowed or encouraged to legally weigh in on matters that would so irrevocably change the course of their lives. Women’s heroic and tragic war stories would remain unrecorded in the history books filled with battle dates and casualty charts. No mourning widow would lend her name to a postwar town square and no single mother would be commemorated with a parade. Yes, women had to play their part in the conflict, but their roles would not be considered record-worthy deeds.

While the day-to-day struggles of women of the Civil War may have remained “unwritten” in the history books, both the Union and Confederate administrations quickly recognized women’s part in shaping public opinion. War effort propaganda on both sides thus targeted their messaging at women to sway their support. Songs, articles, poetry, books, and even church sermons praised the sacrificial Republican mothers who, like their Revolutionary War sisters before them, bravely and encouragingly waved their handkerchiefs as they directed their loved ones toward the fields of battle. According to Drew Gilpin Faust, “Confederate versions [of these female persuaders] originated so early in the conflict as to have been necessarily prescriptive rather than descriptive” (*Southern Stories* 116).

At the same time, war stripped away all pretenses and fictive justifications for the social mores propagated in the antebellum South. Men could not always protect the honor and

virtue of their land and ladies and (privileged white) women could no longer rely on beauty and idleness to satisfy basic wants and needs. The war fought by the South was fought to preserve a “way of life” for a minority of powerful and privileged Southern men who maintained a monopoly on wealth and property based on the enslavement of others. According to W. J. Cash, Southern propaganda so tightly tied the war effort to the honor of the Southern woman that Confederate soldiers “verily believe[d]” that “it was wholly for her that they fought” (86).

White men, however, would write and maintain the historical narrative regarding the gender, class, and race of the persons who supposedly built the nation. Novels such as those by Thomas Dixon which would go on to inspire the notorious film *Birth of the Nation*, would propagate the myth of the dominant “A” white man centric view. In the first book of Dixon’s Reconstruction trilogy, published in 1902, Charlie Gaston, a struggling attorney and aspiring politician, declares at a North Carolina state Democratic convention: “This is a white man’s government, conceived by white men, and maintained by white men through every year of its history—and by the God of our Fathers it shall be ruled by white men until the Arch-angel shall call the end of time!” (422). It was white men who fired the first shots at Fort Sumter and white men who signed the military surrender in Appomattox. White men shaped the historical narrative about how things were, what events had occurred, and who played the most important roles. But long before the trumpets of the archangels, literature enabled others to expand the historical narrative by adding their stories.

Fox-Genovese in *Within the Plantation Household* compellingly argues for the study of Southern women in particular, when researching the history of women in the United States in light of gender and race. Although all women were subject to male dominance, in what manner and to what extent, depended significantly on their race and class. Fox-Genovese contends that haphazardly lumping together the story of all American women, what Catherine Clinton refers to as the “New Englandization” of American woman’s history, obscures essential differences of class and race (39). The rural South’s poor infrastructure not only hindered the Confederacy’s efforts during the conflict, it also helped to maintain a patriarchal society in antebellum times with isolated properties which dominated Southerners’ lives. Fox-Genovese writes that because the Southern household was “the dominant unit of production and reproduction,” Southern women remained confined to their homes while Northern women ventured out to work (38).

Much of the research that has been conducted about women writers of the South examines these women writers either as *Southern* writers and what distinguished them as such from their Northern counterparts or as *women* writers and what distinguished them as such from their male counterparts—including historical and geographical influences. Much of the scholarship has overlooked the combination of these two factors, what today many refer to as intersectionality, and how being not just Southern or not just a woman but rather a Southern woman at a certain point in time in women's struggle for rights has influenced women's historical fiction writing about the US Civil War era. By examining the historical portrayal of women of varying races and socio-economic classes during the Civil War era as portrayed by women writers of varying races and socio-economic classes, scholars can gain a better understanding of the nation's past to better prepare for the nation's future.

3. Why Genre of Historical Fiction

"History is always in several places at once, there are always several histories underway..."

—Cixous and Clement, *The Newly Born Woman*, 160

A single event, like a single book, will hold as many meanings as those who engage with it.⁶ No retelling of the same historical experience, can ever embody an objective truth. Just as identity formation is a "function both of the you I see and of my way of seeing -- my identity as well as yours" (Holland 454), so too are history and literature a function of what the writer sees and the reader's way of seeing. There is no one ordained version of the Civil War although students of history might be tempted to believe that there is.

When approached critically, historical fiction offers the opportunity to broaden our perspective so that we are not misled into oversimplifications and the belief that the trajectory we find ourselves on today is merely the sum of the actions and experiences of a few powerful white men. We are reminded that any engagement with history is a dynamic and inherently skewed process of remembering, forgetting, reclaiming, and reinventing. Historical fiction is a literary genre that blends two seeming opposites—fact and fiction. As a genre empowered with social agency, historical fiction can influence how we view what we are capable of, what can be expected, what we treasure, what we fear, and what has shaped us. In *The Historical Novel*, Georg Lukács recognized the power of the genre to help those who the history books have ignored to develop a common identity and reveal social and human motives of behavior (42).

The extent that a simple point-of-view shift can drastically change a story is evident in the novel *The Wind Done Gone* (2001), the parody version of *Gone with the Wind* (1936). For the Southern black heroine of the 2001 novel, the Civil War ended in victory; for the Southern white heroine of the 1936 novel, it ended in defeat. The same war with the same historical “facts” can produce a very different historical narrative and legacy. Historical fiction reflects this. According to Floyd C. Watkins’ scathing 1970 review of *Gone with the Wind*, Mitchell’s novel was simplistic, romantic, and bad because to achieve “greatness,” a historical novel must include “characters whose accomplishments, with the Hebrew prophets, we exalt to the heavens or whose shames, with Melville, we wish to cover with the ‘costliest robes.’” Neither Margaret Mitchell’s nor Alice Randall’s novel or any of the historical novels examined herein feature “great” men with Moses-worthy accomplishments. Instead, they depict a civil war that was not just a “rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight,” but rather a rich man’s war and the heroic struggle of all for survival.

4. Method of Analysis

Through close reading, eight historical fiction novels written by women about women will be compared and contrasted in relation to how they have portrayed women’s social roles and relationships in the changing era of the Civil War period. Particular attention will be paid to whether the publication time of the novel, during its coinciding feminist-wave era, seems to have affected the subject matter covered.

Despite its widespread usage, or because of it, the wave portrayal—both the depiction itself and what it comprises—has spawned almost as much debate as the goals of the women’s movement itself. As imperfect as the feminist wave analogy may be, no alternative model has yet gained enough widespread acceptance to replace it. Describing the “ubiquitous” wave metaphor as “troublesome, to say the least” (76), Kathleen Laughlin and a team of historians revisited the limitations of the model in a series of essays in 2010 entitled “Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor.” While all of the essayists agree that the wave model is problematic in its oversimplification and exclusivity, they fail to reach the same consensus in regards to alternative framing devices. At the same time, by introducing their essays with a description of the wave metaphor as “standard and widely accepted” and “the dominant conceptual framework for analyzing and explaining the genesis of movements for women’s rights in the United States” (76), the authors acknowledge the wave’s stubborn staying power. In fact, the U.S. Library of Congress uses

the three waves of feminism as topical categories in organizing their books.⁷ For these reasons and those Julie Gallagher cites in her essay “Hard Habits to Shake” (ease in comparing time periods; inclusion of women’s activism in the broader historical narrative; and its prevalence in both academic and public discourse), this dissertation uses the wave model as a framing device to compare the novels and their portrayals over time.

First, in light of feminist criticism, this paper will examine women, family, and gender roles during the Civil War era and how these are reflected (or not) in the novels. Next, using questions raised by Marxist criticism, a look will be taken at how the novels deal with the subject matter of class, property, and women. Last, this paper will use aspects of critical race theory to analyze how the novels reflect the socio-cultural forces at work in relation to women and race during the Civil War period. This dissertation defines historical fiction novels as those novels which have been written from research rather than experience, are set in the past, and have been written at least twenty years after the time period that sets the stage as the historical backdrop to the tale. Novels analyzed in this dissertation will be examined within the framework of one of four time periods in relation to its year of publication: First-Wave Feminism (1848–1920), Between First- and Second-Wave Feminism (1920–1960), Second-Wave Feminism (1960–1986), and Third-Wave Feminism (1986–2018?). The eight novels examined have been selected based on the following seven criteria: (1) genre of the novel is historical fiction; (2) era of the historical fiction includes the Civil War (1861–1865); (3) novel qualifies as Southern fiction; (4) author of the novel is female; (5) a prominent character of the novel is female; (6) novel was published during or between the first–third feminist-wave eras; (7) a significant theme of the novel involves women and their social roles.

II. SELECTION OF NOVELS

After the Civil War ended in 1865, northern troops occupied the South for a little over a decade. By 1877 the Hayes administration recalled the last troops stationed in the South and by the 1880s, Southern scholars, artists, and writers began offering varying interpretations of the conflict that so altered their worlds. Cultural works would influence how subsequent generations of Southerners and others would perceive their past and conceptualize their future. With each passing decade, the war receded from personally experienced events to public memories shaped by tales first told by eyewitness accounts and later pieced together through records, artifacts, photographs, and written works.

Historical novels have played an important role in this process. This dissertation examines the following eight historical fiction novels and how the portrayal of Southern women during the Civil War by Southern women writers has evolved over time.

| | TITLE | AUTHOR | PUB. DATE | TOPIC | FEMINISM WAVE ERA |
|---|---|------------------------------|-----------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted</i> | Frances Ellen Watkins Harper | 1892 | Life of bi-racial plantation daughter turned slave then liberated during the Civil War era Setting: MS, OH, NC | 1 st Wave |
| 2 | <i>The Battle-Ground</i> | Ellen Glasgow | 1902 | Life of white plantation daughter during the Civil War – issues of class highlighted. Setting: VA | |
| 3 | <i>The Wave</i> | Evelyn Scott | 1929 | Vignettes of the lives of various people of all backgrounds during the Civil War Setting: South and North | Between 1st and 2nd Wave |
| 4 | <i>Gone with the Wind</i> | Margaret Mitchell | 1936 | Life of a white plantation daughter during the Civil War era Setting: GA | |
| 5 | <i>Jubilee</i> | Margaret Walker | 1966 | Biracial woman during Civil War era goes from a life of slavery to a life of freedom Setting: GA, AL | 2 nd Wave |
| 6 | <i>High Hearts</i> | Rita Mae Brown | 1986 | Woman disguises her gender to join her husband in the Confederate army Setting: VA | |
| 7 | <i>The Wind Done Gone</i> | Alice Randall | 2001 | Parody of <i>Gone with the Wind</i> featuring plantation daughter's black half-sister Setting: GA, DC | 3 rd Wave |
| 8 | <i>Enemy Women</i> | Paulette Jiles | 2002 | Woman from the Ozarks in southeastern Missouri is accused of being Confederate spy and imprisoned Setting: MO | |

A. IOLA LEROY; OR, SHADOWS UPLIFTED (1892)

In the 1892 novel, *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted*, Frances E. W. Harper tells the life story of her eponymous heroine, Iola Leroy, a plantation belle with white skin and blue eyes, who is raised on a “lonely plantation on the Mississippi River, where the white population was very sparse” (139). On the eve of the Civil War, Iola makes the shocking discovery that she is biracial. The novel is the story of Iola’s journey to liberation and self-determination against the backdrop of a nation at war. Set in the South and North during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, the theme of the novel also drives the novel’s major conflict: a civil war of (racial) identification is waged—not only for the nation but for the biracial heroine.

Iola Leroy first introduces the biracial heroine, Iola, in chapter 5 when she is working as a Union nurse during the Civil War. Readers learn through a series of flashbacks that Iola grew up as the daughter of a Southern planter and that she had always believed herself to be white. However, while she is attending a northern boarding school, her father supposedly falls ill. When a relative named Lorraine arranges her return back to Mississippi, her world changes. Iola discovers that her father has actually died and that her mother is biracial. She and her remaining family members are “inventoried” by Lorraine as his rightfully inherited property and remanded to slavery. Iola’s mother is too sick to challenge Lorraine and her younger sister also falls ill and dies. While Iola is auctioned off at a slave market, her brother Harry, who has remained in the North, eludes Lorraine’s scheme.

When the Civil War erupts, Iola is rescued from slavery and works as a field nurse for the Union. A white northern doctor falls in love with Iola and proposes to her, suggesting that she can “pass” as his white wife and they can live in the North after the war. Iola refuses to lead a life “passing” and declines his offer. Later, Iola marries Dr. Frank Latimer, a man of mixed race who looks white but identifies as black. During the Reconstruction era, Iola and her husband move to North Carolina and coincidental encounters reunite Iola with her long-lost mother and brother. The novel ends on an optimistic note with Iola and Dr. Latimer actively engaging in efforts of racial uplift within the black community.

One of the first novels published by an African American woman⁸ and the first novel that Frances Harper published as a bound book rather than a serialized periodical,⁹ *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted* can be classified in the genre of historical fiction, fictional slave narrative, sentimental romance, or plantation fiction. Told from the third-person omniscient viewpoint, *Iola Leroy* ends with a “Note” from the (implied) author,¹⁰ whose voice, tone, and Christian convictions are indistinguishable from the narrator’s. The veil between narrator and writer is constantly lifted to enforce moral lessons as Harper repeatedly exchanges her author’s pen for her clenched activist fist to make undisguised appeals to readers’ sentiments. Tense changes, repetitions, and flashbacks frequently interfere with the fluidity of the tale. While narrative intrusions occur throughout the tale, the narrator never fully develops into a “dramatic version” of the author¹¹ as a separate character in the novel. Performing the function of a benevolent story guide, equipped with explanatory asides, the presumably black, educated Christian narrator (like the implied author) accompanies the (presumably white) reading audience on a journey to a time and place when America’s black community grappled with indescribable hardships. In the beginning

of the book, the narrator uses the word “we” to align herself with readers. At first the narrator largely confines herself to the start and end of chapters which are otherwise largely dominated by character dialogue. As the novel progresses, the narrator penetrates deeper into the points of view of various characters, black and white. The heroine Iola is first introduced in chapter 5, not by the narrator, but by a fellow slave named Tom.

Tom describes Iola as “a might putty young gal” and “a regular spitfire” (87). Tom repeatedly emphasizes Iola’s beauty, describing her with such long dark hair, delicate fingers, and pale skin, that his description could have been just as appropriate for the then-beloved and renowned Empress Elizabeth of Austria. The narrator shares Tom’s admiration of Iola and throughout the novel appeals to reader sympathy on Iola’s behalf. The narrator first mentions Iola as a “trembling dove” who was taken “from the gory vulture’s nest” (88). Before the heroine herself appears, a white general also expresses his deep appreciation of Iola’s modest demeanor, refinement, and beauty. In chapter 5, readers finally meet Iola and get to know her through her conversations with other characters. Only after the narrator relates the history of Iola’s parents, Iola’s childhood, and Iola’s enslavement, are readers given access to Iola’s internal discourse in chapter 13. Throughout the novel, almost all of the characters who encounter Iola are either enraptured by her or too blinded by racism to be so. Using direct and sympathetic commentary, the narrator strives to persuade readers to share her strong affinity for the beautiful heroine and black community. “Fragile women and helpless children” (68) have their hope of deliverance “cruelly blighted” (72). “Poor Iola” has no idea of the suffering she will soon endure (131), but her brother Harry has “[f]ortunately” fallen into “good hands” (145). In writing about Fielding’s narrative technique in *Tom Jones*, Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* describes the difficulty of mastering what Dorrit Cohn referred to as dissonant psycho-narration with speculative and explanatory narrator commentaries like “Poor Iola” which intrude in the text. According to Booth, such narration must be appropriate to the context, but also persuade the reader to accept the narrator as a living oracle and reliable guide not only to the world of novels in which they appear but also to the moral truths of the world outside the book (220 – 221). Iola’s vulnerability and tenacity no doubt heightened the empathy of readers of the late 1800s, in a successful application of what Suzanne Keen refers to as “ambassadorial strategic empathy” (*Narrative Form* 157). All readers past and present will also most likely condemn slavery. Contemporary audiences, however, might be apt to reject the Sunday-school teacher tone of a narrator who is constantly championing

the appearance, behavior, and character traits of an apparently flawless heroine. Even when Iola, as a young white planter daughter, argues on behalf of slavery, the narrator readily excuses young Iola's notions as those typical of a naïve Southern girl who cannot be condemned for her ignorance (128). Here, as elsewhere in the novel, the narrator adopts a conciliatory tone towards all of the white people whom she deems good-hearted but ignorant. Those the narrator judges as cruel, sinful, hypocritical, or racist, she readily rebukes. The "professed [racist] Christian women" who refuse to give Iola a place to stay, for example, are not putting "the religion in the most favorable light" (200). The book ends with an optimistic poem from Harper who sees "light beyond the darkness" and "a brighter coming day" (252).

Frances E. W. Harper was born to free parents in Baltimore, MD, thirty-five years before the Civil War. Because her parents died when she was young, Harper was raised by her uncle who was an educated reverend. In 1853, at the age of 28, Harper delivered her first public abolitionist speech and subsequently spent most of her adult life lecturing, writing, and advocating for women and the black community. At Harper's eulogy, W. E. B. Du Bois' stated that she "was not a great writer, but she wrote much worth reading." As one of the few novels that was published by an African American woman in the early 1890s and features a biracial heroine's plight during the Civil War, *Iola Leroy*, despite the novel's weaknesses, indeed makes an important contribution to the canon of Civil War fiction novels. Du Bois noted that Harper should be remembered for her efforts to "forward literature among colored people."¹² Recent scholars think that Harper should be remembered for the benefit of *all* people. The questions Harper raised about the struggles facing African Americans based on their class, race, and gender continue to resonate today. A decade later, Ellen Glasgow would raise her own questions regarding antebellum Southern society's treatment of others.

B. THE BATTLE-GROUND (1902)

One of Ellen Glasgow's early works, *The Battle-Ground*, features two prominent, neighboring Virginian planter families, the Lightfoots and the Amblers from shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War until shortly after the war's end. Major Lightfoot, the patriarch of Chericoke plantation, is a staunch secessionist and anti-abolitionist. His universe is based on clear divisions of class, race, and gender. Peyton Ambler, the Major's neighbor and state governor, is a southern "aristocrat" who, though loyal to the Union, has

a greater loyalty to Virginia. The Amblers have two daughters: Virginia, a Southern belle symbolic of all the traditions of the Old South, and her head-strong sister, the fiery, red-headed Betty, who is the novel's heroine.

The novel traces the relationship between Betty Ambler and Major Lightfoot's orphaned grandson, Dan Montjoy. For the Lightfoots, Dan carries the tainted blood of his father, a man who had run away with the Lightfoots' daughter and then abused and abandoned her. The ill-effects of Dan's dubious lineage seem confirmed when Dan, while away at college, is jailed for defending the honor of a "common" bar girl. Subsequently disowned by the Lightfoots like his mother before him, Dan works as a stagecoach driver until the war starts.

When the men leave for battle, the women fend for themselves on the plantations. Betty helps Mrs. Lightfoot run her household and cope with her various ailments. Virginia marries and becomes pregnant and, as the embodiment of all that is precious of the antebellum South, inevitably succumbs to illness towards the end of the war.

While his former friends join the cavalry and enjoy soirées and accolades, Dan serves proudly as a lowly foot soldier. In the army, Dan befriends a cracker named Pinetop and survives major hardships with the help of his freed slave, Big Abel. Defeated and wretched, Dan returns to Betty classless, and, he believes, unworthy of her affections. Glasgow's heroine, however, is not a woman to be confined by prescribed norms. The novel closes with the two lovers, Dan and Betty, reunited and gazing over the ruins of their past, looking with cautious optimism towards a future where class, gender, and race have been redefined.

The Pulitzer Prize winning author of *The Battle-Ground*, Ellen Glasgow, was born into a prominent family in Richmond, Virginia, less than a decade following the end of the Civil War in 1873. Her father was company director of the Tredegar Iron Works, owned by her uncle. Before Glasgow's characters would challenge the traditional codes of the Old South, Glasgow did so in her own life. Glasgow's voraciousness as a reader and skills as a writer led to the publication of her first book, *The Descendants*, when she was only 24 years old. Though a proud Virginian, Glasgow maintained that no matter how splendid the past, it had to act as the "fruitful soil" in which "the seeds of the future are planted; it must not be the grave in which the hope of the race lies buried" ("The Dynamic Past"). Her writing, which spanned fifty years, reflects this sentiment with her self-proclaimed campaign to reflect the "blood and irony" of her heroines and the South. Glasgow was a well-known literary figure with five best-sellers. She published over twenty novels, two collections of short stories,

and a collection of poetry during her career. Her autobiography *A Women Within* was published posthumously in 1954.

The Battle-Ground was the second book in Glasgow's Virginia history series and can be classified as a plantation novel, historical fiction novel, and bildungsroman. Glasgow situated her series in her home state, a place Fred Hobson has described as representing the "reason and imagination" of the South, "the Platonic ideal to which the Deep South aspired, [and] the image from which the rest of Dixie sprang" ("The Anatomy of the South" 115-16). Literature scholars praised Glasgow's first best seller for its "harsh [...] shocking realism" which greatly contrasted with Thomas Nelson Page's schmaltzy books romanticizing the Old South and popular at the time (*The Curious Death of the Novel* 192). Julius R. Raper described Glasgow as a "literary revolutionary" whose work "set the form that [marks] Modern Southern Fiction" with local color, naturalism, realism, and modernism ("Inventing Modern" 4-5). According to Raper, Betty is Glasgow's first heroine to adhere to the novelist's "Darwinian standards" by using her instincts to adapt to and survive a world in transition ("Ellen Glasgow" 406). Perhaps because *The Battle-Ground* was written early in Glasgow's career, the novel at times indulges in an overly sentimental tone as if readers are viewing the antebellum South through an image-softening filter. The novelist herself seems seduced by a magical past with the narrator describing in lush language plantations of singing slaves contently laboring for benevolent masters. This may account for scholars overlooking the novel and the failure of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (1989) to include it in a list of Glasgow novels with "enduring literary merit" (884). Nevertheless, a close reading of *The Battle-Ground* set in the context of the South of 1900, lays bare how Glasgow, even in her early work, advances beyond a mere chronicle of Southern history. Glasgow aims her writer's pen directly at the heart of Southern literature traditions which confined privileged white women to what Glasgow herself would later call "womanly woman" stereotypes. Glasgow's early works began to clear the way for an era of liberating modernity in which the "beginning, middle, and end" of women's existence would no longer simply be men¹³ and in which Southern literature would evolve into a new age that would become known as the Southern Renaissance.¹⁴

In *The Battle-Ground*, "[m]erry gentlemen" set off to battle as glorious victories await. Years after its debut, Glasgow would apologize for the novel's youthful idealism. But closer scrutiny hints that Glasgow may have been employing irony in an attempt to contrast an Eden-like world at the story's outset with the prevailing death and destruction at the

novel's end. Presenting the antebellum South as an idyllic treasure with everything to lose not only serves to heighten the visceral tension of the novel by increasing the worth of what is at stake, but also sets the stage for the heroine's transformation as the changes to her environment make demands of her as well. The novel's tone darkens as the war progresses, starvation ensues, loved ones die, and the plantation paradise is ultimately destroyed. Glasgow's wry irony is subtle yet poignant. Chapter titles such as "How Merry Gentlemen Went to War" and "The Altar of the War God" accentuate the naivety of Southern gentlemen cheerfully marching towards their own demise.

Two major conflicts dominate the narrative. The first is Betty's love relationship to Dan Montjoy as it evolves from a childhood friendship to something more. The second concerns the meaning of class and social position in the Old South – particularly in regards to the disowned plantation son, Dan Montjoy. In the novel, caste not race, "dirties" the blood of Dan Montjoy, who, due to a shameful act of his mother, can never expect to comfortably reside in the upper-class echelons of his grandparents and cousins.¹⁵ One theme of the novel is "love conquers all". Another theme is that an individual's worth supersedes questions of class or race. An additional theme explored in the novel is the myth of the Southern lady versus the woman expected to navigate the demands of a world in conflict.

Written in the past tense, the novel is told from a third-person limited omniscient viewpoint and divided into four sections entitled: Golden Years, Young Blood, The School of War, and The Return of the Vanquished. Glasgow explores the story from multiple points of view rather than solely penetrating into the heroine's inner thoughts and motivations. The narrator is generally reliable, but biased in his¹⁶ descriptions which contrast starkly with the "benighted" and savage-like images reflected in writings from the era by visiting authors and journalists ("The Savage South"). When first introducing the heroine as a young girl, the narrator highlights Betty's boyish qualities. She makes her entrance running in the dust with a boy. She sits in the grass at the roadside, fans herself with her sunbonnet, challenges a boy to a race, and quarrels with the boy about her superior physical skills. More ladylike than her sister, Virginia arrives on the scene with a black boy in tow. The angelic Virginia is "fragile," "little," like a "flower," has "smooth...hair" and "silken braids," wears a "white pique bonnet lined with pink" that is "daintily tied under her oval chin." Unlike Betty, Virginia's bare legs are dust-free and her socks are white. Betty on the other hand, is described as "spirited," "saucy," "defiant," "resolute," and "stubborn."

At the time of its publication, critics not only admired Glasgow's ability to infuse humor into such a serious subject but also expressed wonderment that a woman could produce such quality writing. A review from *Book News* (May 1902) praised Glasgow's novels, for their "virility and mastery of stroke" that "make one almost forget that their author is a woman, so masculine do her works appear at times" (Scura 59). The British *Spectator* (June 1902) remarked that "[t]he picture of war drawn by the author would be remarkable in any case, and is especially so as coming from a woman's pen" (Scura 64). Like her heroine, Ellen Glasgow refused to heed the glass ceilings meant to limit her reach.

Glasgow was an ardent supporter of women's rights throughout her life and a founding member of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia in 1909. In 1942 Glasgow was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her 1941 novel, *In This Our Life*. Though not a work generally revered by Southern literature scholars as a Glasgow masterpiece, *The Battle-Ground* offers an interesting perspective on the plight of white plantation women during the Civil War. Despite Glasgow's contention later in life that she had written her best books after 1922, the writer also admitted that Betty Ambler, *The Battle-Ground*'s protagonist, persisted as one of her readers' best loved heroines. Indeed, Betty Ambler, though a figure of the old South, heralded a modern version of the woman of yesteryear who, according to a later assessment by Glasgow, "seemed to personify the spirit that fought with gallantry and gaiety, and in defeat remain still undefeated" (*A Certain Measure* 5).

According to Susan Donaldson, the South saw a "swell" of Southern women writers of literary modernism who were not always embraced by critics. Donaldson cites a 1926 *Saturday Review* article about Frances Newman and Ellen Glasgow that "pungently noted" that the South's "only salvation" would be to take "the girl babies of good family [sic] who look as though they might have brains, and drowning them as soon as possible after birth." Donaldson contends that "the prolific and daringly original poet-novelist-playwright-essayist" Evelyn Scott could have been just as easily targeted (Donaldson 153). With her critically-acclaimed 1929 best seller, *The Wave*, Scott would grab Glasgow's baton and advance the scope of historical fiction of the Civil War to include an even more diverse group of Southerners who did not conform to the mold of the old Southern "aristocracy."

C. THE WAVE (1929)

Appearing in 1929, 64 years after the canons of the Civil War ceased to fire, at the time of its publication, *The Wave* was touted as, “one of the best novels of the South during the period which precedes and includes the Civil War that has ever been written” (Payne, “Recent Fiction” qtd. in Scura 62). It was the year that the crash of the stock market heralded in the Great Depression, and Virginia Woolf rallied women to demand their own creative space in her iconic essay, *A Room of Her Own*. The second novel of an ambitious trilogy¹⁷, *The Wave* is a chronology of over seventy vignettes¹⁸, usually scenes or events, and sub-vignettes of the Civil War spanning from Fort Sumter to Ford’s Theater. Scott introduces readers to a multitude of fictional and non-fictional characters and events as she zooms in and out on them for the length of a few pages. With determined egalitarianism, the conflict sweeps up everyone in its wake – loyalty, class, gender, and race be damned. Civil war is waged on the psyche as individuals combat their own personal demons while desperately searching for self-actualization, meaning, truth, and justice. Governments declare war, Scott seems to argue, but it is the everyday people who have to deal with its catastrophic fall-out.

Told in past tense from a multi-faceted omniscient viewpoint, *The Wave* features over a hundred different characters from all walks of life in the midst of varying states of mental health. The narrator is not a character in the novel but merges itself with the inner thoughts and feelings of one or more characters in each vignette in a blend of consonant psycho-narration and free indirect discourse. Scott often foregoes dialogue tags and filter words to heighten readers’ intimacy with characters by lessening the narrative distance. The technique used by Scott to emotionally connect readers to fault-ridden characters while maintaining a clear view of events is superbly described by Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Using Jane Austen’s *Emma* as an example, Booth demonstrates how an author can use the heroine as a kind of narrator while remaining in third person to enable readers to view the “world of the book” through the point-of-view character’s eyes and thus travel *with* rather than *against* that character, independent of the character’s moral shortcomings. Booth praises Austen as “one of the unquestionable masters of the rhetoric of narration” (244) and Scott seems to earn her place in the category as well. Scott seamlessly glides in and out of third-person and first-person viewpoints to plunge readers deeper into the characters’ thoughts and motivations, passing readers from a reliable third-person narrator describing scenes or events into the consciousness of an unreliable,

inherently biased first-person narrator in the midst of a civil war. For example, readers experience the thoughts of the hungry spinster, Miss Araminta, who is surrounded by riches that cannot be eaten but conjure up comforting yet disturbing memories of a bygone era:

In the beginning *she* had tried to make so very light of patriotic sacrifice. It's not for myself, *she* decided. *I* was a tomboy when *I* was a small girl and liked to pitch a ball with Bruce Ray that afterwards wrote the verses likening Helen's cheeks unto lilies. Well, poor Jasper was killed in the Black Hawk uprising, and a nobler Southern gentleman never lived. And Bruce's son married Jennie Gill... (193; emphasis added)

Scott's narrative technique merges the characters and readers into one. Scott transforms the narrator into the human we know best—ourselves. In a section entitled, “Control of Judgment” Booth warns that, “In reducing the emotional distance, the natural tendency is to reduce —willy-nilly—moral and intellectual distance as well. In reacting to [a character's] faults from the inside out, as if they were our own, we may very well not only forgive them but overlook them” (249–250). Yet precisely this seems to be Scott's aim. She does not want us to pass moral judgment on her characters until we are ready to pass judgment on ourselves. *The Wave* coaxes readers to recognize our own image in history's reflection. “This is *our* history,” Scott's narrative choices seem to contend. *We* are the freezing soldiers, the hungry spinsters, the plotting rapists, the murderous prostitutes, the suicidal mothers, the child arsonists. *We* made this war and this war made us. *We* did this. *We* were there. *We* remain there still.

While most of the novel's twenty-five chapters contain several vignettes of different events, two chapters (chapter 10 on the draft riots and chapter 15 on the march to “Jawdon”) include one event with several sub-vignettes. Chapter 24 is the only chapter in the novel which focuses on one event and includes no sub-vignettes: Abraham Lincoln's assassination day in Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865. Viewpoint shifts mid-vignette make readers privy to (often tragic) misunderstandings and personal motivations. Rather than using an individual's or family's wartime experience as her basis, Scott uses the setting—the United States during the Civil War—as the driving force of the plotline. Readers are thrown into scenes in medias res only to become witness to characters at what is, no doubt, the ultimate low points (and at many times the end) of their lives. The structure of the novel supports Scott's main theme: every historical upheaval is comprised of hundreds of micro-tragedies that together give meaning to the overarching cataclysmic event. A war's historical and social significance cannot be gauged by battles, numbers, and dates alone, Scott seems to

contend, but must be weighed against the greater social and individual disasters that it perpetuates. Scott's tone is serious, pessimistic, ironic, cynical, and only rarely optimistic. Scott once described Southern women as "little princesses defrauded of their heritage," but nothing about Scott's life indicates that she was a "little princess." Evelyn Scott grew up amongst "decent" Southern society in Tennessee and New Orleans as Elsie Dunn. Scott described herself as having "rejected the idea of being a Southern Belle like everyone else," (Kunitz 1253). At age 15, she declared herself an "ardent feminist," and at age 21, she eloped with a married man and took off with him to Brazil. Despite terrible hardships, Scott dedicated her entire life to writing in avant-garde style that would herald Southern modernists.

The Wave's legacy is as interesting as the novel itself. When released, the novel enjoyed wide critical acclaim. The sheer amount of research required to gather so many stories in a pre-internet age for a writer without a fixed residence was impressive. The publishing community highly regarded Scott's subject, her experimental narrative style, and superior writing skills, praising her as one of "the outstanding literary figures" of the time ("A Serious Damn," Bach 130). The publisher Cape and Smith even consulted with Scott on the merits of William Faulkner's *Sound and Fury*. Advance copies of Faulkner's book were distributed with a blurb predicting that: "*The Sound and the Fury* should place William Faulkner in company with Evelyn Scott" (130).¹⁹ But Scott's star subsided.

As time wore on, Scott grew increasingly paranoid about outside influences in the publishing industry and political pressures she perceived as seeking to suppress dissent. Her financial situation and mental state deteriorated and Scott was never again able to achieve the success she enjoyed with *The Wave*. For decades, literary scholars overlooked her work completely. Daniel Aaron, author of *The Unwritten War, American Writers and the Civil War* (1973), later admitted, however, that though he had been initially very unsatisfied with the lack of "masterpieces" on the Civil War, he "wished he had included Evelyn Scott's *The Wave* in his study" (Madden, *The Tangled Web* 32). In recent years, literary scholars have striven to reintroduce Scott's works to current and future readers and the Evelyn Scott Society regularly facilitates presentations on her work at literature conferences throughout the United States. While Evelyn Scott enjoyed overwhelming scholarly praise for her skills as a writer, Margaret Mitchell's reception amongst scholars was and continues to be controversial.

D. GONE WITH THE WIND (1936)

Gone with the Wind (“*GWTW*”) was Margaret Mitchell’s first and only novel. The historical fiction novel was published in 1936 in an era when the United States still found itself struggling to recover from the “Great War” and the Great Depression via programs such as Roosevelt’s New Deal. The world at large teetered on the brink of another international conflict as Japan invaded China and Hitler reigned as chancellor of the German Weimar Republic. In hindsight, the timing of a novel about a people violently catapulted into the throes of destruction, leaving them with nothing but pure grit and will to survive seemed a precursor for what would come. Add to the mix the sentimentalism of an honor insulted, a patriotism challenged, and a people convinced of their racial superiority, and it is no wonder that *GWTW* enjoyed immediate, world-wide success and even studious scrutiny by Goebbels’s propaganda machine.²⁰ The universality of many of the novel’s themes, however, such as war, death, love, identity, and the struggle for survival, no doubt contributed to making *GWTW* a lasting literary phenomenon.

Gone with the Wind is mostly set on the plantation Tara in northern Georgia with significant scenes also occurring in Atlanta. Events also take place in Savannah, Charleston, Macon, and New Orleans. The tale begins shortly before the start of the Civil War and ends in the early 1870s. The novel focuses on Scarlett O’Hara, a sassy belle from a Georgian plantation whose resilience and determination help her to overcome the struggles of a nation in conflict. Time and again, Scarlett conceals “her sharp intelligence beneath a face as sweet and bland as a baby’s” to play the role of a Southern belle while doggedly pursuing her goals (75). Although Scarlett pines for the unattainable Ashley Wilkes, she does not allow defeat to define her. Because Ashley is promised to his “sweet quiet” cousin, Melanie Hamilton, Scarlett marries Charles Hamilton, Melanie’s brother. In fact, Scarlett marries three times and is twice widowed. She matures into a young woman in the midst of a civil war, defying her culturally conditioned roles as a daughter, wife, mother, and widow.

When Scarlett’s mother dies, her father becomes mentally ill and Scarlett assumes the role of head of the Tara plantation. Scarlett’s “rush-into-life-and-wrest-from-it-what-she-can” attitude saves Tara and her loved ones from ruin. After Scarlett’s marriage to her second husband, she purchases a sawmill and runs a successful business during Reconstruction. Scarlett expertly employs her womanly assets to flirt, to woo, and to play-act to get her way. Only one man sees and loves Scarlett for the person she really is: Rhett Butler.

Scarlett's tumultuous relationship to her third and last husband, Rhett Butler, dominates the novel's plotline. Their marriage is marked by drama. Rhett presumably rapes Scarlett and their daughter dies in a tragic accident. By the time Scarlett finally admits to herself that Rhett is the only man she has ever truly loved, the marriage is in crisis. In the novel's final pages, Scarlett desperately asks Rhett what should become of her if he leaves. Rhett walks out with his iconic response: "I don't give a damn." Scarlett, emotionally battered but not beaten, resolves to retreat to Tara to contemplate her future because: "After all, tomorrow is another day."

Told from a third-person point-of-view, the omniscient narrator usually trails the heroine but at times pulls back to provide readers with broader historical perspectives. Though anonymous and not a character, the narrator's worldview seems to align with those of the antebellum upper-class. Adherent to and an advocate of the Lost Cause ideology, the narrator reinforces the racial bias which weaves throughout the tale. Readers are granted in-depth access to major characters' thoughts, emotions, and motivations. The narrator introduces the heroine in the very first lines of the novel. His less-than-flattering description of Scarlett makes her accessible to readers as someone universally relatable. Simultaneously, the heroine's complexity is laid bare. She is "not beautiful" but charming. She exhibits the delicate features of her Coast aristocratic mother, and the heavy ones of her florid Irish father. Her brows cut a "startling oblique line" in skin that is magnolia-white. Her demurely netted hair, modest spreading skirts, and small white folded hands cannot conceal her "true self." Like Mammy, the narrator admires Scarlett but is not fooled by Scarlett. By immersing us not only into Scarlett's thoughts and intentions but also into those of the characters with whom she interacts, readers are able to witness firsthand Scarlett's keen ability to assay people and situations and tailor her behavior accordingly: "... she smiled when she spoke, consciously deepening her dimple and fluttering her bristly black lashes as swiftly as butterflies' wings. The boys were enchanted, as she had intended them to be" (27). Mitchell's usage of psycho-narration and free indirect discourse lead readers from the narrator's viewpoint deep into Scarlett's:²¹ "This was the end of the road, quivering old age, sickness, hungry mouths, helpless hands plucking at her skirts. And at the end of this road, there was nothing—nothing but Scarlett O' Hara Hamilton, nineteen years old, a widow with a little child" (399). Suzanne Keen argues that authors can heighten reader empathy by employing such narrative techniques and Mitchell indeed seems successful in doing so.²²

Although the novel includes hundreds of characters, each has a distinct voice and personality and many contradict themselves in ways that increase the sense of realism. Mitchell maintains suspense throughout the novel through Scarlett's vivid personality. She embodies the contradiction of a naturally independent spirit who nevertheless yearns for love and security. Choices made by the heroine are often surprising but never out-of-character. Despite being written in past tense, the novel's tone remains immediate and urgent, enhanced by Mitchell's scant use of flashbacks. Eloquent but efficient descriptions bring characters and settings to life. The novel's mood is sometimes serious but generally upbeat. Themes of the novel include the dying of the Old South along with its mythology, banishment from the Garden of Eden, and entry into a new era in which money-making replaces traditions and values. Another theme concerns how cataclysmic events distinguish the momentary from the eternal in a world that is ever-changing. The major conflict of the novel concerns a young woman's struggle for identity, agency, and survival.

For better or for worse, since its publication and movie debut, *GWTW* has influenced subsequent generations' views of the antebellum South. The movie adaptation of the novel drew one of the largest cinema and later television audiences in history and the book has never been out of print since its first publication in 1936 (Seidel xii). Literary scholars David Madden and Peggy Bach argue that the public's enthusiasm of *GWTW* should not be dismissed when weighing the book's merits because: "fiction should both reflect and affect society" (*Classics of Civil War Fiction* 22). Dieter Meindl argues that "generic considerations" have contributed to the book's depreciation (416–417). It is conceivable that the nearly 4-hour, heavily romanticized film version of the tale may have negatively skewed assessments of the 1000+-page novel. Precisely for many of the reasons that the novel is controversial, the novel should not be readily dismissed.

In an article about bringing history to the general public, British sociologist William Davies warns about the dangers of flattening discourse by simplifying history into a culture war in which the past becomes one more product to acclaim or decry. Davies contends that controversial historical artefacts (which no doubt include literature) should be used as an opportunity "to address the myopia of the history curriculum and present the public with the complexities of their history" (5). *Gone with Wind* offers a point of departure to engage in a dialogue about Lost Cause ideology, gender discrimination, racial injustices, class prejudices, and the whitewashing of Southern history.

Margaret Mitchell's own views on the Civil War were initially influenced by the stories told by those who had lived through the war. She contends that she: "heard everything in the world except that the Confederates lost the war" and was indignant at age ten to learn that General Lee had in fact been defeated (Perkerson). From an early age, young Margaret accompanied her suffragist mother, Maybelle Mitchell, to women's rights rallies. Like Ellen Glasgow and Evelyn Scott before her, Mitchell rejected the expected behavior of a privileged Southern daughter to marry well and have children and she instead pursued a career in journalism. While recovering from a car accident in 1926, she began writing *GWTW*, which had the working title, *Tomorrow is Another Day*. Upon publication, the novel enjoyed immediate success and a year after its debut, a film followed. Although she had planned a follow-up novel, Mitchell died before those plans could be realized. As well as influencing readers' views of the South of the Civil War era, *GWTW* also inspired both writers who admired and who loathed the book to pen their own works on the same era. One of those writers was Margaret Walker.

E. JUBILEE (1966)

Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* is a historical fiction novel about a biracial woman's life during and following the US Civil War. The book is a semi-fictionalized account of the life of the author's maternal great grandmother, Margaret Duggans Ware Brown. Published at the height of the US Civil Rights era in 1966, *Jubilee* counters white Southern Lost Cause narratives by unmasking the grand old South as a fictional world that never existed. Set in Georgia and Alabama, *Jubilee* is structured in three parts: The Antebellum Years, The Civil War Years, and Reconstruction and Reaction. Spirituals and black folk songs are used throughout the novel as Walker combines the black oral tradition with the written tradition to produce "a folk novel and a historical novel" (Bonetti 114). Much like a spiritual hymn, the tone of the novel is somber and solemn. The protagonist, Vyry, is the daughter of the plantation master, John Dutton (Marse John), and his favorite concubine²³ slave, Sis Hetta.

The novel begins with a conversation between two slaves using Black English. Grandpa Tom tells May Liza she must be restless in her mind, and May Liza promptly replies, "I is. I is" (3). The owl's screeching, according to May Liza, is surely a sign of death. What awaits readers is obviously a tale of hardship which will trail the lives of the nation's black ancestors. The foreshadowed death is that of the heroine's enslaved mother Hetta who suffers while trying to give birth to Vyry's sibling. Vyry is first introduced at the end of the

first chapter as a vulnerable character in need of protection. “Aunt” Sally wonders what will happen to the “little girl” who starkly resembles the planter’s white daughter and lay sleeping in Mammy Sukey’s arms.

Vyry is raised by the slave women on the Shady Oaks plantation and eventually is taken into the plantation house to work. Visitors sometimes mistake the light-skinned Vyry for her favored playmate and half-sister, Lillian. Such mix-ups infuriate the plantation mistress, Salina, who uses every opportunity to brutally punish Vyry for her husband’s philandering. In addition to physical and emotional abuse, Vyry also suffers from the trauma of loss of those closest to her. Vyry’s second (adoptive) mother dies of an infection and her third (adoptive) mother, is sold away. At age 15, Vyry “jumps the broom” with Randall Ware, a freed black man who manages to make a good living as a blacksmith and promises to buy Vyry’s freedom. Marse John, however, refuses to sell his daughter/slave. Vyry and Randall have two children together who survive beyond infancy, Jim and Minna.

When Vyry attempts to flee northward with Randall, Vyry and her children are captured and Vyry is nearly beaten to death by the Shady Oaks overseer, Ed Grimes. Upon Abraham Lincoln’s proclamation of emancipation, a mass exodus of the former slaves leave their places of former bondage, but Vyry remains at Shady Oaks hoping for Randall Ware’s return. By and by all the members of the Dutton family die. In the end, only Vyry’s white half-sister, Lillian survives, but she suffers a severe psychotic breakdown after being presumably raped by a roving straggler. Vyry escapes sexual assault by the same perpetrator when she is rescued by a former field hand named Innis Brown. Eventually, Vyry gives up hope of Randall’s return and after organizing Lillian’s care, she and her children set off with Innis to build a new life.

Confronted with racism and racist white people eager to exploit their vulnerable condition, the patchwork family struggles to build a life after liberation. In one town, Vyry’s daughter is threatened and the Klan burns down their house. In another, Vyry, with her cream-colored skin, is able to “pass” as white and sell eggs and self-grown vegetables to the local white community. Eventually, Vyry secures a job as the “colored granny” and mid-wife of a small town where Vyry and her family can build their new home and safely settle. During this time, the brewing conflict between Vyry’s intellectually curious son, Jim, and Vyry’s hard-laboring, practically-minded second husband, Innis, escalates. When Innis severely whips Jim for being careless with the family’s pig, Vyry, vividly reminded of her own beatings as a slave, threatens to leave Innis.²⁴ At the end of the novel, Randall appears on

Vyry's doorstep, insisting that she and their children return to him. Vyry, pregnant with Innis's child, sends Jim to live with his father Randall, where he can receive a decent education, while she and the other children stay with Innis. The book ends on an optimistic note about the family's future.

According to Margaret Walker, she was careful about including well-researched historical facts in *Jubilee*. This is both a strength and weakness of the novel. By using dates and events as structuring devices, Walker employs an event-driven approach. Unfortunately, the transition from event to event often interrupts the narrative at the expense of character-building and allows little time for characters to reflect on experiences. The story advances despite any initiative from the heroine.

While slave narratives were generally written from a first-person point-of-view, *Jubilee* is told by a third person omniscient narrator who is not a character in the story. Usage of the third person viewpoint, particularly in historical fiction novels, enables the narrator to provide readers with a broader historical perspective and information unknown to the characters. At the same time, through consonant psycho-narration,²⁵ the third person omniscient narrator merges with character viewpoints, intensifying scenes and heightening reader empathy by honing in on the experience of the character most emotionally affected by the scene's events. Unfortunately, Walker's employment of this narrative tool does not take full advantage of its possibilities. Rather than intensifying the tragedy of Hetta's death in childbirth by melding with her viewpoint, for example, Walker instead shares Marse John Dutton's detached thoughts during the traumatic scene. While this technique may intensify readers' dislike of the planter and prevent what Suzanne Keen terms "empathetic distress" while preserving the image of Hetta's strength, it also distances readers from the traumatic event. Walker protects her readers from the full scale of the atrocity and thus prevents them from viscerally experiencing Hetta's suffering ("Theory of Narrative Empathy"). In one of the most shocking scenes of the novel—the whipping of Vyry—the severely beaten character's injuries are compared to the seemingly harmless 'tuck of a dress.' Again, the implied author "protects" her readers from the full magnitude of the scene. At the same time, however, Walker underscores her heroine's perseverance and resiliency in an era particularly hostile to black women.

For Margaret Walker, her role as novelist was the role of a historian.²⁶ Born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1915, she first began *Jubilee* when she was 19. The book eventually evolved into a manuscript for her doctorate in English before its publication in 1966. Walker

continued to promote the experience of black people in America and American history during her career as a college professor. In 1971 she pioneered one of the earliest Black Studies programs in the US and one of the first in the South at Jackson (Mississippi) State College. The 1973 Wheatley Festival of Black Women Writers, which her institute co-sponsored, featured 20 black women poets, including Margaret Walker, and gave birth to black women's literature renaissance. Jackson State University now has a Margaret Walker Center which is also home to the single largest collection of her works. Though *Jubilee* was her only novel, Margaret Walker continued to write poetry and essays throughout her life. By the time of her death in 1998, she was recognized as one of America's most respected African American writers and scholars.

Scholars who have described *Jubilee* as a kind of transitional novel between earlier slave narratives and later innovative novels like those by Toni Morrison and Alice Walker minimize the novel's historical relevance as a product of not just re-remembering the Civil War South but also the Civil Rights era and second-wave feminism. *Jubilee* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* were perhaps necessary precursors for what would follow. Walker guides readers on a journey into a time and place when the foundation stones for the nation's institutionalized racism are being laid. While Margaret Walker advanced black women's placement in history and literature, Rita Mae Brown strove to expand readers' views on gender identification.

F. HIGH HEARTS (1986)

Published at the tail end of second-wave feminism, and written by one of America's most well-known LGBT²⁷ writers at the time, *High Hearts* is a historical fiction novel of a Virginian girl who rejects her prescribed role as a domestic-bound wartime wife destined to raise funds, knit socks, and bury loved ones. Instead, the newly-wed 19-year-old protagonist, Geneva Chatfield, cuts her hair, sheds her hoops, and masquerades as a young, battle-ready soldier. Superior riding skills help Geneva posing as "Jimmy" to secure a place in the same cavalry as her husband, Nash Hart. Once the fighting ensues, Geneva proves herself to be every bit the born soldier that her poet husband is not. Tensions increase as the troop commander, Mars Vickers, takes a strong and almost "unnatural" liking to the talented "Jimmy" and an equally powerful loathing to "Jimmy's" tent mate / husband, Nash. While Geneva faces her own struggles on the battlefield, a subplot of the novel follows her mother, Lutie, on the home front.

A major theme of the novel is how gender roles promote or impede self-actualization and social power structures. Brown's cross-dressing heroine was no doubt inspired by the estimated four hundred women during the Civil War who disguised themselves as adolescent men to serve on the frontlines. One of the Confederacy's most famous female soldiers was a woman named Loretta Velazquez, who like Geneva in *High Hearts*, cut her hair and joined the army in order to be with her husband.

High Hearts, which is set mostly in Charlottesville, VA, begins in April 1861 and covers the first sixteen months of the Civil War. The last dated entry during the war is August 24, 1962 when the heroine's husband dies and is followed by one postwar entry dated forty years later on June 11, 1910. The book is divided into three parts entitled The Deceptive Calm, The Anvil of God, and These Bloody Cards. Parts I and II each have 26 entries and part III has 43 entries. The length of time between each entry varies from a day to several weeks. The novel opens with a conversation between the 18-year-old heroine Geneva and her "oldest friend and personal property" Di-Peachy. Geneva is introduced yanking a shawl, banging down the stairs, and being reprimanded by her mother for her unladylike "running around" and "galloping." The novel's tone is a mix of both serious and upbeat and Brown's usage of terms such as "hard-on," "queer," and "pussyfooting" give the novel a modern, edgy feel. Told in past tense from a third person omniscient viewpoint, the narrator generally follows the protagonist but also delves into the thoughts and views of other characters. Like many of the other authors examined, Rita Mae Brown employs consonant psycho-narration to blend the narrator with the mind of the character who the narrator has chosen to hone in on. Mid-paragraph, reader distance narrows as the thoughts of third-person "she" morphs into the consciousness of first-person "I": "Odd that *she* didn't miss Peaches one bit when *she* slept with Nash. Nash. My God, where was he? Maybe he was shot ... He crossed the Potomac and—*she* sat upright ... If he dies, then *I'll* die with him" (51; emphasis added). According to Brown, the viewpoints in the novel come entirely from Virginians, black and white, planters and crackers, male and female. Though the book is full of romance, women encounter brutally graphic scenes that lay bare the horrors of war away from the battlefield, horrors which Ulysses Grant once described as "more unendurable than encountering the enemy's fire."²⁸ During amputations, women hold the hands of men with "the sickeningly sweet smell of living bone reaching their nostrils" while severed legs land in carts with soft thuds (164).

Although the novel has all the wrappings of a plantation novel featuring a prominent Virginia family, Brown grants characters from varying racial, class, and gender backgrounds a voice. The tale of a woman who so radically transcends social and gender bounds during the war is unique amongst Civil War historical fiction novels. Graham-Bertolini describes Brown's Geneva Chatfield heroine as an example of the "vigilante women" who "refuse a position of self-sacrifice and instead choose to claim their power" (55). Such heroines, according to Graham-Bertolini, have permanently extended the plots of Western literature by offering viable alternatives to women in literature who, oppressed by domesticity and gender restrictions, resort to suicide or madness as their only option of escape. Rather than reinforcing the message that women are to be submissive and accept their lot as bystanders on the sidelines of history, Brown places her heroine in the midst of historical action. *High Hearts* offers readers a tale of gender fluidity and homoeroticism situated in a time and place when both topics would have been highly taboo. Like Rita Mae Brown, Alice Randall was another author whose Civil War historical fiction novel directly challenged the status quo of the genre.

G. THE WIND DONE GONE (2001)

Published in 2001, Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* is a historical novel about a young woman named Cynara born into a plantation family in the antebellum South as the daughter of the plantation master and his house slave.²⁹ While *GWTW* is told from the point-of-view of a privileged white plantation daughter, the 2001 alternative narrative *The Wind Done Gone*, is told from the point-of-view of her biracial, enslaved half-sister.

The novel begins on 25 May 1873 when the protagonist is 28 years old and alternates between the pre-war period and present-day events of the Reconstruction era. The master of Tata, simply named "Planter" (Gerald O'Hara), and Pallas/Mammy engage in an open, consensual relationship. Cynara, the couple's daughter, is born almost at the same time as her (presumably) white half-sister Other (Scarlett O'Hara). Other and Cynara grow up together in the big house as close playmates, but Cynara secretly harbors a festering jealousy of Other, who she believes Mammy prefers. Meanwhile, Lady (Ellen), also hurt by Other's obvious connection with Mammy, turns to Cynara for the comfort of a surrogate child. When Cynara reaches puberty, she is sold to Beauty (Belle Watling) and put to work as a laundress in Beauty's brothel. There Cynara encounters R/RB/ "Debt Chauffeur" (Rhett Butler) who is in love with Other. Cynara, knowing this, competes with Other for

RB's love. RB eventually takes Cynara as his mistress and moves her into her own house. After Other dies, Cynara becomes RB's wife. Towards the end of the novel, Cynara has an affair with a black congressman she refers to as "Congressman". When she becomes pregnant with his child, she encourages Congressman to marry another woman because she believes that their illicit relationship will jeopardize his political career. Congressman marries a "proper" woman and Cynara selflessly gives them her newborn son to raise as their own because they cannot conceive. The novel ends with Cynara alone and, having inherited Tata from its rightful owner, Garlic, financially independent, supporting her son to become a successful young man.

The Wind Done Gone begins with "Notes of the Text" which offers a legitimatizing tale of the novel's origins. According to the narrator, the old woman who had been in possession of both the type-written and hand-written versions of the diary that serve as the novel's basis, had suffered two breakdowns in her lifetime. Both breakdowns were triggered by her failure to publish the diary at the time of *GWTW*'s publication and film premiere. Alice Randall thus begins the *The Wind Done Gone* with an indisputable connection to *Gone with the Wind* and uses Margaret Mitchell's characters, settings, and events as inspiration for those included in her tale. The novel's opening origin story is told by a third-person omniscient narrator who reappears at the novel's conclusion with a postscript about the fate of the heroine, her diary, her loved ones, and her descendants. One-hundred and fourteen chronological, numbered but undated entries varying from one paragraph to four pages in length, comprise the bulk of the novel. The first-person viewpoint and diary form of the tale enable Cynara to concurrently give eyewitness accounts of her life as the 28-year-old woman at the time of writing during Reconstruction as well as her personal history as an enslaved girl in the antebellum South. The mixture of past and present creates tension between the girl struggling through slavery and the liberated young woman revisiting her past to come to grips with the lessons that Cynara-the-girl hold for Cynara-the-woman. The narrative vantage point is both simultaneous and retrospective. Sometimes the past referenced is immediate—the day of the journal entry; other times the past relates to a childhood experience. Repeated and sudden tense shifts, however, cloud the clarity of the story-telling as apparent in a passage in which Cynara writes about her mother's death:

The visiting colored preacher pronounced Mammy dead and took the ham home to his children. No one in the old house wanted to eat it.

I need to put down this pen and stop writing for me. I need to put down this pen and send a letter to R. before Other does. (38)

Alice Randall may have intentionally muddled tenses to demonstrate that the past is always a contemporaneous part of the present, particularly for those who had been enslaved. No clear lines can delineate a before and an after, a then and a now. As Cynara notes, no amount of wishing can undo the past. "I am trying to remember, but I don't know what I have forgotten. I wish I had run.... I wish [...] Mammy kept looking for me.... I wish Other looked.... I wish I arrived.... I wish Mammy bent over.... I wish Mammy kissed me.... I wish Mammy loved me [...] But that's never going to happen. She's dead now" (145). Regardless of Randall's reasoning, the inconsistency in her application of present and past tense requires readers to remain alert. Entries referring to the day of writing sometimes employ past tense and other times employ present tense: "We strolled out" (188) appears in one entry and "He asks me about my sister..." (189) appears in the subsequent entry. Another problem with the novel results from a plot twist.

In a climactic moment, Cynara learns that her white half-sister Other is not white after all, but biracial like Cynara. If Other is indeed biracial, then Cynara has spent the novel envious of a woman who is Cynara's racial likeness but has been able to "pass" as white. A perhaps unintended message of the storyline is that one can never be certain of the racial background of others. The novel's last entry is written in "you" form directly addressing the father of Cynara's newborn son. Newly empowered with agency, Cynara refers to the Congressman and his wife for the first and only time in the novel by their proper names: Congressman Adam Conyers and Corrine. Cynara not only seems to offer her son to Adam Conyers, but also her diary. "This is for you, my darling....," she writes (204). Cynara's autobiography and her child are her legacies.

Despite some of its weaknesses, *The Wind Done Gone* hit the best seller lists for several weeks. Time has shown, however, that *The Wind Done Gone* has not enjoyed the longevity of the novel that inspired it. Nevertheless, the novel is significant, not for Randall's accomplishment as a writer but for her success, legally and socially, in granting black women their rightful place in the US historical and cultural narrative.

H. ENEMY WOMEN (2002)

Published in 2002 and a New York Times bestseller, Paulette Jile's *Enemy Women*, tells the Civil War story of an eighteen-year-old girl named Adair Colley. Adair lives in

southeastern Missouri in the state of the “Great Compromise” on a small non-slaveholding farm in the Black River valley of the Ozark Mountains. She resides with her father, Marquis Colley, and her brother and two sisters. Marquis Colley is a widower and an apolitical justice of the peace who initially is able to keep his family out of the national conflict. Missouri however is plagued by corrupt militias led by Federalists (Union loyalists) who terrorize locals and pillage homes under the banner of the Union. Adair’s life is forever changed when bands of men from the Missouri State Militia raid Adair’s home in the third year of the war, steal the family’s horses, set fire to their property, and apprehend her father. Rain extinguishes the fires and Adair’s brother, who had been exempt from enlistment due to a disabled arm, flees to join the Missouri Calvary to avenge the wrongs to his family. After safely situating her sisters with a local family, Adair sets off northward to search for her captive father.

When a fellow traveler falsely denounces Adair as a rebel sympathizer, she is imprisoned at the St. Charles Street Prison for Women in St. Louis. The Union major in charge of the prison, Will Neumann, pressures Adair to confess to being a Confederate sympathizer. Adair, however, steadfastly refuses to make a false confession. A romance eventually buds between the Major and Adair. Before being transferred away from the prison, Major Neumann proposes to Adair and promises to reunite with her after the war. He also gives Adair money to bribe the guards so she can escape from prison and return home.

Although sick with consumption, Adair flees from prison and begins an arduous trek home. Along the way, Adair confronts those who try to take advantage of her. Through a lucky coincidence, Adair finds and steals back her beloved horse Whiskey. She returns to her family’s farm only to discover that her father has been declared dead and their farm has been auctioned. The novel ends with Adair uncertain whether to embrace a future as the Major’s wife or to continue on her journey alone.

Enemy Women is an account of the fictional wartime experiences of the fictional daughter of Paulette Jile’s great-great-grandfather, the 18-year-old heroine Adair. Told in past tense from a third person omniscient viewpoint, the narrator is prominent in the beginning of the novel and draws back as the story progresses to allow the characters to present their own viewpoints. Speakers are sometimes signaled through dialogue tags but without the use of quotation marks, blurring the distinction between third person omniscient narrator and first-person narrator. “Thank you, she said. She turned for her shawl. She was thanking somebody for putting her in a cell in a great stone prison. I just appreciate it so much” (89).

Paragraph breaks signify a move into another character's consciousness and/or dialogue. The lack of punctuation demands careful reading to distinguish not only who is speaking and whom is being spoken to but also whether the passage refers to thoughts, dialogue, or action. An example of this can be seen in the following passage in which untagged dialogue from the Major, indicated here in cursive font, is interspersed amongst the third person narrator's scene commentary which merges into Adair's inner monologue: "*Yes, she is all right.* Major Neumann turned and shut the door with a vigorous slam. She jumped. *Miss Colley, listen.* She turned up her face to him and saw that he had pulled up his chair... He had a pleasant scent, of soap and tobacco. Are we agreed? *This is all I can do for you...*" (88; emphasis added). The narrator remains in third person but readers gain the intimacy of first-person consciousness. The lack of dialogue tags and punctuation either heightens intimacy or increases confusion, depending on the reader. Jiles, in a postscript included at the end of the novel entitled, "How I Came to Write the Book," explains that she grew up in the Ozarks amongst people who loved a well-told tale and that she considers *Enemy Women* "at bottom, a good old-fashioned folk tale" (6). This may account for the narrative choices of the author, who wrote the novel without adhering to the strict conventions of the written word, as if the tale were being related by someone sitting on their front porch rocker recalling events from a time past.

Whereas many of the historical fiction novels focusing on white Southern women during the Civil War, feature women of the plantation class, *Enemy Women*, like Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, is a rare example of a novel with a poor white mountain heroine. Situated in a region of rugged terrain and short growing seasons, on the frontier of the US, straddling the lines between North and South, Union and Confederacy, the novel portrays a class of Southerners who view themselves as nothing more than "just plain folks."

Paulette Jiles was born in the Missouri Ozarks and is a critically acclaimed poet. She spent over seven years conducting extensive research for *Enemy Women* which she refers to as, "a good old-fashioned folk tale" ("How I Came to Write *Enemy Women*" 6). Although the novel can be described as a coming-of-age story, readers are reminded of its factual basis in US history by the epigraphical materials which begin each chapter. In the spring and summer of 1863, the Union army accused many Ozark women of aiding and abetting the Southern enemy. *Enemy Women* portrays how one Ozark woman navigated the challenges of a nation at war determined to make women like her the enemy.

III. COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN

In the United States in the 1800s, according to Kate Millet, women were “dead in the law” and placed on the same social tier as villains and the mentally ill (Millet 67). Marriage amounted to a “civil death” and women had no control over what they earned and where they lived. They were legally not permitted to sign papers, bear witness, or manage property. Millet describes how women spent their lives as minors and chattels with their fathers or husbands as their legal keepers (67). Along with slaves and children, women were excluded from the category of *legal person* or subjugated to a grey area somewhere between legal person and legal thing. As legal things, women, privately and publicly, were subject to the laws, rules, and norms drafted, implemented, and enforced by men (Sultana 1).³⁰ The situation for women drastically shifted when the Confederacy introduced compulsory military service for all men 18–35 years old in March 1862.³¹ Which challenges women faced in the South in the Civil War era often depended on their geographical location, social class, and perceived race.

A. WOMEN, FAMILY, AND GENDER ROLES

“If we have come to think that the nursery and the kitchen are the natural sphere of woman, we have done so exactly as English children come to think that a café is the natural sphere of a parrot – because they have never seen one anywhere else.” —George Bernard Shaw

Scholarly research has shown that the so-called privileged plantation mistresses of the antebellum South, were, in fact, not so privileged at all. According to Kathryn Seidel, their letters and diaries reflect that they feared: “death in childbirth, marriages to unloving husbands who were often away on long trips, [and] the ambiguous relationship between the races in which the husband’s white and mulatto children played side by side” (*The Southern Belle* 126). During the war these fears changed. As the casualties rose, the number of eligible bachelors declined, and notions regarding appropriate spouses drastically changed.

The wheels of government propaganda churned to remind unmarried women that an honorable but disabled veteran was a worthier husband than an unpatriotic but able-bodied coward who had dodged the call to duty. At the same time, the ever-changing realities of day-to-day life meant that rituals related to mourning and widowhood could no longer be adhered to. In “The Effect of the Civil War on Southern Marriage Patterns”, Hacker et al. write of the “marriage squeeze” and how white southern women were particularly worried

about spinsterhood, which became more prevalent (41). They note that “war acted as a catalyst for marriage” and led to a “flurry of marriage” as men set off for battle or returned home on leave (44–45). Almost everything about women’s role in her family and community changed. Admired feminine traits such as daintiness and submissiveness, so irresistible before the war, were woefully inadequate in equipping women with the skills needed to survive a time of conflict, death, and shortages.

In the novels featuring plantation class heroines, such as *Iola Leroy*, *The Battle-Ground*, *GWTW*, and *High Hearts*, the tranquility and sanctity of the domestic sphere of the plantation is symbolic for the whole of antebellum Southern society. While all the novels begin in a closed micro-world of home life and slowly open into the public sphere of an unknown wilderness awash with danger, only Glasgow’s *The Battle-Ground* confines the heroine, Betty, to the domestic sphere for the entire novel.

One interesting commonality of all the novels is that no heroine can be defined as a traditional Southern belle and the heroines must be self-reliant to survive. In *The Wave*, for example, the young man who strives to heroically save his mentally unstable fiancée by abandoning his military post to return to her, fails miserably at his attempt when he is shot for desertion. In *GWTW*, as the Yankees descend upon a battle-ridden Atlanta, Rhett informs Scarlett that he must join his troops and leaves her on her own to safely guide a small group of vulnerable people, including a newborn, on a harrowing journey back to Tara. When Vryy’s new husband in *Jubilee* fails to secure her freedom, Vryy concludes that she can only ever depend on herself. In the novels examined, the traditional Southern belle incapable of adapting to the new realities of a world on fire, like Virginia of *The Battle-Ground*, Ellen and Melanie of *GWTW*, and Salina of *Jubilee*, is destined to perish along with the South that molded her.

1. Aspects of Gender

Gender Roles

I thought how unpleasant it is to be locked out; and I thought how it is worse, perhaps, to be locked in. —Virginia Woolf, A Room of One’s Own (1929)

According to Hélène Cixous, women have always been imprisoned in a masculine binary logic. Women who obey are angelic; those who resist, demonic. The body functions as a bridge between inside and outside spaces. It mediates between the conception of the self

and the reception of the Other. In a chapter tellingly entitled “The Mirror and the Cage”, Pearson and Pope write that women who failed to act “according to the values of conventional society [were vulnerable to] ... social ostracism, poverty, madness, or death. In less dramatic instances, [they may have simply risked] ... being disliked” (17). She who could squeeze her foot into the proffered slipper would be rewarded with a prince. She who could not or would not abide by William Wordsworth’s prescription of the ‘perfect woman’ “nobly planned // To warn, to comfort, and command” would be damned to ostracism, social ruin, and possibly death.

In the antebellum South, a common role assigned to white planter women was that of the angelic savior. Perhaps because they were placed on such precarious pedestals, white plantation women were believed to be closer to heaven. Or maybe by hoisting their ladies up to such grand heights, the planter men below became so blinded by the hot Southern sun that they envisioned angels swaying above them. A more likely reason women were often believed to be moral creatures, however, was that they were expected to lead such perfect lives of stringent virtue, that their goodness would be enough to atone, not just for their own sins, but for men’s as well. Betty Ambler of *The Battle-Ground* thinks that even if Dan “had been a scoundrel instead of so big and noble” her love could have “made his life so much better” because only love “is large enough ... that all such things as being good and bad are swallowed up” (345). According to Kate Millet, “women had a ‘higher’ and ‘holier’ mission to make the character of coming men” (71). The myths inevitably became self-perpetuating. Pearson and Pope describe how the image of the “mother-goddess,” which they equate to the virgin myth, granted women social status and admiration (*Who Am I* 10).

In the novels examined, Virginia in *The Battle-Ground* and Ellen in *Gone with the Wind* exemplify the divine figure of the perfect Southern woman who is destroyed by the end of the novel. Sometimes, the mythical woman is a character who has died but lives on in the memory of loved ones like Jane Lightfoot in *The Battle-Ground* and Banjo Cracker’s deceased wife, in *High Hearts*. A common trope in Southern literature and used in *The Battle-Ground* and *Gone with the Wind* is that of a legendary grand dame who presides over subsequent generations of the plantation family through a portrait or her strong lingering presence. The goddess myth, when applied to a deceased loved one, becomes not only untouchable and thus infallible but also an impossible standard for any mortal woman to live up to.

For the angelic planter woman of the antebellum South, the home was the sacred realm close to nature and preserved by the South's agricultural industry. According to Kathryn Lee Seidel, Southerners juxtaposed the image of the Eden-like moral world of the South to the factory-crammed industrial centers of the North. Living in overpopulated cities, dirtied by pollution, Northern immigrant children and women were forced to slave away for pitiful wages in brick prisons run by corrupt, profit-driven bosses. In contrast, Southern plantations served as the last bastion to preserve Christian values (4).

While women of the North often worked in the towns, women of the antebellum South were largely confined to their homes. With limited public roles, Southern planter women had few opportunities to join together in women's liberation efforts. Women who could earn, possess, and freely dispose of money, would no longer be dependent on men to survive. While admitting women as equals into the workforce would have posed a direct challenge to traditional patriarchal notions of prescribed social gender roles, it would have also liberated its male members from the patriarchal burden of being the sole financial providers for their families. While in the 1850s, more academies did open for women, such opportunities, until the war at least, did not lead to a societal acceptance towards women's pursuit of outside jobs. Teaching was still frowned upon and nursing, which often required an intimate closeness with male patients, was likewise deemed socially unacceptable.

The privileged class objected to women earning salaries for many reasons. On the one hand, a woman's need to earn money outside the home was proof of a man's inability to provide adequately for his family. On the other hand, a woman's ability to earn a salary naturally empowered her socially and thus weakened the unchallenged position of the man as provider and patriarch. A working woman could also partake in social situations beyond her husband's sphere of influence. Last, but not least, there was most likely an inherent fear that working women would no longer need men.³² Though Southern society believed that plantation women had no business working, this notion did not extend to *all* women and did not mean that women weren't doing work. In the antebellum South, attitudes towards women and work varied depending on the social class and race of the women concerned.

According to Anne Firor Scott the "ordinary planter wife," the wife of the yeoman farmer, and the poor white woman all led very demanding lives, although the poorer women had to do more manual labor (*The Southern Lady* 28). The US Dept. of Agriculture's 1862 annual report describes the typical farm woman as a "laboring drudge" who worked harder than her husband and all other hired help.³³ Southern women weren't idle but because the

region's agricultural economic basis demanded that women perform jobs within the household, their labor did not constitute salary-earning opportunities outside the home and was therefore never recorded as employment in statistical surveys or socially recognized as "real" work.

Domestic work for plantation mistresses demanded that they act as the managers of the plantation households, overseeing the preparation of meals, supervising the butchering, drying and storing of fruits and vegetables as well as making their own soap, lard, and yeast. They spun, sewed, and wove. They oversaw that the basic needs of the plantation family and workers were tended to by managing their clothing, feeding, and healthcare. Many plantation women taught their slaves how to read and write until this became illegal or socially unacceptable in the 1830s.³⁴ According to A. F. Scott in *The Southern Lady*, "Even extraordinary wealth could not buy leisure for a planter's wife" (31). Any money women earned through tutoring or selling homemade goods legally belonged to their husbands. While men could often find ways to liberate themselves from the expectations and demands of home life, women, particularly once they said "I do," had few such options.

Diaries and letters written by ladies from the antebellum and Civil War eras confirm that their concerns centered chiefly on family members and health. Catherine Clinton in *The Other Civil War*, writes about the physical and managerial burdens shouldered by planter wives. When planter men were ill or absent, their wives often had to substitute for them and take over their duties. In such cases, women "dealt with slaves, negotiated with overseers (who were present on less than one quarter of even the larger estates), tended to merchants and creditors: all in all, their decisions substituted for the rule of the master" (38). As the Civil War got underway, the "temporary" positions became more permanent.

During the war, responsibility to keep the marital assets running in their husbands' absence kept women dutifully chained to marital homes. Many of the novels refer either explicitly or implicitly to the institution of marriage as slavery. Nevertheless, marriage was the only route available for a privileged young woman to maintain or improve her social status. For this reason, the main goal of every young plantation woman was to find a suitable plantation husband. The lifespan of the belle was short-lived, ranging from about the age of the sixteen as a debutante to about nineteen, when the threat of spinsterhood became ominous. The lives of women were defined by their relation to men. Fulfillment for women stemmed from being a dutiful daughter, wife, and mother. Those who strayed risked stumbling down

the rungs of the social hierarchy or being ostracized. Up until the Civil War, the ideal Southern woman was widowed, married, or hoping to marry.

Lest a woman entertain any doubts over her serf status, the wedding ceremony, with its injunctions to subordination and obedience, was perfectly clear upon [her position]. St. Paul abjured the bride to be obedient unto her husband as unto the Lord, a behest more powerful to the pious (and care was taken that women receive large doses of piety) than any mere secular command. Secular law was equally explicit and rule[d] that when man and woman [became] “one,” the one was the man. (Millet 68)

Deemed incapable of autonomy, legal or social, it was only natural that every Southern woman align herself with a man. In *Within the Plantation Household*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese states that, “Women, like children, have only one right – the right to protection. The right to protection involves the obligation to obey” (199). Legally, a married woman disappeared as an independent person and became a “feme covert.” Her rights were subsumed to his and she possessed no distinct and independent rights of her own.

Those women who could not or chose not to find a husband, were socially condemned to spinsterhood. Anne Firor Scott writes that, “The belief that woman was created to be a wife and mother did not allow much room for spinsters, but of course there were some” (*The Southern Lady* 35). Like the character Miss Lydia in *The Battle-Ground*, spinsters were usually adopted by family members to live in their homes and helped to attend to light work within a household, such as gardening and sewing. Anne Firor Scott writes about the limited scope of opportunity available to unmarried women at the time and how respectability required that even women of means live with relatives and perform unpaid labor. Those who did not have money, according to Scott, could work as a governess or housekeeper, whose average monthly wage in NC before the Civil War was just 4 dollars (equivalent to about 120 USD today).³⁵

Attitudes towards unmarried women changed, however, as the Civil War progressed, and the numbers of casualties rose and eligible young bachelors became ever scarcer. As the social situation shifted, the pressure to marry eased. In *Mothers of Invention*, Drew Gilpin Faust writes about spinsters’ special status and freedom during the war. According to Faust, spinsters and widows were able to overcome the social and cultural stigmas associated with their manless states through nursing and teaching because such women existed “outside the structures of direct patriarchal control and domestic obligation” (111).

Class borders, previously bastions protecting proper women from menfolk of humbler backgrounds, became increasingly porous. The wheels of the government propaganda machinery churned to encourage women to marry disabled veterans as an act that was not only socially acceptable but downright honorable. Veterans returned home not only with physical ailments, but mental ones as well. Traumatized by what they had seen and done, many became addicted to pain medication and alcohol. Black men in the Reconstruction era, suddenly capable of earning money and purchasing items, also became susceptible to alcoholism. With divorce still taboo, women had very few options to deal with these postwar challenges.

Since the founding of America, divorce has been governed by the states. Laws therefore varied. In South Carolina, divorce remained illegal until 1949 and in North Carolina, divorced couples were long prohibited from remarrying (Coulthard 210). Since women in most Southern states could not legally testify against their husbands, a woman seeking divorce, even in cases involving abusive, drunkard, or philandering husbands, had to find a (male) witness willing to testify on her behalf. Divorce hearings were held in front of a court composed solely of men, who would then decide whether or not to grant the request. Records from the period indicate that divorces were rarely granted (Coulthard 212). Kate Millet describes the precarious status of women in the early days of the country.

As head of the proprietary family, the husband was the sole “owner” of wife and children, empowered to deprive the mother of her offspring, who were his legal possessions, should it please him to do so upon divorce or deserting her. A father, like a slaver, could order the law to reclaim his chattel-property relatives when he liked. Wives might be detained against their will; ... wives who refused to return to their homes were subject to imprisonment. (67)

Divorce was therefore atypical, socially stigmatized, and widely considered an extreme measure. The divorce of Mars Vickers and his wife Kate in *High Hearts*, is therefore highly unusual. Another unmentionable topic portrayed in the novel is extra-marital affairs.

According to Drew Gilpin Faust in *Mothers of Invention*, “If sexuality between white husbands and wives was fraught with terror and ambivalence because of fears of impregnation, extramarital relations must have produced far greater anxiety and reluctance” (127). Planter women, averse to engaging in physical relations with their husbands may have readily turned a blind eye to their spouses’ philandering with slave women. Though not socially sanctioned, such behavior was often tolerated. A man’s sleeping with a slave or prostitute was not the social equivalent of him having an affair with a white woman of

his class. Slave women could not legally marry but were expected to have many children; white women were expected to legally marry before having any children. Although there must have been many unwed white women who became pregnant, only two of the novels examined, *GWTW* and *The Wave*, both of which were published between the two world wars, deal with the subject of white unwed mothers. Social norms tend to loosen during times of war, as opportunities for extramarital encounters increase and yearnings grow more fervent as lives dangle precariously on the limb of a deadly conflict. Despite an inevitable increase in such incidences, Southern society still frowned upon single motherhood for white women and judged unwed mothers harshly. While having a child was socially scandalous for a white single woman, not having children was equally unacceptable for a white married woman.

For planter women, ladyhood was synonymous with motherhood. While a man could express himself and his lifetime ambitions through a myriad of social and business undertakings, a woman's self-expression was confined to fulfilling her duties as a wife and mother. In *High Hearts*, Kate Vickers' refusal to have children makes her seem cold and contributes to her husband's change in feelings towards her. Women who were unable to bear children were deemed socially inadequate. Rooted in the biblical tale of Isaac and Rebecca and historically perpetuated beyond the English kings, infertility was the fault of the woman and justified a man's decision, in the court of civil law and public opinion, to take another wife.³⁶ Though divorce was not such an accepted option, a husband could easily abandon a childless wife or simply take another woman as a concubine without seeking divorce. Women audacious enough to refuse to bear children were demonized as mad, callous, or both.

The lingering legacy of the notion that womanhood equals motherhood is apparent in feminist, Audre Lorde's words of 1979: "Only within a patriarchal structure is maternity the only social power open to women" (*Sister Outsider* 111). A woman's success and character were measured by the perceived outcome of her mothering through the actions and behaviors of her husband and children. In fact, the responsibility (and liability) of a mother for her child's healthy adjustment in society became a prevalent cultural narrative lasting well into current times. Supported by unsubstantiated theories of men such as Sigmund Freud and his adherents, the psychological problems of adults could always be traced back to a less-than-capable mother guilty of either over-mothering or under-mothering her offspring.³⁷ The road to motherhood in the South, however, was not easy.

In an era without the comforts of air conditioning or electric fans, in a region with a hot, sticky climate, pregnancy could be particularly burdensome. Giving birth, in addition to being painful, could always turn fatal. The novel *Jubilee* opens with the scene of the painful death of the slave Hetta as she lays in labor with the planter's child, her body ragged and worn from fifteen pregnancies. Factors already challenging in times of peace, became even more so in times of conflict. In *GWTW* readers witness the trials and tribulations of childbirth during war in a chaotic scene in which Scarlett is forced to act as Melanie's midwife during the siege of Atlanta. Drew Gilpin Faust describes not only how the medical realities of the time caused Southern women to feel an aversion to childbearing, but how meeting the subsequent needs of babies contributed to anxieties about becoming pregnant. "Overburdened women worried about the additional work of new babies in an environment where the possibility of slave childcare was increasingly uncertain. Additional mouths to feed in an economy of growing scarcity were equally unwelcome" (*Mothers of Invention* 129). Unwanted pregnancies were particularly problematic.

Abortion in the Civil War era was religiously, socially, and legally forbidden. Single women who adhered to the social expectation that they remain virgins until marriage would have no need for a procedure to end a pregnancy. Slave women, who could not legally marry at the time anyway, were also expected to carry their babies full-term and provide subsequent generations of slaves for their masters. Nevertheless, women *did* engage in premarital and extra-marital sex and slaves did not want to be misused as breeding machines. Unfortunately, rape has also always existed and contrary to some seriously disturbing notions, raped women could indeed become pregnant. A lack of reliable birth control, grave health concerns associated with childbirth, and the inability to satisfy the basic needs of children already in existence combined to make abortion a sought-after (illegal) procedure in the Civil War era. Only *The Wave*, however, addresses the topic of abortion. Almost worse than being an unwed mother for Southerners, was being a woman who fraternized with the enemy.

After the Confederates surrendered and Union troops became an occupying force throughout the South, Southerners who had supported the Confederacy were forced to sign loyalty oaths to swear their allegiance to the Union before they could regain many of their prewar freedoms and rights. A loyalty oath could be required to obtain travel passes, conduct business, maintain property, and sometimes even to purchase food and basic necessities. Several events culminated to exacerbate Southerners' mistrust and loathing of

all Northerners. During the Reconstruction era, while all black men had secured the right to legally vote, many white Southerners who had fought on behalf of the Confederacy and refused to take the post-war Union allegiance pledge, were banned from voting. *Gone with the Wind* demonstrates the social stigma of the perceived betrayal to the Confederacy. Even liberated slaves who had bravely fought alongside Union troops underwent a change of heart towards the North with the introduction of measures such as the “Black Codes of Mississippi” and Andrew Johnson’s reversal of Lincoln’s Special Field Order No. 15 which was supposed to grant black Union veterans 40 acres of land and a mule.^{38,39} While most members of the formerly privileged class of the South blamed the Yankees for all of their post-war ills, some were more willing to let bygones be bygones. For young Southern ladies, the Northern occupiers presented a fine pool of young, eligible bachelors. However, the elders of the former Southern elite viewed the taking of a Yankee partner as an act of almost unforgivable betrayal. In *GWTW*, even Scarlett’s business associations with Yankees are scandalous.

For black women of the antebellum South, maintaining family bonds presented a grave challenge. To be a slave was to be the property of a man who could use you, abuse you, and place you on an auction block at will. As if that weren’t enough, he could do the same to all of your loved ones as well. To love was to suffer. Black families who were separated under slavery had no method of staying in contact with one another and no hope of ever possibly being reunited. A child sold was often a child lost forever. Because slaves were members of a society in which the state of their families was subject to whims of their master, they formed familial bonds based not only on blood relations but also community ties. The novels *Iola Leroy* and *Jubilee* describe liberated slaves’ search for lost loved ones following the war.

Starting in 1808 with a law forbidding the transatlantic importation of slaves, the slave trade in the US became legally restricted to trade within the states. This changed the pool of slaves from foreign-born and imported human goods to those born into slavery on American soil. Deborah G. White contends that the relationships within slave families were often *matrifocal*. Female solidarity fostered cooperation within the domestic sphere and women enabled women to support their children independent of fathers if they desired to do so. Interestingly, even freed black women, who could decide how to structure their domestic lives independent of a master’s prerogative, seem to have chosen not to live in mother-father/husband-wife family units. Citing research by Suzanne Lebsock, Elizabeth

Fox-Genovese states that although the exact reasons are unclear, “antebellum free black women, given the opportunity, chose to live without their husbands” (*Within the Plantation* 52). *The Battle-Ground*’s Aunt Aisley is such a woman. These black women’s chosen independence of men seems unique for women of America during this time period.

Whereas white women subordinated themselves to domestic households dominated by the ruling hand of a male patriarch (either a husband, father, brother, or male relative), at the end of the working day, enslaved women, when they retired to their cabins, were often free of gender constraints. Given the frequency within the slave community of marrying a slave from a neighboring plantation, or “marrying abroad,” enslaved women were liable to find themselves head of their private families when the day’s work was done.

Nevertheless, just as white Southern women were subjected to the domination of the white male head of household, so too were the enslaved women subject to the same master. The plantation master provided for a slave woman’s basic needs such as food, clothing, water, and shelter. He also determined which tasks were expected of her. Although distinctions were made between work assigned to male and female slaves, enslaved women could also be expected to perform heavy manual labor such as chopping wood and plowing fields (Finkelman 204). Slave children were generally permitted to play until around the age ten, at which time many were also put to work in the fields. Though not typical⁴⁰ slave families in which the mother and father resided together in the same cabin adhered to strict divisions of labor which had women performing domestic chores such as caring for the children, cleaning, cooking, and sewing. According to Fox-Genovese in *Within the Plantation Household*, slave women could typically work up to eighteen hours a day.

A slave’s welfare and the welfare of those she loved was in the planter’s hands. He had every legal right to discipline her as he saw fit and had the power to make sexual demands of her as well. She had no legal or physical means to resist his authority in any way. Enslaved women were therefore always vulnerable to exploitation not only by the white men but the black men in their communities as well. Their physical vulnerability no doubt contributed to their high pregnancy rates. Enslaved women bore many children (usually about eight) throughout their lives and typically gave birth to their first child at the age of 19 and last child at the age of 40. These children could have various fathers, black and white. In the year 1850, infant mortality for slaves was twice as high as infant mortality for white women.⁴¹

Although marriages among slaves, like those of the indentured servants in early America, were legally forbidden, couples often engaged in informal and, at times, elaborate marital ceremonies.⁴² Referred to as “jumping the broom,” these unions were recognized as socially, though not legally, binding by the slave community as well as the owners. Tellingly absent from the ceremonies, however, were the words, “What God has joined together, let no man pull asunder.” Despite their unofficial nature, even these partnerships could be subject to the planters’ blessing particularly when they involved slaves from different plantations (Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore* 52). In general, the planter class tended to view slaves as wild and childlike. For this reason, according to Edwards, “[m]ost whites tended to view slave marriages with condescension, certain that slaves were childlike, morally inferior, and thus incapable of marital fidelity” (51).

A phrase commonly used by plantation families in letters in the antebellum South was “my family, black and white.” Different versions of this family existed – a family who chose to be together in a traditional manner while ignoring racial distinctions, like in *Iola Leroy*, a family with members who were forced to co-exist in a master-slave dynamic based on race like in *GWTW*, and those families in which the lines of distinction blurred like in *The Wind Done Gone*. Despite the redemptive image of the harmonious, multiracial household portrayed in planter letters, bloodlines ended where race lines began. All the novels selected, with the exception of *Enemy Women* (2002), show the multifarious versions of “my family, black and white” but vary in the extent they expose the deceitful benignancy of this description.

One figure that has survived and perhaps perpetuated the (mis)representation of the integrated, harmonious black and white plantation family is the Mammy. The film version of *Gone with the Wind* no doubt contributed to this myth. Actress Hattie McDaniel gave such a convincing performance of the domineering but caring Mammy who all family members, black and white, adored and respected, that the role won her an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, the first Academy award won by an African American. Catherine Clinton writes about the evolution of the problematic portrayal of the Mammy. She contends that the figure evolved from its origins before the Civil War as a response to Northern abolitionists and as a way to “redeem the relationship between black women and white men within slave society” (*Plantation Mistress* 202) into a postwar attempt to craft a nostalgia for the old times. Clinton calls her the counterpoint of the sexually charged figure of the octoroon concubine who was often victimized by slaveholders:

Mammy was integral to the white males' emasculation of slavery since she and she alone projected an image of power wielded by blacks—a power rendered strictly benign and maternal in its influence. Further, her importance was derived from her alleged influence over whites; in her tutelary role, she was, in fact, invented as the desired collaborator within slave society: idealized by the master class, a trumped-up, not a triumphant, figure in the mythologizing of slavery. (202)

Thirty-four years after the publication of *The Plantation Mistress*, in 2016, Clinton returned to the problems of the stubbornly persistent “Mammy myth.” She argued that white southern women narratives liked to include the Mammy character, even though she did not realistically represent the roles that black women played in plantation households. She criticized that Mammy characters “continued to serve as emblems in nineteenth-century American literature, intended as props to hold up crumbling racist regimes. ... [while, the] flesh-and-blood women, rather than the superficial functionaries, remain[ed], in a sense, in ‘another part of the forest’” (*Stepdaughters of History* 91). Southern white women’s responsibility for the suffering inflicted on those enslaved in the antebellum South ranged from passive compliancy to active abetment. For this reason, Southern white women have long grappled with how to deal with their historical roles in relation to the position of their black sisters in the history of their communities and families.

The propensity of many Southern white men to use their position of power to abuse the black women in their orbits often enflamed conflict between the black enslaved women and the white women of the slave-owning families. Slave narratives abound with tales of plantation women like Salina Dutton of *Jubilee* who, afflicted with jealousy and humiliation by the appearance of enslaved women impregnated by “their white menfolk,” targeted their wrath against the victims, rather than the perpetrators. A number of reasons were likely responsible for planter women’s mis-channeling of animosity toward female slaves. Anti-abolitionists often justified the system of slavery through the notion that benevolent slaveholders were simply doing their part in civilizing an otherwise animalistic and libidinous race. Following this logic, plantation women could pretend that wayward male family members had been tricked into immoral acts by sex-hungry, black, female vixen eager to seduce them. Within their communities, slave women were not subject to the same suppressive sexual codes of guilt and shame that plantation women were. Therefore, a slave woman, who was not entitled to legal marriage, was free to engage in sexual relationships (voluntarily and involuntarily) with different men throughout her life. For a plantation woman, however, extramarital sex was a grave sin and unthinkable.

A planter woman's virtue was intimately bound to the reputation of the family name. A proper Southern belle was to remain a virgin until marriage and then have one sexual partner her entire life – her husband. Thus, a young woman who violated the prescribed moral principles risked being disowned from her family, like Dan Montjoy's mother in *The Battle-Ground*. Woe to any victim of rape or sexual abuse, for the onus to remain pure and virtuous rested on the young woman alone and no respectable man could risk his family's reputation by having such damaged property as a wife. Many believed pregnancy to be a sign of proof that a sexual encounter was consensual. Even when married, a white woman was expected to tolerate but not take pleasure in what she had been indoctrinated to view as a dirty and shameful act. Any expression of lust and sexual desire on her part was simply base. Meanwhile, male kin were virtually granted a free pass to gallivant at will. A man's inability to maintain virginal purity before marriage and fidelity after were not as effectively and socially condemned and penalized. Though frowned upon, a man's extramarital liaisons were often countered with nothing more severe than a tight lip, disapproving gaze, or haughty shrug.

White women's own subservient footing may have caused them to channel the aggression they felt towards their abusive spouses towards enslaved women instead. With no legal status independent of their husbands, white women were in no position to openly oppose or meaningfully criticize the white men in their lives. Black women, lower in the social hierarchy, proved easy targets for angry, suppressed, and humiliated white women.

Those white women who came to accept, without opposition, their husbands' illicit treatment of female slaves, were perhaps fearful of pregnancy or grateful to be left alone. Female slaves could satisfy men's "carnal needs" and free their wives from the perceived burden of sexual relations and the ensuing risk of pregnancy and possibly death. There would be little reason to object to husbands' philandering unless the women actually cared for their husbands, feared social defamation or understood the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. While white women could at least indicate their disapproval of sexual liberties taken by planters, black women could not even venture that.

Narratives of the antebellum and Civil War era portray not only coercive relationships between white men and black women but apparently loving ones as well. The infamous tale of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings has drawn attention to mixed-race couples who lived, unofficially, as such in the antebellum South. While all three of the novels by black authors portray interracial relationships, *Iola Leroy* and *The Wind Done Gone*, along

with *High Hearts*, portray them as seemingly voluntary and loving. In *Jubilee* the relationship between Marster John and Hetta is abusive. With the story of Eugenia Gilbert and Edwin George, *The Wave* also touches upon inter-racial attraction.

In the South, relationships between a white man and black woman have always been more socially acceptable than those between a black man and white woman. Historically, women had been considered the property of not men in general but *white* men specifically. Woe to the black man who tried to lay claim to territory the white man considered his and his alone. Not one of the books examined, however, delves into this extremely stigmatized but pertinent topic used by the pro-slavery propaganda machinery to provoke fears about black people gaining the same rights and privileges as white people. A 1839 cartoon by Edward Williams Clay's entitled, "An Amalgamation Waltz," for example, depicts black men dressed in gentlemen's attire, intimately embracing and waltzing with white women in ball gowns. The term "amalgamation" means "blending, mixing, merging," and draws upon miscegenation concerns. According to Koritha Mitchell, the term "miscegenation" was coined in the US in 1863 and used to describe interracial coupling, and lent it connotations of contamination to support Southern arguments that the abolitionists' political agenda was designed to encourage interracial sex (FN 1, 215). With the outbreak of the Civil War, the power dynamics of "my family, black and white" would shift as the white women left at home would come to rely more and more on the willingness of those enslaved to labor to keep plantations and farms running in the absence of white men.

At the outset of the war, through propaganda, women were encouraged to pressure men to volunteer for service. How many men actually needed coaxing will never be known. Family life was not always easy. In the historical fiction of the Civil War analyzed herein, war represents an exceptional event that offers characters a unique opportunity to reflect upon their relationships. While traditional tropes in literature depict the hurt and pain suffered by those separated by conflict, many of the novels examined, regardless of their publication era, expose the darker, festering feelings of ambivalence that are laid bare by the war. Usually, it is a male character in the novel who experiences contradictory sentiments of love and loathing towards a mother, wife, or girlfriend.

Just as Stede Bonnet, the "Gentleman Pirate" in 1717 is said to have left his cushy life on a Barbados plantation with a wife and three children due to "some discomforts he found in a married State" to build himself a ship and set sail as a self-made pirate, many men in the South marched off to battle to escape the monotony of day-to-day existence in exchange

for what they perceived as something bigger than the sum of their individual lives. And just as “ill-qualified” as Stede Bonnet was for such an adventure, so too were the majority of young Confederate men. But in a patriarchal world, a born warrior resides in every man. Regardless of shooting-, riding-, or survival skill level, every physically-able man, by virtue of his manhood, qualifies for battle duty (C. Johnson 57).

Although reared and raised in the same world as their men, antebellum Southern women were to be submissive and dependent. The Civil War offered many women of the South the first opportunity to be dutifully and appropriately independent and assertive. If marriage for most women impeded self-actualization, war fostered it. At the outbreak of the Civil War, when men left the plantations, circumstances demanded that women become self-reliant. As the war wore on, it became obvious to most that women were indeed capable of getting by without the guiding hands of men. It is therefore notable that it is not until the era of third-wave feminism that in the books examined, the heroines make a conscious decision to leave their men and rather than pursuing a life with an alternative man, opt to live on their own.

One interesting aspect of examining the portrayal of women in historical fiction novels of the Civil War is analyzing whether or not authors grant their female characters agency. Some women not up to liberating themselves from home life and the domestic sphere through work and patriotic activism escaped from their prescribed reality through mental illness. Only Scott’s *The Wave* and Brown’s *High Hearts*, portray women who become so overwhelmed with their preordained female roles, that they exhibit signs of mental illness echoing those suffered by Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s protagonist in the short story “The Yellow Wallpaper.” In many of the books examined, however, women like Molly Lightfoot, who have suffered vague illnesses before the war, are able to overcome their ailments through the sense of purpose their wartime duties give them. The repetitive, mundane work that filled the idle hours of planter women during the antebellum years becomes labor vital for survival during a time of war.

The Civil War redefined the value markers applied to women. Beauty, grace, and obedience were no longer assets. Only women who were brave, useful, hard-working, and resourceful could manage the home-front. Faust writes how the Civil War changed the social norms related to women’s working outside the home, and how admiration of Florence Nightingale’s work in the British Crimean War (1853 – 56) legitimized nursing as acceptable work for women of higher social classes. According to Faust, “[m]anpower

shortages, escalating casualty rates, and patriotic ambitions ... overrode custom and pushed southern women toward work with the sick and wounded" (*Mothers of Invention* 92).

Women also found their public voice and became socially active during the war. In 1861, Texan women sent men who failed to volunteer for the war effort hoopskirts. Later, in New Orleans, the ire of Southern women targeted Union troops. In actions of civil disobedience like the "Battle of the Handkerchiefs," women gathered to show support for Confederate soldiers during a prisoner exchange. Women in New Orleans also expressed their objection to Union occupation by spitting on soldiers. The Union commanding officer, Major General Benjamin Franklin Butler,⁴³ found the behavior of New Orleanian women so intolerable that imposed a "Woman Order" declaring that any woman disrespecting a Union soldier would be "regarded and held liable" as if she were a prostitute exercising her trade.

As portrayed in *The Wave*, women also protested the draft laws in New York and rioted for bread in the South. Countless women wrote to their political representatives pleading the case for the return of loved ones or an end to the conflict. Like Geneva in *High Hearts*, some women even took matters into their own hands, shed their petticoats, chopped off their hair, and galloped into battle themselves. Meanwhile, black women too, played an active role during the war. Harriet Tubman, who had escaped from slavery and fled North, led thirteen missions into the South to help other slaves escape during the war and even led a guerilla raid to accomplish one of her feats. For most women, however, disillusionment ensued as the war wore on and women targeted their protests at the war itself.

White women of the lower and middle classes who were particularly hard hit by the lack of manpower at home to labor on and protect their farms, along with plantation women who feared uprisings and revenge from those they had enslaved, penned letters to representatives to end the war or grant loved ones leave from duty. Others petitioned for work or financial and material support. Still others bypassed the official channels and directly appealed to loved ones to abandon their military posts, desert, and return home. While many women worked to sabotage the war efforts, many others contributed time and efforts to a Confederate victory.

Faust describes the increasingly formalized nature of women's initiatives during the war.

Many such gatherings soon evolved into formal organizations with constitutions, dues, and women officers. ... By midsummer many organizations had shifted from sewing to knitting, with socks a high priority for the coming winter months Women began as well to collect donations

to provide not just flags and uniforms but a wide variety of soldiers' necessities – from Bibles to lint for bandages to scissors to underwear. (*Mothers of Invention* 25)

Such initiatives are portrayed in the majority of the novels examined. Faust continues to explain that since women could not produce the needed supplies, that ladies' societies also turned their attentions to organizing money-raising events. Faust points out that *tableaux vivants*, which were still-life enactments of patriotic themes, gave women the first opportunity to perform in public and “to do so as respected citizens and not as engaging in an unrespectable act” (*Mothers of Invention* 26). Such efforts had a double effect—they raised money, which would have been most easily gotten by people donating directly, but they also gave women something “useful” to do. These initiatives also served as marketing efforts to promote the Cause, raise awareness, and foster national solidarity.

Many women, however, continued to confine themselves to the home during the conflict. For these women the waiting exacerbated an already growing frustration. In *The Battle-Ground*, the one book which largely confines the heroine to the home (or the neighbor's home) during the war, the main character, Betty, expresses her agitation with her lot in a chapter entitled “The Woman's Part.” She is alone and breathless like an entrapped animal. She dreads neither the sounds of battle nor the sight of blood but rather:

the folded hands and the terrible patience that are the woman's share of the war. The old fighting blood was in her veins; she was as much the child of her father as a son could have been; and yet while the great world over there was filled with noise, she was told to go into her room and pray. Pray! Why, a man might pray with his musket in his hand, that was worthwhile. (252)

In her 1913 essay “Feminism,” Glasgow criticizes the propagated myth that was the “exclusive prerogative of man” to grow restless and if a woman ventured into this territory, it merely proved that she was not “the womanly woman.” Pearson and Pope describe the challenges that heroines face on their journey to self-actualization and how these differ from those of heroes because heroines on top of all else, “must slay two dragon myths as well – the ideal of virginity and the dream of romantic love” (133).

In all the novels examined, the heroines overcome their romantic notions of finding a prince and living happily ever after. Even Betty, by the end of *The Battle-Ground*, no longer confined to the domestic sphere and surveying the wide-open fields before her, expresses her readiness to let go of the fantasy of love with Dan Montjoy and simply be “very good neighbors” (386). She even tells him not to hesitate to seek her advice on crops because in

his absence, she's become "an excellent farmer" (386). When Dan insists on walking her back to her house, she waves him off, telling him she does not want to begin such customs, and gathers her skirts as she passes "the battle-scarred elms" and steps over the "ruined gate into the road." Desperate not to lose her once and for all, Dan finally admits that he wants to be with her no matter what. Glasgow ends the novel with Betty's determined pronouncement about their common future as equals, in which she tells him, "this time, my dear, we will begin together" (387).

According to A. F. Scott in *The Southern Lady*, "[After the war] functionally the patriarchy was dead" (102). Many viewed the depictions of Confederate President Jefferson Davis's capture at the end of the war in which he was disguised as a woman and wearing hoops and skirts as a symbolic emasculation of the South. Political cartoons throughout the North propagated the narrative of a land that wasn't man enough to win the war. A popular image showing Davis struggling to flee over a fence in his skirts most likely symbolized Davis's choosing the wrong side of the fence politically, historically, and gender-wise.

The Civil War razed the gender myths that upheld the social system of the elite antebellum South—men could not protect the honor and virtue of their land and their women. At the same time, women had to shed the pretense that beauty and idleness rather than tenacity and intelligence would help them survive. As the Civil War raged and all able-bodied men left for battle, women were left to fend for themselves. Many of the themes of the books analyzed herein explore how gender roles (both for men and women) proved useful or detrimental in a wartime conflict and how strong female bonds were forged and became necessary for survival. As gender roles changed, so did attitudes related to sexuality.

Sexuality

Women's virtue is man's greatest invention.

—Cornelia Otis Skinner

In *The Other Civil War*, Catherine Clinton traces the changing views towards women and sexuality in the antebellum South. She purports that whereas colonial America believed the sexual drive of men and women to be equal, the early 1800s saw "enormous transformations in sexual awareness, sexual attitudes, sexual behavior, and sexual discourse" (147). She describes how these changes altered the standards of femininity by placing an emphasis on sexual purity and erecting "new models of republican motherhood

and ‘true womanhood’” (147). Clinton writes that weakness became a virtue and spirituality replaced sexuality as a means to a woman’s fulfillment. This trend continued, according to Clinton, so that “[b]y the 1840s and early 1850s passionlessness became the very essence of femininity” (148). White women in the antebellum South were chaste, motherly, infallible Virgin Marys; black women were sexual, promiscuous Mary Magdalenas. Both representations were problematic.

Age of consent in early America and throughout the 1800s was generally 10 years and had been adopted from English common law rules. Age-of-consent reform movements in the late 1800s succeeded in raising the age in most states in a wave of anti-rape movements led by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) which was founded in 1874.⁴⁴ Age of consent changes, however, did little to protect girls from male predators. In *The Many Souths*, Robert J. Haws describes how James Henry Hammond, governor of South Carolina in 1843, confessed to doing “every thing [sic] short direct sexual intercourse” with all four of his nieces, but denied that he had committed any crimes (47). While Hammond had to step back from politics for a while, not one of his four nieces ever married. Unmarried women and girls of all ages were expected to remain chaste and successfully police the sexual boundaries of both genders by warding off men. When transgressions inevitably occurred, women were blamed and were expected to pay the price socially, physically, and economically.⁴⁵ A woman’s virtue was a matter of family honor and reputation. The threat of rape combined with women’s sexual vulnerability to serve as an effective and compelling restraint to socially control women and keep them voluntarily confined to the domestic sphere.⁴⁶ As portrayed in the attack of Scarlett O’Hara on her way to her mill in *GWTW*, a woman who ventured beyond the safe bounds of her home had no one but herself to blame, if the unthinkable occurred. Unfortunately, however, although enslaved and black women were particularly vulnerable to physical threats, not even home confinement could keep them safe.

As mentioned, in the antebellum South, there existed a prevailing attitude amongst white people that black people were licentious and lascivious. Frances Smith Foster argues that by surviving sexual assaults, rather than dying like the sentimental heroines, black women reinforced the notion that they did not belong in the category of true womanhood filled with fragile spirits susceptible to ruin through degradation. “If the ‘negress’ were not a hot-blooded, exotic whore, she was a cringing terrified victim” (131). Black women were deemed unrapeable and black men were sex-ravenous animals. Black hyper-sexuality and

promiscuity supposedly endangered demure white people who selflessly volunteered to save the savage souls of an afflicted race through the civilized institution of enslavement. Kathryn Lee Seidel describes the double standard applied to black and white men when it came to interracial sexual violence. “[R]ape,” she writes, “is the term used to describe what a Negro man does to a white woman and seduction is used to describe what a white man does to a white woman” (156). The first Earl of Chatham to the House of Lords stated in 1770 that, “[u]nlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it.” W. J. Cash seems to have had this assessment in mind when he argued that the institution of slavery cankered white men because unlimited and uncontrolled power invariably led to a form of sadism in which cruelty is exercised for cruelty’s sake. Racial double standards regarding rape continued unabated in the postwar South.

In 1900 Ida B. Wells talked about the racial differences for accused rapists in a speech entitled “Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases.” She describes how the alleged rape of a white woman by a black man was often dealt with by a mob lynching—gruesome scenes of self-described vigilante justice in which mobs were known to “cut[] off ears, toes, and fingers, strip[] off flesh, and distribute[] portions of the body as souvenirs among the crowd.” However, when a black woman was the rape victim, “a crime deserving capital punishment ... turned [into] ... a matter of small moment when the negro woman [was] the accusing part.” Black women found themselves in a no-win situation before, during, and after the war in regards to social views on their sexuality and vulnerability to sexual assault.

Rampant male philandering and primitive medical knowledge, according to A. F. Scott in *The Southern Lady*, made women more susceptible to venereal diseases during the war. Though Scott contends that plantation mistresses, in particular, were plagued by such concerns, it is probable that all women residing on the plantation shared similar risk factors. Not only did the planter family men take advantage of female slaves, it is also conceivable that all the other men on the plantation, white and black, enslaved and free, did so as well. Enslaved women, constantly subjected to sexual assault, like Hetta in *Jubilee*, often bore mixed-race children who inherited their slave status from their mothers.

According to the *1860 US Population Census*, of the 4.2 million “coloreds” living in the Southern slaveholding states, 12.3% were officially classified as “mulatto” (x). To what extent hierarchies and preferential treatment evolved from colorism is difficult to ascertain. On the one hand, records indicate that lighter skinned slaves were preferred as house slaves. While the work in households might have been less labor-intensive than field labor, house

slaves were forever subject to the watchful eyes, mercurial tempers, roving hands, and sexual proclivities of planter family members.

Letters from slave traders indicate that lighter-skinned slaves were favored in slave markets where they could be auctioned as concubines to wealthy bidders. Historian Brenda Stevenson writes about the lasting effects of the concubinage experience on the emotional and psychological development of southern female slaves who often came to view their bodies as: “a location of pleasure, production, and procreation as well as a site of exploitation, alienation, loss, and shame” (102). According to Edward Baptist: “Starting in the early 1830s, the term fancy girl or maid began to appear in the interstate slave trade. It meant a young woman, usually light-skinned, sold at a high price explicitly linked to sexual availability and attractiveness.” (242). Isaac Franklin’s 1832 correspondence indicates, according to Baptist, that ordinary girls could fetch a slave trader anywhere from 350 USD to 400 USD (equivalent to about 10,280 USD–11,749 USD in 2020) and the “few of superior appearance” could bring in about 500 USD (equivalent to about 14,686 USD in 2020). Whereas black women were particularly vulnerable to sexual assault in the antebellum South, war made all women possible targets.

When the plantation men left for war, the newfound freedom women gained was constantly overshadowed by physical vulnerability. With Union and Confederate troops on the move throughout the South, the absence of men in the homes presented welcome and unwelcome opportunities for sexual encounters. Southern women resided on the battlefield of the war. In fact, General Orders No. 100, also known as Lieber’s Code, adopted by the Union in Spring 1863 to stipulate permissible and impermissible acts in regards to the treatment of populations of occupied areas, was according to Peggy Kuo, the first explicit prohibition against rape in war (306). Article 44 of the code stipulated that “A soldier, officer or private, in the act of committing ... violence [such as rape], and disobeying a superior ordering him to abstain from it, may be lawfully killed on the spot by such a superior.” In *Jubilee* a roving soldier presumably rapes the plantation daughter Lillian and attempts to rape the black heroine as well.

All women, whether coerced or compliant sexual participants, remained susceptible to pregnancy. Various forms of contraception did not alleviate pregnancy fears. Abstinence, as always, remained the safest, most reliable option to prevent pregnancies.

By the 1860s, American birth control advocates had published tracts describing a variety of contraceptive forms, including coitus interruptus,

vaginal syringes, rubber condoms, and vaginal sponges. ...Whether the problem was ignorance, access, or safety, southern women continued to regard abstinence as the only certain guarantee against conception. (Faust, *Mothers of Invention* 124)

War emboldened men to abuse their positions of power to dominate women socially and physically. According to Thomas Lowry in *The Story Soldiers Wouldn't Tell, Sex in the Civil War*, the rape (of white women) during the Civil War was severely punished, sometimes even with a death sentence.⁴⁷ However, punishment was contingent on the ability of the victim to prove that a rape had occurred. Then, as now, however, a rape victim's pursuit of justice often led to her own social demise. Despite being a victim, a raped woman was an irrevocably spoiled woman. "Earnest Resistance" laws, still in effect in Alabama today, required a woman to prove she had violently resisted her attacker.⁴⁸ Anything less definitive was viewed as willing submission.⁴⁹ Thomas Lowry reports that throughout the Civil War, men who raped women were considered fools because there were so many willing partners for the taking. Such (mis)perceptions, then and today, viewed rape as an act motivated purely by sexual desire rather than a compulsion to exert power, sex, violence or all three combined. The story in *The Wave* of the Federal soldier Parker who spends the vignette repeatedly contemplating how he would like to rape the haughtiness out of a New Orleans woman superbly demonstrates the dynamics at work: rape as a weapon against the enemy and as a kind of twisted payback for the wartime suffering endured by the rapist. Recent work from scholars such as E. Susan Barber and Charles Ritter has uncovered more data about rape cases during the conflict. They report that during the Civil War, "over four hundred white and black women and girls ranging in age from 5 to 82 brought charges of rape, attempted rape, and other crimes of sexual intimidation against Union soldiers and civilians contracted to perform services for the Union army" (3). Because their research is limited to *reported* cases and only covers perpetrators with ties to the Union army, the actual number of rape cases is no doubt far greater. Four of the novels examined, *Iola Leroy*, *The Wave*, *Jubilee*, and *GWTW* include women who have been raped or threatened with rape. Though, in theory, poor white women enjoyed equal protection from rape as their white privileged sisters, in practice, this was not the case, as described by Laura Edwards:

Unlike elite white women, poor white women had to prove themselves worthy before the court accepted their charges – not an easy job given the class bias of elite court officials. The handling of these cases, then, revealed entrenched gender and class hierarchies that actually made poor white

women far more vulnerable to sexual attack than elite white women were.
(*Gendered Strife* 9)

A last aspect of sexuality in the Civil War era concerns sex as a commodity. Desperate times call for desperate measures and there were no doubt women during the conflict who became pressed to sell the only merchandisable item they had left: themselves. Evelyn Scott's *The Wave* superbly depicts such tales. Thomas Lowry quotes a letter by a Southern woman to her husband writing about a fallen neighbor, "I am not astonished to hear of General Sherman saying he could buy the chastity of any Southern woman for a few pounds of coffee" (42). Laundresses worked at the army camps and letters report that many engaged in employment beyond washing clothes by making money "nature's way." The decision to sell their bodies was only one kind of sacrifice women were sometimes forced to make during the Civil War.

Sacrificial Women

"The joy of freedmen bursting from chains, the glory of a nation new-born, the assurance of a triumphant future for your country and the world, — all these become yours by the purchase-money of that precious blood." —Harriet Beecher Stowe, "The Chimney-Corner" (1868)

The Victorian age dominated Western society during Queen Victoria's long reign from 1836 – 1901. The well-demarcated lines of gender served as a sign of class and preferred social behavior. Men ruled publicly and privately in a patriarchal society in which the ultimate duty of a woman was to obey her man. This order of society was reinforced in the agriculturally-based South where production was anchored in private residences, thus excluding women from opportunities to venture beyond property boundaries. W. J. Cash described the limited social scope of planter families. "[T]he plantation tended to find its center in itself: to be an independent social unit, a self-contained and largely self-sufficient little world of its own" (31). Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argued that this environment reinforced the patriarchal power dynamic. "The persistence in the South of the household as the dominant unit of production and reproduction guaranteed the power of men in society, even as measured by nineteenth-century bourgeois standards" (*Within the Plantation* 38). Anne Firor Scott concurred with Fox-Genovese's assessment, writing how the structure "upheld the primacy of the Patriarch as the [symbolic] head of the household. As such obedience and subordination were prized" (*A Southern Lady* 16).

The father figure as the Almighty permeated society. Religion and religious texts propagated unquestioning obedience to the Father. The Lord's Prayer, recited in all

Christian belief systems, begins with “Our Father who art in Heaven.” Anne Firor Scott in *The Southern Lady* writes: “The weakness and dependence of women was thrown into bold relief by [a husband’s] virility and mastery of his environment. Husbands were frequently referred to in the words used for God: Lord and Master” (14). Firor quotes an 1862 diary entry of a young woman named Sarah Morgan admitting that she has never fallen in love because, “I have yet to meet the man I would be willing to acknowledge as my lord and master” (23). Traditionally, the Lord was a figure who led and protected his flock and alone wielded the authority to forgive wrong-doings. The will of the Father was the will of the universe. Outside of the church, in the community realm, Southerners revered the “Founding Fathers” as the knights of liberty and the wise men of the new nation. Women would not have a public role to play in the South until the war effort needed Dixie’s daughters to shoo their men out the door and off to battle. For those women who had most fervently adhered to the teachings of patriarchal power, the loss of men to war left them without direction or hope. In *The Wave*, Evelyn Scott paints the portrait of such a worshipping soul in Midge who, when her husband dies, fervently insists that she “*must* have a God” to replace him (612). Alongside the patriarchal father, was the myth of the sacrificial mother.

For both sides of the conflict, belief in and identification with the myth of the sacrificial mother was essential to garner support for the war effort. For Ellen Glasgow, “masculine insistence upon the beauty of self-sacrifice in women” was costly indeed. Women were subjected to “the tragic waste of useless renunciation” that supposedly led to their fulfillment rather than crucifixion. In this way, society had pre-conditioned women to accept the false notion that the willingness to sacrifice was a “womanly woman” trait (“Feminism”). In a chapter appropriately entitled, “The Giving Tree”, Pearson and Pope write about the false pretense attributed to mothers that they controlled the lives of their children and were somehow responsible for their actions when they did not even have control over their own lives (*The Female Hero* 45). The Confederacy advanced such myths by demanding that women encourage their loved ones to go to war. Like Abraham piously abiding to the will of God, the sacrificial woman gladly obeyed Jefferson Davis’s call and offered up her most treasured possessions to the Cause. Though many women in the novels examined sacrificed family members, none of the books explored the influence of war propaganda on their sacrificial willingness or support for the Cause. Only too late did many women come to recognize the full extent of their sacrifice. Others, meanwhile, stoically

grasped on to the notion that their sacrifice was not only necessary and noble, but that it somehow inflated their own social worth. Many of the novels examined reflect women's double-edged sacrificial role. Women whose husbands died in the war gained a new identity; they became "war widows." Although no equivalent label had been invented to characterize those who lost their children,⁵⁰ any woman who lost a family member in battle was considered honorable. Yet when the celebrations for sacrifice ceased, the loss remained.

War is a widow maker. In the US Civil War, disease killed twice as many troops as battlefield injuries. Dysentery, diarrhea, typhoid, and malaria all resulted from poor sanitation. Measles, small pox, and pneumonia were widespread. In *GWTW*, Scarlett O'Hara's first husband, Charles Hamilton, dies of disease while away at war. Those men who survived the war often returned home as amputees; and those were the lucky ones. One in four amputations resulted in death. Rita Mae Brown depicts the brutality of such surgeries in *High Hearts* and also portrays how both the heroine and her mother lose their husbands to war. According to Drew Gilpin Faust, the unprecedented number of widows during the war shifted social attitudes towards widowhood.

Confederate widows actively seeking romance and remarriage defied conventions about faithful grieving wives living only for their husbands' memories. Their actions suggested that they did indeed have identities apart from their departed mates and that their lives would not just continue, but perhaps begin again. Widow's courtship behavior, especially the rapidity with which many bereaved ladies took up the pursuit of new partners, seemed vaguely scandalous, challenging notions of a female fidelity that should stretch even beyond the grave and affirming existence – and persistence – of female desire. (*Mothers of Invention* 150)

War veterans who survived often returned home battling a lifetime enemy in the form of alcohol or drug addiction.⁵¹ While wives of survivors often faced postwar futures burdened by loved ones with mental and physical ailments, the wives of those who died were raised to the saintly heights of wartime widows. Despite their prominent positions, many women found managing farms, plantations, and businesses as postwar widows difficult without their spouses. Others, however, thrived in an era that sanctioned a life without a spouse and empowered women to act as heads of household in duty *and* in name.⁵² How Southern female historical fiction writers have portrayed the changing gender roles of the Civil War era South often depended on when the novels were written.

2. Novels and Feminist Waves

2.1. *Novels of First-Wave Feminism: Pre-1920*

From the mid-1800s, shifts in attitudes regarding gender were becoming evident in public events such as the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. When the Civil War disrupted all manner of conventions and courtesies, the process accelerated. In the South, the geographical immediacy of the conflict demanded that women shed their petticoats to labor to survive. In the North, women gained employment in factories to become wage earners. During the war, women entered fields such as nursing. After the war, with the nationwide establishment of public schools, women became teachers and perhaps in direct response to black men receiving the right to vote, women began organizing themselves with renewed vigor into national movements for universal suffrage. Black women like Frances E. W. Harper, who had been nationally advocating for the abolishment of slavery also used their platforms to argue on behalf of more rights for women. Lack of enslaved labor, widespread poverty, and a war-torn infrastructure, combined with the severe injury and death toll of able-bodied men, to usher in lasting changes in the gender roles of women.

The two novels published during first-wave feminism and examined herein are written by authors of completely different backgrounds. The first, *Iola Leroy* (1892) was written by the multiracial author, Frances E. W. Harper. In addition to her writing, Harper was an active anti-abolitionist who traveled throughout the US advocating for the black community and women. Her heroine is a biracial woman who is raised to believe she is white, only to discover upon the death of her planter father, that she is actually mixed race. Though born to a loving, multiracial couple, Iola makes a conscious decision to align herself with the black community during the Reconstruction era and engage in efforts of racial uplift. Her social roles in the novel span from being a privileged white planter's daughter, to an enslaved woman, to a liberated black woman.

Writings by Harper, who believed she was standing “on the threshold of the women’s era,” indicate that she envisioned women’s post-Civil War role to resemble the antebellum Southern woman’s position: to serve as a moral role model for the betterment of men and the community. In a piece published in 1893, and entitled “Woman’s Political Future,” Harper writes about a world that “has need of all the spiritual aid that woman can give for the social advancement and moral development of the human race.” Ellen Glasgow,

however, criticized the “irritating assumption of woman’s superiority to man” (“Feminism”). Not “content to copy the models and methods of men,” Glasgow envisioned a different post-war role for women.

Ellen Glasgow, the author of *The Battle-Ground* (1902), the second book of first-wave feminism examined herein was born into a privileged family in Richmond, Virginia. Had she been born in the era of the antebellum South, she would have been considered a Southern belle, though she rejected her own appearance as a debutante in favor of working on her first book. Glasgow’s heroine, Betty, is born into a privileged Southern family, and like the author, she has no desire to adapt to the norms of Southern society that prevent an independent young woman from doing what she wants in life. As a girl, Betty insists on having her petticoats and skirts adjusted so she can play outside with the local boys. Later, when the men are off at war, she laments that she must stay behind and is expected to do nothing more than pray. When the conflict destroys much of the neighboring plantation, it is Betty who manages to help those around her survive.

Though both novels depict the traditional gender roles of the antebellum South, both heroines challenge the bounds of these roles when war erupts. Though Iola and Betty differ in their racial and social backgrounds, both heroines are independent women whose resiliency and agency help them to face and overcome social and wartime challenges.

IOLA LEORY; OR, SHADOWS UPLIFTED

Iola Leroy; or, Shadows Uplifted (1892) was a ground-breaking work for its time as one of the first novels published after the Civil War which was written by and features a biracial woman struggling to establish herself in a postwar South as an openly biracial woman. While many of the other novels examined herein strive to reinterpret women’s role and social identity as separate and independent of men’s, Harper’s novel, though willing to entertain the notion that Southern views restricted women and their abilities, concedes to the widely held belief of the era that women’s ultimate calling was the betterment of men. Harper strives to broaden the pool of women responsible for fostering moral behavior in men from white privileged women to women of all races and socioeconomic statuses.

Abolitionist contemporaries of Harper as well as 20th century scholars viewed *Iola Leroy*’s portrayal of an interracial, loving relationship between a planter and his former slave as counterproductive to the black cause. The relationship of the heroine’s parents, Marie and Eugene, which has been legitimized through marriage, is based on mutual respect and

relative equality. Marie freely contradicts her husband's views of a married planter who secretly liberates rather than sells the biracial daughters he has fathered with his slave. While Eugene praises the man's actions, Marie condemns the man and the system that tolerates and fosters such sins while it victimizes all women regardless of race.

Your friend wronged himself by sinning against his own soul. He wronged his wife by arousing her hatred and jealousy through his unfaithfulness. He wronged those children by giving them the status of slaves and outcasts. He wronged their mother by imposing upon her the burdens and cares of maternity without the rights and privileges of a wife. He made her crown of motherhood a circlet of shame. (114)

Two of the novel's major themes emerge in a discussion between Eugene and his cousin Lorraine about enslaved women: (1) that slavery is detrimental not just to women but to all people: black *and* white and; (2) that black women and white women should be treated alike. In a discussion with his cousin Lorraine, Eugene contends that slavery not only makes Southern planter women idle, but also suppresses their intellectual abilities to engage in literature and art. For Eugene, Marie's role is to be good and pure by raising him to greater heights with her "simple, childlike faith in the Unseen." Her mere presence and the "supremacy of her virtue" cause "every base and unholy passion" in Eugene to die (108). Lorraine, however, is disturbed by his cousin's talk of a biracial woman in a manner usually reserved for Southern belles. For Lorraine, victims or not, beautiful mixed-race women are the curse of Southern homes and the "bane" of Southern civilization. Eugene argues, however, that "you cannot wrong or degrade a woman without wronging or degrading yourself" (109). Eugene's views, like many of the topics touched upon throughout the novel, seem to parrot Harper's own beliefs on slavery, women, and society. By embodying her ideas in the viewpoint of a white Southern gentleman, Harper lends them the patriarchal authority of a master whose word is law. At the same time, she reinforces the sentiment that it is a white man's place to pass judgement on the social narrative and it is a woman's place, through her unsoiled virtue, to better men.

When Eugene suddenly dies, the "deluge"⁵³ that he had feared on his deathbed, comes to pass. Without the protection of their white patriarch, Marie and her three children become ensnared in Lorraine's racist grab for Eugene's property as he has Marie and Eugene's marriage annulled on the grounds "of an imperceptible infusion of negro blood in [Marie's] veins" (139). By disenfranchising Marie and her son, Harry, as Eugene's rightful heirs, Lorraine claims the biracial family members as his property. Lorraine dispatches his

attorney Louis Bastine to Iola's northern boarding school to trick Iola into returning south so she too can be enslaved. According to Catherine Clinton, the fate of Iola's family was not uncommon in the South. "The wish of a testator to emancipate a slave was frequently dismissed as deathbed delirium, and the slave disposed of by the executor of the will" (*Plantation Mistress* 213).

Iola's female vulnerability is suddenly compounded by her newly prescribed racial vulnerability. While sleeping on the train, Bastine awakens Iola by kissing and encircling her (132–133). Iola, still perceiving herself as a proper white girl, is angry and demands that Bastine act like a gentleman and treat her like a lady. Bastine, however, armed with the knowledge of Iola's biracial background and aware of the racial double standards in the code of etiquette of white gentlemen, feels no regret for his assault. Instead, he is excited by Iola who he thinks of as a "real spitfire ... beautiful even in her wrath" (133). Once stripped of her white, protective robes, Iola is henceforth defenseless to the whims and desires of the powerful, white men who view non-white women as readily available sexual objects. The heroine's younger sister, Gracie, is spared the brutality of enslavement when she suddenly dies of an illness, much to the relief of her mother.

Due to their children's constant vulnerability to physical and emotional abuse, many enslaved mothers viewed death as a more humane fate for their children than the prolonged abuse of enslavement. In her 1859 poem, "The Slave Mother: A Tale of Ohio," Harper immortalized the tragic tale of the Margaret Garner who fled slavery and upon the threat of being returned to her former master under the Fugitive Slave Act, slit the throat of her two-year-old child and attempted to end her own and other three children's lives as well. Angela Davis in *Women, Race, & Class* also writes about the plight of Margaret Garner who is said to have declared, "I will go singing to the gallows rather than be returned to slavery" (18). Iola's fate shows the often-gruesome alternative to death for young enslaved women when she is "torn from [her] mother, sold as a slave, and subjected to cruel indignities" (139).

The fear and pain of family separation was very real and pervasive to those who lived in bondage. Characters like the house slave John Andrews, suffer a lifelong trauma after being separated from loved ones. For many former slaves, as evidenced in newspaper ads prevalent throughout the South in the Reconstruction era, the immediate goal after emancipation was to find and reunite with family members. In *Society and Culture in the Slave South* (1992) Deborah White contends that the mother-child bond was supreme over all other relationships because in a world where family members could die or be sold from

one day to the next and the father was often unknown, mothers became the one and only constant in an otherwise turbulent life (237–38).

In *Iola Leroy*, Marie distinctly recalls the trauma of being torn from her mother: “She was all alone in the world. She had no recollection of her father, but remembered being torn from her mother while clinging to her dress” (108). In fact, Iola and her “Uncle”⁵⁴ Robert Johnson, spend most of the novel searching for their mothers. Robert never forgets the mother who, “used to steal out at night to see [him], fold [him] in her arms, and then steal back again to her work (184). He loudly laments the torment inflicted by family separation: “Oh, the cruelty of slavery! How it wrenched and tore us apart!” (158). Robert’s “Aunt” Linda also suffered gravely when she was taken away from her daughter: “When my little girl...took hold ob my dress an’ begged me ter let her go wid me, an’ I couldn’t do it, it mos’ broke my heart” (183). It is not until the end of slavery and the end of the novel when Robert finds his mother and Iola is reunited with her mother Marie and her brother Harry that the “fearful forebodings of cruel separations” (194) are finally a thing of the past.

When Iola is initially separated from her mother and sold on the slave market, she is subjected to “cruel indignities.” As an attractive young woman with fair skin and blue eyes, Iola is a sought-after commodity for moneyed customers shopping for captive bedmates. Brenda Stevenson writes that the physical characteristics of mixed-race girls made them particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and prized as concubines. “Skin tone and hair texture were especially highlighted, but facial features resembling those of northern Europeans (thin lips and noses, for example) also were important. The general measure was that the lighter the skin and the straighter the hair, the more attractive the woman or girl” (106). The sex trade gave a whole new meaning to “my family black and white.” Iola Leroy is “sold seven times in six weeks because she so fiercely resists the sexual advances of the white men who buy her” (90). Though Iola is threatened with rape, Harper spares her heroine the shameful label of rape victim and omits details of her struggles. Iola heroically (and for Harper, conveniently) fends off her would-be rapists and the master “who had tried in vain to drag her down to his own low level of sin and shame” (88). She is delivered as a “trembling dove from the gory vulture’s nest and given a place of security” (88).

Liberated from slavery, Iola takes full charge of her life and works together with a white Northern doctor, Dr. Gresham, who asks her hand in marriage. Refusing to lead a life “passing” as if the “blood in [her] veins were an undetected crime of [her] soul” she declines his proposal (217). Like her mother, Iola has agency about whether she will have a partner

and whom that might be. Although Iola could easily marry the doctor and “pass” as a white woman, she prefers to live a life openly as a woman of mixed race. She also mistakenly believes, initially, that the doctor is unaware of her “race affiliations.” “I do like him;” she confesses, “but I can never marry him. ...I could not accept his hand and hide from him the secret of my birth” (137).

Iola Leroy does not condemn interracial relations per se. The relationship between Marie and Eugene demonstrates that a white man and black woman can choose to be together and lovingly raise a family. However, Iola’s later rejection of Dr. Gresham because of the social burdens their inter-racial relationship would cause not only her, but her white husband, and their racially-mixed children, illustrates the extreme challenges such families faced. Eugene and Marie are only able to avoid these problems as long as Eugene is able to protect his family and they are able and choose to “pass.” In the age of racial uplift during the Reconstruction era, however, passing became increasingly unacceptable in the black community as both communities, black and white, frowned upon interracial relationships.

Given the lack of impartial records and inability of enslaved women to record their own narratives or testify in courts, it is difficult to ascertain in retrospect how many interracial relationships in the antebellum South were coerced and how many were indeed consensual. Records were not kept and racial background was often concealed. In addition, the low literacy rate of women, and of black women in particular, meant that diaries and autobiographies told from the point-of-view of black women living in such circumstances were non-existent. Even if these were to exist, the level of candor women could risk given the dominating nature of the patriarchal environment would remain questionable. The hidden transcript of the subordinate group is destined to remain unknown.

Because of the lack of legal rights of women in general, and black women in particular, women did not possess free will to control their physical and social relationships. The widely known relationship between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings exemplifies the nebulous and controversial character of such situations. For more than a century, historians denied the racially-mixed Jefferson offspring the legitimacy that was their due. Even if a white man were to grant an enslaved woman the option to consent to a relationship, such arrangement could hardly be perceived as voluntary given the overshadowing possible punitive actions to a woman who refused and inability of the couple to legally validate their relationship through marriage. Scholars believe that the practice of a white man taking a black woman as his wife was not unusual in the early American South because of the

scarcity of white women (Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress* 219). However, as slavery became codified and the Southern standard concerning black people was enslaved status unless freed status could be proven, interracial relations became illegal. The relationships between enslaved people and those who held them captive spanned a wide range of possible degrees of exploitation: “from rape and sodomy to romance, from chance encounters to obsession, concubinage, and even ‘marriage.’ They could be hetero- or homosexual in nature. They included, but were not limited to pedophilia, incest, sado-masochism, and voyeurism” (Stevenson 100).

In *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted*, although Iola declines to marry a white doctor whom she loves due to her unwillingness to pass, she later decides to marry Dr. Frank Latimer, a man whom she believes to be racially more compatible. The novel ends with two unions: Iola marries Dr. Latimer and her brother Harry marries Miss Delaney. In the antebellum South, the approval of the plantation master was the only requirement for slaves to form a loose but not legally-based version of marriage that was forever subject to the whims of the master and the legal and economic status of his household. Emancipation, in addition to freeing black people from bondage also enabled them, for the first time in most of their lives, to freely choose their partners, legalize their unions, and establish stable nuclear families. Although, Iola and her sister-in-law can freely choose whom to marry, both women still seek their family’s permission to do so. Black people regained the freedom to choose their spouses, but black women still sought the approval of others. The novel ends with Iola reunited with her family and marrying a kind, educated black man. Iola intends to assume her role, not just as a daughter and wife, but as a teacher, mother, and active member of the black community.

In the postwar era, black and white women often differed in their interpretation of progress for their gender. Interestingly, while white women strove to free themselves from shouldering the moral responsibility for all of society, the black characters of *Iola Leroy* believe that hopes for a better future require that black women assume this role. Bell hooks, in her essay “Revolutionary Parenting” (1984) reflects on the racial difference of feminist goals. While white women “tired of the isolation of the home, tired of relating only to children and husband, tired of being emotionally and economically dependent” fought to be liberated from the home to go into the world to work, black women wanted, “more time to share with family, ... [and] to leave the world of alienated work” (134).

In *Iola Leroy*, Marie Leroy contends that marriage will be a critical means for her race to move towards a future of freedom. She hopes that “a legally unmarried race [is] taught the sacredness of the marriage relation” (232–233). Women, according to Marie, must be instilled with the virtue of purity. Lifting the author veil, Harper advocates, through the voice of another black female character that black women should adhere to a higher calling: “There is a field of Christian endeavor which lies between the school-house and the pulpit which needs the hand of a woman more in private than in public” (233). Reverend Eustace supports the view that what is needed is “a union of women with the warmest hearts and clearest brains to help in the moral education of the race” (233). The morally supportive role that Harper had envisioned for black women of the postwar South had already been expected of white planter women of the antebellum South as reflected in Ellen Glasgow’s *The Battle-Ground*.

THE BATTLE-GROUND

In *The Battle-Ground*, Ellen Glasgow portrays a world in which virtue itself is described as “she” (207) and, until the war, planter women existed to inspire planter men to better themselves. The novel shows how the war evolved the ideal of the Southern privileged women from celestial beings with seemingly mystical powers of patience and influence, who suffer their “womanly woman” lot with a smile, to self-reliant partners of equal status.

In an essay published more than a decade after *The Battle-Ground*, Glasgow harshly criticizes what she terms the “sanctified fallacy of ‘woman’s consecration to suffering.’” With voice raised and fist-pounding, Glasgow proclaims: “The female half of life has not been pre-ordained to suffer any more than the male half; this belief has done more to destroy the conscience of woman than any other single error” (“Feminism”). Glasgow’s passionate rejection of the “womanly woman” who must yield her “martyr crown” to become a free woman is already evident in *The Battle-Ground* in which Glasgow cloaks four of her female characters in Madonna robes: great-great-aunt Emeline, Jane Lightfoot, Virginia, and Betty. Those who abide by the myth created by Southern men about Southern planter women are destined to die along with the mythmaking kingdom by the end of the novel.

The first angelic creature, Dan’s great-aunt Emeline, serves as an absent yet “abiding presence” in the Lightfoot family. The message “Love is best” which she had etched with her diamond ring into a glass pane is faintly visible “against the ivy that she [had] planted on her wedding day” that blocks the view to the outside world for subsequent generations

of women confined to the domestic sphere (30, 31). Emeline is sequestered, not only in a house but also in a portrait and the image of an ideal Southern lady. Her beauty sets an almost impossible benchmark for all subsequent women and the only young lady who seems able to live up to the standard, the neighbor girl, Virginia, is also the one unable to survive the transition to a post-war South. Dan views Emeline's painting and envisions that once he is "safely" married, his future wife's portrait will hang on the opposite wall. Dan visualizes his wife-to-be, however, as more active and independent, like the Roman goddess of the hunt, nature, and the moon. "[H]e rather thought he should have the dogs in [the portrait] and let her be Diana, with a bow and quiver" (105). For readers, the inference is obvious—the new portrait to hang as the womanly ideal will be more a rebellious Betty than an obedient Virginia.

Jane Lightfoot, Dan's deceased mother, also lingers over those still living with her Madonna-like presence. Jane Lightfoot was disowned by her parents when she eloped with a "dirty scamp," Dan's father. Life, like her parents, punishes the girl for her rebellious actions. Not only is her husband poor, he is also violent and beats her. Yet Jane always manages to present herself to her son with "merry eyes" and an eternal smile: "when she was hurt, even when the blow was heavier than usual, and the blood gushed from her temple, she had fallen with a smile" (25). An ideal woman maintains appearances and upholds a veil of sanctity for the sake of others, hardships be damned.⁵⁵ Jane is no different. Her smile is so permanently "fixed upon her face" that even when she is lying in her coffin "with her baby under her clasped hands," her smile has the "brightness and the chill repose of marble" (25). Women's lot is to grin and bear. The smile she carries, however, is fixed and lacks warmth. The image of his "poor mother" with the "merry eyes and bitter mouth," haunts Dan who recalls her "merry eyes" no less than four times throughout the novel.

The third Madonna figure is Virginia Ambler, the young neighbor girl who lives next door to the Lightfoots and is the heroine's sister. As her name implies, Virginia embodies all the virtues the antebellum South supposedly possessed: beauty, refinement, and culture. During the conflict, Virginia follows her husband's regiment. When she hears that he has been wounded, though pregnant and in fragile health, she sets out to search for him. Once the devoted wife ventures beyond the safe walls of domesticity, she is confronted with bloodied and dying soldiers. Too much for the delicate creature to bear, Virginia returns home and, like the beloved Confederacy, Virginia succumbs to death.

For Dan, Betty too is a Madonna figure whose image intermingles with that of his beloved mother. “The two women he loved were forever blended in his thoughts, and he realized dimly that whatever the future made of him, he should be molded less by events than by the hands of these two women” (175). Interestingly, Glasgow has her *male* lead contemplate the omnipotence of women because women, not events, he contends, shape men. Glasgow here seems to imply that although men publicly wield the gavel in the Southern patriarchal world, it is women who grant the men life and mold them like clay. Words such as “religion,” “light,” “worship” and “sacred” are used to describe the two women and invoke a godly realm. “[Betty] had become for him at once a shield and a religion. He looked outward and saw her influence a light upon his pathway; he turned his gaze within and found her a part of the sacred forces of his life – of his wistful childhood, his boyish purity, and the memory of his mother” (170). The real Betty, however, is much different than Dan’s idealized image.

Betty Ambler, *The Battle-Ground*’s heroine, conforms in neither looks nor behavior to the Southern ideal of female beauty. As a young child, Betty seeks out a witch doctor, hoping she can change Betty’s hair from fiery red to blonde. Before she can join Dan to go fishing, Betty must first have the trim of her frock fixed. When Betty tells her mother that the neighbor boys have fought over whether Betty or Champe has more sense, her mother responds that: “[w]omen do not need as much sense as men” (40). Glasgow brilliantly illustrates the satire her mother has laced in that pronouncement by having Mrs. Ambler then take “a dainty stitch” and ask Betty whether she has as much sense as Dan, who has been “whipped” for defending her. Mrs. Ambler tells her daughter with a seeming wink and a nudge, “If the Lord had wanted you to be clever, He would have made you a man” (40). Although it is all too apparent who in fact the Lord has made clever, Glasgow’s and Mrs. Ambler’s acerbity seem to convey to the young heroine that Southern society expects her to grow into the kind of woman who, if she follows her mother’s example, will not be valued for her intelligence and independence but rather for her willingness to “never rest[] from her labours” and sacrifice herself for the comfort and care of others (21).

Initially, Betty’s love for Dan endangers her natural drive to autonomy. “For Betty— independent Betty—had become Dan’s slave. ... she had bent her stubborn little knees to him in hero-worship. She followed closer than a shadow on his footsteps; no tortures could wring his secrets from her lips” (53). Though Dan is ready to fight his cousin, on Betty’s behalf, he refrains from letting Betty believe that she is as good as a boy and informs her,

“Oh, yes, you can keep a secret—for a girl” (53).⁵⁶ Pearson and Pope write about the powerful and damaging message of inadequacy given to women as one of their first childhood lessons, “This lesson of male superiority and female inferiority causes self-doubt, or in many cases even self-hatred, and leads women to commit themselves to the self-denying myths of virginity, romantic love, and maternal self-sacrifice” (*The Female Hero* 24).

Because a woman can never equal a man, she can only become complete by attaching herself to one. Betty is convinced that from the time they are born, women are not alone but rather harbor a place for two in their hearts. “Yes, all [Betty’s] life she had had two griefs to weep for, and two joys to be glad over. She had been really a double self from her babyhood up—from her babyhood up!” (91). Signs of Betty’s cultural conditioning to be dependent are apparent when, after discussing Dan’s love of his slave Big Abel because “you ought to love the thing that belong to you,” Betty suggests to Dan, “But I might belong to you” (53). Dan, as a modern feminist hero, admits to Betty how destructive the patriarchy is not only for women, but also for men, by not only rejecting the notion that a white woman can be a man’s possession but also the idea that possessing others is a worthy objective. He tells her, “It’s a dreadful weight, having people belong to you” (53). To become the woman, she was meant to be, Betty must first overcome her upbringing.

When Betty exhibits an independence similar to Jane Lightfoot’s and expresses her romantic interest in Dan, Molly Lightfoot, Dan’s grandmother attempts to steer Betty towards the more dependable Champe. In a chapter entitled “Betty’s Unbelief”, Molly warns: “Don’t marry a man with too much spirit, my dear; if a man has any extra spirit, he usually expends it in breaking his wife’s” (153). Molly gazes at the autumn leaves, her own passing years evident, while Glasgow playfully hints at Molly’s aged (experienced) disillusionment which contrasts starkly with Betty’s youthful (naïve) exuberance. According to Molly, because of his father’s bad blood, Dan lacks the sought-after qualities of a “safe” husband like Champe who boasts family connections and personal disposition (200). Undeterred, Betty reminds Mrs. Lightfoot that when she had married the Major, she did not do so because she wanted a “safe marriage.” Molly finally accepts Betty’s decision to pursue Dan and thus be “miserable”.

Molly Lightfoot knows from experience that a wife will be pressured to comply to her husband’s and society’s expectations about proper wifely behavior. She is only too keenly aware, as well, that a woman who does not adhere to those norms will be made responsible

not only for her own demise, but that of the micro-world around her. The Major blames Molly and her penchant for romance novels for the ills that have befallen the Lightfoot family. “You know I have always warned you, Molly ... that your taste for trash would be the ruin of the family. It has ruined your daughter, and now it is ruining your grandson. Well, well, you can’t say that it is for lack of warning” (193).⁵⁷

Molly Lightfoot, however, indulges in her books nonetheless. Reminiscent of the ailments which befall the heroine in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Molly’s confinement to the home, compounded by the heartache caused by her overbearing husband, seem to contribute to a vague illness that plagues her throughout most of the novel. Only when a doctor declares her in “perfect repose of mind and body” does her feisty nature surface to reveal the true cause of her ailments. “If [that doctor] thinks there’s any ‘repose’ in being married to Mr. Lightfoot,” she declares, “I’d be very glad to have him try it for a week” (201). When Molly schemes to defy her husband and coax her grandson to return home, she tells Betty not to grow too impatient because, “When you have been married as long as I have been, you will know that a week the more or the less of a man’s society makes very little difference in the long run” (201). Eventually, the challenges of the war cure Molly of her purposeless life and empower her to exercise more independence and to become generally happier.

The Battle-Ground depicts how not only married women but unmarried women of the planter class were expected to assume certain social roles in the antebellum South. The Ambler family’s maiden aunts, Lydia and Pussy, live with the Amblers and are put to work on minor tasks such as tending the garden. When Lydia complains about the limited bounds of her life and her general uselessness, a bemused Mr. Ambler responds, somewhat ironically, that her mere existence “is a blessing to mankind” because “[a] lovely woman is never useless” (18). Interestingly, the only allusions to sexuality in the novel involve the maiden aunt Miss Lydia in a chapter entitled “A House with an Open Door.” Miss Lydia dreams her “virgin dreams in the purity of their box-trimmed walks” (41). Though “the blood of the ‘most finished dancer of her day’ still circulated beneath the old lady’s gown,” she believes dance to be “the devil’s own device.” Miss Lydia vicariously lives out her suppressed romantic desires through novels as she chastises female characters and swoons with the males.

Glasgow’s subtle references to sexuality also extend to women’s vulnerability to sexual assault. No women in *The Battle-Ground* are raped, but the lurking danger is underscored

when a strange man “penetrates” Betty’s bedroom. Betty, however, capably fends off the intruder and protects the Lightfoot and Ambler women throughout the conflict (433). Unlike later novelists, Glasgow spares her Civil War women, both white and black, the shame of sexual assault.

In fact, *The Battle-Ground* barely mentions the plight of enslaved women at all. The one enslaved woman referenced in any detail in *The Battle-Ground* is Saphiry, the wife of Big Abel who “put[s] ‘er foot right down” to insist that Big Abel not leave her to accompany Dan to college. Saphiry is a commanding personality who threatens to take a second husband if Big Abel leaves her because she is not so convinced that “two husbands aren’t better than one” (153). However, later in the novel, Saphiry’s influence over Big Abel wanes as the newly liberated slave opts to accompany Dan to war. Though Dan tells Big Abel he is a fool for leaving his wife behind, Big Abel replies that he’s had enough of his wife and Lord knows what a fool he is (178). War in *The Battle-Ground* offers an escape from domesticity not just for white men, but for their black counterparts as well. As men leave their everyday life and its demands to go to battle, women are left behind to deal with the consequences.

In a chapter entitled “The Altar of the War God,” Virginia resides with a “delicate” widow in Richmond who spends her days caring for convalescent soldiers. The woman predicts “with the observant eye of mothers” that the pregnant Virginia will have a baby boy. Of her own six sons, three have died and three are in the army. Bearing “a patient smile that chilled Virginia’s blood,” she confesses that she is always waiting to hear the summons heralding another grave (274). She is frail and vulnerable with “thin hands” and “faded eyes” but her steadfast willingness to surrender what she loves most is evident in “a peculiar fervor in her face” and “an inward light” in her eyes as she admits that she would not have kept even one of them back because she “gave them gladly” (274). Nevertheless, the weight of her sacrifice is apparent in her “lowered eyes.” She is smiling but “weakened” and “broken” and fated for years filled with “inevitable suffering” because “she gave herself as ardently as she gave her sons” (274). Drew Gilpin Faust writes that “[during the war] men went off to worship at the altar of ambition while women were relegated to the altars of sacrifice. As ambitions failed and sacrifices grew, it was an allocation of roles that became increasingly untenable” (*Mothers of Invention* 138).

Virginia, “in her own enthusiasm,” believes that women’s readiness to make the ultimate sacrifice will ensure victory for the South. “Was not an army invincible, she asked, into

which the women sent their dearest with a smile?” (274). Virginia is symbolic of what Ellen Glasgow would later refer to in her 1913 essay “Feminism” as the “womanly woman” of earlier novels, who has been culturally conditioned to deny “her own humanity so long and so earnestly that she has come at last almost to believe the truth of her denial.” In *The Battle-Ground* the continuous yet changing form of sacrifice demanded of planter women is reflected in the shredding of wedding gowns. The unblemished white sign-value symbol of a woman’s virginal purity in the transaction between a woman’s father and her future husband is cut to pieces to bandage the bloodied wounds caused and suffered by the same men. The altar of matrimony becomes an altar of sacrifice.

Because Julia Ambler has no son of her own to sacrifice, Glasgow provides her with Dan. When Governor Ambler dies, Dan offers to accompany the Governor’s coffin home. Mrs. Ambler, however, rather than keeping the thoughtful boy safe from battle, prefers to have him return to battle. “Your place is with the army ... I have no son to send, so you must go in his stead” (324). Dan obeys the widow’s wishes and survives the war to encounter another widow and sacrificial mother whose son has died at Gettysburg. Dan assures the mother of the youth’s bravery, “My God! It was worth living to die like that.” Weeping, she responds, “And it is worth living to have a son die like that” (376). Glasgow reinforces the romanticized notion that war sacrifices were noble and bravery esteem-worthy.

Glasgow’s view of the future role of women in the postbellum South is optimistic. War has sorted the wheat from the chaff and only those capable of independence survive. Those who were the ego-extensions of their husbands, like Mrs. Ambler, have no place in the postwar South. Julia Ambler “gently” withdraws “from a place in which she found herself a stranger” because “there [was] nothing to detain her now; she was too heart sick to adapt herself to many changes” (343). The female specters of the past that women are apt to discuss are no longer the obedient belles of yesteryear but rather women like “Miss Pokey Mickleborough” who preferred to loudly and indelicately announce her desire for a chicken leg than eat less than a robin and Jane Lightfoot who left home to build her own life. Mrs. Ambler tells Betty that her grandfather always said that “A girl is like a flower, if a rough wind blows near her, her bloom faded” (344). But now, according to Mrs. Ambler, “Things are different ... very different.” The novel ends with Betty and Dan standing together side-by-side surveying the ruins of a past world but determined, as equal partners, to rebuild a new nation.

2.2. *Novels of In-Between First- & Second-Wave Feminism: 1920–1963*

Kathryn Lee Seidel, in *The Southern Belle in the American Novel*, writes about the literary metamorphosis of the Southern belle from the 19th to the 20th Century in which a sweet innocent girl-child becomes a sexually enlightened (often calculating) heroine. She credits this “dismantl[ing] of the myth” to authors such as Evelyn Scott whose writings became classified as works of the Southern Renaissance (1920s and 1930s) (xiv). Though most scholars believe the literary era started after the First World War when a group of poets and literary scholars convened in Nashville, Tennessee at Vanderbilt University, some scholars disagree with this assessment.⁵⁸ Seidel argues that 1914 and the beginning of the First World War marks the most suitable beginning for the Southern Renaissance because the events affected the intrinsic character (psychological and philosophical orientations) as well as the extrinsic character (economy and social order) of the South when the war machine brought industrialization to a previously agrarian economy. It also signified a time when war-time labor shortages offered new employment opportunities for white and black women. According to Seidel, “Caste, class, and sex roles, the foundation of the southern squirearchy, were upset” (26).

Seidel also traces the rape motif in Southern literature, looking in particular at the development from the 1930s onward in books concerning the Civil War era.

The belle herself is presented as the repository of southern values; the rapist is typically an outsider who represents the antithesis of these values. The rape of these belles is a symbolic action that represents the violent disordering of a harmonious society. Authors use this metaphor because it is suitable for the situation of the South both during Reconstruction and during the moral and economic upheavals of the post-WWI period. (47)

The two books selected for this analysis and published after women secured the right to vote and in the era between first-wave feminism and second-wave feminism, were also published in the period between the two world wars. Evelyn Scott and Margaret Mitchell both present examples of “modern” heroines who readily roll up their sleeves to get things done and not only survive the conflict themselves but lead others to do the same. Those ladies who exemplify the traits of the traditional antebellum Southern belle, are featured in both novels, but neither author portrays these kinds of women as capable of weathering the demands of war. In a way, both Scott and Mitchell seem to suggest that the South’s greatest wartime sacrifice, from the patriarchal perspective, was the sacrifice of those ladies.

THE WAVE

In *The Wave*, Evelyn Scott grants her female characters agency as they cross socioeconomic boundaries to unite in their grievances against a world in which the patriarchal-appointed government “ain’t starving,” but “it’s the women expected to carry the load.” In the Civil War, as poverty became widespread, goods scarce, and inflation rampant, distinctions in social status declined. Adjusting to wartime hardships was particularly challenging for planter women reared to be servile. Scott personifies this struggle with the plight of the elderly spinsters, Miss Araminta and Maude Marry. The genteel, refined Miss Araminta, a lady of “plain tastes,” sets out in search of food, and inadvertently becomes the lead in the Richmond Bread Riots. Miss Araminta’s “obligation to condemn” the mob of ladies fades and she is galvanized by an “involuntary loyalty” towards her female “comrades.” President Davis tries to stop the uprising of women by appealing to their sense of duty and loyalty to the Cause. But Miss Araminta “had endured all she could... And men, men, men—They ought to have women in the city government ... Let him go on with his flowery speeches. What did he know about the miseries women had to undergo!” (202). Incensed, she scolds President Davis that he has: “no right to interfere with these women—with any of us” (202).

Although food shortages enkindled women to riot throughout the South, news of the uprisings was suppressed by the Confederacy, which feared escalating demands to surrender. Jefferson Davis distributed flour from government storehouses in Richmond to appease the protesting women there. Nevertheless, according to Catherine Clinton, such acts of “female rebellion” have “remained in the sidebars of Civil War history, despite their increasingly center-stage role in southern women’s history” (*Stepdaughters of History* 7).

Malcontent over injustices of the war and the patriarchal system in general became particularly apparent when women who legally and socially had to rely on men their entire lives, were suddenly left on their own. *The Wave*’s Midge is a young wife and newlywed who views the Confederacy as her personal adversary for greedily ripping away her husband Harry. When the wounded Harry eventually returns home, Midge feels triumphant. “She used to hate them. She hated them more every day. ... Still, *she* had conquered. The commanders of Harry’s regiment had received only his proud gestures of submission to duty. The rest belonged to her” (606). The “rest” however soon dies from his injuries and Midge, having never learned how to care for herself, is forced to keep house for Harry’s dreaded Uncle William. All the while, Midge longs for a deity “[l]ike Harry”

who is not only compassionate, beautiful, and perpetually kind but also fit to save her. “She *must* have a God! In this mean life which could not save her grief, in this life which made even grief mean, she *must* have a God!” (612). As more and more Confederate men die at war or return home wounded, it becomes painfully obvious that the omnipotent plantation masters were nothing more than mere mortals.

As Southern men leave town and occupying troops arrive, war makes all women vulnerable to rape. Rape becomes not just a sexual tool but also a weapon of power and aggression. Southern women become convenient targets for all of the wartime ills men have suffered. Interestingly, Scott chooses to portray this aspect of the war through a male soon-to-be rapist point-of-view and thus offers readers an insightful, albeit disturbing, glimpse into the twisted mindset of a soldier about to rape. The Federal soldier Parker is part of Major General Benjamin Franklin Butler’s occupying forces in New Orleans. The vignette follows the soldier as he roams through the city with “hating eyes” searching for a drink (despite Butler’s strict prohibition orders). Encountering a woman who “[t]hinks she’s the Queen of Sheba,” Parker determines that “it’s right that [the women here are] starvin’” (115). As the woman hurries away, Parker thinks, “For a ‘red cent’ he’d tear all those hoops an’ ruffles an’ things off of her. Leave her in her skin, like she was made, an’ no better’n anybody else” (115). As he secretly follows the “stuck-up bitch,” he bitterly muses about the lack appreciation he has been shown for all that he has suffered and done during the conflict (115). Like a dog and walnut tree, he thinks, “[f]emales like a man what can master ‘em” (119). Parker regrets that his fellow soldier Ike is not with him because Ike would “do more’n kiss her ...[because]... [y]ou got to git *some* fun outa’ the war” (119). Parker decides that before he leaves the city he’ll “find some gal who’s good-lookin’. And ... beat the rambunctiousness out of her an’ give her more’n them kind of fancy girls deserve” (123). By the end of the passage, he resolves to carry out his attack before evening. After he’d “got used’ to seeing folks shot to pieces and bayoneted to pieces so they looked less than anything that had ever been a human being, But if he had to feel like this, he had to. He wanted to do something to somebody—preferably a woman—that would make warfare seem ‘next to nothin’” (124).

As social structures break down, women seize the opportunity to exert themselves in ways previously inconceivable. Scott demonstrates how women became rebellious even in households with men too old to go to war. The banker Samuel Wharton is bemused by his wife’s demonstration of independence when she secretly donates money to the war effort

without first seeking his permission to do so. “It was a new idea for women, that they must think and act for themselves, and he conceded it only ‘within boundaries’” (106).

The grandmother, Miss Irene Quimby, is also prepared to rebel, to the best of her ability, to protect Alec, her sixteen-year-old grandson who she and her husband are raising. With tight-lipped opposition, Miss Quimby looks on as her husband generously gives their land, money, and investments to the Cause. However, Miss Quimby’s patience is tried when Mr. Quimby wants to sacrifice her most treasured object of all by encouraging him to leave for battle. Miss Irene “disparages” the men’s “romantic worship of the military” (476) and quietly weeps for the “poor stricken soldiers without shelter” and her disowned son, Allan, and “because such things as this could be” (478). When the “two obligations” she has as a woman, the “[o]ne toward her spouse” and the “one toward her children and her children’s children” collide, rebellion becomes “something holy” (480). When her husband, who she had always “docilely” served, tells the child to leave that very night, she first lashes out at him and then fights to restrain herself, because “[s]he mustn’t say too much.” A soul-wrenching battle ensues between the obedient wife she has been groomed her whole life to be and the woman who questions the moral soundness of sending a loved one to kill and be killed. In desperation, she tells Alec that though “grandfather knows best,” he should remember his youth and the hardships of war and how she and the other women care for him. The child, obviously fearing what is to come, and reminding readers of his youth with his falsetto voice responds, “Of course if you don’t want me to leave you, Grandmother.” But Miss Irene surrenders to duty and sacrifice: “No, no,” she insists, “I wouldn’t be selfish. It’s only for your own good.” Yet she feels malicious, driven always to the “good, good, good”—*good of everybody—good of everything*” (480).

Many of *The Wave*’s women, however, no longer strive to be good. Evelyn Scott’s “cold tempered” but “sensible” Cecile, for example, is as “clever as a man” but finds herself pregnant with her boyfriend’s child. She calmly decides to terminate her pregnancy with the help of “Tante Marie,” a black woman who lives in the swamp. Nevertheless, she feels a sense of regret that the alligators don’t devour her before her planned abortion. The times may have demanded that women fend for themselves, but Southern society continued to malign those who did so, especially if they did so successfully.

Rosie is a prostitute who dreams of a future with her frequent customer, Dandy Parish. She is so in love with Dandy that “[h]e could beat her, he could kiss her” and “[i]t was the same” (511). A part of Rosie, however, recognizes the futility of her dream to someday be a

respectable wife. Scott intensifies the tragedy of Rosie's plight by also sharing with readers Dandy's point-of-view who so "stubbornly" resists Rosie's affections that readers recognize that he doth protest too much and is actually in love with Rosie. As if to drive the wedge between them deeper, Dandy even brings Rosie "callers" and tells her he likes to see her have her pick. When his resolve to resist his feelings for her weakens, he reminds himself that she is nothing more than "one of these here daughters of joy" and not only that but also that her former home life and her family made her "trash" too (508). At the end of the passage, the detrimental effects of society's double gender standards become obvious as Rosie contemplates suicide: "Dandy had something to live for. He always would have. As for her ... even if he told her that he loved her, she'd only get the same old bosh! ... Rosie, staring at Dandy, [...] thought that, 'pretty soon,' she'd be doing 'something awful' to herself" (516).

In *The Wave*, readers are eyewitnesses to the catastrophe of the war on the micro-level of individuals trying their best to cope. The whores are ordinary people – no better and no worse than everyone else. In such desperate times everyone, even a former plantation daughter like Carrie Williams, can be driven to almost anything. The whore is not an "Other"—an exceptional, immoral creature outside of society—but an integral part of the novel and a society that's unraveling. Though other novels such as *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wind Done Gone* include characters who work as madams, *The Wave* is the only novel examined to give sex workers⁵⁹ not only narrative voices but also points of view.

Although Carrie is not "*born to act common*," she promenades along the river looking for lonely soldiers. She encounters a war-weary and seemingly friendly Union soldier and the two engage in a conversation as Carrie fingers a knife in her pocket. Scott juxtaposes points of view to heighten the tension. Readers fear for the soldier but at the same time sympathize with Carrie. The moral upheaval of "civilized" people forced to survive in "uncivilized" times is evident. Although Carrie is a cold-hearted prostitute contemplating a "patriotic" murder of a "damn" Yankee, she also embodies a virtuous Southern belle who admonishes herself for cursing in her thoughts. "When she was losing her self-possession, foul adjectives much worse would come into her mind, and it was all she could do to keep them back. Miss Tate said Carrie talked in her sleep 'like a fishwife'" (131). The astute soldier recognizes Carrie's fragile mental state and offers to give her money to buy food without an exchange of sexual services. Carrie, however, repeatedly stabs the soldier and feels

“crafty” for doing so. Did she kill him for being a Yankee as she unconvincingly claims or because his pity underscored how far she had fallen?

Amy is another character unable to cope with war. She is hysterical because she has witnessed her uncle’s tar and feathering and fears a similar fate for her war-adverse boyfriend. Yet the patriarchal society that tars and feathers people and sends young men off to kill and be killed is viewed as sane, while the girl with a life budding inside of her who cannot cope with the collective madness is not. Scott is the only author examined who broaches the topic of women who, so disturbed by war-time events or experiences, contemplate suicide.

The story of the poor Stoner woman and her children is told from the point-of-view of the children. Though Ellen Orphelia and her brother believe that things are better at the farmhouse without their perpetually grumbling father, they feel sorry for their baby sibling, “because Ma did not love it” (402). The two children are locked outside of their cabin trying to hide their sheep from marauding troops while their mother, trying to quell the fussy cries of her hungry baby, attempts to hang herself.

While women were left at home to deal with the household and children, men oftentimes saw war as an opportunity to leave behind home life which they often associated with women. Dickie Ross is ambivalent towards his widowed mother who constantly thanks God for giving her Dickie to take her husband’s place (2). But Dickie is revolted by her “widow’s weeds” and her clothing’s “vulgarity.” His mother’s large, humorous eyes fill him with constant doubt. At the same time, Dickie feels tenderness towards his single mother who he fears the town might not respect because of her shabby clothing, though he shrugs it off as “a woman’s life, with its silly gossip.” While Mrs. Ross does not reproach Dickie for getting drunk, readers recognize Dickie’s guilt and shame for disappointing her. His conflicted emotions conjure up in him images of a man who takes to beating his slave unmercifully when he grows angry with anyone. Dickie Ross is obviously confused about the strong man he is supposed to be versus the empathetic young man he obviously is. His mother is his only parental role model and he reveres her for her power as head of the household as much as he resents her for her weakness as a woman. He thinks her mittens make her look “shabby” but still manages to think of her as “tall, so stately.” Although he loves his mother “too much to remain at home” (4), he claims that if he seeks out the “loose women” he so despises, it is because “his mother drove him to it” (4). Scott further portrays the ambivalence men feel towards dotting women in nine-year-old Jamie who is also

conflicted about his relationship with his widowed mom. Although he is proud about her appearance and the fact that she once had been Miss Carter of Virginia, he is annoyed by “her compliance to his wishes. ...If she petted and cajoled, he would use his fist against her; but tantrums did not make him happy” (460). When he decides to set fire to a powder keg depot and things go horribly wrong, he ends up “rejecting memories of his mother’s comforting presence while he wished for it” (463).

Edwin George is an abolitionist who is also plagued by his feelings for a woman. Edwin professes to himself—a little too insistently—that he has the “perfect wife” and would sacrifice his old flame, Eugenia DeNegre Gilbert, for his wife, “Donie” any day. Yet, he speculates that it is precisely the love that he has for Donie which may be slowly killing him. Though he finds her worship of him as “her lord and master” irresistible, her fawning gets to be too much (328). While Scott’s “head-hopping” between the character viewpoints in the scene might weaken the reader’s ability to engage fully in one particular emotion or viewpoint, the technique equalizes both characters’ thoughts and experiences.

In the story of the Major and his former flame, Emily Meeks, the Major is also grateful that war offers an escape from an unsatisfying marriage. One day, the Major’s former flame, Emily Meeks, comes to the Major to plead for a chance to see her husband, Willard, before a dangerous assault. Still nursing a bruised ego about Emily’s preference for Willard over him, and embittered all the more by her obvious concern for her husband, the Major reflects on how if the South fails, he and his wife will be “thrown” into one another’s company once more “without any of those distractions of wealth that relieve boredom” (468). For the Major, “[i]t was a circumstance he was unable to face” (468). The Major “mediates sourly” that his marriage is just as good as the one Emily chose. Although his marriage lacks the “ardours” that Emily’s must still enjoy, he is comforted by the knowledge that he has an “exemplary wife” whom he holds in “great respect” (472).

In another tale, Scott switches the point-of-view mid-story, from the resentful and miserable wife, Melinda, to the annoyed husband, Thomas, to juxtapose a married couple’s differing versions of their marriage and the power relations. Melinda and Thomas are returning to the South so Thomas can join the war effort while Melinda cares for their two young daughters. While Melinda sees herself as the dutiful wife who is condemned to suffer under a commandeering husband, Thomas sees himself as a man “circumscribed” by his wife’s interests. For Thomas, the war offers the opportunity to liberate himself from his spouse and he “looked forward to the times and places into which she could not penetrate” (89).

Scott's choice of words such as "circumscribed," "deplete," "manhood," "liberating," and "penetrate" reflect the sinister power of marriage to emasculate men. Scott's usage of alternating male and female viewpoints highlights the novel's overall theme: although men and women have different and often conflicting perspectives of the same narrative, both are equally legitimate.

War might change women, but women could not change the war. One power that women did have, however, was the power of influence over individual men. A recurring theme throughout *The Wave* is the role women play in pressuring either reluctant men to go to war or adventure-hungry boys to stay home. A feminist reading of *The Wave* shows how not only female programming exists in a patriarchal society but male programming as well. In a patriarchal world, men are to be ambitious, intelligent, strong, fearless, and aggressive. They should most certainly be born soldiers waiting to sacrifice themselves.

Alice Fahs writes that the "republican motherhood shaped images" with "propagandistic aims" (Fahs 1466). According to Fahs, "[i]n feminized war literature women's emotions, especially their tears, were often portrayed as giving appropriate value to men's action" (1466). But Scott reveals the gilded nature of this sacrificial patriotism. The two tales in which men are persuaded to go to war by their girlfriends both end tragically. In the first, Albert is a young soldier who only joins the war because of his girlfriend Charlotte. However, while Albert is away, Charlotte writes that she might marry another because Albert might never return. Albert is crushed by her "petty motives" which he views as "downright maliciousness." In the second, Lea only agrees to go to war because of his girlfriend Amy's urging. He has no desire to "honorably" die in battle and he struggles with the patriarchal expectations of "real men:"

If he went back home, if he deserted, and escaped, there would always be the same old question of what was wrong and right. Quit feeling, quit feeling, he kept saying to himself. And then, when he began to tremble in isolation, Run, you fool....

...A rotten, yellow-bellied deserter he'd be when he got through. And he'd be damned if he would ever be ashamed of it. [...] Murder was nothing to him. (Why should it be, after the army!) (449)

Lea finally deserts to return to Amy, who is pregnant with his child, and becoming increasingly unhinged. Lea hopes to help her, but the girl lives with her aunt, Miss Lily, who would "rather see Amy dead than married to a deserter" (454). The brutality of war Amy has witnessed has plunged her into mental illness and although Lea knows he could

never love the “new Amy,” he resolves to act honorably and marry her. Yet Miss Lily betrays Lea’s whereabouts and Lea is shot for desertion in her parlor. As he lies dying, he recognizes: “the Brussels carpet as *good*, since he could lie there forgetting he and Amy ever argued, forgetting he ever went to war, forgetting the Confederacy.” There is no tomorrow in the Confederacy for a man who does not abide by the patriarchal expectations of manhood.

While men felt pressured to go to war to prove their manliness, the war machinery recognized the importance of women’s attitudes in the war equation. When the family men left for battle, women became physically, emotionally, and financially vulnerable. Government propaganda had to convince women that their natural instinct to protect loved ones and themselves was secondary to a greater cause demanding a sacrifice that was socially revered as noble. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “The Chimney-Corner” (1865) addresses the widows, the mothers, and the “bereaved women,” made “blessed” in their anguish by the “virtues” of their sacrifices and lauds them for earning “by the purchase-money of that precious blood,” “[t]he joy of freedmen bursting from chains, the glory of a nation new-born, [and] the assurance of a triumphant future for [their] country and the world” (282). Stowe paints the wartime sacrifice of loved ones as if it were a capitalistic commodity exchange. Images produced after the war of the domestic bliss of women on the home front such as those portrayed in Lilly Martin Spencer’s 1866 signature painting, *War Spirit at Home*, were also common. Spencer’s painting features a seated mother holding a baby and reading about the 4 July 1863 Vicksburg victory, while her children playfully march around her. Evelyn Scott’s bitter portrayals of personal loss do not pander to sentiments that glorify the wartime sacrifices made by women. Instead, she shows the real horrors of conflict in which mothers desperately try to shield their children from gruesome battles scenes on their doorsteps.

For a Jewish mother, burdened by the responsibility of satisfying the needs of her children, and particularly her beloved son, the war exacts extra hardship and exacerbates her feelings of ambivalence. When Muetterchen (Rachel) of the Rosenbaum family cannot appease her son Jacob’s hunger, she feels “resentment which we feel toward those whom we love, but whom we cannot succor” (217). Although Rachel takes her wifely duties seriously and is “an obedient wife...she could scarcely endure the sight of [her husband, Solomon]” (217).

The image of the sacrificial mother in *The Wave* is one of irony. The beginning and end of the book is flanked with particularly tragic portrayals of this figure. In the beginning of the

novel, we meet Mrs. Witherspoon, who pontificates to other women about the importance of their willingness to sacrifice for “the Cause.” Through faith and “by the hand of God” Mrs. Witherspoon is able to offer up her beloved sons. With unashamed hubris, she boasts between stitches to her fellow Ladies’ Aid Society compatriots, that if she had ten sons, why she “would gladly give up every one of them” (39). Her fervent patriotic speech, however is interrupted by news of her beloved son’s death. Mrs. Witherspoon lashes out at the messenger, her son’s sweetheart, and then swiftly scorns another mother for sacrificing only one son while three others too young for battle remained at home (39). The gilded hypocrisy of the so-called noble sacrifice becomes visceral in this harrowing scene.

In *The Wave*’s final chapter illustrates the manipulative power of society to procure wartime offerings. Mrs. Deering has lost two sons at Gettysburg, but is commemorated along with other mother of fallen soldiers with a parade in Washington, DC. Mrs. Deering stands from “one of the best vantage points of Pennsylvania Avenue” and spies a mother trying to control an unruly child. Her initial thought that a mother’s lot is never having a moment for herself, is quickly dispersed by the day’s events which turn her empathy to pity for the “unlovely mother who was not yet mature enough to know the elan that came so devastatingly with perfect sacrifice” (623). Mrs. Deering will remember “till her dying day” this “supreme moment” and how “[h]ad she fought the war herself, she would not have felt more patriotic” (624). *The Wave* ends with a nation that has hoisted the pathetic woman high onto a grand stand pedestal to resume what Ellen Glasgow referred to in her essay as “her immemorial position as the spectator of man” (“Feminism” (1913)).

The agency and roles Evelyn Scott grants her female characters during the Civil War are ephemeral. The passage featuring Miss Araminta, the spinster who led Scott’s version of the Richmond Bread Riots, ends with Miss Araminta “dread[ing] the vanishing of [the] mood. Something passionately necessary of her self-respect still elud[ing] her” (203). The vignette of the widow Midge concludes with Midge’s longing for a god to replace her husband. The grandmother Irene Quimby is “bewildered” as her husband “gently forces” their grandson into the night despite her protests. She is overcome with the need “to hoard such few odds and ends of existence as were left her” (483). Cecile wishes to be devoured by swamp alligators before she can get her abortion and the prostitute Rosie and mother of three, Mrs. Stoner, both want to kill themselves. Scott’s female characters rise from the rubble to face a postwar nation determined to keep them banished to the postscripts of

history and confined to the margins of society. Margaret Mitchell, however, foresaw a different kind of womanhood for those who emerged from the ashes of battle.

GONE WITH THE WIND

When Scarlett O'Hara's second husband makes the earth-shattering discovery that her "sweet pretty little head [is] a good head for figures," he is "thunderstruck" and finds it downright "disquieting." Worse than the troubling revelation that Scarlett is "a woman ... so unfortunate as to have such unladylike comprehension," is her refusal to "pretend not to." Had Frank Kennedy been privy to the rest of the novel, he would have not been so surprised. In a 1936 interview with the *Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine*, Margaret Mitchell talks about how war has "a way of changing women." *Gone with the Wind* is as much a book about women as it is about the Civil War. The novel begins in the antebellum South, a place, according to Scarlett's mother Ellen O'Hara, that is a "man's world" which is not necessarily happy or easy for women because they are expected to manage the property the men own, while the men take credit for the management and the women praise the men for their cleverness. Mitchell shows how when the tornado-like forces of the Civil War wreaked the "old" South and everything it was and pretended to be, it galvanized women like Scarlett who refused to "sit down and patiently wait for miracles" to drop their hoops, roll up their sleeves, and determine their own tomorrows.

Though christened with the birth name Kate, Mitchell's heroine goes by a nickname that invokes the shade of the incriminating letter branded onto Hawthorne's notorious fallen heroine: Scarlett. From birth onwards, Scarlett is anything but the typical Southern belle. Scarlett's father treats her in a "man-to-man" manner like the son he never had (49). Much to her mammy's dismay, young Scarlett's preferred playmates are the "negro children" and "boys of the neighborhood" with whom she can "climb a tree or throw a rock" (75). Mammy and her mother, Ellen, "labor to inculcate in [Scarlett] the qualities that would make her a truly desirable wife" (75) because "the first duty of a girl was to get married" (75). But "Scarlett, child of Gerald, [finds] the road to ladyhood hard" (74) and struggles to understand "[w]hy it is a girl has to be so silly to catch a husband" (95). Scarlett's marital advice comes from her father who warns Scarlett that "[n]o wife has ever changed a husband one whit" (54) and that it does not matter whom she marries, as long as he thinks like her and "is a gentleman and Southerner and prideful. For a woman, love comes after marriage" (55). According to Gerald, the best marriages are those in which the girl's parents

choose the husband because girls like Scarlett are “silly piece[s]” who can’t distinguish “a good man from a scoundrel” (55). To succeed in her goal of securing a good husband, Scarlett is expected to be “above all other things, sweet, gentle, beautiful, and ornamental” (74). After marriage, however, she is expected to become a skilled administrator able to “manage households that numbered a hundred people or more, white and black” (74).

While Scarlett rebels against her prescribed gender role, her mother is the personification of a Southern lady. Ellen never needs to raise her voice because her “magic” touch (57) and “quiet grace” (58) grant her instant obedience from all. Her spirit is “calm” and her back “unbowed” (58). She spends her days diligently working and when she sits, she does so at ready-stance without her back ever touching her chair. She completes the bookkeeping, attends the sick, and oversees the cooking, cleaning, and clothes-making. While “presiding” over the household, she maintains her angelic trait of forever embodying a “steely quality” and “stately gentleness” while “revealing none of the strain.” Ellen is Scarlett’s “security” and “haven” (398). She is a “pillar of strength,” and “a fountain of wisdom” (59). In fact, “nothing [is ever] so bad that Ellen [can] not better it, simply by being there” (78). Nevertheless, even for Ellen, ladyhood is more duty than nature. Ellen hints to Scarlett that “marriage [is] something women must bear with dignity and fortitude” (215). Scarlett, however, has other plans.

Scarlett is self-aware and competitive by nature. She understands that because she does not naturally possess the esteemed qualities of a Southern woman, she will have to put up a façade to secure a husband. She conceals her “sharp intelligence” and masters “only the outward signs of gentility. The inner grace from which these signs should spring, she never learn[s] nor [does] she see any reason for learning it. Appearances [are] enough” (76). Indeed, Scarlett is able to snag her first two husbands through false appearances alone. Nevertheless, the constant charade exhausts her. She is tired of starving herself, tired of acting faint, tired of curbing her physical exuberance, and tired of pretending to be impressed by men who “haven’t got one-half the sense” she has (79).

Scarlett marries a total of three times in the novel and she is twice widowed. The first time she marries out of spite, the second time for money, and the third time for fun. Scarlett astutely recognizes that marriage is one of the few options available to women to advance their lot. Her no-nonsense approach towards her relationships with men continues long after “I do.” Yet the one man Scarlett has always wanted to marry, is forever out of reach.

Throughout the novel, Scarlett pines for the son of the Thousand Oaks plantation, Ashley Wilkes. Ashley Wilkes, however, has been promised to Melanie Hamilton, a woman with neither looks nor charm but destined to be Mrs. Wilkes because the Wilkes and the Hamiltons have been intermarrying for generations. By setting a woman's worth in accordance to her marital value, antebellum Southern society pitted women against each other as rivals since the law of supply and demand automatically created a scarcity in the pool of potential suitors. When all the men left for war, the need to compete disappeared. Women benefitted more from banding together to survive than cat-fighting over affections.

In *GWTW* Scarlett's relationship with Melanie gradually evolves into a genuine friendship. Scarlett helps Melanie in childbirth, saving her and her baby's life in the midst of chaos, and Melanie showers Scarlett's son with the love Scarlett can't spare. When Scarlett becomes pregnant a second time, Melanie, who ardently desires but is unable to have a second child, "vicariously enjoy[s] a pregnancy not her own" (690). Together the women shoot an intruder and extinguish flames set to destroy Tara. Scarlett "grudgingly" concedes that Melanie's "always there when you need her" (445). When nightmares plague Scarlett, she sleeps with Melanie. In the end, Melanie is not only the only person able to relieve her of her night terrors, she is Scarlett's best friend.

Scarlett and Melanie represent what Pearson and Pope describe as the "Shadow" of the other. "The woman possessed by an unacknowledged Shadow often will project her monstrous image of the repressed attribute onto another woman" (Pearson and Pope 20). Whereas Scarlett is scheming and loud, Melanie is passive and soft-spoken. Whereas Scarlett craves wealth and social position, Melanie desires security and friendship. Whereas Scarlett will stop at nothing to get what she wants and assumes to be her rightful due, Melanie is willing to sacrifice everything for those she loves. As the embodiment of the old South, Melanie tightly aligns her identity with her family and friends and never expresses discontent or the desire for self-actualization. Her life goal is to serve those around her as a dutiful wife, doting mother, and loyal friend. Melanie does what "all Southern girls were to do—to make those about them feel at ease and pleased with themselves" because a patriarchal world where men were content, uncontested, and had their vanity stroked, was a "pleasant place" for women to live (163). "So, from the cradle to the grave, women strove to make men pleased with themselves, and the satisfied men repaid lavishly with gallantry and adoration. In fact, men willingly gave the ladies everything in the world except credit for intelligence" (163). Yet during the war, men had nothing to give. When Melanie dies,

Scarlett realizes “through Rhett’s eyes” that she has witnessed “the passing, not of a woman but a legend—the gentle, self-effacing but steel-spined women on whom the South had built its house in war and to whose proud and loving arms it had returned in defeat” (948). Unlike Melanie, Scarlett is driven by a natural inclination to control her own destiny rather than leaving it in the hands of men and their good will.

Showing agency and self-reliance, Scarlett resolves, “I’m going to live through this, and when it’s over, I’m never going to be hungry again. No, nor any of my folks. If I have to steal or kill—as God is my witness, I’m never going to be hungry again” (408). Scarlett is even willing to “prostitute” herself for the sake of Tara, dressing herself in old curtains disguised as finery to try to coax money out of Rhett Butler. But behavior that Ashley naively views as “gallantry”, Rhett, like Scarlett, recognizes as indecency. When Rhett challenges Scarlett to pursue her proposal to its scandalous conclusion, Scarlett indignantly declines. Mitchell turns the patriarchy on its head when the novel’s macho hero, Rhett Butler, contends that women have “a hardness and endurance unknown to men, despite the pretty idea taught ... in childhood that women are frail, tender, sensitive creatures” (582).

Throughout the novel, Scarlett repeatedly assumes the role traditionally reserved for the family patriarch. She successfully struggles to raise crops and to hide livestock and supplies in order to provide for her and Ashley’s family. When her father becomes increasingly unhinged, Scarlett declares, “I’m head of the house now” (458). The sense of responsibility for the household members plagues her and she feels as though “at every turn she met outstretched hands, pleading eyes. The sight of them drove her almost to madness, for she was hungry as they” (447). Will Benteen seeks Scarlett’s permission to marry her sister Suellen. In an uncharacteristic moment of weakness, Scarlett suffers a brief bout of panic about her second husband’s ability to adequately provide for her. Yet a little reminder to herself that “she could not afford to count on Frank for much [because] [s]he must not count on anything or anybody but herself” (623) helps her to quickly regain her composure. Scarlett’s move towards self-sufficiency upsets Frank: “It was bad enough for her to sell her earrings to Captain Butler (of all people!) and buy the mill without even consulting her own husband about it, but it was worse still that she did not turn it over to him to operate. That looked bad” (592). By selling her earrings to buy herself a sawmill, Scarlett exchanges an ornamental object of sign value for a mill with use value. The same act ends Scarlett’s own role as nothing more than an ornamental wife with sign-value and sets her on the path as a woman with the means to adequately provide for herself and those she loves.

Scarlett is a successful provider and father figure in the novel, but a miserable mother and disobedient wife. For Scarlett, her son Wade is “only another worry, another mouth to feed” (410). Because Scarlett has neither the “time nor the impulse to pet” Wade (410), her friend Melanie assumes the maternal role not just for Wade but for Scarlett as well. Melanie’s natural ability to selflessly “mother” all those around her puts in sharp relief Scarlett’s incapacity to do so. Scarlett fiercely loves and admires her own mother, Ellen, but never strives to emulate Ellen’s maternal ways. Instead, Scarlett savagely wonders “[w]hy had God invented children” who she thinks of as “useless” and “demanding” “crying nuisances” (385). Scarlett is such an anti-mother that she sometimes forgets for long periods of time that she even has a child (385).

Scarlett admires the power of men that she believes she lacks as a woman. When Rhett arrives in the midst of the Atlanta siege, she thinks, “If only she could be as cool and casual as he was!” (365). When he secures a wagon and horse for them to flee to Tara, Scarlett thinks, “How wonderful to be a man and as strong as Rhett” (367). War demands that Scarlett be “strong like a man” and her relationships to men demand that she fulfill her prescribed duties as a woman.

While Scarlett’s second husband harbors hopes that having a child will soften Scarlett, Scarlett is “outspoken about not wanting a child” (601) because having a child is as inconvenient and unpleasant as death and taxes (624) and a baby is something to get “over and done with” (691). When Scarlett becomes pregnant nevertheless, and she is “baffled [with] rage at the untimeliness of it” (624). When Scarlett and her third husband suffer the tragic loss of their beloved daughter, Scarlett’s doctor advises her that the only way to help Rhett overcome his drinking and self-destruction is to quickly have another child (927). Mitchell portrays the typical notion that it is a woman’s job to fix whatever is ailing her man. Scarlett, despite her aversion to child-bearing, claims she “would gladly have another child, several children” (927) if it would help Rhett. Yet Bonnie Blue’s death also invokes a sense in Scarlett that she hasn’t just lost her daughter; but also a sense of herself. At the end of the novel, Scarlett suffers a miscarriage after falling down the stairs and she plummets into an even darker place. “Strange, what a pang it had been even in her pain, to know that she would not have this child. Stranger still that it should have been the first child she really wanted” (891). In her moment of most desperate need at the end of the novel, Scarlett pines after her own Ersatz mother: Mammy.

Mammy is a smart, loving, integral part of the O'Hara household. Scarlett heavily relies on Mammy for emotional support and their relationship represents one of the few positive interracial relationships between women in all the novels examined. While Scarlett's mother Ellen is alive, Mammy plays a supportive role in raising the wayward girl and "frequently adjure[s] her to "ack lak a lil lady" in a futile attempt to instill in Scarlett the qualities of a proper Southern belle (75). "Ellen, by soft-voiced admonition, and Mammy, by constant carping, labored to inculcate in her the qualities that would make her truly desirable as a wife" (75). Mammy's significance to Scarlett increases when Ellen dies and Mammy helps Scarlett to raise her own child. When Scarlett attempts to go to work at the height of her pregnancy, it is Mammy, together with Scarlett's second husband, who searches the house to confiscate Scarlett's hidden store of money. Later, when Scarlett is about to lose Rhett, a man she has come to realize she loves more than any other, she desperately seeks the company of Mammy to comfort her. "[Scarlett] [s]uddenly wanted Mammy desperately, as she had wanted her when she was a little girl, wanted the broad bosom on which to lay her head, the gnarled black hand on her hair. Mammy, the last link with the old days" (959). If the Civil War had cast all Southerners from their Garden of Eden, it was Mammy, however problematic later scholars found her character to be,⁶⁰ who offered a bridge between the two ages and enabled her charges to while away on her maternal bosom, gazing at a paradisiac Old South never to return. Despite her nostalgia for the "good Old days," the antebellum South was not a place where an independent woman like Scarlett was liable to thrive.

In the war's early days, when Scarlett's first husband, Charles Hamilton, dies while off at war, Southern society raises Scarlett to the status of sacrificial and grieving war widow; a position filled with honor and duties. Scarlett, however, shuns the role in favor of working at a fund-raising event in a gown considered entirely inappropriate for a bereaved widow. To make matters worse, Scarlett openly defies all conventions by dancing with a stranger at the charity ball as his auction prize. While the society ladies are downright scandalized by Scarlett's (mis)behavior, her ever-faithful companion, Melanie, prefers to view Scarlett's actions as a noble sacrifice for the war effort. Meanwhile Scarlett, not so nobly, just wants to have fun.

Frank, Scarlett's second husband, comes to realize that "life was very sweet and cozy with Scarlett—as long as she had her own way" (578). For Frank, "a wife should be guided by her husband's superior knowledge, should accept his opinions in full and have none of her

own,” but Scarlett is not a typical wife. Her business with the mill sends her “gaddling about like a man” (601) and Frank becomes embarrassed by her “going about town ...as no lady should” during her pregnancy (624). Eventually, when Scarlett’s pregnancy is well advanced and she falls ill, Frank gives strict orders for her to stay at home and forbids her to use the horse and buggy. At the same time, he confiscates her stash of hidden money and deposits it in his own bank account to prevent her from hiring a ride. He addresses her as if she were a child and tells her, “There, Sugar! You’re just a sick little girl” (696). This patronizing behavior infuriates Scarlett who vows “not [to] be treated like a naughty simpleminded child” (696). When Scarlett is assaulted on the way to her mill, Frank and other townsmen hunt down her attacker and Frank is shot and dies. In the end, Scarlett’s disobedience contributes to Frank’s death and Scarlett blames herself. “She had killed Frank. She had killed him just as surely as if it had been her finger that pulled the trigger. He had begged her not to go about alone, but she had not listened to him. And now he was dead because of her obstinacy” (763).

Mitchell repeatedly illustrates throughout the novel how women who show agency usually reserved for men make themselves vulnerable to attacks on their person physically and socially. As Pearson and Pope state, “The difference between the female and the male heroic pattern usually results from the cultural assumption that strong women are deviant and should be punished” (*The Female Hero* 10). When Scarlett ventures out on her own to the mill without any menfolk to protect her and is assaulted, she falls so low in the social hierarchy that not even the matron of the local whorehouse, Belle Watling, will associate with her. The burden to stop assaults is not placed upon the perpetrators to stop assaulting but rather on women to stop placing themselves in situations in which they are vulnerable to assault. Only women who obey and self-isolate are worthy of protection. Following the death of her second husband, Frank, Scarlett overcomes her short-lived feelings of guilt to marry husband number three—Rhett Butler, the only man in the novel who seems to have the power to tame Scarlett.

Rhett Butler is a modern man, who sees through Scarlett’s charades and is drawn to her independent spirit. Though many try, Rhett is the only man able to rein in Scarlett’s spiritedness. When Rhett proposes, instead of admitting his love for her, he tells Scarlett “according to the Continental code of etiquette, it’s very bad form for husband and wife to love each other. Very bad taste, indeed” (582). He suggests that instead Scarlett should marry a man for fun for once. Scarlett responds that marriage is anything but fun. “[A]ll a

woman gets out of it is something to eat and a lot of work and having to put up with a man's foolishness—and a baby every year" (774). Though Captain Butler "is not the kind of man for any woman of a good family to marry" (782), Scarlett agrees to his proposal because he "is the only man [she] ever saw who could stand the truth from a woman, and it would be nice having a husband who didn't think [her] a silly fool and expect [her] to tell lies" (777). Scarlett recognizes in Rhett the kind of man her father had once advised her to marry, "a man that thinks like you" (55), and Rhett recognizes the same characteristics in Scarlett who he knows is "hard and greedy and unscrupulous" like him (952). Though Rhett says he respects her intelligence and will ride her "with a slack rein," Scarlett must never forget that he is riding her "with curbs and spurs just the same" (798). She should also know that while Rhett does not care what other people think of the two of them, "[t]here's never going to be any doubt in anybody's mind about who wears the pants in the Butler family" (798). Rhett's attraction to the strong woman in Scarlett seems tightly bound to his ability to place himself above her. Treating her like an unruly child, Rhett informs Scarlett that if there is any spanking in the house, "he would do it personally and to Scarlett" (845). In fact, Rhett threatens to severely punish Scarlett if she doesn't behave because "a good lashing with a buggy whip would benefit [her] immensely" (874).

One of the most controversial scenes in *GWTW* occurs when Rhett carries Scarlett off to his bedroom as Scarlett unsuccessfully struggles to break free. Readers and scholars since have come to view this as the "rape scene." In tales tracing as far back as 25 BC,⁶¹ rape was considered so shameful for the victim that the only means for a raped woman to restore her honor was to die—either by committing suicide or, as in *Clarissa*, of an illness triggered by her mental torment.⁶² In Eudora Welty's short story, "June Recital," the townspeople are "surprised" that after the young spinster Miss Eckhart is assaulted by a "crazy nigger," that she and her mother do not leave town and that the "shame alone had not killed her and killed her mother too" (57). Historically, the rape of a woman was considered a crime against the male members of her family (and their property). The men could thus avenge the transgression with little fear of sanction. Rape by husbands, however, was acceptable because marital, or spousal rape, was not (and still is not) uniformly criminalized in the US.⁶³ In many societies throughout history and still today, a husband is legally entitled to conjugal relations with his wife at his demand. But did Rhett rape Scarlett?

Despite Scarlett's resistance, Scarlett confesses to a kind of thrill at being dominated. In the South, women were reared to be alluring but expected to remain asexual. As childlike,

maternal angels, genteel white women had no business indulging in gritty, pleasurable sex. Such behavior was considered synonymous with black women and whores. Sexual pleasure for a respectable woman could only occur as a happy but unnecessary happenstance while she indulged her husband's sexual demands. Many readers have interpreted the turbulent and hotly debated scene in the novel as Scarlett experiencing her first ever orgasm. Was the scene a "no" that meant "yes"? Was Scarlett raped, ravished, or sexually dominated? For Kathryn Lee Seidel, who considers the scene monumental in fiction of the 1930s, "Scarlett has been raped within the bounds of marriage; it is a rape but it is not" (*The Southern Belle* 57).

According to Joanna Russ in *The Female Man*, rape is "one of those shadowy feminine disasters, like pregnancy, like disease, like weakness; [the woman] [is] not only the victim of the act but in some strange way its perpetrator" (qtd. in Pearson and Pope 31). This notion was supported by laws that demanded physical signs that a woman fought off her attacker and denied a married woman the right to withhold sex from her husband. Pearson and Pope contend that pregnancy is the second punishment of rape because a woman's sexuality is socially associated with her biology.⁶⁴ This interpretation of rape is reflected in *GWTW*, when Scarlett becomes enraged that the physical encounter with Rhett has left her pregnant. "'Damn you!' she began, her voice shaking with sick rage. 'You—you know it's yours. And I don't want it any more than you do. No—no woman would want the children of a cad like you. I wish—Oh, God, I wish it was anybody's baby but yours!'" (890). And yet, because the rape results in a pregnancy with the only child Scarlett has ever wanted, doubt is cast on whether Scarlett in fact has been forcefully taken or taken according to her (albeit secret) will. Perhaps the real message of the rape scene is that, in the end, a woman, no matter how strong, is destined to remain vulnerable to male dominance and harbors a secret desire to be dominated. Pearson and Pope discuss the "ambivalence" in "pre-feminist literature" of authors towards their heroic heroines: "The author may portray a heroic woman, demonstrate the problems she encounters by virtue of being unconventionally heroic and female, and still be unable to imagine a narrative framework in which to resolve the dilemma" (11).

While Rhett is portrayed as a "man's man", the characterization of Ashley Wilkes in the novel as someone who prefers daydreaming and poetry to shooting and blood-letting has been interpreted by many scholars as evidence of Ashley Wilkes' feminization. Pearson and Pope write, "In every period of British and American literature ... whatever qualities

are out of favor are identified as female” (*The Female Hero* 19). Scarlett herself hints that Ashley’s unmanly traits may be traced back to the Wilkes-Hamilton propensity to intermarry. Despite the courage he displays on the front during the war, Ashley Wilkes views his reliance on Scarlett as evidence of his demasculinization, and expresses his shame at seeing himself as “less than a man—much less, indeed than a woman” (253). Rhett echoes these sentiments by criticizing Ashley for letting Scarlett support him and his family financially. “Among men, there’s a very unpleasant name for men who permit women to support them” (588). Scholars who contend that Ashley’s “feminine” traits are evidence of his homosexuality have been quick to quote Scarlett’s father, Gerald, who warns Scarlett about Ashley, “[W]hen I say queer, it’s not crazy I’m meaning ... he’s queer in other ways ... [with] his folderol about books and poetry and music and oil paintings and such foolishness” (53). Overlooking the mutual attraction between Ashley and Scarlett alluded to throughout the novel, scholars like Elizabeth Young and writers like Alice Randall support Gerald O’Hara and Rhett’s (patriarchal and biased) judgment of Ashley’s perceived lack of masculinity as proof of his homosexuality. In a patriarchal world, sensitivity is feminine and thus proof of closeted homosexuality. Through the character of Ashley and other characters’ reactions to his less aggressive personality, Mitchell mirrors the hierarchy of the patriarchal world view in which men are on the top, and women are on the bottom and any man who is less than a man must endure the shame of falling below the social rank of a woman. Also low in social rank during the antebellum period are unmarried women.

Although the theme of marriage as a social requirement for a young lady runs throughout *GWTW*, the exigency of the social institution invariably declines as the war and the novel progresses. The novel begins in the antebellum period when the primary goal of every young plantation belle is to secure a prominent bachelor. In the 1860s, as the Civil War advanced and men became ever scarcer, social norms on the bachelor-worthiness of men loosened. A one-legged former soldier named Will Benteen decides to stay at Tara and help work on the war-torn plantation for room and board. When asking Scarlett for permission to marry Suellen, Will explains that Suellen “needs a husband and some children and that’s just what every woman needs” (647). Scarlett, whose adherence to practical considerations always outweighs her compliance to social norms, agrees to his proposal even though he is disabled and not from the genteel class. “Men were scarce, girls had to marry someone and Tara had to have a man” (483). Although Ashley’s sister, Honey, “married beneath her...[t]he rest of the family privately thought that the giggling and simple-minded Honey

had done far better than could be expected and they marveled that she had caught any man” (682). Even a man who has been “wounded low down by a bursting shell” so that it did something to his legs, giving him a “vulgar appearance when he walks” and making him “spraddle” is considered worthy husband material and marries the neighbor girl Fannie.

When a young woman is unable to find a husband, like Ashley’s twenty-five-year-old sister, India, she quickly assumes “the mantle of spinsterhood” (682). Scarlett grimly predicts that “there’ll be thousands of girls all over the South who’ll die old maids” (468) and she wonders gravely, what will happen to such girls. Although Scarlett’s sister Careen is also single, Scarlett insists that Careen is spared the disparaging status of spinster because she at least had secured the promise of marriage from her sweetheart before he died. Loss of male loved ones becomes commonplace. Scarlett claims to have even known a girl “who had been widowed three times by the war and was still able to take notice of men” (481). Scarlett leads by example and recovers from the deaths of her first two husbands with impressive resilience. After all, death brought honor, but divorce was another matter.

The severe social stigma attached to divorce is first touched upon in the beginning of the novel when Scarlett’s parents consider appropriate suitors for their debutante daughter. For staunch Catholics, a divorced man could never be considered a potential suitor because “divorce was unthinkable...[d]ivorced people were under the ban not only of the Church but of society. No divorced person was received” (274). Divorce condemned a woman to a social death. In fact, the Virginia state legislature granted the first divorce settlements to husbands whose wives had allegedly shamed them by engaging in sexual relations with African American men and bearing their children (Stevenson 113). Initially, Rhett playfully teases Scarlett that he’ll divorce her if she doesn’t control her gluttonous tendencies (792). Later, however, Rhett is no longer smiling when he remarks to Scarlett after a vehement feud, “I take it, then, you do not want a divorce or even a separation? Well, then, I’ll come back often enough to keep the gossip down” (956). For Scarlett, divorce could never be a viable option.

When her second husband Frank forbids a pregnant Scarlett from leaving the house, commandeers her carriage, and deposits her hard-earned money into *his* bank account, Scarlett’s most extreme form of protest is throwing a tantrum. When her third husband, Rhett, rapes her and seeks the company of the prostitute Belle Watling, Scarlett never once contemplates divorce. At the end of the novel, Mitchell leaves Scarlett’s marital fate precariously hanging in the balance. It is Rhett who walks away as Scarlett desperately tries

to persuade him to stay. Although Scarlett is an unusual Southern woman for the era and has no qualms about engaging in socially scandalous activities, filing for divorce is not one of them. Mitchell ends her novel, not with a defeated or triumphant heroine, but rather with a woman determined to rise from the ashes yet again to get what she wants from life.

2.3. *Novels of Second-Wave Feminism: 1963–1991*

JUBILEE

In one of *Jubilee*'s most climactic scenes, the heroine, wielding a cast iron skillet warns, "I'm a little piece of leather, but I'm well put together." Based on the life story of Margaret Walker's maternal great grandmother, *Jubilee* introduces the reading public to a strong, resilient, racially-mixed heroine named Vyry. Though subjected to repeated hardships, the young heroine perseveres by never relinquishing her fierce drive to achieve independence and to make a better life for herself and her family members. Walker conveys an optimistic message of reconciliation and uplift for the black community while demonstrating how she and the black women she portrays, combat the three "pernicious evils" she believed corrupted society: racism, classism, and sexism.

From the novel's very first scene in the hot sticky slave quarters of the heroine's dying mother, *Jubilee* depicts the odious reality of life in the antebellum South for the black women who were enslaved there. Although she is a planter's daughter like *The Battle-Ground*'s Betty Ambler and *GWTW*'s Scarlett O'Hara, the racially-mixed Vyry's antebellum life is not defined by ball gowns and barbecues. Vyry's planter father watches with indifference as her enslaved mother Hetta suffers a painful death trying to give birth to another one of his children. According to Brenda Stevenson, abuse of enslaved women often started shortly after they reached puberty so that the abusing planters could "assure the 'sexual purity' of their conquests and impose a type of psychological control" (106). *Jubilee* describes how Dutton senior instills in his son John the notion that it is "better for a young man of quality to learn life by breaking in a young nigger wench than to spoil a pure white virgin girl" (9). John can "satisf[y] his lust with [Hetta]" (9) while Hetta is made to endure all manners of abuse: sexually through rape, physically through impregnation, and emotionally through bondage and the legal theft of her children.

The heinousness of slavery even robs black enslaved women like Hetta the joy of motherhood. Witnessing Hetta's painful death, the house slave Calina remarks that her own

barrenness is a blessing because “[s]laves were better off ... when they had no children to be sold away, to die, and to keep on having till they killed you” (4). An early death spared an enslaved child the prolonged misery and affliction of a life enslaved and if the child-to-be were a girl, an almost inevitable legacy of all manners of sexual exploitation.

Margaret Walker demonstrates the many layers of victimhood of black women. Not only did black women have to contend with abusive white people, they also faced those in the black community who blamed them for their victimhood. Hetta’s suffering is compounded by accusations by Hetta’s enslaved husband Jack that as “Marster’s woman,” Hetta considers herself to be “too good for [Jack].” When Jack looks at Hetta, he “despises himself” and gets “mad and evil” (14). When Hetta is dying, Jack says nothing while the “Marster” simply laughs (6). The physical abuse of black women is not only a constant reminder to the enslaved community of their helplessness and vulnerability but also an emasculation of the black male members who are powerless to defend their women.

Like her mother, Vyry realizes that a black woman must be self-reliant to survive. When the freedman Randall fails to deliver on his promise to buy Vyry her freedom, Vyry resolves to never ask or expect anything from anyone because they were all just “part of the scenery” (150). As a woman with a lover but no legal husband, Vyry can defy her partner’s demands in a way few planter women could. When Randall asks Vyry to flee North with him without their children; Vyry is not having it. “Leave my youngyns? Is you done lost your senses?” Vyry asks incredulously. Though Randall claims that she’ll get her “young’uns back”, Vyry knows Randall is in no position to make such promises (165). When Vyry and her children eventually attempt to escape, Vyry, dons “men’s clothes, a pair of britches and a coat, and a man’s old cap” (138). The cross-dressing is symbolic of Vyry’s treatment as a black woman, which resembles more the treatment of a black man than a white woman. Like Sojourner Truth, Vyry leads a “Ain’t I a Woman too?” life. When she is captured, the severity of her beating is as extreme as a black man’s.

While black enslaved women were often expected to satisfy white men’s lust, white women were expected to only tolerate sex as an unpleasant act required to pleasure husbands and create offspring. Walker portrays the hypocrisy of the so-called devout Christian families in the planter’s behavior. Salina, the Dutton plantation mistress, joins the Dutton household as a young, pious virgin who is averse to sexual relations with her new husband. When he persists and finally succeeds despite her negative sentiments, she is “shocked” and “outraged.” Once she bears her husband two children, she makes “him understand that sex,

to her mind, was only a necessary evil for the sake of procreation. ... and consequently, there was no more need for sex” (10). Marster Dutton promptly returns to Hetta to satisfy his physical needs. “Miscegenation was no sin to Marse John. It was an accepted fact of his world. What he could not understand at first was where Salina had been given such romantic notions, and how her loving parents had kept the facts of life from her” (10).

When Salina discovers John’s philandering, she threatens to leave him. John, keenly aware of his wife’s lack of legal power and agency, coolly remarks that she is free to go but will have to leave the children with him. With no legal or social recourse, white women in the antebellum South had few options to challenge ill-behaved spouses. Though divorce was theoretically possible, few planter women pursued this course of action. Writing about a study that examined official divorce documents of the antebellum South, Anya Jabour states that: “Only when slaveholding men granted their slave concubines special privileges that challenged the wife’s position as mistress of the household did white male/black female extramarital sex become a matter for the courts” (Jabour 459). According to Brenda Stevenson, “[g]endered decorum demanded that slaveholding women exercise a strong sense of propriety.... Silence, many believed, was their only acceptable public response unless they were willing to risk loss of face within their households and standing in their communities” (112). Salina’s behavior was not unusual. According to Kathryn Seidel, plantation women often tolerated their husbands’ use of slaves for their “proclivities” because “men were popularly thought to be doing their wives a favor by not demeaning them with the sex act” (*The Southern Belle* 136). Yet Salina’s sufferance reaches its limits when Hetta bears John a daughter named Vyry whose fair-skin and blue-eyes bear a striking resemblance not only to John but also to John and Salina’s daughter, Lillian. Salina, incapable of challenging her powerful patriarchal husband, targets her wrath instead at his helpless mixed-race daughter.

Walker details how the abused plantation mistress becomes Vyry’s abuser. Under the pretense that Vyry is to act as Lillian’s maid, Salina moves Vyry into the home quarters where Salina takes advantage of the girl’s close proximity to severely punish and torture her. When Marster John attempts to intervene on behalf of his illegitimate daughter, his vengeful wife blames his “nigger-loving ways” for making everything go to “rack and ruin.” Emboldened by what she considers John’s moral sins, Salina informs John that she need not to obey him because she is in charge of domestic affairs and soon the whole

plantation (22). Though Marster John promises Vyry her freedom when he dies, his wife refuses to honor his promise and surrender Vyry for John's sake.

John's death from gangrene following a carriage accident shifts Salina's role from the disrespected wife to the mourning, venerated planter widow. Although she proudly sends forth her son to battle, his return home mortally wounded plunges Salina into her "blackest hour." The agony becomes physically intolerable as her body sags "with an aching burden her spirit could not bear" (240). Yet, the sacrifice of her beloved son does not break Salina's patriotic fervor, it fuels it all the more. Salina busies herself with volunteer work and ignores warnings about investing the family savings in high-risk war bonds—a move that eventually plunges the family into poverty. "[A]s stoic as ever in this black hour of grief," Salina makes a Confederate flag and proudly hangs it so "all who [come] might see the patriotism of her stricken rebel home" (252).

As a die-hard Southerner, Salina believes it is her duty to tame the animal-like ways of those she and her husband enslave. While John coerces the slaves to engage in unwanted sex, Salina tries to curb the natural and consensual sexual relations amongst those she perceives as uncivilized. Indicative of its publication in the era of second-wave feminism, *Jubilee* portrays sexuality and black women's sexual desires more frankly and explicitly than the novels of earlier eras. In "the season of love," the plantation mistress lays "in a big supply of ipecac, ergot, and saltpeter to control the passionate natures of house servants," all the while remarking, "I don't care what the field niggers do, but I'm not having niggers acting like dogs around me!" (107). The slaves, however, free of moral concerns, indulge in "the season of mating" (107).

At age sixteen, the heroine is also physically drawn to the free man, Randall Ware. Try as she might to fight Randall's image in her mind, at night Vyry longs to hear his signal calling her because she cannot "forget his arms of steel and his kiss of fire." At the same time, she feels "all mixed up in her head and even more confused in her heart" with "despair in her mind" (107). Randall Ware's "fiercely passionate but tender embraces" give Vyry a sense of security and "[e]verything in the distant past died. Time and the present went far away. All the painful knots inside melted. She lost their remembrance and a blank went over her mind" (131). For those living in bondage, particularly mothers, loving was dangerously close to losing.

Jubilee depicts the evolution of motherhood from slavery to liberation. Before she is twenty, Vyry gives birth to two children and suffers one miscarriage. Although Vyry loves her children, she is all too aware that as long as she is enslaved, any child she bears will “belong to Marster” (141). Therefore, when a child was “dead before it was born ... there was no grief within her nor tears to shed. That was one who would never be a slave” (150). Once emancipated, Vyry has the freedom to mourn and is able to submerge herself in the pain of losing a baby in childbirth (401). During the Reconstruction era, when Vyry and Innis have a home and the certainty that their children will be born free, Vyry eagerly awaits her baby’s birth and even hopes for a girl because: “Gal babies don’t never want to leave they maw easy” (496).

As a woman who has suffered severe abuse during slavery, Vyry is a staunch opponent of any kind of physical violence. Vyry is also a woman who will fiercely protect her children at all costs. At the end of the novel, when her second husband, Innis, severely beats Vyry’s son, Jim, Vyry directly challenges him:

If you hits him one more time, I ain’t gwine be ‘sponsible. Don’t you hit him nary nother lick or I’ll send your soul to Kingdom Come [...] you ain’t gwine browbeat and mistreat nobody here, not long as I’m living and I can help it. You ain’t gwine hit Minna lessen it’s over my dead body, now does you hear me? I’m a little piece of leather, but I’m well put together, cut the holy man! ...Try me and see. (448)

In the scene, Walker skillfully portrays the culmination of several issues that affected black families during the Reconstruction era: (1) a black mother’s strong bond and urge to protect her children; (2) the social differences between the field hands on the one side and free blacks and former house slaves on the other; (3) the question of whether labor of the land or education would be the most effective path to a better future for the black community; (4) the lasting trauma slavery would have on the black community long after emancipation;⁶⁵ and (5) the difficult dynamics that arose when families were separated, contacts lost, communication difficult, and relationships extralegal.

Once separated, “married” but not-legally-recognized-as-married black spouses had no way of knowing the fate of their partners or their relationship. The problem of polygamy comes to a climactic head in the novel when Randall arrives on Innis and Vyry’s doorstep after being told that Innis has beaten Randall’s biological son. When Innis welcomes Randall to spend the night in their home, Randall responds, “Well, that’s real kind of you, Mister Brown, I guess we do have a lot of things to talk out even if you don’t recognize we

are both married to the same woman” (468). Each man believes himself to be Vyry’s legitimate husband. Vyry, pregnant with Innis’s child, is “more mixed and confused than any of the others” (471). Once slaves were emancipated, the black community had to undo the Gordian knot of relationships that enslaved people had formed but never formally dissolved when they were forcefully separated. After slavery, many former slaves searched for their previous partners only to make the unpleasant discovery, like Randall Brown, that those partners had moved on in their absence to form new partnerships and families. For Vyry, “[i]f she were not so nervous and uneasy and excited she could enjoy the fun, but here sat two men facing each other who were strangers to each other but intimately familiar to her. She had carried babies for both and though one had come back from the dead, she was still wife to both” (465). In Walker’s version of events, the men eventually agree that Vyry should decide who she wants to be with. It is Vyry’s decision, but it is the men who grant her that right. “I knows it’s hard to split a family,” says Innis. “We’s all got childrens and I specs we loves em. I’m gwine bide by her choice and trust it’ll be the will of the Lawd” (468). Vyry has agency but only because the men concede her that agency.

Although all of the women of *Jubilee* have battles to fight during the war, which battles had to be fought and the best way to do so, often diverged along racial lines. For black women, the Union victory was a victory for the South and Southern black women. Walker and the black American foremothers like the great grandmother who inspired her, provide the models in literature and in life that Alice Walker sought to enrich and enlarge our view of existence.⁶⁶ *Jubilee* leaves readers with a hope for the beneficial cooperation amongst women in the postwar South. Vyry survives slavery and the war to become a free woman who earns her own money, provides for her family, and looks optimistically towards her future. While *Jubilee* is an inspirational story of a black woman’s ability to assert her independence in her community and marriage, Walker also weaves into her story the unmistakable message that black women’s path towards a better future will be rough but ultimately successful.

HIGH HEARTS

Like second-wave feminism, *High Hearts* challenges and redefines traditional gender roles and heteronormativity. While men in the novel struggle with their identities and the expectations of masculinity, women push the boundaries of acceptable ladylike behavior. The cross-dressing heroine’s service in a Virginia cavalry also gives rise to issues of

queerness and homoeroticism. Rita Mae Brown, the author renowned for her queer-themed books such as *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973) and *Six of One* (1978), offers readers a different look at Southern women of the Civil War who, as they struggled to survive, also contended with the strict gender norms which fell to pieces along with the antebellum Southern society that had created and reinforced them.

Following the footsteps of Loreta Velazquez and the more than two hundred other documented women who together fought in almost every battle of the Civil War⁶⁷, the novel's heroine, Geneva, cuts her hair, masquerades as a young man, and enlists as a soldier. Just as the roots of Scarlett O'Hara's "boyish" behavior in *GWTW* were thought to have come from a father who treated his daughter like a son, so too does Geneva's father, Henley, believe that he is "to blame" for her "caper" because he had encouraged rather than curbed "those traits" in her (224). Those traits include being very skilled at horseback riding, and not knowing "jackshit about running a house" (9). According to Drew Gilpin Faust, the number of female soldiers who disguised themselves as men were too few to pose a threat to traditional gender roles, particularly when the motivation to enlist was, as purported by Loreta Velazquez, wifely devotion (*Mothers of Invention* 202). Yet the lingering controversy surrounding the veracity of Loreta Velazquez's escapade, which has raged for no less than 150 years, shows the range of reactions that women challenging conventional gender roles can incite.

From the beginning of her marriage, Geneva demonstrates her resistance to assume the role of a traditional Southern wife. When her newlywed husband, Nash Hart, leaves to join the cavalry within a week after they wed, Geneva makes a one-sided decision to join him. Initially, Geneva claims that her desire to disguise herself as a soldier is driven by the yearning to be together with Nash. Her first move of marital independence, however, is the usage of her deceased brother's name "Jimmy Chatfield" for her male alter-ego. As "Jimmy", Geneva has no connection to her husband in name or otherwise and is therefore treated by her fellow soldiers, not as Nash's ego-extension, but rather as an individual independent of her husband, his decisions, and his social status. Geneva's enjoyment of soldiering supersedes her desire to be a proper wife. The longer Geneva is accepted as a young man, the more ambivalent her feelings toward Nash become. After their first battle, while Nash is still reeling from the horrors witnessed, Geneva is promoted to a commanding position. The relationship becomes turbulent as the gender role reversal becomes more pronounced and the usual gender hierarchy is reversed. The more autonomy Geneva gains

through her military advancement, the further apart she grows from her husband. When Nash ignores an order by “Jimmy”, the colonel, Mars Vickers intervenes, calling Nash “Piggy” and telling him to listen to “Jimmy” because he’s twice the man he is (173). Nash despises the fighting; Geneva is exhilarated by it. Nash is a miserable soldier; Geneva thrives on the battlefield. Both Nash and Geneva question their relationship. To Nash, Geneva, who was always two inches taller, seems to have grown even more. Meanwhile, Geneva wrestles with the obvious differences of someone who felt no glory in service and someone born for it. “Could she accept that in him?” she wonders. “And could he accept this in her?” (145). Towards the end of the novel, when Nash confesses to his brother-in-law Sumner that he no longer thinks of his wife like he used to, Sumner responds, “She’s a woman where it counts.” For Sumner, Geneva’s significance as a woman and partner is reduced to her female sex organs and ability to pleasure her husband. But Nash needs more. Nash thinks Geneva doesn’t know the meaning of femininity and smells like leather. Whereas before the war, mere thoughts of Geneva, “gave him a hard-on, [n]ow ... when he [had time to make love to Geneva], he thought of other women, women who looked and acted like women” (204). Geneva notices that Nash never looks at her anymore like he used to (377) and Nash realizes that he never calls Geneva by her right name, thinking of her instead as her alter-ego “Jimmy” (385). Nash even hopes that Mars will force Geneva to quit the cavalry and praises Mars’ wife Kate who “is doing what she’s supposed to be doing: nursing the sick and behaving like a lady” (386). Brown resolves the marital impasse of both equally likeable characters by having Nash be hit by a bullet while scouting for Union troops alongside Geneva.

Geneva’s need to cross-dress in order to pass as the soldier “Jimmy” sets the basis in the novel for a cornucopia of issues surrounding gender fluidity and homoeroticism. First and foremost is the challenge that gender is binary. The main character is both a woman and a man whose embodiment of both genders leads to same-sex eroticism in the novel. Geneva’s manly features contrasts with the effeminate traits of her husband Nash. Uncharacteristically, Geneva stands two inches taller than her husband. Her long, lean appearance is boyish and she has “tiny breasts,” “broad shoulders,” “non-existent hips” and a “tight little ass” (19, 33). Her legs are more muscled than Nash’s. Nash is described as fair and slender with an elegant frame. Even his fingers are refined and meant to play the piano or write poetry. Women are attracted to Geneva when she is cross-dressed as “Jimmy”, believing her to be a man. Mars is also attracted to her as “Jimmy”, believing her

to be an effeminate young man. At the same time, Mars embodies all the manliness that Nash lacks. Mars is one of the few men taller than “Jimmy.” He’s a born leader with muscular shoulders and breath that smells like whiskey (105). While Geneva insists that women are silly because “they sit around and sew and gossip and nurse the sick” so “[y]ou’re better off as a man” (105), Mars Vickers counters that all the guns of the Confederacy aren’t as powerful as a woman’s kiss so if there were reincarnation, he’d want to return as a woman (105 – 106). One Sunday at camp, when the soldiers begin drinking and dancing, “Jimmy” gets caught between Nash and Mars vying for her attention. As a confrontation ensues when Nash intervenes with Mars and “Jimmy” dancing to fetch “Jimmy” and return to their tent, the homoerotic nature of the love triangle is laid bare. Because Geneva is not a man but a woman who is believed to be a man, the homoeroticism in a military environment composed solely of men, is explored in a “safe” and, for the time, socially acceptable way, particularly for the era of publication when the AIDs epidemic was sweeping the country and stigmatizing the gay community.

The boundaries of gender and same-sex love are also explored through Geneva’s sharing a tent with her husband. Fellow soldiers assume that the pair are a homosexual couple. Tensions increase as Mars Vickers, takes a strong and almost “unnatural” liking to the talented “Jimmy” and an equally powerful loathing to “Jimmy’s” tent mate, Nash. The novel, however, does not normalize or legitimize homosexual relationships. When Mars implies to “Jimmy” that his and Nash’s relationship is inappropriate, “Jimmy”/Geneva reacts greatly offended by the suggestion that his/her tent mate/husband is homosexual. In general, *High Hearts* is more explicit than the other novels regarding sexuality.

Evelyn Scott has reported that when she was writing her biographical novel *Escapade* (1923), censors eliminated what they considered unseemly details about her experience with childbirth. More than sixty years later, Rita Mae Brown liberally uses explicit language and descriptions of sexual acts: “she felt an unfamiliar but welcome hardness bump into her groin.” (19). Brown writes about penises, throbbing cocks, cupping genitals, stupendous erections, and cocksuckers. *High Hearts* describes a mixed-race character who possesses such lustrous beauty that, “[t]he only way a man couldn’t get a hard-on around her was if he was stone queer or dead” (5). Both enslaved and planter women fantasize about physical contact. The house slave Sin-Sin has difficulty understanding her mistress’s cool attitude towards men and believes that women could have themselves a “passel of husbands” and that “God made men and women to enjoy one another” (55). While the

commander's wife, Kate Vickers, has no interest in sex, the other women in *High Hearts* are generally sex-positive. Almost none of the women, particularly those who are married, however, have positive views about matrimony.

Common throughout many of the novels examined, and in *High Hearts* in particular, is the sentiment that marriage invariably leads to disappointment. Conversations amongst women in the novels are peppered with jaded remarks made half-jokingly or warnings given in confidence. Though the delivery varies, the message is often the same: "You're better off without a husband." Readers learn that as a young wife, Geneva's mother, Lutie, was a loving and devoted spouse to her husband, Henley. However, when Henley fathers a child with one of their slaves, she is devastated and recoils at his touch (27). When Lutie's son Jimmy (Geneva's brother and alter-ego namesake) dies, Lutie retreats into self-isolation and will only talk to Sin-Sin and an imaginary lover. With the outbreak of the war, Lutie's role changes from isolated wife to active community member. Her imaginary lover magically disappears along with bitterness towards her husband. Lutie eventually learns that: "[her husband] could add or detract, but only she could create happiness" (394). *High Hearts* casts serious doubt on marriage as the sole quest and vehicle of fulfillment for women. Because of the widespread negative attitude towards marriage, the women of *High Hearts* have little understanding for Geneva's initial sadness about her husband's departure for war. Lutie remarks, "Maybe she's better off" (56) and Di-Peachy describes love as "a disease shared by two" (53). Sin-Sin can't believe that Geneva would disguise herself as a soldier to be with her husband and asks incredulously: "Why she want to do a crazy thing like that?" (81). In fact, Sin-Sin is quite: "[s]ure [she's] not goin' to feel that way [about a man] ever again, and [she] thank[s] the good Lord, too" (81). For the seasoned women, naïve dreams of a knightly bridegroom and happily-ever-after are met with wry cynicism.

The novel draws comparisons between the power hierarchy of men and women to that of masters and slaves. The house slave Sin-Sin doesn't want any man because "she'd die before she'd be a slave of a slave" (34). Di-Peachy, a racially-mixed house slave and Geneva's closest friend (and half-sister), is disappointed about Geneva's plans to marry Nash because "[n]ow she'd have to take orders from Nash and worse, watch Geneva take them, too" (9). Meanwhile, Big Muler, a field hand, lays his claim on Di-Peachy and threatens to kill anyone who touches her. As the novel progresses, Geneva too becomes disappointed in marriage. When Di-Peachy observes that, "[d]isappointment seems to be a

standing feature of marriage,” Geneva warns her ominously, that “marriage isn’t what you think it is!” (310).

The difference between the actual partner and the idealized image of the partner is a constant theme throughout the novel and permeates every marital relationship. In *Parallel Lives* (1983), Phyllis Rose writes, “Marriages set two imaginations to work constructing narratives [...] presumed to be the same for both” (15). She states that in unhappy marriages, there are two versions of reality rather than two people in conflict as each person struggles for imaginative dominance. In happy marriages, according to Rose, “the two patterns agree on the scenario they are enacting” (15). In a patriarchal society such as the Civil War South, men had the power to enforce their narrative as the shared reality—at least on the surface in the dominant discourse. The hidden discourse, as reflected throughout *High Hearts*, reflects the very different reality of women. While Geneva discovers that she was born to be a soldier, Nash re-evaluates his feelings for his wife. Both begin to suspect that they have fallen in love, not with their real partner, but rather their own imagined version of a partner. Speaking from experience, Henley advises his daughter to not be as big a fool as he was and to “[l]earn to see reality as it is, not as you wish it to be” (306). Lutie confides to Henley when the two openly discuss their marriage: “I wonder did I truly love you as you are or did I want to control you, to turn you into someone else” (192). Time sobers Lutie’s expectations of marriage and fidelity.

Mid-way through the novel, Lutie grants Henley her permission to engage in a discreet affair with Kate Vickers, proposing a kind of one-sided “open marriage” arrangement. “I don’t really care,” Lutie says. “In a marriage as long as ours, I think we become as brother and sister in some fundamental way. Your body is yours to do with as you please” (192). Her husband feigns offense and asks how many wives would tell their men to do such a thing. Lutie coolly replies, “More than you might think...if they have any sense” (191). Lutie, once devastated by her husband’s sexual relationship with a slave, is a changed woman. By suggesting to her husband that he have an affair before it happens, she empowers herself as a person with agency in the situation rather than a helpless victim *fait accompli*. Her worth as a woman is no longer dependent on her ability to keep her husband monogamous. Despite her practically-minded approach to marital fidelity, she questions why a man, like the biblical David, would want multiple wives and endure the inevitable squabbles. “She thought that monogamy was the beginning of democracy. Monogamy might go against nature, but it certainly made one’s social and emotional life infinitely

easier. Easier on the purse strings, too" (266). Despite Lutie's unconventional ideas about marriage, it seems likely that the "open" marriage proposal is one-sided. Henley can have a real lover, but Lutie must satisfy her needs with an imaginary one. While the white women struggle to free themselves from their husbands' and society's expectations, black women of the antebellum South struggle to just be free.

In the hierarchy of emotional strength, the slave women in *High Hearts* are often on top. Sin-Sin is described as indestructible (8). When Lutie becomes hysterical, it is Sin-Sin who calms her down. Sin-Sin is also the only person who can keep the seven-foot-tall slave, Big Muler, in line during Nash's absence from the plantation. Despite her strength, or because of it, when Sin-Sin's daughter dies before the war, Sin-Sin refuses to cry (36). Though strong ties are forged across racial lines in the novel, distinctions between the women, depending on the color of their skin, persist. Nevertheless, Rita Mae Brown portrays a strong family connection between Sin-Sin and the Chatfields.

The bond between Sin-Sin and Lutie is so close that at one point in the novel, Lutie refuses to talk to anyone but Sin-Sin. Lutie believes that she would even willingly trade her own life to save Sin-Sin's or her other beloved family members. The word "even" in the text, however, illustrates that though Sin-Sin is part of the family, she is not *really* family. Yet for the plantation children, black and white, Sin-Sin is "Auntie Sin-Sin." The mutual affection between Sin-Sin and the planter children is apparent when Sumner runs to embrace Sin-Sin after a long absence and Sin-Sin's cries: "My young mastah, my baby boy! God done answered my prayers. He brought you safe to Sin-Sin" (187). While Sin-Sin is treated as an integral part of the family, Di-Peachy straddles a role somewhere between slave and not slave.

As a racially-mixed woman, Di-Peachy acts as Geneva's body servant and is therefore always present at family events. Because she is beautiful, men lust after Di-Peachy but pay "her their compliments" in the bounds of decorum that would be due to white planter women. At the same time, Di-Peachy is less constrained by sexual norms than the white women. Reddy Neutral Taylor, the crooked hardware store owner, is over-persistent in his attentions and even offers Henley one thousand dollars to sleep with Di-Peachy (16). When Lutie and Henley believe that Di-Peachy is sleeping with Big Muler, Lutie asks Di-Peachy directly if this is the case (123). The planter couple presume that Di-Peachy, as a black woman, is not only sexually active but has agency over whom she sleeps with. But Di-Peachy's agency is limited to their approval. Lutie informs Di-Peachy that Henley, "doesn't

want [her] carrying on with the help” (134). Ironically, Di-Peachy, who is a slave like Big Muler, is also “help.” Henley, her master and father, does not question Di-Peachy’s virtue but rather her class sensibility when it comes to sleeping with a field hand.

For much of the novel, Di-Peachy is unaware that the plantation master Henley is her father. Because her mother has been sold, Di-Peachy turns to Sin-Sin for “mothering” (57). Her “two points of emotional reference” are Geneva and Sin-Sin even though Di-Peachy and Geneva are unaware that they are half-sisters. Di-Peachy longs to be close to the plantation mistress Lutie but is unknowingly a constant and painful reminder of Henley’s infidelity: “[e]very time [Lutie] looks at that blameless child, she [sees] her own humiliation” (306). Black and white women, though both oppressed, lived radically different lives.

Rita Mae Brown’s sympathetic portrayal of a person who could readily use his patriarchal power to manipulate and abuse those he rules over is problematic. Brown emphasizes the supposedly consensual nature of the inter-racial relationship between Henley and Di-Peachy’s enslaved mother by adding the mitigating ingredient of love. Concealed is the heinousness of a man who impregnates his enslaved lover, keeps her child, then sells his lover away to an uncertain fate. Brown does not even give the woman a name. Henley’s seeming good-nature is underscored by his concern for his suffering wife and the readiness of both his bi-racial daughter Di-Peachy and his other daughter Geneva to accept his actions without any consequences. The love he had for the women in his life is emphasized by his final thoughts as he bleeds to death from a battle wound. After dutifully writing loving letters to his wife Lutie, his daughter Geneva, and his daughter Di-Peachy, he focuses his reveries on Di-Peachy’s mother. He wonders not only if Di-Peachy’s mother loved him but if she ever really loved him (359). Though it doesn’t seem to have been Brown’s intention, in some ways, Henley encapsulates the banality of evil and the question of why ordinary and seemingly likable Southerners were able to commit such appalling deeds. Henley can take his slave’s/lover’s child and sell his slave/lover to continued enslavement but reduce the significance of their relationship to whether or not she ever really loved him. While readers are led to sympathize with the dying Confederate colonel, it is difficult to simultaneously ignore the undescribed suffering this dying man has inflicted on some unnamed enslaved woman.

While disappointment seems to be a recurring theme in the relationships between planter women and their husbands, loss is the recurring theme between planter women and their sons. Lutie loses her first son, Jimmy before the war and later, during the war, loses her

second son Sumner, who adores his mother “despite her peculiarities” and “could tell her almost anything” (27). Jennifer Fitzgerald—Lutie’s small town rival, idolizes her son, Greer, who is never sober and generally unlikeable. One of the most gut-wrenching episodes of the entire novel, and perhaps of all the novels examined, is a graphic scene in which Jennifer is thrust into the role of sacrificial mother. When news reaches Jennifer that Greer’s remains have arrived at the train station, Jennifer rushes to the scene to prove it is untrue. Yet when she opens his coffin and sees his remains, she ends up cradling his detached head all the while repeating: “It’s all right, Greer, honey. It’s all right. You’re home now” (167). Jennifer interprets attempts to calm her down as schemes to wrench her child from her once again and she is having none of it: “‘You can’t have him! He’s my baby!’... she backed off, tightly clutching her son’s head ... [and] screamed bloody hell. She wouldn’t give up the head ... she wouldn’t release her grasp” (167). Jennifer doesn’t relinquish her son’s head until another woman knocks her out. Though not all of the body parts in Greer’s coffin belong to Greer, Lutie insists that they receive the respect they deserve as the remains of another mother’s son (167). Though a merciless war divides the nation, all mothers equally suffer the loss of their beloved children.

Like Jennifer, Lutie is an unwilling but nevertheless sacrificial mother. On the morning when Lutie is preparing to send her son, son-in-law, and husband off to war, she is filled with worry. Her brother and brother-in-law have already left for battle and she is tired of the war. During the conflict, when Lutie can hear the sound of cannons, she becomes hysterical about the safety of her soldier children. She races outside screaming “My babies are out there!” (143). When the portent of impending death, the mystical rider Casimer Harkaway, gallops past her, Lutie is distraught that she is expected to surrender her “remaining child to the bloody jaws of hell [too]” (245). Like the slave women, Lutie imagines that it is better to have no child like her sister than to give birth, raise, and then have to sacrifice a child to war. Yet, not having a child in a society that equated womanhood to motherhood was exceptionally difficult.

According to Pearson and Pope, the only positive role conventional thinking grants an aging woman is motherhood (*The Female Hero* 42). In Southern society, women who did not strive to fulfill their role as mothers were particularly frowned upon. Rita Mae Brown personifies the struggle of women who do not want children in the character of Kate Vickers. Kate “loathes” conversations with her husband about having children and believes that pregnancy will ruin her figure. She thinks of children as “hostages,” who will “freight”

her down for twenty years (222). Kate's husband, Mars, resents her for not wanting a family and not sleeping with him enough. He thinks of himself as a man who has been "betrayed by his cock" and that "those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make fall in love" (130). He is angry that he is "reduced to begging for it" and "[t]hough her sex drive was low, her ambition was high" (130). When Mars Vickers brings up the topic of children, Kate "fix[es] him a cobalt stare." Rather than admit her aversion to motherhood, Kate blames the war: "This is no time to have a child" (222). But a woman who doesn't want children is not a worthy wife and Mars, who thinks he is reaching the age where a man "needs" children, begins despising not only his wife, but all women: "Lacerated by Kate's presence, he'd begun to fear the whole breed or hate them. He wasn't sure which" (176). Despite Mars' frustration, it is his wife, Kate, who asks for a divorce.

High Hearts attaches less of a stigma to divorce than the other novels. Whereas the characters of *GWTW* view divorce as so socially unacceptable that it is out of the question, in the post-war era, Mars and Kate Vickers are able to divorce and maintain their social status as divorcees. Despite the (seemingly minor) social scandal that ensues, Mars is able to take Geneva as his second wife. Geneva marries Mars, but, according to the narrator, she continued to wear pants for the rest of her life.

2.4. *Novels of Third-Wave Feminism: 1992–2002*

The novels published during third-wave feminism and analyzed herein are both written by and about women who had been marginalized both in real life and in fiction. The milestone heralding third-wave feminism is often believed to be Anita Hill's testimony against Thomas Clarence at his confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Judge. Despite legitimate sexual harassment allegations against him, Mr. Clarence was confirmed to office. For many women, the outcome as well as Anita Hill's treatment by white male congressional members laid bare the hypocrisy of a system that claimed to open its doors to equality but insisted on perpetuating its patriarchal version of women in the work force. Anita Hill could have her say but her words held no meaningful power. Women should exist in the workforce according to how men wanted them there. Third-wave feminism challenged this viewpoint.

Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* also challenged the status quo. The novel is a reinterpretation of *GWTW*'s version of the past told from the view of the heroine's imagined racially-mixed half-sister. Randall also turns the controversial figure of Mammy

completely on its head. Randall's tale is a feat of empowerment for black women and their place in the historical narrative of the nation. The novel reflects one of the central messages of third-wave Feminism: that there is no universal woman and despite their differences, all women matter.

The heroine of *Enemy Women* comes from the Ozarks region of the United States where community members have to contend with the stigmatizing label of "hillbillies."⁶⁸ The novel portrays how a young woman struggles not only with the misconceptions about who she is but also with expectations about who she, as a young woman, is supposed to want to be. The books published during third-wave Feminism are the only ones, besides a few of the vignettes included in *The Wave*, that end with heroines who are single and set on pursuing goals of self-actualization that do not involve men or family.

THE WIND DONE GONE

The Wind Done Gone has been officially classified as a parody of *GWTW* which reinterprets the iconic characters and much of the story from a racially-mixed woman's viewpoint. Alice Randall places the black woman's experience back into the history of the US South, as well as into the canon of historical fiction. The novel's diary form endows the racially-mixed heroine with the authoritative voice to tell her life story in her own words. For Randall and her enslaved characters, the South of the Civil War era was a place full of resentment and pain more reminiscent of Dante's levels of hell than the Bible's Garden of Eden. Slavery permeated all the relationships of the young heroine, particularly the ones that should have afforded her the greatest security and confidence – the bond with female family members.

Throughout the novel, the heroine Cynara is plagued by feelings of betrayal in regards to her mother, the plantation Mammy, and feelings of envy towards her mother's pet, her presumably white half-sister, Other. Other, as her name implies, is a kind of doppelgänger for Cynara. Although Cynara's father is the plantation master and Cynara has light skin and green eyes, she has inherited her slave status from her mother. From a young age, Cynara suffers from a mixture of envy and resentment towards her half-sister Other who she has to serve and who Mammy loving refers to as "Lamb." When Other suckles on Mammy's breast, Cynara feels "a rage of possession" and physically aches. When Cynara has nightmares, she dreams that her mother is serving Other a "choice piece of dark meat" (12).

A plot twist eventually reveals that Cynara's dreaded half-sister and Other's mother, Lady, are actually racially-mixed women who have been "passing" as white planter women. Cynara's deep-rooted hostility has been targeting a half-sister who is Cynara's racial likeness but ranked socially superior. The web Randall weaves invokes a host of interesting questions: What is race? Who and what determines racial affiliations? How do gender, race, and class intersect with our public and private lives? Yet Randall forgoes the opportunity to delve into these issues and never adequately addresses the ramifications the revelation has on the women's self-reflection of their previous behavior towards one another. If there is nothing deep down inside of us, which we have not put there ourselves (Richard Rorty qtd. in Nelson 505), then Cynara's issues with Other are a reflection of issues which Cynara has internalized in herself. Cynara fails to recognize her own power to shape her narrative, even in such confined boundaries. Instead of contemplating the social injustice of racialization, Cynara nurses a deep resentment towards a half-sister who she has made the personification of her own racial discrimination.

Cynara's resentment towards her mother lingers even after her mother dies. When a fellow former slave expresses sympathy towards Cynara for the loss of her mother, Cynara responds, "I hadn't known my mother well and she didn't know me" (84). When Mammy's body is laid out in her bedroom, Cynara spies from a darkened corner, Other paying her respects to Mammy. "She lay her head on Mammy's chest and told Mammy her troubles, like Mammy care, like she was telling her to fetch a shawl" (40). Cynara's ambivalent feelings for both her deceased mother and her half-sister climax when she demands that Other leave the bedroom to grant Cynara and her mother some time alone. Cynara believes that angels weep at an ebony child's longing for attention and intimacy from its "dusky Mama."

There are so many things of Other's I have wanted. Things, then people. People more than things – but nothing she has ever had, no emerald, not R., have I ever wanted as much as I wanted her love for Mammy. As the sun sets, it don't hurt near as much that Mammy didn't love me as it hurts that I didn't love Mammy.... It hurts not to love her. And it hurts more when I didn't—I still don't—believe she ever loved me. ...God damn her soul! (42)

When Other dies, Cynara visits her grave and reflects on her muddled emotions toward Mammy, Other, and herself. Other, she believes, was afraid of Mammy. Meanwhile, Cynara recognizes her negative feelings towards them both as well as herself. She hated Other for bruising Mammy, hated Mammy for being bruised, and hated herself for not being

able to put a stop to the situations and resulting pain. “When you can’t protect a thing you love, it’s natural to come to hate that thing a little bit more each and every time it’s injured. Even if that thing is your Mammy’s heart. Even if that thing is your daughter’s body” (98). Like the slave Jack in *Jubilee* who hates his wife, Hetta, for being victimized, Mammy and her daughter hate each other and themselves for their inability to shield those they love from slavery’s abuses.

Although Cynara occasionally hints that she believes that all the women are casualties to varying degrees of the brutal slaveholding system, her intense feelings of anger and jealousy incapacitate her ability to view others as victimized as herself. In the end, she finds some kind of strange comfort when “Other dies without ever once seeing her mother’s breasts, breasts on which I sucked” (101). Even at the end of the novel, Cynara is not concerned with whether or not her loved ones loved her but whether or not her loved ones loved her more than they loved her half-sister. “I wish Mammy kissed me as Other watched. I wish Mammy loved me and Other saw it” (145). Her ardent desire to be loved more than Other extends over several pages. “What if Mammy always loved me, and loved me more? What if Garlic was right? What if Lady was black and loved me and loved me more? What if I had never lost the first race? What does that do to the savor of the second?” (147).

Cynara is not the only one who feels snubbed by the closeness of Mammy and Other. Other’s mother, Lady, is also jealous of the bond between Mammy and Other and this draws Lady closer to Cynara. Lady takes Cynara to suckle, telling her, “You’re my little girl, aren’t you?” (15). She confides in Cynara that she wishes she were her daughter and Cynara shares this wish. “I had so long and fervently wished for Lady to be my mother, her wish sounded to my ear only natural and true. It’s hard, having natural wishes in an unnatural time” (120). Lady is the one who reveals to Cynara that Planter is her father when Lady witnesses Cynara drinking alcohol and warns her that if she continues to drink, with the Irish blood in her, she’ll end up a drunkard (97). In this way, *The Wind Done Gone* supports the notion that blood lines, particularly from the Irish, can corrupt a person.

Despite their once close relationship, like the plantation mistresses in *Jubilee* and *High Hearts*, Lady rejects Cynara as she matures and her resemblance to her father becomes an increasingly unpleasant reminder to Lady of her husband’s infidelity. “And every day it was easier to see more of him in me, because every day she was coming to see other things in me she didn’t like. And the more she saw what she didn’t like, the more she could see Planter in me” (98). The Southern diarist Mary Chestnut Boykin wrote during the Civil

War era about the problem of the illegitimate children of plantation owners who became painful reminders not only to planter wives but other family and community members of the moral failings and hypocrisy of the Southern elite. While coercive methods could be used to suppress hidden discourse that challenged the dubious albeit dominant Southern narrative of God-fearing white people civilizing black savages, mixed-race children were harder to conceal.

As Cynara matures, Planter attempts to resolve the problem of his and her undeniable resemblance by suggesting to a fellow plantation owner that they resolve their “delicate situations” by exchanging the little blooms that may need replanting. Letters between plantation owners indicate that such swaps were not uncommon and a preferred method to rid households of overt signs of white male indiscretions. Such trades kept illegitimate offspring off the auction block and possibly spared them physical and sexual abuse. At the same time, such arrangements also provided a steady pool of much-sought-after lighter skinned personnel as house servants. Whether such agreements were concluded out of love, guilt, convenience, or social pressures, we will never know. However, it is conceivable that not all planters made any effort to discreetly and, in their eyes, constructively mitigate the suffering their philandering had caused. Unfortunately, however, in *The Wind Done Gone*, thirteen-year-old Cynara ends up on the auction block because of Mammy’s “divided loyalties” and Other’s jealousies. For Cynara, the betrayal by a mother who allows her daughter to be auctioned away cuts deep. “I have never forgiven Mammy for the hours I stood bare-breasted in the market in Charleston. I don’t know how to forgive her and love myself” (31).

While Cynara’s “black blood” makes her vulnerable to abuse, her light skin and green eyes make her a sought-after concubine. According to Brenda Stevenson, white Southern men often chose concubines whose appearance and mannerisms resembled those of white women. “These women ... had to possess a degree of sophistication and cultural knowledge... [as well as] an intimate familiarity with southern white females’ culture and conventions.” Because these women were expected to maintain comfortable and presentable homes for privileged men, “slave owners preferred that their concubines not only look like white women, but also dress, speak, clean, sew, cook, and worship like them as well” (107). The racially-mixed background of these women also made them ideal heroines in novels that strove to portray the atrocities of slavery to white female readers.

“Mulatto” slaves who had been “house servants” were more likely to possess the mannerisms and behavior that would be familiar to white female readers.

Though Cynara is not considered a Southern belle due to her racial heritage, her light-skin and ability to assume the role of a cultured lady, often restrict her to the same social norms that white women are subjected to. When she visits the Douglasses for tea she asks herself, “Was this the first party in my life I had attended alone, unescorted? Has any other woman in the world arrived at a formal party on her own?” (107). When she travels to Washington to see the Congressman, her new love interest, she confides in her diary the fears of traveling alone. “I am traveling unescorted. I feel nauseous. There are rascals of every hue on this train. Whatever remained of my good name will be gone by the time we reach Washington. Why doesn’t anyone assume that a woman on her own wants to be?” (198). Once she arrives in Washington, she is unable to rent a room as “an unaccompanied woman” (198). Both Di-Peachy in *High Hearts* and Cynara in *The Wind Done Gone* are racially-mixed women who, the more they are accepted into white society and “civilized,” the more they are expected to adhere to the same behavioral constraints that restrict privileged white women.

Though not subject to the same social expectations as refined ladies, the prostitutes in *The Wind Done Gone* like those who are portrayed in *The Wave* and *GWTW*, are upright, likeable characters. Like Belle Watling in *GWTW*, Beauty in *The Wind Done Gone* is a redeemable whore. When Cynara is auctioned at the slave market in Charleston, she is purchased by Beauty to work in her Atlanta brothel as a maid. Beauty is a kind woman who becomes a mother-figure to Cynara, acting as the girl’s confidante and mentor. Though Cynara never works as a whore, she learns valuable life lessons at the brothel: “We who clean the sheets and drawers know all about blood and talk about it too. You clean the sheets, you know a lot of things” (132). Later in the novel, when Cynara shows off her wedding ring to Beauty, she kisses her and thinks how much women and slaves have in common: “I kiss Beauty because Jeems is a glorified stable boy and the Congressman is far away and because we both love R. One way of looking at it, all women are niggers. For sure, every woman I ever knew was a nigger –whether she knew it or not” (177).

From the beginning, Mammy, and her husband Garlic use Mammy’s body to maintain control of the plantation. According to Garlic, the sleeping arrangements in the household began on the wedding night of Planter and Lady.

Planter came to the room and found Lady knocked out, completely drunk, sleeping in Mammy's arms. ...Mammy went to Planter to his room and gave him what he wanted in his bed. She gave it so good, he never complained. Mammy say Lady came to think of her baby as an immaculate conception...Between them, they called Lady "Virgin Mary." She liked to pray, and she got her babies without ever knowing a man. (60)

In *The Plantation Mistress*, Catherine Clinton writes that "within the slave South, all black women were potentially surrogate prostitutes" (221). Though Mammy willingly places herself in Planter's bed, she does so to maintain her and Garlic's hidden hand of power. Mammy calculatingly "prostitutes" herself but retains her agency by proactively choosing to sleep with Planter. Meanwhile, the child-like and naïve planter mistress, characterized with traits formerly applied to black people, unknowingly conceives while drunk. What today would constitute spousal rape is depicted in *Wind Done Gone* as an act of mercy. Lady is able to conceive the Planter's "white" children without having to satisfy his carnal needs. In Randall's narrative, Mammy performs sexual favors for Planter with the tacit approval of her black husband, Garlic. Even when Garlic confesses to Cynara that he had always wished that he and not planter, had been her father, he does so matter-of-factly. Though the sexuality is frank and explicit, it is, at the same time, sterile and without feeling. Like her mother, Cynara initially uses her body as an instrument of control and revenge.

What begins as a kind of one-sided competition for R's affections, ends with Cynara sincerely seeking affirmation that R loves her more than Other: "I believe, I believed, I will continue to believe, that he loves me more than he loved her. That he loved me first and fiercer, ... But I know this, this I remember, the men don't love the brown babies as they love the pale white ones" (131). Cynara seems triumphant in her battle for affection when R. and Other's daughter Precious dies and she is in the room where R. mourns, holding his hand. "In the room we were a family. Grief will form one family just the way it will destroy another. It's a primary force" (17). Her affections for R. wane, however, when she meets a black congressman. Unusual for a heroine of Civil War fiction novels, Cynara engages in an affair and must choose between two lovers, a black man and white man.

Cynara's relationship with the black congressman is indicative of an imagined future for black women which is confined to supporting black men. Her lover is referred to throughout the novel simply as "Congressman," and only at the very end, through a proud pronouncement of empowerment, by his proper name: "Congressman Adam Conyers." Like the famous mixed-race abolitionist Frederick Douglass, *The Wind Done Gone's*

Congressman is willing to risk all he has achieved for the sake of love. For the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, this meant taking Maria Dietrich, a white suffragist, as his second wife. For Cynara's lover, this means marrying a woman with an illicit past. Cynara, however, striving to protect his reputation, declines his offer. Unlike *GWTW*'s Scarlett O'Hara, however, Cynara is comfortable with the idea of being a single woman. Cynara bears the congressman's son and gives him to his father and his father's wife to raise. She thus sacrifices her son for his own good and the good of the black community. Throughout their lives, she financially supports his education so he can pursue the career path of his father and also become a congressman. Cynara's goal is not to make a positive contribution to the future of the black community in her own right. Instead, she views her role as the one envisioned for black women by Frances E. W. Harper: as a supporter of black men who will do so. Perhaps precisely for this reason, Randall grants Cynara a son. A daughter, after all, would need more than a generation to realize the dream of a congressional seat. Nevertheless, *The Wind Done Gone* forges a new path for Civil War heroines who, though neither spinster nor whore, could live happily ever after on their own.

ENEMY WOMEN

Gender norms were perhaps some of the first casualties of the Civil War, particularly for mountain women like the heroine of *Enemy Women*, Adair. The novel tells the story of a young woman who is imprisoned in St. Louis during the war who just wants to break free, rescue her father, and be left alone to ride her horses. Through dialogue and actions, Jiles superbly contrasts the image of the supposed Southern lady that continued to burn bright in the mind's eye of the Southern men and women during the Civil War era and a young Ozark woman who is determined to decide for herself who she is, what she is made of, and who she wants to be.

The initial attempt of many Ozarkers to remain neutral at the outset of the conflict became increasingly difficult in August 1861 when the Union placed the entire state of Missouri under martial law.⁶⁹ Over 360 women were incarcerated in St. Louis during the war for treasonous activities such as overt disloyalty, corresponding with, sheltering, or offering supplies to enemy combatants, insulting Union soldiers, or encouraging men to "go south" to join Confederate forces (Curran 5). Although most women were able to take a loyalty oath and be released, those who refused face prolonged imprisonment or banishment to regions beyond Federal lines (Curran 7). Missouri women's (un)willingness to take such

an oath is apparent in Mildred Elizabeth Powell's response to an offer of freedom for a loyalty oath, as recorded in her Civil War journal: "I wrote [the Union officer] a pithy little note ... which I suppose has settled all doubts upon that subject, telling him I am as loyal as any faithful subject can be to the best and most superior man that ever graced a presidential chair" (Powell ch. "Rebel Girl"). Initially the act of throwing women in jail was met north and south of the Mason Dixon Line with outrage. Yet imprisonment was just one example of the battle waged directly on Southern women during the war.

Major General Benjamin Franklin Butler's direct challenge to the women of New Orleans with his "Woman Order" and Sherman's invasion of the domestic sphere⁷⁰ with the pillaging and destruction of all public and private Southern property in the wake of his march, directed the battle charge not just at Confederate soldiers but also white Southern women. While female prisons and Butler's measures are irrefutable evidence that the Union viewed Southern white women as possible threats that needed to be quelled, public sentiment at the time and later historical accounts⁷¹ generally maintained the view of women, not as active participants, but as detached bystanders. *Enemy Women* directly challenges the notion that women spent the war confined within a cage of domesticity, experiencing the hardship of battle on the sidelines.

In the third year of the Civil War, Adair and her two younger sisters find themselves left on their own when a band of men from the Missouri State Militia raid their small family farm in the Ozark mountains, chase away their brother, and carry off their father. Adair assumes the role of head of the household. Determined to locate and have her father released, Adair safely situates her younger sisters with a family living far away from the Yankee garrison. War or no war, the young ladies must safeguard their reputations because, according to their brother, "[t]here are women that fall into bad habits in refugee camps" and their Pa "wouldn't want [them] all near women like that" (45).

Enemy Women, however, demonstrates how the naive belief in knights of shining armor could lead to a rude awakening for those who clung to notions of Southern ladyhood during the conflict. When Adair is wrongfully imprisoned as a traitor to the Union, her practically-minded refusal to internalize the valued traits of Southern ladyhood gives her the strength and wherewithal to survive. In contrast, Adair's prison friend, Rhoda, embraces Southern gender norms. For Rhoda, ladyhood is clearly not just about gender but about class. Because a "real" lady does not help herself, Rhoda rejects Adair's suggestion that they should escape. Instead, Rhoda would prefer to remain in a prison of the Union, the

patriarchy, and her own culturally-conditioned notions. From her cell window, Adair later observes Rhoda walking down the street “in a confused, shambling way” with her head down for having apparently gotten herself “in the family way with her lawyer.” Adair surmises that Rhoda is probably heading for either “hell or a bordello” (113).

Unlike Rhoda, Adair is not looking for a man to solve her problems and dreads the thought of relinquishing her freedom to wifedom. Nevertheless, Adair and the major in charge of the prison, Will Neumann, develop a mutual affection for one another. When they meet in his office, the Major offers Adair a mirror and brush to groom herself while there. The gesture, however, triggers Adair’s fears of entrapment. “In effect,” Adair thinks, “the woman entrapped in a mirror polices herself so that those in power will be attracted to her and care for her” (Jiles 23). During the Civil War era, etiquette books recommended that women use mirrors as self-surveillance tools to control their “terrible fits.” The recommendation implied not only that fits were unreasonable, but also that women were expected to safeguard their docility through cradle-to-crypt surveillance by husbands, society, and the mirror-image of themselves (Young 13). Just as Adair rejects her self-policing image, she also refuses to sign a false confession about her supposed loyalties. In place of a confession, Adair writes the Major a tale about a prince, a queen, and Snow White, stating, “I’ll tell you who the prince was, it was the huntsman himself, who harries us away from the mirror” (100).

Only after the socially-conditioned image is dispelled, can self-actualization occur. A major theme of the novel, which can also be classified as a *bildungsroman*, is the struggle to be true to oneself. As recipients of wedding quilts and hope chests, Adair realizes from a young age that she and her sisters are being socially groomed for wifedom and motherhood and a future “in a noisy house, trapped by domesticity” (14). At the same time, positive, unmarried female role models are lacking in the community. The one townswoman who has never married is the Witch of Slayton Ford. Whether being a spinster makes her a witch or being a witch makes her a spinster is not clear.⁷² Adair’s life goal, however, is to spend her days riding her horse into the great expanse. Believing that women are born with “little clocks ticking away inside ... that told them it was time to have children,” she dreads the inevitable (260). “[F]or the wrong man could shut you up in a house, he could take your horse away from you if he proved cruel, and put him to a plow, and beat you with a broom handle and no one could rescue you” (17). Major Neumann, however, seems to be different.

Will Neumann's marriage proposal to Adair already appears to differentiate him as a man ready to accept a woman as his equal partner. When he promises her all the horses in the world (124, 132). This, despite his belief that horse breeding is inappropriate for ladies: "Brood mares and a good stallion. I don't know if they allow ladies to do that ... You may have to get a dispensation from the Pope or something ... Ladies have no business with that kind of thing" (108). Rather than accede to her socially prescribed role, Adair tells the Major she might just have to go to hell then (108). The Major's proposal is progressive and it is not. The theme of marriage and entrapment continues. By offering Adair horses, the Major acknowledges that Adair has passions and interests beyond her husband and household. Because Adair will have to tend to the horses, the Major is also granting Adair implicit permission to engage in activities beyond cooking and cleaning. While the proposal directly to Adair rather than through a male family member is evidence of the Major's belief in Adair's ability to decide her own future, there are no male family members for him to make his case to. The gift-giving underscores the Major's masculine identity by demonstrating his socioeconomic capability to provide for his future wife's wants and needs (Schwartz 3). Yet the present also serves to seal the deal by acting upon the gratitude imperative which, as defined by Barry Schwartz, automatically indebts Adair to the Major (10). This is compounded by the fact that at the time of his proposal, Adair is literally the Major's prisoner. He has the power to determine her well-being. When the Major is transferred away from prison duty, he again attempts to use the gratitude imperative to ensure that his and Adair's relationship continues. The Major gives Adair gold coins to bribe the prison guards so she can escape. While doing so, he secures her promise that she will not marry someone else in his absence and the two become engaged.

According to Pearson and Pope, literature can illustrate the pressure that social norms exert on women by promoting "[a]n awareness of the psychological and social mine field through which the female hero moves." They argue that this in turn, "also gives the reader an increased appreciation of her courage and ingenuity" (12). In *Enemy Women*, the important role that social norms play is apparent not only through the conflict that rages within the heroine when contemplating the Major's marriage proposal and her fears about losing her independence through marriage; it is also apparent on her return journey home. Jiles shows the problematic value system of the patriarchal world. Although Adair successfully escapes from prison, the lack of a hat implies that she is not a lady. This in turn makes her vulnerable to attentions by random male strangers. By securing herself a hat as her first necessary act

of freedom, Adair is able to rise to ladyhood and, because “ladies don’t talk to strange men,” avoid interactions with suspicious soldiers (155). Despite the raging conflict, people are surprised that Adair is traveling on her own. When Adair encounters Greasy John, an acquaintance from her home town, he can’t believe that “[t]his is what the war has done to this world” (233). For Greasy John and his companion Asa Smitters, men dying of disease and starvation and voluntarily slaughtering one another with man-made weapons isn’t nearly as disconcerting as a young woman traveling by herself. Adair, however, does not allow the men’s perception of her proper wartime place to deter her from driving a hard bargain for a saddle and her sister’s horse, Dolly. Despite social expectations, Adair has learned to fend for herself.

During her journey home, Adair waivers between brief stints of romantic idealizations about love and marriage, and level-headed skepticism about becoming someone’s wife. She suspects that perhaps companionship with a horse may be preferable to companionship with a man (211). When she is delirious with fever, Adair fondly recalls the intimate moments together with the Major. As Adair prays for salvation, her appeals are targeted at a blend of God and the Major. Adair beseeches Him to hear her story—recalling an event earlier in the novel when she penned the same tale for the Major. “She then told God a story about a horse called Whiskey ... Or maybe it wasn’t God, maybe the Major was the image in her mind” (192). God and the Major blur into a patriarchal one, both powerful enough to hold judgment over her and determine her fate. Her feverish stints conjure up images of her life as a wife “caught up with eternal work indoors, with carding wool and washing babies’ diapers and a truck garden and chickens and canning and the eternal weaving and spinning” (259). She concludes that even if she survives her bout of illness, marriage would probably be too much to bear. Jessie, the tavern owner where Adair temporarily takes a job, concurs. According to Jessie, tavern work life is preferable to marital life because at the tavern, at least you get the evenings off. “If you’re married you can’t quit of an evening. You will be up all night with a baby or sewing and repairing things that are broke” (290). Jessie predicts that unless Adair manages to snag a rich man with servants, her married life will be filled with toiling, washing, weaving, and scrubbing.

Enemy Women ends ambiguously. Adair returns to her family home only to discover that it no longer belongs to her family. As she takes a walk to contemplate her future, she sees from afar the Major searching for her. She lingers at first and then hurries towards him.

Will she marry him? Probably. But *Enemy Women* leaves the question unanswered and for readers to decide.

B. WOMEN, CLASS, PROPERTY & WEALTH

“[In the South] class identity had to be constantly asserted and claimed. Evident in skin, color, dress, hairstyle, language, and prescribed behavior, race, class, and gender were both the markers and the principal determinants of power, as well as the stuff of self-definition.”

—Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention*

In the United States, because of the undeniable power of class, a kind of “birth lottery” has ruled. From a person’s day of birth, the race, gender, and ethnicity, of the newborn combine with the class standing of its mother⁷³ to determine whether the bouncing bundle of joy has chains weighing down its ankles or wings lifting up its back. Class positioning can determine the extent that a person is free to engage in civic functions, to enjoy personal freedoms, to access adequate health care, and to lead an autonomous existence. Combined with power, class can dictate who and what is expendable. The permeability of class borders in impeding or facilitating the upward and downward mobility of a person or group of persons through the rungs of society is also important in understanding the social positioning of certain groups in the history of the nation.

According to Marxist criticism, the goals of all social and political activities in a society is to acquire and maintain economic dominance which subsequently leads to social and political power. In turn, the relationship among socioeconomic classes determines the distribution and characteristics of economic power. Marxist criticism maintains that although people are (mis)led to believe in social divisions based on factors such as religion, race, gender, political alliances, and belief systems, the real division is, in fact, one of an economic nature between the haves and the have-nots. For Marx and early Marxists, economic power was derived from ownership over the means of production, for later scholars, economic power also extended to ownership of resources and capital growth. Interestingly, Karl Marx reported on the US Civil War and what he called “the root of all evil—slavery” for the Vienna newspaper *die Presse* as a London correspondent in the years 1861 and 1862. In a report from November 7, 1861, under the subtitle, “Battle for Two Social Systems” Marx wrote:

As early as 1856–1860, the political spokesmen, lawyers, moralists and theologians of the slave-owner party had sought to prove not so much that Negro slavery was justified as that color was irrelevant to the cause and that the working class everywhere was created for slavery...the war of the

Southern Confederation, in the true sense of the word, is a war of conquest to expand and eternalize slavery ... [and] is thus nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labor.

1. Aspects of Class

Class rank was particularly important in the antebellum South and the Confederacy. Though the prevailing historical narrative of the pre-Civil War South portrays a monolithic white society united in ideals and convictions and battle-ready to preserve its “way of life”, a closer look at the question of class reveals a different picture. The veneer of (white) class unity became increasingly fraught with discord with the first talk of secession and even more so as war casualties escalated and living conditions of the non-elite grew ever more precarious. In fact, class divides had long plagued the South and the fissures of division were already apparent decades earlier when the foundation stones of the new nation were first being laid.

Despite the beloved myth that the Revolutionary War was fought to give birth to a nation based on freedom, independence, and equality, the actual history is far more complex and rooted as much in class privilege and elitism as it is in suppression and enslavement. In his book, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time*, historian Carroll Quigley argues that the structural framework of the proposed ruling system is evidence of the Founding Fathers’ ambitions to secure access to power, wealth, and leadership for a select few. Rather than establishing a direct democracy, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson et al. founded a republic in which representatives, not the public, ruled the nation. They graciously guaranteed “the common man” the right to pursue “happiness” (an unlimited resource) while maintaining for themselves the ability to own and manage “property” (a limited resource).

The Founding Fathers had assumed that the political control of the country would be conducted by men of property and leisure who would generally know each other personally and, facing no need for urgent decisions, would move government to action when they agreed and be able to prevent it from acting, without serious damages, when they could not agree. (Quigley 70)

The Declaration of Independence as well as subsequent legislation, therefore, in the words of the intellectual historian Howard Mumford Jones, entitled men to “the ghastly privilege of pursuing a phantom and embracing a delusion” (17). The new nation would be a class-based society, ruled neither by royals nor commoners, but rather by those of wealth, power,

property, privilege, and prestige. By restricting the right to vote first to white men with land holdings or wealth and later to men who could afford poll taxes, pass literacy tests, provide “good-character” endorsements, or prove that a father or grandfather had voted, an elite few ensured that ruling power (and wealth) would remain in the hands of a select few men.⁷⁴ Southern planters, in particular, were especially well-versed in compelling arguments to maintain a class society with impermeable boundaries of demarcation. Though their lines of reasoning at times severely clashed, they could usually agree on the ultimate goal – a ruling class of landowners presiding over a subservient class of slave laborers.

In the 1850s, George Fitzhugh,⁷⁵ a Virginian-born social theorist, contended that slavery was a form of socialism more humane than the wage-labor common in the North. Not only did Fitzhugh argue that the Southern slavery system was not excessive, he argued that it should, in fact, be expanded across racial lines to include poor whites, who are a “naturally depraved class” who are “born prone to crime.” Fitzhugh contended that because all men are not born physically, morally, or intellectually equal, they cannot expect or be expected to hold equal rights in society. “The weak of mind or body require guidance, support and protection; they must obey and work for those who protect and guide them ... Nature has made them all slaves” (178). Fitzhugh argued that:

Men are not ‘born entitled to equal rights!’ It would be far nearer the truth to say, ‘that some were born with saddles on their backs, and others booted and spurred to ride them,’—and riding does them good. They need the reins, the bit and the spur. No two men by nature are exactly equal or exactly alike. No institutions can prevent the few from acquiring rule and ascendancy over the many. (179)

The idea of a natural ruling class in the South, born of royal lineage, and destined to reign had become widely prevalent by the Civil War. In *The Mind of the South*, W. J. Cash traces the historical development of class society in the South and argues that the myth of a Southern aristocracy descending from the best blood in Europe is simply that—a myth. Likewise, is the notion that poor whites stemmed from criminals. According to Cash, to be successful and tame the land, the first settlers were most likely laborers and/or debtors. For Cash, a privileged Southern class arose when a land holder:

pyramided his holdings in land and slaves, squeezed out his smaller neighbors and relegated them to the remote Shenandoah, abandoned his story-and-a-half house for his new “hall,” sent his sons to William and Mary and afterward to the English universities or the law schools of London. These sons brought back the manners of the Georges and more developed and subtle notions of class. And the sons of these in turn began to think of

themselves as true aristocrats and to be accepted as such by those about them—to set themselves consciously to the elaboration and propagation of a tradition. (8)

Cash argues that the small minority who rose in the social hierarchy, did so, in all probability, through superior farming skills and by investing in slave labor to grow their land and property holdings by elbowing out less aggressive neighbors.⁷⁶ “Beneath these,” he writes, “was a vague race lumped together indiscriminately as the poor whites—very often, in fact, as the ‘white-trash.’” Those belonging to this “inferior” class, if the myth were to be believed, had supposedly descended from “convict servants, redemptioners, and debtors ... with a sprinkling of the most unsuccessful sort of European peasants and farm laborers and the dregs of the European town slums” (Cash ix).⁷⁷

Expansive plantations first really became possible through the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 which boosted large-scale cotton production. Hitherto, Cash convincingly argues, class distinctions in the South were most likely immaterial. The cultivated myth therefore most likely lasted only about 40–70 years from the beginning of the early 1800s until the Civil War. Nevertheless, the myth transformed reality, at least in the minds of the ruling class, and the idea of Southern aristocracy outlived the actual era of its existence by decades, wielding a powerful and lasting influence on attitudes towards class in the South.

In the South, slave ownership was often a predominant symbol of class status. Slaves were considered property and the growth of the slave trade as an economic branch, even after the ban on slave imports in 1807, was only dependent on the demand for more slaves and the ability of slave women to have children. By 1860, 48% of all slaves lived in *plantation households* (Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household* 32) holding twenty or more slaves (Edwards 51). Then came the *slaveholding households*, with upwards of three slaves and *farm households* with three or fewer slaves. Edwards states that 20% of all slaves lived on estates holding between 10 and 20 slaves and 32% of slaves on farms with less than 10 slaves (51). Finally, *yeoman households* typically included no slaves but could move in and out of slaveholding without altering their basic characteristics (Fox-Genovese 32).

The exact size of the South’s ruling class in 1860 at the outbreak of the Civil War is impossible to pinpoint. One of the legacies of *Gone with the Wind* was the lasting narrative it spun that the South was solely and universally composed of an aristocratic class that resided in Doric-columned mansions overlooking expansive acres of cotton fields. Every

white Southerner, so the film script, was wealthy, cultured, literate, and owned a slew of happy, willing slaves. The reality was far different.

Michael O'Brien in *The Many Souths: Class in Southern Culture* (2003) contends that by the 1830s the idea of a Southern "aristocracy" was becoming a "tenuous" and "semi-ironical" notion and was mostly used to refer to rich people who had powerful networks and were politically influential (5). This may have been equivalent to modern day references to "elites".

In fact, only two percent of all plantation owners belonged to the upper-most class and owned 1000 of the 50,000 plantations between Maryland and Texas. Most farmers led far simpler lives with few if any slaves. About two-thirds, did not, nor could afford to own a single one of the four million slaves who were held captive in 1860 south of the Mason-Dixon line.

The structure of southern slave ownership did not match popular conception. In 1860 less than 5% of the white population were slaveowners. Of these, 72% had fewer than 10 slaves, and more than half owned fewer than five. The largest single category of slaveowner owned only one. Most slaveowners, then, owned very few, but most slaves were part of the larger holdings. At the other end of the spectrum 'substantial planters' with 20 or more slaves were only 12 %. (Cooper qtd. in A. F. Scott, *The Southern Lady* 295, FN 42)

Generally, the more slaves one was able to afford, the higher the class status. Though not all people who held slaves were members of the upper-most privileged class, membership in that class typically required the possession of more than twenty slaves.⁷⁸ Though somewhat of an anomaly, historical records show that indeed a few black men also owned slave plantations in the antebellum South (Schwarz 317–88).⁷⁹ Slaves were also generally considered necessary for a Southern woman to assume the status of a plantation belle, mistress, or lady. In this way, the status of the "master class" was dependent on a "slave class." Because slavery was based on race, race and class in the antebellum South were intrinsically linked.

During the mid-1800s two other Southern white classes also existed throughout the South: the "poor white trash" and "the crackers." According to Michael O'Brien, the moral dimension antebellum Southerners associated with class is evidenced in the wide array of disparaging labels used to described white non-planter Southerners such as "lower grades," "lower orders," "common people," and "the mob" (6). While plantation households resided comfortably in the upper rungs of white Southern society, the crackers and the poor white

trash subsisted at the bottom of the social ladder. In his enlightening study on the poor whites in Southern society in the mid-1800s, sociologist Matt Wray contends that the person largely responsible for negative attitudes towards poor Southern whites was Harriet Beecher Stowe who “popularize[d], nationalize[d], and internationalize[d] the phrase *poor white trash* more than anyone in antebellum history” (57). Published in 1853 after her wildly successful novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, her supplement book *Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,⁸⁰ describes the depravity and culpability of the “miserable class” of poor whites in the South (451). Despite the fact that Stowe portrays poor whites as manipulated and unknowing victims of the South’s system of slavery, Stowe’s damning portrayal is filled with a scathing contempt for the “horrible and ferocious mobs” of “blind savage monster[s]” she describes as “utterly ignorant,” and “inconceivably brutal” who “when aroused, tramples heedlessly over everything in its way” and is possessed by a demoniac hatred towards abolitionists. Feeling the scorn of the upper classes, so Stowe, the “poor white trash” consoled themselves by channeling scorn at the class below them.

A socially divided underclass mitigated the risk of a unified rebellion rising up to challenge the established hierarchy which disproportionately favored the elites and their position of privilege. Intra-class division thus helped the elite to maintain their positions of power. Cash argues that a white man, even when poor, maintained his position as a member of the dominant class because “however much the blacks in the “big house” might sneer at him ... Come what might, he would always be a white man” (Cash 39).

According to Stowe, the plantation system, with its extensive use of fertile land, dispersed the settlements of poor whites,⁸¹ thus making regular schooling and church attendance unfeasible. At the same time, poor whites viewed hired labor jobs negatively because such positions were stigmatized as typical slave work. Thus, according to Stowe, employment options for poor white people remained limited.

Vituperative sentiments concerning poor Southern whites could also be found in Fanny Kemble’s diary entry of 14 February 1839, later published in her second memoir. While expressing a sympathetic stance towards the plight of enslaved blacks, Kemble lambasts the “so-called Pinelanders of Georgia” who she accuses of being “fiercely accessory to slavery.” For Kemble, the poor whites with their “yellow mud complexion[s]” were:

the most degraded race of human beings claiming an Anglo-Saxon origin that [could] be found on the face of the earth—filthy, lazy, ignorant, brutal, proud, penniless savages, without one of the nobler attributes which have

been found occasionally allied to the vices of savage nature. They own[ed] no slaves, for they [were] almost without exception abjectly poor; they [would] not work, for that, as they conceive[d], would reduce them to an equality with the abhorred Negroes; they squat[ed], and [stole], and starve[d], on the outskirts of this lowest of all civilized societies, and their countenances [bore] witness to the squalor of their condition and the utter degradation of their natures. To the crime of slavery, though they [had] no profitable part or lot in it, they [were] fiercely accessory, because it [was] the barrier that divide[d] the black and white races, at the foot of which they [lay] wallowing in unspeakable degradation, but immensely proud of the base freedom which still separate[d] them from the lash-driven tillers of the soil. (182)

Wray points out that such contemptuous views supported the widely held sentiment at the time: “I’d rather be a nigger than po’ white trash.” But, in fact, race played an important role in bolstering the belief amongst poor whites that though they were not socially equal to the ruling elites, by mere virtue of their race, they ranked higher in the social totem pole than all non-whites and were therefore better off. Willa Cather’s *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (1940), reflects these sentiments: “Sapphira’s darkies were better cared for, better fed and better clothed, than the poor whites in the mountains. Yet what ragged, shag-haired, squirrel-shooting mountain man would change places with Sampson, his trusted head miller?” (228). Crackers, according to Wray, though sometimes lumped together with “poor white trash,” were usually viewed in a more positive light, both in fact and fiction.

Although poor, rebellious, uneducated, and antisocial, the independent frontiersmen from the backcountry referred to as crackers were also believed to be industrious, courageous, and loyal to their own people. The legends of historical figures such as Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone helped to promote this admirable image. The novels examined herein also tend to draw distinctions between the two classes of poor white people in a similar manner: with crackers as friend-worthy material and “poor white trash” as an almost untouchable group deserving of disdain. While all black people are generally depicted in a sympathetic and positive light, the “poor white trash” like the Slatterys of *GWTW* and the Grimes of *Jubilee* are depicted as lazy, scheming, and dirty. Although the Southern elite do not seem open to accepting “poor white trash” into their families, hard-working crackers like Will Benteen in *GWTW* and Banjo in *High Hearts* manage to cross class borders as a result of the war and lack of eligible bachelors.

In *GWTW*, Mitchell illustrates the closed nature of the antebellum Southern elite in the biography of Gerald O’Hara, who acquires property and wealth but as an Irish immigrant,

belongs to a group of people who, at the time, were so strongly disliked by many Americans, particularly those in the cities, that job advertisements often included the heading, “No Irish Need Apply.” As an Irishman, Gerald lacks class legitimacy until his marriage to the 15-year-old daughter of a respected Savannah family, Ellen Robillard. As characterized by Mitchell, the accumulation of wealth and property by white men did not automatically grant them and their families a standing invitation into the drawing rooms of the Southern plantations. Katherine Anne Porter in her analysis of her short novel, “Noon Wine” describes the fixed views on social standing that began in the antebellum South and continued to be dominant in the South, long after the Civil War and Reconstruction had come and gone:

A man who had humble ancestors had a hard time getting away from them and rising in the world. If he prospered and took to leisurely ways of living, he was merely “getting above his raising.” If he managed to marry into one of the good old families, he had simply “outmarried himself.” If he went away and made a success somewhere else, when he returned for a visit he was still only “that Jimmerson boy who went No’th. (qtd. in Brooks and Warren, *Understanding Fiction* 354)

An integral part of class division in the South, was the placement of women in the class structure. If the women were white, placement was usually rigidly aligned with the status of their men, and if they were black or racially-mixed, automatically on a low tier. Almost all women of the antebellum South, regardless of race, were considered the property of men and greatly restricted or completely prohibited from owning property, depending on the state legislation where they resided.

Property ownership restrictions on white women limited the means for them to maintain or improve their social status to one avenue: marriage.⁸² Thus marrying well was a particularly important goal for antebellum Southern belles. When a woman married, she changed her last name and her dwelling from her father’s to her husband’s. Women of the privileged class of Southern society were expected to look and act the part. In the words of Shulamith Firestone, wives were the “ego extension” of their husbands (145).

When the male head of the household died, the social status of all women in the household was put at risk. Women of the farming or yeoman classes had to labor without their husbands’ help. Planter daughters suddenly faced the possibility of being married to the next available bachelor and planter widows were often forced to relocate to a relative’s household. Usually male kin of heiresses would assume legal or de facto control of the deceased’s patriarch’s estate.

Enslaved women, forever low in the social hierarchy, still had a stake in the class standing and financial well-being of the plantation masters. A well-to-do planter was in a better position to provide food, housing, clothing, and healthcare for those he enslaved. He was also less susceptible to financial downturns requiring slave sales and separations. In addition, the more powerful the master, the greater the protection from outsiders enjoyed by his enslaved people. Considered property themselves, enslaved people were not granted the right to own property. Though planters may have allowed those they enslaved to earn pocket money by selling homegrown food, hunted game, or skilled services to others in the community, the reality was that anything which belonged to an enslaved person legally belonged to his or her master.

Freed black men and women were also strictly regulated in their ability to acquire and maintain wealth and property. Always subject to the very real possibility of being stripped of personal freedoms and possessions, Southern black people remained stringently confined in their class status. The precarious state of freed blacks living in the South during the Civil War era is superbly demonstrated by Margaret Walker in *Jubilee*. At first, the freed black man, Randall Ware, enjoys the protection of a white man and is thus able to own property, earn money, and live a rather free existence in a small Southern community. Later, however, as the Civil War gets underway, with no protection from a white man, Randall Ware must abandon his property and flee northward to save his life.

Slavery, as an integral part of the class structure of the antebellum South also had a great influence on the global Western economy. The main motor for the Southern cotton industry was England's textile industry—70% of imports to England came from the US South. According to Edward Baptist, with almost 20 percent of all US wealth, mostly liquid, connected to millions of slaves worth 1 billion USD, the slave industry was financially strong and a very attractive lending target for international banks (245). British banks, in particular, found enslaved people who also served as commodity for “slave” mortgages, attractive investments.⁸³ Slave-based collateral was preferable to land-based collateral because groups of slaves could be more easily divided into smaller, movable units and sold.⁸⁴ After granting loans to Southern planters, banks pooled together the amount accumulatively owed by several planters, converted the amount into bonds and then resold the bonds to investors all over the world. Government bail-outs minimized any risk the banks might have in lending money to planters by ensuring that if individual planters failed to pay back their loans, taxpayers would step in to cover the shortcomings. Such

arrangements guaranteed that large segments of the population, whether they supported bondage labor or not, were contributing to the financial mechanisms that kept the wheels of slavery turning. In this way, the institution of slavery in the South benefitted an entire web of international business people (Baptist 246). Due to the dependence of major global financial players on the slave-cotton-economy, the antebellum South class structure seemed solid indeed. For those near and far who lined their pockets with wealth generated by the blood and sweat of an enslaved population, because the prevailing social structure in the South proved lucrative, the system was legitimate.

Richard Gray remarks that, “The South has never *not* been made up of a number of castes, classes, and smaller communities that at best live in uneasy coexistence with each other and at worst are in active conflict – and some of which, at least, choose to claim that *their* South is *the* South, their story the master narrative of the region” (5). While the Civil War did not eradicate the Southern caste/class system, in addition to changing the outward signs of socioeconomic status, the period of severe social upheaval did manage to neutralize for quite some time many of the privileges enjoyed by the upper classes.⁸⁵ Though not apparent at the outset of the conflict, the diminishing of class advantage became more pronounced as the war progressed. As reflected in Glasgow’s *The Battle-Ground*, class position often played a role in who was expected to heed the battle call, which posts they would fill, and how well-equipped they would be. The range of options an individual had to determine how property, income, crops, and family members were to be managed during the crisis was also dependent on class status. According to Drew Gilpin Faust, the first conscription legislation was passed during the spring planting season making its impact through the loss of needed manpower immediately apparent (*Mothers of Invention* 32). Poor white women, left with no male help to labor in the fields, were some of the first to raise their fists in opposition to the war. The heroine and her family from the Ozark mountains in *Enemy Women*, for example, had nothing to gain and everything to lose in a war.

Evelyn Scott’s *The Wave* shows the extent of social discontent that came from conscription laws on both sides of the Mason Dixon line that granted wealthy white male citizens the opportunity to buy their way out of service by hiring substitutes. In the South, such dodging of duty was possible from the time conscription was enacted in 1862 until legislation disallowed it in 1864.⁸⁶ Historians such as Lowell H. Harrison have noted that, “Substitution probably caused more resentment than conscription itself, and it contributed few good soldiers to the Army” (13).⁸⁷ Substitutes were suboptimal recruits because they

were oftentimes more likely to desert once they had been paid in order to re-enroll elsewhere for other wealthy individuals or to spend their earnings far away from the dangers of armed conflict. In October 1862, the Confederacy passed another controversial law favoring the wealthiest 12% of the population by exempting one man on each plantation of twenty or more slaves from service under what became known as the “Twenty-Nigger Law.” Overseers were generally expensive and became more so when planters had to pay 500 USD (equivalent to about 12,900 USD in 2019) to exempt them from conscription. Faust writes that this legislation “triggered enormous popular resentment, from non-slaveholders who regarded it as valuing lives of the elite over their own and from smaller slaveholders who were not included in its scope” (*Mothers of Invention* 55).

As Cash astutely points out, war also bolsters class structure by imposing a social hierarchy in the battle ranks. Soldiers are grouped, organized, and commanded in a way in which lower ranks are expected to grant the upper-ranked, their utmost, unquestioning, obedience (Cash 111). The master class, according to Cash, thus becomes “imbued with the imperious conviction of their own right, and not only their right, but their duty, to tell the masses what to think and do” (112). This class privilege becomes so potent during the war that one man, by wielding the commanding authority of an officer, can determine the life and death fate of masses of less (class) privileged foot soldiers.⁸⁸

Class resentments were also stoked by wealthy men who enlisted and then brought along their servants to the frontlines to wash their clothes, chop their wood, cook their food, and tend to their horses (*Fatal Self Deception* 141). The novels *The Battle-Ground* and *High Hearts* depict the class differences within the army that favored the wealthy cavalry men capable of bringing horses and servants to battle, over the infantrymen who were often left without adequate gear, clothing, and shoes.⁸⁹

For black people living in the South during the Civil War era, the resulting social changes offered liberation but also, for many, increased vulnerability and hardship. As black men took advantage of the chaos, broke the chains of bondage, and fled northwards, black women generally stayed behind. Often reluctant to leave older and younger loved ones, these remaining slaves were then expected to take up additional and more physically demanding tasks to make up for the loss of labor of their male brethren. The dilemma enslaved women faced in regards to whether to seize the opportunity to flee slavery or not is depicted in *Jubilee* when the heroine Vyry is faced with the prospect of escaping north without her children.

The long-term effects of the governance of a minority of white elite men in the antebellum South had a lasting impact on all non-elite Southerners, black and white, during and after the war. Cash details how the antebellum cotton planters, had “absolute control of government and every societal engine, ... [taking] its measures solely with an eye on its own interest – which were not the interests, clearly, of most of the non-slaveholders” (Cash 22). The ruling planters, with the power and authority to determine how government funding was spent, had predominantly constructed the Southern infrastructure around the movement of cotton, financing roads, railways, and shipping ports which supported the needs of the industry. Expansive agricultural areas were dedicated to the growth of cash crops which were then sold elsewhere. At the same time, Southerners left the commercial banking industry largely to the North and England, making themselves vulnerable to high-interest loans before the war and sanctions during the war. This country-club approach to regional planning conceivably contributed to shortages experienced during the Civil War, making the transport of needed goods from areas less affected by the conflict more difficult and the basis of the local economy largely dependent on imports and exports that came to a standstill during the war.

In 1860, had the South been independent, it would have been the fourth wealthiest nation on Earth. At the outset of the conflict, both the North and the South were convinced that the war would be short. The North thought that the South would come to its senses and return to the Union; the South thought that foreign powers would step in to defend the Confederacy’s claim to independence and the North would concede. Both were wrong. The Confederacy, with no clear plan on how to finance a long war, suffered greatly as a result of the blockade imposed by the North. In *GWTW*, Mitchell’s hero, Rhett Butler, earns a dubious but lucrative living as a blockade runner. The South’s cash crop, cotton could be neither sold nor eaten. Rather than imposing taxes, like the North,⁹⁰ the South chose to finance its war machine by simply printing more paper money. This economic strategy led to rampant inflation, which in turn led to an increase in prices for ever scarcer goods (Kennedy 181). *The Wave* depicts the uprisings these shortages stoked. By 1863 the economic situation in the South was dire. Most of the novels examined herein reflect this strain. Farmers who were self-sufficient had some advantages, but agricultural production became increasingly difficult with the men off fighting and enslaved labor either interned for the war effort or fleeing to the North. With the embargoes in place, merchants hoarded the goods they had, unsure of when inventory could be replenished. Nature also played a

role in the spread of starvation when an unusually dry spell struck. In addition, legislation in the South legalized the seizure of private goods for the war effort. Though the government had theoretically agreed to compensate people for seized goods, the amount paid was rarely what the goods were worth, and the currency of exchange was the increasingly valueless Confederate dollar, the so-called “greyback”, which was not backed by any hard assets but rather just a promise of payment after a Southern victory. Before the war 48.3 % of the private wealth held by Southerners was composed of slaves; with emancipation, elite planters lost a significant amount of their property holdings and disparities in economic distribution lessened (Scheidel 177). As the situation grew increasingly tenuous for civilians and soldiers alike, Union and Confederate troops often plundered and “borrowed” what they needed from the locals and locals raided government storage depots. By the end of the war inflation had reached 9000 % and goods in the South cost 92 times the amount they had cost before the war began (Bank et al. esp 31–4, 41–2).

During the war, class differences sharpened in Southern regions where shortages occurred. According to Andrew Smith distribution disparity between the classes was particularly acute in Richmond where goods were only available to the privileged class (esp. 49–72). *The Wave* depicts how this situation came to a head with the Richmond Bread Riots. To earn money, women often converted their dwellings into boarding houses for army officers or wives who followed their husbands from battle to battle, like Virginia Ambler in *The Battle-Ground*. Confederate women were particularly struck by hardship through the burning and looting of their homes and property, forced sexual and domestic servitude, and depletion of food supplies (Clinton, *The Other Civil War* 87). Those fortunate enough to have savings but foolish enough to invest them in Confederate bonds as a sign of patriotism became destitute by the end of the war. The misguided short-sightedness of such blue-grey zeal is evident in Big Missy’s ill-fated purchase of war bonds in *Jubilee*.

The destruction of battle was experienced by everyone in the South, regardless of class. Particularly merciless was General Sherman in what later became known as “Sherman’s March to the Sea.” For over a month from mid-November until late December in 1864, “the Angel of Revenge” and his troops plundered and burned everything in their wake. In a letter to James M. Calhoun, et al., of September 12, 1864, Sherman unapologetically states, “Those who brought war ... deserve all the curses ... a people can pour out.” Transportation and infrastructure was destroyed along with the materials and manpower needed to rebuild.

At the end of the war, white women outnumbered white men in almost every community. A. F. Scott reports, “Of the million men who at one time or another had served in the Confederate army a quarter, at least, had died from wounds or disease, and no one knows how many others were crippled or debilitated for life.” The high male death toll left many women throughout the South widows. A. F. Scott adds that, “In Alabama alone there were eighty thousand widows, three quarters of whom were said to be in want of the bare necessities of life” (*The Southern Lady* 92). Those men who survived to return home were often physically and mentally broken.

Depressed and traumatized from a lost war with little hope for a better future, war veterans often turned to alcohol for solace. Freed men, also traumatized by their former enslavement and war and able for the first time to spend their own money, also fell victim to the home-brewed and ever popular “white lightning”.⁹¹ None of the novels examined delves into the issue of addiction and war, though *Gone with the Wind* does touch upon the topic with Rhett Butler, who turns to the bottle after the tragic death of his beloved daughter.

By the end of the war, many plantation owners had lost their wealth and property holdings. The nearly four million emancipated slaves gained freedom but little else. Freed women in particular, having left plantations with no housing alternatives, often ended up dwelling in deserted barns or hovels. Poor diets and the unavailability of medical care made them a particularly vulnerable target of a smallpox epidemic that tore through large parts of the South from 1863–1866 (Clinton and Silber 89–90).

One thing that did change throughout the United States after the war was access to education. Congress made two demands on ex-Confederate states to be readmitted to the Union: adopt the 14th Constitutional Amendment, which granted former slaves citizenship rights and equal protection under the law, and rewrite state constitutions to conform to the republic form of government. Congress expected the newly drafted state constitutions to guarantee free education. By 1868, 28 out of 32 state constitutions provided for free public education open to everyone. The last three states to join the Union and comply with these demands were Virginia, Texas, and Mississippi. Southern women began venturing outside the home to attend schools and enter the teaching profession. But the consequences of the lack of a universal education up to that point were dire. According to *The Literate South*, while there was a relatively high rate of literacy amongst Southern whites, about 80%, before the war, the amount of literate Southern blacks was presumably only 10% due to anti-literacy laws in half of the slave states (333). As portrayed in *Jubilee*, newly liberated

blacks who could not read and write were easier to oppress and take advantage of during the postwar era.

Emancipation brought new hardships for black people in America. According to Cash, of the three hundred people who were reportedly burned or hung by mobs between 1840 and 1860, less than ten percent were black (43). This worsened when enslaved persons were liberated and no longer considered the property of wealthy white males who held a vested financial interest in their well-being.⁹² Cash details the plight of freed black men:

[W]orth from five hundred dollars [equivalent to about 15,600 USD in 2019] up, [an enslaved black man] had been taboo—safer from rope and faggot than any common white man, and perhaps even safer than his master himself. But with the abolition of legal slavery his immunity vanished. The economic interest of his former protectors, the master class, now stood the other way about. (113)

While enslaved people lost the little protection they had had from privileged white men before the war, privileged white men suddenly lost their “master” title with the emancipation of the slaves. W. J. Cash credits the Civil War with ending the fictional Southern aristocracy. The demands of war made adhering to the norms and expectations of class divides impossible (A. F. Scott, *The Southern Lady* 92). Everyone was affected, everyone suffered, and everyone had lost loved ones. Yet, racist ideologies were stronger than historic bonds of suffering.

While the war would serve as the great equalizer to cement white Southerners with a common bond transcending class divides for subsequent decades, slavery and oppression would do the same for the black population. White Southern men had a common enemy in black people and Northerners and black people had a common enemy in racist white Southern men. The war that ended in a resounding victory for black Southerners would be interpreted as a humiliating defeat for the majority of white Southerners. Lingering racist views would carve a long-lasting gulf between the black and white Southern communities. The resulting effect of the war on the Southern class structure is much more complex. Though the conflict managed to break down many of the antebellum class divisions and keep them at bay for many years to come, gender divides decreased but stubbornly continued while racial divisions intensified.

2. Novels and Feminist Waves

2.1. Novels of First-Wave Feminism: Pre-1920

Both *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted* and *The Battle-Ground* were published in the immediate post-reconstruction generation of the South in which the reverberations of a major armed conflict were still freshly felt amongst a people struggling to find their social and economic place in a new world. While Frances Harper focused on the racial future of blacks in America, Glasgow imagined what the privileged women's place might be. Both authors recognized that the postwar South could not return to the rigid hierarchy of the antebellum period, which placed women and people classified as non-white in a kind of parallel hierarchal structure that denied them access to the highest and most elite tiers associated with political power and public decision-making.

Believing that education was a vital ingredient in raising the nation's people to a higher level, Harper aligned education with class standing. She advocated for access to education as a way to break down the divides of class, race, and gender and argued for moral and educational tests as pre-requisites for the ballot-box.

I do not believe that the most ignorant and brutal man is better prepared to add value to the strength and durability of the government than the most cultured, upright, and intelligent woman. I do not think that willful ignorance should swamp earnest intelligence at the ballot-box, nor that educated wickedness, violence, and fraud should cancel the votes of honest men. The unsteady hands of a drunkard can not cast the ballot of a freeman. The hands of lynchers are too red with blood to determine the political character of the government for even four short years. The ballot in the hands of woman means power added to influence. ("Woman's Political Future")

Like Frances Harper, Ellen Glasgow asserted that people should be judged on character before gender, race, or class. Although *The Battle-Ground* is the tale of a young Southern belle who has fallen in love with the rebellious grandson of the neighboring plantation, and Glasgow herself would later criticize the novel as the "work of romantic youth" and an "immature" writer with "more audacity than wisdom", the book delves deeply into questions about the intersectionality of class, race, and gender relations. In fact, Glasgow also contends that one of her aims in her early series of novels was to address the social make-up of Southern society at the time: "I planned to portray the different social orders, and especially, for this would constitute the major theme of my chronicle, the rise of the middle class as the dominant force in Southern democracy" (*The Battle-Ground*, x).

Throughout the novel, through the heroine's love interest, Dan Montjoy, Glasgow portrays the rigid structure of the pervading class system of the South and its detrimental effects on the lower classes. In fact, of all the novels examined herein, *The Battle-Ground* is probably one of the most class conscious.

IOLA LEORY; OR, SHADOWS UPLIFTED

One of the major themes Frances E. W. Harper explores in *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted* is how racial categorization affected socioeconomic standing in the Civil War era. In *Iola Leroy*, the US is described as having a caste rather than a class system. The white planter Eugene fears that he will lose his *caste* status if he marries his slave Marie. Eugene's son, Harry, is challenged about the wisdom of his decision to racially identify as black considering the "virulence of *caste* prejudice and the disabilities which surround the colored people" (197). Harry's father most likely had concealed from his children their true racial identity because he had recognized the shackles that inextricably link race to caste: "[Your father] did not wish you to know that you had negro blood in your veins," Harry's school director tells him, "[because] [h]e knew that the spirit of caste pervaded the nation, North and South, and he was very anxious to have his children freed from depressing influences" (145). Those who were born to black women, because they were categorized as non-white, automatically assumed the lowest possible socioeconomic status, and thus had to contend with a rigid caste system.

In "Class and Caste: A Definition and a Distinction" (1944), sociologist Oliver C. Cox, contests the notion that America, unlike India, ever had a caste system.

In a class system it is the family or person who is the bearer of status; in the caste system it is the caste. The caste system emphasizes group status and morality; the individual without a caste is a meaningless social entity. He is an object naturally ignored by the rest of society. Thus, a man's class does not determine his rank in society, for class is rank; a man's caste, however, does tend to decide his rank. In other words, his class is his rank, while his caste has a rank to be determined. We define an individual's status, not by first determining his class position, but rather we determine his class position by ascertaining his status. (141–142)

Nevertheless, Cox himself contends in the very same article: "At one end are societies in which the status of the individual tends to remain fixed for life; at the other are societies in which the opportunity for advancement of status of the individual is recognized and even encouraged. In other words, at the one end are caste systems, at the other open class

systems.” Cox’s own arguments seem to support that perhaps two parallel systems of social stratification existed in the United States of the Civil War era: a class system for white people and a caste system for non-white people.

The social status of black slaves in antebellum South was practically fixed for life according to their racial category. Even after liberation, black people had virtually no possibility for social advancement as a group of people classified, judged, and ranked according to their non-whiteness rather than as individuals according to financial, education, or social status. Even those in the South who managed to socially advance due to a political position, education, or even wealth, were relegated to a parallel class system in which they were not ranked in relation to white people but rather only in relation to other black people. Such characteristics seem to support, even according Cox’s own definition, Harper’s description of the South as having more of a “caste” rather than “class” social structure.

Although they term the social structure a class structure, even Fox-Genovese and Genovese argue that in Southern society at least, the social group was “the main source of the individual’s standing and sense of self” and “family, clan, and community” were “more important than the individual” (*The Mind of the Master Class* 4). Harper’s use of “caste” to describe the social hierarchy shines light on the difficulty in placing freed and enslaved blacks of the Civil War era, like privileged white Southern women, in the traditional class rungs of a hierarchal social system which first and foremost considered their gender and race before their social ranking. In the South, white males were the only ones who were born into the structure in which their social status was determined by wealth, property, and power. The argument by Harry’s schoolmaster in *Iola Leroy* that race and social hierarchy were inherently linked within a symbiotic system is echoed in *The Mind of the Master Class* in a passage about Lost Cause darling, former US Vice President, South Carolina statesman John C. Calhoun. In 1836, Calhoun argued to the US Senate that Southern slavery “was not merely a system of property ownership and labor organization but a system of racial control” (63) and that the privileged status of white Southerner planters was dependent on the slave status of black Southerners.

Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted, like many of the other novels examined herein, lumps the plight of the poor Southerners together with the lot of the enslaved blacks as victims of Southern slavery. The exchange between the Union soldiers Colonel Robinson and Captain Sybil, from a plot standpoint, seems only to serve, once again, as a thinly veiled voice of

Frances E. W. Harper, expressing her views of the social positioning and cultural conditioning of Southern actors at the time.

It surprises me to see how poor white men, who, like negroes, are victims of slavery, rally around the Stripes and Bars. These men, I believe, have been looked down on by the aristocratic slaveholders, and despised by the well-fed and comfortable slaves, yet they follow their leaders into the very jaws of death, face hunger, cold, disease, and danger; and all for what? What, under heaven, are they fighting for? Now, the negro, ignorant as he is, has learned to regard our flag as a banner of freedom, and to look forward to his deliverance as a consequence of the overthrow of the Rebellion. (149)

According to the two Union soldiers, the poor white men of the South occupied a social rung below the plantation house slaves and fought for the South because they were simply “ignorant” and had been “awfully deceived” by disinformation of a united white cause. When the colonel criticizes “big white men [who] not only ruled over the poor whites and made laws for them, but over the whole nation” (151), Harper again legitimizes her own critical views to a white (most likely female) readership by having white male characters espouse them.

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 supports the notion that plantation owners were dictating the laws of the nation. The same legislation also calls into question whether black people of the Civil War era, as legal things rather than persons, could have even had a class status.⁹³ Early in *Iola Leroy*, the slave Robert explains to the other slaves the concept of contraband as defined in the Fugitive Act. “[I]f a slave runs away from the Secesh to the Union lines [...] [h]e is called a contraband, just the same as if he were an ox or a horse.” If black people, according to the law, were treated more like animals than human beings, how could they possibly occupy any kind of rung in the social hierarchy, even if it were the lowest?

Though Harper does not explicitly address questions of class position of women in Southern society, the parallels between the treatment of blacks based on race, and women based on gender, provoke a wide array of questions. How can people whom society has legally categorized as property, simultaneously occupy any position in a social hierarchy of class? Does the positioning of people in a class system first require the enjoyment of basic human rights and protection under the law within that society? Did a black man who owned a plantation in the South,⁹⁴ albeit an anomaly, enjoy the same social status as a white widow of a plantation? Could either person ever achieve the same social status as a white male plantation owner? If enslaved blacks had no class standing, how could they hold a position higher in the social hierarchy than poor whites? If a white woman could lose her

social status simply by aligning herself with a black man, did she possess enough autonomy to occupy a rank in a system defined as a class system? Can a social hierarchy that reserves the power of mobility to a select few be described as a hierarchy at all?

In the novel, the problematic social stance that placed both black people based on race and women based on gender, in a lesser category than white Southern men is evident in an exchange between the two cousins, Eugene and Lorraine, both plantation owners. Lorraine asks Eugene why he wants to marry his slave Marie, when she is already his property “to have and to hold to all intents and purposes” (105). Is he not satisfied with the “power and possession” the law gives him? According to Lorraine, Marie, as Eugene’s slave, has use, exchange, and sign-exchange value. By marrying Marie, Eugene diminishes all the commodified values she would otherwise embody as his property. Nevertheless, as wife or slave, a woman belongs to the man.

The severity of the lack of class status for Southern black women, even when freed, is apparent in a scene in the novel which occurs after the planter Eugene Leroy dies and his cousin Lorraine claims not only Eugene’s property as his own, but also his wife and children. When Marie objects, Lorraine tells her in no uncertain terms: “By the authority of the law...which has decided that Leroy’s legal heirs are his white blood relations, and that your marriage is null and void...your manumission is unlawful; your marriage a bad precedent, and inimical to the welfare of society; and ... you and your children are remanded to slavery” (127). Marie and her children, though “freed” blacks, are only quasi-liberated for as long as they enjoy the protection of a white male. Their class standing perishes along with the man who bestowed it.

Harper’s optimism that blacks could break the chains of oppression, overcome racial discrimination, and raise themselves socially is apparent throughout *Iola Leroy*. The novel demonstrates how the enslaved community, even without organized schooling, bands together to challenge the oppressive forces of the ruling class by developing advanced forms of communication to surreptitiously pass news amongst community members. The quality of market produce represents the latest victories or defeats; the order of hanging sheets signals the movements of troops.

Symbolically, when the war ends, the school-house replaces the slave-pen and auction block. Iola goes from her wartime position as a nurse to a peace-time position as a school teacher. For Harper, education should not promulgate the self-serving narratives and

lessons of the ruling class. Instead, she advocated for the power of knowledge to set people free from oppressive social systems. This conviction is reflected in a scene in which a white “gentleman” visits Iola’s school “to address the children” and “essay” them “on the great achievements of the white race, such as building steamboats and carrying on business” (161). The power of the questioner to frame and manipulate the discourse by posing leading questions is depicted in his quizzing the children about how white people accomplished such amazing feats. The children, sly to cultural conditioning, “chorus” that the white race did so with money that it took from the black people. The scene concludes with Iola smiling and a nonplussed gentleman who, “could not deny that one of the powers of knowledge is the power of the strong to oppress the weak” (161).

Ron Eyerman makes a compelling argument that Harper’s schoolhouse scene “portrays [an historical account] almost to the letter” (28) of an occurrence in a Freedmen’s school in Kentucky in 1866 which is included in Leon Litwack’s 1979 winner of the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery*. Eyerman contends that Harper most likely modeled the scene with Iola on an actual event that had occurred with the black teacher George Washington Williams (1849 – 1891), an activist, scholar, preacher and the first African American elected to the Ohio state legislature (1880-1881). According to Eyerman, Harper, like Williams, “was part of the attempt of the black middle class to counter the anti-reconstruction revisionism of the time” (28). For both Williams and Harper, black people had to be the ones in charge of uplifting the black community. With a good education, Harper and Williams were convinced that future generations of black Americans would advance to the upper rungs of society that were being solely occupied by white men. To achieve this, however, it was critical for black people to ensure that schooling would be a tool, not to suppress, but rather “uplift” the community. Fears about educational objectives were later echoed during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 70s by activists such as James Baldwin who would argue: “The brutal truth is that the bulk of white people in America never had any interest in educating black people except as this could serve white purposes” (Baldwin 5–6).

In *Iola Leroy*, women’s role in the future of the black community and the nation is limited in many ways to the role assigned to privileged white women in the antebellum South. Miss Delaney, for example, is a black graduate from a university who strives to open a school to “train future wives and mothers.” On one hand, Harper rallies black women to support the postwar community by fostering the proper upbringing of children and maintaining the

moral uprightness of men. On the other hand, Harper, through Iola, encourages women to “join the rank of bread-winners” because every woman ought to know how to earn her own living to counteract the “great amount of sin and misery [that] springs from the weakness and inefficiency of women” (198). When Iola loses her job due to racism and resolves to find another, she asserts that, “every woman should have some skill or art which would insure her at least a comfortable support... [because] there would be less unhappy marriages if labor were more honored among women” (201). Harper urges women to join the work force to stabilize their homes and marriages, not to escape them. Iola and her black female peers strive towards a future that resembled the lives of many white Northern working women. If women would only demonstrate some independence, she contends, then there would be fewer unhappy marriages. In other words, women should marry, have kids, and get a job.

According to Koritha Mitchell, Harper often spoke publicly about the financial hardships she herself had endured as a widow. Her ability to write, travel, and lecture helped her to not only support her family, but also her efforts on behalf of abolitionists, the black community, and feminists. Mitchell interprets Harper’s call to black women to take responsibility for the moral standing of the children and husbands of the community as common for African American women activists, who, according to Mitchell, “believed that racial progress depended on their educating their community’s mothers regarding housekeeping, childbearing, and comportment” (247, FN 1). Mitchell argues that it was crucial to the black community to prepare children for “the inevitable racism and violence that African Americans would face, so the home was not imagined as a refuge from violence but a training ground to withstand it” (247, FN 1). Interestingly, Mitchell’s commentary on the novel interchanges race with class. Mitchell argues that *racial* progress depended on education, when she could have just have easily purported that *social* progress depended upon it.

Whether Harper longs for racial or social progress, or undoubtedly both, in *Iola Leroy*, she neither rejects the “caste” system, nor questions the planter class’s claim to an aristocratic lineage and inherent right to rule. When Colonel Robinson speaks with incredulity about poor white Southerners’ readiness to die to uphold an oppressive system, he says that “[t]hese men ... have been looked down upon by the aristocratic slaveholders” and uses the term “aristocratic” with no hint of irony. In fact, according to the omniscient, anonymous narrator of the novel, the enviable qualities of Iola’s white Northern physician suitor, are

conflated with his prominent class standing. “Dr. Gresham was a member of a wealthy and aristocratic family, proud of its lineage, which could trace through generations of good blood to its ancestral isle” (100). Though acutely aware of the oppressive nature of the system she defines as a “caste” structure, rather than demanding its destruction, *Iola Leroy* reaffirms and even advances its myths. Rather than challenge the ruling class narrative of a hierarchal system that rewards socioeconomic power to a small ruling elite on the basis of often fictitious blood lineages, Iola seems to long for the day when non-white people too will boast proud lineages.

A year after the publication of *Iola Leroy*, Harper, however, seems to have a change of heart concerning self-proclaimed American aristocrats and the social structure of the future nation. In her address entitled “Woman’s Political Future” (1893), Harper criticizes the patriarchal world of yesteryear dominated by an oppressive (male, white) class system plagued with a destructive “greed of gold and the lust of power” and envisions a day when women will determine the social fabric of the nation.

Men may boast of the aristocracy of blood, may glory in the aristocracy of talent, and be proud of the aristocracy of wealth, but there is one aristocracy which must ever outrank them all, and that is the aristocracy of character; and it is the women of a country who help to mold its character, and to influence if not determine its destiny.

For France E. W. Harper, the nation’s future must not be determined by wealth and power and men but rather education and moral character and women.

THE BATTLE-GROUND

One of the most interesting aspects of *The Battle-Ground* (1902), is Ellen Glasgow’s portrayal of the fall of the Southern aristocracy and the rise from the rubble of how a new generation of Southern planters with a broader mindset concerning identity and class. Glasgow’s sympathetic portrayal of a wide-breadth of classes is unique amongst the novels and spans from the traditional elite planter class, to the slaves, free blacks, crackers, and poor “white trash.” As male ego-extensions, white Southern women of the era adopted the class status of their men. For this reason, any examination of Southern women and class in the novel is intimately bound to the social positioning of Southern men.

Major Lightfoot, the patriarch of Chericoke plantation, is the prototype of an old-world Southern gentleman. The Major first banishes his only daughter, Jane, for marrying outside of their class and without her parents’ blessing and later banishes his grandson, Dan, for

“murder[ing] [the] Virginia gentleman [in himself] for the sake of a barroom hussy” (160). For the major, the sacred order of the Old South is built upon a rigid social hierarchy in which everyone knows and maintains their proper social positioning. He rants about being seated at the same table as an abolitionist at the neighborhood tavern and insists that he would “as soon eat with a darkey” (16). In a chapter entitled “The School for Gentlemen,” the Major rejects the government’s proposal to buy up the slaves by arguing that the institution of slavery was “the very foundation” of the Southern aristocracy (50). According to Fox-Genovese and Genovese, “Virginians pretended to take for granted their aristocratic origins in England, and other Southerners pretended to believe them” (92). For Virginians like Major Lightfoot, self-purported ties to European nobility were integral to the legitimacy of their ruling class rank.

The Lightfoots fulfill all of the clichés of the Southern elite and the elite of the Southern elite, which were the Virginia planters. When the wayward and disowned Jane describes their family lineage to her son, Dan, she reinforces the notion that as the quintessential Virginia planter family, they have “no false pride, but they know their place” (26). Like all good Southern families, the Lightfoots’ roots can be traced back to England, of course, where, according to Jane, they were more important than the Washingtons. Since, Washington, as a founding father and core member of the so-called “first families” of Virginia, was the crown of the Southern aristocracy who only the Almighty Himself superseded, the high social standing of the Lightfoots was indisputable. Amongst the legendary Lightfoots, looms the figure of Dan’s great-great-aunt Emmeline who was not only admired by Washington (yes “Him” again) but was the beauty and belle of not one but two continents. The Lightfoot residence is built of bricks from England, “a simple gentleman’s home” with a parlour to display the family coat of arms and to entertain great generals who were wont to dance minuets with the beautiful first lady of the estate. Great-aunt Emmeline’s portrait, painted in no less than amber brocade, casts an “abiding presence” over all future generations of the Lightfoot home (26).

Glasgow skillfully crafts a character study of class and the evolution of the Southern aristocracy through the prodigal-son figure of Dan Montjoy. At novel’s outset, Dan is an orphaned child of a disowned and deceased plantation daughter. When he returns to his grandparents’ estate, he is welcomed back into the fold where he assumes his role as a privileged plantation son, albeit with his wanton father’s tainted blood running through his veins. Dan puts the plantation patriarch’s initial doubts concerning his aristocratic stock to

rest when Dan defends the honor of the planter-girl-next-door, Betty. In a chapter appropriately entitled “The School of Gentlemen,” Major Lightfoot expounds to his social circle on Dan’s gentlemanly qualities and the importance of blood, family, and lineage. “If you want polish,” Major Lightfoot remarks, “come to Virginia; if you want chivalry, come to Virginia. When I see these two things combined, I say to myself, ‘The blood of the Mother of Presidents is here’” (49). Although Virginia did indeed provide four of the first five presidents of the United States, (Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe) and seven of the sixteen by the outbreak of the Civil War, the blood running through Dan’s veins was more of the Revolutionary than pampered strain.

While at the university, Dan is expelled and jailed for being involved in a duel to defend the honor of a daughter of a bar owner. Dan’s grandfather, upset that an “honorable gentlemen” would sully himself on behalf of such a low class creature, and that he had placed false hopes that the “dirty [Montjoy] blood” “could be made clean again,” disowns Dan (160). Glasgow brilliantly highlights the hypocrisy of the so-called gentlemen code of etiquette by paralleling Dan’s defense of two different women’s honor: the upper-class Betty’s and the lower class bar girl’s. Men were only required to be gentlemen towards upper class women. By breaking class ranks to defend a woman from a lower class, Dan brings dishonor to himself and his family. A woman in a bar is no lady and thus can never expect to be treated as such. Defending Betty’s honor is virtuous, defending the barmaid “wench’s” is nothing more than a “quixotic notion.” Mrs. Lightfoot, Dan’s beloved grandmother, is equally scandalized by Dan’s actions and the fact that her grandson has been placed in jail. “He was even put into gaol for a night, I believe – a Lightfoot in a common dirty gaol!” (157). Just as a barmaid deserves no honor, a Lightfoot deserves no legal consequences.⁹⁵

Disowned like his mother, Dan leaves his grandparents’ estate to work as a stagecoach driver. His biggest regret in losing his class status is not for himself but for what it means for his relationship with Betty. Dan believes that Betty deserves a man from her own class. Although Dan resents any hint from the lodge owner that he has fallen in class standing, he has to admit to himself that: “he was fast sinking where Betty could not follow him” (182).

Dan’s fall in class status is further evident in his military rank. When war breaks out, while his cousin and former friends join the elite cavalry, Dan enlists as a lowly foot soldier. Though he has no horse, other remnants of his privileged past negatively distinguish him from his rank-and-file comrades. Big Abel, Dan’s former body servant, though liberated,

ignores Dan's protests and accompanies Dan to battle where he assumes the more menial and strenuous camp tasks assigned to Dan. Dan and Big Abel's relationship is complex. On the one hand, Glasgow's portrayal of Big Abel reinforces old Southern notions of loyal slaves who willingly served their masters beyond emancipation. In *The Battle-Ground* Big Abel even joins the efforts of the Confederate troops with Dan. On the other hand, Dan ends up owing his life to Big Abel, whose skills and intelligence help Dan survive the conflict. The problematic aspects of this relationship is acknowledged in the novel through a fellow soldier, Blake, who "reproachfully" airs his disapproval of the extra help Dan and some others have brought along to battle: "I worked like a darky hauling yesterday," he complains, "but when your turn comes, you climb a wood-pile and pass the job along. When we go into battle, I suppose Dandy and you will sit down to boil coffee, and hand your muskets to the servants" (218).

Dan's privileged background is often apparent in his skills and attitudes as well. Dan has attended college and is well-versed in the social etiquette of the elite. Dan harbors a resentment towards the hierarchal structure of the army, which demands that Dan take orders from those he considers his social inferiors. He "growls" about being "hectorated" by "any fool who comes along". Dan is particularly upset by Lieutenant Jones who, because of his rank, Dan complains, thinks "he's got a right to forget that I'm a gentleman and he's not" despite the fact that his family was so poor that "his father before him wasn't fit to black my boots." (211). For Dan, family birth rank trumps earned military rank. Dan even challenges the good-natured officer to "take off his confounded finery" for a private brawl after the drill. A fellow foot soldier, also originally from the higher class, echoes Dan's complaints and claims that he too is "willing enough to do battle" for his country but not to have his "elbow jogged by the poor white trash" while doing so (221).

Though *The Battle-Ground* challenges traditional notions of socioeconomic class and rank, Glasgow seems reluctant to completely relinquish Darwinian ideas of innate superiority. Between the lines, Glasgow conveys the muddled attitudes that even progressive elites had in regards to race, gender, and class. While a part of them concedes that social ranks are man-made and bogus, another part advocates notions of birth-endowed distinction. Though Dan is poor and no longer the heir of a plantation, he somehow maintains his upper-class status, inwardly and outwardly. This is not only apparent in Dan's refusal to accept military superiors who are social inferiors, but also later, in a chapter entitled "A Straggler from the Ranks" when Dan, towards the end of the war, starving, unkempt, and haggard, is able to

raise his “old spirit ... superior to his misfortune” and stir the sympathy of a young woman who “with the unerring instinct of her race knew that the one before her was well worth the saving. Gallantry that could afford to jest in rags upon a pile of straw appealed to her Southern blood as little short of the heroic.” The passage ends with the words, “He stepped into a mud puddle, and his feet came out but his shoes didn’t” (300). No matter what touches him, nothing can dirty him. By the novel’s end, Dan has grown cynical about the ambiguity of rank: “Well, I dare say, it was cheaper for the Government to give him a title than a pair of shoes” (300). With the Confederacy’s defeat, the majority of upper-class Southerners lost the property and wealth that generations of their families had been accumulating. With the surrender at Appomattox came a dethronement of the so-called “Southern aristocracy.” When everyone is left muddied and shoeless, the only thing left distinguishing the classes is etiquette and character.

Glasgow juxtaposes the plight of the different classes in war through an encounter of Dan with his upper-class cousin, Champe. Whereas Champe, who is in the infantry, is unchanged by the war and genial as he swings easily with “his black plume curling over his soft felt hat” (333), Dan and his fellow foot soldiers are in tatters. Words used to describe Dan as he observes Champe are “melancholy,” “grim,” and “aged”. Champe good-naturedly yet poignantly teases his cousin telling him: “Oh, Beau, Beau! ... How have the mighty fallen! You aren’t so particular now about wearing only white or black ties, I reckon” (333). Though Dan responds in kind, the passage highlights Dan’s class descent. The omniscient narrator in *The Battle-Ground* remarks that in the initial years of the war, the Army of Northern Virginia only distinguished differences in rank on the parade grounds (270). In the Governor’s words: “A gentleman fights for his country as he pleases, a plebeian as he must” (270) and Dan, though he has assumed the status of a lower-class soldier, is still, according to the definition of the Governor, a “gentleman” because he fights for his country as he chooses and not as he must. Nevertheless, his encounter with those in the cavalry remind Dan that, gentleman or not, as a foot soldier, he no longer ranks in the upper class.

The “fringe of the army,” as Dan had once jeeringly called it, was merrily making ready for a raid. As he listened, he leaned nearer the window and watched, half enviously, the men he had once known. His old life had been a part of theirs and now, looking in from the outside, it seemed very far away; for theirs was poetry of war beside which the other was mere dull history in which no names were written. (270)

Glasgow paints a vivid passage of Dan's daydream which "seizes him like a heartache" in which Prince Rupert beckons him to "Join the cavalry." While the cavalry prance around on their horses, enjoy accolades and revel in the "romance of war," the (now) commoner Dan fights without recognition as "only the man with the musket" (270). Here Glasgow seems to be acknowledging all of the nameless soldiers who fought and died in the war, but who would never be commemorated with a statute or special recognition.

In a chapter entitled "In the Hour of Defeat" both the Confederacy and Dan have been vanquished. Four years of war have taken everything and left Dan with nothing, "not ... so much as an empty title to take home for his reward" (363). Interestingly, despite his own experiences as one of the "mighty who have fallen," Dan, even at the very end of the novel, fails to question the legitimacy of a class-based system. Because of his low-class rank, he believes himself unworthy of Betty. It is Betty from the novel's beginning to end, echoing the sentiments expressed in *Iola Leroy*, that it is "one of the great mistakes of our civilization" that the "social test" of a person's worth is not rooted in character (118).

As was common for plantation women in antebellum times, the women of *The Battle-Ground* assume the class status of their men. Like her husband, Major Lightfoot, Mrs. Lightfoot has very rigid views about the importance of maintaining the sacred class structure of society. Limited in her scope of public life, however, Mrs. Lightfoot is confined to exercise her class prejudices in the realm of the fictional characters in her romance novels. Ranting about "new-fangled writers" like Charles Dickens, Mrs. Lightfoot laments the advent of "untitled heroes" who, God forbid, may work at the local butcher shop, sport names such as "Bill Bates," and fall in love with plain pug-nosed heroines named "Sukey Sue." Mrs. Lightfoot's fictional world is so real to her, that she insists that these everyday-Joe-like characters from a lesser class make her really feel as if she "had been keeping low society" (151). The passage illustrates not only the power of fiction to make the plight of the lower class not only visible but visceral to those who, before the war at least, never personally experienced want or hardships but also how removed the planter class was from the reality of the majority of people and the educated class's penchant to engage in "class tourism" through books.⁹⁶

When Mrs. Lightfoot determines that the time has come to rescue her grandson, Dan, from his lowly life as a wage earner and stagecoach driver, she commands Mr. Hicks, the owner of Dan's boarding house, "with courteous condescension" to do her bidding and fetch her grandson. As a member of the lower class, Jack Hicks is to obey Mrs. Lightfoot's will and

politely accept her curt behavior. Dan too, had initially treated the Hicks with the same haughtiness as his grandmother. However, his attitude, unlike his grandmother's, changes.

When Dan first arrives at the boarding house, Mrs. Hicks, the boarding house matron, expresses concern for Dan and advises him to return to his former life. Then she confesses that she had been the last person to see his "poor mother" on the night she eloped. At first, Dan is offended by a lower-class woman mingling in his affairs and responds abruptly, "Is there anything you wish?" However, when Mrs. Hicks refuses to relent and steps closer, he recognizes a "new meaning" in the face of the woman with the soiled wrapper and curl papers. He sees

something that made her look like Betty and his mother, that made all good women who loved him look alike. For the moment he forgot her ugliness, and with the beginning of that keener insight into light which would come to him as he touched with humanity, he saw only the dignity with which suffering had endowed this plain and simple woman. The furrows in her cheeks were no longer mere disfigurements; they raised her from the ordinary level of the ignorant and the ugly into some bond of sympathy with his dead mother. (183)

All women in Dan's life merge into a universal oneness that unites them in a kind of otherworldly beauty and insight that transcends class boundaries.

Whereas Dan represents a man of all classes, Pinetop is a sympathetic representation of a "cracker." The poor and illiterate son of a peanut farmer proves himself, to Dan and his fellow soldiers, to be every bit as worthy an individual as those from the more privileged classes. Pinetop's relationship with his brothers-in-arms illustrates how serving in the military brought together men from different backgrounds, education levels, and classes, and how the differences of their pasts became less important when the first shots were fired. Bullets, hunger, cold, and illness have no regard for class standing.

When Pinetop matter-of-factly answers taunts about his clothes that they're from his "Maw," he does so with the uttermost sincerity and not a single ounce of shame. In the end, it is Pinetop's tormenter, Bland, rather than Pinetop, who humiliates himself with his taunts. Bland's pre-war tailor-made suits are grossly inadequate to combat the grim and cold of battle. Dan and his friend Jack also understand that the finery of their former lives means nothing on the battlefield because "where every man's fighting for his country, [they're] all equal" (224).

Dan's friendship with Pinetop forces Dan for the first time, to confront the harsh realities of the struggles of the lower class and "the tragedy of hopeless ignorance for an inquiring mind" (335). Dan is rendered speechless by the epiphany of his own "lofty isolation." He suddenly recognizes that he has lavishly lived in a society not made possible but literally "produced by that free labour which had degraded the white workman to the level of the serf" (336). The truth pierces him and Dan is unable to remember his "genial plantation life" without also seeing the poor and doomed of the antebellum South who possessed an "untaught intellect" but had been denied the "birthright of every child" to learn. Dan believes that he has been so blinded by the hardship of the slaves, that he has remained ignorant of the plight of the poor whites, who he describes as "the white sharer of the negro's wrong" (335).

Glasgow, like Harper in *Iola Leroy*, compares the plight of the white poor to that of the slaves. Like Harper, she marvels at the poor men's willingness to die for a society that neither benefitted nor respected them. Whereas *Iola Leroy* purports that poor white men like Pinetop are ignorant and have been deceived about why they are going to battle, *The Battle-Ground* asserts that such men did not join the Confederacy to "protect a decaying institution" but rather out of an "instinct in every free man to defend the soil" (335). At the same time, Glasgow, unlike Harriet Beecher Stowe and Fanny Kemble, views the poor whites as victims.

Through Dan's point-of-view, Glasgow contends that ignorance requires empathy, not disgust. When Dan asks Pinetop why he hasn't asked for help to learn how to read, Pinetop admits to his shame and embarrassment and that he had feared that Big Abel would make fun of him. Again here, Glasgow shows the complex dynamics of race and class in the relationship between poor white Southerners and the black community. Despite Pinetop's "strong mountain reserve," Pinetop suffers from a gnawing dread that a former slave may look down on him as a member of a class lower than a black man's. Pinetop explains to Dan that as the child of a single parent who didn't know how to read herself, there was no one around to teach him. As he grew older, he was so exhausted from his dawn-to-dusk labor that he no longer had the energy to try to teach himself. Through Pinetop, Glasgow advocates for the poor community and counters assumptions of indolence and biological inferiority with arguments about a people denied the resources, opportunity, and the time needed to better themselves intellectually.

Dan's former slave Big Abel views poor white people with contempt and a class below him in social rank. He explains to Dan that he doesn't like the troop of foot soldiers because he isn't used to "po' w'ite trash" and they "ain' use ter" him either. Here Glasgow is no doubt reflecting the postwar racial tension yet to transpire in the South as a result of freed blacks and poor whites often competing for land and jobs. Once black men were given the right to vote, earn a wage, and own land, the only distinction remaining between them and poor white men came down to race. This was a distinction that many poor white men were keen to abuse through the postwar implementation of Black Codes and "separate but equal" Jim Crow legislation.

After the war ends, Dan falls ill on the return journey home. Big Abel is still by his side and complains to Dan about his actions: "you could er foun' somebody ter fit wid back at home widout comin' out heah ter git yo'se'f a-jumbled up wid all de po' white trash in de country. Dis yer wah ain' de kin' I'se use ter, caze hit jumbles de quality en de trash tergedder jes' like dey wuz bo'n blood" (300). For Abel, despite their state of wretchedness and near starvation, they are able to maintain their social rank above the "po' white trash" Big Abel so loathes.

At the time of *The Battle-Ground's* publication, the Progressive era was in full swing. While efforts were underway to improve the living conditions of the poor throughout the country, Booker T. Washington, former slave and black activist, was lecturing the nation on the importance of education and entrepreneurship to overcome the postwar racial and social divides. Though Glasgow herself was a member of the privileged elite of Southern society, in *The Battle-Ground* she superbly draws upon the conflicting tensions of class in Southern society as they intersect with race and gender. While the Civil War, as it progresses, seems to hold out a promise for an egalitarian postwar society, these hopes are dashed with the ever-growing animosity brewing between the blacks and poor whites as those who survive head homewards to rebuild their future. One permanent change the war did manage, however, was initiating the abrupt and permanent end to the so-called aristocratic planter class.

2.2. Novels of In-Between First- & Second-Wave Feminism: 1920–1963

In 1929, Evelyn Scott's *The Wave* was published. In October of the same year, the economic expansion of the "Roaring Twenties" would take a sudden and devastating downturn that would usher in a decade of economic hardship for most of the country. While

Scott was working on *The Wave*, the nation was undergoing a gilded age filled with a thriving market based on mass production offering an ever-growing selection of home appliances and consumer goods. With the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, women were, for the first time, no longer excluded from their right to vote based on gender. Although most families still relegated household work to women, the advent of home appliances tended to make domestic chores easier and more efficient. The twenties was a decade of contradiction. As prohibition attempted to dry out the nation, “flappers” sporting short dresses and bob-cut hairstyles danced the nights away. Artists such as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong wooed crowds with their Jazz tunes as racism became more rampant and the Ku Klux Klan increased its membership rosters. Everything seemed to come to a sudden and sobering halt with the crash on Wall Street. As factories and businesses failed, jobs and lines of credit grew scarce, and soup kitchen queues and shanty towns spread. In 1933 Franklin D. Roosevelt, in an effort to reinvigorate the economy, introduced his “New Deal” initiative.

Literature during the time seemed to reflect and almost anticipate the impending downturn. Directly following the integration of the 19th Amendment in the US Constitution in August 1920, Edith Wharton was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Literature for *The Age of Innocence* in 1921. Books like *The Great Gatsby* (1925) were questioning how the accumulation of considerable wealth affected the human condition while spurring discussions on class membership and exceptionalism. At the same time, middle-class society was coming under attack in books such as Sinclair Lewis’ *Babbitt* (1922). William Faulkner’s *The Sound and Fury* saw the rise and decline of a prominent family. In the same period, in a nation still recovering from “the war to end all wars”, the trauma of armed conflict was being grappled with in books such as Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) in the US and Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) in Germany. War is recognized, not as an opportunity for glory, but as a machinery producing widespread human misery.

Working-class literature published in the 1930s, known later as the Proletarian Literature Movement, featured books written by or about those of the laboring class. The first seeds of the movement, however, had no doubt been planted much earlier with books such as Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906). Showcasing the wretched conditions of immigrant workers in Chicago’s meat packing industry, the book was praised by readers such as Jack London as: “The *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* of wage slavery! And what *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* did for black slaves, *The Jungle* has a large chance to do for the wage slaves of today” (London

541). Though his 1906 letter illustrates an increasing awareness of the dismal conditions of America's working-class population, London's assessment was overly optimistic. The nation was not yet ripe for an introspective discussion about class and the exploitation of the many by a few. When the *The Jungle* hit the market in 1906, the public expressed greater disgust for the unsanitary conditions of the meat factory than the miserable plight of the workers. Sinclair's famously quoted response was, "I aimed at the public's heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach" (Arthur 83). The Zeitgeist would turn with the Great Depression by extending the suffering of the lowest classes to the nation as a whole.

In light of the historical period at the time of publication, the differences between the depictions of class in *The Wave* and *Gone with the Wind* are not as surprising as they may first appear. Though Scott would later distance herself from any association with what she considered a Communist plot to control US politics and the publishing industry, her themes were very much aligned to the concerns of class and power. *The Wave*'s vignettes grant equal stage time to a multitude of characters regardless of gender, race, or socio-economic background. The Civil War experience of the army general is as important as that of the destitute whore. Everyone suffers. Everyone has moral shortcomings. While Scott razed social barriers, Margaret Mitchell highlighted their significance.

In *Gone with the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell focuses on the plight of the privileged class of the South struggling to maintain a way of life that had reached its expiration date. Rather than expose the sufferings of all the classes, Mitchell draws sharp distinctions between the conniving poor white trash as exemplified by the Slatterlys and the rich cultured families of the O'Haras, Tarletons, and Wilkeses. At the same time, however, Scarlett O'Hara is not a traditional belle who stems from a pure blood line of the upper crest of Southern society. While the Robillards, Scarlett's mother's family, are indeed the crème de la crème of Southern society, Scarlett's father is a poker-playing Irish immigrant who won his plantation through a gambling bet. Throughout the novel, Mitchell, in the voice of Scarlett, repeatedly questions the soundness of the concept of class standing as an inherent trait. This was at a time when eugenics and notions of a master class were gaining popularity.⁹⁷

The timing of Mitchell's novel about people persevering in the midst of misery and social upheaval was auspicious. *Gone with the Wind* enabled a public steeped in the misery of the Great Depression and marching to the front of another world war to escape to a fantasy world of milk, honey, and cotton.⁹⁸ Stately Doric-columned mansions overlooking rolling fields of crops manned by singing and whistling slaves was just what the novel (and

subsequent film) the (white) public was waiting for. Like the *Heimat* films of post-World War II German cinema, *GWTW* delivered a message of gumption, hope, and optimism in a world destitute of rainbows. Most African Americans would not only not embrace a novel (and film) that so grossly misrepresented the inhumane industry and forced labor that sustained the so-called “Southern way of life,” many would challenge such narratives by subsequently penning their own historical narratives and usher in a new era of Southern fiction with new voices.

THE WAVE

In *The Wave*, Evelyn Scott poignantly depicts, from one story to the next, one fate to the next, how the deadliest war in US history wreaked misery and havoc on all people of all classes, regardless of race or gender. The Civil War was a conflict in which diseases and starvation killed more soldiers than bullets did. By April 1863, in several cities throughout the South, food was increasingly scarce and starvation rampant. This was due to a combination of factors. First, with all the men off to war and many slaves escaping to the North, farms no longer had sufficient “man” power to work the land. What *was* produced, was either legally confiscated through terms of impressment to feed Confederate troops, or illegally taken by marauding soldiers. Poverty and need breached class lines. Newspapers reported about “respectable” women shoplifting while hunger-stricken women from all socioeconomic classes throughout the South engaged in riots for food. In *The Wave*, Scott portrays women who cross the bounds of socioeconomic standing to unite in their grievances against a world in which the patriarchal-appointed government⁹⁹ “ain’t starving,” but ‘it’s the women expected to carry the load.”

Though Miss Araminta and Sister Maude Mary—two upper class Southern spinsters—are hungry, Sister Maude Mary warns her sister that she can’t beg or accept charity because she’d “prefer death first” (195). The sentiment that fighting for basic needs was somehow unladylike was common. Andrew Smith writes about an uprising of about 50–100 armed Georgian women in 1864 demanding “bread or blood” one judge in the case was quoted as saying: “When women become rioters, they cease to be women” (64). Planter class women, in particular, had been culturally conditioned to bear hardship with a congenial smile. In *The Wave*, however, Miss Araminta, always the more practical sister, recognizes that to survive, she will have to take action. The realization provokes within her a feeling “instantly fiery with abuse, haughty, and covertly revengeful—not, she insisted, toward Maude Mary”

(195). Indeed, the elderly Miss Araminta is the last person anyone would expect to descend from her refined Richmond pedestal, let alone direct a roving mob of rioting ladies in the Virginia Bread Riots but that's exactly what happens in *The Wave*. Scott also spotlights the malcontent over injustices of the war and the ruling patriarchal social system that was likewise brewing in the North. In July of the same year as the bread riots, men and women in New York City participated in the four-day long draft riots—one of the largest and most destructive riots in US history. Like in the bread riots, women in *The Wave* play a central role in the draft riots as well.

To suppress the spread of opposition to the war, Southern newspapers generally refrained from reporting on anti-war protests (Smith 65). The reasons for this were twofold. On the one hand, the South hoped to prevent desertions and waning support for the war effort by quelling a growing sentiment of frustration and disillusionment with the Confederacy. On the other hand, the South attempted to mitigate pro-Union propaganda stemming from the North. The Union-led campaigns were designed to exaggerate reports of widespread misery and discontent in the South in order to rally Northern morale about an inevitable Union victory while fueling Southern fears about an impending defeat.¹⁰⁰ The Union also strove to deter foreign trade partners (most notably the United Kingdom and France) from providing financial aid to the Confederacy through wartime loans. Despite these efforts, women-led protests throughout the nation were evidence of their widespread suffering and subsequent determination to take matters into their hands in a united front wholly unconcerned about imaginary class bounds. Women were determined not to be relegated to the dark corners of society as a voiceless class without rights, opinions, or the power to initiate meaningful social change.

The demands of war not only emboldened women to raise their fists and march in the streets, it also facilitated an increase in unchaperoned physical encounters (forced and voluntary) between men and women. Union and Confederate troops along with black people fleeing northward moved throughout the South. Strict conventions regarding women's involvement in public initiatives and their contact with strange men loosened, along with dress, mourning, and courting norms. While men could engage physically with any number of the opposite sex without permanent endangerment to their class standing, the same cannot be said of women.

In the vignette of the Union soldier Parker, Scott demonstrates how gender and class intersect with social conventions during the war. To many Southern female loyalists during

the war, Union soldiers were foreign invaders. As such, they were to be rejected as unworthy of Southern ladies' attention. Scott places readers in New Orleans in the point-of-view of one Union soldier named Parker who attempts to regain his footing in the social hierarchy by using social gender dynamics and even rape to reestablish himself in a socially dominate position. Parker is particularly upset by Southern women who make him feel like he's not good enough for them. He has no qualms about showing one such woman who "thinks she's the Queen of Sheba" who's boss. He feels a sense of superiority in the knowledge that despite her fine clothes, she must be starving. He fantasizes about tearing her "hoops an' ruffles an' things off of her. Leave her in her skin, like she was made, an' no better'n anybody else" (115). The fantasy of rape is motivated, not by a sexual desire, but rather the drive to physically and socially dominate a less-than-accommodating woman. The effectiveness of this wartime weapon is that the perpetrator not only demonstrates his power over the woman, but also the men who are supposed to protect her. Rape forever de-ranks the rape victim socially.¹⁰¹

The tale of Carrie Williams depicts the plight of a young woman who, after being disowned by her family for not living up to their notion of virtue, has fallen from her class rank to the bottom rung of society. Working as a whore for a woman named Miss Tate, Carrie is forced to earn her keep by "promenading" along the river, near the Custom House. Miss Tate is astute to the bitter sweet nectar wartime whores provide to soldiers who consider themselves gentlemen. She advises Carrie not to "fancy anybody who was less than a major. Gentlemen in responsible positions feel obliged to be generous, if it's only to protect their own reputations and save a fuss" (149). When Carrie reflects on what she has succumbed to, she justifies her solicitation of men with the notion that she wasn't *born* to act common, implying that there are other kinds of women who *are* born to act common. She can treat a man fine and still not be "like them others" (154). Like Dan in *The Battle-Ground*, Carrie believes that there is some innate trait or, in the words of Thomas Jefferson to John Adams "natural aristocracy,"¹⁰² that distinguishes class and social standing that transcends filth (in Dan's case, physical, and in Carrie's moral).

Rosie is a prostitute who has fallen in love with a brothel regular named Dandy. Though the affection seems mutual, Dandy will never consider Rosie a potential partner because selling her body has placed her into an "untouchable" social class for Dandy. A man can buy sex to satisfy his carnal needs, but a woman with nothing left to sell, but her body suffers a permanent social stigma that the man does not. Scott shows the hypocrisy of the

double standard of Southern society. Though history is replete with examples of women such as the Italian *cortigiane oneste* and the French courtesans who were not only respected for their services but maintained an upper-class position in society, in the Civil War era South, being a prostitute was equivalent to being a low class outcast.

A seemingly parallel class society exists amongst the emancipated black women who parade together in a procession of newly liberated slaves heading to Savannah. Scott describes those who walk together toward an uncertain future as socially delineated as former house slaves and field slaves. The former house slave, Lou, for example, is demure with an “air of decorum peculiar to slave girls who are lady’s maids and seamstresses” (417). She is described in a manner befitting a Southern belle, as a “pretty [...] small girl [...] with a consumptive chest” talented in needlework. Her skin tone is light black, the tint of milk and coffee. Her image is in stark contrast to Anna’s – a former field hand, who “could ‘swing a hoe jes’ like a man,’ [and is] accustomed to a life of independence” (417).

While the former house slaves are plagued by a conflicted loyalty toward their former masters, the field slaves wholly embrace their newfound freedom. Lou thinks of her former mistress, Miss Dosia, as “a solitary spinster, [who] had always been ‘mighty good.’” She was a woman who publicly praised Lou but always tried to “convert” her. While Lou is giddy about her liberation, at the same time she feels a sense of guilt for being ungrateful. “Lou could not explain herself, and felt very apologetic that she had been so dissatisfied” (418). Lou longs to behave herself “de way de nicest white folks did.” She has internalized her social rank to such an extent that she wonders how “she had ever dared to leave her home with an ‘Injun’ girl.” Meanwhile, Anna, more self-aware than Lou, thinks, “I ain’t gonta waste *mah* life doin’ chores faw ol’ maids” (419). The march represents a kind of purgatory for the women, in which they go from being someone else’s property to a life of freedom. Scott brilliantly reflects the convoluted sense of self that the women struggle with as they try to position themselves socially and psychologically in their new worlds.

The importance of displaying outward proof of class standing becomes particularly significant after the war. Scott juxtaposes the hypocrisy of the outward tailored appearance of civility with the inward petty judgments that afflict those supposedly cultivated people of the upper class in a tale of Mrs. Sutter and her daughter, Jemima, as the two ladies attend (unescorted) a performance at Ford Theater. While Jemima is relieved that she had convinced her mother to wear a décolleté to the theater, she is equally concerned that her mother’s “contrary” attitude and forgetfulness of “correct behavior” will hurt her own

chances of reaching the “highest place in Washington society” (565). Extremely conscientious of her appearance and how it imparts her class standing, Jemima takes it as a personal offense when a “know-it-all menial” first forgets to give her a playbill and then rushes to rectify his error. She resolves that she will teach him manners if he thinks he can treat her “any old way” and fantasizes about slapping the smirk off his face. She thinks: “They were much too ‘know-it-all,’ these menials” (567).

Preserving her outward identity as a lady is more important to Jemima than self-actualization. Observing the actress on stage, Jemima thinks how she too would love to act but that such a career is too unladylike even though, “[w]omen like Miss Keene were of quite good standing and accepted almost as equally as everybody.” The qualifier “almost” signifies that Miss Keene is far from being accepted as a social equal. The longing to be a modern woman stuck in the unmodern world is apparent in Jemima’s ambivalent attitude toward the actress as Scott’s delves into the young woman’s viewpoint in third person narrative voice:

Jemima did not state her conclusion in so many words, but she did not find it quite fair that a woman could put herself so in the limelight, receiving, no doubt, even the addresses of utterly strange men who admired her, and not have to pay any penalty for her advantage. She began to dislike Miss Keene a little. Yet if I were only she, Jemima thought—but I suppose if I were I could not marry well. How do they dare take such risks? (569)

Meanwhile, Mrs. Sutter, directs her antipathy at the Lincolns seated in the balcony above:

Mrs. Lincoln cannot *compare* with Miss Keene! [...] She’s the most commonplace woman I ever saw in my life. I have no *patience* with her. And as for the *President*—he is well enough, I know—but did you ever see *plebeian* so written all over a man! If he hadn’t managed to make himself president nobody would ever give a second thought to him. (I can’t abide that lilac dress.). (572-73)

The point-of-view changes, then to Major Rathbone, who is sitting in Lincolns’ balcony and feasting his eyes on his fiancé, Miss Harris. He is annoyed that Booth, whose manners he finds “insufferable,” has “nose[d] himself into *her* society.” For Rathbone, Miss Harris is an innocent, “brilliant little woman of the world” who deserves his protection (582).

Throughout the passage, Mrs. Sutter and Jemima exchange mean gossip about the Lincolns, who are “such plain people” and according to “Washington society” are responsible for its unmentionable deterioration. Their offenses include Mrs. Lincoln’s ignorance in “how to behave herself,” by overdressing terribly and being “so affected” while Mr. Lincoln is

guilty of having “manners . . . as plain as his face.” When Mrs. Sutter comments that Lincoln is a hero because of the Emancipation Act and all, Jemima responds, implying that heroism is measured by turn and change steps rather than political achievements: “Well, he’s not *my* notion of a hero. Think of *waltzing* with a man like that” (568). When the public makes an obvious fuss about Mrs. Lincoln’s entrance, Mrs. Sutter complains about the “unworthy annoyance” of the interruption and about Mrs. Lincoln now being so “stuck up” that “she thinks she can behave just any way she likes” (570). The passage illustrates the gilded nature of the postwar upper class, who struggle with a democracy that can raise poor and less educated people to tiers above those who consider themselves naturally aristocratic. The so-called Southern aristocrats grapple with their perceived loss of distinction and privilege. The only way to elevate themselves in the postwar era is to make others appear socially smaller. The irony that Lincoln is about to be assassinated and his legacy cemented into the books of American history while Mrs. Sutter and her daughter will forever be forgotten is not lost on readers.

GONE WITH THE WIND

One of the major casualties of the Civil War was the social structure of antebellum society. According to the *GWTW*’s romantic hero, the rebellious planter son Rhett Butler, when the world falls to turmoil and everyone loses everything, everyone becomes equal: “And then [everyone] start[s] again at raw, with nothing at all. That is, nothing except the cunning of their brains and strength of their hands” (772). *Gone with the Wind* portrays the dethroning of the South’s proud planter class. The battle bugles trumpet the “Götterdämmerung”¹⁰³ as those who considered themselves Southern gods lose their “noble blood”, wealth, and property holdings as casualties of war. For upper-class families such as the Wilkeses, Calverts, Tarletons, and Fontaines, once so revered for their “aristocratic” lineages and fine manners, the war is the end of a golden era of rule. For members of the black and poor white communities, the war is the beginning of an era of new-found freedoms and opportunity. Southerners like Scarlett O’Hara and Rhett Butler, whose temperaments were less suited to the restrictive conventions of antebellum society, are not only able to survive, but even thrive in a world on fire.

With the loss of so many young, able-bodied men from “good” Southern families, planter women’s notions about appropriate husbands and the importance of keeping the Southern “aristocratic” blood pure, shifts. Gone are the days when a daughter was expected to wed a

man whose grandfather was known or to marry into a family “who had lived in the South much longer than twenty-two years, had owned land and slaves and been addicted only to the fashionable vices during that time” (69). Recognizing that there is more at stake than just winning the right to secede, Ashley Wilkes states that he is fighting for “the old days, the old ways” which he had loved so much but fears have gone forever. When the Confederates suffer their final defeat, Rhett Butler concludes that the planter class has not just lost their money, but an entire world: “the world they were raised in [...] to be certain persons, to do certain things, to occupy certain niches ” (718). *Gone with the Wind* is not just a look back at the destruction of a world that was, but also a preview of a world to come. A major theme of the novel looks at what determines class and status and how this will affect the new social structures to be forged in the postwar South. War may have wrecked class distinctions, Mitchell seems to contend, but Southern planters would be damned if they’d go down with a fight.

Coursing through the feisty veins of the novel’s heroine, Scarlett, is the tainted blood of her Irish immigrant father and the “noble” blood of her Southern upper-class mother. As a sixteen-year-old planter daughter, Scarlett’s antebellum days are filled with picnics and barbecues arranged to foster mingling amongst the young privileged class. Although her parents and Mammy have schooled Scarlett in the ways of “ladyhood,” Scarlett finds it difficult to accept that the man she pines for, Ashley Wilkes, the Twelve Oaks plantation heir, has been promised to his cousin, Melanie Hamilton. No amount of hair pulling or foot stamping on Scarlett’s part will admit her to their inner-most consanguineous circle of the upper-most crest of class society where blood and wealth must be secured through marriage. Beatrice Tarleton, a matriarch in the upper-class community and breeder of prized thoroughbreds, asserts that the Wilkes-Hamilton practice of intermarrying makes them “overbred and inbred too” without the tenacity and stamina to survive a run on a “mud track” (104). Her predictions prove prophetic. The Southern elites who prize gentility and the purity of blood over street smarts are unfit for the hardships of the Civil War. By the end of the novel, Twelve Oaks is in ruins, Melanie is dead, and Ashley Wilkes is only able to survive with Scarlett’s help.

Just as Twelve Oaks Plantation which “crowns” the hillside with “stately beauty” and “mellowed dignity,” exemplifies the nobility of the Wilkes family, Tara is evidence not only of the O’Hara patriarch’s checkered past, but also of the importance of hard work, determination, and drive. While Twelve Oaks can boast a long history as an estate that has

been passed on for generations, Tara's beginnings are humbler. In an all-night poker game, Gerald O'Hara wins the expansive uncultivated plot of land with the blackened foundation of a burned building by wagering money that is not his, but belongs to his brothers' firm. To finance slaves and a "clumsy sprawling building" (65), Gerald borrows money by mortgaging parts of the land. Gerald's origin story reinforces the Southern ruling class myth that the socioeconomic structure benefitted all white people and with hard work and a little luck, anyone could make it. But Gerald realizes that a plantation alone does not an esteemed planter make.

As a "new man," "foreigner," and someone without a long lineage or old money, Gerald initially has difficulty integrating with the upper-class Southern community. With far more experience observing the workings of high-class Southern society, Gerald's slave Pork, also part of his poker bounty, advises him: "'whut you needs is a wife, and a wife whut has got plen'y of house niggers.'" Only his marriage to the fifteen-year-old Ellen Robillard, who is "a lady and a lady of blood" but whose marital eligibility had been compromised by rumors of abandonment by a cousin (51) endows the determined Irish immigrant with the upper-class legitimacy he so desperately seeks. Ellen instinctively knows "how Coast people ... act in any circumstance," and is a "thrifty and kind mistress, a good mother and a devoted wife" (73). Despite his new positioning, the patriarch of Tara is never once referred to in the novel as "Master Gerald" or "Master O'Hara."

Perhaps because of her father's background and her devotion to him, Scarlett is not the natural-born lady of her peers. For Scarlett, ladyhood required one thing and one thing only – wealth. Pomp and circumstance be damned. Why should a young woman starve herself at a party? Why should a grieving widow deny herself bright colors, pretty dresses, and gay dances? Scarlett, child of Gerald, finds the road to ladyhood hard (71), but shrewdly masters the art of outwardly bowing to the class conventions while inwardly mocking the mores confining its women.

War radically changes the lives of Southern planter women. Scarlett, "sick and ragged, driven by hunger to hunt for food in the gardens of her neighbors" feels a certain sense of injustice as one "born to be pampered" now lowered to scavenge to survive (407). As she is forced to perform more arduous tasks, Scarlett believes that labor and poverty have stripped her of the status of "lady" even though the other women, "bore themselves like ladies ... Ladies all!" Scarlett believes she can only rehabilitate her class status by reacquiring certain luxury goods and reinstating black people to perform her menial and

back-breaking tasks: “until her table was weighted with silver and crystal and smoking with rich food, until her own horses and carriages stood in her stables, until black hands and not white took the cotton from Tara” (570). Scarlett, unlike her silly and foolish counterparts, recognizes that ladyhood has but one requirement: “money!” (570). “There was only one thing in the world that was a certain bulwark against any calamity which fate could bring,” she thinks, “and that was money. She thought feverishly that they must have money, lots of it to keep them safe against disaster” (608). Throughout the novel, Scarlett just can’t bring herself to accept the notion that “a born lady remained a lady, even if reduced to poverty.” Scarlett rejects the Southern belief that breeding and not money make gentility, and aligns herself, with the uncouth Yankee notion that: “It took money to be a lady” (571). She even adopts the unseemly Yankee trait of being consumed with the pursuit of money. At the end of the war, rather than living independently off the land in the Southern agrarian tradition, Scarlett buys and manages a mill which more closely resembles the factories of the North so abhorred by antebellum anti-abolitionist Southerners.¹⁰⁴ Her unapologetic views on class and proper place are also evident in her choice of supervisors for her mill. While Scarlett’s husband, Frank, objects to Johnnie Gallegher managing Scarlett’s mill because he is nothing more than a “Shanty Irish on the make,” it is precisely because Johnnie recognizes the “value of money” that Scarlett thinks he is perfect for the job and feels a “closer kinship with him than with many men of her own class” (709). Scarlett’s judgment proves dubious when her workers fall into slave-like conditions when Gallegher not only whips the leased convicts but nearly starves them to death by selling their food. Yet as a self-made woman, Scarlett believes in the self-made man.

As Gerald O’Hara’s surrogate son, Scarlett eventually assumes the role of “head of the household” of Tara. Scarlett eschews social norms in favor of results when she is vested with the financial and social management of the destitute plantation. Scarlett attempts to secure funds to pay Tara’s back taxes by offering to “prostitute” herself as Rhett Butler’s mistress. Later, she grants the Cracker Will Benteen permission to marry her sister Suellen to secure manpower to transform the war-torn fields into a functioning farm.

As Scarlett matures, she eventually grows from a superficial antebellum girl only interested in sign-value items like dresses and jewelry into a hardened post-bellum woman with a genuine appreciation for the use-value of the land. Gerald, whose heart would always “swell with pride” (66) whenever he surveyed Tara, worked hard to instill its worth to his daughter: “[l]and is the only thing in the world that amounts to anything,” he tells her, and

“the only thing in the world that lasts ... [and] the only thing worth working for, worth fighting for—worth dying for” (55). In the midst of war and chaos, Tara becomes synonymous with Scarlett’s mother, Ellen. Scarlett yearns to “run every step of the way” (379) to lose herself in “the kind arms of Tara and Ellen” where she can “lay down her burdens, far too heavy for her young shoulders” (381). Ashley recognizes Scarlett’s deep connection to Tara and presses a clump of clay into her trembling hand as he reminds her that even if he were to leave, she would still be left with something she loves even more than she loves him (503). When all seems lost, Scarlett clutches the plantation clay and repeats over and over, “I’ve still got this. Yes, I’ve still got this” (505).

Like Scarlett, Rhett Butler takes a practical approach to acquiring what he wants in life with little regard for laws and social norms. Though born to a respectable, upper-class Southern family, Rhett is disowned by his father for ruining the Butler name with his gambling and blockade running (714). Rhett has little faith in the value of class that supersedes the demand to satisfy basic wants and needs. While he can understand his father’s refusal to accept his “tainted” monetary hand-outs, he cannot tolerate his father’s willingness to allow his sense of honor to plunge their family into “genteel starvation.” When these misled notions end up killing Butler Sr., Rhett is finally able to properly provide for his family. Nevertheless, Rhett heeds to class propriety by concealing the origins of his funding because the ladies “have a position to uphold” (714). Concerns about the Charleston court of public opinion supersede any moral misgivings about shady business practices. Despite his affluence, Rhett, unlike Scarlett, does not believe that wealth determines class. For Rhett, Melanie Wilkes, despite her “poverty and tacky clothes,” remains “the soul and the center of everything in Atlanta that’s sterling” (837).

Marriage, which had always been a means of social “ladder climbing” for Southern belles, undergoes radical changes during the war. As battle casualties increase, the qualifications for suitable husbands lessen. Cathleen Calvert, the daughter of a rich planter and a much sought-after belle “who, next to Scarlett, had had more beaux than any girl in the Country”, marries a Yankee “white trash” overseer to help her maintain the plantation on her own (470). For the ever-practical Scarlett, Cathleen’s “plight” is “more startling than catastrophic” (471). After all, girls have “got to marry someone.” For Melanie, however, Cathleen would have been better off as a spinster because “[t]here’s nothing shameful in being a spinster.” In fact, Melanie asserts that even Cathleen’s death would have been a

preferable fate to marriage to a Yankee because such a disgraceful act will no doubt be the end of the Calverts (471).

Despite Scarlett's defense of Cathleen's decision to marry a Yankee, Scarlett feels a sense of superiority over her girlhood rival, Cathleen, who Scarlett believes has sunk socially to irrecoverable depths. In the end, Scarlett condemns Cathleen for marrying the "poor white trash Yankee overseer," and reducing herself to working alongside him to keep the Calvert plantation operating. Cathleen's faded sunbonnet, freckled and unclean hands, stained dress, and dirty fingernails, are a "tragedy" to be shuddered at. Scarlett thinks Cathleen looks like a lowly Cracker, "poor white, shiftless, slovenly, trifling" who will probably even be "dipping snuff" soon (661). Most disturbing of all, however, is Scarlett's realization that war has narrowed the chasm "between quality folks and poor whites" (661). Likewise, Scarlett is keenly aware: "There but for a lot of gumption am I" (661). The irony, brilliantly presented by Mitchell, is that in the very same scene, the cracker Will, who has been helping Scarlett with Tara, will publicly announce at Gerald O'Hara's funeral his intentions to marry Scarlett's sister, Suellen.

In his Cracker-style English, Will praises Gerald O'Hara's resilience, stating, "when the war come on and his money begun to go, he warn't scared to be pore again." For Will, Gerald's strength as one who "warn't licked" is an example that everyone in the community needs to follow. Will sees them all united in the same good fight. While Scarlett generally does not approve of contemporaries marrying beneath themselves—to either overseers or (white) Yankees—her disapproval does not extend to Will Benteen whose love of "every stone" of Tara is proof enough of his worthiness (685). Will's funeral eulogy on behalf of Gerald O' Hara, is ample testament for Scarlett that although "Crackers are short on sparkle," Will must be a "gentlemen at heart" because he is not stymied by past memories and promises. In short, she decides, "Yes. Will will do well by Suellen and by Tara" (669).

When Scarlett and Rhett marry, two people are joined together whose pursuit of wealth supersedes their desire to conform to old Southern upper-class ways. Scarlett embraces her new life as the pair moves away from Tara to reside in a grand but gaudy mansion purchased with money made by shady dealings. The house has something unsavory about it and while there, Scarlett loses her social status amongst "respectable society." Her life becomes increasingly tumultuous as she is presumably raped by her husband, loses her daughter, her unborn child, and her best friend, and is left completely alone by the end of the novel. Tara, as it always has, offers Scarlett a place to return to her roots to replenish herself.

Scarlett recognizes Tara's soul-nourishing ability to ground her and grant her space to lick her wounds (958). "She had gone back to Tara once [before] in fear and defeat and she had emerged from its sheltering walls strong and armed for victory." As she reels from the shock that Rhett may have left her for good, it is thoughts of Tara's "avenue of dark cedars," "cape jessamine bushes, vivid green against the white walls [and] fluttering white curtains" (959) that comfort Scarlett. As she resolves to win Rhett back, she resolves to plot how to do so at Tara.

Just as Mitchell uses "black language" for characters like Mammy, she also uses Cracker language for characters such as Will. However, for the poor white characters the language signifies, not a cultural attachment to another race but rather a socio-economic marker of a lower class. The language of poor whites is not an empowering symbol but rather indicative of a low level of education. Use of the class-specific language constantly reminds readers that the character does not belong due to his less advantaged background.

Grandma Fontaine, the grand "Old Miss" of the Southern planter families, expresses concern about Scarlett's decision to let Suellen marry "out of her class" just to have someone take care of Tara. Scarlett, suddenly and conveniently oblivious to the parallels with Catherine Calvert Hilton's situation, acts surprised at the mere suggestion that something is awry. "Class? Class?" she asks, "What does class matter now, so long as a girl gets a husband who can take care of her?" (668). The "her" is not just Suellen, but Tara, and any man who cares for Tara possess gentlemanly qualities, as far as Scarlett is concerned. Cathleen's mistake, perhaps, was not just marrying a poor overseer, but marrying a poor *Yankee* overseer. Class adherence may no longer play a role, but the importance of Confederate loyalty most certainly persists.

Grandma Fontaine recognizes that some might consider Scarlett's actions "common sense" but reminds Scarlett that there are also those who would question whether such bars ought to ever be lowered because "Will's certainly not quality folks and some of your people were" (668). Because only *some* of and not *all* of Scarlett's people were, there is an obvious danger of tainting the family bloodline even more. Though Scarlett recognizes in Will the characteristics she perceives as typical of "most Crackers" who did not have "a long line of ancestors of wealth, prominence and blood" (668), she still stands by her decision to welcome him into the family. Will may be uneducated with ancestors who most likely stem from a debtor or a bond servant, but Will possesses other traits vital to survival, such as honesty, loyalty, patience, and the willingness to work hard. Nevertheless, the sum of these

attributes, for a man such as Will, is “not quality” by Robillard or Grandma Fontaine standards. Even Scarlett is forced to admit that “Undoubtedly by Robillard standards, Suellen was coming down in the world” (668). Yet Scarlett approves of Will with an unequivocal “Yes.”

For Grandma Fontaine, any old family marriage to a Cracker is comparable to breeding scrub stock to thoroughbreds. Although she considers Crackers good, solid, and honest, she cannot bear the notion that suffices to welcome them into the fold (669). Nevertheless, Grandma Fontaine tells Scarlett that though she has no love lost for “hard females” like Scarlett, except for herself, she admires Scarlett’s ability to tackle life’s hardships so matter-of-factly. Scarlett, she says, should take criticism about Suellen’s match with a grain of salt. Scarlett responds that she never let what other people say bother her.

While *Gone with the Wind* depicts how the war positively changes the attitude of many upper-class Southerners towards Crackers, it also portrays how the status of another class of poor whites, those who barely subsisted in the same communities as the planters, worsened. As more men were drafted for battle, the war made a hard life even harder for the already struggling class of “poor white trash.” Mitchell christened the representative family of this abject class of people the Slatterys—a surname that instantly evokes a clear connection to the offensive term of disparagement, “slatternly,” meaning sleazy, untidy, or dirty. *Gone with the Wind*’s omniscient narrator, who parrots elite planter class viewpoints, describes the patriarch “Old Slattery” and his family members in a derogatory manner, implying that they are unkempt, unhealthy, and always having more children. Old Slattery’s wife is “a snarly-haired woman, sickly and washed-out of appearance, the mother of a brood of sullen and rabbit-looking children—a brood which was increased regularly every year” (66). Tom Slattery spends his time getting his wife pregnant rather than working the fields. The already too-large family is therefore dependent on hand-outs from the O’Haras to survive. When the Slattery daughter, Emmie, becomes pregnant, she is unmarried, presumably barefoot, and without shame. At the end of the war, the ungrateful girl, whom Ellen O’Hara had fallen fatally ill nursing, marries Tara’s former overseer, Jonas Wilkerson. Together, the two scoundrels set their sights on snatching away Tara from Scarlett. When Tony Fontaine kills Jonas Wilkerson for stirring up the “darkies” with “his nigger-equality business,” the other planter elite agree that the killing was justified. These “poor white trash” are the kinds of despicable people, Mitchell seems to say, who subsist at the bottom rungs of white Southern society and get what they have coming to them.

With the Emancipation Proclamation, Southerners could no longer retain their former way of life and immediately lost their master ranking. No master can exist without a slave. Page-by-page *GWTW* guides readers deep into the racist mentality of postbellum ruling class whites which would pave the way for the racial terrorism and discrimination of the Jim Crow era. Slaves served not only as an inexpensive pool of laborers, trade commodity, and property asset, they also signified wealth and status. The enslaved characters Mitchell includes throughout the novel are those who are closest to the O'Hara family and are generally treated as an addendum to the women of the family rather than a class of people with their own individual standing. Pork is a dedicated servant to Gerald, and Mammy is a beloved mother-Ersatz to Scarlett. Prissy is a scared child who needs direction, and the house servants help the women survive some of the worst times of the war by stashing food and household items.

Had the novel ended there, the view of black people in the novel would have been generally more positive than negative. However, *GWTW* details the Southern planters' narrative of the changes in the social fabric of the South following the end of the war in the "cold spring of 1866," when the Yankee occupiers elevated the blacks and disenfranchised the whites as a "way to keep the South down" (613):

The former slaves were now the lords of creation and, with the aid of the Yankees, the lowest and most ignorant ones were on top. The better class of them, scorning freedom, were suffering as severely as their white masters. Thousands of house servants, the highest caste in the slave population, remained with their white folks, doing manual labor which had been beneath them in the old days. Many loyal field hands also refused to avail themselves of the new freedom, but the hordes of "trashy free issue niggers," who were causing most of the trouble, were drawn largely from the field-hand class. (611)

According to the omniscient narrator, the "house negroes" and "yard negroes" despised the former field hands as "lowly blacks" and "creatures of small worth." In antebellum times, through a strict selection process, plantation mistresses such as Ellen had selected the most skilled and talented slaves for positions of greater responsibility as "house and yard negroes" while "[t]hose consigned to the fields were the ones least willing or able to learn, the least energetic, the least honest and trustworthy, the most vicious and brutish. And now this class, the lowest in the black social order, was making life a misery for the South" (611). The narrator blames the Freedmen's Bureau along with the Yankees for elevating former field hands to "seats of the mighty." These freed slaves, so the narrative, are

“creatures of small intelligence” who “[l]ike monkeys or small children turned loose among treasured objects whose value is beyond their comprehension, ...[run] wild—either from perverse pleasure in destruction or simply because of their ignorance” (611). In a patronizing tone, the narrator surmises that most were not motivated by “malice,” but due to their “childlike mentality” and “long habit” of taking orders, they had simply taken on a new set of masters: “the Bureau and the Carpetbaggers, and their orders were: ‘You’re just as good as any white man, so act that way.... you are going to have the white man’s property. It’s as good as yours now. Take it, if you can get it!’” (611). The “trashy free issue niggers” opt to flock to the cities to indulge in “a never-ending picnic” and “a carnival of idleness and theft and insolence” instead of working in the fields. The crowded urban conditions cause outbreaks of illnesses which exacerbate the suffering of the “trashy free issue niggers” who are no longer cared for by their former mistresses. The narrator describes the act of white families who take in black children and put them to work as gestures of “kind-hearted” people who rescue the “abandoned negro children [who] ran like frightened animals about the town” (612).

According to the novel, black men’s addiction to whiskey and their unwillingness to work cause many to steal from and “terrorize” the white community, which was left “unprotected by law”: “Men were insulted on the streets by drunken blacks, houses and barns were burned at night, horses and cattle and chickens stolen in broad daylight, crimes of all varieties were committed and few of the perpetrators were brought to justice” (612). The Ku Klux Klan is born out of “tragic necessity” (613) to protect the white community, and especially the most precious property of that community—their white women. Mitchell depicts how the war and the end of slavery overturn the social structure of the South and enkindle deep-seated racist attitudes into a raging fire that would plague the South and all the people of the US for decades.

2.3. Novels of Second-Wave Feminism: 1963–1991

With the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, and the advent of the second-wave movement, also came the awareness that within the women’s movement, the ability of some women to receive an education and work in blue collar jobs depended on the necessity to keep others firmly tied to the homes. If men weren’t willing to stay home to cook, provide child and elderly care, and do household chores, then women from the lower classes who would have to assume these tasks. Such an arrangement could only be financially viable for most

(white) families if the compensation for the women employed to perform such domestic tasks was low. Particularly in the South, domestic service positions were disproportionately filled by black women.¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile, the Black Civil Rights movement came into full swing along with the advent of “negro colleges” and national organizations to fight discrimination. An awareness spread that the nation’s recorded, taught, and commemorated history grossly overlooked important roles and events of its marginalized citizens. The 1960s and 1970s galvanized many of those who had been sidelined to demand change. As feminists rallied for equal rights, an us-vs.-them sentiment plagued the woman’s movement, substantially restricting its strides forward. Blacks were working against whites, women were working against men, heterosexuals against homosexuals, conservatives against liberals.

In her 1974 essay “The Last Straw,” Rita Mae Brown took on the old white male Marxist scholars and their views about class, which according to Brown, were “tricking” middle-class women into inaction with overly restrictive definitions of class and its relationship to the means of production. For Brown, class determined behavior and basic assumptions about life: “Your experience (determined by your class) validates those assumptions, how you are taught to behave, what you expect from yourself and from others, your concept of a future, how you understand problems and solve them, how you think, feel, act” (qtd. in hooks 4). This, according to Brown, needed to be “recognized, understood and changed.” Bell hooks contended that lesbian women like Brown were particularly well positioned to fight the injustices of class because, “No matter their class, they were social outcasts, the objects of patriarchal abuse and scorn. Concurrently, unlike their heterosexual counterparts, they were not relying on men to support them economically. They needed and wanted equal pay for equal work” (*Where we Stand* 103).

In the same feminist wave period, Alice Walker made history in 1983 by being the first African American woman to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Literature. Her novel *The Color Purple* also received a National Book Award. Given the changes brewing in the era of their publications, it is not so surprising the both *Jubilee* and *High Hearts* addressed issues of class and marginalized groups in their novels of the Civil War.

JUBILEE

Jubilee begins in an antebellum South where the demarcation lines dividing classes are strictly defined and adhered to. By successfully depicting how the class system of Southern

society, before and after the Civil War, not only oppressed people based on socioeconomic differences, but also gender and racial differences as well, Walker portrays the intersectionality of race, gender, and class long before the term was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.

As a racially-mixed woman, Vyry, leads a very different life than her “white” half-sister, Lillian. Vyry is legally classified as a slave according to her black mother’s enslaved status; Lillian is classified as a (free) Southern belle, according to her white planter mother’s status. Although both girls share the same well-situated planter father, Vyry, because of her “black blood,” is denied the socioeconomic benefits associated with her father’s upper-class status that her white half-sister enjoys. The girls’ racial and thus social differences influence their expectations from life. While Lillian dreams of securing a husband with a high social standing, Vyry simply longs to be freed from enslavement. As Vyry matures, because she is black and because she is enslaved, she becomes the target for the plantation mistress’s anger and physical assaults. In her 2019 book, *They Were Her Property*, historian Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers provides evidence that far from being helpless victims, Southern white women often played an active role in the plantation economy and slave-market system.

Salina’s sadistic abuse of Vyry is only surpassed in severity by the actions of one of *Jubilee*’s most unlikeable characters, the plantation overseer Ed Grimes. Walker’s unsympathetic rendering of Grimes aligns with Harriet Beecher Stowe’s characterization of those referred to with the racial epithet “poor white trash.” Stowe’s contention and Walker’s portrayal depict poor white Southerners as antagonistic towards black people. As a scorned class of people, poor whites, so Stowe, needed a class below them to malign and consequently became fervent supporters of slavery. “To set the negro at liberty would deprive them of this last comfort; and accordingly no class of men advocate slavery with such frantic and unreasoning violence, or hate abolitionists with such demoniac hatred” (*The Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin* 368). Both Stowe and Walker reinforce classist stereotypes and overlook the socioeconomic realities of poor white Southerners. The victims are blamed rather than the victim-making system.

The lowly position of the “poor white trash” as portrayed in *Jubilee* supports Marxist theory that economics is the basis for social, political, and ideological realities (Tyson 51). The planter class is not the ruling class because they are white; the planter class is the ruling class because they are white and maintain a monopoly on the means of production: the natural, financial, and human resources. By disrupting the ruling planter class’s

disproportionate share of money, property, and labor, the Civil War overturns its position of power as a ruling class. Yet, as Walker portrays in the struggles of her black characters, Randall, Innis, and Vvry during the Reconstruction era, having an education in and experience with the social workings of the power structures was equally advantageous to white Southerners long after they lost their prewar resources. Southerners with experience as social leaders were better positioned after the war to tailor and manipulate the legal and social framework of the postbellum South to their benefit and could thus regain their (temporarily) lost social, political, and economic power. Those who did not, could not.

Walker shows the symbiotic relationship between race and class in which poor white Southerners like Ed Grimes obtusely believe that all whites have the opportunity to socially advance. An important part of this process, however, was ensuring that a different group of people perpetually occupied the bottom socioeconomic ranking based on their race rather than economic standing. While planters' attempts to colonize the consciousness of those they enslaved were usually in vain, the same efforts in regards to the "poor white trash" enjoyed greater success. By convincing poor white Southerners that the Southern socioeconomic system was beneficial for *all* white people, the Southern ruling class convinced Southern poor whites that with enough hard work and a little luck, the sky was the limit. Nothing was stopping poor white Southerners, so the narrative, from one day having their own slaves and plantation. At the same time, such myths kept the two subordinate classes – the Southern blacks and poor whites, from joining forces to challenge the ruling class and the legitimacy of the socioeconomic structure. Stowe describes how the system of slavery that the "luckless race" of poor whites supported rather than fought against, worsened and perpetuated their social plight: "Without schools or churches, these miserable families grow up heathen on a Christian soil, in idleness, vice, dirt, and discomfort of all sorts. They are the pest of the neighbourhood, the scoff and contempt or pity even of the slaves" (*The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* 366–367). Stowe writes that the best that poor white families could hope for to rise in social rank was for their sons to become plantation overseers. Thus, poor whites like Ed Grimes uphold and advance the very system that oppress them and all others who do not belong to the ruling class.

The surname "Grimes" evokes images of deeply ingrained filth. Grimes is the personification of the "poor white trash" despised not only by the planters but even more so their slaves. The feeling is mutual. Grimes believes that a "nigger-loving man" such as his boss John Dutton, who Grimes thinks of as a "nigger-loving namby-pamby, s.o.b. pretty

boy” can’t be expected to treat poor white people right. Conversely, Grimes greatly admires Dutton’s wife, Salina, who “know[s] how to handle niggers” (26). For Grimes, the “first-class lady” Salina Dutton is a real Christian woman who can set a fine table, behave with moral decency, nurse the sick, read the Bible, and above all, “know and act the difference between niggers and white people.” As a “woman of Quality,” Salina “knows how to lay the law down to niggers and keep her business to herself” (26). Grimes thinks that Salina’s feigned ignorance of her husband’s indiscretions and her ability to remain “always strictly business-like and matter-of-fact” are more evidence of her natural high-class status.

Using the improper language and syntax of his uneducated class, Grimes describes his own wife, Jane Ellen from the Pine Barrens, as a woman whose “folks” were so “awful poor” that they sometimes had to resort to eating dirt. Epitomizing the “poor white trash” cliché, Jane is pregnant eight times and craves “dirt like her Maw done before her” which is “why she eats so much snuff” (27). When Jane dies of “starvation or dysentery” and being “worn out with child bearing,” Grimes’ eagerness to remarry is interpreted by gossiping townspeople as a sign of Grimes’ aversion towards his Pine Barrens first wife: “good riddance of bad rubbish” (313). The drastic social changes that result from a war which left white Southern women with few eligible men, are evidenced in the class differences between Grimes’ first and second wife. Grimes’ second wife is the banker’s widow, an “old hussy gal” who, according to town gossip, hasn’t even “let [her first husband] get cold” before she marries Grimes. Though uneducated, Grimes is alive and uninjured from the war, and therefore able to work and husband-worthy.

The animosity between poor white Southerners and enslaved black people was no doubt perpetuated by the popular, albeit dubious, notion at the time that well-cared for slaves enjoyed a higher social position than “poor white trash.” The ruling planter class not only tolerated negative representations of poor white Southerners, they no doubt reinforced them. According to W. J. Cash, because the Southern ruling class had an “overweening pride in the possession of rich lands and slaves ... [they also had] contempt for those who lacked them” (34). Many novels set in the period depict black house slaves who mirror their master’s disdain towards poor white people. In Willa Cather’s novel, *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, the house slave, Till, prefers to live in the city where the cultivated people are, rather than amongst simple “country folks” whom Till considers poor white trash who “lived mostly on the squirrels they shot, and the pig or two they fed on acorns” (71). Vyry also believes that the “po buckra” from the pine barrens and rocky bills suffered a lot worse

than the slaves who were living in the slave quarters and barely subsisting. The poverty and misery shared by the slaves and poor Southerners was only surpassed in ferocity by their mutual contempt of one another:

[The poor white Southerners] suffered more than the black slaves for there was no one to provide them with the rations of corn meal and salt pork which was the daily lot of the slaves ... These white people did not work well with slaves. Each group regarded the other contemptuously and felt that the other was his inferior. ... The slaves claimed that the poor whites were lazy and wanted the easy jobs, shifting the hard work on them, while the whites got wages and the slaves got none. (59)

Vyry's father and master, John Dutton, justifies his refusal to liberate Vyry by contending that she is better off as a slave than a freed black woman:

Look all around you at the poor white people who are free. You don't want to be like *them*, now do you? What is it you call them, 'po buckra'? They are free, free and white; but what have they got? Not a pot to piss in. Every blessed thing they get they're knocking on my door for it. Can't feed their pot-bellied younguns; always dying of dysentery and pellagra; eating clay cause they're always hungry; and never got a crop fit for anything; no cotton to sell, and can't get started in spring unless I help them. Do you think you would be better off if you were like them? (145)

Jubilee reinforces the notion that "poor white trash" and black people were opposing factions. Though such representations were common in literature, counter examples also existed. In Joel Chandler Harris's story "Free Joe and the Rest of the World" (1887), Micajah and Becky Staley, a poor white couple, befriend the freedman Joe as he attempts to secretly rendezvous with his enslaved partner. In *Jubilee*, however, Randall Ware's difficulties with local townspeople during the war signal the postwar troubles yet to come. Before the war, Randall Ware had lived and worked as a free black man in the community and as a black smith was generally able to lead a comfortable existence. With the establishment of the Confederacy, hostilities towards the Yankees and abolitionists were also channeled at freed black people residing in the South.

Intra-racial class discrimination also persists amongst the former slaves in *Jubilee*. As Vyry begins to doubt if Randall will ever return to her and their children, a former field hand named Innis Brown appears and taking an affectionate interest in Vyry, asks her to marry him. At first Vyry is reluctant to partner with a man who comes from the class of "[y]ard niggers and field hands [who] didn't set so high with her." Vyry looks down on Innis's cheap sack slave clothes and tattered, makeshift shoes, which she considers evidence of his low-class status (294). Current scholarship, however, calls into question the popular myth

of an opposing dichotomy between field and house slaves which *Jubilee* portrays. Historian Greg Downs argues that because the majority of slaves held in the South belonged to small slaveholders, slaveholding households were typically not large enough to maintain slaves who performed solely household or field work. Types of labor were most likely divvied out according to the person's age, health, and the season (Berry and LeFlouria). Separation of field and house labor most likely did occur, however, on large plantations and gained myth-making proportions through works like *GWTW*. Malcolm X's 1963 speech in which he distinguishes between two types of "Negro," the "house Negro" and "field Negro," may have legitimized the narrative. For Malcolm X, the difference was less about class and more about autonomy. The "house slave" emulated and identified with his master and suffered more when the master was in pain than the master himself, while the masses of field slaves would pray for the sick master to die and for the breeze to fan the flames of his burning house. Although Walker draws a distinction between the field and house slaves in *Jubilee*, despite Vyry's initial misgivings about their perceived social status differences, Vyry eventually agrees to marry Innis so they can build a common life together as free people.

The challenge of Vyry and Innis to find a safe place to settle, call home, and raise their family is one many African Americans have faced time and again throughout US history. As liberated black people, Vyry and her family repeatedly suffer various forms of racial terrorism. President Lincoln's promise during the war that liberated slaves would receive 40 acres and a mule, was quickly retracted when the smoke of battle settled. Along with it, any hopes of the black community for the opportunity to achieve economic independence were also destroyed. Vyry and Innis Brown's struggle illustrates the precarious state of black people during the Reconstruction era. With overt and discreet racial intimidation, white Southern men attempted to re-instate themselves as the superior, God-chosen, Southern race. *Jubilee* illustrates the manifold methods used to oppress black people from Klan raids to contractual tricks. By commandeering public authority, white postwar Southerners sought to ensure that black people would be relegated to the lowest possible rungs of Southern society indefinitely.

Vyry's initial economic liberation is symbolized through an array of objects that she manages to secure and take with her on her path to freedom. Later, however, Vyry's final physical ties to her enslaved past are destroyed in a fire set by the Klan that also reduces to ash the house that she and Innis had built. The destruction is a harbinger of the struggles to come. When Innis Brown suggests that their family re-build again on another farm, Vyry

is reluctant because she “had learned from bitter experiences that the white world around them deeply resented Negroes settling the lands and building new farms” (413).

Later, Vry and Innis are confronted with their own prejudices concerning those they consider “low class.” When Innis is offered a position in a sawmill, Vry fears that the “low-class folks” working in such camps are just “the worstest folks, just nothing but roustabouts.” She doesn’t want Innis associating with such people since all they do is drink and “given they money to them bad womens” (367). The sawmill boss admits that Vry’s assessment is true and that the work sites are “bad environments” with “lots of prostitutes.” Nevertheless, Innis and Vry seize the opportunity to earn enough money to buy their own farm. They conclude that though it hurt their pride to live among “low-class folks,” the year has been “real” prosperous (370).

In *Jubilee*, both Innis and Vry are responsible for providing for their family. When Vry decides to sell eggs and vegetables door-to-door, however, *Jubilee* reflects how even seemingly innocuous jobs could prove dangerous for a black person in the postwar South venturing into white communities to make a living. Differences in Innis and Vry’s skin tones, because Vry is bi-racial and very light-skinned and Innis so dark, could lead strangers to mistake them for an inter-racial couple. According to “The Effect of the Civil War on Southern Marriage Patterns,” after emancipation, laws against inter-racial marriages became stricter as fears of racial mixing grew (Hacker 48).¹⁰⁶ Although Vry’s produce customers indeed believe that Vry is a poor white woman being chauffeured around town by her servant rather than her husband, *Jubilee* never delves into the problems that would have likely occurred if the townspeople had mistaken Vry for a white woman with a black husband. Innis, objecting to Vry mixing with customers he considers “poor white trash” and “evil white folks,” refuses to drive Vry on her route. Vry, however, not bothered by her customers’ low-class standing, hitches up her team of horses and drives herself (422). Similarly, in *GWTW*, Scarlett’s husband, Frank, also objects to Scarlett driving to the mill to do business. In both novels, the husbands fear for their wives’ safety, believing that the women will be vulnerable to assaults based on their gender and race. The fears of both men stem from a racial suspicion of members of the “other” race whom they envision lurking in wait to assault their women. While both Vry and Scarlett refuse their husbands’ demands that they stop working, Vry, perhaps out of the necessity to provide for the family, has an easier time asserting her independence.

The class distinctions amongst black people in the Civil War era initially touched upon early in the relationship between Vyry and Innis Brown, are rekindled when Vyry's son, Jim, whose father is the educated Randall Brown, is forced to help his stepfather labor in the fields. Jim would prefer to earn a living using his mind rather than his muscle and longs to be educated. Innis Brown views his stepson's negative attitude towards field work as high-brow nonsense and the ensuing conflict between the two eventually escalates into a climactic scene in which Innis severely beats Jim.

The novel ends with Vyry choosing a life of labor with her second husband, Innis Brown, rather than returning to a more leisurely existence with her first husband, Randall Ware. This contrasts with a notion espoused about postwar black women in Zora Neal Hurston's 1937 novel, *Their Eyes were Watching God*. In Hurston's novel, the main character Janie's grandmother, who is a freed slave, idealizes a life of leisure for black women following their liberation:

[I]n slavery time ... folks, dat is black folks, didn't sit down anytime dey felt lak it. So sittin' on poches lak de white madam looked lak uh mighty fine thing tuh her. Dat's whut she wanted for me – don't keer whut it cost. Git up on uh high chair and sit dere. She didn't have time tuh think whut tuh do after you got up on de stool uh do nothin'. De object wuz tuh git dere. (114)

According to Hurston, many liberated slaves strove to emulate the ways of white people who prided themselves on the (male) head-of-the-household's ability to provide so well for his family that his wife had nothing to do all day but look pretty and idle away the hours sitting on a porch and doing needlepoint. In *Jubilee*, a novel written nearly three decades after the publication of *Their Eyes were Watching God* and during the Civil Rights era and second-wave feminism, liberated black women were eager and willing to roll up their sleeves to build a better life for themselves and their families.

Walker's character Vyry presents readers with a black woman of a new era. In her 1977 article entitled, "Teaching *Black-Eyed Susans*: An Approach to the Study of Black Women Writers," Mary Helen Washington traces the evolution of black female characters in American novels. Colorism, according to Washington, drives Zora Neal Hurston's Mrs. Turner to positively distinguish herself from darker skinned blacks. Washington classifies these kinds of earlier black female characters as "The Assimilated Women" who are "victims, not of physical violence, but of a kind of psychic violence that alienates them from their roots and cuts them off from real contact with their own people and also from a

part of themselves” (22). For Washington, black female characters of the Sixties like Walker’s Vyry are “Emergent Women” who are emblematic of the Civil Rights era they emerged from – a time of Black Power, the Black Panthers, and second-wave feminism.

Greatly influenced by the political events [...] and changes resulting from the freedom movement, they are women coming just to the edge of a new awareness and making the first tentative steps into an uncharted region. And, although they are more fully conscious of their political and psychological oppression and more capable of creating new options for themselves, they must undergo a harsh initiation before they are ready to occupy and claim any new territory. (22–23)

These black women characters, along with the black women writers who created them, march into what they hope will be a new era in which they are no longer victims but agents of their own destiny prepared to initiate a change to improve not only their own lives and the lives of those they love, but of American society in general. They hope to build a nation in which the American Dream is in everyone’s grasp, regardless of gender or race.

HIGH HEARTS

Although Rita Mae Brown’s Civil War novel, *High Hearts*, largely focuses on the female heroine, Geneva, who is a young Southern planter lady who joins the Virginia cavalry, Brown’s plotlines also delve into the points of view of people of other backgrounds and socioeconomic classes. The novel highlights the stories of socially diverse characters such as a young battle-adverse Confederate soldier named Nash, a widowed “Cracker” named Banjo, a racially-mixed planter’s daughter named Di-Peachy, a mentally fragile planter woman named Lutie and many more. Rita Mae Brown begins her story in a land of milk honey and leads readers through the destruction of the fabled Old South to forge a new kind of South where race, gender, and class lines blur.

The novel begins in mid-April 1861, shortly before the start of the war. Brown’s heroine, Geneva Chatfield, and her family fulfill all the requirements necessary to attain the status of the antebellum elite: “pure” white blood, a family name, property, history, education, slaves, and wealth. Geneva is the nineteen-year-old daughter of an upper-class Virginian planter family of horse breeders. Much like Scarlett of *GWTW*, Geneva is the product of the merging of two conflicting family lines that prove advantageous for surviving a conflict. Her mother is a brilliant Chalfonte and her father is a practical Chatfield (8). The novel opens with Geneva’s marriage to Nash Hart, a university graduate and planter son from the neighboring estate who has studied equine husbandry to qualify himself as a worthy suitor

because: “[s]uccess with horses enhanced anyone’s reputation throughout the South, and breeding horses wasn’t grubby like trade. He’d slit his wrists before he would lower himself or his family name to trade” (29). Similar to Ashley Wilkes of *GWTW*, Nash, who is described as elegant and refined, also has an upper-class love of music and poetry. The Chatfield wealth is evident in their many “servants,” and a home filled with long halls, a ballroom, and a library with leather-bound books. At the wedding, guests feast, drink champagne, and dance to orchestra music. The newlywed couple’s parents give them a new frame house built upon seven hundred acres of land adjoining the properties.

Plantation women, because of their gender, are socially ranked according to their husbands’ status. Geneva, however, does not want to assume a stay-at-home role. Disguised as a young man named “Jimmy”, Geneva sets off to join her husband in the cavalry.

The Confederate cavalry was an example of how Southerner class distinctions carried over onto the battlefield. When “Jimmy” meets a cracker named Banjo as he is making his way to the army camp, Banjo tells “Jimmy”: “I’d be joining the cavalry, too, but as you kin plainly see, I’m no gentleman. By the look of your horses I kin see that you are” (63). Like Will Benteen in *GWTW*, and Pinetop in *The Battle-Ground*, Brown distinguishes Banjo’s lower socioeconomic class and uneducated background through his Cracker-style English with improper grammar and syntax. “Jimmy,” oblivious to the ways of the world, responds “Mr. Cracker...a gentleman is a gentleman from his heart. Money’s not so important.” The subtle irony in the exchange, of course, is that “Jimmy” is not and can never be a gentleman either. Cracker, undeterred but amused believes that “Jimmy” must have run away from home because otherwise, given his class position, he’d have his servant in tow. Because “Jimmy” “kin write” and Banjo cannot, the two strike a deal that Banjo will pretend to be “Jimmy’s” hired hand so they can both join the cavalry. As previously portrayed in *The Battle-Ground*, soldiers from the South’s upper class often took along their servants to battle to perform camp chores on behalf of their “masters.”

Like Glasgow in *The Battle-Ground*, Brown presents the cavalry as a high-class military branch that looked down on other branches of the military and also stoked the envy and loathing of non-cavalry soldiers. Only soldiers in possession of a horse were able to join the cavalry so membership in the cavalry automatically became a sign of upper-class status. “Each branch of the military made claims to being superior but the cavalry, comprised mostly of wealthy men, bore the brunt of the criticism – fancy boys, all powder and no lead” (212). While the infantry is left unsavory tasks like burying the dead, the cavalry is

spared the menial jobs (235). “Jimmy” is infuriated by the “special” treatment that prevents them from participating in a “hot battle” (362). Geneva’s father, Henry Chatfield, views the preferential positioning of the cavalry almost as a naturally ordained right. When a cavalry man lost his mount, he was sidelined to a special company until he could procure a replacement. Henry, in a shameless display of classism, indignantly questions what those who lacked the funds were supposed to do, “fall in with the infantry?” (247).

As the war progresses, encounters between upper- and lower-class whites inevitably increase on and off the battlefield. In *High Hearts*, Banjo Cracker is tasked with the delivery of the deceased Sumner’s sash to Sumner’s planter mother, Lutie. When Lutie then uses the occasion to offer Banjo a tour of Richmond, Banjo at first declines because he has “never been in the presence of such a fine-looking woman” and is afraid that he’ll “make a fool” of himself in front of a person “so far above” him. Lutie persuades him that a warrior like himself will alleviate her fears of the “riffraff” brimming in the crowded streets (277). War not only breaks down the barriers that divide the classes physically but also wrecks the social stigmas associated with class intermixing.

When Rita Mae Brown re-focuses the narrative back on the home-front and the women like Lutie and her neighbors, readers become privy to the constant fears of the women of “riff raff,” usually liberated blacks or Northerners, who could take advantage of them while the (white) men are gone. Lutie’s neighbor, Jennifer, is particularly concerned about the Northerners, but Lutie assures her that her brother-in-law is a northerner and “They’re gentlemen!” and “the Yankee army will [not] make war on women and children” (71). Jennifer’s fears were most likely justified given that General William T. Sherman, though born to a prominent political family and no doubt considered by most a “gentleman,” did not let “good breeding” get in the way of the death and destruction he wreaked along his infamous march to the sea. While “gentlemen” on both warring sides were expected to act civilized, the same could not be said of those considered “poor white trash.”

In *High Hearts* Reddy Neutral Taylor, is “poor white trash” who is described as “the owner of a hardware store and crooked as a dog’s hind leg,” and not having “the sense God gave a goose” (17, 18). While at Geneva and Nash’s wedding, Reddy first pursues Di-Peachy and when she rebuffs him, he offers to pay Henley one thousand dollars to sleep with her. Henley promptly puts him out of the house. During another visit, Reddy asks the slave, Big Muler: “Boy, where’s that gorgeous piece of black ass lives up there?” (134). He “hoots” that he is certain that Sumner Chatfield, the planter’s son, “has enjoyed her delicacies!”

(134).¹⁰⁷ When Big Muler responds by giving Reddy's wagon a violent shake, Reddy tells him, "Chatfield niggers, Chatfield whites. You all think your shit don't stink up here. Lots of history here you know nothin' about. Won't do you good to ride a high horse, and won't do you good to think jes 'cause you're a Chatfield nigger, you're better than a workin' white man" (135). Reddy, like the poor white trash character Grimes in *Jubilee*, has a deep-seated disdain for the plantation master's sexual interactions with a slave, which leads to racially-mixed offspring. Both characters imply that the airs put on by the upper-class planters can never be respected because their sins of the flesh and racial intermixing are testimony to the hypocrisy of their class values.

The arbitrary nature of class distinction is apparent in the house slaves who perceive themselves as a class ranked higher than field slaves and poor whites. Ernie June, the Chatfield cook refuses to perform garden work because "[t]hat was for field niggers." Ernie determines which slaves are given what food while assuring that she always allots herself the better bites (36). Despite her position as a slave, Ernie manages to raise her social status, particularly amongst the slaves, by wielding the limited power vested in her to the full extent possible. And she isn't alone. Sin-Sin is the plantation mistress's personal servant, and dearest friend. She is also Ernie June's fiercest rival. The two women compete for the slot of highest ranked slave in the household. Who holds the coveted position is solely up to the discretion of the plantation mistress.

Sin-Sin would wear Lutie's keys around her waist to remind everyone that she, Sin-Sin, held ultimate power. Ernie hated the jingle of those keys. Like a sixth sense she knew when Sin-Sin was wearing them instead of Lutie Sin-Sin walked like Napoleon. Someday, someday before she died, Ernie would wear those keys on her belt. And when the mistress designated her, no one, no one would meddle with Ernie June. (37)

The slave Evangelista informs her mistress Kate that she is too good to treat Richmond's wounded because such labor is "nigger work" and she is "no nigger" but rather "a quadroon born on the island of Haiti." Unimpressed by the distinction, Kate responds, "Whatever you are, Evangelista, if you don't pull your weight, you're going to be black and blue" (297). Before the disagreement can escalate, Sin-Sin intervenes and confirms Evangelista's special position and declares that she is obviously "too refined for this grubbing" (297). Sin-Sin even suggests that her own status as a "rough-hewn" woman is lower, but you "[c]an't expect the white ladies to understand yo' position." In reality, however, Sin-Sin

simply re-assigns Evangelista to kitchen duty telling her, “I can still tend to my mens if I has authority over the other servants ‘round here” (297–298).

While the slaves resolve their own issues of rank and new duties during the war, the “high born” women of Richmond struggle with the re-defining of their roles. As people flee the city, Kate Vickers, wife of Colonel Mars Vickers, only regrets that she will no longer have the chance to “go to the pedigree parties before McClellan descends upon [the city] with his hordes” (270). When the conflict arrives, and the same women volunteer to care for the wounded, they are met with deprecating skepticism. The assistant surgeon, for example, believes that though Lutie and Kate perform their duties well, that they will “get tired of the daily drudgery of nursing soon enough.” According to him, “[t]heir life of opulence and luxury did not equip them for hard labor.” Because of this, he predicts that “[o]nce these two women grew tired of being useful the others would follow like glamorous sheep” (298–299). The good doctor fails to recognize that the young men whose limbs he hews off were just as equally ill-prepared for the trials of battle.

Though the cavalry may have been an enviable unit of privilege at the beginning of the war, eventually, the clutches of death, destruction, and want widened its grisly grip to snatch up everyone. Brown depicts war’s stubbornly apathetic egalitarianism:

The best families of the South lost their husbands, sons, and brothers. Hardly anyone was untouched especially since the upper classes led the regiments, brigades, and divisions. The leaders, the wealthy and the gifted, were cut down by the scythe of war no less than the small farmer, the shopkeeper, even the vagrant seeking to redeem himself by military service. They died alike, and Death, as always, impartially selected his victims. (387)

By the end of the novel both Chatfield men and Geneva’s husband are dead. Lutie transcends class and social bounds by marrying Banjo Cracker, a poor, uneducated man. Geneva/Jimmy also breaks planter class conventions by marrying the divorced Mars Vickers. Di-Peachy, Geneva’s mixed-race half-sister, breaks both class and racial conventions by marrying a white Yankee. Of all the post-war unconventional bonds, Di-Peachy’s interracial cross-national union undergoes the most trials and tribulations.

2.4. Novels of Third-Wave Feminism: 1992–2002

In the 1980s and even more so in the 1990s, discussions revolving around race, gender, and work began to converge in works by those who came to be known as intersectional feminists such as bell hooks, Angela Davis, and Kimberlé Crenshaw.¹⁰⁸ Intersectionality

recognizes that nothing exists in isolation. Reigning power in a class hierarchy is not just the possession of wealth and influence, but the ability to shape the social narrative. From the Egyptian pharaohs to the British monarchs and the antebellum plantation masters, the ruling classes have long claimed legitimacy through some kind of divine entity which had supposedly endowed them and them alone with special ruling privileges. What in exceptional times may require brute force to uphold and maintain, generally only required an acceptance of or acquiescence to the truth of this narrative. A woman was to obey her man, a slave was to obey his/her master, and the citizens were to obey their king. In Western patriarchies, the ruler was almost always white and always male. During the final decades of the twentieth century, marginalized groups began to join together to challenge the white man's only access to power, wealth, and narrative formation.

Bell hooks criticized those who advocated change within the existing "phallocrist" economic system arguing that anything but the total destruction of the status quo simply contributed to the advancement of class domination by white men and their exploitation and oppression of everyone else (*Feminist Theory* 30). Black feminists like hooks directly challenged the exclusionary principles of second-wave feminism, contending that they experienced gender oppression in ways that differed from white women. Hooks argued that black women sensed no lack of a supportive community of women and for this reason, "[t]he focus on feminism as a way to develop shared identity and community has little appeal to women who experience community, who seek ways to end exploitation and oppression in the context of their lives." Hooks contended that the struggle for the liberation of women should be an action that is political, not identity-forming. Rather than saying, "I am a feminist", hooks argued for the use of "I advocate feminism" to prevent stereotyping and show the act of will and choice in feminist goals (30).

As women of differing racial and ethnic backgrounds became (theoretically) equal and active participants in the feminist movement, whiteness studies, according to Matt Wray, emerged as an interdisciplinary field in the 1990s. What first examined the position of white privilege in society, expanded to include studies on whites who failed to benefit from their supposed position of privilege. According to Wray, the advent of boundary theory in the same decade expanded the exploration of social, economic, gender, and racial categories and how they shape our perceptions of the world. Both intersectionality and boundary theory would influence how scholars exam current and past social class structures. Boundary theory could help to expose some of the preconceived notions that influenced

categories and their delineations, and also investigate how the evolution of category characteristics focusing particular attention on the self-perpetuating nature of the system.

Also in the 1990s, women first began to recognize that the struggle for equality entailed both bitter and sweet fruits for them and their standing in the social hierarchy. As more women pursued higher education and joined the workforce, it became increasingly possible for women to achieve a social status independent of their fathers' or husbands'. At the same time, however, women like Naomi Wolf believed that class status differed fundamentally for the sexes because men generally achieved rank through wealth whereas women could generally only do so through beauty (Wolf 29). Thus, as they aged, women tended to experience a loss of social status while men experienced a gain.

The characters and themes addressed in both *The Wind Done Gone* and *Enemy Women* reflect the feminist movement era in which they were published. Both novels portray women who exercise agency to break the usual confines of their class status. In *The Wind Done Gone*, Alice Randall presents a female character who, though she is biracial, manages to acquire property and establish herself as completely independent of men by the end of the novel. In *Enemy Women*, Paulette Jiles creates a young woman from the poor rural class who is educated, independent, and determined. Her heroine knows what she wants and can survive on her own. Both authors demonstrate that the canvas of life is not a one-dimensional painting comprised of a few bold brush strokes of the ruling class. It is rather a mosaic of pixels of lifetime narratives. The pixel of the racially-mixed black woman shines just as brightly as that of the poor mountain farm girl and the Confederate troop general. Together they bleed into one grand masterpiece of human history.

THE WIND DONE GONE

Wind Done Gone's biracial heroine, Cynara, has virtually no entitlement to class status or power in the Civil War era South. Alice Randall empowers her, however, through the novel's content and structure. The diary form of the novel grants both the African American author and the racially-mixed heroine the agency to tell a racially-mixed woman's narrative, from her own point-of-view, in her own words, using her own language. The controversy surrounding the book's publication, highlighted the need to expand historical narratives of US history to include points of view from marginalized groups. Randall reminds readers that the recording and re-telling of history is more subjective than objective, more an interwoven forest of roots and branches than one straight-growing trunk.

Mitchell's tragic tale of a cause lost is Randall's celebratory rendition of freedom won. In Randall's tale, the racially-mixed daughter of a slave is the heroine and the daughter of the plantation mistress is (the) "Other." While the men in the novel seem to be in power, it is in fact the women behind the scenes moving the pawns.

Social power is naming power. Just as the Bible states that God called the light "day" and the darkness "night," so too is the ability to assign names in a narrative the God-like ability of a creator. In a society which prided itself as having its very own aristocracy, family names and titles were particularly important. In *Wind Done Gone* Alice Randall uses naming as a tool of empowerment for herself and her heroine. The estate called Twelve Oaks in *GWTW* is Twelve Slaves Strong as Trees in *Wind Done Gone*. Cynara is the heroine while the white plantation daughter is simply "Other." The madam of the whorehouse is "Beauty." Throughout the novel, Randall demonstrates that there is power in naming, there is power in forgetting, and there is power in remembering. "[H]e took them over to where the house we called Twelve Slaves Strong as Trees once stood. I have forgotten their name for it. What I remember is this: there were twelve columns across the front of that slave-built house" (55).

As powerful as the tool of naming is the tool of narrative creation. When Planter complains to Lady that the overseer thinks she has been "making a pet out of that pickaninny" Cynara, Lady responds, "Every fine family in Savannah has one, and what precisely does our overseer know about the care and feeding of a tribe of Southern aristocrats?" (134) Her simple explanation is telling in many respects. According to Lady, for a Savannah family to be considered "fine," they must have a slave. More important, however, is Lady's description of Southern aristocrats as a "tribe," a label which would have evoked images of an untamed, uncivilized people rather than a cultured community. Randall shows that reality is simply a matter of perspective.

Like in *GWTW*, Randall continues the theme of what defines class belonging. Planter, like Gerald O' Hara, is an immigrant, and has acquired his class standing through wealth and marriage rather than familial lineage. For this reason, he avoids ever standing too close to the overseer, as if a mere brush with someone of the lower class is enough to reveal the gilded nature of his own class status. "For all his Planter swagger, for all his luxurious clothes, for all his acres, his only genuine link to the aristocracy was his lady, whose lily-white "quality" hand seemed raised to draw a line that placed him on the trash side of the social divide. All white skins are not created equal; he knew that" (135).

Alice Randall, speaking through Cynara, alludes late in the novel to the notion that a difference exists in class standing based on how that class standing is achieved. Unfortunately, however, the author leaves the train of thought hanging in the air, without pinning down what is really meant. “R. is a rich man and perhaps a powerful one. My Congressman is a famous man and perhaps a powerful one. I’m beginning to discern the differences and they might matter to me” (189). Another interesting aspect of this comparison, however, is that it is as if she is saying, all other things being equal, fame and wealth are not. What is significant, however, is that not all other things are equal: Rhett is a white man with money; the Congressman is a black man with fame. Randall seems to infer the existence of two parallel class structures: one for whites, another for blacks.

In her diary, Cynara explains what mattered in terms of social status and prestige in the antebellum South had little to do with money:

You don’t see paper money on a cotton farm. You don’t even see paper money on [...] a great Georgia plantation. On a place like that, in the place we lived together, half-sisters separated by a river of notions: notions of Negroes and notions of chivalry, notions of race and place, notions of custom and rage; in the country we inhabited in our childhood, you measured wealth in red earth and black men. There was nothing green in it. (195)

Planter realizes that by fathering a racially-mixed child, he has “sinned against the only creed he had sworn to, the credo of milady’s fragility, the creed that balanced the vow to protect the particular delicate needs of particular delicate ladies against all the ugly peculiar Southland customs” (135). While *The Battle-Ground* and *High Hearts* both suggest that there is a certain inherent quality to a gentleman, Randall is very specific that being a “Southern gentleman” requires proper treatment of Southern ladies. When Cynara suspects that the black Congressman she has fallen in love with, has secretly read her diary, she tries to shame him with the notion that at least Planter had respect for her privacy. Bemused, the Congressman remarks that the Planter only had respect for “a gentlemanly principle” and that “respect for Negro women is not a tenet of the code of the Southern gentleman” (183). Just as the code of gentlemen in *The Battle-Ground* does not extend to barmaids, the code of gentlemen in *The Wind Done Gone* does not extend to black women.

Randall depicts how people, due to social power hierarchies, channel pent-up aggressions they harbor towards superiors at those individuals who they can more readily oppress. In the Civil War era, Southern women and black people often assumed the role of surrogate targets. In *Jubilee*, Salina directs the anger she feels towards her husband at his racially-

mixed daughter and Grimes kills the loyal slave Grandpa Tom to indirectly punish John Dutton Jr.. While Cynara uses R. as a form of payback to her dreaded half-sister who also has a relationship with him, R. also tries to use Cynara as a way to release anger he harbors towards Other: “[I]t wasn’t me he wanted to slap,” Other writes, “But he couldn’t slap Other.” Cynara warns R. that if he tries to hit her, the only thing he can beat out of her is her love for him and she tells him, “I ain’t taking her licks” (19). When Cynara walks away from R. with the sting of his slap still burning her face, she thinks of all the times her biological mother, Mammy, had also slapped her. The all-too-familiar “vanishing brand” is inflicted by both white and black hands.

The difficulty of attaining a higher social status for women, and black women in particular, in the South during the Civil War era involved laws regarding property ownership. Even when local legislation or public norms permitted black women to hold property, ownership was often precarious and based on the whims of others. In *Wind Done Gone*, the twist of the novel is that the male house slave closest to Planter, Garlic, is the true owner of Tata.

Together with Garlic, Mammy had spent her life successfully pretending to be working within the system of the dominant class, when she was in fact subverting it. While Mammy masqueraded as a loving, dutiful servant of a white family, like Herod the Great she murdered the male babies to prevent any future challenges to the black hidden hand of power. Again, the moral consequences of Mammy’s behavior, given that Lady is actually racially-mixed and not white, would mean that Garlic and Mammy have actually murdered mixed-race baby boys who would have someday inherited the plantation. Though it does not seem to have been Randall’s intent, the revelation of Lady’s racially-mixed heritage is likewise a transformative moment for Mammy and her vengeful actions. Rather than a black woman crusader out to seek racial justice by any means possible, Mammy becomes a greedy woman out to kill her own people to maintain power. With her enslaved “husband” Garlic as her co-conspirator, Mammy’s actions do not undermine a suppressive patriarchal system. However, since Cynara ends up as the ultimate heir of the plantation, Mammy’s actions inadvertently end the patriarchal line of succession.

In the Reconstruction era, estates that had been abandoned were often claimed by former slaves. Having labored on the land their entire lives, many justifiably felt that they were the rightful owners. Such claims rarely ended in legal recognition and black “squatters” were often forcefully removed. For Cynara, however, the most contested and valuable property in her eyes is her mother: “Other owns Mother by more than ink and law” (7).

In one compelling passage, Jeems, a former fellow house slave at Tata, is visiting Cynara in her beautiful house. She reflects on what he must think, seeing her surrounded by such opulence. She considers the different viewpoints between house slaves and field slaves toward property. How did those who had been enslaved as property feel about property?

“[Jeems and I] had exchanged our earliest confidences in silk-wallpapered halls and richly furnished corners. We had both dusted and mopped and washed too many fine things, too much Limoge, too much Wedgwood, too many times, to retain awe. The former field slaves will have different relations to wealth (the wealth they see and the wealth they attain) than we, who, like Jeems and me, worked in the house. Familiarity, even with things, breeds contempt. (81)

In the novel, R. gives Cynara a house and her name is on the deed. She says she calls it *her* house because, “as Beauty says and it’s ugly to admit, I earned it” (198). The implication here is that Cynara has been trading sexual favors for money with R. even though their relationship was one that was supposedly mutual. At the end of the novel, rather than stay in the house “she earned” and that R. bought for her, she buys her own home by selling the earbobs that had once belonged to Lady (202). Like Scarlett O’Hara using her earrings in her drive for independence to purchase a mill, Cynara sets her own future path.

Cynara’s treatment as a slave as property—a legal thing, rather than a legal person, causes scars that last long after she has gained her freedom.

I’m scared, that old fear that what we love might be sold: Mamas, Daddys, children...the place...a dress...anything we love.

It’s an old confusion, people turning into things. When folks is gone (sold, dead, run-off), you got a corn husk doll, a walnut-shell ring, fingertips of dirt on the hem of a dress. It happened so much, maybe now things turn into people. (86)

As the people become objects in *Wind Done Gone* objects, such as the plantation, become animated. Whereas *GWTW* endowed the plantation of Tara with a magical quality that gave Scarlett meaning and purpose throughout the novel, Cynara and Garlic perceive Tata as having a monster-like quality. Garlic could hear it speak and it did not just eat all the people who resided there, it ate their entire lives.

As Cynara admits to herself her fondness for the Congressman, she begins to think about if he could be hers. In the next instant, however, she realizes that in slavery people possessed people, and the thought of having a person for herself, “seemed too close to slaving.” Nevertheless, she wonders not only if she could possess the Congressman, but R.

too. The idea seems to empower her, rather than revolt her. Within the same train of thought, within the same passage, the author uses psycho-narration to merge from “she” to more intimate “I”: “Everything about ownership is changing: land, people, money ... It doesn’t seem in this time of [change] ... that hearts would be any different. Why couldn’t she who couldn’t own, who now owned forty acres and a mule—if I could own a former plantation—could I not own a planter’s heart?” (111)

Within the novel, Cynara struggles with the concept of people owning people. R. has bought her but she also engages in a mutual relationship with him after she is liberated. “Redeemed I was, I was sold and he bought me. I should let him be my God; I have let him be my God. He redeemed me and I have loved him for it. Where do I go, to go and sin no more?” (145) Like Midge in *The Wave*, Cynara longs for a male partner to be her God. Having been property, Cynara struggles with the concept of property. She writes that Planter cared about land and Other about money. Cynara tries to put an end to her part in slavery, but her efforts are forever unsuccessful: “Always ending up with one; sometimes it’s Mammy and sometimes it’s me. There always seems to be one of us who don’t want to be free” (151).

Cynara persistently views herself as the second-class version of the Southern belle as the racially-mixed half-sister of Other. Even when Cynara is in a relationship with R., she feels the stings of being a second-rate version of Other. When R. gives Cynara pearls, for example, they are not new but from a pawn shop (30). In the end, however Cynara successfully acquires everything she has envied about Other except her mother: “Other’s man, house, and farm are mine; this is not a complete surprise. These things were hoped for and achieved” (175). However, the fulfillment that Cynara has spent the novel chasing eludes her. The object that Cynara seems to actually be pursuing throughout the novel is not something that either the heroine or the author seems to recognize: it is her own identity and self-worth, separate from Other. Had she been able to find herself, she might have also been able to find happiness.

ENEMY WOMEN

For a long time, poor Southern whites, according to scholar Dennis Covington, were the only ethnic group in the United States who were not permitted to have a history (Covington xviii). Of all the novels examined, *Enemy Women* is the only novel with a heroine who others label as “white trash.” *Enemy Women* (2002), like many Southern novels beginning

in the early 90s according to Robert Brinkmeyer Jr. in *The Many Souths*, rejects the portrayal of poor white people as less than human and a separate degenerate race. In doing so, Brinkmeyer describes how the Southern poor in contemporary novels “generally act just like everyone else, driven by similar feelings, needs, and desires; ... [with a] culture ... as rich, diverse, and complicated as those of any group of people” (152). By featuring a poor, white heroine from the Ozarks, a region where people were disparagingly referred to as “hillbillies,”¹⁰⁹ *Enemy Women* rejects sexist and classist notions that equate a person’s value and the value of her historical experience to her socioeconomic standing.

Paulette Jiles’ Adair also differs from the heroines of the other novels examined herein in her reluctance to identify as a Union or Confederate sympathizer. She and her family feel no patriotism and thus, at the advent of the war at least, try to avoid being “used and spent like coins by one army after another” in a conflict that willingly sacrifices them to serve the interests of the elite while escalating the misery of the poor (256). Unlike the low class whites in planter regions, poor Ozarkers had nothing to gain from a Confederate or Union victory and everything to lose in a war. Unlike Ed Grimes in *Jubilee*, Adair and her fellow community members do not perceive the bowed backs of black people as the stepping stones for their social elevation. Geographically and ideologically isolated in their mountain communities, Ozarkers were less influenced than their non-mountain poor white peers, by the antebellum South’s version of the American Dream. Ozarkers were not fooled into thinking that with a little luck and a lot of hard work, they too could advance from their pitiful lot to become the masters of their own slave-holding plantations. Nevertheless, Adair and her family members become entangled in a conflict started by the far off planter class that cared little for their welfare but presumed their undying support.

Although Adair is a young white woman living in the antebellum South, unlike the plantation mistresses in *Gone with the Wind* and *The Battle-Ground*, Adair does not dream of balls, beaux, or barbecues. From the beginning of the novel, the family’s poverty and self-sufficiency is evident in the quilts and odd things their mother had “prudently” saved because “in this wilderness, who knew when she could replace clothing or women’s tools?” (16). The girls’ trunk is filled with worn blankets and hats and stockings mended roughly with strings. The little that the family possess is ransacked in the third year of the war by a mob of marauding militiamen. Adair and her two sisters are left on their own as the militiamen carry off her father and her brother flees into the mountains to avoid capture. Symbolically, when the men disappear, the three girls are left destitute. Adair and her sisters

endure a fate many Southern women suffered during the war when soldiers carried the battle to women's doorsteps. In writing about Sherman's march, Lisa Tenrich Frank argues that the wreckage of women's sphere was not inadvertent collateral damage but a planned military strategy.

Stories of the Union plunder of food stores, the burning of houses, and destruction of clothing, housewares, personal papers, and furniture made clear the domestic ramifications of the march. Sherman, they realized, would not spare women or households but had instead targeted them to strike at the heart of Southern domesticity and morale. (*Occupied Women* ch. I)

Contrary to the goals of the white heroines of the other novels herein, Adair longs for freedom and agency rather than marriage and stability. Unlike Scarlett O'Hara, who aches for the red clay of Tara, when circumstances get rough, Adair longs to be free of property ties and obligations. She yearns for the "waste places and their silences. Places where nobody lived and so there would be no smoke and dirt and ceilings and mindless talking, only herself and the clean snow and the way of the world went at every cant and turn of the seasons, and herself riding through it" (15). Her goal is not to advance within society but to live her own life outside of its confining borders, disappearing for days on end into the wilderness on one of her few but most prized possessions: her horse Whiskey.

Although she does not strive for socioeconomic status, Adair recognizes class rank's ability to endow people with privileges and respect, particularly women. She also knows that appearance conveys status. Adair instructs her sisters to pack two nice dresses so they can persuade the militia commander to release their "Pa" without "looking like white trash" (28). Concealing their lower class standing during their journey is more difficult. In a blend of the narrator's and Adair's viewpoint, readers learn that as the girls set out to locate their father, they "walk in the streams of refugees afoot as if they [are] white trash" (29). The usage of "as if" indicates both the narrator's and Adair's refusal to internalize the disparaging social judgments despite awareness of them. Later, when Adair escapes from prison, she takes advantage of the sign-value of a hat for a young woman to boost her social rank and shield herself from random social interactions that could jeopardize her escape plan. Adair realizes that ladies of high-class rank fared socially better, even in war, than women considered "poor white trash."

Mildred Powell's wartime experiences, according to her journal published after the war, support Adair's presumptions about class privilege. Powell, who was held in a Missouri home as a prisoner of war, recorded her interactions with one Union general.

General Merrill...remark[ed] that he had never met with an intelligent southern lady in Missouri ...[and] assured me [that despite the many accusations of treason against me that] I should soon be released and that every courtesy should be extended me which my position in society entitled me to receive. Professed to be very much interested in my behalf, complimented me highly, amounting even to flattery.

Without the ability to lock her door and feeling herself “entirely among foes” Powell spends a “a very unhappy night.” “[W]ith some indignation” she also refuses the general’s invitation to a dance in the dining room of the house. As evidenced, a woman’s class could make all the difference in her wartime treatment, despite her alleged crimes.

When Adair is imprisoned upon a false accusation of being a Confederate sympathizer, readers see the gradations of the “white trash.” Adair’s fellow inmates are mostly prostitutes and thieves. Like slaves, the women wash outside and sleep on pallets. A woman named Cloris introduces herself as the “head of prisoners,” and commands Adair to throw down all of her belongings (58). Possession of valuables in prison is determined by Darwinian power hierarchies. Adair is ready to physically defend what little she has but must navigate the new social norms and ranks of prison society. “Adair ... did not know whether it was smarter to appease these women for the present or to fight them right off. She did not know what would work. She had never met people like this” (58). Adair’s ability to defend herself physically is supplemented by her ability to defend herself mentally as well. Although poor, unlike many of her fellow Ozarkers and prisoners, Adair is literate. When the Major asks what she would do if given a copy of the martial law, she tells him she would sit herself down and read it. Adair uses her writing skills to pen her version of a “confession” – a story of the life that led her to the prison and deepens the Major’s interest in her. *Enemy Women* thus reinforces the social power inherent in women’s ability to write their own version of their history.

In contrast to Adair, Rhoda Lee, a fellow inmate, fears that the riffraff of prison women ready to help themselves will be the ruin of Southern women. Rhoda has so fully embraced her status as a Southern lady that she would rather suffer through imprisonment than plan her escape. According to Rhoda,

there are the right ways to go about things. There are still rules in the world. And one of these rules is that women must suffer our abusers without resistance. Ladies do not help themselves ... we make appeals. We pray our complaints might be heard, but nothing more. Now the Mayberry girls bribed the guards with ten dollars in gold and went over the wall. I consider

that very low-class. That is for white trash and the laboring classes. This is what the Yankees want to do to us. Destroy Southern womanhood. (70)

Rhoda parrots the popular notion that Southern ladies were the embodiment of the South and that the very survival of the Confederacy depended on Southern women's adherence to the cult of Southern womanhood. W. J. Cash described the power of this sentiment as an anti-Yankee propaganda tool which purported that "the assault on the South would be felt as, in some true sense, an assault on [Southern womanhood] also, and that the South would inevitably translate its whole battle into terms of her defense" (115). Rhoda, who denounced herself and told the Union army that she stood for Dixie, is happy to have the Union army "just take care" of her because they "owe" it to her (69). Adair is not.

Adair has no qualms about exhibiting "very low-class" behavior by breaking the unjust laws and unjust social norms which have been crafted to imprison her. She eagerly accepts two gold coins which the Major offers her to bribe the guards for her escape. Practically-minded, Adair rejects the Southern planter class conditioning that Rhoda Lee so readily embraces and adheres to. Like Geneva in *High Hearts*, Adair's ego is not gratified by the imprisoning label of "lady."

When Adair becomes trapped into convalescing at the home of a mother and daughter who belong to a band of horse thieves and murderers, Adair again encounters a young woman who yearns to define and distinguish herself as a proper lady. Though Rosalie and her mother are obviously squatters in the grand house where they reside, Rosalie asks Adair to listen to her compositions and confides that, "There are so few here I can share with them with. Everybody around here is French and they are very common people. People of a low class I sure don't want to be like all those low people" (196). Rosalie explains away the lack of maids and cooks required for a ruling class household, by claiming that their servants had run off and that the people who remained, "won't work and ... [are] too lazy to steal" (201). Adair, suspecting that her intended future role is to be their servant and believing that an implicit social agreement exists that a lady would never be expected to perform physical labor, plays along with Rosalie's charade by also feigning an upper-class status and claiming with an equally helpless gesture, "I don't know a *thing* about the wood either" (201).

Both Rhoda Lee and Rosalie exemplify the power of cultural conditioning to persuade self-respecting young Southern women that ladyhood status should be their one and ultimate goal. Their fervent insistence that they are indeed Southern ladies, despite their

circumstances, starkly contrasts with Adair's outright rejection of the hollow status which threads its chains through the white chiffon and lace of the Southern female disciples it has groomed and indoctrinated. Adair does not strive for ladyhood and its prescribed cut-out doll image of women but, like Scarlett O'Hara, knows how and when to reap advantages by feigning it.

Though Adair manages on her own, *Enemy Women* shows how many women struggled to do so. The novel depicts the severe misery many Ozarkers suffered in a scene in which Adair encounters a starving woman and child. While other novels such as *The Wave*, *High Hearts*, and *Jubilee* depict the painful reluctance of planter women to sacrifice their sons to the Confederacy's cause, *Enemy Women* portrays the unsentimental readiness of a poor woman to let her "eggshell-colored child" go hungry because "[h]e's going to die anyhow ... [and] [a] man child will die before a girl will." Scarcity makes food more valuable than silver as neither the woman nor Adair believe that a silver cup is worth more than a ham. The woman even attempts to commodify her child by trading the "good little worker" for something to eat (251). Although the woman claims that she is unwilling to shoot a nearby bear devouring a corpse because the bear has just eaten her husband, she eventually admits that she just doesn't have the gun powder to do so.

Adair's wartime experiences change her conception of herself and what should be valued. As she journeys back to the family's farm, thoughts of "lights in the windows" and her "silent privacy" and a place that "they themselves owned and were beholden to no one, were not beggars asking a place in somebody else's kitchen" give her strength (225). Her expectations are dashed, however, when a troop of traveling actors residing at the residence inform Adair that her father has been declared dead and the family home has been auctioned. Adair retreats with the news to her childhood room and places her hand on a "homespun blanket" and longs for the innocence and simplicity of her pre-war life, a time when "she had thought of herself as a person that wonderful things would happen to because she was uncommon and marked apart. That a clear light burned inside her that nothing could extinguish and it would always illuminate her way. That [...] she had held this light between her hands [...] that no wind would ever put it out." (315). She reflects on a past when she had thought of herself as a "very pure person" who "had not wanted anybody to die nor [ever] led anyone to their death, nor [...] stolen anything or lied or hated as she had [now] hated" (315) and concludes that "now her name was written in the Book of Dirt." The thread she touches on the blanket is the color of "ocher" because they had run

out of green and she thinks “I came traveling a long way thinking I was coming home. But I could have just stopped off anywhere” (311). The green of innocence never had a place in the fabric of life.

Unlike the other novels herein, which generally end with a heroine hopeful about the future (with the exception of *The Wave*) Adair’s attitude at the end of *Enemy Women* can be better characterized as a stoic resolve. After gathering a few items she can travel with, she offers everything else to the actors who react “disturbed” and “regretful” and try to “press other things on her.” Adair, however, doesn’t want or need anything else. She has “learned the specific gravity of possessions and how they weighed a person down” (319). In the end, Adair has no desire for anything but the freedom to lead her own life.

C. WOMEN AND RACE

History, despite its wrenching pain,

Cannot be unlived, but if faced

With courage, need not be lived again

—excerpt from Maya Angelou’s “On the Pulse of Morning” written for and read at the Inauguration of Bill Clinton in 1993

Since the arrival of first Africans in the British Colonies of North America to cultivate tobacco in the early 1600s, race has played a significant role in the social and historical development of the South. Sadly, humankind’s earliest recorded history includes accounts of humans enslaving fellow humans. Unique to the South, however, was a system of enslavement based solely on racial identity. According to historian Arnold Sio, societies such as ancient Rome also had slavery but because their slavery was non-racial, those liberated from bondage could attain the same rights as all freed persons with the same citizenship and gender. In the antebellum South, however, legally, all black people were presumed to be enslaved unless they had documentation to prove otherwise (289–307).

Southern Christians’ justification of race-based enslavement can be traced back to British rule and the biblical story of Noah’s curse of Canaan as punishment for Ham’s sin (Ham was the father of Canaan) (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 521–522).¹¹⁰ In medieval times, nobles were thought to be descended from the pure blood of Japheth, and free commoners from Shem, two of Noah’s three sons. Noah’s third and youngest son, Ham, was thought to be the forefather of the non-white slaves, who were “blackened by their sins” and expected to serve the nobility. By the end of the 1500s, these beliefs spread throughout Great Britain and its colonies. At first, the British had employed both indentured servants

and Africans in their “New World” colonies. However, with the desire to increase their land holdings abroad came the need for men and women to populate the colonies and laborers to work the land. Soon the British began to draw distinctions between the white indentured servants and the black African workers. The British granted citizenship to the white workers to populate the new communities as British subjects and kept the black workers as a cheap perpetual labor force. This eventually morphed into a system of slavery based on race. The system continued long after the Revolutionary War had ended and the British left America’s shores.

By the foundation of the United States in 1776, one of every five of America’s 2.5 million inhabitants was a slave (Baptist 3). From the late 1700s onwards, with the introduction of Eli Whitney’s cotton gin, the yield of cotton production doubled with each subsequent decade. Increasing demand for cotton increased the demand for field laborers. Slaves enabled plantation owners to keep production costs low and profits high. Under Thomas Jefferson, however, an 1808 ban prohibited the importation of slaves from abroad. To maintain the supply of cheap labor, Southerners made it progressively more difficult for slaves already held in bondage to attain and retain their freedom.

1. Aspects of Race

The South adopted the Roman custom of *partus sequitur ventrem* which determined the legal status of children (slave or free) according to the legal status of the mother. This system ensured an ongoing and bountiful supply of slave laborers for generations, regardless of the race, bondage, or social status of the father. This combined with the “one-drop rule” to form a society based on the rule of hypodescent, automatically ranking those with African ancestry lower than whites and categorizing people in the United States according to race.¹¹¹

Questions about the legitimacy of race as a social category were virtually muted as the concept of race became reified into the social fabric of the South and throughout the United States as a whole. In the 1800s the very influential Southern Baptist leader Robinson Graves, also known as “Mr. Baptist,” purported that: “God had ordained the white race to rule the world and ... slavery would continue until the end of time” (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 522). In her book, *The Plantation Mistress*, Catherine Clinton explains that according to the ‘drop-of-ink’ formulation— “just as a single drop of black ink colors a whole glass of clear water, so—white America decreed—one drop of black blood ‘pollutes’

a human being” (203). By basing the race of a child solely on the mother’s race, wealthy cotton planters could deny children they fathered with slaves legal rights and conveniently sell away any unpleasant proof of philandering.¹¹² In her diary, published after the Civil War, Mary Boykin Chestnut writes about the “monstrous system” of “wrong and inequity”:

Like the patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines; and the mulattoes one sees in every family partly resemble the white children. Any lady is ready to tell you who is the father of all the mulatto children in everybody’s household but her own. Those, she seems to think, drop from the clouds. (qtd. in Catherine Clinton’s *Plantation Mistress* 199)

In the novel *Jubilee*, based on the life story of a woman whose father is a planter and mother his slave, the plantation overseer, Grimes, condemns his boss, Master Dutton, for “carrying on with nigger wenches, and even stooping so low as to raise whole families by them” (26).

Of the 9 million people who lived in the Confederacy at the outbreak of the war, 3.5 million were slaves.¹¹³ According to W. J. Cash’s estimates, more than 80% of the Southern black population before the Civil War could be considered multiracial, which would have translated to 2.8 million multiracial slaves at the time (Cash 84).¹¹⁴

In *Iola Leroy*, the parents of the heroine and her siblings, all of whom are biracial, attempt to conceal from their children their true racial identity in order to protect them. Historian Brenda Stevenson writes, “Mothers and other kin, who were sensitive to the kinds of teasing, insults and rough treatment that their children might receive at the hands of both blacks and whites, often would lie to their children about their paternity or teach them to avoid the issue when questioned about it” (120). Other novels, such as *Jubilee*, *High Hearts*, and *The Wind Done Gone* delve into the many problems faced by racially-mixed slaves. *Jubilee* also depicts the trauma experienced by enslaved couples when the enslaved “wife”¹¹⁵ is sexually abused by the plantation master and bears his children. Stevenson writes, “These stepchildren, after all, were a constant reminder to bondsmen of the power white men held over their wives and their inability, as men, to protect them” (120).

Race was not only an accepted trait that determined a person’s physical, legal, and economic freedom, it also became hierarchal. In the antebellum period, race could determine whether a characteristic attributed to a Southern woman was an asset or a liability. A beautiful white Southern woman of the planter class and even yeoman class could secure marital advantages based on her beauty. In a place like New Orleans with its elite “mulatto” markets, however, beauty (often marked by light skin) could be both a

blessing and a curse. While beauty could spare a young black woman arduous field labor, it could also seal her destiny for sexual servitude. Beautiful fair-skinned slaves fetched a high price at the marketplace from men seeking enslaved mistresses. As portrayed in *Jubilee* and *High Hearts*, beautiful black women of the South, enslaved and freed, not only drew the attentions of lustful males, but also sparked the vengeful ire of their ladies. As so poignantly observed in Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1961), "[I]f God has bestowed beauty upon [the enslaved woman], it will prove her greatest curse" (46). Biracial female slaves were particularly vulnerable because of their oftentimes fair skin.

In the Victorian age (1820–1914), a fragile, delicate look with a complexion as pale as a cadaver was desirable for women. Deborah Gray White argues that in ways different from black women, white women also endured their own forms of race-determined sexism (*Ar'n't I A Woman* 6). Pale was the shade of the nobility. In the patriarchal South, the more frail-looking the lady, the more vital-looking the Southern gentleman at her side. Some ladies used white facial mineral powder made of zinc oxide to achieve the desired whiteness. Other beauty regimes involved coating faces with opium at night followed by a brisk ammonia washing in the morning. Dr. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Complexion Wafers and Fould's Medicated Arsenic Complexion Soap, "sold by druggists everywhere" promised beauty, admiration, and worship for their faithful users. In the South, this seemed to have an added significance.

First, a pale complexion was evidence that a woman did not belong to a class required to perform hard, manual labor under a merciless Southern sun to make ends meet. Second, a woman's translucent skin, like her white debutante and wedding gowns, was evidence not only of her wealth and status, but also of her virginal purity, which, according to Virginia Woolf, "was supposed to be her chief beauty—her blushes, her great grace" ("Profession for Women"). After all, a white tablet is a blank page waiting to be written on. Above all, a woman's whiteness distinguished her racially from her black enslaved sisters with "savage" African roots.

By the Civil War, the South had firmly established its system of slavery solely on race.¹¹⁶ When Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 in the midst of the Civil War, the default status of non-whites in the South legally changed from slave-unless-proven-otherwise, to free person. The Confederate South, however, was slow to accept the change. The significance of racial status did not wane with the defeat of the Confederacy. In some ways, Southerners categorized as non-white became even more vulnerable to

racially-motivated violence. Ironically, in the antebellum South the status of slaves as property worth upwards of 500 USD (equivalent to about 14,686 USD in 2019) protected black people from non-planter sanctioned abuse since injury to a slave amounted to damage to the (white) slave master's property. Emancipation removed the white man from the black person's legal status. Thus, a public system which unfairly favored white people through implicit and explicit sanctions targeting non-whites became instrumental in establishing a two-tiered social system in which the salient characteristic of whether a person was a first- or second-class citizen was race.

In the Reconstruction era, the hierarchy of race and the perceived negativity of the black race were apparent in the disgust associated with "nigger work," which W. J. Cash describes as work that was despised by whites and "smacked of servility or work in gangs under the orders of a boss" (49). At the same time, the Ku Klux Klan, which sought racial purification, white supremacy, and the overthrow of the Republican, northern-friendly government in the South, was established throughout the South until federal law enforcement temporarily suppressed it around 1872 until its resurgence in 1915.

With the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in February 1870, federal legislation forbade federal and state laws to deny citizens the right to vote based on: "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Millions of black men who gained the right to vote cast their ballots for the pro-Unionist Republican party. Meanwhile, white Southern men, who had been disenfranchised directly after the war, were regaining their rights as well. To tip the voting scales back in favor of white Southerners, many parts of the South enacted measures such as grandfather clauses, poll taxes, and literacy tests to block black people from voting.

In a country in which slavery was based on racial distinctions, ignoring the historical categorizations of race is ignoring the powerful and often negative legacy this categorization has had for generations of Americans living in a society marked by institutionalized racism. As argued by historian John Blassingame in *The Slave Community*, in novels portraying the Civil War era, one stereotype is intricately bound to another. Unraveling one invariably does the same to the other it is interwoven with. There is no slave without a master and there is no master without a slave. A *New York Times* article on power and race relations quotes Georgetown University professor Charles King: "[R]ace is about power, not biology," he argues. "The closer you get to social power, the closer you get to whiteness. The one group that was never allowed to cross the line into whiteness was

African Americans – the long-term legacy of slavery” (Tavernise). In his autobiography, Malcolm X claims that the black man has been “brainwashed for hundreds of years” because “[t]he true knowledge ... was that history had been ‘whitened’ in the white man’s history books” (187).

For Deborah Gray White, black women, racism, and sexism are and have always been intricately linked and because of this, black women’s experiences with sexism have differed in significant ways from white women’s. “The rape of black women, their endless toil, the denial of their beauty, the inattention to their pregnancy, the sale of their children were simultaneous manifestations of racism and sexism, not an extreme form of one or the other. For black women, race and sex cannot be separated” (*Ar’n’t I A Woman?* 5–6).

Frances E. W. Harper, and many other black American activists like her, sought to combat racial discrimination in the United States with education. After the publication of abolitionist David Walker’s 1829 booklet, *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*, advocating radical rebellion, and Nat Turner’s 1831 Slave Rebellion, with the exception of Maryland and Kentucky, every Southern state implemented anti-literacy laws forbidding the education of slaves. According to Fox Genovese, “well over 90 percent of the slaves remained illiterate” (*Within the Plantation* 156). Illiteracy amongst the slaves increased the importance of developing an oral tradition to preserve a cultural heritage within slave society. Through folk songs, folk tales, spirituals, and historical narratives, enslaved people recorded time based on events rather than dates and thus were able to carry their history along with them, without fear of discovery or alteration by outsiders. Subsequent narratives and biographies of escaped and freed slaves such as those of Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman were recorded in the form of “told to” biographical accounts.

In addition to having a particular method of story-telling, black Americans also had a language of their own. In an essay entitled “If Black English Isn’t a Language, Then Tell Me, What is?” published in 1979 in the *New York Times*, the African American writer James Baldwin writes about the importance of language for a person or group’s identity. Not only does language reveal the speaker, it has the power to describe and thus control circumstances: “It goes without saying, then, that language is also a political instrument, means, and proof of power. It is the most vivid and crucial key to identify: It reveals the private identity, and connects one with, or divorces one from, the larger public, or communal identity.” Baldwin writes that in England, to open your mouth is “to put your

business in the street” leading you to instantly confess “your parents, your youth, your school, your salary, your self-esteem, and, alas, your future.” The South was no different.

Black novelists often use “black” vernacular to proudly put their business in the street and empower their characters by honoring a history, culture, and community distinct from the world created and retold by white people. For the black feminist Audre Lorde, if the “tools of a racist patriarchy” are used to evaluate that same patriarchy then “only the narrowest parameters of change are possible and allowable” (110–111). Because oral tradition is so important to black culture and the legacy of a people who have been separated from the language of their ancestors and have also been forbidden to learn how to read and write, usage of black English in narratives about black people is almost (an authorial) imperative. Use of folk language—also known as Black English—is use of a dialect with its own pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary usage, and syntax. Subject-verb agreement also differs in Black English from “white” American English. The black community members not only tell their stories in their own unique voices, but also feature the tales of black American ancestors as a significant and integral component of American history.

The cultural and historical legacy of racial distinction in the United States continues into the present day. In a thoughtful article entitled “Biracial, and also black,” Professor Martha Jones writes about the difficulty of the legacy of self-identification (possible in the national census since 1960), even (or especially) for those who identify themselves as multi-racial. She challenges the concept of what she terms as the belief in a “racial binary” that exists and categorizes people either as white or non-white that can be traced back to the “one-drop” era and can lead to people with mixed racial identities to experience a kind of social stigma if they choose to admit to a non-African parentage because “racial identity as a social construction is rooted in more than the fact of one’s paternity.”¹¹⁷

In a 2003 review of books that attempt to trace the origins of racially-based slavery in the South, Randy Sparks concludes that though “slavery may have disappeared, the intellectual foundations of the institution continue to resonate in contemporary America, and we ignore them at our peril” (1021). The authors examined strive to ensure that the valuable yet costly lessons garnered from the Civil War era are not only told but resonate intellectually and emotionally. Nevertheless, repeated use of race as a social category, even to counter racial discrimination, carries the inherit risk of advancing the reification of the concept of race as a legitimate marker for humans to distinguish themselves in relation to one another in regards to every aspect of social interaction, including oppression. Literature in general and

historical fiction in particular can foster constructive dialogue on the role race has played in our nation's past and what role we should allow it to play in the future.

2. Novels and Feminist Waves

2.1. *Novels of First-Wave Feminism: Pre-1920*

By 1892, *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted*'s publication, the "Black Codes" of the South were already dividing communities on the falsehoods of a racially "separate but equal" society even before the Plessy v Ferguson Court decision in 1896. The hopes of a "postracial" society prevalent in the early days of Reconstruction were dashed by the late 1870s. As northern troops left the South, the Democratic party regained its footing and northern states shifted their focus to their own problems with racial tensions (Hobbs 120). Miscegenation laws came into force which automatically nullified all marriages between a white person and a "Negro." Lynching had become such a widespread problem that Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a black journalist from Memphis, urged her black readers to arm themselves in self-defense so that "the white man ... the aggressor [will] know[] he runs as great risk of biting the dust every time his Afro-American victim does, [and thus will] have greater respect for Afro-American life" (Well-Barnett 22).

The black elite strove to deescalate growing unrest by positively influencing the image of the black community and combating white racism through a more peaceful means. By promoting the principles of "racial uplift," activists sought to improve the education, moral instruction, and the material conditions of the black community. In her work as a social activist and writer, Frances E. W. Harper advocated the ideas of racial uplift but crossed racial lines to rally all women to play a critical role in the social advancement and moral development of the nation. According to Harper, because "we are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity," all women, of all races, needed to unite to initiate the changes necessary to bring racial unity to the nation (*Brighter* 217). Such a vital task could not be trusted to "[t]he hands of lynchers ... too red with blood to determine the political character of the government for even four short years" or "the unsteady hands of a drunkard" ("Women's Political Future"). Seeing the ills plaguing men of all races of the nation, Harper placed her hopes for a better future in a racially united women's front, "to demand justice, simple justice, as the right of every race" ("Women's Political Future"). In 1869, Harper, who had been actively engaged in the equal rights battle for blacks and

women broke away from Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's suffrage efforts because of the controversy surrounding the 15th Amendment. Theoretically, granting black men the right to vote would place the black community on equal footing with the white community and thus be a positive step forward for all black people. For white women, however, granting black men the right to vote would simply increase the number of men holding the power to rule over the civically incapacitated women while at the same time decreasing the voting power of the white community. Racist remarks and behavior by some of the leading white suffragists did not foster the formation of a formidable, united front.

An integral part of the racial uplift movement was constructing a positive racial identity for black and multiracial people by providing black role models for community members to emulate. For people of a mixed racial heritage, "passing," or identifying themselves with the white community while concealing their black heritage, became a way to ease the challenges of a system of apartheid and racism. Promoters of racial uplift hoped to empower community members to actively embrace their black heritage and resist the temptation to "pass" as white.

Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted delves into the complicated aspects of racial relations in the South both before, during, and after the war. Harper's heroine is born and raised as a white woman. When her racially-mixed heritage is revealed, she is enslaved. As a free adult, Iola chooses not to "pass" despite the many disadvantages, social ills, and ever-present threat of violence she is forced to endure due to her chosen racial alliance.

Published only a decade after *Iola Leroy*, *The Battle-Ground* arrived on bookshelves in a nation wrought with racial tensions. In 1896, the Supreme Court legally sanctioned "separate but equal" laws in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The Honorable John Marshall Harlan, the lone dissenter, argued that "Our Constitution is color-blind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens," and "[t]he arbitrary separation of citizens on the basis of race ... is a badge of servitude wholly inconsistent with the civil freedom and the equality before the law established by the Constitution." Harlan presciently predicted that the court's decision would "permit the seeds of race hate to be placed under the sanction of law."

In December 1903, North Carolina state governor, Charles Aycock, gave a speech about disenfranchising black men in order to solve the "negro problem." The Governor urged whites to quit writing about, quit talking about and quit "coddling" "the negro" because he had to toil for his lot in life and learn to recognize the "fact" that in white men's veins

“[flowed] the blood of the dominant race” and the “race problem” would end when the races were completely separated without intermingling or crossing of lines. In 1905 Thomas Dixon’s novel *The Clansman* was published as the second novel in his trilogy about the South during the Reconstruction era. Around the same time, the dubious ideological claims of eugenics were being championed into a powerful social movement and the Ku Klux Klan was undergoing a resurgence. Meanwhile, the defeated (white) South was struggling to brand the legacy of its past and the depiction of its role in the 1861–1865 conflict as congressional debates were waged on an appropriate name for the war satisfactory for the North and the South.

In this social climate, in 1902, Ellen Glasgow’s *The Battle-Ground* was published. The novel’s black characters give fleeting hints about the hardship of slavery and the black characters who are slaves and former slaves, seem, for the most part, well-treated and content with their lot. Although Dan and his former body servant, Big Abel, have a close relationship with mutual respect, the hierarchal master-and-slave basis of that relationship is always present. Glasgow avoids taking a hard look at the bleak reality of racism and slavery. The only indication of racial tensions in the novel are apparent in Big Abel’s negative attitudes towards those he perceives as “poor white trash” and thus his social inferiors. Though Glasgow proved quite capable of shining an unforgiving light on class injustice in the Civil War era South, her 1902 novel fails to expose the harsh reality of slavery and racial oppression in the same manner.

IOLA LEORY; OR, SHADOWS UPLIFTED

Iola Leroy conveys a message of racial uplift that contrasts starkly with the overall pessimistic tone of Frances E. W. Harper’s previous work *Minnie’s Sacrifice* (1869). Harper’s earlier heroine is a racially-mixed woman who makes a fatal decision not to “pass” so she can do for her race what she could “never... accomplish as a white woman” (46). As the title suggests, Minnie “sacrifices” herself for her race. In *Iola Leroy*, published nearly two-and-half decades later, although the main character and her brother also refuse to “pass” once they discover their racially-mixed heritage, they ultimately dedicate themselves to uplifting the black community and lead fulfilling lives.

According to Koritha Mitchell, the decision of racially-mixed people not to “pass” strengthened the cause for racial equality because: “a white-skinned person who acknowledged their non-white heritage could argue that their “Negro blood” was clearly

not a source of inferiority, immorality, or shame” (38). As a committed activist, Harper spent most of her life combatting racial discrimination in both her writing and her work. For many years, however, scholars did not consider *Iola Leroy* a novel that successfully advocated for the black community.

In the Civil War South in which *Iola Leroy* is set, a large majority of black people were racially “mixed” (Cash 84).¹¹⁸ Historical accounts of enslaved women like Sally Hemings show that “mulatto” slaves were often raised in households not necessarily as planter daughters like Iola but alongside them like Di-Peachy in *High Hearts* and Cynara in *The Wind Done Gone*. Nevertheless, some scholars have criticized Harper for making Iola a “mulatto” heroine who they argue is nothing more than a white woman who the author has labelled black. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese describes the “mulatto” heroine as an “elite young wom[a]n who by the trick of a cruel fate [is] doomed by a few drops of black blood to slavery” (162). According to Fox-Genovese, in order to engage an “essentially” white female readership, Harper’s novels frequently featured mulatto heroines who looked and behaved like white women to convey “the thinly veiled message that [the heroine’s] unmerited destiny could threaten countless other unsuspected young women” (“Southern History” 162). Many black rights advocates of the Reconstruction and the Civil Rights eras, also found Harper’s fair-skinned “mulatto” heroine who was the daughter of a loving interracial planter couple, problematic. A mulatto heroine trying to unite the races, according to critics, was not only a suboptimal role model for the Black Power cause but also for academic institutions in the Civil Rights era which strove to expand curricula by including works by marginalized groups (*Iola* 43).

Recent publications, however, such as Koritha Mitchell’s *From Slave Cabins to the White House* (2020), have reconsidered the contributions *Iola Leroy* can make to the literature canon. Hazel V. Carby argues that the mulatto, as a narrative figure, is able to bridge the canyons forged by the Jim Crow laws and be employed as a “narrative device of medication” to help readers explore race relations (89). Carby contends that all readers can connect with a heroine who is neither completely white, nor completely black, but who has both suffered and benefitted from the system. For Koritha Mitchell, an important aspect of the novel is the Harper’s portrayal of lasting loving relationships in the black community that were able to survive a system set on destroying them. She also highlights the importance of the novel as a work of black domestic fiction with characters who successfully establish nurturing homes. “*Iola Leroy* asserts that racial uplift is best

understood as practices of making-oneself-at-home on an explicitly collective scale” (*From Slave Cabins* 66). Feminist scholar Susanne B. Dietzel argues that with *Iola Leroy*, Frances E. W. Harper not only “gives voice to an underrepresented population,” but also “lays the foundation for an independent black southern literature to follow” (165). Harper challenged the “authoritative discourse” of the white community (*Iola* 30) and illustrated the innovative ways the enslaved community overcame oppressive measures designed to keep them from reading and writing by developing strong oral traditions.¹¹⁹

The opening line of the novel: “How’s butter dis mornin’?” along with the response “Fresh; just as fresh, as fresh can be,” immediately suggest to readers the prime importance of the black community’s developed language to covertly bypass suppression by their white oppressors. As previously mentioned, Harper’s characters use banal chitchat as coded language to communicate war news between and among plantations. Elizabeth Young describes Harper’s portrayal as, “representing slaves as manipulators of the marketplace rather than as commodities within it” (207). Using intertextuality, and thus, according to Koritha Mitchell, “highlight[ing] the importance of the community conversation,” (*From Slave Cabins* 31) Harper also incorporates spiritual hymns and poems to place her characters in a multiracial world rich with black cultural history and traditions. Although Harper’s characters use what James Baldwin describes as “Black English,” the omniscient narrator does not. Instead, the narrator acts as bridge between the white audience and black characters and seems cognizant of the “white gaze”¹²⁰ of the white, female, northern readers who most likely comprised the majority of Harper’s initial readers.

Iola Leroy begins with the story of the heroine’s parents: Eugene and Marie, a white planter and his black slave who fall in love, marry, and have a family together. From the very beginning, however, the apparently mutually loving relationship is subject to racial prejudices and the disapproval of the white community. Alfred Lorraine urges his cousin to not marry Marie because “society [has] the right to guard the purity of its blood by the rigid exclusion of an alien race” (106). For Eugene, however, the racial problem is not the mixing of impure blood but the usage of race as a tool to oppress others and deny them basic human rights. In a thinly veiled voice of the author, Eugene contends that “society [should] have a greater bane for those who, by consorting with an alien race, rob their offspring of a right to their names and to an inheritance in their property, and who fix their social status among an enslaved and outcast race” (106). The cousins’ discussion dissolves into how much “negro” is enough “negro” to be considered “negro” when Lorraine argues

that despite her beauty, Marie is still a negro, and Eugene replies that she “isn’t much of a negro” (106). Despite Eugene’s sad concession that one drop of “negro blood” is sufficient to taint Marie into non-whiteness, he remains steadfast in his determination to marry her. In the end, Eugene’s socially unforgivable act is his attempt to legally legitimize his relationship to Marie and grant her a status equivalent to that of a white wife.

Although planters frequently fathered slave children, the willful ignorance of “civilized” society to recognize such parentage prevented the depraved actions from entering the “public transcript.”¹²¹ Although inter-racial sexual relationships, forced or compliant, did not endanger the white dominant class’s hold on power, any public acknowledgement of such circumstances may have. How could a married planter who raped helpless women also be an honorable Christian nobly civilizing a savage race? How could a race worthy of marriage to a white person be justifiably classified as savage?

In *Iola Leroy*, Marie “passes” as white and she and her husband conceal from their children their racially-mixed background. The family resides isolated from the local community but is unable to completely evade racist acts when young Harry is teased and called “nigger” by local youth. As demands for secession escalate, Iola and Harry are sent north to boarding school to protect them from an increasingly volatile Southern environment.

Even in the North, however, white Southern parents pressure the school director to dismiss a “colored” student because of her race. Iola, still unaware of her own racially-mixed heritage, pities the dismissed girl but defends the South’s right to slavery nevertheless (124). After all, didn’t her parents treat their slaves well and she and her mammy love one another like daughter and mother? (128). As the scene draws to a close, the omniscient narrator takes the reader aside to foreshadow Iola’s dark days to come: “Poor Iola! When she said slavery was not a bad thing, little did she think that she was destined to drink its bitter dregs the cup she was so ready to press to the lips of others” (131). As if directly targeting the white audience, the narrator offers a thinly disguised warning to all those smug enough to believe that the plight of a “colored” girl can be carelessly dismissed as the plight of the “other”. “You too could be colored, and just not know it yet,” Harper seems to warn.

When Iola’s father dies, Lorraine dispatches a Southern lawyer, Louis Bastine, to fetch Iola and lure her back to Mississippi. A friend of the lawyer who happens to know Iola, finds it a shame to reduce such a beautiful girl to slavery. “She is just as white as we are, as good as any girl in the land, and better educated than thousands of white girls.” Though she

boasts “apparent refinement” and “magnificent beauty” that would make her “the sensation of the season,” she is condemned to slavery due to the “cross in her blood.” The friend claims that it would be easier to take a girl from the slums as his wife than the “lovely” racially-mixed girl. Marrying Iola would be considered so offensive that “[t]here is not a social circle in the South that would not take it as a gross insult to have her introduced into it” (131).

Bastine persuades Iola to return to her supposedly ill (but actually deceased) father in Mississippi. By transporting the heroine from relative safety in the North into the jaws of captivity in the South, Harper shows the precarious state of blacks living in a divided nation in which laws such as the Fugitive State Act made all black people, even those in the North, potential slaves. Stripped of her white protective cloak, Iola becomes vulnerable to Bastine’s sexual advances on the journey southward. He kisses and encircles the now “black” Iola while she sleeps. Even when Iola awakens and condemns Bastine for his ungentlemanly behavior, Bastine is not ashamed but aroused by the “tigress” who is “a real spitfire, ... [and so] beautiful even in her wrath” (133). Once home, Iola not only learns that her father is long dead but also that Lorraine has tricked her into returning to Mississippi so that he can remand her and her family members to slavery as his property. Black blood has commodified the family. Only when she too is black, is Iola finally able to fully appreciate the heinousness of the system that had enabled her hitherto privileged life. The heroine suddenly questions how people who call themselves Christians can support slavery and such unjust laws (135).

Perhaps because she wanted her novel to inspire white and black readers alike, Harper chooses not to include any details regarding the time Iola spends at the slave markets and as a slave. While death spares the heroine’s younger sister from the atrocities of slavery, Iola is conveniently and miraculously rescued from bondage by a “dear dear friend” who also helps place her in a position as a nurse in a hospital. Only after she has been liberated, does Iola briefly mention her time as a slave and being “subjected to cruel indignities” (140). Iola stresses that though she was treated as an article of merchandise and subject to outrages that “might well crimson the cheek of honest womanhood with shame”, she was abased but not degraded because “the men who trampled on [her] were the degraded ones” (140). By not detailing the very real perils and probable assaults a light-skinned, attractive woman like Iola would have most likely suffered, Harper preserves her heroine’s reputation and honor.

The prominent white physician, Dr. Gresham, with whom Iola works, falls in love her and asks her to marry him. Although Iola believes that the doctor's enthusiasm for her will wane, the doctor insists that Iola should judge him by his character rather than the worst of his race (140). While Dr. Gresham tells Iola that the North is different than the South when it comes to slavery and racism, Iola replies that "the negro is under a social ban both North and South. Our enemies have the ear of the world, and they can depict us just as they please" (140). She is also unconvinced that racism does not exist in the North.

It is easier to outgrow the dishonor of crime than the disabilities of color. You have created in this country an aristocracy of color wide enough to include the South with its treason and Utah with its abominations, but too narrow to include the best and bravest colored man who bared his breast to the bullets of the enemy during your fratricidal strife. Is not the most arrant Rebel to-day more acceptable to you than the most faithful colored man? (218)

Although Iola loves the doctor, she views their racial differences as an "insurmountable barrier." Iola's suffering motivates her to "cast [her] lot with the freed people as a helper, teacher, and friend" (139). In a show of racial uplift, Iola argues that the "negro has no other alternative than to make friends of his calamities. Other men have pled his cause, but out of the race must come its own defenders" (140). In words spoken by the white character, Dr. Gresham, Harper criticizes the white race while suggesting how the black race can uplift itself: "[The negroes] must learn to struggle, labor, and achieve. By facts, not theories, they will be judged in the future. The Anglo-Saxon race is proud, domineering, aggressive, and impatient of a rival, and ... has more capacity for dragging down a weaker race than uplifting it" (141). The white community will not proactively support black progress but will continue to take a leading role in society and judge black advancement. Echoing arguments of material determinism later expounded in critical race theory, Iola predicts that "the time will come when the civilization of the negro will assume a better phase than ... Anglo-Saxons possess" because white people will prove themselves "unworthy" of their "high vantage ground" if their "superior ability" is only used to "victimize feebler races and minister to a selfish greed of gold and a love of domination" (141).

When Dr. Gresham suggests that Iola's fair complexion would enable her to pass as his white wife, Iola declares that she has "too much self-respect to enter [his] home under a veil of concealment," and questions whether the doctor would be able to accept their children if they were born with dark skin. Although Harper advocates the moral obligation of racially-mixed people to identify themselves as members of the black community, she

also makes it clear that such decisions will demand great sacrifices in a nation mired in racism: “unto her was present the offer of love, home, happiness, and social position; the heart and hand of a man too noble and generous to refuse her companionship for life on account of the blood in her veins” (141). Iola eventually chooses a man as her partner, who has an equally prestigious position as Dr. Gresham but who, like Iola, is biracial. Harper, however, “whitens” Iola’s hero who is the “natural grandson of a Southern lady” with a mother who was enslaved and boasts the “blood of a proud aristocratic ancestry ... flowing through his veins, and generations of blood admixtures [which] had effaced all traces of his negro lineage.” He is black but looks white with a “blond” complexion. Importantly, however, he identifies himself with the black community. Although white enough to “pass” and “forsake his mother’s race for the richest advantages his [white paternal] grandmother could bestow” (222). Dr. Latimer self-identifies as a black man because he has “too much sterling worth of character.”

Iola’s brother, Harry, is also faced with difficult decisions about passing. While Harry comes to feel profound pity for slaves even while he still identifies as white, he also distinguishes “between looking on a man as an object of pity and protecting him as such, and being identified with him and forced to share his lot” (147). Although Harry is “fair enough to pass unchallenged among the fairest of the land ... a Christless prejudice ha[s] decreed that he should be a social pariah” (146) and he must therefore decide whether to join a “colored” or white regiment. The description of his options reinforces negative racial stereotypes: “On one side were strength, courage, enterprise, power of achievement, and memories of a wonderful past. On the other side were weakness, ignorance, poverty, and the proud world’s social scorn. He knew nothing of colored people except as slaves, and his whole soul shrank from equalizing himself with them” (146). Here again, the disgust that causes Harry’s soul to shrink as he begins to identify with the black community seems tailored to the gaze of white readers. Despite the positive aspects of the white regiment and the negative of the black, in the end, Harry chooses the colored regiment, “Because [he is] a colored man” (147).

Harry’s decision to join the colored regiment despite his fair complexion not only runs counter to the decision made by so many others who were “anxious to lose their identity with the colored race and pose as white men” but also means that Harry will have to give up “dreams of promotion from a simple private to a successful general, [and] deliberately turn[] his back upon every gilded hope and dazzling opportunity, to cast his lot with the

despised and hated negro” (147). Identification with the black race automatically demotes Harry’s class status. Yet, despite the social costs, Harry is “soon able to gain [the] esteem” (147) of his colored colleagues. Even though both he and his sister have white skin, they are both welcomed into the black community’s fold. Unlike Vyry in *Jubilee*, neither Harry nor Iola endure negative treatment by the black community for being or acting “white.” When asked whether he was “aware of the virulence of caste prejudice and the disabilities which surround the colored people” when he “cast his lot” with them, Harry’s tone is conciliatory (197). The war atrocities Harry has witnessed galvanize him to join in peaceful efforts to elevate the black race rather than engage in violence to avenge their wrongs.

Throughout the novel, many characters declare that multiracial people have an obligation to align themselves with the black community rather than opt to “pass.” Robert tells Harry, for example, that a decision to the contrary would have meant that Harry would be “masquerading as a white man” and would be a treacherous act not only against the race but all of *humanity*. Iola echoes this sentiment stating that those who pass are moral cripples who sacrifice honor, true manliness, and self-respect (241). Although attempts to influence racially-mixed community members to identify themselves as “black” were meant to “lift” the black community with positive role models, the notion that multiracial people could only morally identify as black also reified the ideology of race and further advanced the planter-serving tenet of the one-drop rule that those who were not pure-blooded white were by default black.

The shop owners, Mr. and Mrs. Cloten, from an unnamed city in New England, are positive roles models of white community members who actively embrace an egalitarian mixed-race community (200). The message that they deliver about gender and racial issues is one that echoes Harper’s speeches of the same era. By having a white woman deliver the message in the novel, Harper gives herself the voice of a white woman and thus unites the message as a goal of both the black and white community: “When we have learned to treat men according to the complexion of their souls, and not the color of their skins, we will have given our best contribution towards the solution of the negro problem” (203).

As the book progresses, the white characters disappear and two highly educated black characters are introduced: Rev. Carmicle, a graduate of Oxford, and Lucille Delany, also a college graduate. Both are better educated than Iola and Harry and serve as positive role models who, unlike Iola and Harry, have no white blood running through their veins. As a

reverend and a teacher, they will be instrumental in the racial uplift of the black community, empowering the future generation with the moral and educational tools to succeed.

In the end, Iola declares that she prefers the Iola who identifies as black to the Iola who had identified as white (246). Iola intends to write a book about black people's plight because "it seems to be almost impossible for a white man to put himself" completely in the place of black people because "[n]o man can feel the iron which enters another man's soul" (238). Harper's ultimate goal is to help build a nation that makes character, rather than color a determining factor of social worth and rank.

THE BATTLE-GROUND

While race is not the focal point of Ellen Glasgow's *The Battle-Ground*, the novel nevertheless includes over twenty named black characters and prominently features a black man whose skills and resourcefulness enable the novel's hero to survive the war. The heroine of Glasgow's novel is the Virginia Governor's white privileged plantation daughter, Betty Ambler, who, like most historically privileged people, is initially unencumbered by preoccupations regarding the ethical basis of the society she has been born into which favors her class of people by exploiting others. *The Battle-Ground*, however, is a portrayal of the evolving South. As the heroine matures and a battle is waged, a new generation of white Southerners emerges whose relationships to class, gender, and racial concerns sharply diverge from the old planter class it is destined to replace.

In *The Battle-Ground*'s depiction of the antebellum South, the freed black people socially reside outside the white community. "Old Aunt Aisley," is a freed black woman whose relatively autonomous existence is unparalleled by any white woman at the outset of the tale. Aunt Aisley lives by herself in her own cabin where she is self-sufficient and apparently content. Unlike many Southern planter class adults, who viewed the black community's mysticism as a sign of their African savage roots and frowned on independent women, Betty, in her child's wide-eyed view of the world, sees Aunt Aisley as a person worthy of awe and respect. According to Wells-Oghoghomeh, "among the enslaved, beliefs regarding the hag [or witch] did not function as a sanction against socially deviant women as in the West African and European American contexts, but rather attested to the sociological importance of women in enslaved communities" (239). Convinced that Aunt Aisley has "conjured all the tails off Sambo's sheep" (4), the young heroine seeks her aid to "[b]eg the devil" to "come change" Betty's red hair to black.¹²² Betty's reverence

towards Aunt Aisley, and the playful innocence of the relationship between an old freed black woman and a young plantation daughter, are illustrated in Betty's quest to discover how old Aunt Aisley is. The difference in their worlds is apparent not only in their age, appearance, and speech, but also in the white child's steadfast belief in Aunt Aisley's dark, magical powers. How else could a woman live and manage on her own? Awe-struck, Betty images all the biblical characters a woman as old as Aunt Aisley must have encountered throughout her life and Aunt Aisley fuels the girl's imagination with her "Jes' es live es I is now, honey" (12). Though she denies being as old as God, she does tease that when she first laid eyes on the devil, "he warn' no mo'n a brat" (12). Wells-Oghoghomeh explains that, "enslaved people did not evince a cultural suspicion of unmarried, childless, or other deviant women in their patterns of hag-witch accusation. Rather, the hag's appearance as a female-embodied or feminine trans-sense entity attested to the relationship between gendered ideas, slavery, and ways of naming extraordinary power" (258).

Uncle Levi is another free black character who lives in the community and interacts with the planter children. The third person limited omniscient narrator describes Levi as "an honest-eyed, grizzled-haired old negro, who wrung his meagre living from a blacksmith's trade, bearing alike the scornful pity of his white neighbours and the withering contempt of his black ones" (114). While those who are enslaved are jealous of Levi and his freedom, the white community fears a self-sufficient black man who could inspire slaves to rebel. Southern gentlemen were expected, at the most, to tolerate freed black men but by no means financially support their independence. The Amblers are unsettled by their daughter's obvious infatuation with the whole Dan who is ever apt to give his pocket money to "that poor free negro" Levi (52). But like Dan, Betty sees the person before his or her class, race, or gender. Uncle Levi gives Betty her first lesson in the cruelty of slavery by explaining to her in his black vernacular that of course he is "[m]ah'ed" but because his wife "warn' nuttin' but a fiel' han," when he was set free, "dey des sol' [her] up de river" (114). As Uncle Levi walks away chuckling "Lawd, Lawd, she warn' nuttin' but a fiel' han," Betty is plagued by the nagging suspicion that Uncle Levi is not so amused by the fate of his wife. Nevertheless, despite his own poverty and the injustices he has suffered, during the height of the conflict, Levi voluntarily supplies Betty with the nearly-impossible-to-attain eggs Betty so desperately seeks for her sick mother.

Glasgow's inclusion of the northern tutor Mr. Bennet, provides readers with an outsider's view of planter life while illustrating the North-South divide. Mr. Bennett purports that a

“soul [is] a soul in any colour” and unsuccessfully tries to draw the planters into his “schemes for the uplifting of the negroes.” For Mr. Bennet, forcing slaves to perform mundane tasks like “hunting for the spectacles of another” that slaves like Mitty are forced to perform for the planter families is evidence that slavery is a dark ages institution (54). Susan Wright, in her examination of *The Battle-Ground*’s African Americans, states that Mr. Bennett bears witness to the “mutually debilitating” master-slave relationship which promotes the helplessness and dependence of the master class on those they have enslaved (28). Yet *The Battle-Ground* both dispels and reaffirms many Southern myths.

Although the overall message of *The Battle-Ground* condemns slavery as an institution detrimental to both the slaveholders and the slaves, the book not only fails to show the atrocities of slavery, at times, it even trivializes it as an unfortunate but integral part of a peaceful and glorious former age. Rhetoric highlighting the beauty of the Old Southern plantations glorifies and sanitizes the South’s ugly past while it caters to Lost Cause romanticism. In the beginning of the novel, a wagon filled with “the sound of [the] voices [of] singing” slaves who have been sold in the liquidation of a neighboring plantation’s property assets, interrupts the play of the planter children. The wagon driver has “an almost cosmic good nature” (5) about him as he regards the landscape with “imperturbable ease” and even advises his cargo of enslaved women that they’d feel better if they’d sit down and jolt more softly. Meanwhile, the “negro women” chant “the slave’s farewell.” The scene is described in a parade-like manner, with the enslaved women “gripped” with the frenzy of excitement and “childish joy in coming change” who bend their “turbaned heads to the imaginary faces upon the roadside” while they sing and curtsy. Although Glasgow hints at a lingering darkness in the corner with the lone, crouched figure of a mother “yearning over broken ties,” her weeping is drowned out by the “rich notes” of the “bright mulatto” whose voice “rolled like an organ beneath the shrill plaint of her companions.” As the children call the slaves by name and bid them farewell, the slaves call back that they hope to meet them in heaven “whar wel’ll Part no mo.’ The statement is a subtle but strong reminder that regardless if black or white, all will die, and the human race is in fact all bound together in this life and the next.

Glasgow often depicts the relationships between the black and white community as an almost amiable hierarchy. When the white planter son Champe spies the slave Zeke “wistfully” watching the wagon of the departing slave women “vanish in a sunny cloud of dust,” he tells Zeke that the slaves have been sold “dirt cheap” and if Zeke steals any more

of Champ's fishing lines, he will be too. Zeke, unperturbed by Champe's harmless badgering, responds that it's been a month since he stole a fishing line and it was so bad, it wasn't worth his trouble.

Another example of Glasgow's Eden-like view of the antebellum South can be found in a chapter entitled "A House with an Open Door," which begins with the Governor contently surveying his plantation:

complacently [looking] over the fat lands on which his fathers had sown and harvested for generations. Beyond the lane of lilacs and the two silver poplars at the gate [...] across the blue green strip of grass-land to the tawny wheat-field, where the slaves were singing as they swung their cradles. (37)

The slave-holding Governor has "something of a genial aspect of the country, as if the light that touched the pleasant hills and valleys was aglow in his clear brown eyes and comely features." Even his "smooth white hand" which holds a riding-whip "had about it a certain plump kindliness." The narrator continues, "after all, he looked but what he was—a bland and generous gentleman, whose heart was as open as his wine cellar." The passage continues with Mr. Ambler and his wife discussing the need to always keep a close eye on their slaves because they would otherwise slack off and get nothing done. Julia Ambler teases her husband for being far too kind-hearted for buying up slaves and filling up the quarters with "infirm darkies." The Governor insists he "couldn't help it" because they would have been sold south otherwise and one wanted to marry their Mandy.

Glasgow's goal in the aforementioned scenes may not have been so much to trivialize slavery as to acquaint readers with the calm before the storm. Used as an authorial device, the painting of an intact paradisiac world teetering on the brink of total destruction heightens tension and underscores the evolutionary process of the South. Alternatively, or additionally, Glasgow, who was consistently praised for breaking through the sentimental tradition of the old South, may be employing scenes of "picturesque sterility" and "bitter nostalgia" to mock the "mournful literature of commemoration" and "evasive idealism" (*A Certain Measure* 21) commonly found in the traditional plantation novels of her contemporaries. Whatever her intention, Glasgow's gilded veneer, while no doubt evoking a lingering sense of nostalgia for a supposed golden past, is equally unsettling to readers all too aware of the underlying monstrosities.¹²³

As signs of a crumbling age become apparent, the unapologetic Major expresses his anger about the general "ingratitude" which abounds and must no doubt contribute to the South's

state of peril. At first he grumbles about his absent grandson, Dan, and their former slave, Big Abel, being “all alike” with “not a trustworthy one among them” (206). He accuses them of “eat[ing] [his] bread and steal[ing] [his] chickens, and then run[ni]g off with the first scapegrace that gives them a chance” (206). When Betty challenges his assertions, and defends Big Abel for doing “just right,” she too is declared a culprit. Although not a particularly memorable scene, it embodies the overall theme of the novel which is the passing of the torch from the old to the new generation in which views on the Southern way of life are radically changing. The Major insists that “youth is always an enemy to the old—to the old” (207).

In *The Battle-Ground* abolitionist efforts exacerbate planter anxiety of uprisings and contribute to the secessionist fervor that prompts Virginia to leave the Union on 4 April 1861, eleven days before Abraham Lincoln issues a proclamation to quell the rebellion. Using her two patriarchs in a chapter entitled “The Night of Fear,” Glasgow contrasts the different planter class reactions to the perceived threat. Although the Governor fears, with every lantern flash, that “[t]he slaves are armed and rising,” and sees a “murdered woman” and “an infant with its brains dashed out at its mother’s breast” (188), the level-headed master of the Ambler plantation is still able to appreciate the “wild justice in the thing he dreaded, in the revolt of an enslaved and ignorant people, in the pitiable and ineffectual struggle for freedom” (189). Less sympathetic, Major Lightfoot warns the Governor, that after all his speech-making and brotherly love his “damned [slave] friends,” have a “mind to murder” him and that the abolitionists are:

putting pitchforks into the hands of savages and loosening them upon you. Oh, you needn’t mind [your slave] Congo, Governor. Congo’s heart’s as white as mine. ...go on...Keep up your speech-making and your handshaking until your wife gets murdered in her bed—but, by God, sir, if Virginia doesn’t secede after this, I’ll secede without her. (187–188)

While the Major represents those Southerners who felt no pangs of consciousness about the Southerners’ use of slave labor to fund their way of life and enthusiastically demand secession, the Governor is emblematic of the 50,000 Virginians who made up the majority of voters at the state convention who did not support breaking away from the Union (Donnelly 81). While the Major is convinced that “the sons of Ham were under a curse which the Lord would lighten in his good time” (54), the Governor is able to recognize that “behind the new wrongs were the old ones, and that the sinners of to-day were, perhaps, the sinners against yesterday” (189).

Though the concerns of slave uprisings were indeed real, the actual threat posed by armed resistance was relatively low. According to Catherine Clinton: “[b]lack on plantations rarely, in point of fact, organized armed revolts, plotted rebellions, or attempted violent individual resistance. But significantly, the actual infrequency of insurrection did little to lessen the constant threat of slave rebellions in the minds of planters—or their women” (*Plantation Mistress* 194). As it has throughout history, fear (regardless if real or imagined) proved an effective tool to galvanize the planter class to take actions to counter threats, whether they were perceived or real.

While a good majority of planters must have worried about slave rebellions, Glasgow shows how there were also those who naively preferred to live in their constructed narratives that because slavery supposedly benefitted the enslaved, enslaved Southerners must also be rooting for a Confederate victory. Virginia assures her old slave, Mammy Riah, with no tinge of irony, that they had to remain optimistic because with Virginia’s husband Jack fighting for their freedom, the Confederacy was sure to win. Mammy Riah “scornfully” retorts: “Is dat ar freedom vittles? ... Is it close? Is it wood ter b’n?” (272).

In a chapter entitled “The Silent Battle,” the burden of responsibility Betty feels to provide for “those faithful people” toiling in the “wasted fields” as the “secret places were emptied of their last supplies” “stab[s]” her “like a sword” (346). Though she puts on a show of optimism, she suffers from a “grim fear” that grows “sharper every hour.” Betty’s behavior aligns her with common notions at the time that slaves required their mistresses to be their guardians because they were, “childlike, dependent, and of diminished responsibility” (Clinton, *Plantation Mistress* 195). Glasgow’s contrast of Betty’s belief in the slaves’ helplessness with Big Abel’s skills of self-sufficiency seems to indicate that the plantation slaves were oppressed more by bondage than any lack of self-reliance.

At the time of Glasgow’s writing, as previously mentioned, Thomas Nelson Page’s historical fiction novels of the South’s past, mired in nostalgia and teeming with “Lost Cause” ideology, enjoyed great popularity. His writings were admired in the highest echelons of the country’s political and intellectual elite. His book, *The Negro: The Southerner’s Problem* (1904), provides a sobering insight into the rampant fears of “racial progressivism” in the Reconstruction era and the racial ideology that inspired his novels:

the great majority of the Southern whites who live in constant touch with the blacks ... will tell you that while the old-time Negroes were industrious, saving, and, when not misled, well-behaved, kindly, respectful, and self-

respecting, [...] the “new issue,” for the most part, are lazy, thriftless, intemperate, insolent, dishonest, and without the most rudimentary elements of morality [...] universally, they report a general depravity and retrogression of the Negroes at large in sections in which they are left to themselves, closely resembling a reversion to barbarism. (80)

In stark contrast, Glasgow portrays Southern black people as self-sufficient go-getters who are better equipped to survive the war than the planter class. Big Abel, in particular, personifies these traits.

Although Dan emancipates Big Abel when Dan leaves home, Big Abel refuses to leave Dan’s side and accompanies him to war. Big Abel, despite being a free man, is treated differently than the other soldiers and given more demeaning and undesirable tasks to perform. Glasgow makes no mention of whether Big Abel receives any kind of compensation for his military service, but her portrayal highlights the immediate racial discrimination freed black men faced. Even those who joined Union troops were ranked as second-rate enlistees, with no clothing allowance and a racial pay difference amounting to a bit over 37% (Beard 48–55).

Towards the end of the novel and the war, the need for survival outweighs racial concerns. Dan and Big Abel are battle-ridden and starving. In a chapter entitled “A Straggler from the Ranks,” Big Abel, resourceful from his days as a slave, receives handouts from a black woman and prepares “middlinn” for “Marse Dan,” a meal that “old Marster wouldn’t tech hit wid a ten-foot pole” (307). As Big Abel cooks the meat at the end of Dan’s bayonet, he tells Dan, “Ole Marster wouldn’t tech hit, but den he ain’ never had dese times.” Dan assures Big Abel that he won’t mind eating the middling. Big Abel responds that “Hit ain’ all nigger food, no how ... caze de ‘ooman she done steal it f’rom w’ite folks, sho’s you bo’n” (307). Dan, not bothered with the black woman stealing food from white folks, tells Abel, “I only wish she had been tempted to steal some bread along with it” (307). When Big Abel offers Dan half of his stolen hoecake, Dan tells him that he’ll be ashamed to look the Major in the face when the war is over. Big Abel responds “gloomily” yet pragmatically that “somebody got ter do de stealin’ in dis yer worl’” (307). He tells Dan, with what the narrator describes as a “rustic philosophy,” that someone has to steal in the same way that:

somebody got ter ber w’ite folks en somebody got ter be nigger,¹²⁴ caze de same pusson cyarn be ner en ter dat’s sho’. Dar ain’ ‘oom fer all de yerth ter strut roun’ wif dey han’s in dey pockets en dey nose tu’nt up jes’ caze dey’s honess’. Lawd, Lawd, ef’n I’d a-helt my han’s back f’om pickin’ en stealin’ thoo dis yer wah, whar’ ‘ould you be now? I ax you dat. (307–308)

Towards the end of the novel, when slavery has been abolished and it is obvious that the Confederates have lost the war, in a chapter entitled “The Last Stand,” Dan, in his delirium of illness and starvation, recalls a childhood conversation he once had with his grandfather about who made slavery. To his grandfather’s response, “God.” Dan promptly responds that when he grows up, he’ll help free the slaves, even if he has to fight to do so (355). Yet, Dan eventually fights on behalf of the Confederacy to uphold slavery rather than defeat it. Ironically, however, Dan is only able to survive the hardships of war with the help of his former body servant and companion, Big Abel.

The close relationship between Big Abel and Dan masterfully demonstrates that despite Dan’s eternal title as “Marse Dan” it is the former slave and not the former master, who proves to be more resourceful in a time of need. While Dan is symbolic of a Southern gentry ill-quipped to survive without the fruits of labor of an enslaved population, Big Abel symbolizes the resiliency of the black community. Big Abel not only saves Dan from starvation, he also protects him from gun fire by rushing him a pail to place on his head in the midst of battle. When Dan is too weak and injured to move, Big Abel carries him like a child in his arms to safety. The racial role reversal in the novel strongly contrasts with the beloved antebellum argument that slaves were childlike and unable to survive on their own.

In later years, Glasgow would criticize *The Battle-Ground* as the work of a romantic youth, and it is conceivable that part of that self-criticism stems from her trivialization of slavery and glorification of the antebellum South. However, in a 1926 review, *The Battle-Ground* is praised for going beyond the inclusion of “negroes of the conventional type” with portrayals of “the free negro – a tragic figure on the outskirts of life” (Mims 496). Given the time period, and Glasgow’s own privileged Southern (white) background, Glasgow’s decision to feature two main characters who stem from the planter class but do not abide by many of the racist and elitist attitudes of that class was indeed groundbreaking for the South and Southern literature of the era. Daniel Aaron, in his 2003 assessment of American writers and the Civil War praises *The Battle-Ground*’s depiction of “negroes” who are “individualized persons, not always childishly happy and contented, not blurred supernumeraries introduced to grace a Southern pageant” (289). A 1931 review of the novelist and her works in *The English Journal* praised Glasgow for “tell[ing] the truth about life ... [and] throw[ing] the spotlight of intelligence upon the inconsistencies of the old system” (Parker 188). Yet Glasgow’s exceptional social commentary on gender and class prejudice in the Civil War era, failed to give the same depth to race-related issues. Given

that her last novel, the Pulitzer Prize winning book *In This Our Life* (1942) includes the themes of white privilege and racial injustice when a white woman wrongly accuses a black man of a crime she herself was committed, *The Battle-Ground* can best be described as an important first step in the writing career of a skilled and unconventional author who would dedicate a significant part of her career to exposing the injustices suffered by those marginalized in the South.

2.2. Novels of In-Between First- & Second-Wave Feminism: 1920–1963

Racial discrimination was becoming an even more pressing issue in the 1920s as veterans returned from the Great War to find many former job positions filled by black people. The employment of black people to break picket lines of striking workers only increased growing tensions. In 1919 white supremacists killed hundreds of mostly black Americans in terrorist attacks throughout the country, setting off a year marked by racial riots that became known as the “Red Summer.” From January to September mobs lynched at least 43 black people by hanging, shooting, or burning at the stake. The Dyer Bill, which passed the House in 1922 but failed to make it through the Senate, sought to federally criminalize not only lynching but also the participation in lynching and failure to prevent or prosecute lynching. Meanwhile, the South began to officially establish an apartheid society through legislation making the separation of blacks and whites in businesses, restaurants, and on public transit. Laws were also enacted throughout the nation strictly defining the term “white person” – a label that became increasingly narrow as time passed, eventually excluding anyone with even a trace of so-called “black blood” (Harris 90). The custom of racially separating members of the armed forces persisted until World War II.

Inspired by what he had witnessed working as a waiter on trains and traveling throughout the country, the African American writer and activist Claude McKay, penned “If We Must Die” (1919). His now famous sonnet with lines such as: “If we must die, O let us nobly die //...[and] face the murderous, cowardly pack // Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!” (Lee 216). launched the Black cultural movement known as the Harlem Renaissance and rallied the black community through Jazz, spirituals, blues, and black literature. Leaders in the movement such as Richard Wright and Langston Hughes in the 1930s and 1940s argued that black writers and artists had a duty to politicize their work. Hughes contended in “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” that “true” Negro art in America must overcome a mountain standing in its way, paralyzing the race with an “urge ... toward

whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible” (Hughes 1).

It was against this charged backdrop that Evelyn Scott’s *The Wave* and Margaret Mitchell’s *GWTW* introduced their versions of the South in the Civil War era. While Scott would barely touch upon black characters and the plight of slaves in the Civil War in a novel otherwise ground-breaking in its portrayal of a wide variety of people from all social classes, Mitchell would provide a controversial portrait of enslaved black women as integral and willing participants of the plantation households.

In the same period, historians strove to release books recording a more complex view of the South and the Reconstruction era. One of the most prominent works of revisionist history for the time was W. E. B. Du Bois’s *Black Reconstruction in America*. In a chapter entitled “The Propaganda of History,” for example, the Pan-Africanist historian details all the falsehoods taught to American children about Reconstruction. According to Du Bois, although the war was fought on behalf of the rich planters, and the poor whites were victims, redress was sought by “demanding unity of white against black” rather than “unity of poor against rich, or of the worker against the exploiter” (117). The “white planter endeavored to keep the Negro at work for his own profit on terms,” writes Du Bois, “that amounted to slavery and which were hardly distinguishable from it” (117). Meanwhile, he contends that the poor white people had one ambition: to become planters themselves. This led to a climate in which, according to the author, “the poor white did not want the Negro put to profitable work. He wanted the Negro beneath the feet of the white worker” (117). Rather than alleviate racial tensions of the era, *GWTW*, at least, would add fuel to the fire for decades to come. While Mitchell’s novel would influence views of the Civil War era South not only throughout the nation, but throughout the world, until present times, Scott’s riveting work would be all but forgotten.

THE WAVE

In his thoughtful article entitled “The Negro Character as Seen by White Authors” (1933), Sterling Brown praised Evelyn Scott for *The Wave*’s “rounded” portrayal of Civil War era “negroes” and her portrayal of slavery as something other than “a perpetual Mardi Gras.” Brown includes Scott in the category of novelists who resist popular clichés and common stereotypes in an effort to present black people “as human beings, not as representatives of a peculiar species” (202). In *The Wave*, Evelyn Scott takes a unique approach to telling the

narrative of the Civil War by using the metaphor of a wave to show the multitude of diverse people swept up in the throes of conflict.

Although racism is not the focus of Evelyn Scott's novel, Scott offers readers one of the most interesting representations of racism of all the novels examined herein in the portrayal of an occurrence during the war that has since been almost all but forgotten. In the vignette of the Rosenbaums and their slave, Sally, Scott not only highlights the little-known plight of Southern Jews during the Civil War, she also expertly pits sufferers of racial discrimination against each other. Her vignette skillfully exposes the corrosive force of racism that possess people who are themselves victims of some of the most heinous forms of racial prejudice.

Under General Order No. 11 (1892) issued by Major-General Ulysses S. Grant on 17 Dec 1862, all Jews were expelled from Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky. Union military commanders in the South, responsible for administering trade licenses and the sale of cotton, attempted to combat the rampant black market, which Grant believed was being run "mostly by Jews and other unprincipled traders" (Simon 56). Though Lincoln revoked the order less than three weeks later, by the time the change had been communicated many Jews had already fled the region as rumors spread and acts of violence against Jewish families escalated.

Scott's vignette begins in the Rosenbaum household. The family suspect that their slave Sally has reported them to local authorities and fled. The permanently injured slave who had been acquired at a bargain price was supposed to have been not only a symbol of the family's prosperity but also a way to alleviate "Muetterchen," of burdensome house chores. Yet Sally's presence in the home turned out to be "hostile" and the children ceased to speak Yiddish because Sally "despised" it. For the family's daughter, Rose, Sally "had fearsome powers, acquired through the assistance of a hoodoo man" (212). The second daughter, Esther, had suspected that "the evil Sally" was the "author of some unnamed power which was devastating all of them. [...] Judging by the violent interchanges, unendurable to hear, which had passed between Muetterchen and her one black chattel" (213). Son Jacob viewed the slave that liked to slap his sisters in their parents' absence as "slyly vituperative." Vater, who would never tolerate a woman hitting his son (but was seemingly indifferent about the punishment of his daughters), had forbidden Sally to chastise Jacob threatening to "kill" her if she did (213). According to Jacob, this simply provoked Sally to target Esther and Rose all the more.

It was a bitter time for the Rosenbaums who had to place their valuables in “indefinite” storage because they were being forced out of Mississippi. Racism manifests itself in each family member, as target and perpetrator, in its own unique way. Rose “in the dimness of an almost sensual fear” keeps asking, “Why Jews? Why us? Why Jews? Why Jews?” (214). Jacob, thinking himself shrewder, offers “boastful guesses” to Rose’s desperate question. Esther, meanwhile, doesn’t care why, she just feels indignant about it all (214). Scott, portrays the many complex and contradictory layers of racism. Esther, who refuses to believe that she belongs to the “the lowest of the very lowest race”, is chastised as being the vainest child for stealing away to “play with gentile children disobediently” (214). Meanwhile, the family feels a general disdain towards their former slave, who Muetterchen insisted, had a “slattern temper” and “did not wish to work” (216). Sally embodies both use value and sign-value. She is to work and “crown the comfort of the cottage and its permanence” but instead “proved a curse.” The family tells themselves that they are not regretful that she has fled the house (216).

Because Sally was no doubt less accommodating to the demands of the Rosenbaums, the only son and Muetterchen’s “spoiled child” Jacob “despised the black slut in the kitchen” who, along with the war, exposed his parents’ vulnerability (217). Jacob punishes his mother with taunts that “Sally’s gone ... She says the Yankees set her free. She don’t belong to us” (217). Muetterchen, for her part, would actually “rejoice, in her soul, to be rid of Sally, but not without a toll of voluntary dismissal” (217). Again, Scott depicts the hierarchy of racial hatred in the deep-seated need to show superiority by making the “other” subordinate. Muetterchen longs for the opportunity to “berate Sally, once, at last, and for all time, saying what she thought. Had not Sally told the children that all Jews possessed the evil eye!” (217). When Sally unexpectedly returns for her belongings, she defiantly confronts the family. “Ya’all dirty Jew folks ain’ stole mah bundle, too, is ya’all? ... Cause ef y’all takes what rightly belongs to me Ah’s gwineta set de Fed’ral law on y’all!” (222).

Scott delves ever deeper into the conflicting layers of racism, enslavement, fear, and anger as they intermix to afflict the oppressed as well as the oppressors. Muetterchen feels ashamed and “a nakedness before this creature The world was represented by its mean connivance with this less-than-human one, this erstwhile slave” (222). Overwhelmed by her antagonistic emotions, Muetterchen physically attacks Sally with her fist, but Sally dodges and takes cover under a table (223). At the same time, Jacob is struck by a “loathly attraction which he sometimes felt for things inhuman and bizarre.” Readers bear witness

to Sally's miserable condition. She is skinny and barefoot. "Solomon had never brought himself to buy her any shoes. He was kind to people who were kind to him, but toward those who opposed him and were in his power he showed no pity. Pity had too often betrayed him" (223).

Unsettled by the pent-up antagonisms and brewing chaos, as well as Sally's audacity to directly challenge his patriarchal power in front of his family, Solomon orders Sally to come kneel before him. "Squinting covertly, testing him with a terror-stricken glance that was almost a smirk, Sally refused to budge" (223). Instead, she instigates Solomon by attempting to strike Jacob and calling him a "Heathen Jew." As Solomon is overcome with rage, his wife, sensing the worst, tries to de-escalate the situation by asking her husband, in an awkward English to "Let dot mean gal go," she says, "I don't vant her, Solomon. I vill not haf her more to make nasty dees hones' house" (224).

Sally bursts out in a tirade of racist remarks and declares sobbing, "Ah's goin', Mis' *Jew* woman! ... Ef y'all talk 'bout nasty, Ah ain' nevah seen mo' dirt – greasy, goose-grease-eatin' Jews. Ah's lived mah life wid a Christian mastah, 'fo' Ah's took away by you. Ah's used to decent, Christian ways, Ah is!" (224).

Solomon, "like a judge" trades racist insult for racist insult: "Do you mean to insult me – dot dirty slave you are, dot low, ignorant nigger!" (224). He nearly beats Sally to death but stops himself, and re-gaining his control, raises her "slack body" and drags her to the open door where he "almost slung her out" (226). His daughter is thankful that the confrontation is over and fetches Sally's things and tosses them after her in the rain. However, Sally is too injured to go on: "Her limp body lay in the weeds and young grass" (226). Meanwhile, Solomon "longed to flee the sight. In abusing that woman, he had robbed himself. He stood before his family in unaccustomed exposure" (226).

Scott makes racism visceral by masterfully providing just enough background information to escalate the hostility and urgency of the passage. The characters are spatially confined in the kitchen and mentally in their prejudices. In the end, it is not the accusations wielded by Sally at Solomon which lead to his downfall, but rather that which stems from his own inner being, his racism, that destroys him. Scott seems to be demonstrating what Richard Rorty describes as people having nothing inside of the themselves, which they did not put there themselves.

The “mad” Virginie is “a free negress” who is “a beggar” but who calls herself “a prophet.” She has no possessions, wears ragged clothes, and runs “like a deer” when delivering messages. Her eyes are “humid with perpetual apology” and her head covered with “dusty knots of wool.” Virginie has “the distrustful gestures of something wild” and sits crouched in a corner scratching herself while staring and observing the family of the vignette’s heroine, Cecile (232). Despite being “dirty” and “shiftless,” Virginie tries to help the single yet pregnant Cecile to a cabin on the other side of the swamp where a free black woman named “Tante Marie” who is “as old as the deceased” and an angel maker. Cecile trusts the black people in her time of need because “[n]egroes did not make a pious war for ‘freedom.’ Negroes did not try to kill [her fiancé] Janot. And they did not condemn” (235). Tante Marie “did not ask questions of the white people” and “was never critical.” According to Cecile, unlike the white ladies whose squeamishness was only vanity, the old woman “would know that what was happening had to happen” (233). When Cecile and Virginie reach the woman’s cabin, Cecile’s imagination transforms a bush that adorns the entrance to one “all alive with little white corpses.” Cecile’s scene ends as she enters the cabin in a state of connectedness with the black people and their forced hopelessness: “And if cataclysmic events had defeated her every effort to resist, she discovered, even against her will, sin the same, but horror less. It was as though the negroes were about to show her something she had foolishly refused to know” (235).

For Scott, the black community in their struggle to survive, and perhaps from their origins in Africa and mystical voodoo-like practices (Cecile hears a drum beating as she approaches the cabin, a “flat iteration, suggesting the Congo”) possesses a nonjudgmental, pragmatic wisdom in their approach to life in a back to earth kind of manner. The free woman, “Tante Marie,” unlike her literary predecessor “Free Joe” (1887), is not only able to survive as a free black woman but is endowed with a profound knowledge of life and death that could enlighten white people with things they “had foolishly refused to know.”

Two characters who recur throughout Scott’s trilogy are the mulatto woman Eugenia Gilbert and her white admirer Edwin George. In *The Wave*, book two of the trilogy, the characters reunite for a meeting in a hotel lobby after years of separation with the intention of spying on each other. Over a decade before, Edwin George had saved the beautiful Eugenia along with her husband from a mob of anti-abolitionists who were after Gilbert and “his nigger wife”. The passage, set in Cincinnati, alternates viewpoints between the two characters. From Edwin’s point-of-view, readers learn that before her husband

“martyred” himself and married Eugenia, she had been a “placée”, a racially-mixed woman of New Orleans who belonged to an “isolated caste” “destined to become either servants or plaçage mistresses” (Nagel 170).

Though loath to admit it, Edwin obviously takes a liking to Eugenia. Scott depicts how Edwin’s racism intersects with misogyny as a means for Edwin to counter an ego bruised by Eugenia’s disinterest in him. For Edwin, Eugenia’s respectability is “a rag” which he should have “looked down on...properly.” He delights in the notion that she has underrated him and “hadn’t half a notion of his wickedness” (328). Beating his clenched fist against the sofa, Edwin suspects that Eugenia “certainly would not have forgotten that he had shown a weakness for her” and the thought perturbs him as he constantly reminds himself that he cannot be attracted to a black woman. “The woman was a *nigger*,” he thinks to himself. “Never stop thinking of that—the woman was a nigger, servile breed even when ‘educated,’ and not to be trusted—not to be reckoned with as a man reckons with a person of his own race ... Impure product of the worst institution of our century, she is” (331).

Edwin, like many of his white male counterparts, then and even now, views Eugenia as a sexually available Jezebel. She “excites his sense” and he sees something “nigger” in her face that is unique to all of the faces he has ever known. Her gentle stare is “unreserved” and “lacking in female modesty” (335). He is certain that she has never told him the truth, nor would he want her to. “He had enough of truth-telling, as he understood it, from [his wife] Donie. Maybe he was looking for a woman with something of the ‘devil’ in her. He had tried hard enough to convict himself of that tantalizing devilishness” (335).

Meanwhile, Eugenia, who feels she has been used as an object by men all her life, regardless of their pro- or anti-abolitionist leanings, contemplates her intention to “make the sentimental Mr. Edwin George her tool” (332). Twisting the common trope of the black woman as a femme fatale with black, African, savage blood coursing through her veins, Eugenia hopes to use the preconceived notions of her supposed sensual nature to her advantage and as “her security against pollution from her own conduct.” She fears that if Edwin accepts her “at her own face value, it would be a torture to her that she would not forgive” (332–333).

Eugenia is mistrustful of everyone, even her abolitionist husband, who is “narrowed by fanatical beliefs” of what had been done to her (333). Eugenia sees little difference between the men in New Orleans who used her for sex and her abolitionist husband who accuses her

of “mean self-seeking” and uses her for his anti-Confederate moral crusades which contradict her own “leanings.” Her spying is solely for his sake because she “was no more in love with freedom for the black race than she had been at first” (331). She concedes to the clandestine work, not because of her “admiration of his nigger freedom talk, but while she hated it” (331). Eugenia considers herself as “branded, at best. A woman suspected of a negress grandmother had been born branded” (333). Scott eschews one-dimensional stereotypes and lives up to Sterling Brown’s praise of her portrayal of black people, not as simplified clichés, but intricate individuals who struggle with contradictory thoughts and views as they attempt to navigate through a complex world. Like the mulatto heroine of this passage, Scott’s world is filled with varying shades of grey. Long before black feminists were to identify intersectionality with a label, Scott portrayed how white men viewed and treated black women through the lens of gendered racism.

One missed opportunity in *The Wave* was Scott’s depiction of the New York City draft riots. Though she offers a compelling and avant-garde view of the riots by placing women at the center of the tale, rather than men, the real riots had actually escalated into mob attacks targeting black communities in New York City. Scott, however, closes the curtain on the scene, before any members of the black community play a significant role.

In the constructed narrative of many slaveholding Southerners, enslaved “servants” happily labored for white families and even subscribed to their worldview that the South was the promised land where the white man’s rule was divine. Such fairy tales ended in happily-ever-afters. Reality differed. Just as Virginia Ambler in *The Battle-Ground* falsely assumes that her house slave is rooting for a Confederate victory, so too does Cousin Rachel in Scott’s vignette believe that the family’s life-long servant Mordecai does as well. Rachel contemplates Mordecai as he drives her, her old gentleman friend Mr. Small, and Rachel’s ailing niece, Fanny May, to a hilltop outside of Richmond to observe the clash of the opposing armies. While Rachel interprets Mordecai’s mask of disinterest as a sign that he is taking the war “philosophical[ly]”, Fanny May observes that it is “fortunate” that “darkies never reflected very deeply” and that she, like Mordecai, is only an “onlooker” (159). In fact, all the older men, women, children, and slaves gathered to observe the battle “from a safe distance” are nothing more than a group of “sightseers” (162) of the “remote, remote” “midget men” and “little people” with “toy horses” and “doll tents” determining their fate below (162). Free will is an illusion. A fact that Mordecai must know too well. While Mordecai stands apart, the white observers are shocked when a blast suddenly lands

close by and they are forced to make a hasty departure. Helpless beneath the forces bearing down upon them, all of the outing's participants, white and black alike, are mere bystanders, steered by remote dots that they can hardly perceive and never control but will determine their fate nonetheless.¹²⁵

The complexity of Scott's characters demands from readers a judicious tolerance for the universal weakness of the human condition. As war ravages the nation, so too do the destructive forces that lurk in our individual selves. Every human harbors both a victim and potential perpetrator. The indiscriminate and all-encompassing wave of destruction is unleashed in the battle between the Confederacy and the Union and the struggle within ourselves. While black people seem to have learned and accepted this lesson long ago, it is the "civilized whites" who the conflict impels towards this epiphany. Black and white, life and death, good and bad, moral and immoral, were one, and "what was happening had to happen" (233).

GONE WITH THE WIND

Gone with the Wind's handling of racial issues has been a point of controversy since the novel's publication. Yet silenced in the justified cries of the book's racist stereotypes and depictions is the cultural and historical demand, as argued by William Davies, that society can only learn from its past when it resists efforts to sugarcoat its ugly historical truths. Context is important. A Civil War novel told from the white Southern planter class perspective would be guilty of "whitewashing" the South's unsettling racist history, were it not to include the unapologetic racist attitudes of the Southern elites. As Mitchell strips away the civilized dressings of the elite planter class, she successfully exposes the good, the bad, and the ugly of their ways. In response to criticism that the novel was "incendiary and negro baiting,"¹²⁶ Mitchell contended that her "negro" characters were "people of worth, dignity and rectitude" and that "certainly Mammy and Peter and even the most ignorant Sam knew more of decorous behavior and honor than Scarlett did" (Mitchell and Wiley 65). Mitchell could not appreciate her black readers' gaze. Like her heroine, Mitchell was only able to see the world from a privileged Southern "aristocrat" viewpoint.

Although a Southern white plantation daughter, Scarlett's own racial background sets her apart from her peers. While Scarlett's mother, Ellen, is indeed a refined "lady of blood" and a descendant of an old aristocratic family, her father, Gerald, is a gambling, drinking, Irish immigrant and "new" man (69). While Scarlett's "overbred Coast aristocrat" ancestry

legitimizes her membership in the planter community, her “shrewd, earthy ... Irish peasant” side endows her with the grit to survive the war (102).

Planters’ beliefs in their racial superiority and ordained right to rule enabled them to tout themselves as civilized Christians while enriching themselves through the exploitation, enslavement, trade, and monetization of people. *Gone with the Wind*’s white characters, its omniscient narrator, and at times even its black characters, promote a Lost Cause ideology which purports that slaves were content with their lot and even viewed themselves as extended members of the plantation family. Ellen reminds Scarlett of a planter family’s responsibility for the moral and physical welfare of “the darkies” who none other than God Himself has entrusted to their care. Because slaves are “like children” who “must be guarded from themselves like children,” Scarlett must “always set them a good example” (447).

Mammy, however, is more like a mother than child to Scarlett. She symbolizes a South in which slavery forges mutually beneficial relationships in the guise of “my family, black and white.” Mammy is *black* but acts *white* with a “code of conduct and ... sense of pride [that] [are] as high as or higher than those of her owner” (42). She commandeers and insults other slaves in the racial tones of a white plantation mistress. She calls the slave Ruth a “wuthless nigger” who “ain’ never ... does nobody no good” (43). By placing racial slurs on the lips of Mammy, Mitchell insidiously promotes racist attitudes. The most respected black character conveys common negative racial stereotypes about her own people and thus reinforces the notion that what she describes is true. Why would Mammy lie? The house slaves in general, but Mammy especially, view themselves as superior to field slaves and want no part of field work because they are “house niggers, not field hands.” Mammy “vehemently” declares that “she had never been a yard nigger” (432).

Mammy is the “perfect slave” who is a “shining black, pure African, [and] devoted to her last drop of blood to the O’Haras” (42). As a dominant yet loving mother figure and head slave of the O’Hara household, Mammy unconditionally loves her charges as if they were her own. “Whom Mammy loved, she chastened. And, as her love for Scarlett and her pride in her were enormous, the chastening process was practically continuous” (43). Mammy is such an amenable slave that rather than the O’Haras possessing Mammy, “Mammy felt that she owned the O’Haras, body and soul” (42). Mammy makes it her business to see, hear, and know everything in the plantation household: “their secrets were her secrets; and even a hint of mystery was enough to set her upon the trail as relentlessly as a bloodhound” (42).

Over the years, critics have accused Mitchell of presenting simple versions of black characters. *The Wind Done Gone*'s publishers argued that Alice Randall's novel would counter false impressions left by *GWTW*'s one-dimensional black characters. Scholar Floyd C. Watkins criticized Mitchell for "not showing the depths of humanity" (91) and writing in an "exaggerated Negro dialect" (103). However, a close reading, as will be shown, reveals Mammy to be quite complex. Moreover, recent research has uncovered evidence of Mitchell's painstaking efforts to empower her black characters by properly reflecting the words, word formations, pronunciation and speech patterns of black Southerners who often used a mixture of English and the African language of Gullah (Marianne Walker 193). Mammy in fact uses the African American dialect of Geechee (Davis 61)¹²⁷ and Mitchell intervened when publishers attempted to exclude some of the novel's included dialects before publication.

Although Scarlett is officially Mammy's mistress, Mammy always seems to be the one in command. Mammy shrewdly uses the planter family's etiquette towards the servants to her advantage by voicing her opinions in a way that protects her from rebuke or retribution:

Mammy ... knew it was beneath the dignity of quality white folks to pay the slightest attention to what a darky said when she was just grumbling to herself. She knew that to uphold this dignity, they must ignore what she said, even if she stood in the next room and almost shouted. It protected her from reproof, and it left no doubt in anyone's mind as to her exact views on any subject. (82)

Like the beloved trickster of African folklore, Brer Rabbit, Mammy openly voices her honest opinions and thus brings to the forefront the typically hidden transcript of the enslaved persons. Mammy's sly technique enables the dominant group¹²⁸ to overtly maintain their sham of power while granting Mammy the ability to publicly demonstrate agency, and the readiness to challenge them and her submissive stance. Mammy is a force to be reckoned with and does not let anyone forget it, most of all Scarlett. While white male Southerners positioned plantation mistresses as the moral compass of the family, for Scarlett, this role is assumed by Mammy.

When Scarlett plots to acquire money to pay off Tara's back taxes, Mammy airs her displeasure and then waits in the rain for Scarlett to return from her audience with Rhett "[h]er wrinkled black face ... a study in anger and apprehension and her lip ... pushed farther than Scarlett could ever remember" (560). After tucking Scarlett into a warm bed with some tea and a hot brick, Mammy lectures her: "Honey, you kain fool me. Ah knows

you.” When Scarlett confesses her plan to marry Mr. Kennedy, Mammy gives Scarlett her blessing “even ef he ain’ so pretty.” Scarlett and Mammy’s connection is so strong that no words are needed: “No explanations were asked, no reproaches made. Mammy understood and was silent. In Mammy, Scarlett had found a realist more uncompromising than herself. ... Scarlett was her baby and what her baby wanted, even though it belonged to another, Mammy was willing to help her obtain” (561). Mammy’s is the only opinion that ever matters to the strong-willed Scarlett: “[Scarlett] didn’t mind what anybody said [about her marrying Rhett Butler], except Mammy. Mammy’s words were the ones that made her most angry and brought the greatest hurt” (783). Mammy warns Scarlett that not while she has a breath in her body, will she allow Scarlett to marry “wid trash” (784). When Scarlett feels out-scolded by Mammy, she reverts to the attitude of a spoilt child abruptly bossing Mammy around as if she is nothing more than a servant. Yet Mammy knows who’s boss and when Scarlett orders Mammy to go buy her a pot of rouge, Mammy threatens to give her a beating. “Face paint! Well, you ain’ so big dat Ah kain whup you! ... You is los’ yo’ mine! ... Paintin’ yo’ face lak a—” (562). When Scarlett promptly orders Mammy to go back to Tara, Mammy shows that Scarlett is not the boss of her: “You kain sen’ me ter Tara ness Ah wants ter go. Ah is free,” Mammy responds heatedly. “An’ Ah is gwine ter stay right hyah” (563). When Scarlett accuses her of forgetting her place, Mammy shoots back that it is high time she forgets her place. Having raised Ellen’s daughter, Mammy won’t let anyone stop her from raising Ellen’s granddaughter (Scarlett’s child) too. “Hyah Ah is and hyah Ah stays. ... Ah ain’ leavin’ you. Ah gwine stay right hyah an’ see dis ting thoo” (784). Mammy is also greatly respected by Rhett Butler.

When Scarlett tells Rhett that Mammy has declared that both he and Scarlett are nothing more than mules dressed up like horses, he is bemused by the “profound truth expressed so succinctly” (785). For Rhett, Mammy’s a “smart old soul” and one of the few people whose “respect and good will” he’d like to have (785). Rhett is also impressed by Mammy’s refusal to accept his attempted bribe of a gold coin after his and Scarlett’s wedding: “[S]he looked me in the eye and thanked me and said she wasn’t a free issue nigger and didn’t need my money” (785). When Scarlett encourages Rhett as “head of the house” to be firm with Mammy, Rhett just laughs and declares that Mammy is “the real head of the house” (807). This newly branded role for Mammy is reinforced when Bonnie Blue, Scarlett and Rhett’s daughter, tragically dies in a riding accident.

The tragedy of the child's death is related to readers through Mammy's retelling to Melanie. Mammy, who has come to love and respect Rhett as much as she does Scarlett, is the most ideal point-of-view character because she offers a sympathetic perspective of both Rhett and Scarlett's behaviors without being biased towards one or the other. Mammy's point-of-view also drives the plotline forward by convincing Melanie to come into the Rhett-Scarlett household and calm things down. Mary Condé argues in her article "Some African-American Responses to *Gone with the Wind*," that *GWTW* and Mammy's legacy was so powerful that "it [is] fair to assume that all African-American fiction about slavery since its publication in 1936 has contained some measure of response to it even if this is not made explicit" (210).

The constant struggle for racial equality from the Emancipation Proclamation to the publication and film adaption of *GWTW* 75 years later, is evident in the book's aftershocks. Hattie McDaniel, the actress who played Mammy in the film, received glowing reviews in (white) newspapers throughout the country and was the first black entertainer to receive an Academy Award (Carter 115–116). The prize, however, was conferred in a "whites only" nightclub in Los Angeles and special permission had to be obtained for McDaniel to attend the ceremony where she was relegated to a table for one in the back of the room.

Despite the accolades, the character of Mammy, with its myth-like status that more readily served Lost Cause ideology than Black Empowerment has remained controversial. While white Southern leaders pressured the film's producer not to use the images of black actors in promotional materials throughout the South, and not to invite the black actors to the movie's premiere in Atlanta, the African American press criticized the film and Mammy. Catherine Clinton writes about the careful cultivation of the Mammy myth, which she contends was a "clever ploy" to "disguise black women's victimization and trapped position within [an] ugly, raw system" (84). She argues that Mammy's "beaming countenance became a trademark symbol in soft-pedaling human bondage alongside the 'shining face' of slavery apologism" and thus became "the human face of America's whitewash of slavery" by misleading the public to believe that enslaved women were happy, content, and well-fed (85).

In *GWTW*, Mitchell draws a distinction between blacks such as Mammy who work in the interests of whites and "darkies" who don't. Aunt Pitty is upset that the Republicans have put such "silly" ideas in the "poor darkies' heads" that they should be allowed to vote that it has made some of them downright "insolent" (527, 528). Her house servant, Uncle Peter,

however, “has much more sense ... and much better manners [and] ... is far too well bred to want to vote” (528). The streets are no longer safe and ladies have actually been pushed in the mud, she complains. In a conspiratorial voice, Aunt Pitty tells Scarlett about the Ku Klux Klan who: “ride around at night dressed up like ghosts and call on Carpetbaggers who steal money and negroes who are uppity.” The Klan either scares off their targets or, “when they don’t behave they whip them and sometimes they kill them and leave them where they’ll easily be found with the Ku Klux card on them” (528).

Mitchell shows how white Southerners’ intense dislike of the “Yankee occupiers” was tied to their hostility towards the liberated black population. For the planter class, a Southern gentleman was beholden to a civil code of etiquette in which the taking of a black man’s life could be considered a chivalrous act to uphold the codes of the Old South to protect a woman’s honor while reinstating a man’s status as a “gentleman.” When the Yankees jail Rhett Butler for killing a “darky who had insulted a white woman,” they do so officially because “so many uppity darkies have been killed recently” (528). Unofficially, however, Rhett is locked up to pressure him to reveal the whereabouts of “the mythical gold of the Confederacy.” The black man is a pawn in the demonstration of power within the white community. “Justice” is only pursued when it serves the white community’s goals. Rhett’s escape from punishment is a textbook example of white privilege, and a harbinger of what’s to come in the Jim Crow South. Although Rhett admits that he is “guilty as Cain” for killing the “nigger,” he is set free nonetheless because “influence is everything” and “guilt or innocence [is] merely an academic question” (583). Besides, when a “nigger” is “uppity to a lady ... what else could a Southern gentleman do?” (583).

The poor white Southerner Will predicts that the social conflict brewing in the postwar South will be, “worse than war—worse than prison—worse than death” (602). When Tony Fontaine shoots to death a drunken black man for scaring his sister-in-law and then kills the dreaded former overseer of Tara, Jonas Wilkerson, Frank, Ashley, and Scarlett help him escape from town. They all seem to concede that Wilkerson’s stirring up of the “darkies” with “his nigger-equality business” along with his declaration that “niggers had a right to—to—white women” was ample justification for a vigilante death sentence (604). Tony confesses how much he has grown to “hate darkies” and he damns “their black souls” for believing everything that the Yankee “scoundrels” tell them and forgetting everything the Southern whites had supposedly done for them. Tony places the blame for the inevitable end of white Southerners on the Yankees who gave the “negroes” the right to vote while

disenfranchising¹²⁹ many of those who fought with the Confederacy. “Soon we’ll be having nigger judges, nigger legislators –black apes out of the jungle” (604). For Tony and the others, the liberated blacks are the enemy for receiving freedom and rights, poor whites are the enemy for fraternizing with the blacks, and the Yankees are the enemy for attempting to impose a forced system of equality. Scarlett thinks it’s, “as if the house were ringed about by naked savages, squatting in breech clouts” (605). No matter which way they turn, the former plantation families see themselves as surrounded by hostile forces with the “negroes ... on top and behind them ... the Yankees with bayonets” (606). For these elite Southerners, the Yankees spent too much time and energy on protecting black people rather than vulnerable white Southern ladies.

White women are described in the novel as being in “peril” and “bereft by the war of male protection” while living “alone in the outlying districts and on lonely roads” (613). Black men are referred to as “monkeys” and “black baboon[s].” The “cold and trembling [ever-present] fear” that Southern men have for the safety of their daughters and wives because of the “large number of outrages” that have been committed against them incites the Ku Klux Klan to “spring overnight” (613). Mitchell unapologetically reflects the irrational fears of white Southerners that freed black men had one goal in life—to sexually dominate white women. Just as the white plantation mistress represented all that was pure about the antebellum South, the Reconstruction era white woman embodied all that was vulnerable to the unchained and vengeful black man. Scholars such as Elizabeth Young have argued that Rhett himself is a symbolically black lover with all the dangerous prowess and sexual vitality usually reserved for black men in similar novels of the era and thus metaphorically represents a kind of sexual fantasy and racial civil war (23). If this was indeed Mitchell’s intention, the rape/sexual domination scene between Rhett and Scarlett becomes a disturbing nod to the extreme fear of black men’s supposed savage lust for white women. Such concerns became so widespread in the South¹³⁰ that they were used to justify lynching and prompted calls for the general deportation of the black population back to Africa.¹³¹ Calvin Hernton contends that the perceived sexual threat posed by black men to white Southerners had less to do with the safeguarding of white women’s chastity and more to do with fears of black men’s potency. “Contrary to what is claimed, it is not the white woman who is dear to the racist. It is not even the black woman towards whom his sexual rage is directed. It is the black man who is sacred to the racist. And this is why he must castrate him” (111–112).

Erin Sheley compellingly contends that Mitchell's depictions of the Klan are more in line with Klan activities from the 1930s that sought to completely separate blacks from white society rather than Klan activities from the Reconstruction era which strove to suppress black political power (3). Sheley proposes that widespread media coverage and public outrage over of the heinous lynching of Claude Neal in Florida in 1934 in which he was "castrated, savagely beaten, and partially flayed before he was finally killed" for allegedly raping and murdering a 19-year-old may have influenced Mitchell (14). However, Sheley adds that "[e]ven the most severe critic" of the novel would be "hard-pressed to read the text as an endorsement of atrocities like the murder of Claude Neal" (15).

In *Gone with the Wind*, when Scarlett expresses concern about the social climate in the South, Frank tells his fretful wife not to bother her "pretty head about it" (608) because the Southern white men, united in their belief that the state of things wasn't "to be borne" were "doing things" (607) were "scaring the darkies and teaching the scallawags a lesson" (607). Scarlett, ignorant of Frank's intentions, is catapulted into a "state of dread" (609). However, his message later takes on a new meaning when Scarlett is attacked. Scarlett's assailants are two men—one black and the other a white "scallawag." By giving Scarlett's attackers the same background as Tony Fontaine's victims, Mitchell reinforces the notion that the Reconstruction era had reduced the antebellum planter families to a vulnerable class of helpless victims living in a state of constant threat. The biracial shantytown where Scarlett is attacked is a makeshift town where black and white people co-exist and is thus, obviously, according to the novel, inherently perilous and unsavory. Yet Scarlett, at the same time is "saved" by the black man, Big Sam, her former slave and field hand at Tara. Again, Mitchell seems to imply that there are two classes of black people: those who are savage and a danger to proper white people and those who dutifully serve them. Scholars have often severely criticized Mitchell's portrayal of the Klan as some kind of knights in shining armor out to rescue their damsels in distress. Yet like her unvarnished depiction of Southern (racist) attitudes, by unashamedly weaving the Klan plotline into her story, Mitchell exposes Southerners' misguided use of vigilante justice to justify racial terrorism.

Despite the attack she suffers and her ever-present fears, Scarlett harbors a deep disapproval of the Klan which becomes apparent to readers when the shocked heroine learns that her husband and their male friends will avenge her attack as members of the Klan. Melanie tells Scarlett that because she had always been "so outspoken against the Klan," Frank had been forced to "sneak out as though [his participation] were something shameful" (742).

Part of Scarlett's view that such actions are "foolish," however, stems from her pragmatic concern that the Yankees will discover the men's actions. She fears that they could all be punished, her mill and Frank's store confiscated, and Frank imprisoned. Scarlett is a woman whose moral compass is steered by her own egotism rather than cares for what is ethically right or wrong.

Scarlett's own racism becomes clearly evident in a passage which occurs directly after her failure to secure a much-needed loan from Rhett Butler. In a state of smoldering rage, humiliation, and rejection, with "[h]atred of Rhett burn[ing] in her heart," she passes some black people on the street who laugh and look at her with "insolent grins" when she slips in the mud. "How dared they laugh, the black apes! How dared they grin at her, Scarlett O'Hara of Tara! She'd like them all whipped until the blood ran down their backs. What devils the Yankees were to set them free, free to jeer at white people!" (551–552). For Scarlett, emancipation has ruined the "darkies" and made them "worthless" and undependable. As a mill owner in need of workers, she finds emancipation "criminal" (597). Thousands are out of work and those who have work are "lazy and shiftless." She is upset that if she hit her free black workers a "few licks for the good of their souls," there would be consequences from the Freedman's Bureau. While in antebellum times Scarlett's father had "only" hit his stable boy once, times were different. "Free issue niggers are something else," she declares "and a good whipping would do some of them a lot of good" (597). Scarlett believes that black people without any work should be forced to do so. Perhaps unintentionally, Mitchell's depiction of Scarlett and the organization of her mill employees hints at the system of forced labor that became widespread throughout the South in the era of the Jim Crow laws in the form of convict leasing programs.¹³²

More racist than the Southern white women, according to *GWTW* are the Northern women who have settled in the South after the war. When Scarlett suggests to some Yankee women that they find "darkies" to help them in their households, the women react with "indignant cries" and answer "So you think I'd trust my babies to a black nigger? ... I'm a good Irish girl" (627). Another responds, "I wouldn't trust them any farther than I could see them and as for letting them handle my babies" (627). Scarlett, however, recalls Mammy with her "kind, gnarled hands ... worn rough in Ellen's service and hers and Wade's. What did these strangers know of black hands, how dear and comforting they could be, how unerringly they knew how to soothe, to pat, to fondle?" (628). Scarlett is indignant that the "queer" Yankee women don't realize that Uncle Peter, because he is black, has feelings which can

be hurt. They don't know how "negroes had to be handled gently, as though they were children, directed, praised, petted, scolded" and "[t]hey didn't understand negroes or the relations between the negroes and their former masters" (627). Scarlett declares she would trust a darky "far more than most white people, certainly more than she trust any Yankee" (627). Mitchell brilliantly illustrates the messiness of racism: how people who are racists are oblivious to their own racism. Ironically, Scarlett's attitudes towards black people mirror in many ways the attitude of the men towards women that so enrages her.

Mitchell draws parallels between the fate of women and those of black people. At a charity raffle in which men bid to dance with ladies, Melanie whispers to Scarlett, "Don't you think it's—it's just—just a little like a slave auction?" (265). For planter women, the marriage enterprise is also a market place, albeit subtler and "civilized." This notion is underscored later when Rhett only half in jest tells Scarlett that he's "invested a good deal of money" in her and he'd "hate to lose it" (820).

Some of the most virulent and racist passages in the novel, and no doubt largely responsible for condemnation by some of the novel's most incensed critics, are the descriptions of the white Southern disdain for all those they believed to be below them in class and race. Mitchell utilizes the omniscient narrator rather than a character to expound on the breakdown of the social fabric of the Reconstruction era South. Although obviously a member of the upper tier of Southern society though not a character in novel, the narrator seems to describe historical events of the Civil War era from a reliable and unbiased viewpoint. This effect is compounded by Mitchell's skills in blurring fact and fiction so seamlessly. The novel is thus able to show, not tell, how the thinking and mentality of many white Southerners would metastasize into "Lost Cause" ideology prevalent in the postwar years throughout the South and still lingering in debates surrounding Confederate flags and monuments today. *Gone with the Wind* thus vividly illustrates the social breakdown in Southern society across class and racial lines that would go on to fuel fear, resentment, and violence for decades to come.

2.3. *Novels of Second-Wave Feminism: 1963–1991*

In 1954, in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* the US Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation of school children was unlawful and subsequently, separate-but-equal legislation and practice throughout the country became by-and-by illegal. By 1958 the US military finally desegregated a decade after President Truman's efforts to bring

about such changes in 1948. Advances towards racial equality were slow and arduous and leaders in the black community began calling on fellow community members to establish their own ways forward. While peacemakers like Martin Luther King Jr. attempted to persuade fellow blacks to resist the urge to “satisfy [their] thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred” and dreamed of lifting “our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood”, the Federal Bureau of Investigations under J. Edgar Hoover branded the minister as Public Enemy # 1, and a serious threat to national security which should be thwarted through blackmail and coerced suicide.

Racial tensions were running high. In 1963 more than twice as many blacks as whites were unemployed and while 20% of the white population were labelled as poor, half of the black population subsisted below the poverty line (Zinn 456). In 1964, during what became known as Freedom Summer, civil rights groups tried to register black voters in Mississippi. Three young civil rights workers – one black and two white – were abducted and murdered, but the perpetrators were never brought to justice. No administration was motivated to take the actions needed to protect black citizens against racial violence. “Black Power” became the new slogan.

Organizations like the Black Panthers organized members throughout the country to actively struggle for their “What We Want Now” Ten-Point program from the 1960s through the 1980s. Luminaries like Malcolm X joined the battle-ready stance and urged black people to recognize their only true side, their black side.

In one generation, the black slave women in America had been raped by the slavemaster white man until there had begun to emerge a homemade, handmade, brainwashed race that was no longer even of its true color, that no longer even knew its true family names. The slavemaster forced his family name upon this rape-mixed race, which the slavemaster began to call “the Negro.” (*Black in America* 153)

While provisions such as the Civil Rights Act of 1968 seemed to advance racial equality, hidden agendas within the act provided harsh prison sentences for broadly defined offenses such as interstate efforts “to organize, promote, encourage, participate in, or carry on a riot.” Malcolm X often referred to the battle to be waged on behalf of the “black man” but rarely the black community in general, which would include black women.

In 1969, in her address to the United States House of Representatives in support of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), Shirley Chisholm, the first black congresswoman,

informed her fellow congressional members that “the happy little homemaker” and “the contented old darkey” were both produced by prejudice on the plantation. And while she was certainly “no stranger to race prejudice,” she contended that she more often had been discriminated against in the political world because she was a woman than because she was black. Though the US at the time of her speech had millions more women than men, the Congress had a total of 11 women: one Senator and 10 Representatives. Alice Walker echoed the sentiments of a united struggle for equality when asked about the difference between literature written by black and white Americans. She answered that it is not the difference between them that interests her, but rather the “way black writers and white writers seem to ... be writing one immense story – the same story, for the most part – with different perspectives. Until this is generally recognized, literature will always be broken into bits, black and white, and there will always be questions, wanting neat answers, such as this” (*In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens* 5).

But the common story was not emerging and in 1983, Alice Walker coined the term “womanist” in response to a feminist movement dominated by white women. Womanism was an attempt to give black women and women of color agency in the feminist movement.

Black women ... have been called ‘Matriarchs,’ ‘Superwomen,’ and ‘Mean and Evil Bitches.’ Not to mention ‘Castrators’ and ‘Sapphire’s Mama.’ When we have pleaded for understanding, our character has been distorted; when we have asked for simple caring, we have been handed empty inspirational appellations, then stuck in a far corner (*In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens* 181).

The 1980s mark a time period in the women’s movement when black women fought for visibility. The theme of the 1981 National Women’s Studies Association Conference was “Women Respond to Racism.” The conference attempted, and apparently failed—given the ratio of black women to white women as participants—to address the relationship between racial and patriarchal oppression (“Uses of Anger” 192). The Black lesbian feminist Audre Lorde delivered an anger-filled address at the conference in which she argued that for fifteen years the feminist movement had “professe[d] to address the life concerns and possible futures of all women” but still was not fighting for all women (193). She contended that when she spoke of women of Color, she didn’t just mean Black women: “The woman of Color who is not Black and charges me with rendering her invisible by assuming that her struggles with racism are identical with my own has something to tell me that I had better learn from” (195–196). For Lorde, the movement, in its attempt to unify, became

more of a hierarchy in which the white voices spoke and all non-whites aligned themselves to the white message and disappeared into the fog the of whiteness: “There was usually little attempt to articulate the genuine differences between women, such as those of race, color, age, class, and sexual identity. There was no apparent need at that time to examine the contradictions of self, woman, as oppressor” (198).

A couple of years later, in the essay “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action” (1984), Lorde warned of the silence of black women in the feminist movement that rendered black women “invisible though through the depersonalization of racism” (*Black in America* 190). For Lorde difference did not immobilize black women, silence did. “And there are so many silences to be broken” (191).

Margaret Walker’s *Jubilee* (1966) accomplishes just that: it breaks the silence of black women about their role in the South in the Civil War era. As the author and descendent of the novel’s heroine, Margaret Walker seems perfectly positioned to tell the story of black women struggling to survive both the antebellum and post-bellum periods of the South and finding strength in their “Blackness”.

Similarly, *High Hearts* breaks the silence about women in general during the war. Despite the fact that the novel’s heroine is a white plantation daughter, albeit cross-dressing daughter, the tale does not whitewash the history of the South and slavery. Rita Mae Brown includes intelligent black women with agency and a racially-mixed half-sister of the heroine, who has a story of her own to share.

JUBILEE

When asked about her main objective for writing *Jubilee*, Walker responded that she not only wanted to tell the story of her grandmother, but that she also wanted to “set the record straight” in regards to black people, the Civil War, slavery, segregation, and Reconstruction (Walker and Graham 23). If *GWTW*’s Mammy figure left a lasting legacy on the public’s perception of a slave woman’s acquiescence to a life of bondage, then *Jubilee* can be viewed as a counter-narrative. According to Mary Condé, Margaret Walker was quoted as saying that *Jubilee* had been brewing for thirty years, ever since *GWTW* had been published (212). Walker’s heroine, as Condé points out, is visually the opposite of Mammy – tall, thin, light skinned with grey-blue eyes and sandy hair. Condé even contends that *Jubilee* is “very much *Gone with the Wind*” from a black point-of-view. However, when an interviewer asked Walker how she felt about the novel’s description as a “Negro *Gone with*

the Wind,” Walker responded that while both books take place in the backwoods of Georgia and during the Civil War era, *GWTW* was merely romantic nostalgia while *Jubilee* was a realistic book:

The difference is, or the distortion is, that [Mitchell] does not distinguish between her cultivated whites and uncultivated whites. She has all the Blacks speaking one way and all the whites another. That is wrong for the South ... she was not concerned with humanistic and realistic standards. In some respects, I suppose we could compare superficially the two Margarets – Margaret Mitchell and Margaret Walker. But she was coming out the front door, and I was coming out the back door. (Walker and Graham 24)

Like Harper before her, and Randall after her, by featuring a mixed-race heroine, Walker gives the women “coming out the back door” a voice, a story, and a role in America’s history.

But *Jubilee* is not a book of reckoning; it is a book of remembering. It is also a book of exploring what it means to be free—free from more than just the chains of slavery. In her essay, “Willing to Pay the Price,” Margaret Walker emphasizes her commitment to the struggle and hope for “peace and dignity and freedom in the world, not just as Black people, or as Negroes, but as free human beings in a world community.” According to Stefanie Sievers, *Jubilee* counters three historical falsities about black Americans in the 1800s: (1) during slavery, slaves did not have a distinct culture; (2) during the Civil War, blacks were only marginally involved in the fight for their emancipation, and (3) Reconstruction failed because former slaves were incapable of leading a “free” life based on self-motivated industriousness (39). *Jubilee*’s structure reinforces a message of racial uplift. The opening scene begins with an enslaved black woman suffering and dying in a slave cabin. The novel ends with the black heroine living in her own home and working on land that she and her husband own. In the beginning of the novel, the heroine is a slave in a world where white people dominate and abuse her. By the end, she is a respected and integrated member of a multi-racial community. In the final pages, Vyry is heavy with a child who will belong to the first generation of free black Americans, born into a nation without slavery.

As an empowered woman, Vyry has little in common with the “tragic mulatto” figures of the novels popular in the mid to late 1800s which featured very light-skinned, racially-mixed women who intentionally or unintentionally led lives “passing” as white women. Usually, such novels ended tragically in ostracism, social ruin, or death, with the discovery of the heroine’s “dark” racial heritage. At the time of their popularity, according to historian Jean Fagan Yellin, the tragic mulatto novels enabled “white readers to identify with the

victim by gender while distancing themselves by race and thus avoid confronting a racial ideology that denies the full humanity of nonwhite women” (*Women and Sisters* 71). Yellin contends that the mulatto’s pathos rests in a contradiction of the true womanhood standard set by the patriarchy in which *white* women were expected to be demure and chaste, while *black* women were expected to be sexually available (72). Lighter skinned racially-mixed women could counter gendered racism by “passing” as white.

Walker approaches the topic of passing, which is a major theme of the novel, from an angle very different than the “tragic mulatto” novels of yesteryear. During Reconstruction Vyry’s ability to pass brings her advantages and helps her and her family survive. Not only does Vyry’s outward whiteness help her to gain physical access to the white community where she can sell homegrown vegetables from door-to-door, it also affords her an unfettered view of white people’s perceptions of and racist attitudes towards “niggers”.

Poor whites, often without enough money to buy Vyry’s food, complain to her that they are constantly competing with the “niggers” for work and farmland:

Them peoples ain’t got no business in here, at all. They was much better off in slavery, and I says that’s where they needs to be right now. Why, it’s tore up our country just something awful! Instead of us prospering like we thought we was gonna after the war and everything, them grand rascals what the Yankees has brung down here ain’t done nothing but set us back a hundred years. No telling when we’ll git a living wage. (419)

The notion of racially-mixed schools with “niggers” is equally upsetting: “Twas bad enough when the nigger lords had all the land and decent white folks couldn’t make a living. Now we got to divide everything we got with the niggers” (419). Such racist views, however, were not new to Vyry, who, while growing up, had been severely mistreated by the plantation mistress for being the illegitimate child of the plantation master and his slave.

Portraying the intersectionality of racism, Walker also shows how the racist views of white Southerners varied, often depending on the class of the individual. While John Morris Dutton, the plantation master, considers black people childish and in need of supervision and help, he also has no qualms about using the slave Hetta as an object to satisfy his sexual urges. Others, like Grimes, view black people as “a pack of evil”, uncivilized, lazy, and an almost less-than-human race in need of a “firm hand.”

[N]iggers is the work of the devil, and cursed by God. They is evil, and they is ignorant, and the blacker they is the more evil; lazy, trifling liars, every one of them. ... they is just plain evil and stubborn and hard-headed. Best

thing to keep a nigger working and jumping is a good bull whip. All you got to do is flick the whip, and believe you me, they jump. (28)

Although many black people fled northward to escape the violence, black women were less likely to do so. Eugene Genovese states that “[a]t least 80 percent [who fled North] were men between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five” and “at least one-third of the runaways belonged to the ranks of the skilled and privileged slaves—those with some education and with some knowledge of the outside world” (*Roll, Jordan, Roll* 648–649). Phyliss Rach Klotman speculates that the bonds women formed with family members may have played a role in their reluctance to leave, as was the case with Vyry in *Jubilee* (140).

Jubilee blurs historical facts with fictionalized renderings of real events to make readers eyewitnesses to the life of a black woman struggling to survive and protect her loved ones. While doing so, Walker zooms her writer’s lens in and out on other people’s stories to depict a wider, collective black experience. The South’s secession from the North immediately catapulted those freed black people still residing in the South into an ever more vulnerable state of existence. In a chapter entitled “Ku Klux Klan don’t like no Koons,”¹³³ the politically engaged free black man, Randall Ware, is coerced to surrender his Southern property and flee North. Before doing so, he casts his voting ballot. When he is accused of being a coward for running away, Randall replies, “Right now I’d rather make a good run than a bad stand. I feel like it’s better to have folks look at my back saying ‘yonder runs that stinking yellow-bellied coward’ than looking at my corpse saying ‘don’t he look natchall?’” (397). Knowing that despite his free papers, “[a]ny day he could expect his status to change from free man to slave or prisoner or both” (229), he leaves behind his property, business, and enslaved wife and children. For a black man, taking a stand was often synonymous with the willingness to die.

The end of the war finally brings an end to slavery but also ignites racial tensions and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. While seeking work and a place to settle down, Vyry and Innis are hired by a wealthy man to cook and work for his family. Vyry, however, considers “colored folks” who labor in the local saw mills and turpentine camps, as “too low-class and just nothing but riff-raff” (365). The ever-present danger such places harbor for black people just trying to earn a living wage is evident when the Klan targets a local black woman for being a “goddamned whore” and “black bitch” who needs a lesson for prostituting herself out to white men. When Vyry first sees the six riders dressed in white sheets with masks, she thinks that they must be “ghostes.” The Klan’s victim is “Ku

Kluxed,” dragged into the woods, and tarred and feathered. The verb form of the word implies not only that such actions were so frequent that they demanded a verb form, but also that the meaning bundle “being Ku Kluxed” is universally understood. Vyry’s attempts to help the injured woman come too late. In graphic detail, Vyry (and Walker) describes the woman’s tortuous ordeal: “They poured hot tar all over her and she is just blistered from head to foot. Then they covered her with chicken feathers, and just ain’t no ways to help her at all. Even if you gits the cold tar off without tearing off her skin and her flesh she still burned black underneath it. Jesus! I knows we can’t stay here” (366).

Walker demonstrates how attacks against black people are motivated by the desire to demonstrate power and instill fear. What was prevalent during slavery continued after Emancipation. Power over black women was often wielded in the form of sexual assault rendering black women helpless and vulnerable. *Jubilee*’s heroine regains the sexual agency denied to her foremothers. Vyry, is never subjected to the sexual exploitation that her mother suffers and escapes an attempted rape. She freely engages in sexual relations with only two men in the novel, both of whom are black and each of whom she considers her husband. Unlike the “tragic mulatto” novels in which the novel ends with the heroine alone, *Jubilee* ends with Vyry having to make a difficult choice between two loving partners. But the Reconstruction era is full of threats for black women. Vyry and her husband have to defend their daughter from white local boys looking for trouble and are targeted by racial violence when their self-built home is burnt to the ground. Vyry pleads to God to help her understand their constant suffering: “Why, Lawd? Just tell me, why? And maybe I’ll try to understand. What is I done to them white folks?” (379). Racial violence also causes discord within the black community as attitudes diverge about the best ways to deal with the conflict.

In *Jubilee*, both Randall and Innis are mistrustful of all white people while Vyry is not. Some scholars see the split as Walker’s representation of similar arguments raging in the era of the novel’s publication and grounded in the combative Malcolm X vs. the peaceful Martin Luther King Jr. points-of-view. Randall Ware, who regards white men as the “natural enemy” of black men warns Vyry to not let herself be fooled: “the colored people haven’t got any friend in the white man, North or South. Average white man hates a Negro, always did, and always will” (473). Randall contends that “deep down in his heart, [every white man] believes that a black man’s color makes him less than a white man and he’s supposed to treat you like a brute animal because he believes you are” (473). Vyry

challenges Randall's sweeping view of an entire race as racist. She believes that in general, people are kind-hearted and striving toward the same things and that racism comes from ignorance more than hate. However, like the black authors of Walker's era who advanced the ideas of racial uplift, Walker, in the voice of Vyry, argues that the only way to maintain racial peace is to separate the races:

Only ways you can keep folks [from] hating is to keep them apart and separated from each other. ... they's plenty evil peoples in the world ... but I just doesn't believe its cause they's white or black. I doesn't believe every white person's evil and every black person's good. It ain't that way, Randall Ware, it just ain't that way. (473)

When Vyry's second husband, Innis, confronts her about passing in order to do business, Vyry unapologetically responds that it's not her place to discuss her racial background with strangers: "Does you think I gotta go round saying I'm a colored person to white folks? ... I ain't said nothing, and they ain't asked me nothing" (331). For Innis, however, when Vyry "passes" as white, people often mistake him as her "nigger." For Vyry, passing is not a matter of principle but survival: "I don't care what them white folks thought, and you can laugh all you wants to and make out like I was passing for white. We done our business and that's all I'm caring about, and we ain't had no trouble neither" (331).

One day while selling her vegetables door-to-door, Vyry happens upon a couple in desperate need of a mid-wife. Believing Vyry is white, they allow her into their home and she successfully helps them deliver a healthy baby. During her time with the new mother, Vyry learns that the young woman ain't "scairt" of nothing with the "excepten big old black bears and other wild animals and niggers" who she isn't just scared of, but "scairt to death of" because she has been told that "all black nigger mens wants white women" and that black men have tails (427). Vyry, in her no-nonsense manner, explains to the girl that she is a "colored woman" and her fears are unfounded. While the girl wrestles with this revelation, the girl's mother enthusiastically embraces the new "colored granny" because "the best grannies in the world is colored grannies. They doesn't never lose they babies and they hardly loses they mothers. They is worth more'n money and you is real lucky to had a colored granny" (428).

With the family's support, Vyry's superior skills as a caregiver enable her to secure a permanent position as the town mid-wife. This then enables Vyry's family to finally build a safe, stable, and prosperous home within the (now) racially-mixed community. Although Randall Ware criticizes Vyry for being a "colored granny" to the white community, Vyry

sees racial cooperation as natural: “White folks needs what black folks got just as much as black folks needs what white folks is got, and we’s all got to stay here mongst each other and git along ... They ain’t needing me no worser than I is needing them, that’s what. We both needs each other, that’s your trouble” (480).

Unlike *Iola Leroy* and *The Wind Done Gone*, *Jubilee* also addresses the unique struggles faced by racially-mixed persons who experience discrimination from both the white and black communities—with white people viewing them as non-white and the black community considering them as somehow less black. When Vyry challenges Randall’s opinions on white and black people, rather than making a debatable counterpoint, Randall disparages her as racially disqualified to hold a valid opinion: “Well, Vyry, I keep forgetting that you’re half-white and you love white folks better’n you love colored folks” (473). Vyry interprets his response as an accusation that she is somehow a “white folks’ nigger” which seems to correspond to Randall’s conspiratorial beliefs that white men have a grand plan to pacify blacks by racially mixing with them.

That’s the way he made the black slave docile and a good nigger in the first place. Black African slaves right out of the jungles use to die before they’d take a whipping and let the white man stomp them down in slavery, but he mixed his blood with them and then he made good niggers. You got his color and his blood and you got his religion, too, so your mind is divided between black and white. I know you can’t help it. He made you that way. (480)

While Vyry and Randall spar with one another about racism, and hate, Vyry declares that she refuses to inject the poison of racial hatred into her children’s veins. Vyry’s belief that race isn’t a choice people make about themselves echoes Frances E. W. Harper’s sentiments that people should be judged on the basis of character rather than color.

In one of the final and most climactic scenes in the novel, Vyry attempts to justify her equal right to have a legitimate opinion about race and becomes increasingly agitated as she confides in Randall and Innis everything she has had to endure as a racially-mixed woman. Though her “daddy was a white man,” Vyry asserts that he was never her father, but just her master. She maintains that she got her color from God because that’s how He made her. “I ain’t had nothing to do with my looking white no more’n you had nothing to do with your looking black” (483). Vyry details all of the atrocities she has been made to suffer under Big Missy’s direction and the brutal beating she had received for trying to escape but argues that despite it all, she bears no ill will. She becomes increasingly upset as she tears off her clothes to show the two “horrificed” men her scarred back. As someone who has

gravely suffered from the evils of a system that justifies and condones hatred and abuse on the basis of race, Vyry has just as much right to her opinion on such matters as any darker skinned, “pure” black man (481).

In addition to including examples of racial uplift in the novel such as positive racial role models and racial cooperation, Walker also highlights the importance of hard work and education for the black community. Laws of the antebellum South that punished those who taught black people to read and write had lasting effects in the postwar era when illiterate blacks were often taken advantage of. When Innis and Vyry move into an abandoned home and begin farming the surrounding land, a man appears claiming to be the real property owner and demanding a share of their crops. Forced to sign paperwork that they are unable to read, Vyry and Innis become trapped in slave-like conditions. Scholars now refer to the sharecropping situation that many black Southerners became ensnared in as debt slavery, debt servitude, or debt bondage. Black people who wished to work as sharecroppers often had to borrow not only the land but also equipment, seeds, and other items from the landowners. While in theory the loans were to be paid with a portion of the harvest, in practice, high interest rates and other disadvantageous contractual clauses, ensured that the debts perpetually grew. Once in debt, laws required that the sharecropper continue to work on the property until the debt was settled, a servitude that was often enforced by armed men. Thus, de facto enslavement continued in the Reconstruction era and Walker draws a direct line from education to economic power. Laws to curb the power of black people politically, socially, and economically after the Civil War were not unusual throughout the former Confederacy. Under vagrancy laws, black people could be arrested for minor infractions and then punished with penal labor which meant that they could be auctioned or contracted out to private members of the community for a minimal fee. These and similar practices reinstated slave-like conditions for many black people long after the Emancipation Proclamation. Vyry, like her first husband, and their son, recognize how imperative education is for black equality and freedom. Ware declares, “We have got to be educated before we know our rights and how to fight for them” (482).

Throughout the novel, Walker also empowers the black community using methods that James Scott, in his book, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcript* has identified as tools of subordinate groups to counter domination. One of these methods is the usage of folk culture, particularly important for those not permitted to read or write. In such communities, oral culture becomes a method to control communication, tailor hidden

messages of resistance as well as maintain the anonymity of the group's collective (intellectual and cultural) property (161). Using hymns, biblical quotes, folk sayings, aphorisms, songs, and local vernacular, Walker renders a world rich in African American culture. Walker honors the slaves' oral traditions by beginning each chapter with excerpts from songs or poems. Interior monologue, which James Scott identifies as a vital component of the "hidden transcript" of subordinate groups, is used to make readers privy to the lively voices and defiant spirits of blacks living in the antebellum South who have been silenced from expressing opinions or dissent. In this way, Walker illustrates that the black community is neither child-like nor dumb, but muzzled by oppression. Subversive thoughts directly contradicting white judgment cannot be subdued and the limits of the white man's power are laid bare. When a white doctor arrives two days too late to save Hetta during a difficult childbirth, the doctor blames the slave Granny Ticey for Hetta's death. Granny Ticey, however, knows better: "thinking all she dare not say: How was he expecting me to get all rotten pieces after a dead baby? That's exactly why I sent for him, so's he could get what I couldn't get. If he had come when I sent for him, instead of waiting till now, Hetta might not be dead" (6-7).¹³⁴

Despite the awesome power of interior monologue to bring readers closer to a kind of situational truth and the ability to intensify the scene by placing readers in the point-of-view of the character with the most to lose, Walker opts not to use the psycho-narration to enable readers to vicariously experience Hetta's thoughts and suffering. Hetta is not given a point-of-view and is therefore denied a voice. In her very insightful analysis of the novel, Ana Nunes contends that Walker's narrative choice was intentional rather than an oversight. For Nunes, Hetta's muteness is Walker's "tribute to the silenced black woman whose story is noted but ultimately untold" (38). By bringing her grandmother's life story to generations of readers, however, Walker's final message is that while the nation may be moving two steps forward and one step back towards racial equality, progress is indeed being made. The silenced cannot be silenced forever.

HIGH HEARTS

Zora Neale Hurston¹³⁵ writes about the exact moment in her life when she was transformed from "Zora of Orange County" to a "little colored girl" upon her arrival in Jacksonville. At the time of her writing in 1928, Zora Neale Hurston the grown woman could still see her colored reflected in her heart and in the mirror but refused to view herself as "tragically

colored.” For Hurston, her white neighbors, plagued by the specters and ghosts of their past, were in a far more difficult position. A very similar sentiment is echoed by the character Sin-Sin, in Rita Mae Brown’s *High Hearts* who argues that she doesn’t envy whites because, “[t]hey got chains, but they thinks they free. Least I know my chains” (349). Throughout *High Hearts*, Rita Mae Brown presents strong black female characters who despite their bondage, refuse to view themselves as “tragically colored.”

In a clear departure from the sexualized tragic mulatto and child-like Prissy figures of earlier fiction, Rita Mae Brown’s black enslaved women such as Sin-Sin, Ernie, Di-Peachy, and Evangelista are strong, self-assured, and independent-minded. Evangelista can declare, “I am no nigger...I am a quadroon born on Haiti,” and make it known that she is too refined for certain house work, without having to endure any negative consequences. Sin-Sin can command her mistress to “Put on yo’ shawl” (295) and be only half-heartedly reprimanded for telling her mistress what to do while said mistress throws on her shawl. Di-Peachy, a “goddess in human flesh,” can possess “lustrous beauty” with her “coffee-colored skin and her long curly hair” as well as breasts which stick out “like hard melons, and ...hands...as aristocratic as a queen’s” and cause every living, non-queer man a “hard-on” but not be vulnerable to rape (5). Reddy Neutral Taylor can even offer Di-Peachy’s master one thousand dollars for Reddy to sleep with Di-Peachy and he will be thrown out of the house for doing so. Chatfield plantation is so civilized, in fact, that at the heroine’s wedding reception, Di-Peachy, though “[h]er slave status should have kept the men away publicly,” is paid compliments “one by one” by all the men, which she responds to with “polite restraint” (16). Although these and other examples throughout the novel reinforce the image of strong, proud women, *High Hearts*’s failure to capture the true vulnerability of enslaved women in the antebellum South trivializes the harsh reality of slavery. While Rita Mae Brown may not have wanted to dampen the novel’s “light” tone by including details of bondage and abuse, *High Hearts* does not shy away from gruesome depictions of war when a mother cradles the decapitated head of her war-slaughtered son. For W. E. B. Du Bois, there was no romanticizing about the antebellum South:

if truth is our object, no amount of flowery romance and the personal reminiscences of its protected beneficiaries can keep the world from knowing that slavery was a cruel, dirty, costly and inexcusable anachronism ... [with] widespread ignorance, undeveloped resources, suppressed humanity and unrestrained passions, with whatever veneer of manners and culture that could lie above these depths. (*Black Reconstruction* 715)

High Hearts presents the Chatfield patriarch, Henley, as the beloved father of the main character, Geneva, the seemingly kind husband of the mistress, Lutie, and the apparently respected master of the slaves. Readers eventually learn, however, that Henley has not only broken his wedding vows and abused his position of authority by fathering a daughter with his slave, he has also subsequently enslaved his child while selling her mother, a woman he supposedly loved, to mitigate the hurt and humiliation he has caused his wife. He has also spent decades concealing from Di-Peachy that he is her father and from Geneva that her beloved servant and friend is actually her half-sister. By making Henley's act with his slave consensual, Chatfield plantation remains a largely amiable place and Henley a mostly likeable character. Brown reinforces this impression by referring to the slaves as "servants" who may be threatened with beatings for grave transgressions such as fleeing or stealing, but the threats never seem to be carried out.¹³⁶ Brown's generally positive portrayal of Henley reveals three important traits about the antebellum South and slavery: (1) outwardly upright people are capable of heinous acts; (2) sexual abuse of enslaved women by white men was so common and considered so trivial that it did not severely mar a man's good standing; and (3) the antebellum South was gilded with a veneer of respectability that, when scratched, exposed an ugly underbelly. How typical it was for white men to father children with enslaved women is apparent when Di-Peachy asks Geneva if she is ashamed of having a biracial half-sister, and Geneva responds "Me and half the Confederacy" (308).

Like *Jubilee*, a major theme of *High Hearts* is whether the black community should let itself be steered by racial hate or racial reconciliation. When Di-Peachy tells Sin-Sin it would be easier just to hate the Chatfields, Sin-Sin warns Di-Peachy that hate is a ravenous cancer.

Acceptin' doan mean you lie down. I ain't no weak woman. I changes what I can. What I can't, well, I prays for another day or another person someday, when I dead and gone, to change things. I can't do everythin', but I can climb. You can climb. We can redeem ourselves. ...God give each of us little pieces of other people's souls even when we doan know them ... we all part of one another. Thass white folks' terrible curse. They cuts off everyone from them. They think' they superior but they jes alone, and when they hear that coffin's hollow moan, it too late." (349)

In fact, Sin-Sin says she pities white people and that Di-Peachy shouldn't try to imitate them because she will lose her heart and soul.

We bound to one another hand and foot. This whole human race, I don't give jack shit 'bout the color nor they sex, we bound hand and foot, and we goin' walk to glory or we goin' to talk to hell! I used to cry 'bout bein' a

slave. Oh, yes, you wouldn't know it now. I hated it. I still care I'm an old woman. Makes no sense fo' me to care too much. ... You getting' seduced by they money and they power and they land, but they have no peace. (348)

Had Brown, like Margaret Walker, depicted white people's physical abuse of black people, Sin-Sin's pity of white people, particularly those who were slavery's perpetrators, would be hard to reconcile with the crimes that they committed.

While the black writers Margaret Walker and Alice Randall portray the relationships between female slaves and white plantation women as often abusive and conflict-ridden, the white writers Rita Mae Brown and Margaret Mitchell, portray relationships between planter women and those they enslaved as loving and close. In *High Hearts*, the plantation mistress Lutie often confides in her slave Sin-Sin and seeks her advice as her most trusted friend and confidante. Evidence of Sin-Sin's special status is Lutie's careful phrasing of "requests" to Sin-Sin because "Sin-Sin couldn't abide taking orders from anybody, any color" (7). Sin-Sin is the only real person Lutie talks to after isolating herself in her bedroom following the death of her son (121). When Sin-Sin also loses a child, the two women bond even more. Echoing Mammy's sentiments in *GWTW* that she "owns" the O'Hara family (42), Sin-Sin's and Lutie's relationship is so close that neither knows who owns whom: "Sin-Sin owned Lutie as much as Lutie owned Sin-Sin" (36). Lutie even breaks a promise to keep a secret of her daughter's plans to disguise herself as a Confederate soldier by confiding the news to Sin-Sin who is, "the only person around...with sense" and who Lutie can never keep anything from (81). The connection between the women is mutual, with both seeing the other as the racial exception. Lutie believes that all black people—with the exception of Di-Peachy and Sin-Sin—are incapable of caring for themselves. Meanwhile, Sin-Sin wonders if a Union victory will really liberate the slaves because it was doubtful that a Northern white man would keep his promise because "whites is whites. Except for Lutie. She loved Lutie" (144). Lutie marvels at "[h]ow easy it was ... to forget just how deep Sin-Sin's mind was" and wonders "how many white people had stopped to listen to what was actually being said by their servants ... [and] how many people, white or black, have frank communication with one another" (295).

Despite their closeness, in many ways, the relationship between Lutie and Sin-Sin is one-sided. While Lutie assumes the socially dominant role as the white planter woman in their relationship, Sin-Sin is the stronger of the two women and cares for Lutie's physical and mental well-being. Lutie remarks that Sin-Sin is indestructible (8). Lutie's awareness of the

one-sidedness of the white-on-black dependency is evident in Lutie's rhetorical question to her husband, thoughtlessly voiced in the presence of Sin-Sin: "Since when do Negroes show their true emotions to us?" For James Scott, the wall of silence displayed by subordinate groups is not unusual in environments in which the dominant group determines and enforces public discourse and threatens any challenges to the dominant narrative. Sin-Sin, knowing that slaves can never risk giving free reign to their true thoughts and opinions in front of white people, even those who supposedly love and respect them, accuses Lutie of being "disgusting mean" as she storms from the room (308).

Another close inter-racial relationship portrayed in *High Hearts* that also evidences the imbalance of power is the kinship between the main character Geneva and her biracial half-sister, Di-Peachy. Di-Peachy and Geneva grow up together as mistress and servant but also confidantes. When Di-Peachy tells Geneva that they are half-sisters, for a brief and awkward moment, "they stared at one another, two half-sisters separated by the chasms of race, temperament, and war" before they rush to embrace and cling to one another like "frightened children" (309). The revelation that Henley is Di-Peachy's father and has not only lied to both women throughout their lives, but separated Di-Peachy from her mother by selling her away to some unknown fate, does not negatively affect the girls' relationship to their father. Whereas Di-Peachy is concerned that Geneva may not want a biracial half-sister, Geneva is never concerned about how her family has treated Di-Peachy and Di-Peachy's mother.

While *High Hearts* shows characters who enjoy unusually close interracial relationships, Brown also depicts how war sharpens racial divides. When Henley and Lutie discuss news of the war, they send Sin-Sin away to keep her from eavesdropping because "[t]he less [the slaves] know, the better." Henley insists that "if the North wins, the Negro race might be freed" and Di-Peachy can read the news to the slaves because she is just "one of them, after all" (250). Though Di-Peachy is classified as a member of the "Negro race", as Henley's illegitimate daughter, she is also "one of him" and a member of the white race as well. This, however, remains unsaid. For the planter family, race is a self-serving distinguishing factor. This is especially the case for the plantation mistress.

Lutie, as "the mistress of a great house ... in Virginia", considers her home state the center of the civilized world, and steadfastly believes that the slaves have been entrusted to her family's care. "To her befell their religious training, assignment of duties, routine, and reward. It never once crossed her mind that the white race might not be superior to the

black, indeed, to all other races on the face of the earth. Surely this was God's will or why would the whites have conquered the others?" (108). Whereas Henley, Lutie's husband, strives to set their "servants" free one day, Lutie "whatever her reservations about slavery" knew that they could not afford to pay worker wages and keep the plantation operational. The difference in the married couple's views reflects the general difference of attitudes on slavery in the South at the time of the Civil War. While Southerners never tired of using God and religion as dubious justifications for enslavement, practical considerations of property and labor, while not as frequently touted publicly, were even more compelling reasons for privileged Confederates to oppose emancipation. Nevertheless, Henley, in an effort to rationalize his desire to free the Chatfield slaves, contends that wage labor would be cheaper than slave labor because employed workers would not have to be fed, clothed, housed, or cared for. Lutie, however, convinced that the slaves "couldn't think for themselves," believes that the slaves are incapable of independence. "Where would they go, and what would they do?" she thinks. "She, Lutie Chalfonte, was responsible for them to her peers and to God. ... no matter what, no matter when, the white race would have to care for the black" (108).

Later, however, when all able-bodied white men depart from the plantations for war, the plantation women are no longer worried about how emancipation would affect their slaves, but rather the white planter community. While Lutie's neighbor, Jennifer Fitzgerald, fears a possible slave revolt complete with murderous deeds rivaling Nat Turner's Rebellion, Lutie's primary concern is that the "servants" will simply run off, and leave them with no help to operate the plantation. Henley's plan is to set the slaves free on Christmas day (1862) and to offer them paid positions for half of a white man's wage (250). Henley's plan is a harbinger of the racially discriminatory practices that would become commonplace in the Reconstruction era.¹³⁷ White people might be willing to free the slaves but were incapable of seeing black people as equivalent in value to white people.

Sin-Sin's favored status by the mistress of the Chatfield household leads to a jealous competition with the household cook, Ernie. The two constantly compete over who is the more favored and powerful slave, demonstrating that even oppressed groups have hierarchal structures that can divide the subordinate community. "Ambition coursed through Ernie June. As cook of an important estate, she too had power, but not enough. One obstacle blocked Ernie's ascension: Sin-Sin. As long as Sin-Sin lived, Ernie couldn't get around her, she could only hold firmly to her number-two spot" (36). In fact, Ernie only

ever feels sorry for the “ole muleface” Sin-Sin when Sin-Sin’s child dies. Sin-Sin also refers to Ernie in disparaging terms as, “a fat tub ... so ugly she’s an elephant fart” and “so petty she could find flyshit in pepper” (228). Just as Margaret Mitchell’s Mammy hurls abusive language at other slaves, Rita Mae Brown’s black characters are also the ones who speak negatively about other black characters.

In *High Hearts*, the slave community is organized with its own private codes and rules separate from the white planter household. When the slave Peter steals Lutie’s brooch because he intends to flee northward and the slave Alafin, in turn, steals the brooch from Peter before he can implement his plan, two things become apparent. First, the Chatfield household is a slaveholding plantation and no matter how kind the Chatfields may treat their slaves, they are still holding people in bondage who are willing to risk their lives to escape. Second, within the slave community, there are unwritten rules of trust that are vital to uphold a strong community spirit. James Scott writes about the pressure within a subordinate group to align an individual’s behavior to comply with the general interests of the group. “The strength of the sanctions deployed to enforce conformity depends essentially on the cohesiveness of the subordinate group and on how threatening they view the defection” (27). In *High Hearts*, both thieves threaten the well-being of all the slaves but for different reasons.

Peter would have jeopardized every slave on Chatfield had he run off, but Alafin had hurt only Peter. Yet a servant stealing from another servant soured everyone. It was one thing to take from the master; it was quite another to fleece another slave. Although Peter’s crime would have immediate physical effect on everyone, Alafin’s would have a corrosive psychological effect. (65)

According to James Scott, “coercive pressure ... can be generated to monitor and control deviance among a subordinate group. This pressure serves not only to suppress dissent among subordinates but may also place limits on the temptation to compete headlong with one another—at the expense of all—for the favor of the dominant” (27). Although the men are not competing for favor, they are placing their individual interests above those of the group and are thus sanctioned for their behavior. Fortunately, the slaves discover the misdeeds before Lutie does, and convene to solve the problem on their own. The slaves decide Alafin will have to labor in Peter’s garden for the offense and threaten to tell the plantation mistress if Peter attempts to steal again. The scene shows not only the shrewd intellectual skills of the slaves to solve difficult dilemmas with swiftness and justice as well

their ability to mutually cooperate in the interest of the community, but it also demonstrates the waning control of the plantation family. With the men off to war, the women struggle to meet the responsibilities of the large estates. Rather than feeling threatened by the notion that Lutie could discover his crime, Peter is amused: “That crazy ole fool! She can’t do nothin’ to me” (65).

Another escape attempt in the novel illustrates the intersectionality of race and gender. Ernie’s daughter, Boyd, an enslaved girl, flees northward together with an enslaved man from a neighboring plantation. Ernie discovers that Boyd has stolen money that Ernie has spent her life squirreling away to buy freedom for Boyd’s brother but not for Boyd. When Ernie discovers Boyd’s actions, she vows that no one else will have to beat Boyd if she gets caught because Ernie will do the honors herself. Though Lutie, the plantation mistress, is “furious” at Boyd for escaping, she writes a letter to authorities that the girl has been abducted rather than fled in order to protect her if she is caught (265). *High Hearts* portrays how seamlessly people are capable of being both the victim and perpetrator of discrimination. Boyd can flee from the racial bondage imposed by a society led by white men, but her liberation from the chains of gender bondage imposed by her own mother might prove more difficult to escape.

Race and gender intersect in another story in the novel in a dream that Sin-Sin claims was “life-changing.” In her dream, a little white man leads Sin-Sin to the epiphany that she will find God in people’s heart. Annoyed, Ernie demands that Sin-Sin explain why her prophet has to be a little *white* man. Although Ernie recognizes that that Sin-Sin’s subconscious favors the guidance of a white person over a black person, she fails to recognize that it also favors a man over a woman. “Why not a black man?” Ernie insists. “Why was everything good supposed to be white?” (227). Ernie could have also demanded to know, “Why not a black woman? Why was everything good supposed to be a man who is white?”

Later in the novel, Ernie’s entreaties seem again relevant when Di-Peachy announces her intention to accept the marriage proposal of a white Union soldier named Mercer. *High Hearts* shows how bi-racial relationships only united the black and white communities in their misgivings about inter-racial partnerships. Ernie warns that, “[no]othing good comes from mixed blood” and that “mens always foolin’ with the wimmins” and that Mercer is bound to “spoil” Di-Peachy (228). For Lutie, any inter-racial relationship is an unwelcome reminder of the “anguish” she was made to suffer by her husband. In Brown’s version of miscegenation, white women are the clear victims. Even Geneva “in her heart” is

convinced that no good can come of the relationship though she hates herself for thinking that way (332). The field hand, Big Muler, threatens Mercer not to “trifle” with Di-Peachy because “no white man was going to marry a black girl” (201). Despite the “thorny situation,” however, unlike Iola and Dr. Gresham in *Iola Leroy*, Di-Peachy and Mercer resolve to marry after the war causing Big Muler to hang himself over the loss of Di-Peachy. Sin-Sin is one of the few practically-minded yea-sayers who argues that it “[d]oesn’t matter if a cat be black or white as long as it catches mice” (228). Brown shows that even those who believed that the two races could have a future together on equal grounds faced insurmountable odds. When Mercer questions if racial differences really mattered all that much, Mars responds that he’d be lying if he said they didn’t. Mercer naively declares that his love is so great that he and Di-Peachy can go northward or even abroad if necessary, as long as they are together. In the book’s epilogue, readers learn that the couple suffered many hardships in the postwar era.

A scene included towards the end *High Hearts* does nothing to move the plotline forward but provides a view of Southern attitudes leading into the Reconstruction era. A group of six white women discuss how Richmond will look in a hundred years without slavery as a basis. The women express varied opinions from “A Negro is a Negro and nothing more ... [and] [has] to be told the same thing every day, and watched to see if they do it” (341) to a consensus that when emancipated, blacks will have to be taught “the responsibilities that go with freedom” (340). When Lutie points out that the arguments about the helplessness of black people resemble the arguments about the helplessness of women, she is accused of being an abolitionist. The passage shows the depth of racism prevalent throughout the South which the black community of the postwar era will have to contend with. In 1928, Zora Neale Hurston proclaimed: “At certain times I have no race. I am me. I belong to no race or time. I am the eternal feminine with its string of beads.” The Richmond women of 1864 could hardly envision that 100 years later their daughters of all skin colors, would march together arm-in-arm to insist on everyone’s right to a world where everyone can freely be a “I-am-me.”

2.4. Novels of Third-Wave Feminism: 1986–2002

The era of third-wave feminism strove to break away from the confines of white women as the norm and basis of the movement in order to extend the cause to include all women regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientations or race. For questions concerning race in

America, there seemed to be grounds for optimism. In 1988, Toni Morrison was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved* and in 1993 she was the first black woman to receive a Nobel Prize in Literature. In 1993, Maya Angelou read her poem “On the Pulse of Morning” at the presidential inauguration of Bill Clinton, making her the first African American woman to participate at such an event. Meanwhile, another talented black woman was making history. In the 1980s, Oprah Winfrey began her own talk show which eventually catapulted her to wealth and fame. *Life* magazine named her the most influential woman and the most influential black person of her generation. Her endorsements and influence on public opinion were considered so great that they were dubbed “the Oprah Effect.” Changes were occurring in other sectors of the country as well. A paper published by the Brookings Institution in April 2001 and based on the 2000 census, concluded that although “segregation remain[ed] high in many metropolitan areas,” “segregation levels between blacks and non-blacks ... [had continued its] 30-year decline ... [and had reached its] lowest point since roughly 1920” (Glaser & Vigdor 1, 3).

Despite these points of light, many people in the African American community, including scholars contending with racial concerns, were less optimistic about claims of progress. They viewed the Oprahs of the nation as anomalies. Civil Rights activist and legal scholar Derrick Bell, the theorist behind the tenet of “interest convergence” in critical race theory, wrote in an essay entitled “Racial Realism” that he did not believe that the “long-sought goal of equality under the law” or “the romantic love of integration” was what was “real out there in America for black people.” Instead, his message to the black community was:

The Racial Realism that we must seek is simply a hard-eyed view of racism as it is, and our subordinate role in it. We must realize, as our slave forebears did, that the struggle for freedom is, at bottom, a manifestation of our humanity which survives and grows stronger through resistance to oppression, even if that oppression is never overcome. (Taylor 123)

In other words, the interests of the black community would be better served to reject racial idealism and accept the permanence of racism so that they could develop strategies to deal with that reality. These ideas echoed arguments Bell had previously made in his 1992 book *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*, that “racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society.”

Black people will never gain full equality in this country. Even those herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary “peaks of progress,” short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. This is a hard-to-

accept fact that all history verifies. We must acknowledge it, not as a sign of submission, but as an act of ultimate defiance. (12)

Awareness began to grow in the 1990s about the intersectionality of positions in society. Who has access to resources and power was not determined by a person's gender, class, ethnic group or race alone, but by the combination of all these factors together, intersecting. According to John Stanfield, most whites have the privilege of "denying that whiteness matters [which]... allows them not even to notice they are white." At the same time, African Americans are confronted with ever-pervasive reminders that they are not members of the white country club of privilege.

Because of their subordinate position, racial minorities are not given the privilege of denying the relevance and the existence of their nonwhite skins ... They are constantly reminded by words, deeds, and unconscious gestures that they are out-group members. Most blacks still learn at an early age that there are certain things they cannot do, although their white peers can. (400)

Though there were advances in racial integration by the early 2000s, the white male standard continued to determine the cultural, political, and historical narrative of the country while ensuring that the positions of power in the government, finance, business, and social institutions throughout the country were maintained. *The Wind Done Gone* and *Enemy Women* were published in a time when the goals of equality were compounded by the reality that progress was an arduous hike on a mountain of sand in which every step forward inevitably entailed discouraging slides back.

THE WIND DONE GONE

Frederick Douglass, in his powerful essay, "Learning to Read and Write" (1845)¹³⁸ relates his painstaking efforts as an enslaved child to escape "mental darkness" by speedily completing errands and then exchanging bread for impromptu tutoring sessions from poor local white boys he refers to as "hungry little urchins." Both Douglass and Malcolm X write about the power of literacy in a way that resembles how the first bite from the Tree of Knowledge makes them acutely aware of the vulnerability of their black naked bodies. The act of reading and writing for slaves, particularly because it was often legally forbidden to teach them how to do so, was an act of deviance and empowerment. By writing *The Wind Done Gone* in the form of a diary, Alice Randall vests her racially-mixed heroine, Cynara, with the power to write herself, enslaved women, and black people back into history, not just of the South, but the whole country and all of humankind. By also writing a book that

directly challenges the white privileged narrative of *Gone with the Wind*, Randall demonstrates that significant aspects of history have been left untold.

In the novel, Cynara shares her memories of her childhood on the Cotton Farm Tata, her gut-wrenching separation from her family, her time of shawl-fetch slavery in Charleston, her bare-breasted hour on an auction block, the drudge of bondage as a maid in Beauty's Atlanta brothel, and her persistent concubinage later in life (2). Along the way, she relates to readers not just the events themselves, but the contradictory brew of emotions which accompany her experiences. Borrowing a term typically used in gender studies to challenge the male normative in patriarchal societies as a reference to all things not masculine (see Introduction A1), Randall names the plantation daughter and half-sister of Cynara, "Other." Based on Margaret Mitchell's heroine Scarlett O'Hara, Other's story is nothing more than a byline to Cynara's. In this manner, Randall situates her heroine as the centric point and normative of the novel and demotes the dominate to the subordinate.

Randall empowers black characters that *Gone with the Wind* had belittled. Whereas Prissy in *GWTW*, is viewed as the embodiment of the negative stereotype of slaves as dim-witted, scatter-brained children who must constantly be given stern instructions on how to act and what to do,¹³⁹ in *The Wind Done Gone*, Miss Priss is "sly and intelligent" though the "whites don't see it" (62). In fact, white people don't see a lot of things but "dark eyes see everything" (65). In *The Wind Done Gone* it is the supposedly white plantation mistress, Lady, who is the naïve "Prissy-like" character of *GWTW* fame.

Another subplot of the novel challenges the supposed racial superiority of the white race in intelligence and property ownership. The character Garlic (*Pork*) aids Planter in his scheme to drug Tata's original owner so that Planter can win the estate in a card game, but ends up using the same ploy against Planter and thus becomes Tata's true owner. In a scheme devised by Garlic and Mammy, Lady, who had originally wanted to join a convent, becomes Planter's wife in appearance. Meanwhile, Mammy acts as Planter's real companion, satisfying his sexual needs and keeping him sufficiently befuddled by alcohol to ensure that Mammy and Garlic maintain true control of the plantation. Mammy murders all of Planter and Lady's sons, one by one, to remove any possible heirs who could challenge her and Garlic's authority at Tata and to forego the danger of having "a sober white man on the place" (63). Garlic eventually passes Tata to Cynara, who mortgages it to fund her son's future election to Congress. Randall thus makes the place symbolic for the origin of their exploitation the eventual means for them to secure political power.

One of the major themes of the book is the deception of appearances. Moral purity, like racial purity, is a fictional, self-serving narrative. Who is the victim; who is the perpetrator? At first a young Cynara and Lady take refuge in each other's company as Mammy and Other develop a strong bond. What initially appears as a plantation run by a white family is actually run under the furtive charge of the black servants Garlic and Mammy.

The intractability of racial concerns is another major theme of the novel. Cynara reflects on RB's ignorance of racial matters. "He thinks that blackness is in the drop of blood, something of the body. I would have thought he know enough women's bodies to know that could not be true. And enough blacks and white to know there is a difference" (162).

A central plot twist in *The Wind Done Gone* takes advantage of an ambiguous and fleeting reference in *GWTW* and acts as a direct provocation to Lost Cause ideology that paralleled the purity of the white Southern woman with the sanctity of the South. In *GWTW*, Ellen Robillard agrees to marry the not-so-socially-sought-after Irishman Gerald O'Hara because 15-year-old Ellen had been abandoned by her lover cousin. In *The Wind Done Gone*, correspondence between Lady Ellen and her beloved cousin P., reveals that the two had fallen in love and would have married had not the "curse of Haiti" hung over them once they learned that their great-grandmother "was not a murderess but a 'Negresse'." Only marriage to another "pure-blooded" white person could further dilute the black blood coursing through both of their veins. The agony suffered by their mothers in regards to their great-grandmother's racial identity was "greatly lessened but not ended by the arrival of perfect pink infants" though they kept a vigilant eye on the "tips of [the] ears and ridge of skin around [the] fingers every night for signs of darkening." Had one of the babies shown such signs, the aunt would have suffocated the culprit with a pillow and cried. Given this hidden truth, P. wonders how he and Lady should refer to themselves: "Niggers Who Knew Not? Can you be a Negro if you don't know you're a Negro? I would have said a nigger knows he's a nigger. Always. Absolutely. But what if he doesn't?" (124). According to P., he and Lady were never supposed to know their true ancestry and were intended to be "the first to be white not black with a secret" (124). P. writes to Lady about his struggles with his own racism and racial identity in regards to his love for her: "Strange as it may seem, it is not as hard for me to imagine having a Negresse for my bride as it is for me to imagine you having a Negro for your husband and in your bed. It feels blasphemous. Even when I know the Negro so well and know his desire for you to be as hot and pure as fire" (126). This is the only example in all of the novels examined that brushes up against the subject

of a physical relationship between a black man and a white woman. However, even here, the interracial relationship is more imagined than real because both characters concerned are actually classified as “black” but pass as white.

Given Lady’s black heritage, Cynara has to reframe her views on the now-deceased plantation mistress and their relationship to one another. The revelation seems to change for Cynara all the things that she had thought she knew: “What does it mean ... to me, that you are black and he was black, and you still wanted to marry him, and have his little maybe-brown babies? Could you have loved me just that much and I didn’t know it?” (133). If Lady is biracial, so too, according to the “one-drop” rule, is her daughter, Other. Cynara acknowledges this in her diary: “I have accepted the injustice of all of them loving her different because she was white. If she was just a nigger like me but got the chance to live white, it’s too much too bear.” The next chapter begins: “She was just a nigger.”

As previously mention, a problem of the novel is that the moral consequences of Other’s mixed racial heritage for the book’s characters and plotline remain confined to only Other and Lady. The character of Mammy is never reframed in this new and damning light even though she has murdered all of Lady’s racially-mixed sons and taught the racially-mixed Other to mistreat white men to ensure that Other will never have the opportunity to achieve happiness. As long as Other and Lady are white women, Mammy’s treatment of them can be viewed as a kind of requite for racial injustices and Cynara’s jealousy of her half-sister as a kind of racial envy. As soon as Other and Lady have black ancestry, however, Mammy’s acts become either punishment of the two women for “passing” as white or as acts of black-on-black hatred. The epiphany is particularly problematic, since Mammy apparently knew of Lady’s true racial heritage because it was not such a well-kept secret. Readers are told that the Twins, for example, do not consider Other a racially legitimate mate. Yet, Randall never has Cynara confront the moral consequences this reframing demands. The heroine never soul searches previously held convictions that Mammy’s murders of Lady’s babies to prevent a “sober white man” from taking control of the plantation, was proof of Mammy’s love for her since she was willing to kill for her (65). If that were the case, then what did Mammy’s murder of racially-mixed babies prove about her love for Cynara?

Cynara, as a racially-mixed woman, constantly feels trapped between two worlds. Even as a free adult she dreams of the Cotton Farm and fanning the plantation family while her mother serves their dinner. “The house was built to let the inside in...But I am inside

looking out, toward the distant cabins” (11). Cynara spends most of the novel unable to see a world beyond the legacy of enslavement.

For a black child in the antebellum South, privileges and rights are associated with racial differences. “Mammy ...wasn’t big enough to own a name” (6), and “[o]nly white folks go into the pharmacy” (9). Cynara spends much of the novel comparing herself to her half-sister, Other, who is able to lead the life of a white girl. While Other slept on a “cool soft pallet,” Cynara tries to fall asleep on a “hot rug in the kitchen,” but her attempts are interrupted by her mistress, Lady, wanting to be served. Cynara or the other children have to fan away flies from “Little Miss while she slept” (15). Cynara recalls the long hours her mother has to toil in the house from “can’t see in the morning to can’t-see at night” (16). Later in the novel, Other, the “white” legitimate partner of R., meets him at a barbecue on the plantation, while Cynara, the black mistress, meets R. in a whorehouse where she labors as a maid. Cynara believes that the calluses on her feet are the only part of body better than Other’s and she is particularly envious of her half-sister in summer when her own skin color deepens from the sun (136). Cynara eventually recognizes, however, that in death, as time strips away the skin from the bones, everyone is equal, despite their race. “And the dead don’t care who’s out walking with who and if their colors match. Plenty folks, black and white, pack picnics and make a feast of a visit” (18).

According to Cynara, she and Mammy save the plantation from the Yankees because “this house stood proud and tall when we couldn’t We, Mammy and me, kept this place together because it was ours” (52). She calls Mammy the “real mistress” of the house. This notion is further supported by the arrangement of the graves in the family plot. According to Cynara, Lady had wanted Mammy buried beside her, but the graves had been switched to place Planter between the two ladies. Though Randall implies that Planter had initiated the change, the wording is ambiguous: “What [Lady] doesn’t know is a long time ago Lady’s grave and Planter’s were changed, looking toward just this day. Mammy be lying down beside Planter. He got himself in the middle, in death just like in life” (49).

Two worlds collide in the novel: the fantasy world imagined by whites in which they are the masters of a harmless, child-like race who willingly, gratefully, and eagerly submit to bondage, and the reality in which black people manipulate white people to do their bidding. As Dreamy Gentleman (also known as R.) presides over Mammy’s funeral, he talks about: “laying to rest the last of a vanished species and culture – the loyal old servant who, Christ-like, sacrificed herself for others.” Cynara revels in Dreamy Gentleman’s gullible view that

Mammy was an unselfish woman and a loving beast of burden without sex or resentment, though she was in reality a manipulating murderess who, together with Garlic, ruled over the plantation (53). Mammy had used Other to “torment” white men, and carefully cultivated the girl on behalf of her own and Lady’s suffering to mercilessly “pick up hearts ... and dash them down ... with casual ease” (54). While on the surface, Mammy’s actions could have been viewed as a strike against patriarchal rule, the fact that she had been manipulating a young, unsuspecting, racially-mixed woman to perform her dirty deeds was also a blow to sisters uniting to fight the good fight. Mammy was a woman so consumed by the desire for revenge on the “world of white men” that she has “stopped wearing the mask and the mask had worn her.” Cynara and Other had been nothing more than paper dolls for Mammy to use for her designs (54). Nevertheless, Cynara seems to take a kind of Schadenfreude-like comfort in the knowledge that Other’s expression had betrayed her inability to discern if Mammy’s treatment of her had been voluntary or forced. “Maybe Mammy loved her and maybe Mammy didn’t. Slavery made it impossible for Other to know. ‘She who ain’t free not to love, ain’t free to love.’ Some folks are easy with that and some folks are not” (103). Randall’s baby-murdering Mammy is not only scheming in the shadows for power in the novel, she is also razing the saintly figure of the good-natured mother-Ersatz Mammy of Margaret Mitchell’s *GWTW*. The funeral is not just laying to rest Mammy of *The Wind Done Gone* but of all the fictional mammy characters that reinforced Lost Cause ideology. Randall’s Mammy challenges the portrayal of characters which Catherine Clinton claims “decorate[d] the prose of white southern women’s narratives ...[a]nd ... continued to serve as emblems in nineteenth-century American literature, intended as props to hold up crumbling racist regimes” (*Stepdaughters of History* 91).

After the war has ended Cynara is visited by Jeems, a former house slave of the Twins who has been raised to not have “niggerish ways” but who, in a show of black pride, considers himself “pure African” with a “mulatto mind” and embraces his “niggerish ways” (84). The limitation of Cynara and Jeems’ newfound freedom is evident, however, when Jeems invites Cynara for a ride and Cynara declines, concerned for Jeems’ safety since white men might punish him for trespassing on R.’s property: “They’re hanging black men all through the trees. It’s the boil on the body of Reconstruction, whites killing blacks. They didn’t kill us as often, leastways not directly, when they owned us” (83).

Cynara’s relationship with a black Congressman causes her to reconsider her position as a black woman in white society. Civilized “Negro society” has little respect for a woman like

Cynara who is the “mulatto” mistress of a white “Confederate aristocrat” (108). When Cynara greets the Congressman for the first time, she welcomes him in a low-cut dress with hoops and her revealing clothing suddenly makes her feel “niggerish” and “sluttish” (74). The Congressman, touting the principles of racial uplift, stresses the responsibility of black people through their own energy, muscle, and brain, to change their lots. Until that time, he says, “every second of [the black people’s] very existence on these shores is tragic” (109). When R. “imperiously” intervenes in Cynara and the Congressman’s dance, Cynara feels “a shackle snapping” on her wrist. Like a slave bought at a market, she feels “the hand that had signed the paper to buy me” caress her neck. For her the feeling of being possessed, is an “old familiar feeling,” a “comfortable feeling” (144). Despite Cynara’s public appearances with R. in Washington, and sentiments expressed that “[t]he times are changing” and “[b]arriers are falling,” Cynara remains skeptical. She knows “dimly of clubs and weddings, lines across which no colored can step. Not even me with [a man like R]. [R] goes to places I cannot go” (141).

R. proposes to Cynara that the two of them live together as a white couple in London after they are married. For Cynara, like Iola in *Iola Leroy*, a life of passing is unacceptable:

He couldn’t understand it. I don’t often think on how white I look; it’s always been a question of how colored I feel, and I feel plenty colored. He said that no one in London will know that I’m supposed to be colored. And I said I am colored, colored black, the way I talk, the way I cook, the way I do most everything, and he said but you don’t have to be. (158)

R.’s sense of privilege allows him to determine when Cynara should be considered black (when it suits him) and when she should consider herself white (when it suits him). When R. reinforces the racial hierarchy by comparing Other and Cynara and argues that though Other “wasn’t much lighter than” Cynara, but she didn’t seem “black,” Cynara feels like R. does not know her at all. “Always at least he knew the difference between her and me, and now he saw little difference, and the advantage was all to Other” (158). In fact, the advantage is all to R..

Although R. never seems to really know Cynara, Cynara, by the end of the novel, comes to know herself. As she reflects back upon her life she becomes self-aware and able to accept herself for who she is. First, she looks for love, then safety and propriety, to finally realizing her true goal: “I want not to be exotic. I want to be the rule itself, not the exception that proves it” (161). Gazing in a mirror, she sees the mixture of black and white, the blue veins of her breast, her dark honey skin, her plum-colored full lips, green eyes, and curly hair and

thinks, “it’s not so very bad being a nigger—but you’ve got to be in the skin to know” (161). In reflecting on what determines racial belonging, Cynara ascertains that her “Negressness” does not lie in the pigment or color of her skin but the color of her mind, which is “dark, dusky, like a beautiful night.” She concludes that Other, however, had the “dusky blood but not the mind, not the memory” (162).

Throughout the novel, Cynara wrestles with the question of what it means to be black and what makes her black and her half-sister, Other, white, although both girls are actually biracial. Cynara thinks that the belief that a drop of blood, “something of the body” determines race is ignorant. Yet she struggles to define the differentiating characteristics:

What did I suck in on Mammy’s tit that made me black, and why did it not darken Other’s berry? Was there some slight tinge, some darkening thing about Other? Lady’s fortitude; Other’s willingness to take to the field? And how does one explain the sisters except that part of the blood memory must be provoked and inspired and repaired, time and again, to become the memory. (163)

Since Cynara refuses to accompany R. to London and pass for white, he says they can just as easily remain where they are, because being colored is just as easy there as anywhere else. Cynara, however, disagrees with his assessment. “I don’t believe colored is easy anywhere,” she thinks (165). Her new self-awareness becomes apparent when she refuses to eat the traditional “lucky” black-eyed peas for New Years because there is nothing black people can do to induce luck: “We ain’t got no good luck” (172).

For Cynara, the most enviable of all people are “white boys:” “It occurs to them to live with great expectations. It occurs to them to do what they want and not worry about it” (192). Whereas R. lives his life this way, Cynara’s only thought is to “run back to Atlanta” (192). As a black woman, Cynara will never know the luxury of a carefree life. While Cynara grappled with her position as a black woman in a white man’s world, Alice Randall struggled with the legal implications of a black woman trying to publish the black woman’s point-of-view of a classic and beloved white planter woman’s tale.

Legal counsel defending *The Wind Done Gone* from accusations of copyright infringement, stated that *Gone with the Wind*’s portrayal of black characters as “stereotypes and stock characters” exempted *GWTW* from any enjoyment of copyright protection. The courts, however, did not agree. Randall borrowed a total of fifteen characters from *GWTW*, many of them black. According to the Harvard Law Review Association’s article on the case, the

pre-trial, advance-read version of the book blurb on the jacket originally intended to market the book as a kind of filling in the blanks from the perspective of *GWTW*'s black people:

In a brilliant rejoinder and an inspired act of literary invention, Alice Randall supplies the story that has been missing from the work that more than any other has defined our image of the antebellum South, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. Imagine, simply, that the black characters in Mitchell's tale were other than one-dimensional stereotypes. Then imagine, audaciously, that Scarlett O'Hara had an illegitimate mulatto sister, and that this sister, Cynara, Cinnamon, or Cindy—beautiful and brown—gets to tell her story. (“‘Re-Writing’ and Fair Use” 1207)¹⁴⁰

This description was eliminated in the final version of the book, which, by court ruling, only could be marketed as parody. The original version of the book blurb, however, illuminates Randall's intention for the novel – to grant the black community, and black women in particular, their own voice and agency.

ENEMY WOMEN

Despite the fact that it is a Civil War historical fiction, *Enemy Women* hardly touches upon race or racial issues. The book's focus is rather a subject barely mentioned in any of the other books examined – the plight of the poor white mountain communities caught between two fronts during the nationwide conflict. Paulette Jiles' goal was to write a novel that relates her ancestors' hardships living in the southeastern Ozark Mountains of Missouri during the Civil War. *Enemy Women*'s characters live on the outskirts of slave society and belong to a community of people who seem to make up their very own race and have been referred to as “hillbillies” and also targeted as a subclass of Americans:

the people of these hills and other hills, and the mountains to the east in Tennessee and the Carolinas, where they had come from ... [who] moved along in the wilderness of the Carolinas, refusing to work for any but themselves, a people who made their own whiskey and pulled their own teeth and were unconquerable in a fight. (255)

According to an epigraph at the beginning of chapter 12, whereas 20% of families in the lower south held slaves at the beginning of the Civil War, in Missouri, the amount was about 12 %. Only thirty-eight families had more than fifty slaves, and three quarters of the Missouri slaveowners had less than five. Missouri was largely rural with most communities totaling no more than 2000 people: “statistically, the average Missourian was a Methodist from Kentucky who owned a 215-acre family farm, owned no slaves, and produced most

of the family's subsistence" (106). A short growing season and poor infrastructure made the region ill-suited to large plantations worked by slaves.

Although in the minority, planter families who depended on racial oppression for their livelihood also existed in the region. *Enemy Women* contrasts how the helpless Southern belle, Rhoda Lee Cobb, has been culturally conditioned to depend on others with Adair, the self-reliant girl from the Ozarks. According to Rhoda, her family's "darkies" had run off and left their fields to ruin while her mother spent her days hiding in their brick house with "her old darky women." Rhoda, who is convinced that a young lady has to have a personal servant because "life is so much better" is unable to recognize how her upbringing has stunted her ability to be independent. When Rhoda half-heartedly claims that had they "known darkies was doing to be so much trouble [they]'d have picked our own cotton," Adair, simply responds "It would have done you good...Builds character" (69). Adair's life as an Ozark woman has equipped her with the perseverance that Rhoda lacks.

By contrasting Rhoda and Adair, Jiles illustrates how the white privilege that slave ownership bestowed on the planter class estranged them from white non-slaveholding Ozarkers. Rhoda matter-of-factly relates the business side of slavery to Adair, telling her that she had suggested to her father that they buy an additional slave by taking out a mortgage on their other two slaves. "And then if she didn't work out, if she sulked or one thing or another, she would have been good on resale" (69). Adair eventually blames the Southern planters for her and her family's plight. Pleased about Sherman's march to the sea and the destruction he has left in his wake, Adair remarks, "Good ... They been beatin up on us for solid four years, let those rich planters get their share of it, they started it" (71). By describing the planters with the single word "rich" Adair affirms her conviction that the battle lines, as far as she is concerned, are not geographic but rather socioeconomic. Not all Ozarkers, however, saw things that way.

Towards the end of the novel, an old Ozark couple boisterously voices their frustrations that the Union came to the region "warrin' and shootin'" for four years just to "liberate fifteen niggers." Instead of dragging Missouri into the conflict, the couple believes that the Union could have used all of their money to purchase the freedom of the few "darkies" and even given each of them a silk dress and carriage to boot. Yet, the real party to blame for their wartime misery, according to the couple, is neither the Union nor the slaveholders but the entire race of black people. "If I ever see a nigger again in my life I am going to shoot him," declares the husband. "There ought to be no niggers down here ever again. The sons

of bitches draw fire” (289). Although the scene does nothing to advance the plotline, it does provide readers with a general sense of common attitudes in the region, not just towards the Union troops, but also towards the war, the slaves, and black people in general. Folks in the Ozarks were poverty stricken but independent and proud. For most, slavery and race issues were someone else’s problem until the war made it their problem as well.

IV. CONCLUSION: THE EVOLUTION OF THE FEMALE SOUTHERN PROTAGONIST FROM 1892–PRESENT

Portrayals of women in historical fiction novels can bring to light not only what had inspired and shaped our female ancestors but also how they have inspired and shaped us. The process of discovering who we are and what we can expect from our lives is the process of forming our “I” and “we” in the society and time period we live. The identity of a woman as an individual and of women as a group is both an ongoing process and a finished product, “both a conclusion one comes to and a way of continually modifying that conclusion” (Holland 465). Because there is no universality of experience, no one voice can represent or speak for all women. Our differences become our strength when we recognize the unique powers inherent in those differences.

The antebellum South had long cultivated a society that distinguished women based on socioeconomic status and especially race. White women were revered for their looks and black women for their labor. While wifehood and motherhood were intimately tied to the identities of white women and their position as valuable members of society, black women had no opportunity to enjoy such basic roles. White women were expected to guard their chastity; black women were expected to be sexually available. Although all women, regardless of race, suffered from the oppressive force of dominant white men in the South, the paths they would journey towards their long sought-after liberation would diverge more than they would cross and ultimately lead to very different destinations.

Although the earliest novel examined, *Iola Leroy* (1892), questions how Christian people can use race as a reason to oppress others, none of the novels question the use of race and the “one drop rule” to categorize humans. Only *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) raises but does not develop the point that racial identity might not be biological when a plot twist reveals that the heroine’s dreaded half-sister is not white, but racially mixed like the heroine. The differences between the two girls are shown to be not racial, but *perceived*

racial differences (162). All of the novels with racial themes explore to some degree if and how black and white people can peacefully and constructively coexist in society. Yet, only Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*, published during the second-wave feminism and the height of the Civil Rights era, envisions a community which is not separate-but-equal but rather racially integrated.

All of the novels employ the term "passing" in its conventional usage: as a reference to a racially-mixed person attempting to fit in as a member of the dominant (white) group but not in reference to a racially-mixed person attempting to join the subordinate (black) group. Whereas the heroines of *Iola Leroy* (1892) and *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) reject "passing" as a betrayal to the black community, Vyry of *Jubilee* (1966) readily "passes" to work in the white community. Vyry's husband Innis, however, condemns "passing" and dismisses Vyry's conciliatory views as the sentiments of a racially-mixed person whose black blood has been tainted by the white blood of the oppressor. Vyry in *Jubilee* (1966), Eugenia Gilbert in *The Wave* (1929), Di-Peachy in *High Hearts* (1986) and Cynara in *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) are "mulatto" characters who, as literature scholars often contend in regards to mulatto characters, act as bridges between the white and black communities within the novel and towards the implied white reading audiences. At the same time, racially-mixed characters are often stigmatized by both racial groups because their racially-mixed backgrounds make them white and black but neither completely white nor completely black. They are bridges and islands at once. A common plotline in many of the novels is the difficulty these women encounter when a white man falls in love with them.

Several of the novels portray loving inter-racial relationships between white men and racially-mixed women, but these relationships never end with a happily ever after. Both racially-mixed heroines, Iola in *Iola Leroy* (1892) and Cynara in *The Wind Done Gone* (2001), refuse to "pass" as the white wives of the white men who propose to them. Iola, declines Dr. Gresham's proposal despite her affection for him, and Cynara continues her relationship (temporarily) with R. but leaves him by the end of the novel. *The Wave's* (1929) Eugenia Gilbert is married to a white abolitionist who she is convinced is only using her for his social crusades. In *High Hearts* (1986), the planter Henley supposedly engages in a loving relationship with his unnamed slave, Di-Peachy's mother, but then sells his mistress to spare his wife pain and embarrassment. The marriage of Di-Peachy in *High Hearts* (1986) to a white Union soldier results in a life of hardship despite the couple's initial optimism. In *Iola Leroy* (1892) Eugene and Marie, the heroine's parents, share the

only happy interracial marriage of all the novels examined. Yet even their relationship illustrates the inherent danger of such a union which depends on the white patriarch's ability to protect his non-white family members. When the patriarch dies, the deluge follows. The once happy interracial partnership ends tragically for the non-white family members as they are remanded to slavery.

While many of the novels portray interracial relationships between a *white man* and *black woman*, none of novels portray an interracial relationship between a black man and white woman. According to Nancy Tischler, black men are generally featured less often in southern fiction than black women because the black man was "less a part of the white community. As farm laborer, butler, or handy-man, he is a background figure and alien" (171). Another reason may be the lingering stigma attached to relationships between black men and white women, which were deemed as a direct challenge to the Southern white man's supreme authority.

Particularly important to all of the racially-mixed heroines, is the relationship they have with their mothers who they have lost to slavery in very different ways. When Iola and Marie are remanded to slavery in *Iola Leroy* (1892), they are separated when Iola is auctioned away. Both spend the rest of the novel searching for one another. In *Jubilee* (1966), Vyry's mother Hetta dies while giving birth to yet another of the planter's children and Vyry subsequently spends her childhood being passed from one Ersatz-mother to the next. Cynara spends *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) plagued by the estrangement she feels towards her mother because she is convinced that her mother loves the white planter daughter more than she loves Cynara.

Unlike the more ambivalent portrayals of inter-racial female relationships by black novelists, white authors portray positive female relationships between white planter women and their black servants or half-sisters. Although mothering Mammy of *GWTW* (1936) is reframed as a murderess in *The Wind Done Gone* (2001), both novels portray the plantation mistresses, Ellen and Lady, as loving towards the black slaves (although Lady, we learn later, is not actually white). While the two planter women, Lutie and Geneva in *High Hearts* (1986), both have black women slaves as their closest confidantes, none of the black authors portray such a close interracial relationship between two female characters. Only Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (1966) mentions a congenial relationship between the heroine and her white half-sister, Lillian, though the relationship plays neither a central role in the heroine's life nor in the plotline of the novel.

The only novel in which race plays absolutely no role in the life of the heroine or the storyline is *Enemy Women* (2002) which takes place in the Ozarks, in a community where the majority of people were too poor to own slaves and no black characters appear in the novel. *Enemy Women* focuses more on class differences in the Civil War era than racial differences. Many of the other novels examined, however, illustrate the intimate ties between race and class in a society which readily perceived oppressed people as socially inferior (Fields 106).

Class status and distinctions within the black community are depicted in almost all of the novels similarly. The worlds created by the novelists categorize field hands and former field hands as a lower class of people within the black community than house “servants” and former house “servants.” This, despite recent research by scholars such as Diana Ramey Berry and Talitha L. LeFlouria that suggests that tasks in slaveholding households were most likely allocated according to the planting season, household needs, and physical condition of the slave. The former house slave Lou in one of the vignettes in *The Wave* (1929) is genteel with the manners of a Southern Belle. In *GWTW* (1936), Pork, Mammy, and Prissy refuse to work in the fields because they are “house niggers” and no “yard niggers” (432). In *Jubilee* (1966), when Vryy’s son tries to avoid working in the field with his stepfather, Innis accuses Vryy of being a Big House servant whose children are as fine as their daddy (448). In *High Hearts* (1986) the slave Evangelista refuses to do degrading “nigger work” because she is “no nigger” but rather “a quadroon born on the island of Haiti” who is “too refined for [the] grubbin’” work better suited to a “rough-hewn” slave like Sin-Sin (297).

The earliest novel examined, *Iola Leroy* (1892), which features a “mulatto” heroine, is the only novel that describes the social hierarchy in the South as a caste system. The novel’s focus on the plight and position of the black community most likely accounts for this distinction. Whereas white male community members were ranked according to individual traits such as wealth, family lineage, and slave ownership, black community members were lumped together into one social grouping from birth onwards in accordance to their race. Harper portrays the finality of rank in the caste system which confines people to one and the same socioeconomic ranking throughout their entire lives with no opportunity for advancement. In the postwar era, the white and black community, as depicted by Harper, splits into separate societies with their own systems of rank.

To some extent all of the novels explore what defines a person's class—whether it is money, character, blood, or something else and seem to accept and even propagate the legitimacy of an “aristocratic” Southern class. Both Ellen Glasgow's *The Battle-Ground* (1902) and Margaret Mitchell's *GWTW* (1936) stand out in their portrayals of how the Civil War changed Southern attitudes regarding class. Both question the antebellum system of social rank and advocate a new way forward in the postwar era. Despite Betty Ambler's and Scarlett O'Hara's progressive views towards class, however, some class barriers would remain formidable in the postwar era. None of the novels depict members of the black community or “poor white trash” as potential members of the upper class and only *Enemy Women* (2002), published in the last feminist wave era examined, features a sympathetic “poor white trash” character as the heroine. Although black people continued to be barred from advancement to the upper-class echelons of white Southern society, the black community in *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) promptly develops a morality- and education-based social ranking of its own in the postwar South. A trusted doctor advises the heroine that her bad reputation could negatively influence the standing of her lover, the Congressman, within the black community.

Four novels spanning the feminist wave eras feature women who become romantically involved with men from lower socioeconomic classes: Betty of *The Battle-Ground* (1902) plans a future at the end of the novel with the disowned planter son and former foot soldier Dan. Scarlett of *GWTW* (1936) marries Rhett Butler, also a disowned planter son and blockade runner. Vry of *Jubilee* (1966), a former house slave, overcomes her initial aversion for the field hand Innis to marry him. At the same time, however, *Jubilee* likewise portrays how the perceived class differences between Vry and Innis cause later tensions, particularly in relation to Innis' treatment of his stepson Jim. Both *GWTW* (1936) and *High Hearts* (1986) feature female characters who marry hard-working “crackers” who labor on the plantation.

Gone with the Wind (1936), published in-between the world wars and the first and second waves of feminism, is the earliest book examined in which a woman assumes property ownership. Despite Scarlett's being the “head of household” of Tara, she has to reassert her autonomy in each marriage. Rhett, her third and last husband, tells her outright that he is in charge. Only the heroine in the book published during the era of third-wave feminism, Cynara in *The Wind Done Gone* (2001), officially owns both a plantation and house during the novel. Although many of the heroines never assume ownership of properties, most of

them engage in some kind of paid employment and/or oversee their households as the unofficial heads during the physical or mental absence of male family members.

In *Iola Leroy* (1892), the heroine espouses the importance of women supporting themselves and works as a nurse, teacher, shopkeeper and Sunday school teacher. In *The Wave* (1929) Elfie and Lucy are factory workers, Mrs. Ross is a teacher, Carrie Williams and Rosie are both prostitutes, and Eloise Ducros is the madame of a brothel. In *Jubilee* (1966), Vyry works as a cook and door-to-door produce saleswoman and finally through work as a midwife. In *High Hearts* (1986) Geneva presumably earns money as a soldier. Unfortunately, however, Rita Mae Brown fails to include any details in the novel about Geneva's pay and thus foregoes the opportunity to heighten tension in the marriage and plotline since as an officer, Geneva would have no doubt received a higher salary than her husband. The heroine of *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) works as a sheet washer during slavery, but there is no mention of any postwar employment. Adair of *Enemy Woman* (2002) works for a time at a tavern and hopes to be a horse breeder someday. The owner of the tavern is a woman named Jessie who tries to convince the heroine that work is preferable to marriage because working women, unlike married women, get time off. Three of the novels, *The Wave*, *GWTW*, and *Wind Done Gone* portray women who are in what might be considered one of the oldest forms of female business ownership—the madame of a brothel. All of the novels portray these ladies as independent-minded, no-nonsense women with a keen business sense. Scarlett of *GWTW* (1936) is unique amongst the heroines examined because she is the only female entrepreneur who acquires, owns, and manages a traditionally male business which employs a host of men. Of all the women portrayed, Scarlett is the pioneer of professional women. Amongst the gender raised to conform, it is women like Scarlett who overcome their constraints to bring about the most meaningful change.

Like *Enemy Women* (2002), many of the novels, regardless of the era in which they were published, explicitly or implicitly challenge the patriarchal system that oppresses women because of their gender. *The Wave* (1929), published between first and second-wave feminism, features women spanning all age groups and socio-economic backgrounds who rage against a social structure that has failed to represent their interests and needs. Elfie seeks “revenge through violence, ... [and assumes] the privilege men called their right” (*The Wave* 302). Lucy, protesting alongside Elfie, is nourished by her hate and tired of “[t]he rich fellows [who] would wink and grin and make their dirty propositions, but they’d never marry you” and if they tore her clothes off while arresting her, that was fine by her

because they'd all be naked before the seat of Judgement. (*The Wave* 304). The old, wealthy spinster Miss Araminta also "had endured all she could... And men, men, men—They ought to have women in the city government ... What did [Pres. Davis] know about the miseries women had to undergo! ... [Pres. Davis had] no right to interfere with [...] women – with any [women]" (*The Wave* 202). In *GWTW* (1936), Scarlett O'Hara rejects the notion of relying on a husband to support her and instead supports Ashley and his family. In *High Hearts* (1986), the planter wife Lutie declares, "We'll win [the war] and the dead will still be dead! ... I'll be goddamned if I want someone telling me how to live. People like Thaddeus Stevens up there in Washington have the grotesque bad manners to meddle in our affairs" (28). It is not until the novels of third-wave feminism, however, that women seriously envision living their lives without men.

Women's disappointment in men and marriage is already portrayed in the novels published during the era of first-wave feminism and continues throughout all the feminism eras. In *Iola Leroy* (1892), Iola fears that her first suitor, Dr. Gresham, will come to resent her for her non-whiteness: "Today your friendship springs from compassion, but, when that subsides, might you not look on me as an inferior?" (140). In *The Battle-Ground* (1902), the older plantation mistress, Molly Lightfoot, warns the young, smitten heroine, "Don't marry a man with too much spirit, my dear; if a man has any extra spirit, he usually expends it in breaking his wife's" (153). In *GWTW* (1936), Scarlett O'Hara complains that, "all a woman gets out of [marriage] is something to eat and a lot of work and having to put up with a man's foolishness—and a baby every year" (774). When Scarlett fears that her husband's Klan activities could get him killed, she reminds herself that she can only ever rely on herself anyway. In *Jubilee* (1966), when Vyry remains enslaved despite her husband's promise to secure her freedom, Vyry likewise concludes that a woman can only depend upon herself. In *High Hearts* (1986), Di-Peachy observes that "[d]isappointment seems to be a standing feature of marriage" (310). Towards the end of *The Wind Done Gone* (2001), Cynara returns to her husband R. one last time before leaving him for good, responding to his plea "I gave you my name," with "I never told you mine" (193). In *Enemy Women* (2002), marriage is described as a job without leisure time: "If you're married you can't quit of an evening. You will be up all night with a baby or sewing and repairing things that are broke" (290). When it comes to marriage, all of the novels concur: you're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Although many female characters throughout the decades consistently express disappointment with men and marriage, divorce only becomes a socially viable option beginning with the novels published during the era of second wave feminism. In *High Hearts* (1986) Mars Vickers and his wife Kate divorce and Mars is able to remarry the widowed heroine Geneva without a scandal. In *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) R. is spared having to divorce Other to be with Cynara when Other unexpectedly dies.

Without the option of a life worth living after divorce or as a woman without a man, many women in the novels published during or before second wave feminism exhibit symptoms of mental illness due to the stress of marriage. In *The Battle-Ground* (1902) Molly Lightfoot retreats to her “romantic novels” to escape her domineering husband who has disowned their daughter and their grandson. She suffers from vague headaches until, together with the heroine, she assumes control over her life and even attempts to defy her husband by attempting to convince their grandson to return home. In *The Wave* (1929), Mrs. Stoner, the mother of three hungry children, locks herself in the family’s cabin and attempts to hang herself. In *Jubilee* (1966), Lutie locks herself in her room and invents an imaginary lover to cope with the shock of a husband who has fathered a child with their slave. In *The Wind Done Gone* (2001), Lady is so upset that she has to marry Planter that Mammy keeps “feeding her something by the spoonful that didn’t make [her] pain go away but made [her] stop caring that [she] hurt” (60). Dreading a future as somebody’s wife, the heroine of *Enemy Women* (2002) spends most of the novel trying to avoid the inevitable march down the wedding aisle.

The shame of single motherhood, for white women in particular, is barely mentioned in any of the novels. Although abortion was no doubt commonly practiced throughout history and especially in times of war, *The Wave* (1929) is the only novel that mentions a woman who seeks out a black “witch” to abort her unplanned pregnancy. From the earliest novel examined, however, women suffer miscarriages or the loss of a young child. While white women such as Scarlett in *GWTW* (1936) and Lutie in *Jubilee* (1966) always mourn the loss of a child, the novels consistently portray how enslaved women, like Vyry in *Jubilee* (1986), feel a sense of relief when a child dies and is spared the suffering of slavery. Death of a child during pregnancy or childbirth also spared an enslaved woman the additional pain of having to relinquish her child to her tormentor as his legal property, to (mis-)treat according to his prerogative.

While black women were consistently vulnerable to rape in the antebellum South, all women became possible targets for sexual assault during the war. Although all the books allude to women's vulnerability to rape, regardless of the publication era, some allude to the threat more explicitly than others. In *Iola Leroy* (1892), Iola is exposed to repeated rape attempts during her slavery but somehow manages to fend off her perpetrators—a feat that gets her sold seven times in six weeks (90). In *The Battle-Ground* (1902) a strange man “penetrates” Betty’s bedroom but the unsullied heroine also successfully manages to avert assault. In the over seventy vignettes and brutal scenes of war depicted in *The Wave* (1929), there isn’t one graphic rape scene though for an entire vignette, Evelyn Scott delves deep into the point-of-view of a Federal soldier who makes up his mind to hurt and rape a woman in New Orleans by nightfall. In another passage, the blouse of a protesting woman named Lucy is ripped from her body as she is arrested and she challenges the men in the crowd to shame her for her nakedness. In *GWTW* (1936), two men – a black man and a scalawag – also attempt to rape the heroine as she travels to work in her mill, but again, the assailants are successfully thwarted. In the same novel, however, Scarlett’s husband Rhett forcefully carries Scarlett to his bedroom and many readers interpret the scene as a marital rape scene, though the action is implied rather than portrayed. In *Jubilee* (1966), Hetta, Vvry’s enslaved mother, is repeatedly sexually assaulted by the planter and eventually dies while trying to give birth to one of his children. Later in the same novel, a roving straggler presumably rapes the white planter daughter Lillian and attempts, but fails, to rape the heroine Vvry. None of the three most recently published novels examined mention rape or sexual assault. Interestingly, the only heroine raped in all of the novels examined is Scarlett O’Hara who is believed to have been raped by her husband. As described by Kathryn Lee Seidel, because Scarlett’s rape is a spousal rape, “It is a rape but it is not” (*The Southern Belle* 57). In rape, a woman is forced to engage in a sexual act and is shamed for being the victim; in prostitution, a woman willingly sells a sexual act for her own personal gain and is equally shamed for being the perpetrator.

Evelyn Scott’s *The Wave* (1929), written between first and second-wave feminism, is the only novel that depicts well-bred women who, desperate for food and money, resort to prostitution during the war. Half of the novels—*The Wave* (1929), *GWTW* (1936), *Jubilee* (1966), and *The Wind Done Gone* (2001)—feature prostitutes who, by virtue of their profession, forever ruin their social standing. Their male customers, however, suffer no social consequences. In *High Hearts* (1986), even the poetry-loving, war-hating Nash, had

“enjoyed the favors” of “servants or the occasional whore” before his wedding night and “[h]e didn’t think about it. That’s the way things were” (19). Despite their scandalous job choices, the prostitutes and madames in *The Wave*, *GWTW*, and *The Wind Done Gone* are likeable and even admirable characters.

The only topics that seem to show a definite correlation with the feminist wave movement in which the novels were published involve attitudes towards women’s liberation and expression of female sexual desire. Beginning during second-wave feminism and the Civil Rights era, novels feature women who proactively desire physical relationships with men and exhibit sex-positive viewpoints. During second-wave feminism, women challenged the effort to corral them back into the kitchen and topics such as sexuality, family life, workplace positions, reproductive rights, divorce law, and legalized inequality were openly discussed. It was also the era when one of the perhaps greatest technological advancements of the women’s movement was approved for public use: oral contraception. With so many women writing about sex and female empowerment, it is no wonder that many of the novels of the era became increasingly explicit in their characters’ discussion of the same topic.

Jubilee (1966) describes how in “the season of love,” the plantation mistress tries to control the “passionate natures of the house servants” with “ipecac, ergot, and saltpeter” (107) and how the warm weather draws the slaves to sleep in the cornfields and “[e]verywhere in nature they could watch the season of mating” (107). The heroine “craves” and “yearns for” Randall Ware and his “arms of steel” and “kiss of fire” (107). In *High Hearts* (1986) men have “hard-ons” for Di-Peachy and when the heroine asks the slave Sin-Sin what to expect on her wedding night, Sin-Sin tells her “Thass the best part!” (8). The wedding night is described in lurid detail including Nash’s throbbing “cock” and the heroine’s feeling of an “unfamiliar but welcome hardness bump into her groin” (19). Geneva can see the outline of Nash’s “penis” in “beautiful silk underwear” and Nash places his hand on Geneva’s “genitals” and she places her hand on his “crotch.” *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) also describes sexual acts more explicitly than earlier novels. Lady’s frigid sexual experience is described as occurring when she is ripe at the age of thirty and perhaps a little hungry when: “Planter, stone drunk, ploughed into her stone-dry and laudanum-drugged body. She had felt no pleasure, had given no pleasure, felt no pain, gave no pain, as he flopped about, planting his seed in her soil” (101–102). Cynara describes a time when only R’s hand “pleasured” her. “Those were sweet years, a time I sought to lose myself in him. It took a white-hot grown-man flame to distract me from little girl pain” (91). Whereas *The Wave*’s

Midge “*must* have a God” to command her like her deceased patriarchal husband, *The Wind Done Gone*’s Cynara believes that R. is endowed with God-superior powers to satisfy her sexually: “He talked back, and he fucked, and he kissed. He was better than God; then he was my God” (146). In Cynara’s later affair with a black Congressman, she and her partner merge sexually into a “sacred territory” of one. She discovers: “[t]he mystery of making love to myself, for he is me, and I am he, and I know all that he and she want” (187).

Less stringent attitudes towards sex, however, are not reflected in regards to homosexuality and homoeroticism. Only *High Hearts* (1986), written by a novelist who, according to the *Washington Post* has been “awarded as a pioneer in lesbian literature” but “scoffs” at the term,¹⁴¹ handles the topic of gender fluidity and the homoeroticism that stems from having a cross-dressing character who is both the wife and “brother of arms” of the man she shares a tent with during the day and a bed with during the night. In *GWTW* (1936), although Melanie and Scarlett share a close bond and Scarlett sleeps with Melanie to alleviate her nightmares, no one assumes that they are lovers. Gerald O’Hara’s belief in *GWTW* that Ashley Wilkes’ gentle nature and love of art make him “queer” (53) has been echoed by some scholars as proof of his homosexuality. *The Wind Done Gone*’s Dreamy Gentleman, who is based on Ashley Wilkes’ character, was rumored in the novel to have been in love with Miss Priss’ son. Because Ashley Wilkes in *GWTW* and Nash in *High Hearts* do not fulfill the prescribed masculine traits of a “real man,” fellow characters and scholars describe them as being emasculated and socially less worthy of the women who love them.

Several novels explore how the South of the Civil War era expected men to live up to certain norms of manliness. *The Wave* (1929) repeatedly explores the toxicity of social norms of manliness in vignettes about men who do not want to go to war and kill but are pressured to do so in order to prove their social worth. In *Jubilee* (1966), Kevin MacDougall’s lack of enthusiasm for Secession and the war is viewed negatively and he is characterized as less manly. The heroine’s husband in *High Hearts* (1986), Nash, is also teased and called “Piggy” because he is “so thin-skinned he’d bleed in a high wind” (183). At the same time, men (and a woman) like Harry in *Iola*, Dan in *The Battle-Ground*, Dickie Ross in *The Wave*, Rhett Butler (eventually) in *GWTW*, the planter son John in *Jubilee*, Geneva in *High Hearts*, and John Lee in *Enemy Women*, are all considered brave for willingly and eagerly heeding the call to war. The only novel that does not include an example of wartime bravery exemplified by soldiering is *The Wind Done Gone*. The only novel that consistently mocks the notions of bravery and patriotism as honorable virtues is

Evelyn Scott's *The Wave* (1929). This sentiment is especially evident in the stories of mothers such as Mrs. Witherspoon and Mrs. Deering whose sermons about the glory of sacrificing their sons, remain unconvincing, despite their fervor.

Women in all of the novels, except Geneva in *High Hearts* (1986), oppose the killing and dying that war brings into their lives. In *High Hearts*, due to the gender role reversal, Geneva's husband Nash is the one who opposes killing. Nash's feminization heightens Geneva's male-traits. Rather than questioning patriarchal value systems of supposed male and female traits, Brown dresses her heroine up as a male, gives her male-like height and skills, and assigns traditionally female traits to her male partner.

In many novels, the women who exemplify the perfect Southern belle are not equipped to survive the war and its immediate aftermath. Virginia in *The Battle-Ground* (1902) dies while pregnant and desperately searching for her husband. Melanie and Ellen of *GWTW* (1936) also perish. The mean plantation mistress, Big Missy (Salina) of *Jubilee* (1996), symbolizes an old way of thinking that cannot survive in the new era. She too dies before the war ends. Other of *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) dies as well. While the women who symbolize the old days die, those who are the self-sufficient odd-ones-out in the antebellum South are uniquely equipped to survive the war.

An overriding theme of all the books examined—even the pessimistic short stories in *The Wave*—is a message of perseverance. Women may undergo hardships, but when they rely on themselves rather than others, they pull through. All of the heroines possess the grit and resilience to survive the conflict. They are unapologetically assertive and many become the heads of their households well before the US Census enabled women to name themselves as such with its 1980 census.¹⁴² At the end of *Iola Leroy*, the heroine has a job as a teacher, has found her family members, has resolved to write a book and intends to marry a black man who will support her efforts to racially uplift the black community. *The Battle-Ground* concludes with the heroine Betty overlooking the remains of her plantation and ready to start a new life with Dan Montjoy as an equal partner. In the final scene of *Gone with the Wind*, the heroine Scarlett, enlightened about what she wants and what is important to her, resolves to return to her beloved Tara to collect herself and plot her come back. *Jubilee* ends with the heroine Vyry having successfully found a good job and a safe home where she and her family can settle as integrated members of a (now) racially-mixed community. In *High Hearts*, war has given the heroine Geneva purpose and she lives her postwar life as her husband's equal. *The Wind Done Gone* ends with the heroine living the life she has

chosen for herself: on her own, in a house that is hers, supporting a son whom she has given to his father to assure he'll have a better life. *Enemy Women* also ends with the heroine on her own, without a place to live and without her family, but looking forward to her freedom, her horse, and just *maybe* a future with her fiancé.

The only novel which seems to be an outlier when it comes to an optimistic view of women's future is Evelyn Scott's *The Wave*. None of Scott's vignettes conclude with a happily ever after for the women involved. The last vignette of the novel shows women once again sidelined to the observatory position, dubbed by early feminists as "the listener and spectator,"¹⁴³ to celebrate men and their history-worthy deeds. One year after publication of *The Wave*, Evelyn Scott wrote an unpublished essay on feminism entitled "The Decline of Feminism and the Metamorphosis of the Feminist." The essay reflects Scott's disappointment in the lack of progress women were making on many fronts and her belief that men had no reason to give women "dignified consideration" because Justice "blind as she is depicted" had no compulsion to open her eyes to see those "whose enslavement persisted."

Each of the novels selected, with the exception of *The Wave* which does not focus on one character, qualifies as a bildungsroman¹⁴⁴ in which conflicts and setbacks serve as the stage for the characters to learn about themselves and their social positioning in order to build on each lesson to gradually develop into mature individuals who, by the end of the novels, have made peace with themselves and their places in the world. The evolution that occurs, is not just an educating process for the novels' heroines but for the South as a whole. Glasgow skillfully shows this metamorphosis by employing different characters in *The Battle-Ground* to represent each of the changing social systems. Through the heroine Betty Ambler, the shifting power dynamics in gender relationships is evident. The hero, Dan, reflects the gilded nature of the Southern aristocracy whose era has passed. Pinetop demonstrates the misunderstood potential of the poor whites. The hero's trusted companion, Big Abel, symbolizes the shifting social positioning of black people in the South. *The Battle-Ground* optimistically envisions a postwar South of a new generation determined to raze the debilitating exploitations of the antebellum era. For the postwar South to manage, so the novel's message, Southerners will have to work towards a society that fosters mutual cooperation and respects all classes, races, and genders.

In general, a breakdown of the portrayal of women in the novels reviewed reveals that while all the books share commonalities in their portrayals, only some venture into certain, more

delicate, subject areas. Books of earlier eras offer glimpses of the changes in gender relations and roles to come as the books gradually become more explicit over time in relation to sexuality, and women progressively gain more agency over the decades. Again, a definite outlier in respect to her portrayal of women is Evelyn Scott's *The Wave*. Though published in 1929, not long after the end of first-wave feminism, Scott includes topics and portrayals that would tantalize a modern audience as much as it must have struck readers of her era as well. Although all the books feature strong heroines, only later novels like *GWTW* (1936), *High Hearts*, *The Wind Done Gone*, and *Enemy Women* feature heroines who do not seem to care about anybody else's gaze upon them but their own.

The conundrum of a female hero like Scarlett O'Hara who is strong-minded, ambitious, and willing to do anything to get her way is that such a portrayal often presents the character as a villain. As discussed by Pearson and Pope, "Literature ... tends to portray the woman who demonstrates initiative, strength, wisdom, and independent action—the ingredients of the heroic life – not as a hero but as a villain" (*The Female Hero* 6). Scarlett O'Hara, a most iconic heroine if ever there was one, is often subject to this double standard in the court of gendered opinion. Had Scarlett been a Steven his most deplorable crimes, would have probably been his greatest feats. A man in love and unable to marry his heart's desire, the victim of a tragic love story. A man who defies all to work, a go-getter. A man who will stop at nothing to keep himself and those who depend on him from going hungry, a bread winner. A man willing to stop at nothing to save the land he loves, a knight in shining armor. A woman like Scarlett O'Hara who does such things is simply a troublesome vixen.

In a speech given in 1931 and entitled "Professions for Women," Virginia Woolf talks about the importance for women writers to, in self-defense, kill the "Angel in the House" whose presence casts a permanent restrictive shadow over the works of women. When writing *GWTW* (1936), Margaret Mitchell originally thought that an antebellum belle like Melanie would be the heroine but Scarlett, stubborn as usual, kept asserting herself as the true subject of the tale. According to Woolf, "[i]t is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality." Only when a woman writer has successfully slain the "Angel of the House" and overcome all the falsehoods, ghosts, and prejudices, so Woolf, can she be herself. But Woolf asks, "Ah, but what is 'herself'? I mean, what is a woman? I assure you, I do not know. I do not believe that you know. I do not believe that anybody can know." For Mitchell, it is the phantom Melanie who dies and the self-assured Scarlett who prevails.

Readers may wish for a happily ever after for Scarlett, but her uncertain future is not only plausible but somehow even gratifying. The question however is, does part of that gratification come because we are rooting for or against the independent-minded heroine? As *The Battle-Ground's* Mrs. Ambler tells her daughter, when Betty admits that she thinks Jane Lightfoot may be partially to blame for her own misery: "Your grandfather used to say 'get a woman to judge a woman and there comes a hanging'" (345). The novel's book-loving spinster, Miss Lydia, also believes that readers tend to expect strict moral behavior from heroines but are more forgiving of swashbuckling heroes:

[We] forever [hold] the sinner above the saint, unless, indeed, the sinner chanced to be [a woman], when, probably, the book would never have reached [our] hands. For the purely masculine improprieties, [our] charity [is] as boundless as [our] innocence. [...] 'Men are very wicked, I fear,' [we] ... murmur, 'but they are very —a—a—engaging, too.' (paraphrased from 42)

Would the wartime changes women experienced prove lasting? Just as men's return from WWII prompted orchestrated efforts to shoo women from their wartime positions of employment back into the domestic realm of hearth and home, so too did the return of the wounded and traumatized Confederate soldiers lead to attempts to reassert men's authority role on the home-front. Nonetheless, as the historical fiction novels examined show, many men would never return and those who did were often incapable of performing the work that needed to be done. The rebuilding of the South would require all hands on deck and the work-ready women had no intentions of re-lacing their corsets or praying for a man-God to deliver them.

Interestingly, just five years following the end of the Civil War in 1870 forty percent of black married women in the cotton belt were employed, most in field labor, yet 98.4% of white women in the same region had no recorded occupation. Women working on their own farms and plantations and thus not considered employees may account for this difference, but the discrepancy is notable nonetheless. Sixty percent of those women who were employed in 1870 worked in domestic service jobs.¹⁴⁵ Some changes were lasting, others demanded more time.

In the historical fiction novels of women by women, not all white Southerners are genteel plantation masters, not all black Southerners are eager-to-please servants, and not all women are ego-extensions of men. Women are not valued for their levels of eroticism, their ability to seduce, their readiness to obey, or their willingness to self-sacrifice. The women

who advance have grit, are resourceful, resilient, and self-reliant. Their source of self-fulfillment is not found in a man, marriage, or motherhood, but in their journey to liberation and self-actualization—happy ending or not. Women exist independent of men.

Abigail Smith Adams had warned her husband John that if the Founding Fathers failed to mention the ladies in the Declaration of Independence, “we are determined to foment a Rebellion [sic], and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.” The unintended rebellion that came, came eight and half decades later in the form of the Civil War. Women did not start the war, but it became their battleground. Those able to assert themselves independent of the world that dictated their cultural narrative, survived and some even thrived. Those unable to envision an alternative self in a changing world, perished. The Civil War and the women who lived through it set all Southern women on a radically different course than their mothers and grandmothers. Pandora would not obediently return to her slavery chains, dirt-floor kitchens, and golden cages. More than a century and half later, the #MeToo movement and worldwide pandemic have shown the continuing struggles of marginalized groups rooted in gender, class, and racial differentiations. Yet history has taught us that humankind must find ways to advance without war. Until then, literature will continue to offer a much-needed space to reflect and reflect upon our past so that tomorrow can become more than just another day.

V. NOTES

¹ This dissertation does not capitalize either “black” or “white” when denoting people classified as belonging to a supposed racial group (this dissertation questions the use of race as a category). For a very good discussion on this matter weighing the pros and cons of capitalization see Kwame Anthony Appiah’s “The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black.”

² Fox-Genovese in *Within the Plantation Household* speculates that black women were less likely than black men to flee or engage in riots because of the desire to stay near their family members and a lack of skill sets that would have enabled them to find work and manage on their own.

³ The NYC Draft riots began on Monday, 13 July 1863, sparked by the newspaper publication of 1200 New Yorkers who had been drafted. The Union had intended to draft 300,000 men. The riots torched recruiting offices and other government buildings and also targeted black community members. The chaos was eventually quelled on the fourth day by Federal troops returning from the Battle of Gettysburg.

⁴ For an insightful look at the evolution of the American literature canon, see Reising, Russell. *The Unusable past: Theory and the Study of American Literature*. London: Routledge, 2003 and The New Accent Ser. and Bubíková, Sarka. “The Formation and Transformation of the American Literary Canon,” in: Pavel Drábek and Jan Chovanec (eds.), *Theory and Practice in English Studies*. vol. 2. Brno: 2004. 25–28.

⁵ Here again, ‘left behind’ is a hierarchal description with men as ‘A’ in the patriarchal equation. Women’s positioning is described in relation to the location of men.

⁶ In *Literature as Exploration* (1938), Louise Rosenblatt discusses the role of the reader as a co-creator in which the reader and text are bound and the reader gives both meaning and aesthetic experience to the text, making every text unique depending on the reader.

⁷ Hewitt, Nancy A. “Feminist Frequencies: Regenerating the Wave Metaphor.” *Feminist Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2012, pp. 658–680. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/23720198. Accessed 24 Jan. 2021.

⁸ Scholars have speculated about Frances Harper’s race—whether she was black, “mulatto,” or “red mulatto,” due to references by those who knew her that indicate that her skin color was not dark. Frances Harper apparently described herself as “African American.” The omission of the name of a father on her birth certificate supports the theory that her father was a white man. For more on the topic, see FN 4 in Jessica Wells Cantiello’s “Harper’s Educational Reservations: The Indian Question in *Iola Leroy*.”

⁹ See Introduction to *Iola Leroy* by Koritha Mitchell, p 24.

¹⁰ For insight into the differences between a real author vs. implied author when discussing prose narratives, see Chapter 3 “Narrative Situation: Who’s Who and What’s Its Function” in Suzanne Keen’s *Narrative Form* (2015).

¹¹ See Dorrit Cohn’s *Transparent Minds*, p 217.

¹² Broadview Press offers an excellent edition of *Iola Leroy; or, Shadows Uplifted* published in 2018 with extremely insightful annotations by Koritha Mitchell, an associate professor at Ohio State University who specializes in African American literature.

¹³ See Ellen Glasgow's essay from 1913 NY Times essay entitled "Feminism."

¹⁴ Ellen Glasgow's father is reported to have held strict beliefs concerning the inappropriateness of women of Glasgow's class attending college or engaging in a profession. Glasgow's profession as a writer defied the patriarchal and social constraints that both her father and Richmond society placed on her. See Linda Wagner-Martin's "Glasgow, Ellen," in *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*.

¹⁵ A more in-depth discussion of the South and its rigid caste system can be found in section III.B of this dissertation entitled "Women, Class, Property, & Wealth."

¹⁶ Here I use the gendered pronoun "his" for the narrator. This contrasts with the usage of the gendered pronoun "she" for *Iola Leroy's* narrator. While Ellen Glasgow distances the narrator in *The Battle-Ground* in a way that Frances Harper with her usage of dissonant psycho-narration does not, for me as the reader, the voice I "heard" narrating *The Battle-Ground* seemed male. While there are good arguments to refer to an omniscient narrator with a gender-neutralizing "it," as I had done in *Gone with the Wind*, I could not resist the feeling that there must have existed implicit signals in the text that led me to the conclusion that narrator was male rather than female despite the novel's female authorship. What clues or signals led me to hear a male rather than female voice in the narrator's comments would go beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, which factors influence a reader's gendering of third-person narrators would be a topic that would warrant more in-depth investigation. The first question such an analysis could pose, would perhaps be whether all readers "hear" the gendered voice of a narrator while reading.

¹⁷ Suzanne Keen in *Narrative Form* writes about the common practice (in England at least) in the 19th century of publishing novels in three volumes because three-volume novels were more attractive to private lending libraries, where most readers, who were not able to afford private book copies, sought their books (25).

¹⁸ *The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People Movements and Motifs* (2002) compares the organization of *The Wave* in vignettes to John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) p. 884.

¹⁹ Faulkner showed his gratitude to Scott for her support during a 1940 interview in which he was asked to name a female author he admired. "Evelyn Scott is pretty good ... for a woman," he is quoted as saying. D.A. Collard later used the "Pretty Good for a Woman" label as the title for his 1986 Evelyn Scott biography.

²⁰ For an interesting look at Nazi interest in the US South, see Johnpeter Horst Grill and Robert L. Jenkins's "The Nazis and the American South in the 1930s: A Mirror Image?"

²¹ See Dorrit Cohn's *Transparent Minds*.

²² See Keen, Suzanne. "The Theory of Narrative Empathy."

²³ The word "concubine" was used to describe a woman who had sexual relations with a man but no legal status or social standing and whose children could not legally inherit property from their father.

²⁴ Technically slaves were not permitted to marry but the black community and often the plantation families acknowledged the marital-like oaths promised in the ceremonies of the slave communities. *Jubilee* illustrates the difficulty of those who had been enslaved to maintain and trace family members. Historians have speculated that the marital restrictions placed on slaves and the precarious nature of the lives of those considered property may have contributed to the more open view the black community seemed to have regarding relationships and extra-marital sexuality. In the case of Vyry, she has two husbands simultaneously, Innis and Randall, and at the end of the novel, is forced to choose between the two.

²⁵ See Cohn, Dorrit. *Transparent Minds* and Keen, Suzanne. "The Theory of Narrative Empathy."

²⁶ See Walker's interview re-printed under "Poetry, History and Humanism."

²⁷ Although the term "LGBT" (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) first became widely used in the 1990s, and Rita Mae Brown was often described as a "lesbian" writer, Brown was quoted as saying that she believed that all people, including herself, existed on a spectrum of sexuality. For this reason, LGBT seems a more fitting description of Brown than lesbian.

²⁸ Included in Ulysses S. Grant's personal memoirs is a letter in which Grant describes his visit to a makeshift hospital. Grant writes: "all night wounded men were being brought in, their wounds dressed, a leg or an arm amputated as the case might require, and everything being done to save life or alleviate suffering. The sight was more unendurable than encountering the enemy's fire, and I returned to my tree in the rain" (ch. 24). See Grant's Personal Memoirs available under: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4367/old/orig4367-h/p2.htm>

²⁹ Before it was even published, *The Wind Done Gone* became the subject of a lengthy legal battle over copyright and trademark infringement with the Margaret Mitchell Trust because of the novel's obvious ties to the characters, storyline, and events in *Gone with the Wind*. The disputing parties settled when *The Wind Done Gone*'s publishers agreed to market Randall's novel as a parody. See "'Gone with the Wind Done Gone': 'Re-Writing' and Fair Use." *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 115, no. 4, 2002, pp. 1193–1216.

³⁰ A. M. Sultana writes "Patriarchy refers to male domination both in public and private spheres." See "Factors Effect on Women Autonomy and Decision-Making Power within the Household in Rural Communities."

³¹ Ulysses S. Grant describes in his memoir how the conscription eventually took all white Southern men. "Before the war was over, further conscriptions took those between fourteen and eighteen years of age as junior reserves, and those between forty-five and sixty as senior reserves. It would have been an offence, directly after the war, and perhaps it would be now, to ask any able-bodied man in the South, who was between the ages of fourteen and sixty at any time during the war, whether he had been in the Confederate army" (ch. 68). Available under: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4367/old/orig4367-h/p6.htm>.

³² At the time of writing, Fox News anchor, Tucker Carlson, echoed 19th Century male fears in a rant in which he claimed: "Study after study has shown that when men make less than women, women generally don't want to marry them. Over big populations this causes a

drop in marriage, a spike in out-of-wedlock births, and all the familiar disasters that inevitably follow. More drug and alcohol abuse, higher incarceration rates, fewer families formed in the next generation.” The New York Department of Labor immediately tweeted a rebuttal that closing the pay disparity gap benefitted “women, men, families, the US & global economies and businesses.”

³³ See “Timeline of Social History and Everyday Life” in *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*

³⁴ Following the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, state legislatures passed laws prohibiting the education of slaves and free black people in order to ensure the continued oppression of the black community and to quell white community fears of another insurrection led by an educated black person.

³⁵ For a comprehensive breakdown and interesting look at domestic wages in 1860 by state and territory see *Statistics of the United States, (Including Mortality, Property &c.,) in 1860*.

³⁶ Infertility was often considered one of the grounds for a fault divorce. Other grounds included adultery, impotency and homosexuality.

³⁷ For an interesting discussion on this phenomenon and how it relates to pervading misogyny and sexist ideology, see Kate Manne’s *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (2019) along with a review of the novel by Adam Phillips in *The London Review of Books* entitled “Unforgiven” (March 2019). Manne distinguishes between sexist ideology, which she views as “bad science” wearing a “lab coat” and misogyny, which goes on “witch hunts” and purports moralism. “Sexist ideology ... valoriz[es] portrayals of patriarchal social arrangements as more desirable and less fraught, disappointing, or frustrating than they may be in reality. Whereas... misogyny... police[s] and enforce[s] a patriarchal social order without necessarily going via the intermediary of people’s assumptions, beliefs, theories, values, and so on. Misogyny serves to enact or bring about patriarchal social relations in ways that may be direct, and more or less coercive” (146).

³⁸ The Black Codes permitted “all freedmen, free negroes, and mulattoes” to marry one another but forbade them from marrying whites. Once they signed contracts with white men, they could be captured and returned if they fled their workplace before the contract ended. In addition, orphans who could be classified as belonging to the class of “freedman, free negroes, and mulattoes” who were under the age of eighteen if female and twenty-one if male could be forcefully kept as “apprentices,” which was virtually enslavement by another name See *Black Code of Mississippi 1865* (25 November 1865).

³⁹ In 1978 film maker, Spike Lee, founded a movie production company named “40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks.”

⁴⁰ See Deborah G. White’s “Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status in the Antebellum Plantation South.”

⁴¹ Davidson, Cathy N., Linda et al. *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*.

⁴² In the early years of America, because many immigrants came to the country as indentured servants with service obligations typically lasting seven years, people of lesser

means tended to marry later than people of the privileged elite. For the laboring free class, marriage certificates were expensive, travel burdensome, and magistrates legally empowered to declare a couple husband and wife scarce. For this reason, many of America's early settlers, similar to those enslaved later, engaged in unofficial unions that would nevertheless be socially recognized as marriages by fellow community members. Bonding ceremonies could require couples to declare their intention to be man and wife publicly in church three times over a three-week period before a couple was considered married.

⁴³ Confederates found Major Butler's behavior so intolerable that they nicknamed him "Beast Butler."

⁴⁴ Recognizing the lingering North-South skepticism in the post-Civil War era, slogans of the WCTU included "No North, No South" and "Firm in one Cause." See Janney, Caroline E. *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation*. UNC Press, 2016.

⁴⁵ Unfortunately, this attitude persists to the current day. Women who have been sexually assaulted are accused of "asking for it." When a rape case is brought to trial, the victims must testify and are subjected to insinuating questions about their attire, their whereabouts, their drug and alcohol intake, and their sexual history. The accused rapist, however, is not required to testify and is not subject to such questioning. Unfortunately, there is a long history of punishing women who cry rape. In Italy in the early 1600s, female artist Artemisia Gentileschi was tortured to see if she was telling the truth that her mentor, Agostino Tasso, had raped her. Though they crushed her painting fingers, she refused to recant the accusation against Tasso. Despite the fact that he was found guilty, Tasso was neither tortured nor forced to serve a sentence. Even today, the notion prevails that to stop rape and sexual violence, potential targets (usually women) should change their own behaviors rather than advocating that the best way to stop rape is for rapists (usually men) to stop raping. The logic applied to rape victims is rarely applied to other crimes such as robbery and murder. No one places the onus for preventing such crimes on the crime victim. Recent high profile cases such as that of Harvey Weinstein and Bill Crosby demonstrate how the word of one powerful man has long silenced the voices of hundreds of victims and how the patriarchal system tends to enable men to continue victimizing others while silencing and intimidating the victims they consider expendable commodities. While Weinstein's sentence gives hope for change, Bill Crosby's ability to appeal his sentence does not.

⁴⁶ The social instrument of controlling women while confining them to their homes for their supposed safety has been repeatedly used throughout the world and history. In Northern England in the mid-1970s until 1980, at a time when young women, galvanized to enjoy newfound freedoms during the second wave feminist era, were chastised and even ordered to adhere to women-only curfews. The curfews were imposed to allegedly protect women from an elusive but active serial killer dubbed the "Yorkshire Ripper" who seemed to target lone women walking on the street after dark. At the time, however, women, recognizing the injustice of this proposed solution began protesting in the form of Reclaim the Night marches and newspaper ads demanding that *men* be subject to nightly curfews to allow women to walk the streets safely after dark.

⁴⁷ In a Guardian article highlighting the findings of his book, *Berlin: The Downfall 1945* on the prevalence of rape by the Red Army during its WWII march to Berlin, author Anthony Beevor sums up his findings on rape and war as follows: “Even if the feminist definition of rape purely as an act of violence proves to be simplistic, there is no justification for male complacency. If anything, the events of 1945 reveal how thin the veneer of civilisation can be when there is little fear of retribution. It also suggests a much darker side to male sexuality than we might care to admit.”

⁴⁸ For a good look at this problem, see Estrich, Susan. “Rape.” *The Yale Law Journal*, vol. 95, no. 6, 1986, pp. 1087–1184.

⁴⁹ Whether or not a rape allegation was credible, often depended on who the accused was and who the alleged victim. Often, the alleged victim was subjected to humiliating scrutiny of her background, sexual behavior, and reputation to determine the “credibility” of her allegations. This scrutiny was not consistently applied to cases involving other crimes such as robbery. “Rape shield” laws introduced into the Federal Rules of Evidence in 1975 counter procedures that tended to victimize the alleged victims even more and protect victims from public humiliation and embarrassment. Legal scholar Susan Estrich, however, stated in her article “Rape,” cited above, that “In the law of rape, supposedly dead horses continue to run” (1091).

⁵⁰ This has changed in recent years with the invention of the so-called “Gold Star” families denoting US families who have lost loved ones killed while serving in battle. The term is a description of next of kin who have sacrificed parents, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters or others. The Department of Defense presents the family with a flag or lapel pin with a gold star to demonstrate the “honor” and “glory” of the soldier’s death as a symbol of the family’s noble sacrifice.

⁵¹ “Soldier illness” and “army disease” were the terms used for narcotic addiction. It is theorized that the invention of the hypodermic needle shortly before the war may have advanced its use and the amount of those who became addicted. Drugs used to help alleviate pain were opium and morphine. For a deeper look at addiction and the Civil War see Mark Quinones’s “Drug Abuse during the Civil War (1861–1865).”

⁵² In antebellum times, because of the social stigma attached to divorce and the legal difficulties in ending a marriage, men often abandoned their wives. In such cases, women were expected to shoulder the burdens of the household traditionally left to the husband, but without the social recognition that she was in fact head of the household.

⁵³ Harper uses intertextuality in Eugene’s declaration: “After me the deluge?”—the expression is attributed to King Louis XV (r. 1715–74) after the disastrous loss of a battle—thus Harper compares the father of the household to the king of a country and the impending loss as a flood which will bring misfortune to all.

⁵⁴ “Aunt” and “Uncle” were commonly used for enslaved men and women and did not necessarily denote blood ties as much as communal bonds.

⁵⁵ In his 1895 three-stanza poem, “We Wear the Mask” black American poet and novelist, Paul L. Dunbar writes about mask-wearing as a way to conceal suffering. In the poem, the suffering stems from racism and racial terrorism: “We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries

\\ To thee from tortured souls arise.\\ We sing, but oh the clay is vile \\ Beneath our feet,
and long the mile; \\ But let the world dream otherwise, \\ We wear the mask!"

⁵⁶ The denigrating essence of this qualifier "for a girl" calls to mind its same use by William Faulkner in 1940 when asked in an interview to name a woman whose work he admired: "Well, Evelyn Scott was pretty good *for a woman*."

⁵⁷ In 1645, Anne Hopkins, the wife of the governor of Hartford, Connecticut was given medical attention for her unhealthy habit of reading and writing too much. John Winthrop, first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony noted in his journal that, "If [Mrs. Hopkins] had attended her household affairs, and such things as *belong to women*, and not gone out of her way and calling to meddle in such things as are *proper for men*, whose minds are stronger, she had kep her wits, and might have improved them usefully and honorably *in the place God had set her*" (qtd.in *American Jezebel* 41)

⁵⁸ For John M. Bradbury (*Renaissance in the South*) 1917 marked the beginning of the Southern Renaissance. For John L. Stewart the literary era first began in 1925.

⁵⁹ Recent efforts are underway to de-stigmatize women who work in the sex industry by referring to them as "sex workers" rather than prostitutes. This is because the word "prostitute" was historically associated with a verb meaning to sexually dishonor yourself and over time the label "prostitute" has become associated not with a job someone does but rather a negative social status someone has. This dissertation generally uses the word prostitute because it is used in reference to historical novels, most of which were published before "sex worker" gained widespread use.

⁶⁰ See the discussion of Catherine Clinton's work on the Mammy character in the introduction of III A. "Gender Roles" herein.

⁶¹ See the tale of Lucretia (in Ovid's *Fasti*, Livy's *History of Rome*, Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*, Thomas Middleton's *The Ghost of Lucrece*, Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece*, etc.) who stabs herself after she is raped by Sextus Tarquinius, an Etruscan king's son. Her suffering and self-sacrificial act leads to the eventual uprising and overthrow of the Roman monarchy and establishment of a republic.

⁶² In literature, rape was historically discreetly referred to by the heroine fainting. Another method employed by Herman Melville, for example, was to disrupt the narrative with dashes to indicate sexual assault.

⁶³ Although all US states have finally criminalized marital rape, many initially have done so in a limited scope. For example, marital rape can only occur if the married couples do not live together. Historically, a woman's "I do" was considered perpetual and irrevocable consent to sexual intercourse with her husband from the wedding vow onward. In addition, marital rape was distinguished from non-marital rape in the requirement that the husband would have had to have used excessive violence or force. Tennessee first reformed its laws as late as 2005 to eliminate the differentiation between marital and non-marital rape. South Carolina still has not amended state legislation to eradicate distinctions.

⁶⁴ Historically, a woman's anatomy has been defined more by her uterus than by her clitoris. This has ignored that women are endowed with a clitoris, the only human body part solely dedicated to sexual pleasure. Fairly recent efforts led by Prof. Caroline de Costa and Prof.

Helen O’Connell attempt to counteract the long-held myth that women are solely designed to procreate rather than experience sexual pleasure. For more on this topic, refer to: Murphy-Oates, Laura, host. “Revisited: the clitoris coverup – why do we know so little?” *Today in Focus, The Guardian*, 31 Dec. 2020.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2021/jan/01/today-in-focus-revisited-the-clitoris-coverup-why-do-we-know-so-little-podcast>.

⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution did not end all forms of slavery. Convict leasing programs in the US continued after the Civil War until they were officially abolished in 1928. Now thirty-seven states still allow private companies to contract prison labor. An article published by *The Intercept* provides more details: “The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution bans ‘involuntary servitude’ in addition to slavery, ‘except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted,’ thus establishing the legal basis for what is today a \$2 billion a year industry, according to the Prison Policy Initiative, a nonprofit research institute.

Most able-bodied prisoners at federal facilities are required to work, and at least 37 states permit contracting prisoners out to private companies, though those contracts account for only a small percentage of prison labor.”

⁶⁶ See *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens* p 4.

⁶⁷ See De Anne Blanton and Lauren M. Cook’s *They Fought Like Demons* (2002).

⁶⁸ According to John Solomon Otto in “Reconsidering the Southern ‘Hillbilly’: Appalachia and the Ozarks”, the word “hillbilly” was first used in 1900 by a *New York Journal* reporter and was defined as “a free and untrammelled white citizen who lives in the hills ... has no means to speak of, dresses as he can, talks as he pleases, drinks whiskey when he gets it, and fires off his revolver as the fancy takes him” and later evolved to refer to marginal farmers of the Southern mountains (327).

⁶⁹ James Fenimore Cooper’s classic American novel, *The Spy: A Tale of the Neutral Ground* (1821) is the story of people caught in the neutral ground between the warring British and American factions during the Revolutionary War.

⁷⁰ See Lisa Tenrich Frank’s “Bedrooms as Battlefields.”

⁷¹ In her essay “(Mis)Remembering General Order No. 28: Benjamin Butler, the Woman Order, and Historical Memory,” Alecia P. Long contends that General Major Butler’s postwar efforts to reshape historical memory by minimizing the role women played as a threat to the Union directly contradicted with his wartime statements and actions. In the case of Eugenia Levy Phillips, Butler left her unnamed in his retelling of the history of the Woman Order. This, despite the fact that Phillips was charged with treason and incarcerated for two and half months on Ship Island because her 10-year-old son spit on a Union colonel.

⁷² As mentioned, according to Well-Oghoghomeh, the antebellum black community did not generally view independent, childless, black women living on their own with the same suspicion that the white community viewed their white counterparts (258).

⁷³ For an interesting look at the links in maternal socio-economic standing and a child’s well-being, see Kasey Buckles’s “Maternal Socio-Economic Status and the Well-Being of

the Next Generation(s)” and Derek Thompson’s “Economists: Your Parents Are More Important Than Ever.”

⁷⁴ In “Can the Poor Think?” Malcolm Bull contends that irrational voter behavior is indicative of the inherent dangers of direct democracy because voters are “loss-averse sentimentalists who, faced with even the simplest cognitive problem, prefer dodgy short cuts to careful analysis.” Exploring alternative representative systems that may better serve society’s interests, Bull argues that “[o]ne of the benefits of having a property qualification for the franchise [of voting] was that, by restricting political choice to those with capital, it served as a rough and ready mechanism for aligning democratic decision-making with market choice.”

⁷⁵ The pro-slavery writings of Fitzhugh were said to have raised the particular ire of Abraham Lincoln.

⁷⁶ Recent research has been published supporting Cash’s theory about a difference in character traits amongst those of the upper class that may give them economic and social advantages over those who would be classified as “lower-class individuals.” In an article entitled, “Higher social class predicts increased unethical behavior,” study authors report: “In follow-up laboratory studies, upper-class individuals were more likely to exhibit unethical decision-making tendencies (study 3), take valued goods from others (study 4), lie in a negotiation (study 5), cheat to increase their chances of winning a prize (study 6), and endorse unethical behavior at work (study 7) than were lower-class individuals. Mediator and moderator data demonstrated that upper-class individuals’ unethical tendencies are accounted for, in part, by their more favorable attitudes toward greed.” See P. K. Piff et al.’s “Higher Social Class Predicts Increased Unethical Behavior.” Future research would have to address if these character traits help individuals acquire their upper-class status or if the upper-class status influences the development of these traits. There has been speculation that a sense of over-confidence can play a role.

⁷⁷ Alabaman author and lawyer Daniel Hundley provides a satirical yet thought-provoking view of antebellum Southern class structure in his widely read book, *Social Relations In Our Southern States* (1860). Hundley’s classes included: the southern gentleman, the middle class, the southern Yankee, the cotton snobs, the southern yeoman, the southern bully, the white trash, and the slave. Michael O’Brien (“Class in the Old South”) discusses Hundley’s categories, which, according to O’Brien, are noteworthy for extending beyond socioeconomic considerations to include physical as well as social and behavior traits.

⁷⁸ In his essay “Class and the Old South,” Michael O’Brien briefly discusses the views of a few of the twentieth century scholars who wrote about Southern antebellum class structures. O’Brien credits Ulrich Phillips, who O’Brien describes as an “economic historian of labor,” with the notion that farmers who held 20 or more slaves were members of a planter class. According to O’Brien, later scholars differed from Phillips’s dual class approach but often also described rigid and vertical class structures. O’Brien contends that antebellum class structures were most likely more open and also influenced by behavioral, cultural, and racial considerations. (*The Many Souths*).

⁷⁹ Edward P. Jones’ 2003 Pulitzer Prize winning historical fiction novel *The Known World* features a mixed-race planter who is also a slaveholder.

⁸⁰ Written as a response to Southern critics who maintained that the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a gross misrepresentation of slavery and Southern society, the book's subtitle is evidence that the book is a true reflection of Stowe's convictions on the state and character of poor white Southern people: *Presenting the Original Facts and Documents upon Which the Story Is Founded, Together with Corroborative Statements Verifying the Truth of the Work*.

⁸¹ That poor Southern whites lacked education due to an agricultural system that led to settlements too sparse to establish schools echoed the assessment at the time by sociologist George Fitzhugh, who wrote in *Sociology of the South, or the Failure of Free Society* (1854): "This very property [that the poor protect but cannot hold themselves] has rendered the South merely agricultural, made population too sparse for neighborhood schools, prevented variety of pursuits, and thus cut the poor off as well from the means of living, as from the means of education" (144–145).

⁸² Recent research from scholars such as Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers indicates that while women lost their legal autonomy upon marriage under the doctrine of coverture, legal tools existed for them to protect their inheritances from seizure to pay off their husbands' debts and to continue to exert control over their estates. These included marriage contracts, deeds, wills, and trust agreements. See Elizabeth R. Varon's "White women's long-overlooked complicity in the brutality of slaveholding."

⁸³ According to Matthew Desmond, sociology professor at Princeton University, in a 2019 *New York Times* article entitled, "In order to understand the brutality of American capitalism, you have to start on the plantation," the value of enslaved persons in the United States exceeded the value of all of the railroads and factories combined.

⁸⁴ According to Mehrsa Baradaran, professor at U.C. Irvine School of Law, in a 2019 *New York Times* article entitled, "Cotton and the Global Market," Thomas Jefferson was able to finance the building of Monticello through by mortgaging 150 slaves. The loan was given by a Dutch firm.

⁸⁵ Matthew Desmond argues that cotton and the plantation business model was not only the basis of the United States economy at the time, but has influenced the evolution of "America's low-road approach to capitalism" still evident today. A system, according to Desmond, which favors low-priced goods over quality, punishment of workers over incentives and benefits, and inequity in wealth distribution. See Desmond, Matthew. "In order to understand the brutality of American capitalism, you have to start on the plantation." *The New York Times*, 14 Aug. 2019, pp. 1-4, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/slavery-capitalism.html.

⁸⁶ For a more in-depth look on the topic, see Mary L. Wilson's "Profiles in Evasion: Civil War Substitutes and the Men Who Hired them in Walker's Texas Division."

⁸⁷ Also see Albert Moore's *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* for a thorough analysis of conscription and its effects: "It produced moral turpitude, popular discontent, and class animosity; and [greatly reduced] the fighting strength of the Army."

⁸⁸ The ability (and irresistible temptation) to abuse this authority is illustrated in the Biblical story of King David and his loyal soldier, Uriah. While Uriah was away at battle, King

David impregnated Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. To conceal his transgressions, he ordered Uriah to be sent to the front lines of battle and thus killed his rival.

⁸⁹ See Paddy Griffith's "Civil War Cavalry: Missed Opportunity" for more on casualty differences between the cavalry and foot soldiers.

⁹⁰ Before the Civil War, not many taxes were levied on the American population in general. During the Civil War, to finance its military efforts, the North established the Internal Revenue Service in 1862 and imposed an income tax and other taxes which contributed to about 21% of its war expenses. Though the South also ended up introducing tax measures to pay for its war effort as well, it did so much later and the collected money only covered 1% of the South's war costs.

⁹¹ Although quinine and laudanum were used as anesthetic during the war, whiskey was one of the few medicines widely available. Though many Confederate states declared prohibition during the war to save supplies for medicinal use, such restrictions were often ignored and increased both cost and demand.

⁹² The legal quandary that arose through the classification of persons as property was evident in the case of Margaret Garner. Garner fled from a plantation in Kentucky to the North with her husband and four children. US Marshalls discovered the family in Ohio and sought to return them. Garner, desperate to keep her children free from bondage, killed her two-year-old and attempted to take her own life and those of the other children as well. The question arose during the trial whether she could be tried for murder or just for damaging property. Garner's tragic tale was later immortalized by both Harper in her 1859 poem, "Slave Mother: A Tale of Ohio" and Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Beloved* (1987).

⁹³ Under the Three-Fifths Compromise of 1787, found in Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3 of the US Constitution, when determining taxes and representation, a slave counted as 3/5 of a person. This increased the voting power of the southern states in the first US Congress in 1790 from 38% of the seats to 45 % of the seats and continued to influence southern power in government until the Emancipation Proclamation. Whether or not planters considered slaves as property or people depended on interest convergence.

⁹⁴ See Philip J. Schwarz's very interesting article on the topic: "Emancipators, Protectors, and Anomalies: Free Black Slaveowners in Virginia." Middleton Harris's *The Black Book* also describes how in 1862, when Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia, seven "colored" residents received compensation for 26 slaves (25).

⁹⁵ That legal sanctions are often dependent, not on culpability, but on the wealth and education of the perpetrator, is still evident in the US judicial system today (see work by Becky Pettit and Bruce Western).

⁹⁶ For modern readers, the passage may echo the sentiments of class tourism mentioned in the powerful 1995 rock hit "Common People" by the band Pulp and sung by William Shatner in which a privileged woman tells the singer, "I want to live like common people. I want to do whatever common people do." The singer takes her to a supermarket and tells her to pretend she has no money and she laughs and says, "Oh you're so funny." He then responds, "Yeah? Well I can't see anyone else smiling here."

⁹⁷ In 1910 Charles Davenport, a chicken breeder, inspired by the work of Francis Galton, founded the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) in Long Island, NY: The ERO became instrumental in introducing eugenic sterilization laws throughout the US that led to the sterilization of approximately 60,000 people who were deemed to be “socially inadequate.” See Norrgard, Karen. “Human Testing, the Eugenics Movement, and IRBs.” *Nature News*, Nature Education Publishing Group, 2008, www.nature.com/scitable/topicpage/human-testing-the-eugenics-movement-and-irbs-724/#.

⁹⁸ In anticipation of the film’s release, in the 31 January 1939 issue of the *Statesman Journal from Salem, Oregon*, a reviewer quotes psychologist Henry C. Link’s opinion on the appeal of *Gone with the Wind* to the general public and adds his own thoughts to these. Scarlett O’Hara was a heroine who, though “[LINK]: ‘in many ways not an admirable person, was a woman who remained forever the master of her world rather than its victim.’ [LINK END] Neither war, nor disappointment in love, nor scandal, nor starvation, nor the setting of fire to her home, nor the pain of childbirth, nor bloodshed; none of these catastrophes could daunt her spirit. Here was a woman who experienced in a short lifetime more tragedies than most people ever dream, who rushed to meet disaster and emerged with courage unimpaired.” (qtd. in Patricia Homer’s “Kinship: Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* and the Irish Big House Genre.”)

⁹⁹ Women in the United States would have to wait another 58 years to receive the right to vote in 1920.

¹⁰⁰ Historically, disinformation campaigns have often played an integral role in war machines. In WWII, the British broadcast radio transmissions throughout Nazi-occupied countries from a supposed disgruntled, high level Nazi officer known as “Der Chef” who spread “secret” (dis)information about the state of the Nazi administration and the Nazi war efforts. See Shaer, Matthew. “Fighting the Nazis with Fake News.” *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 1 Apr. 2017, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/fighting-nazis-fake-news-180962481/.

¹⁰¹ “Rape victim” becomes an integral part of the woman’s identity, forever binding her to her perpetrator.

¹⁰² For Adams, however, the “natural aristocracy” was confined to men only. See letter of 28 October 1813 from Jefferson to Adams (<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-06-02-0446>).

¹⁰³ Ashley states: “The people who have brains and courage come through and the ones who haven’t are winnowed out. At least, it has been interesting, if not comfortable, to witness a Gotterdammerung. ... Unfortunately, we Southerners did think we were gods” (496).

¹⁰⁴ Allen Tate, in his 1936 essay “Notes on Liberty and Property” argues that the loss of private property (as it existed, for example, throughout the South in the form of farms and plantations) in favor of corporations was not only symbolic of the classic Hamilton vs. Jefferson struggle but indicative of a trend that put the liberty of private American individuals at risk as dispersed ownership lessened individual responsibility and liberties and marched the nation towards collective control.

¹⁰⁵ See: Smelser, Neil, et al., editors. “Chapter 6: Racial Trends in Labor Market Access and Wages: Women.” *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences, Volume II*, by Cecilia Conrad, National Academies Press, 2001, pp. 124–151.

¹⁰⁶ Decades later, in 1955, 14-year-old Emmett Till was brutally lynched in Mississippi for supposedly, upon a dare, whistling at and making lewd advances at Carolyn Bryant, a white woman working in a local store. Till’s two murderers, two local white men related to Bryant, were tried and cleared of all charges by an all-white jury. Years later Carolyn Bryant recanted her story saying that Till had never touched her.

¹⁰⁷ The implication of Reddy’s taunting is made all the more unsavory as readers later discover that Sumner is actually Di-Peachy’s half-brother. Though in *High Hearts*, Reddy’s insinuations are false, in the antebellum South, given the widespread abuse of enslaved men and women, such incestual transgressions would have been not only conceivable but most likely prevalent. The prevention of such occurrences may have been another motivation for planters to “trade” their racially-mixed offspring with other planters.

¹⁰⁸ The term “intersectionality” was actually coined by the black feminist scholar Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989 and addresses the ways in which gender, race, class, disability, and more mix together with one another to form distinctive social identities for individuals and groups.

¹⁰⁹ The people of a town in Western Arkansas seem to have turned the “hillbilly” label into one of pride. Ozark High School in northern Franklin County is located on Hillbilly Drive and the school mascot is a Hillbilly donning purple overalls and armed with a shotgun.

¹¹⁰ See Genesis 9:18 -27: “[Noah] planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, ‘Curse be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.’ He also said, ‘Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave. God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave.’” (Standard, Bible English. revised. *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version*. Collins, 1971.)

¹¹¹ The lasting legacy of the one-drop rule is still evident today. The most recent example of one-drop race classification is the labeling of President Barack Obama as the first black president. Though Stanley Ann Dunham, Barack Obama’s mother, was from Kansas and primarily of English ancestral origin and would have been racially classified as “white” and his father, Barack Obama Sr. was from Kenya and would have been racially classified as “black,” President Obama is widely considered the first “black” president of the United States.

¹¹² Interestingly, under French rule in places like New Orleans, when a slave owner or white man fathered a child with a slave or black woman, the child was born free. These offspring would form a group of people who would become known as creoles, or “gens de couleur”, or free people of color. See James Nagel’s *Race and Culture in New Orleans Stories: Kate Chopin, Grace King, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, and George Washington Cable* (2014).

¹¹³ The Union had a population of 22 million at the beginning of the war. The North outnumbered the South four to one in military-age white males.

¹¹⁴ Cash's estimates do not coincide with numbers provided to the US Census in 1860 which classifies only 12.3% of all "coloreds" living in the Southern slaveholding states as "mulatto." It is conceivable, however, that because the figures given in the census were no doubt provided by planters, that the true number of "mulatto" slaves was not provided.

¹¹⁵ As previously mentioned, slaves could not legally marry but they often held ceremonies such as "jumping over the broom" to indicate a couple's commitment to one another as husband and wife.

¹¹⁶ Two books on the Curse of Ham story as justification for slavery in the South are: David M. Goldenberg's *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* and Stephen R. Haynes's *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*.

¹¹⁷ An interesting aspect of this is also how present-day measures against racial discrimination, such as federal affirmative action policies, which are inherently race-conscious, address issues of race. Should racial categorizations be self-identifying and if so, why did the case of Rachel Dolezal, who self-identified as black and headed a chapter of the NAACP but seems to have no "black blood," fuel such a national debate? For a thought-provoking article addressing race and affirmative action see Eghosa Asemota's "When Affirmative Action Becomes Diversity Only."

¹¹⁸ As previously mentioned, however, the official US Census of 1860 shows a much smaller amount of mixed-race people living in the South in 1860 (about 518,360 people).

¹¹⁹ According to Fox-Genovese in *Within the Plantation Household*, in the 1860s, well over 90% of all slaves were illiterate (295).

¹²⁰ In the 2019 film entitled, "Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am," Toni Morrison explains that as a writer, she never strove to speak *for* black people, but rather *to* black people because so many books by well-known black authors always seemed to be written for either a white audience or in deference to the "white gaze".

¹²¹ See J. C. Scott's discussion (p 52) about public vs. private transcript.

¹²² It's conceivable that the character of "Aunt Aisley" was inspired by the legendary Marie Laveau, who dominated the black community as the "Voodoo Queen" of New Orleans for at least forty years in the 1800s and was written about in various newspapers throughout the country, including page 3 of *The Richmond Daily Palladium* on 24 Feb 1900: "She had wonderful knowledge of the toxic properties of herbs and roots and no less marvelous skill in extracting and compounding these poisons. For gain or revenge, for black or white, she was always ready to use her skill and was feared by every negro in the city and surrounding country as a dealer in black art."

¹²³ Just as Hannah Arendt argued that there is nothing more evil than an unthinking bureaucrat acting as a mere cog in administrative machinery, those who suffered slavery might also argue that there is nothing more evil than a devout slaveholder acting in the conviction of a right endowed by a higher, spiritual power.

¹²⁴ Evidence of the lingering and widespread racist association of the label “negro” with poverty can be found in the words of the first black soccer player of Austria’s national team in the 1960s. When team salaries remained unpaid, Waldemar Graciano Jacaré, in an interview on national television, pulled out both of his pant pockets and smiling into the camera declared, “Today I am double negro.” Fortunately, in a small sign of social advancement, it is currently considered inappropriate in Austria to use “negro” as a synonymous term for being broke.

¹²⁵ The scene calls to mind the climactic encounter in the 1950 B&W film, “The Third Man,” (based on a novella by Graham Greene) between the main character, Holly Martins, and his old long-believed-to-be-dead friend Harry Lime high up in the air in a cabin of the Vienna Prater Ferris Wheel. Holly accuses Harry of being the mastermind behind a money-making, murderous racket which steals hard-to-get life-saving penicillin from military hospitals, and then sells a diluted version of it on the black market to the highest bidders. Harry Lime nonchalantly points to the unsuspecting carnival goers below and unapologetically explains to his old friend that none of those dots matter because no one really cares if a few disappear.

¹²⁶ Mitchell penned her views in response to the NYC Communist newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, which criticized producer, David Selznick, in 1937 for his interest in filming the book.

¹²⁷ For a thorough and interesting look at the importance Mitchell placed on dialect, see Anita Price Davis’s *The Margaret Mitchell Encyclopedia*.

¹²⁸ See James Scott’s *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcript*.

¹²⁹ In his thesis on the 1872 West Virginian Constitutional Convention, Richard Hartmann writes about the “zealous administering of disenfranchisement” in West Virginia which disenfranchised most former Confederate soldiers (17). The “Wade-Davis” bill (which passed votes in both the House and Senate before Lincoln’s pocket veto in July 1864) would have required a fifty percent loyalty threshold by white males in each Southern state before allowing the state to admission to representation in the Union and no doubt exacerbated Southern loathing for the North (See Elizabeth R. Varon’s *Armies of Deliverance: A New History of the Civil War* (2019)). The Military Reconstruction Act of March 2, 1867, which was the first of four reconstruction acts, passed into law over President Andrew Johnson’s veto. The Act placed the states of the former Confederacy (except Tennessee) under the command of the U.S. Army, oversaw the first election allowing freed black men to vote and temporarily disenfranchised white ex-Confederate soldiers.

¹³⁰ William Faulkner’s short story “Dry September” (1931) masterfully portrays the frenzied blood-lust that grips a vigilante-motivated mob of small town white Southern men out to avenge the purported rape of a white local townswoman. Although serious doubts are cast if the accused black man committed any kind of crime, sin, or impropriety, any voice of reason bold enough to defend the black man’s presumed innocence is immediately silenced with accusations of being a “niggerloving Northerner.”

¹³¹ See an interesting look at such sentiments in Timothy M. Griffiths’s “Bricolage Propriety: The Queer Practice of Black Uplift, 1890–1905”. He mentions an employee of the Department of Interior who corresponded with Thomas Nelson Page about the need to

send black people back to Africa because their presence in the United States was “unnatural” (81).

¹³² Vagrancy laws authorized the arrest of people without a fixed abode or known means of livelihood whose labor was then sold for pennies under convict leasing programs. Although convict leasing was officially prohibited in 1928, the practice of selling the work of prisoners to corporations for a very small amount of money, still persists in many states. Ironically, prisoners who work for corporations, hardly earn anything at all but do earn while those forced to work for the prisons often do so for free. California has an inmate program in which prisoners receive about 2 USD–5 USD a day plus an extra 1 USD an hour to battle the state’s dangerous forest fires. See <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/10/california-wildfire-coronavirus-prison-incarcerated-firefighters>.

¹³³ The term “Koon” or “Coon” was a disparaging word used for black people most likely derived from Portuguese barracoos, which, according to *The Facts on File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*, refers to “buildings especially constructed to hold slaves for sale.” The website “Online Etymology Dictionary” adds: “If so, no doubt this was boosted by the enormously popular blackface minstrel act Zip Coon (George Washington Dixon) which debuted in New York City in 1834. But it is perhaps older—one of the lead characters in the 1767 colonial comic opera “The Disappointment” is a black man named Raccoon.”

¹³⁴ Authors’ unique ability, through writing tools such as point-of-view, omniscient narrator, and interior monologue, grant readers access to “true” and “free” hidden discourse. Such devices expose the multifaceted layers of power in relationships and allow readers to become privy to the dynamics of and discrepancies in sanctioned public discourse and unsanctioned hidden discourse. If history books are largely products of cultural hegemony in which interior monologue is silenced along with the hidden transcripts, then perhaps historical fiction novels can help us connect to a more defined image of our past. Though diaries such as Mary Boykin Chestnut’s are revealing in this respect, the never-ending presence of the real or imagined censures that all writers contend with, even in intimate writing environments such as diaries, will invariably also limit our ability to ever fully attain any kind of historical truth. The best we can possibly hope for is narrowing the gap between the truth of reality and how we are able to perceive and interpret that truth for ourselves, each other, and future generations.

¹³⁵ See Zora Neale Hurston’s “How It Feels to Be Colored Me.”

¹³⁶ According to Michael O’Brien in “Class and the Old South,” antebellum Southerners were more likely to view the relationship between black and white people on Southern farms as “master-servant” relationships than “master-slave” relationships because it was “closer to the vision of an Elizabethan household than a Roman galley” (*The Many Souths* 4).

¹³⁷ The Union also attempted to racially discriminate against black soldiers in regards to pay. National Archive documents show the case of Private Sylvester Ray of the 2nd US Colored Cavalry who in June 1864 was recommended for trial for refusing to accept less pay than white soldiers. That same month, the US Congress retroactively granted equal pay to the US Colored troops. See <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war/equal-pay.html>

¹³⁸ This can also be found in chapter 7 (pp. 47–53) of Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Written by Himself*.

¹³⁹ Some scholars argue that Prissy’s ignorance is feigned and an act of subversion.

¹⁴⁰ From: 3 Suntrust Bank, 136 F. Supp. 2d at 1376 (quoting the former cover to Alice Randall, *The Wind Done Gone* (Uncorrected Proof/Advance Read) qtd. in “‘Gone with the Wind Done Gone’: ‘Re-Writing’ and Fair Use.”

¹⁴¹ A 2008 interview in *Time Magazine* quotes Brown as saying that she thinks we are all degrees of bi-sexual (Sachs).

¹⁴² The 1980 US Census was the first US census that allowed someone other than the husband to be listed as “head of households.”

¹⁴³ See Davis, Angela Y.. *Women, Race & Class*, Penguin Random House UK, 1981, p 32.

¹⁴⁴ The term *Bildungsroman* was coined by Karl von Morgenstern sometime around 1820 in his lectures entitled “Essence” and “History” and describes novels that follow a young hero or heroine on his or her life journey as he or she confronts and overcomes difficulties which contribute to his or her development of an identity and maturity into adulthood.

¹⁴⁵ Davidson, Cathy N., Linda Wagner-Martin, and Elizabeth Ammons. *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.

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VIII. ENGLISH SUMMARY

Thirteen years following the Seneca Falls Convention that feminist-wave theorists regard as the beginning of first-wave feminism, the US Civil War raged from 1861–1865. The smoke of the battle-ridden South forged a “New Woman” (decades before its 1894 coinage) whose survival demanded her to escape the “Cult of True Womanhood” along with the mores and rules set forth by the white male-dominated society of the pre-war period. Eight historical fiction novels written by women about women are compared and contrasted in relation to how they have portrayed women’s social roles and relationships in the changing era of the Civil War period. Particular attention has been paid to whether the publication time of the novel, along with its classification in a particular feminist-wave era, seems to have affected the subject matter covered. First, in light of feminist criticism, this paper examines women, family, and gender roles during the Civil War era and how these are reflected (or not) in the novels. By exploring the differentiated challenges and problems that white, black, and racially-mixed women faced, the selected novels redefine the outdated role model for Southern womanhood. Female figures encapsulate the “Southern woman” seen anew. The complexity of the overall picture helps us to recognize not only the many dangers and disappointments, but also the resilience and strength of individuals amongst these characters. Using questions raised by neo-Marxist criticism, a look is taken at how the novels deal with the subject matter of class, property, and women. Last, this paper uses aspects of critical race theory to analyze how the novels reflect the socio-cultural forces at work in relation to women and race during the Civil War period. The following eight novels are examined: (1) *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted* (1892); (2) *The Battle-Ground* (1902); (3) *The Wave* (1929); (4) *Gone with the Wind* (1936); (5) *Jubilee* (1966); (6) *High Hearts* (1986); (7) *The Wind Done Gone* (2001); and (8) *Enemy Women* (2002).

IX. GERMAN SUMMARY

Dreizehn Jahre nach der Seneca Falls Convention, die von Theoretikerinnen als der Beginn der ersten *Welle* des Feminismus angesehen wird, wütete von 1861 bis 1865 der US-Bürgerkrieg. Die Kriegswirren im Süden formten auch eine "Neue Frau" (Jahrzehnte vor der Begriffsprägung 1894), die dem "Cult of True Womanhood" sowie den Sitten und Regeln der von weißen Männern dominierten Gesellschaft der Vorkriegszeit entkommen wollte.

In der vorliegenden Arbeit werden acht historische Romane, die von Frauen über Frauen geschrieben wurden, einander gegenübergestellt. Soziale Rollen und Beziehungen von Frauen in der sich wandelnden Ära der Bürgerkriegszeit werden verglichen und analysiert. Besonderes Augenmerk wird darauf gelegt, ob die Erscheinungszeit des Romans und die Einordnung in eine bestimmte Epoche einer feministischen *Welle*, Einfluss auf die behandelte Thematik hatte. Im Lichte der feministischen Kritik untersucht die Arbeit zunächst die Frauen-, Familien- und Geschlechterrollen während der Bürgerkriegszeit und analysiert, ob und wie sich diese Rollen in den Romanen widerspiegeln. In den gewählten Romanen werden die Ablösung des überholten Rollenbildes und die differenzierten Herausforderungen und Probleme der weißen, schwarzen bzw. der zwischen den Ethnien stehenden Frauengestalten untersucht, wobei das komplexe Gesamtbild die vielen Gefahren und Enttäuschungen, aber auch die Resilienz und die Stärke einzelner unter diesen Figuren erkennen lässt. Des Weiteren wird anhand von Fragen, die von der marxistischen Kritik aufgeworfen wurden, untersucht, wie die Romane mit dem Thema soziale Klasse, Eigentum und Frauen umgehen. Schließlich wird anhand von Aspekten der kritischen Rassentheorie analysiert, wie die Romane die soziokulturellen Kräfte widerspiegeln, die in Bezug auf Frauen und Rasse während der Bürgerkriegszeit gewirkt haben.

Die folgenden acht Romane wurden analysiert: (1) *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted* (1892); (2) *The Battle-Ground* (1902); (3) *The Wave* (1929); (4) *Gone with the Wind* (1936); (5) *Jubilee* (1966); (6) *High Hearts* (1986); (7) *The Wind Done Gone* (2001); und (8) *Enemy Women* (2002).