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MEETING AT THE THRESHOLD: SLAVERY'S INFLUENCE ON HOSPITALITY AND BLACK PERSONHOOD IN LATE-ANTEBELLUM AMERICAN LITERATURE

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MEETING AT THE THRESHOLD: SLAVERY'S INFLUENCE ON HOSPITALITY AND BLACK PERSONHOOD IN LATE-ANTEBELLUM AMERICAN LITERATURE

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
Rebecca Wiltberger Wiggins

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Armando Prats, Professor of English

Lexington, Kentucky

2018

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

MEETING AT THE THRESHOLD: SLAVERY'S INFLUENCE ON HOSPITALITY AND BLACK PERSONHOOD IN LATE-ANTEBELLUM AMERICAN LITERATURE

In my dissertation, I argue that both white and black authors of the late-1850s and early-1860s used scenes of race-centered hospitality in their narratives to combat the pervasive stereotypes of black inferiority that flourished under the influence of chattel slavery. The wide-spread scenes of hospitality in antebellum literature—including shared meals, entertaining overnight guests, and business meetings in personal homes—are too inextricably bound to contemporary discussions of blackness and whiteness to be ignored. In arguing for the humanizing effects of playing host or guest as a black person, my project joins the work of literary scholars from William L. Andrews to Keith Michael Green who argue for broader and more complex approaches to writers' strategies for recognizing the full personhood of African Americans in the mid-nineteenth century.

In the last fifteen to twenty years, hospitality theory has reshaped social science research, particularly around issues of race, immigration, and citizenship. In literary studies, scholars are only now beginning to mine the ways that theorists from diverse backgrounds—including continental philosophers such as Derrida and Levinas, womanist philosopher and theologian N. Lynne Westerfield, and post-colonial writers and scholars such as Tahar Ben Jelloun—can expand the reading of nineteenth century literature by examining the discourse and practice of hospitality. When host and guest meet at the threshold they must acknowledge the full personhood of the other; the relationship of hospitality is dependent on beginning in a state of equilibrium grounded in mutual respect. In this project I argue that because of the acknowledgement of mutual humanness required in acts of hospitality, hospitality functions as a humanizing narrative across the spectrum of antebellum black experience: slave and free, male and female, uneducated and highly educated.

In chapter one, "Unmasking Southern Hospitality: Discursive Passing in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*," I examine Stowe's use of a black fugitive slave host who behaves like a southern gentleman to undermine the ethos of southern honor culture and to disrupt the ideology that supports chattel slavery. In chapter two, "Transformative Hospitality and Interracial Education in Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*," I examine how the race-centered scenes of hospitality in Frank J. Webb's 1857 novel *The Garies and Their Friends* creates educational opportunities where northern racist ideology can be uncovered and rejected by white men and women living close to, but still outside, the free black community of Philadelphia. In the final chapter, "Slavery's Subversion of Hospitality in Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," I examine how Linda Brent's engagement in acts of hospitality (both as guest and host) bring to light the warping influence of chattel slavery on hospitality in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

In conclusion, my project reframes the practices of antebellum hospitality as yet another form of nonviolent everyday resistance to racist ideology rampant in both the North and the South. This project furthers the ways that American literature scholars understand active resistance to racial oppression in the nineteenth century, putting hospitality on an equal footing with other subversive practices, such as learning to read or racial passing.

KEYWORDS: Antebellum American Literature, Slavery in Literature, Hospitality in Literature, American Women Writers, African American Writers

Rebecca Wiltberger Wiggins

November 30, 2018
Date

MEETING AT THE THRESHOLD: SLAVERY'S INFLUENCE ON HOSPITALITY AND BLACK PERSONHOOD IN LATE-ANTEBELLUM AMERICAN LITERATURE

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Chapter One: Introduction: “Is dis you, my frien’?”—Hospitality and Slavery

For nineteenth-century writers concerned with issues of race and sectional division, the Dred Scott decision of 1857 was a pivotal moment in history. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney’s opinion put into law the belief commonly held by white Americans in the inferiority of black humanity and the necessity for the exclusion of all black Americans, slave or free, from citizenship in the nation. Justice Taney wrote the following about African Americans:

> They had a century before been regarded as being of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it. (*Dred Scott* 19)

With this official opinion Justice Taney gave the force of law to the belief that African Americans were inherently inferior and must be barred from legal and social relationships of mutual humanity with their white neighbors. Justice Taney, echoing the mores of the honor culture of the South, pronounced that African Americans were not only deemed inherently inferior but they also deserved no respect whatsoever.

The Dred Scott decision demanded a response. In my dissertation I investigate how writers of fictional texts rebut Justice Taney’s ruling on the intractable inferiority of African Americans. The nature of personhood explored in the following chapters goes beyond the limits of legal existence, however. The issues faced by the African American

participants in hospitality range widely, from internal wrestling with identity to questions of relational interdependence and one's place in community; and in every instance, exploring the mutual humanity that the practice of hospitality requires its participants to recognize. In this project I examine how a selection of nineteenth century writers incorporate scenes of black hospitality into their narratives to humanize the black host or guest and emphasize their equal personhood with white members of society. Additionally, these scenes of hospitality challenge the legal and social limitations placed on black men, women, and children. In this project I examine three texts: Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1856 novel *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, Frank J. Webb's 1857 novel *The Garies and Their Friends*, and Harriet Jacob's 1861 fictionalized slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. African American writers such as Frank J. Webb and Harriet Jacobs create compelling portraits of black hosts and guests that demonstrate the full personhood of African Americans, both slave and free. Narrative responses are not limited to the writings of African Americans, however, and a close examination of Harriet Beecher Stowe's second novel, *Dred*, reveals that white women writers were also working against the dehumanizing rhetoric of slavery exemplified in the Dred Scott decision.

Hospitality in Brief

Hospitality as a social practice has played an important role in American history, but it is only in the last few years that scholars have begun talking about it in relationship

to nineteenth century American literature.[1] The ubiquity of the tropes of hospitality in texts of this period often cause scenes of hospitality to fade into the background in literary analysis. In this project I bring these often-overlooked scenes of hospitality to the forefront and expand the growing discussion surrounding their use in American literature by shining a light on the role that blackness plays in the practice and understanding of hospitality in the mid-nineteenth century. More specifically, I argue that understanding how nineteenth century writers use the tropes of hospitality in narratives about slaves and free black men and women might help us to better understand the variety of ways these writers established the personhood of African Americans in the mid-nineteenth century.

The three major tropes of hospitality can be briefly described as follows: First, the host is the person in control of a space and the one who has the power to welcome or refuse those desiring entrance. Second, the guest stands in counterpoint to the host, a person on the opposite side of the threshold requesting entry or, conversely, present in the space of the host under his or her sufferance or welcome. In the relationship between host and guest, recognition of the other is required to negotiate who has authority in the space and who has the right to welcome or refuse welcome. Third, a threshold is either a neutral or contested space between the host and the guest that must be crossed in order for both to come into relationship with each other. In hospitality, recognition of personhood is necessary to support and enforce the host's authority over his or her space, but recognition of the personhood of the guest is also essential to positioning the guest in

[1] See Hannah (2010), Mastroianni (2013), Stamant (2013), Szczesiul (2007, 2011), and Cynthia Williams (2014) for recent examples of the types of arguments made about hospitality in American literature.

relation to the host and the larger community. This negotiation is clearly seen in Martin Delany's *Blake*, a text contemporary to the ones my dissertation examines more closely.

> "Who dat?" enquired Aunt Rachel, as Henry softly rapped at the back window.
>
> "A friend!" was the reply.
>
> "What saut frien' dat go sneak roun' people back windah stid comin' to de doh!"
>
> "Hush, ole umin, yeh too fas'! how yeh know who 'tis? Frien', come roun' to de doh," said the old man.
>
> Passing quickly around, the door was opened, a blazing hot fire shining full in his face, the old man holding in his hand a heavy iron poker in the attitude of defense.
>
> "Is dis you, my frien'?" enquired Uncle Jerry, to whom Henry was an entire stranger.
>
> "Yes, uncle, this is me," replied he.
>
> "God bless yeh, honey! Come in; we didn know 'twos you, chile! God bless de baby!" added Aunt Rachel. "Ole man, heah yeh comin' an' we been lookin' all day long. Dis evenin' I get some suppeh, an' I dun'o if yeh come uh no" (Delany 88-89)

When the slaves of Arkansas greet the fugitive slave Blake at the threshold of their hut, they greet him simply with "Is dis you, my frien?" This greeting allows them to name him "friend" and assert his connection to their community while also questioning his presence on their doorstep. Blake's respectful response, including using the title "uncle" when addressing the host, indicates that he recognizes their authority in their home and

that he, as an outsider, is only welcome if they choose to invite him in. The way that hosts and guests negotiate the space of the host's home can either challenge or reinforce the power hierarchies central to mid-nineteenth century American society. At the threshold, the host can either recognize and welcome or refuse the guest, and the guest can either accept the welcome or choose to leave.

For the writers examined in my dissertation, hospitality is an essential part of their narratives, with frequent or pivotal scenes giving precedence to specific enactments of hospitality ritual and practice. Traditionally recognized acts of hospitality, such as formal dinners, house parties, or local celebrations, are usually hosted by the most dominant male in the scene, usually a white landowner with education and a good pedigree. In the texts I examine, however, a significant portion of the acts of hospitality are hosted not by a dominant white male character, or by the female relative acting as hostess in his name, but by slaves and free black men and women, actors whose marginalized social position should limit the authority they can wield in scenes of hospitality. By appropriating the role of host or guest and using it to negotiate relationships with individuals who may be more powerful or possibly even enemies, these marginalized hosts and guests force recognition of their humanity and disrupt the binary thinking about their race that feeds the social divides surrounding them.

Disruptive expressions of hospitality include the hosting of white children and a wounded white man in a fugitive slave retreat in the swamp, slave to slave hospitality in the form of shared meals and overnight visits, and even formal visits between white and black men in the home of a socially prominent free black man. These scenes mimic some of the practices of majority culture hospitality, but without the expected markers of a

prominent white host in control of a well-equipped home. These disruptive expressions of hospitality allow black men and women to take positions of authority in relationship to other men and women, both black and white. This is a major upheaval in conventional relationships of hospitality, especially in the South. Under the paternalism implicit in slavery, the blackness of a slave relegated him or her to the position of dependent family member, albeit a second or third class family member at best.[2] As Tahar Ben Jelloun argues, hospitality is not available to family or household members, only to the stranger or guest outside of family bonds; and as all black men and women were viewed as simultaneously dependent and family regardless of their actual relationship to a white person, they were by their very nature excluded from any practice of hospitality.[3] The derisive appellation of "son" or "boy," or even the slightly more respectful "uncle," effectively barred a black man from creating the distance needed between himself and a white man to establish his individual personhood. Without the ability to hold an individual identity, it is impossible to have control of your own person; therefore, one is barred from entering into the practice of hospitality. Thus, racialized markers of blackness, such as skin tone and hair texture—and the accompanying stripping of the individuality of black persons that accompanied them—meant the permanent exclusion from the role of host or guest and the limiting of personal authority through enforced marginalization.

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[2] This argument is explored at greater length in chapters one and three.

[3] *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants* (1999)

Hospitality is disruptive in the context of both Northern and Southern expressions of racism. Chapter one, which examines Stowe's novel *Dred*, focuses primarily on the way that the fugitive slave host undermines the expectations of southern honor culture, destabilizing the narrative of Southern hospitality. Even under the constraints of Southern paternalism there is evidence that slaves asserted their right to play host to each other, and thus reclaim their humanity and some level of authority denied them by practices of Southern hospitality. As Stowe shows, slaves practice forms of hospitality that engage not only with Southern ideals of honor and generosity towards their guest, but with a variety of forms of personhood and a complex understanding of blackness in the face of widely accepted stereotypes of inferiority. In fact, I argue that, like the reclaiming of freedom and history that Russ Castronovo indicates is a characteristic of African American writers' "discursive passing," writing a black slave host into a text is another way that writers of the 1850s claim a presence for blackness in the historical narrative and practice of Southern hospitality.[4] If discursive passing is an essential move to trouble the traditional narratives of early American history that elide the presence of blackness, then the black host is an important disruption in the narrative of Southern honor culture, epitomized by the white patriarchal host. The relationship between slavery and hospitality is developed further in chapter three, which examines Jacobs's narrative

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[4] For Castronovo, discursive passing occurs when a black writer inserts him or herself into historical moments where traditionally black presence is minimized or completely elided. Discursive passing also happens when traditional historical figures, especially the founding fathers or George Washington himself, are used as part of an ensemble cast in an African American narrative. This is an act of passing because in this writing black characters are now actively part of a culture from which they are formally excluded. Castronovo makes this argument in his 1995 monograph, *Fathering the Nation*.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. For Jacobs, the presence of a slave as host or guest in the community in which she calls home shines a light on the ways that slavery warps the practice of hospitality, regardless of whether the host is slave or free. While slavery was economically essential to the support of southern hospitality, it also undermines the very essence of hospitality, forcing participants into physically, emotionally, and psychologically damaging positions.

Accordingly, the narrative of the black host disrupts not only the dehumanization of African Americans under Southern social mores, but also racist ideologies of the free states. Chapter two, which examines Webb's novel *The Garies and Their Friends*, lays out the ways that interracial hospitality in the free North can transform the racist ideology present there as well. As Michael Bennett argues, radical abolitionists of the North inextricably tied race and democracy together, working from the margins of political discourse of the antebellum period in an attempt to replace partial democratic forms with a democracy for all people, regardless of race or gender.[5] Racial abolitionists were a minority in the North, however, and sympathy with southern ideals as well as ingrained racist assumptions shaped the relationships between black and white neighbors in the North. I argue that the black host living in freedom from slavery is essential to understanding the relationship between blackness and personhood in the antebellum North. For Frank J. Webb, creating narratives that highlight the role of the free black host or guest forces characters within the text and the readers outside the text to wrestle

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[5] *Democratic Discourses: The Radical Abolition Movement and Antebellum American Literature* (2005)

with their understanding of the humanity of African Americans. When wealth, culture, and control of property is associated with black individuals and communities, the social practice of dehumanizing African Americans must be defended or rejected. When he describes a black host engaging in hospitality with white men on equal terms, Webb participates in the arguments about the mutability of blackness by attributing white characteristics to an undeniably black character and thus troubles racist ideologies of the North at a foundational level.

The pervasiveness of scenes of hospitality in antebellum literature and narratives about the antebellum period are too inextricably bound to discussions of blackness and whiteness to be ignored. In arguing for the humanizing effects of playing host or guest as a black person, my analysis joins that of other scholars who complicate the research on the ways that writers humanized blackness in the mid-nineteenth century. No discussion of humanizing narratives would be complete without referencing William L. Andrews foundational text on African American slave narratives, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865*. Andrews argues that African American writers use the narratives of spiritual conversion, violence, self-purchase, and literacy as primary modes of narrative humanization. While these were the four most prominent narratives analyzed by early scholars of African American literature, Diana Pazicky is one of a more recent cadre of scholars broadening and deepening our understanding of how narratives are used to humanize African Americans. She argues that it is not just literacy, but being educated into participation in the capitalist economy

that effectively moves a slave from property to person.[6] In particular, Pazicky emphasizes narratives in which slaves not only purchase themselves, but go on to acquire tools and skills that let them participate in the local economy through skilled labor or producing products and materials needed by the community. This participation in the local economy is an implicit support of the personhood of African Americans as they engage with their black and white neighbors in a meaningful and remunerative way.

Twenty-first century scholars continue to explore the growing variety of narratives that can be read as literary attempts to humanize African Americans. Keith Green argues that the list of humanizing narratives articulated by Williams must expand to include stories of bondage intended to generate sympathy among white readers.[7] He notes, "writing about bondage functioned as a humanizing discourse, transforming despised black subjects into more acceptable ones" (8). Green further argues that narratives of bondage "generat[e] sympathy and respectability for despised black subjects" as well as giving them a "stage on which they can declare their desire for freedom and moral rectitude" (8-9). For Green and other recent scholars, humanizing African Americans can also be tied to attempts to gain respectability. As Brannon Costello notes, respectability is a loaded term tied both to the performance of social norms of a certain class and the way that this performance is accepted or rejected by

---

[6] Diana Loercher Pazicky, *Cultural Orphans in America* (1998)

[7] Keith Michael Green, *Bound to Respect: Antebellum Narratives of Black Imprisonment, Servitude, and Bondage, 1816-1861* (2015)

those with power and authority.[8] Subjective and illusive, respectability often escapes those trying to perform it because of subtle missteps or because of individual or communal denial of respectability claims. Even though it is unpredictable and of uncertain value, respectability is also central to the work of Timothy Buckner, who argues that the combination of both successful participation in the capitalist economy and a lifestyle of middle-class virtues is another narrative used by black individuals to overcome the assumed inferiority of their blackness and be integrated into local society.[9] Whether the emphasis is on education, material success, or something more ephemeral and indefinite, these scholars focus either on the conversion of slaves from property to person *or* the contested social position of free black individuals. I posit, however, that hospitality functions as a humanizing narrative across the spectrum of antebellum black experience: from slave to free, uneducated to highly educated, and between male and female participants. As I will demonstrate, playing host or guest, and the negotiations of personhood inherent in relationships of hospitality, are an essential addition to Williams's (and Green's) list of humanizing narratives.

Hospitality Theory

What is hospitality? Hospitality is the practice of welcoming the stranger. It is also the gathering of friends and family to strengthen bonds of mutuality and trust.

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[8] In *Plantation Airs: Racial Paternalism and the Transformations of Class in Southern Fiction, 1945-1971* (2007)

[9] Timothy R Buckner. "A Crucible of Masculinity: William Johnson's Barbershop and the Making of Free Black Men in the Antebellum South." *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men: Black Masculinity in U. S. History and Literature, 1820-1945.* Timothy R Buckner and Peter Caster, eds. (2011)

Hospitality is the opposite, for Henri Nouwen, of hostility. It is "to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become fellow human beings" (Nouwen 65). Hospitality is a place, a space, and an act, that allows for the knowing of each other and the giving of oneself and one's possessions to provide for another. It is a host inviting a guest across the threshold and into a space of openness, nourishment, and rest. As Christine Pohl argues,

> hospitality was understood to encompass physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of human existence and relationships. … Hospitality, because it was such a fundamental human practice, always included family, friends, and influential contacts. The distinctive Christian contribution was the emphasis on including the poor and neediest, the ones who could not return the favor (*Making Room* 6).

This combination of the routine entertainment of family and friends and the sacrificial care of the needy is part of what sets hospitality grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition apart from the self-serving hospitality of those who use it primarily as a tool to support their prestige and to facilitate relationships of mutual use among their peers or superiors.

This project is informed by varied critical voices of hospitality theory. From the simple doorways of slave homes in *Incidents* to the imposing front door of the Walters home in *The Garies and Their Friends*, the give and take that happens between host and guest in threshold spaces has a profound effect on the identity and authority of the individuals and communities that meet there. In particular, my project relies on insights

from the later work of Jacques Derrida,[10] Tahar Ben Jelloun's incisive commentary as an Algerian writer living and working in France,[11] N. Lynne Westerfield's African American womanist theories of hospitality,[12] and a variety of theologians and scholars who have examined the Judeo-Christian historical roots of hospitality practices and theory.[13] Hospitality theory has been a fruitful and active critical perspective in fields as varied as cultural anthropology, sociology, political philosophy, and gender studies, but it has been more slowly applied to literary studies. In examining blackness through the lens of hospitality, I have found Derrida's arguments for the precarious position of the host and the radical and sacrificial nature of offering welcome essential in examining historical practices of hospitality. While a basic view of hospitality assumes that all the power rests with the host, Derrida explores how the demand for hospitality inherent in the guest's position on the threshold can actually entrap the host. When considering the power disparities between black and white actors engaging in acts of hospitality, this critical insight invites a reconsideration of how power is moving between the host and the guest in subtle and unexpected ways. While Derrida's deconstructionist perspective is useful in undermining the expectation of traditional power dynamics in hospitality, it was

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[10] By Jacques Derrida: "Hostipitality" (2000), "The Principle of Hospitality" (2005). *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (2001). With Anne Dufourmantelle: *Of Hospitality* (2000). By Judith Still and Jacques Derrida *Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (2010).

[11] *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants* (1999)

[12] *Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality* (2007)

[13] This final grouping includes the following texts: *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (1975) by Henri Nouwen, *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (2001) by Amy Oden, and *I Was a Stranger: A Christian Theology of Hospitality* (2006) by Arthur Sutherland.

also necessary to search out theorists who could balance his white masculinist perspectives. As a counterweight to Derrida's high philosophy, Ben Jelloun's and Westerfield's scholarship situates hospitality theory more firmly in the lived experience of non-white practitioners.

Ben Jelloun looks beyond the strictly European context of continental political philosophy and theorizes about hospitality from the perspective of an Arab-Algerian living in Europe. With a focus on Berber traditions, Ben Jelloun highlights the way that hospitality facilitates non-familial connections and concord between strangers and even enemies. His emphasis on the embodied physically and spatially rooted nature of hospitality raises questions about the way that hospitality practices have been divided between the urban and mechanized practices of the industrializing North in contrast to the familial and place-based hospitality of the South. His work also opens the door for a more nuanced reading of hospitality in contested spaces, such as slave hospitality practiced in huts or homes owned by their masters or hospitality practiced by an orphan in the home of her benefactor. Westerfield focuses her attention on the secret gatherings of African American women as essential hospitality practiced by the marginalized in a space apart from dominant racial or gendered groups. Considering hospitality practiced apart from the control of dominant groups or individuals is important when examining the hospitality practiced by orphans, slaves, and others who are often denied sovereignty over their bodies or spaces. As an African American womanist[14] theologian,

---

[14] Womanist theology is an emerging school of thought that reexamines traditional theology through a lens that privileges the experiences of minority women, especially African American women (Burrow 41).

Westerfield's theories of hospitality focus on the practices of the dually marginalized African American woman, providing a valuable perspective often absent from more mainstream hospitality theory.

Finally, the egalitarian perspectives of contemporary theologians and scholars of Christian hospitality are an important reminder of the radical nature of the Judeo-Christian practice of hospitality that far exceeds the normative social expectations of even the socially Christian culture of the United States of the mid-nineteenth century. This radical nature is founded in many of Jesus's teachings, including the parables of the "Prodigal Son" and the "Good Samaritan," as well as his injunctions to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit prisoners, and love your enemies. This radical hospitality practice has a long history: it was lived out by the early church as documented in the Biblical book of Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament and the writings of the early church fathers and mothers, has a continuing history in the monastic movements of the early Middle Ages, and is still practiced by many monastic and faith communities up to the current day. Because of its longstanding history and continual presence in Western civilization, the habits of Judeo-Christian hospitality should be considered in examining hospitality practice and theory.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 - Unmasking Southern Hospitality: Discursive Passing in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*

In chapter one, "Unmasking Southern Hospitality: Discursive Passing in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*," I examine Stowe's use of a black fugitive slave host who

behaves like a southern gentleman to undermine the ethos of southern honor culture and to disrupt the ideology that supports chattel slavery. Stowe accomplishes this ideological unsettling through a rhetorical mode called discursive passing. Discursive passing is passing one narrative for another and is focused on either taking control of or disrupting a cultural narrative through the manipulation of a literary narrative. I argue that Dred passes discursively as a Southern host with an important difference: Dred's ability and willingness to offer hospitality from his home in the Dismal Swamp to both black and white individuals indicates his commitment to an inclusive ethics of hospitality often corrupted by the plantation class in their pursuit of southern hospitality's political aims.

Chapter 2 - Transformative Hospitality in Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*

In chapter two, "Transformative Hospitality in Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*," I examine how the race-centered scenes of hospitality in Frank J. Webb's 1857 novel *The Garies and Their Friends* creates educational opportunities where northern racist ideology can be uncovered and rejected by white men and women living in proximity to but still outside the free black community of Philadelphia. Through social calls, shared meals, and business meetings in the home of black hosts, a variety of white characters face the conflict between their active or passive racist beliefs and the reality of their black neighbors. This chapter focuses on scenes of *transformative hospitality*, which, like transformative educational theory, creates an educational space where an adult can have their worldview challenged through interactions with difference. When discussions of race are central to an experience of hospitality, host and guest can move from merely a social relationship into an instructional relationship and conversations in the home then challenge presuppositions and allow the host or guest to propose

alternative ways of thinking. Through scenes of transformative hospitality, Webb shines a bright light on northern racism, offering a social context for challenging the latent and overt expressions of racism in the North.

Chapter 3--Slavery's Distortion of Hospitality in Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

In chapter three, "Slavery's Distortion of Hospitality in Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," I examine the way that hospitality is deformed by the conflicting pressures that the laws of chattel slavery exert on any act of hospitality involving a slave. Focusing on hospitality engaged in by Linda Brent as both guest and host, this examination reveals that the dehumanizing rhetoric and legal precedent of slavery so distorts the practice of hospitality that it becomes unrecognizable. Harriet Jacobs's slave narrative provides a unique insight into the ways that slavery distorts the practice of hospitality because she overtly and repeatedly calls on the reader to recognize the fundamental contradictions between the laws of chattel slavery, the lived experience of men and women under slavery, and the social expectations of a Christian society. While these conflicts are often displayed in abolitionist literature and slave narratives more broadly, Jacobs's strongly developed personhood founded in her experience of a loving and nurturing childhood allows her to tell a story of broken and distorted hospitality that mars the host/guest experience whenever a black person steps into one of these roles. For Jacobs, and all the characters that people *Incidents*, hospitality must be twisted and bent out of traditional form in order to be practiced by and toward slaves.

Chapter Two: Unmasking Southern Hospitality: Discursive Passing in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Dred

"Harry," said Dred, "when they come, to-night, read them the Declaration of Independence of these United States, and then let each one judge of our afflictions, and the afflictions of their fathers, and the Lord shall be judge between us" (451). When Harriet Beecher Stowe's Dred invokes the Declaration of Independence, his fictional voice joins a chorus of black abolitionists—both those born free, like David Walker and Martin Delaney, and those born slaves, like Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown—in criticizing the narrative of freedom that defined the United States. In *Fathering the Nation*, Russ Castronovo (1995) argues that black writers make an important antebellum rhetorical move when they claim the discourse of the founding fathers for slaves in revolt; Castronovo calls this rhetoric *discursive passing*. For Castronovo, when an ex-slave or free but disenfranchised black man claims the right of rebellion against despotism so clearly advocated in the Declaration of Independence, he both revises the white narrative of freedom by applying it to black endeavors and upsets it by making visible the elision of blackness from that narrative. Discursive passing happens in the text, and is enacted by characters in the narrative, but it is primarily authorial in nature. In his instructions to Harry, Dred, like Stowe herself, takes on the authorial role, creating a character (Harry's performance of prophetic leadership) and situation (the meeting of the slaves) where discursive passing can happen. For Stowe, there are other national narratives beyond that of the founding fathers that need to be undermined and revised before the enslaved men and women can be truly free.

In this chapter I argue that Stowe creates in Dred a character that, in his practice of hospitality, passes as a Southern host, with a difference. Dred's practice of hospitality displays a clear understanding of the ethics central to Southern hospitality while rejecting the politics inherent in its standard practice by white southerners. Dred's passing disrupts the national narrative of Southern hospitality[15] and makes plain the reliance of Southern hospitality, most frequently identified with plantation hospitality, on an honor culture that conflates being white with being honorable and being black with being dishonorable. Stowe uses the disruption of Dred's discursive passing as an overt attempt to undermine the southern culture that supports and maintains slavery.

What is Discursive Passing?

Discursive passing is passing one narrative for another and is focused on either taking control of or disrupting a cultural narrative through the manipulation of a literary narrative. Before I go further I would like to clarify why I am using the term "discursive passing" rather than the more common literary-scholarly term of "racial passing narrative." Steven Belluscio argues in *To Be Suddenly White*, that "in the *racial passing narrative*, a character attempts (successfully or not) to shed all overt evidence of racial

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[15] In his 2007 article, "Re-Mapping Southern Hospitality," Anthony Szczesiul argues that the "Southern Focus Poll, Spring 1995" is evidence that they myth of Southern hospitality is not only a narrative of regional identity told by southerners about themselves, but that it is actually a "product of inter-regional collaboration" (140). While Southern hospitality is closely tied to regional identity, I would argue that it is as much about American identity as a whole. Just as New England thrift has been conflated with what it means to be a hard-working American, Southern hospitality is just as much an identifier of Americanness as it is a marker of being Southern. Not only that, but the myth of Southern hospitality, and the values of honor culture on which it rests, are central to national laws and discourse about slaves, blackness, and American aristocracy in the antebellum period, regardless of where one resides nationally.

difference and imperceptibly enter mainstream society" (13). As the work of Belluscio and many other contemporary scholars shows, scholarship on passing focuses on the practice of characters in a narrative putting aside one identity to take on another that is more advantageous in some way.[16] For these scholars, passing is about identity and visibility. Elaine Ginsberg notes in the introduction to *Passing and the Fictions of Identity* (1996) that "identity creation or imposition, their adoption or rejection, their accompanying rewards or penalties" is the primary goal or focus of passing in a narrative (2). In *Dred*, the protagonist does not put aside his black identity to take on a white one. Stowe and the narrator make it clear that Dred is far too defined by his blackness and Africanness to ever pass as a white man. His passing is of another variety. Instead of concealing his black identity as a fugitive slave, Dred practices hospitality in a way that co-opts the characteristics of Southern honor culture and allows him to pass as a Southern gentleman host. Thus, *Dred* is a text of discursive passing, rather than a racial passing narrative, because there is no indication that Dred is attempting to take off one identity to put on another. Rather, he identifies as a Southern host by acting on the inclinations of his inherently honorable nature. Dred is already a southern gentleman of upright and noble character even though his social and legal position is that of a fugitive slave. For

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[16] Some of the most well-known scholars of narratives of passing are Samiar Kawah, Gayle Wald, Cheryl Wall, Deborah McDowell, Hazel Carby, Judith Berzon, Jacquelyn McLendon, Elaine Ginsberg, Werner Sollers, and Pamela Caughie. While most of these scholars focus on black-to-white racial passing, Belluscio is part of a growing group of scholars, including Laura Browder and Sinead Moynihan, who focus on other forms of passing, such as the ethnic passing of Eastern and Southern European immigrants, social or class passing, and gender passing.

Dred, then, there is no dissonance caused by taking up or putting off one identity or another.

In *Dred*, the passing is primarily the work of Stowe as author, who puts words in Dred's mouth and creates scenes in the voice of the narrator, that are "laced with cultural and historical residues that render dark and murky distinctions between heroes and oppressors" (Castronovo 195). This blurring of the contrast between "heroes and oppressors" is particularly apparent in the practices of hospitality in the novel. Men and women of the plantation class, the standard "heroes" of hospitality, act against the ethics of hospitality while Dred, as an outcast fugitive slave, demonstrates a courage and generosity in his hospitality generally believed impossible outside Southern honor culture practices. In Stowe's novel, being white does not make you heroic and being black does not mean you are a villain or a fool. As Dred's hospitality shows, being black also does not mean that you are forever confined to a life of subservience and dishonor. Additionally, in establishing Dred as a noteworthy and successful host, Stowe participates in the "ironic undercutting" of the Southern hospitality narrative and the discourse of Southern honor culture by upsetting the cultural connection between the whiteness of a man's skin and his ability to follow the ideals of Southern hospitality (Castronovo 196). Narratives that participate in discursive passing go beyond the story of slaves masquerading as white (or other individual identity exchanges) and focus instead on the historical space where an African American "interacts with the historical narratives already embedded in the culture," raising questions about how a "foundational narrative is written and authorized" (196). Stowe uses a black fugitive slave host, engaged in practices of hospitality most often associated with plantation hospitality, to

upset expectations about blackness in the narrative of Southern hospitality that is based in Southern honor culture.

While discursive passing and racial passing narratives are fundamentally different there are still similarities between the two. In passing of any kind there is an implication of censure, by the passing subject, of the prevailing social or cultural boundaries of race and claims of deception from those who are part of the dominant culture defining whiteness (and its benefits) as limited and exclusive. The act of exchanging racial identities, for instance, implies that it is necessary for a black person to perform whiteness to have access to something that is withheld from them when they identify as black. That a white person would feel deceived by this performance of passing is a censure of the exclusivity of certain social, cultural, or legal benefits refused to non-white members of society. Another shared characteristic of both discursive passing and the racial passing narratives that I would like to examine more closely is the necessity of reader participation to the success of an act of passing. In *Passing into the Present*, Sinead Moynihan argues that passing is not just the act of the character or the writer, but requires complicity between the reader and the individual attempting to pass. It is the "act of reading (or misreading) [that] constitutes the performance of the passing subject" (151). That the act of passing requires a participating "reader" is particularly relevant when one considers the reader's experience of the character of Dred in the novel. The reader's status as the one who knows what is going on in a text is deliberately and forcefully undercut by Stowe's introduction of Dred offhandedly into the novel nearly a third of the way through. As Levine notes in "The African American Presence in Stowe's *Dred,*" this narrative move "enacts a point of rupture, as readers will initially

find themselves disoriented by their own lack of knowledge of the existence and motives of this swamp-dwelling black" (177). Additionally, Levine codes this experience as "a revelation: that to this point our reading of the plantation (novel) has been thoroughly inadequate" (177). When Stowe disrupts the reader's experience in this way, making the reader face the dissonance between genre expectations and what is happening behind the scenes in the narrative, she makes the reader complicit with the blindness of the white planter class regarding both Dred's existence in the neighborhood and what his presence means to the larger story of the community.

In chapter eighteen of the novel, simply titled "Dred," the focus of the narrative is on Harry Gordon and his conflict with his half-brother, Tom, the dissolute full-brother of Nina Gordon. After receiving blows and threats from Tom when they meet on the road near the Dismal Swamp, Harry is riding along the path stewing and swearing under his breath. His angry soliloquy is interrupted by a voice from the swamp that says, "Aha! Aha! It has come nigh *thee*, has it? It toucheth *thee*, and thou faintest!" and then the narrator launches into a page-long description of an impressive and unusual black man (198). While this character is completely new to the reader, and startling both in his appearance and diction, Harry's response is familiar: "O, it is you, then, Dred! I didn't know that you were hearing me!" (198). Their exchange continues for another two pages, but the conventions of the plantation novel have just been wrenched by the casual appearance of a foreboding new character who is familiar to the slaves in the novel but foreign to both the reader and the white plantation-class characters. In this moment of introduction, the reader realizes that she, like the white plantation class of characters in the novel, made several wrong assumptions about the narrative and the actors in it. For

the first seventeen chapters of the narrative, the reader and the white characters have misread Harry's performance as a devoted slave, neglected to notice or value the seemingly empty space of the swamp, and most importantly, have overlooked the importance of the heretofore unseen character of Dred.

In order for Stowe to disrupt the narrative of Southern hospitality through the use of discursive passing, however, the reader must learn to properly read Dred, including his passing as a Southern host engaged in model hospitality. To enable the reader to successfully read Dred's passing, the narrator leaves the standard conventions of the plantation novel and in the next chapter, chapter nineteen, delves deeply into Dred's history as the son of Denmark Vesey. The narrator also enters the swamp and narrates the actions of its residents, prominently led by Dred himself. With the help of the narrator, then, the reader relocates herself in the narrative and in the process learns details about Dred and the swamp unknown to the plantation-class whites of the novel. These insights in turn give the reader a clearer picture of who Dred is and allow her to read him as a host to visitors to the swamp in a way that the plantation class whites cannot.[17] The ideological blindness of the white characters in the novel causes them to overlook or dismiss Dred, but this blindness does not have to characterize the reader, and this knowledge allows the reader to participate in Dred's passing and the resultant disruption of the continuity and inevitability of the exclusion of all blackness from Southern honor culture and Southern hospitality.

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[17] These descriptions take place over a number of chapters in the novel and are discussed at length in the following pages.

Discursive passing is disruptive and has major impacts on central cultural narratives. For writers like Stowe who were invested in reimagining the United States as a freer and more equal society, the discursive passing practiced by well-known African American writers provided a point of entry into a process that could change the American national identity. For Stowe, the disjuncture and disruption of discursive passing creates a gap where she can shine a light on the elided practices of racism and slavery in the national narrative of Southern hospitality. In *Dred* she addresses the need to rewrite the narrative of Southern hospitality so that the abusive practices of the plantation can no longer be hidden by the mask of genteel welcome.[18]

Passing can be seen as an acknowledgment of the "supremacy of white culture" while also subverting the very narratives and structures it seems to support or value (Castronovo 194). When Stowe explicitly and implicitly draws parallels between Dred's swamp settlement and the local plantations, or between Dred's welcome of guests at his threshold and the welcome of the Southern planters in the neighborhoods around him, she appears to be holding up the ideal of Southern hospitality personified in the gracious

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[18] While Castronovo attributes the disruptions of discursive passing exclusively to the writings of ex-slaves, it is also evident in texts by American women writers of this period. E. D. E. N. Southworth and Elizabeth Oakes Smith, for example, both participated in this reimagining of who can be a patriot and how might they be identified in their novels *The Hidden Hand* and *The Western Captive*, respectively. For Stowe, we see this attempt to reimagine the patriot leader dramatically illustrated in the characters of Dred and Harry Gordon. Both men voice language akin to that of the Founding Fathers, especially Harry Gordon, who quotes from the Declaration of Independence to justify his unrest in slavery. For my purposes, however, this challenge to the "cultural authority of language" is seen most fully in the disruptive uses of the narrative of the benevolent and generous southern host. In *Dred*, Stowe imagines a black fugitive slave host engaging in Southern hospitality in a way that requires the reader to reconsider what Southern hospitality is, how it functions, and why it bears the authority that it does in shaping Southern identity.

plantation owner. It is not unqualified praise, however, and this is clearly seen in the many ways that she disrupts this parallel. In one example, Edward Clayton, the generous and kind slave master from South Carolina, is beaten by a mob for seeking more education and legal rights for his slaves and the local plantation owners refuse to aid him. In fact, his beating was instigated by Tom Gordon, his (almost) brother-in-law and heir to Nina Gordon's plantation, Canema. Dred and his wife, both fugitive slaves, offer hospitality to the injured Clayton and their care is all that stands between him and death. In this act of hospitality, Dred personifies the ethic behind generous Southern hospitality, even endangering his family and community to offer aid to a man in need. It is important to note, however, that Dred's hospitality displays formative differences from that of the plantations that surround the swamp, thus undermining any unqualified praise for Southern hospitality implicit in the comparison.

The Mythic Nature of Southern Hospitality

As Anthony Szczesiul first noted in 2007, "While Southern hospitality may have first existed as a narrowly defined body of social practices among the antebellum planter classes, it also exists as discourse, as a meaning-making story continually told and retold about the South" ("Re-constructing Southern Hospitality" 148). Szczesuil elaborates on these ideas in *The Southern Hospitality Myth* (2017), arguing that the American understanding of Southern hospitality is inextricably bound to "a discourse, a system of representations and narratives through which southerners and nonsoutherners alike have defined, understood, interpreted, and collectively remembered the South" (6). While the two-hundred-year-old story of Southern hospitality may have its roots in the historical practices of antebellum plantation society, its enduring acceptance is a reminder that it is

in fact "an essential foundational narrative" that feeds both an exceptionalist ideal of the South and of America as a whole (2).[19] That Southern hospitality is both a mythic story that has endured in spite of two hundred years of cultural evolution and social change and a set of material practices is not mutually contradictory. For the sake of clarity in my argument I will use the term *Southern hospitality* to refer to the ideals and discourse of hospitality that are not tied to any specific historical moments and have been in use for the last two centuries and the term *plantation hospitality* to refer to the material practices (both fictional and historically verifiable) of the white plantation class in the antebellum South.[20] In *Dred*, for example, Stowe disrupts the myth of Southern hospitality through her narration of material acts of hospitality practiced by Dred as both a fugitive slave and a gracious southern host.

Generally, plantation hospitality is defined by the warm welcome and hosting of guests in a manner that is both generous and elegant. Because of the isolation of plantation houses from each other and from larger population centers, the plantation master would often host family and friends for extended visits in the plantation house. These visits would include formal and informal meals, outdoor pursuits, socializing over

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[19] Szczesiul explores the connections between southern exceptionalism and American exceptionalism at length, including an analysis of the field of southern studies as a whole. He cites the work of Tara McPherson, Leigh Anne Duck, Jennifer Greeson, Grace Elizabeth Hale, Martyn Bone, Matthew D. Lassiter, and Joseph Crespino as evidence of the scholarly engagement with the connections between southern and national exceptionalism. This work reinforces my argument for considering Southern hospitality's role as a national narrative.

[20] While my analysis of plantation hospitality will be confined to the practices represented in Stowe's fictional account, the historical practices were often discussed in newspaper articles and travelogues of the period. Rebecca McIntyre discusses a body of these texts in her article "Promoting the Gothic South," (2005) *Southern Cultures* 11.2, 33-61.

music and other arts, entertainment by the guests and family members, and tours of the grounds and the neighborhood. As houseguests on a plantation, visitors were of similar social standing to the host, and often reciprocated in kind, welcoming their plantation host and his family to their homes in the North, on another plantation, or in a population center, such as Charleston, SC. Nina Gordon's hospitality to her suitors is, in fact, a reciprocation for hospitality extended to her when she was at school in the North. Plantation hospitality was also practiced in unequal relationships as a form of patronage, with the mistress of the house, especially, bringing food and succor to poorer families in the area. While this type of hospitality was extended *from* the plantation house, it rarely resulted in an invitation to dine or socialize with the family at home.[21]

As Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese discuss at length in *Fatal Self-Deception*, slavery was foundational to the identity of the white planter class of the South. Through extensive quotations from a wide variety of southern publications from the leaders of the South, as well as the personal correspondence of men and women from slaveholding families, the Genoveses argue that the mores and morality of southern society are directly tied to the practices and influence of slavery on those who owned slaves. Understanding the role of slavery in Southern society, and especially the way that ideas about slavery and paternalism were woven into the fabric of social conventions and

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[21] These practices are often discussed in southern antebellum fiction, including work by William Gilmore Simms, Augusta Jane Evans, Caroline Lee Hentz, and John Pendleton Kennedy. Simms' nonfiction work also touches on these practices as well. Historians such as the Genoveses, Raimondo Luraghi, Bertram Wyatt-Brown, and Rhys Isaac have also discussed the historical practices of antebellum plantation hospitality in a variety of their writings.

expectations, is essential to understanding how plantation hospitality works and how slave hospitality can be read against these formal expectations.

A distinctive characteristic of the practice of plantation hospitality is the abundance and generosity of the room and board offered to guests by plantation families. Both fictional and nonfictional accounts of plantation hospitality focus on the elaborate meals, the cool rooms filled with flowers and graceful décor, the spacious grounds, and the willing and cheerful service of the many household members. This image of hospitality rests on the paternalistic ideal of the household that is made up both of the white family and its slaves. Under paternalism "slaves became quasi-kin: Whites referred to 'our family, white and black,' and blacks referred to 'my white folks.' Indeed, throughout the world, masters, to preserve self-esteem, needed to credit every such story. They called slaves 'my children,' and the slaves called them 'father'" (*Fatal Self-Deception* 25). Unlike northern households, which often relied on paid domestics that lived apart from the family, this "quasi-kin" relationship between the white slaveholder and his black slaves meant that the southern "family" could offer a level of care and comfort inaccessible to a family with unreliable or minimal household help. The hostess could preside at an abundant table because her kitchen slaves did the cooking and meal preparation away from the hosts and guests, and all that was put on display was the end results of hours and days of preparation. Table servants attended to the needs of the guests and maids and valets kept the guests' clothing in good order, cleaned up any messes in sleeping areas, and made sure that family and guest spaces were comfortable and beautiful. Outside the house, gardeners kept the grounds in a state of beauty and elegance, grooms looked after the horses, and the slave children were available to run

errands, provide entertainment, or look after the children of the white hosts and guests. Inherent in this "family, white and black," is the idea that *all* members of the household delighted to care for the host and the guest. Unlike the service of a hired maid or manservant, slaves were an extension of the family and thus offered a more personal care that could be equated with the direct service of the host or his white family members.[22]

The Relationship Between Southern Honor Culture and Southern Hospitality

Why are Dred and his acts of hospitality so disruptive to the myth of Southern hospitality? To understand this disruption, it is necessary to go back to the historical roots of Southern hospitality discourse in the practices and social expectations of antebellum plantation hospitality. In *Honor and Slavery*, historian Kenneth Greenberg examines the particular language and practices of the southern gentleman, exposing the way honor culture is rooted in racist ideology and an obsession with appearances. Greenberg argues that as a man of honor, the southern gentleman always acted to preserve the appearance of himself and his family, most especially when it came to assertions of dishonesty. For a southern gentleman, he argues, anything that belied the appearance of an honorable life worthy of respect was to be avoided or combated. Whether the life actually was honorable or worthy of respect was less important than the perception of honor and respectability. Foundational to this life of honor was the idea that whiteness was

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[22] Related to this discussion is the indirect way that slaves supported Southern hospitality through the income generated from their uncompensated labor and through the sale of slaves born on the plantation. While I believe these concerns are central to the existence and continuance of slavery, there is not space to go into the details of racial capitalism at this time. For further inquiry into these issues, see Lisa Lowe's *Intimacies Across Four Continents* (2015) and the Boston Review's *Forum 1: Race Capitalism Justice* (2017).

inherently honest and blackness was inherently deceitful and consequently, a slave or black man could never be a man of honor. In his preface, Greenberg notes that all discussions of honor culture eventually return to slavery: "Every puzzling action or statement analyzed in the book relates to honor, and since Southern gentlemen defined a slave as a person without honor, all issues of honor relate to slavery" (xii). Greenberg further argues that white men "distinguished themselves from slaves" by refusing to be called a liar, giving gifts, and courageously facing the possibility of death (xii). While the focus of my arguments will be on the way that Dred engages with hospitality as a man of honor, I would like to note that Dred prides himself on his honesty and when he leaves the swamp settlement to avenge the wrongful death of a friend, his reply to his wife's fears is a short soliloquy about how he does not fear death at the hands of Tom Gordon or his mob. As to giving gifts, Dred's practice of hospitality is inherently a gift exchange, but he also engages in gift giving when he leaves food for Tiff and the children while they are sleeping in the swamp. All of these characteristics will be explored in greater depth later in this chapter.

Southern honor culture emphasizes appearances and relies on slavery as both a financial support to the maintenance of appearances and to provide a standard of dishonor (in the person and actions of slaves) against which to measure a man's honor. Paternalistic thinking is a logical outgrowth from this worldview and the ideology of southern honor culture and the material practices of plantation life are enmeshed through the practice of slavery. Because plantation hospitality cannot be separated from slavery, paternalism, and honor culture, the practice and ideology of southern hospitality become mutually dependent. Thus southern honor culture both undergirds the ideology of

southern hospitality *and* is a necessary support to the maintenance of the practice of plantation hospitality.

When Stowe decided to create a character that was black and also capable of taking on the role and responsibility of host she not only disrupted the discourse of Southern hospitality, she disrupts the supporting narrative of what it meant to be a man of honor. Greenberg notes that the language of honor culture (both the words and practices) requires translation; he calls *Honor and Slavery*, in fact, a "text of translation" (xi). Even at the height of antebellum sectional conflicts, northern and southern Americans often talked at cross purposes because of the need for such a translation. Greenberg argues that the differing values placed on appearances and surfaces is the foundational misunderstanding between the North and South (3). The southern reverence for good or honorable appearances governed cultural mores of the South and extended from social interactions to the very surface of a person, including their skin tone (15, 47-48). In the context of antebellum southern society, the disruptive nature of passing becomes even more powerful. If appearance is misleading and, for example, a black man successfully passes as a southern gentleman of honor, that very code of honor becomes unstable. Animosity toward mixed-race slaves, and especially the almost white children produced by the sexual conquest of black women by their masters or masters' family members, is the natural result of reliance on appearances to order society. Passing, then, is an egregious wrong to the dominant culture because the ability to successfully wear the

mask of white honor "gives the lie"[23] to the enforced limitations that define a gentleman and a man of honor.

Dred's disruptive passing in the scenes of hospitality destabilizes not just the practices of plantation hospitality but the entire myth of Southern hospitality; this disruption unsettles foundational truths of honor culture. The need to keep this foundation sure and strong in the midst of national unrest and sectional animosity provides some explanation for the self-deceptive nature of paternalism in the slaveholding south.[24] While *Uncle Tom's Cabin* can be read as a full frontal attack on Southern honor culture by removing the mask of gentility from chattel slavery, the scenes of slave hospitality in Dred are a more insidious and possibly more dangerous attack on the foundational ideals of Southern honor culture, dangerous because of their very indirectness. If a reader accepts Dred's position as host and views his hospitality as a natural extension of his person and beliefs, the reader is primed to question why it is that he must be excluded from both the practices of plantation hospitality and the national discourse of Southern hospitality and the accompanying narrative of honor culture.

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[23] "Giving the lie" is a term that Greenberg emphasizes in his discussion of honor culture. Accusing a man of lying is the worst insult that could be paid to a man of honor, and equally damning, but harder to confront, is the action of man that is a lived accusation of lying. While the direct accusation could lead to confrontation and even death, the less direct mode of doing the very thing a man of honor claims to be doing, but is not, allows a man to accuse someone of not holding up the standard of honor without endangering himself directly. It is still dangerous, however, and most especially when there is a serious power imbalance between the accused and the accuser.

[24] For a more nuanced and extended description of the self-deception of paternalism, see chapter 2 of Greenberg and *Fatal Self-Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South* by Eugene D. Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.

Scholars writing about *Dred* have noted the strange division between what happens on the plantations and what happens in the swamp. In the narrative, it is as if the white plantation elite are completely blind to Dred's existence, while their slaves can move easily between the world of the plantation and the world of the swamp. Again, Greenberg gives us a clue as to how this blindness can happen. Southern honor culture's reliance on appearance make slave faces unreadable to their white masters and mistresses (47-48). The skill that slaves have in putting on masks that meet the expectations of their white owners, coupled with their owners' need to read the happenings on their plantation as reflective of the best that they, as master/mistress, can offer, means that there is a willful blindness to anything that could disrupt the narrative of honorable rule that the white owner has constructed. The many small self-deceptions of paternalism practiced by southern whites, coupled with their larger self-deceptions about the intelligence, resourcefulness, and anger of their enslaved household members, resulted in a deeply embedded blindness to the ways that slaves participated in or engaged with the practices of Southern honor culture.[25] That a black man could exhibit care for his guest, or skillfully create a refuge in the swamp that is not only habitable but welcoming, is impossible when blackness is always equated with all that is dishonorable and inferior. Therefore, although the white plantation class cannot imagine a black man successfully engaging in honorable practices because they cannot see beyond the mask of his black

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[25] Small deceptions might include beliefs that a slave loves his or her white owners more than their own slave family, that slaves are only lazy—not actually trying to disrupt the work flow, that the missing food/supplies/work materials were just misplaced etc. Larger self-deceptions include the belief that slaves do not experience pain, for instance, or that they are incapable of familial affection, or that they will not rebel under their harsh treatment or the sale of their children.

skin, the slaves of the community are not equally blinded. Their exclusion from engagement with honor culture as autonomous individuals, while still living within close observation of its daily practices, uniquely qualifies them to pass between the world of the plantation and the world of the swamp, recognizing the difference between the politics of Southern hospitality practiced by their master or mistress and the ethics of hospitality practiced by Dred in the swamp.

As Szczesiul notes, the power and complexity of Southern hospitality is rooted in the frequent conflation of historical practices with an evolving mythic narrative of southern identity. While he investigates at length why this conflation is so common and unexamined, I will focus on one important variable of this argument—the divided nature of Southern hospitality between the politics and the ethics of hospitality. Szczesiul returns to this idea repeatedly in his work, showing how important the duality of the practice and beliefs about Southern hospitality permeates the accompanying discourse. The divided nature of Southern hospitality is most important in considering the ideological implications of the scenes of hospitality that Stowe includes in her text. In Stowe's novel, there are multiple scenes of generous plantation hospitality practiced by Edward Clayton, Nina Gordon, and a variety of other southern families. In some of these instances, especially when they are performed by the white hero or heroine, there is little or no distinction between the political and ethical motivations or implications of the practices of plantation hospitality. Nina, for instance, is kind and gracious to her unwanted suitor both because she understands the political ramifications of being a boor to a wealthy Northern gentleman and because she believes that to be a good hostess means that she is kind and welcoming to all her visitors, even those she does not like or

desire to entertain. Her desire to not be rude or offensive and her conviction that she must welcome him because she has accepted his offer of marriage are an example of the politics of Southern hospitality. Her suitor is her social equal, she owes him because of his offer of marriage, and his wealth entitles him to a generous welcome in her home. Under the politics of Southern hospitality, when the lines are drawn around who is welcome and who should be excluded, Nina's suitor has the wealth, education, and social position to guarantee he will be welcomed over the plantation threshold.[26]

Later in the novel, however, after the outbreak of cholera that decimates the region surrounding her plantation, Nina demonstrates her firm grasp on the ethics of hospitality in a scene quite different from that of the visit from her suitor. When the slaves on her plantation come down with the dreaded disease and need medical attention and comfort in their panic, Nina opens her home to the sick and dying. In a demonstration of the most radically generous practices of hospitality, Nina erases the dividing line that the politics of Southern hospitality drew so firmly between those who had the right to care and refuge in the plantation house and those who must be excluded. By welcoming the sick and dying (who also happen to be black), Nina acts out the ethical imperative to welcome the stranger and the one in need that is foundational to the Christian practices of hospitality upon which Southern hospitality ostensible rests.[27] The hospitality that Dred

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[26] As Szczesiul notes, "southern hospitality has functioned primarily as a white mythology, produced by whites, directed to a white audience, and invested in the project of maintaining white status and privilege" (7). It could also be added that it was also a function of class, with the emphasis on showing hospitality to those who were economically, socially, and culturally your equal or superior.

[27] The most famous of the Christian examples of this hospitality can be found in the parable of the Good Samaritan which appears in several Biblical accounts of Jesus' life. This self-sacrificing

practices aligns more closely with the ethic of Southern hospitality that requires a generous and self-sacrificing welcome than with the politics inherent in the limited and exclusionary practices of the plantation host. He honors the ethical imperative to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, succor the sick, and protect the undefended through the many acts of invitation and care that he extends to those who cross his threshold. In this way, his very actions and presence disrupt the myth of Southern hospitality by belying its lack of ethics as practiced by the plantation families around the swamp.

To further understand Dred's slave hospitality as an act of discursive passing, it is important to examine the facets of his hospitality—*where* he hosts, as well as *how* he hosts, and *who*, as guests, can cross his threshold. As the following analysis shows, Dred's hospitality contains all three of these elements, but the effect of his passing as a southern host with a difference disrupts expectations of plantation hospitality practices and the myth of Southern hospitality that frames and defines those practices. While not strictly binary, there are important correlations between the swamp and the plantation, between the fugitive slave and the plantation guest, and between the margins of the swamp and the doorways of the plantation.

Where Dred Hosts: The Dismal Swamp According to Stowe

Where Dred hosts his guests is central to the claim that he performs southern hospitality with a difference. As a host, Dred has many of the personal characteristics of

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hospitality practice is also prominent in the monastic rule of St. Benedict from the late sixth century, which codified the expectation of hospitality to anyone who asked as a central rule of Catholic monasticism.

the antebellum southern gentleman, but the Dismal Swamp differs considerably from the southern plantation. These differences shape Dred's hospitality into something more than and other than traditional plantation hospitality.

In *Dred*, the most powerful slave host is Dred himself, the primary occupant, or at least the most dominant occupant, of the large tract of land called the "Dismal Swamp." As Stowe notes shortly after she gives the reader Dred's biography, the Dismal Swamp is a space that is not naturally hospitable or even tenable. Her opening description states that the swamps were a "region of hopeless disorder, where the abundant growth and vegetation of nature, sucking up its forces from the humid soil, seems to rejoice in a savage exuberance, and bid defiance to all human efforts either to penetrate or subdue" (209). The descriptors that Stowe uses to introduce the swamp are very similar to those she uses for Dred himself. He is marked by a surfeit of strength, robust health, wild and untamed thoughts, and an unsubdued temperament. In this opening description, Stowe also deliberately marks the Dismal Swamp with identifiers associated with negative connotations of blackness and Africanness: the swamp is savage, exuberant, wild, untamed, majestic, and depicted as being the home to plants of garish colors and displays. Immediately, then, when Stowe introduces the swamp, she also designates it as a space with much affinity to the temperament and physical characteristics associated with slaves and blackness in the antebellum period.

In addition to the attributes that line up well with stereotypes of wild blackness, the swamp is also associated with reptilian ownership: "These wild regions are the homes to the alligator, the moccasin, and the rattle-snake [*sic*]" (209). By highlighting the extreme danger of the reptiles that make their home in the swamp, and by identifying

Dred as a co-occupant of the swamp with these reptiles, Stowe emphasizes the danger of the fugitive slave who has lived undetected for so long. As Richard Boyd argues, the ambivalent descriptions of the swamp reflect not only Stowe's own ambivalence about Dred and the insurrection he is promoting, but also the changing antebellum views of the swamp (57-63). Rebecca McIntyre goes even deeper into the changing views of the swamp in her article "Promoting the Gothic South." As she notes, historically the swamp had been viewed as the source of evil, sickness, and death. But as the antebellum period advanced, the swamp was also seen as a site of sublime beauty, the romantic equivalent of European ruins (37). Both scholars agree, however, that the swamp is intimately connected with the identity of the South and its conflicted relationship with slavery. McIntyre states that "in the 1840s, writers sympathetic to the abolitionist cause began to use the swamp as their new symbol of the degradation of slavery. For these writers, the South, like the boggy terrain of its wetlands, was tangled in its morality and confused in its Christian purpose" (40). While Stowe's descriptions might appear to align her with these earlier writers, her use of the Dismal Swamp redeems the "boggy terrain" by making it the site of the most Christian acts of hospitality of the novel, and instead upending reader expectations by showing that the orderly and elegant plantation homes were the actual sites of "tangled… morality and confused… Christian purpose."

Even with all the dangers that Stowe associates with the swamp, and the way that she inextricably ties the swamp to stereotypes of blackness, she also explains that the swamp is not entirely bad or hostile. She first does this by comparing the way that the swamp affords refuge to fugitive slaves with the refuge of the Swiss mountains to early Protestant reformers: "What the mountains of Switzerland were to the persecuted

Vaudois, this swamp belt has been to the American slave" (210). After an extended paragraph describing the overwhelming and dangerous nature of the swamp, Stowe's comparison of the hiding place of Protestant reformers to the refuge of American slaves brings the reader to a quick about-face. In her initial description it sounds like she views the swamp, and its major inhabitant, as a threat to society. Her repeated use of the term "parasitic" alone makes the swamp sound less like a life-giving space and more like a life-taking space. Instead of accepting this simple description of the swamp, however, Stowe attempts to redeem the space and its occupants by aligning them with reformers of the church. This comparison sets up Dred and his swamp settlement as something that will be praised in future days for the work done there to save society and the church. By equating slavery to the excesses of the Catholic Church before the Reformation and by comparing Dred and other fugitive slaves with persecuted reformers, Stowe calls upon the reader to be horrified by the decadence of Southern plantation culture. This feeling of horror and disgust is further fed by a quick description of the rise of "a separate profession, unknown at this time in any other Christian land—hunters, who train and keep dogs for the hunting of men, women, and children" (210). As slave hunters will play an important role in both bringing guests to Dred's threshold and destroying those he tries to keep safe through his hospitality, this juxtaposition is even more jarring. Stowe's glorification of the salvific possibilities of the swamp and its slave occupants heightens the horror the reader feels toward slave hunters while also implicating these slave hunters in the failure of southern Christianity.

While Stowe's further descriptions emphasize the solitary nature of Dred's life in the swamp, asserting that he was "cut off from all human companionship, often going

weeks without seeing a human face," her emphasis on solitude and exclusion is troubled by later descriptions of how plantation slaves and poor white shopkeepers were often in contact with fugitive slaves dwelling in the swamp (211). Their motives for doing so were mixed. Slaves, Stowe notes, were moved by "compassion and policy," knowing that they too might need to seek refuge in the swamps (211). For the poor white shopkeepers, the ability to cut a profit and have access to the abundance of the swamps was incentive to them to keep up the side business with fugitive slaves that was roundly condemned by the dominant plantation culture (211).[28] Whether for emotional or pragmatic reasons, both slaves and poor whites, excluded from the benefits and privileges of Southern hospitality, support the refuge and hospitality provided by the swamp. Both groups, by their willingness to support the material needs of Dred's residence in the swamp, formally recognize Dred's success in making the swamp profitable and habitable, and in turn, his right to act as host in this space. Stowe further reinforces Dred's position as master of the swamp when she notes at the end of the chapter that "wherever he stopped, he formed a sort of retreat, where he received and harbored fugitives" (212). Although these safe spaces that Dred creates in the swamp might be small and temporary in nature, they still are spaces where he formally offers hospitality to those in need. Additionally, after rescuing a slave woman whom he then takes as a wife, he sets up a more stable and permanent settlement for her "with more than common ingenuity, in the

[28] Allison Hurst, in her 2010 article on poor whites in *Dred*, argues that Stowe sees poor southern whites as an "uncontrolled social contagion" that exists because the culture of slavery leaves them out of the necessary social hierarchy. While highly critical of Stowe's social politics, Hurst provides useful background on the relationship between Stowe's abolitionist convictions and her belief in necessary hierarchies in society.

swamp adjoining the Gordon plantation" (212). This home becomes an important site of hospitality for Dred, acting as an additional support to his identity as master of the swamp and as a host who must be reckoned with by any who enter it.

The overwhelmingly forbidding nature of the space would lead a person to assume that it was also isolated and lonely, but as the narrative shows, the slaves on adjacent plantations think of it as a place that can be visited in the same way that the slaveholding white folks go visiting each other. In multiple scenes we see men and women arrive at Dred's home, usually at night, and walk into meetings around the fire or to see fugitives who have made their home in the clearing. Their appearance in the clearing is given little background and Dred welcomes them as those who have the right to be there. Scholars Sarah Meers and Mary Kemp Davis, among others, highlight the ways that the margin between the swamp and the larger plantation culture is a permeable space that allows Dred and his practices to influence the larger society. Highlighting the community built in the swamp and their pursuit of freedom, both scholars note that while Stowe's racial politics might be ambivalent, the swamp is a place where black voices are heard and black stories are spoken. The swamp is a place where slaves can securely make their voices known and explore what freedom could be for slaves if they could throw off the control of the slave plantation. The hostility of the swamp vegetation and wildlife acts as a protection for the community growing in Dred's settlement, its seeming impenetrability hiding the easy access the swamp gives the slaves to the narratives of freedom and Southern hospitality.

Where Dred Hosts: At Home in the Swamp

Not only is the swamp generally a difficult and ambivalent place, it also houses Dred's settlement, a space that is forbidding to anyone who is not specifically welcomed there by its host. Unlike the openness and approachability of the plantation house, Dred's home is defined by its defensibility and hiddenness, both necessary attributes to keep Dred and his guests safe. When Stowe describes Dred's swamp settlement near the Gordon plantation at greater length, what is most compelling in her description is how the swamp settlement is characterized in terms related to yet almost the direct opposite of the descriptions of the various plantations. Dred may be a host that is respected by those around the swamp who seek entrance, but his home is neither welcoming nor accessible. Instead of describing wide verandas, central hallways full of cool breezes, or long drives lined with massive trees and flowering shrubs, Stowe's description of Dred's home is forbidding, using language that hearkens back to her earlier references to savagery and overabundance. After several sentences that describe in detail the overgrowth of trees, shrubs, and vines, and after yet again emphasizing the name "the Dismal Swamp" like it was the name of Dred's home estate,[29] the narrator remarks, "It would seem impossible

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[29] Several scholars reference Dred's settlement by the name "Engedi," the title of the chapter in which Dred shows hospitality to Clayton (see Davis 135, Rowe 45-50, and Stratman 395). I believe that this is because Dred tells Harry, "We must take him [Clayton] to our stronghold of Engedi" (494). I believe that this is a misreading of an Old Testament Biblical allusion being made by Dred. Dred is referencing the desert oasis that David fled to when persecuted by Saul, and the chapter titled "Engedi" definitely supports the idea that the settlement is a refuge. However, I prefer the name "the Dismal Swamp," which the narrator uses repeatedly as the name of Dred's home, because its use is far more pervasive in the text and the way that the narrator uses the name is similar to the way she mentions Canema (the Gordon plantation) and Magnolia Grove (the Clayton plantation). Engedi, on the other hand, is only used once by Dred and seems less a name than a metaphor for how Dred imagines the settlement.

that human foot could penetrate the wild, impervious jungle; but we must take our readers through it, to a cleared spot" (239). Before we follow the narrator into the swamp, I want to take a few moments to focus on the language Stowe uses in her descriptions.

Dred's home in the Dismal Swamp is described as a space that is both inaccessible and productive, unwelcoming yet secure. Unlike the open layouts of the plantation house and grounds at Nina Gordon's estate, or any of the other plantations mentioned in the novel, Dred's space is described in terms both of excess and fortress-like security. For Dred and the other escaped slaves living in it, the swamp is only home, only *safe*, if it can protect them from the incursion of white slaveholders and slave hunters and their dogs. For Dred, that means constructing a space that can simultaneously produce food, provide shelter for people and their small amount of belongings, and be made invisible to the untrained eye in pursuit of the fugitives.

Stowe's narrator begins by describing the joint work of nature and man to make a space that is dry and accessible:

> trunks of fallen trees, long decayed, have formed an island of vegetable mould, which the art of some human hand had extended and improved. The clearing is some sixty yards long by thirty broad, and is surrounded with a natural rampart, which might bid defiance to man or beast. Huge trees have been felled, with all their branches lying thickly one over another, in a circuit around; and nature, seconding the efforts of the fugitives who sought refuge here, has interlaced the frame-work thus made with thorny cat-briers, cables of grapevine, and thickets of

> Virginia creeper, which, running wild in their exuberance, climb on the neighboring trees, and swinging down, again lose themselves in the mazes from which they spring, so as often to form a verdurous wall fifty feet in height (239).

Rather than the delicate and complex architecture characteristic of the plantation home and grounds, Dred's swamp estate is marked by the joint ingenuity of man and nature to construct an awe-inspiring and well-protected enclave. Starting with the fugitives' attempts to create a stronghold with felled trees, nature in turn supports and encourages their endeavor through the luxuriant growth of vines that acts both as a cover for their work and as an additional protection against discovery. When the narrator uses the term "rampart" to describe the form this construction takes, the connection between the swamp and a fortress is solidified. As this catalog of the natural protections indicates, Dred's ability to provide hospitality is predicated on having a space that is hidden from view and impenetrable to unwelcome strangers.

After further description of the botanical variety and beauty that makes up the wall around Dred's clearing, the narrator comes to a closer description of the threshold of Dred's space.

> The leafy ramparts sweep round on all the sides of the clearing, for the utmost care has been taken to make it impenetrable; and, in that region of heat and moisture, nature, in the course of a few weeks, admirably seconds every human effort. The only egress from it is a winding path cut through with a hatchet, which can be entered by only one person at a time; and the water which surrounds this island entirely cuts off the trail from the scent of dogs (239).

What is most prominent in this description is not who might be welcomed at this threshold, but who is expressly being kept out. First, by emphasizing that only one person can enter the clearing at a time, the narrator reminds us that this is not a place for parties or large social gatherings. Any guests must come single file through a narrow and winding trail and then enter one at a time into Dred's space. By limiting the approach and the entrance in this way, Dred has made his home far less vulnerable to attack by the lynch mobs that proliferate in the later scenes of the novel. The narrator also makes it clear that in order to be a refuge for fugitives, even the dogs must be cut off from finding the entrance. Like a medieval moat, the swampy waters that surround the walled-in clearing are a strong defense against one of the fugitive slaves' most terrifying enemies: trained slave-hunting dogs. In several heartbreaking scenes, Stowe illustrates the violence and death that come to fugitive slaves attacked by the dogs of slave hunters, and Dred's long-time fugitive status makes him ready prey for any slave hunter seeking to hunt him. His wilderness skills and familiarity with the swamp keep him safe while traversing the swamp, but not so the many men and women that he rescues and offers shelter to after their attempts at escape. In the fortress-like presence of Dred's swamp home, the reader gets a glimpse of how difficult it is for a slave to survive outside the confines of plantation slavery. That Dred not only survives in this hostile environment but also manages to create in it a space for hospitality and community-building is a testament to the strength of his personality and the generosity of his character.

The physical connections between Dred and the Dismal Swamp are an essential part of his hospitality. In the midst of descriptions of the swamp, the narrator uses

terminology that often conflates Dred and the swamp.[30] This is clearly seen in her description of the tempest that stirs the swamp—the shivers and quakes that the ground and trees experience are like the exultation and spiritual ecstasy that shapes Dred's temperament (275). In addition to connecting Dred physically to the swamp, this language also explains why it is that he is able to make a home so successfully in such an inhospitable space. In fact, the narrator explicitly states this: "So completely had he come into sympathy and communion with nature, and those forms of it which more particularly surrounded him in the swamps, that he moved about among them with as much ease as a lady treads her Turkey carpet" (274). In this moment the connection between occupant and space is direct: Dred is as at home in the swamp as a southern lady is in her own home. This comfort comes from familiarity as well as ownership, which is implied in the phrase "her Turkey carpet." For the narrator, at least, Dred belongs in the swamp. As he traverses its length and breadth, his comfort on the trails and in the morasses provide him with a position superior to any other entrant there. He knows those spaces as well as if they were the actual living room or hall of his plantation estate.

How Dred Hosts: The Difficulties of Slave Hospitality

One of the questions raised in this chapter is how hospitality looks different for slaves than for other men or women in the southern community. Against the backdrop of

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[30] Some scholars mark the connection between Dred and the swamp and others read him as entirely separate from that space. Richard Boyd connects him closest to the swamp and goes so far as to call him a parasite and contagion (59). The complexity of Dred's character leaves him open to a wide variety of interpretations. Apart from the swamp Dred is characterized as "a powerful visionary" by Meer (235), a failed insurrectionist by Nabers and Crane, a "somnambulist" by Davis, a terror-inducing rhetorician in the vein of David Walker by Pelletier, and something between a prophet and a lunatic by many other scholars.

plantation hospitality Dred, as master of the Dismal Swamp, enacts a form of hospitality that disrupts these practices and illuminates the often hidden or elided role of blackness in plantation hospitality. Dred's position as host in the swamp is unique in the geographic area in which the novel takes place. There are not many opportunities for a slave to practice any kind of serious hospitality, primarily because they have no control over the spaces that they occupy and maintain. Dred's situation as master over an inhospitable landscape, the Dismal Swamp, gives him the chance to offer a variety of different types of hospitality to fugitives and those in need throughout the latter two thirds of the novel. As noted earlier, a major factor in the disruptive nature of Dred's hospitality is that his close adherence to the ethic of Southern hospitality "gives the lie" to the political hospitality practices of those on the plantation. As active participants in Southern honor culture, plantation hosts would react negatively, and perhaps even violently, to the unmasking of their political and exclusive uses of hospitality. Dred's generous and risk-taking hospitality practices serve as a foil to the practices of southern gentlemen, illuminating gaps between the practices of plantation hospitality and the ideals of Southern hospitality.

In considering Dred's role as host, there are three qualities that set his hospitality apart from that of his neighbors: first, Dred's guests are all either slaves or those in deep peril or need; second, his hospitality is inherently unequal and nonreciprocal; and third, his hospitality is unstable and contingent on maintaining physical control of his space in the Dismal Swamp. In considering Dred's hospitality, who he hosts stands out dramatically in comparison with the plantations around him. Like the guests in scenes of plantation hospitality, Dred is host to his social equals. As a fugitive slave, most of his

guests are fugitive slaves. Even if his guests are not literal fugitives—for instance, Edward Clayton is a successful plantation owner who becomes lost and wounded in the swamp—they are in a disadvantaged position and may not survive without Dred's hospitality. This is clearly illustrated by Dred's wife and the other early guests to the swamp. Among the list of guests who join in Dred's hospitality are the following: Dred's wife (unnamed in the text), who is a fugitive slave that he rescues from the dogs; a family of fugitive slaves led by a male slave who fled to the swamps to protect his wife from "the licentious persecution of the overseer" (240); a runaway escaped from the slave coffle; and eventually Old Tiff—the ancient slave of a family of squatters whose mother was a disgraced member of a fine Virginia family—and the orphaned children he cares for who flee to the swamp to escape the abusive new wife of the children's father. Some of the last to take up Dred's hospitality are Harry and Lisette Gordon, who take up residence in Dred's swamp home when Nina Gordon dies and her brother Tom Gordon attempts to take Harry's wife as his mistress. For these individuals and families, Dred offers them a safe haven to rest, heal, rebuild, and create a meaningful life. In contrast to the formal plantation hospitality of Nina Gordon or her neighbors, with its emphasis on satisfying social conventions or facilitating relationships between those at the top of society, Dred's hospitality is based in his drive to protect and care for those in his community that are needy and helpless.

As host of the weak and defenseless, Dred engages in unequal and nonreciprocal forms of hospitality. While the visitors at Canema, the Gordon plantation, enjoy Nina's gracious hospitality, it is in full knowledge that they may be called upon to offer the same in return. It is the hospitality of social equals of high standing. In fact, Nina offers

hospitality to people who welcomed her in New York and later becomes the guest of the Clayton's after Edward's visit to her home. By contrast, Dred always hosts those who cannot offer him any equivalent hospitality. While plantation families do offer periodic hospitality to those in need, such as the long-term residence of Nina's indigent aunt, the guests at the plantation homes of the novel rarely need more than a meal or a place to rest for the night, basic needs that are foundational to the practice of plantation hospitality. This imbalance again reveals how singular Dred's position is in the community. Of the many slaves and fugitives in and around the swamp, Dred alone has enough authority to hold recognizable control of his space: he demonstrates his right to welcome or refuse guests and visitors as he sees fit. While he is not shown refusing entrance to his home to anyone directly, he does deter unwanted company in two ways—he uses violence or the threat of violence to deter mobs entering the swamp and he leaves those wandering or hunting in the swamp to lose their way or give up trying to find his clearing. Because of both its fortifications and natural camouflage, there is little risk that anyone will find his way there accidentally.

Dred's position as host in the Dismal Swamp is isolated and costly. More than that, however, it is also highly unstable because Dred bears the full responsibility of the care and protection of the space on his own. From the reader's introduction to Dred to the many interactions he has with both slaves and white men as the novel continues, it is clear that Dred claims full right to himself and to the fruit of his labors. His hunting allows him to gain the necessary tools to support himself and the work he and his fugitive band do to grow fruits and vegetables in the open spaces of the clearing keeps their hidden community fed. Like his plantation-dwelling counterparts, Dred's ability to make

the Dismal Swamp productive and self-supporting gives him the authority necessary to act as host. Unlike the plantation masters surrounding him, however, Dred's authority is based only on his personal strengths. Dred is not a part of a network of hospitable hosts like his plantation counterparts, and he does not have the use of social, financial, or cultural capital that accompany being a member of honor culture with which to shore up his relationships and support his livelihood. His singular position, and the fact that he does not hold title or deed to the land that he calls home, leaves the entire responsibility for his guests and their care on his shoulders.

It is significant that Dred, who plays host to so many in the Dismal Swamp, is known only to slaves and the lowest white community members until the Cripps children, and later Edward Clayton, need shelter in the swamp. Dred's role as host may bring him a greater level of autonomy and movement because of his mastery of the swamp, but it does not change his standing with the larger community of plantation-living, slave-owning white people. In this we see the partial nature of slave hospitality at work. Dred is respected and honored among the slaves. His position is acknowledged publicly, and as both the scene with the fugitive slave and the scene with Tiff and the children (examined in the next section) show us, his power allows him to demand an explanation from those who would seek refuge in his swamp. Dred's power is both physical and moral. His size and strength, along with his comfort and familiarity with the swamp, evidence his physical power; his moral power, however, is rooted in both his generous nature and his role as the prophetic conscience of the region. Both sources of power enable him to move and speak with authority in his interactions with the black and white people of the area around the swamp.

While Stowe does not write any scenes into the novel that explicitly show Dred as powerless or in a subordinate position to any of the local landowners, his fugitive status by necessity keeps him away from most upper class white men, who would be his social equivalent of host in plantation culture. Some members of the community acknowledge that there is a fugitive slave in the swamp who has made a life there, but they know nothing about him and do not attribute to him any of the characteristics that are required of the host, including the recognition of his mastery over the swamp, his right to question visitors, or the possibility that he has any sort of property that could be used to succor guests who flee to the swamp.

Who Dred Hosts: The Stranger from the Coffle

In spite of the danger of his position as a fugitive slave at home on the fringes of a slave-holding community, Dred does not hide away in his swamp settlement. Instead, he regularly makes the rounds of the larger swamp and the neighbors on its fringes, investigating the local happenings and building connections with the slaves and poor whites that surround him. As part of his rounds in the swamp and the neighborhood surrounding it, Dred encounters men and women who are potential guests to his home. Not everyone he meets is invited into his home, however, and as will become clear in the scene below, it is only when Dred is acting upon the ethical compulsions of a man of honor that Dred welcomes his guest across his threshold. Dred acts with a combination of courage, generosity, shrewd reasoning, and compassion that are contradictory to his race and position as a slave under the traditions of southern honor culture.

At the close of volume one, Dred attends the camp meeting that excited all the neighbors, rich and poor, black and white, and even speaks out as a prophetic voice from the trees, condemning the Christian men who preach about God and then buy and sell slaves. After the camp meeting, as part of one of his journeys through the neighborhood, Dred meets an escaped slave and we are given our first extended scene of Dred's hospitality. Near the edge of the swamp Dred sees "the cowering form of a man, crouched at the root of a tree, a few paces in front of him. He was evidently a fugitive, and, in fact, was the one of whose escape to the swamps the Georgia trader had complained on the day of the meeting" (276). As mentioned earlier, Dred extends hospitality primarily to those who are in need, and this situation is no exception. The slave's posture, both his cowering and his position "crouched at the root of a tree" indicate his fear which, we learn later, is both of the swamp and of capture. What follows is an engaging exchange that clearly articulates the relationship between Dred and the "visitors" to the swamp. In the conversation below, Dred and the slave make several important rhetorical moves that allow them to establish their identities, including Dred's right to act as host, and thus to negotiate the terms of their relationship and to welcome or refuse his guest.

> "Who is here, at this time of the night?" said Dred, coming up to him.
>
> "I have lost my way," said the other. "I don't know where I am!"
>
> "A runaway?" inquired Dred.
>
> "Don't betray me!" said the other, apprehensively.
>
> "Betray you! Would *I* do that?" said Dred. "How did you get into the swamp?"

> "I got away from a soul-driver's camp, that was taking us on through the states."
>
> "O, O!" said Dred. "Camp-meeting and driver's camp right alongside each other! Shepherds that sell the flock, and pick the bones! Well, come, old man; I'll take you home with me." (276-7).

First, Dred opens the exchange by asking why the guest is on his "threshold." This is standard practice when the master (or mistress) of a house finds someone on their doorstep. What makes this situation unique is that the man is not on a physical doorstep. As noted earlier, there is no clear threshold or entrance to Dred's home, which in turn means that many spaces in the swamp outside of that clearing have the potential to be a threshold and provoke an exchange of welcome or rejection. When Dred asks or demands an explanation from the slave for his presence, he assumes that he has the right to control that space. The slave, upon questioning, does not offer his name or home address as would be common in a traditional exchange upon the threshold. His name would mean nothing to Dred, and as a fugitive slave, he has no home to mention. Rather than building a relationship upon a traditional exchange of information about identity and belonging, the slave builds his identity on the immediate need: he is lost and does not know where he is. This dual response positions him as subordinate to Dred, who is obviously at home in the space, while also making space for a gracious refusal. The slave is not an invader; his words communicate that he did not realize he was on Dred's doorstep, and thus indicates that he meant no harm in his apparent tresspassing.

Since the slave is nameless, Dred, as host, assigns him a name that can help shape their relationship. Dred names him "runaway." Again, the slave does not claim the name

or assert a different one. Instead, he at first names Dred as betrayer, preparing himself for rejection and possibly even death. Here Dred takes umbrage at the inferred insult and reclaims his honor by asserting that *he* would never do such a thing. This moment in the exchange directly ties Dred to the practices and values of Southern honor culture. His angry response to being called a betrayer is evidence that Dred feels insulted by this "guest" akin to being called a liar and his position as master of the swamp requires that he defend his honor. He takes back his authority and affirms his honor by questioning the slave a third time, seeking to give the man not just a name but also a place of belonging by asking him how he got into the swamp. By taking the position of interlocutor Dred establishes himself in a position of power. The fugitive slave does not capitulate to that power immediately, but he makes his own moves at naming and placing Dred in order to secure his own safety.

In the final exchange of this meeting, the slave admits that he ran away from the coffle parked near the camp-meeting. By locating himself here he does two things: first, he establishes his position as an outsider and someone in need of refuge. The nature of the coffle indicates that he is a slave that no longer has a home and that he has been sold off, possibly with ill-intent on the side of his owner. It also indicates that he is likely not from the area and thus does not know Dred and his role as master of the swamp. Second, the slave's ties with the coffle remind Dred of the happenings at the camp-meeting and his anger at the promiscuous mixing of Christianity and the support of slavery. Dred responds positively to the man's admissions and immediately makes him an offer of shelter and refuge by saying, "I'll take you home with me" (277). Having established the slave's need for shelter and having been given adequate reason for the slave's fear and

failure to acknowledge Dred’s authority, Dred, acting as host, decides to welcome his fugitive guest.

The analysis above illustrates that, like players in an important game of strategy, Dred and the slave make various rhetorical moves to establish their identities (including Dred’s right to act as host), negotiate the terms of their relationship, and provide Dred with the means and opportunity to welcome his guest. These exchanges with the guest at the threshold are necessary in any hospitable encounter. However, scenes of slave hospitality present the reader with a much more complex interaction between host and guest necessitated by the precarious situation of the slave host. For Dred, hospitality is inherently a risk-taking endeavor, with every potential guest also a potential enemy who could turn him in to the local authorities as a fugitive slave. While Dred’s mastery of the swamp and his successful creation of a home that is both safe and comfortable seem to indicate that he has found a place in the area that allows him to thrive as a man, his position is in fact tenuous and dangerous. The fact that Dred takes his life in his hands to extend hospitality to those in need reinforces the nobility of his character and indicates that he is a man of courage and determination who, in accordance with honor culture, is not afraid of death. Additionally, his willingness to offer hospitality at great risk and cost to himself and his “family” firmly aligns him with the ethics of Southern hospitality grounded in the long history of Christian generosity.

As is clear in multiple instances in the novel, including the closing of the scene examined above, Dred’s hospitality, like his swamp home, requires more of him than is usually expected of the southern plantation host. While a host may have to bear the burden of feeding a guest or housing a guest in a way that inconveniences himself or his

family, Dred literally takes the weight of the fugitive slave as his burden, carrying him from their meeting place in the swamp over the rough terrain to the entrance of the settlement. Physically bearing the burden of his guest is something no ordinary host would be expected to do, but it is an act that does not seem so unusual in the face of both the type of guest Dred is likely to welcome and the physically strenuous effort required to cross the threshold of his home. Later in the novel, when Dred welcomes Tiff and the Cripps children into his settlement, he again takes up the weight of his guest, this time putting Teddy on his shoulders and warning him to hold tightly, saying, "Trees have long arms; don't let them rake you off" (413). Dred may be master of the swamp, but he acknowledges that the inhospitable nature of his surroundings could easily keep Teddy from finding safety and shelter if he is not watchful. Those who would take refuge in the swamp must accept that it is a difficult and trying place to live. Nature may have thrown her hand in with Dred's in making his settlement safe and secure, but nature is not always or consistently hospitable in her own right. Dred's ability to make himself at home in this scene is tied, as the narrator shows us, to his ability to live harmoniously with nature. When he introduces new people to his home, he must also help them learn to live alongside the menaces of nature that help to keep his home safe.

Who Dred Hosts: Welcoming His Neighbor

While the scene with the fugitive slave gives us a clear picture of how Dred performs the duty of host to a stranger, Stowe gives us another opportunity to see the danger and courage of the slave host when Dred welcomes Tiff and the children he cares for into his swamp settlement. While it would seem reasonable for Dred to welcome them because he and Tiff have a long-standing relationship, Tiff too must be examined

by the host before receiving welcome. This need to establish Tiff's honesty and his willingness to submit to Dred's authority is also a function of honor culture. While Dred, as a black man himself, does not accept the assertion of southern honor culture that all black persons are inherently dishonest, he also does not give his trust immediately or without thought. His cautiousness in welcoming even someone as obviously needy and helpless as Tiff and the children evidences wisdom and discernment about the neighborhood and the precarious position that he and his settlement occupy. In this exchange Dred reveals that he is not only a courageous and generous host, he is also a shrewd and self-controlled one who is unwilling to sacrifice his family or his future on an impulse.

In response to the "drunken orgies" that Polly Cripps indulges in while her husband is on the road, Tiff decides to take the children off into the swamp and settle into a fugitive slave settlement there (404). It is only after the children and Tiff journey several hours into the swamp and find a dry place to spend the night that the reader gets any inkling that there is a connection between Tiff and Dred. When Dred comes upon the sleeping trio in his early morning hunting in the swamp he closely examines the group. The narrator states that "Dred had known Old Tiff before; and had occasion to go to him more than once to beg supplies for fugitives in the swamps, or to get an errand performed which he could not himself venture abroad to attend to," and she further adds that even the children, "who knew [Tiff] most intimately" did not know of his relationship with Dred (409). Through both narrative structure and direct comment of the narrator, Stowe repeatedly draws the reader's attention to the way in which Dred and the Dismal Swamp operate as a parallel world to plantation culture with the slaves (both

bound and fugitive) easily crossing between them without giving any hint of their dual citizenship to the white people most intimately connected with them.[31]

The exchange between Dred and Tiff and the children on the threshold between the wilderness and entrance to the Dred's settlement differs from the exchange with the fugitive slave because there are already neighborly connections between Dred and Tiff. As host in the swamp, and especially with other fugitive slaves under his care and protection, Dred does not assume that Tiff's prior help and intimacy guarantees his current honesty and safety. Dred does begin the threshold exchange, but Tiff must present himself as an appropriate guest before he gains entrance to the settlement. Under normal social conditions in a plantation neighborhood, such precautions would not only be unnecessary, they might even be read as disrespectful or rude. This necessary difference again sheds light on the precarious nature of slave hospitality and Dred's commitment to the ethical imperatives versus the political necessities of Southern hospitality. He walks a fine line between meanness and generosity: he could just dismiss his guest out of hand because he does not want the inconvenience of caring for additional dependents, or, conversely, carelessly opening his home to whoever seeks entrance.

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[31] Again, this blindness can be attributed to Southern honor culture's focus on surfaces and appearances. As long as Dred and the slaves can keep the master from "seeing" them, they can maintain intimacy that allows them to move between the swamp and its surrounding areas. Because paternalism assumes that slaves are incapable of surviving on their own or caring for themselves, it would be ludicrous for a white plantation owner to even consider that there might be slaves making independent lives for themselves in the swamp. Additionally, paternalism and Southern honor culture work together to create a narrative in which slaves are inherently lazy and dishonest, and allowances have to be made for their inability to work or be present. The lies that masters told themselves about why their slaves were tired or absent left no room for the truth of their late-night meetings in the swamp.

Instead, Dred shows the reader that slave hospitality is a more complex and complicated practice, in some ways, than the plantation hospitality practiced in the neighborhoods around him.

Dred initially welcomes his potential guests when he leaves food for Tiff and the children while they are sleeping.[32] Dred is well aware of the changes to the Cripps household: "Dred, whose eyes, sharpened by habitual caution, never lost sight of any change in his vicinity, had been observant of that which had taken place in Old Tiff's affairs. When, therefore, he saw him sleeping as we have described, he understood the whole matter at once" (410). This knowledge of the lives of those around him sets Dred apart as a keeper of the neighborhood in a way that implies leadership and foresight not usually attributed to slaves. He is prepared to offer extended hospitality to Tiff and the children, another group of fugitives in need of his protection and care. This hospitality, however, is contingent on Tiff asking for it and so, since Tiff is sleeping when Dred first sees them, Dred makes no offer. It is only after Tiff answers Dred's morning song with another song that the host and guest formally meet for the first time.

Tiff's sung response is akin to knocking on the door of someone's house and asking for entrance.[33] For a home like Dred's, without a clearly demarcated entrance, singing out to grab the host's attention might have been the easiest mode of reaching him.

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[32] Greenberg argues that in Southern honor culture, giving gifts was a sign of being a man of honor and was used to distinguish between masters and slaves. When Dred leaves the food for Tiff and the children, then, he is actively engaging in honor culture, discursively passing as a man of honor apart from directly performing the role of host.

[33] The sung exchange is also reminiscent of the slave call-and-response tradition as they sang in the fields or in church meetings.

Tiff and the children are first made aware of Dred's presence when they hear a voice singing off in the woods in the early morning after their rest. Tiff, because of his previous acquaintance with Dred, recognizes his voice and immediately decides to sing out a response to get the singer's attention. Before he sings out, however, he makes sure to tell the children that the singer that they hear will "get us to dat ar camp I's telling 'bout" (412). He cautions the children not to be afraid and starts a song that the narrator notes "might, perhaps, have been used as a signal" connecting Tiff and Dred to the history of escaped slaves looking for shelter on their way north to freedom. Tiff and the children need help—homeless, with little resources and nowhere to go—making them particularly vulnerable to the power of the host. Although the children are white, their dependent status means that without the faithful care of their old slave, who is both mother and servant to them, they would die in the woods or be thoroughly corrupted and abused by their debauched stepmother.

In the role of protector of the children, Tiff takes their lives into his own hands and leads them into the woods in search of safety. In this role Tiff puts all of his powers to work to get them into the care of Dred and the safety of his swamp home. Singing until Dred emerges from the woods to stand in front of them, Tiff's response to the song of his host works to draw the attention of the host and opens the way to their threshold exchange. Meeting on the open space where they spent the night, Dred addresses them with a question that is both an observation and an invitation to explain what it is they want with him: "'So, you've fled to the wilderness?' he said" (412). Tiff's response is straightforward and direct. They "tuck to de bush" to escape the degrading situation at their former home. Instead of a straightforward invitation to his home such as Dred

offered to the fugitive slave, Dred responds instead with a soliloquy about the glories of the woods and God's creation ending with a proclamation that God will break the yoke of captivity. While Tiff is responsive to Dred's promises and Biblical language, his expressed desire to "live peaceably" indicates that he is seeking survival in the swamp, not an invitation to participate in a revolution. Dred's response to him shows that he does not respect this line of thinking, but Tiff is not deterred. He makes it clear that his priority is the care and protection of the children, not his own freedom.

While this exchange seems long and convoluted, it allows Dred to feel out his visitor's intentions and test his loyalties. At this point in the narrative, he is not just putting himself at risk. His settlement houses other fugitive slaves as well as his own wife. Furthermore, it is the meeting place where local slaves gather to plan their insurrection. When he does decide to invite Tiff and the Cripps children into his home, it is because of the long-standing relationship of mutual aid that Tiff and Dred shared: "'Well,' said Dred, 'you have served him that was ready to perish, and not betrayed him who wandered; therefore, the Lord will open for you a fenced city in the wilderness'" (413). In response to this offer, Tiff affirms that Dred's settlement was their end goal and that he will continue to support Dred and the children acknowledging that he is "willin' to lend a hand to most anything dat's good" (413). Dred notes that Tiff offered him care that may have even saved his life when he was wandering in the swamp. In a very material way, Dred could not be host without Tiff's earlier support. This relationship, however, is not enough in and of itself to guarantee Tiff and the children a place of refuge.

Unlike the political nature of plantation hospitality practices, reciprocity cannot be assumed in the experience of slave hospitality. For the slave host there are layers of connection and mutual understanding that must be established before the threshold can be crossed. Tiff was a friend in the past, but is he still a friend? When he demurs at the idea of vengeance against the oppressors, Tiff presents himself as someone who is not willing to join in the slave uprising that Dred is leading. Dred must weigh whether bringing Tiff and the children into his settlement will be a safe and prudent choice. At this point Dred welcomes them, using Biblical language that connects clearly to Tiff's prayer for provision the night before. Tiff's grateful response to the offer shows that Dred made a right judgment because, even in his reluctance to join in violence, Tiff calls what Dred is doing, and where he lives "good" (413). In two pages, Stow lays out the full threshold experience of the slave host: a relationship of mutual care and respect is acknowledged, need is stated, offer of welcome is made, and offer is accepted.

Conclusion

Slave hospitality is Southern hospitality with a difference. When Stowe treats slave hospitality as a form of Southern hospitality she raises questions about the legitimacy of the narrative the South tells about itself and the narrative that many in the North tell about the South. Why does it matter that Stowe subverts Southern hospitality and Southern honor culture by creating an ethical and upright black slave host? This choice to create a black slave host is closely tied to Stowe's evolving racial politics and her horror at the growing sectional violence in the years between *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dred*. Scholars note that there are clear connections between the violence of Bleeding Kansas and the beating of Charles Sumner in Congress and the violence enacted,

contemplated, and prophesied in *Dred*.[34] Whether they are focused on the legal discourse of the novel, the botanical imagery, or the relationship between Stowe and African American writers and speakers, these scholars routinely speak of the aborted insurrection and Dred's martyrdom as signs that Stowe either could not stomach the thought of slave violence or was simply unwilling to glorify a violent end to slavery at the hands of slaves. While I agree that her views of African Americans evolved considerably from those in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and that, moreover, she cannot seem to escape a romantic racialist view of slaves, I also agree with David Grant that the lack of an insurrection is not a failure of the novel. Grant argues that Stowe's aim was to reflect the growing realization that slavery as an institution can only be overthrown by violence, and while the novel closes without the overthrow of slavery, this absence indicates not Stowe's ambivalence about slave violence as much as her uncertainty about the nature of the violence necessary to abolish slavery. While *Dred* was published only five years before the onset of the Civil War, it is still not absolutely clear in 1856 that Civil War is inevitable. Stowe sees the necessity and inevitability of violence, but like Martin Delany in his 1859/1861 serialized novel of slave insurrection, *Blake*, she does not follow through on the possibility that slaves can overthrow slavery on their own.

Instead of the direct assault on southern life through a slave insurrection, Stowe shows her growing political and social acumen in the way that she attacks and undermines the ideology of the South on multiple levels. As I have argued in this

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[34] This theme appears in multiple articles and books that discuss *Dred*, including works by Richard Boyd, Clare Cotugno, Gregg D. Crane, Jeannine Marie Delombard, David Grant, Kevin Pelletier, Jacob Stratman, and Christina Zwarg.

chapter, Stowe enacts her anti-slavery abolitionist politics by going to the root of the slavery system: Southern honor culture. I have already sketched out how honor culture is grounded in slavery, but I want to mention in closing that Stowe's use of discursive passing to unsettle the discourse of Southern hospitality is both a sophisticated ideological move and a necessary one. If sectional violence is inevitable, then it is vital to draw a line between those who rightfully support American ideals of freedom and those who do not. By upsetting the discourse of Southern hospitality with a black host, Stowe reveals to her readers the seamy underbelly of the gracious and bountiful hospitality praised by both northern and southern writers and travelers. Her discursive passing becomes another weapon against the pleasing veneer of southern life, working alongside her fictionalized legal discourse, her conflation of Southern honor and intemperance, and her unmasking of the religious sophistries that allowed the South to legitimize slavery and protest the restrictions proposed by free labor and abolitionist leaders of the North and West.

Chapter Three: Transformative Hospitality in Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*

In the antebellum North, the practices of daily life, including hospitality, were deeply segregated affairs. This divided society provides the backdrop for Frank J. Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*, a novel that Natasha Kohl characterizes as the "first fictional account of color discrimination in the antebellum North" (77).[35] Webb's novel follows the path of two groups of people: the Garie family, a southern interracial couple with children, and their friends, primarily the Ellis family and other members of the free black community in Philadelphia. Clarence Garie, a wealthy white planter from Georgia,

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[35] For many years little was known about Frank J. Webb other than the fact that, unlike most of the African American writers of the antebellum period, Webb was not a former slave. Rosemary Crockett argues that the absence of biographical information about Webb may have contributed to the lack of scholarly attention given to The Garies in the years since its initial publication. In both her 1994 essay in The Black Columbiad and her 1998 dissertation, Crockett provides scholars with a well-researched biography of Webb, starting with his birth in Philadelphia in 1828 and his appearance in the 1850 census as a 22-year-old who either worked in a clothing store or was a "designer, or commercial artist" ("Frank J. Webb" 113-4). Webb's wife Mary was a "dramatic reader in the northeastern coastal states" and toured in New England in 1855, with moderate success; the couple then traveled to England in 1856 to tour there on the recommendation of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who sent letters of introduction with the couple to her friend, the British abolitionist Edward Baines (114). Crockett notes that Mary Webb received "at least one favorable review, in the Illustrated London News of August 2, 1856, which heartily commended her performance (115). While in England, Webb completed *The Garies*, and it was published by George Routledge & Co in 1857 to mixed reviews. From England the Webbs traveled to France and then Jamaica for Mary's health. While the outlines of Webb's life are relatively easy to document from 1856 onward, Crockett is clear that much is still unknown about Webb and his life. He did not return to the US until 1870 and at that point had a large family, began publishing a variety of writings, including short stories and poetry that were not racially specific, and became a student at Howard University Law School (118-9). After completing law school, Webb moved to Galveston, Texas where he was "actively involved in the colored community and in local politics," working and living in the area until his death in 1894 (120-1). In 2001 Eric Gardner wrote an article in the African American Review about the biographical recovery work being done on Frank J. Webb, arguing, like Crockett, that a better understanding of his life is important to both "our specific understanding of The Garies and Their Friends and our more general sense of the multiple histories of Blackness in the nineteenth-century United States" (298).

moves with his mixed-race mistress and their two children to Philadelphia so that he can marry her and ensure that their unborn third child will be born into freedom. Befriended by the Ellis family and their friend Mr. Walters, a wealthy black businessman, the Garies only partially integrate themselves into the free black community before they both die traumatically at the hands of race rioters. After the riots conclude midway through the novel, the narrative jumps ahead to the young adulthood of the Garie and Ellis children. The black community has suffered much at the hands of the race rioters, and this brokenness is expressed in the mixed endings of the Garie children: young Clarence Garie wastes away and dies after his failed attempts to pass as white, but his younger sister Emily marries the youngest Ellis child, Charlie, and their marriage leads to a successful integration into the free black community.

The Garies gives insight into one of Eric Gardner's "multiple histories of black experience" because it neither relays the horrors of chattel slavery nor endlessly focuses on the fragmented black family or community, two narratives prominent in abolitionist literature of the period (298). Instead, Webb paints the picture of a community of individuals and families that come together to empower each other and change the social and legal opportunities for African Americans in the antebellum United States. The novel, unlike a traditional slave narrative, does not define black experience in terms of the loss, pain, homelessness and isolation of chattel slavery. Instead, this narrative of community tells the story of the stranger who is welcomed, the homeless who is given a place to live, and the broken who are helped to find healing. It is a community shaped by and actively practicing hospitality with purpose and intentionality. In this chapter I address the way in which Webb's uses hospitality to educate members of white

Philadelphia, as well as visitors to the city, about the lives and pursuits of the free black community in their midst. The goal of this hospitality is to transform the relationships between white and black members of Northern society by providing an opportunity for white men and women to see their racist presuppositions for what they are and to work towards a more egalitarian worldview. In this chapter I use the term *transformative hospitality* to describe hospitality that provides a learning opportunity both for the reader and for the characters that participate in the interracial acts of hospitality.

Transformative hospitality is important because there were so few opportunities for black and white members of northern society to engage in meaningful interactions as equals. Northern institutions were highly segregated and thus were unable to provide the white community with opportunities for transformative learning that would allow them to revise their understanding of racism as a personal belief or a social structure. In the absence of institutional spaces for transformative learning, Webb uses hospitality practices that bring white and black men and women together in private homes to facilitate both "social change as [well as] individual transformation" (Taylor 10).[36]

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[36] The foundational theorist of transformative learning theory is Jack Mezirow, but the theory has been expanded and critiqued significantly in the last 30 years. Edward J. Taylor's essay "Transformative Learning Theory" in the 2008 edition of *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* provides a strong summary of the theory and its various incarnations since Mezirow's original article in 1978. The role of transformative learning theory in promoting social awareness and creating leaders has been explored recently by Kathleen Brown in her 2004 article "Leadership for Social Justice and Equity: Weaving a Transformative Framework and Pedagogy" and Kathleen Riley and Kathryn Solic in their 2017 article " 'Change Happens Beyond the Comfort Zone': Bringing Undergraduate Teacher-Candidates into Activist Teacher Communities." All three authors explore at length the way that transformative learning (both theory and practice) are essential for promoting social change through transformed individuals influencing other individuals or groups. Shilpi Sinha provides a more philosophical approach to

Transformative learning theory posits that adults can participate in activities where the learner is "constructing and appropriating new and revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world" (Taylor 5). In moments of transformative hospitality, this transformation is a challenge to the participants' understanding of the world and, therefore, transformative hospitality often has mixed results. I argue that throughout *The Garies,* Webb draws a complex picture of black personhood that directly contradicts stereotypes of black inferiority prevalent in the late-antebellum period. When these complex black characters interact with their white neighbors their interactions disrupt expectations of blackness. When a white host or guest is willing to change their viewpoint after engaging with their black host or guest, the hospitality has been truly transformative; however, some of the white characters cling to their prejudices, deny what they have seen and experienced in their interactions with the black community, and continue to promote an image of inferior blackness that they find safe and socially acceptable.

Transformative Hospitality in a Segregated Environment

The practice of transformative hospitality allows individuals to reach out to their neighbors across the chasm of virulent racism and discrimination that characterized Philadelphia in the 1830s and 1840s. At the time of the writing of *The Garies,* Philadelphia was the site of the largest free black population in the United States. Newman and Mueller estimate that "by the Civil War era, Philadelphia boasted the

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transformative learning theory in his 2010 article "Dialogue as a Site of Transformative Possibility."

largest single free black population in the United States—nearly twenty thousand persons" (8).[37] Because of the gradual emancipation laws put in place in Pennsylvania in 1780, over the next fifty years the free black community grew through the emancipation of local slaves and through the marriage and childbearing of African American couples who already lived in the state. The city was also identified strongly with abolitionist beliefs, which meant that fugitive slaves and free black men and women from the South often saw it as a safe haven and moved there to escape threats of violence in their home communities. But all was not well in this growing community. Historian Ira Berlin highlights the "pervasive discrimination black people faced," evidenced in violence that belied the ideals of the "City of Brotherly Love" (19).[38] Racist ideology grew in the early years of emancipation and expanded further under the democratic reforms of the 1830s. In particular, "once equality became normative, the poverty, illiteracy, and degradation of most black people—particularly free ones—needed an explanation" and medical and social theories of black inferiority grew in popularity and power (Berlin 33). Julie Winch argues that because of this discriminatory ideology, it was essential that black "men and women who came of age in the period from 1800 to 1830 … devise new strategies to enhance their status as full-fledged members of the larger community" (75).[39] In order to

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[37] "Introduction," *Antislavery and Abolition in Philadelphia: Emancipation and the Long Struggle for Racial Justice in the City of Brotherly Love* edited by Richard Newman and James Mueller, Louisiana State UP, 2011. 1-16.

[38] "Slavery, Freedom, and Philadelphia's Struggle for Brotherly Love, 1685 to 1861," *Antislavery and Abolition in Philadelphia: Emancipation and the Long Struggle for Racial Justice in the City of Brotherly Love* edited by Richard Newman and James Mueller, Louisiana State UP, 2011. 19-41.

[39] "Self-Help and Self-Determination: Black Philadelphians and the Dimensions of Freedom," *Antislavery and Abolition in Philadelphia: Emancipation and the Long Struggle for Racial*

make a change in social status, the black community had to address the issues raised by the white community—African American poverty, illiteracy, and degradation—in a way that demonstrated their civic engagement and provided some modicum of success with these issues. While the African American community attempted improvements in their own neighborhoods the northern white community argued that the inferior black community needed to be contained, or even better, relocated to Africa. Although social and legislative prejudice abounded, this period witnessed the growth of the African American churches, schools, literary societies, and debating halls that Mr. Ellis mentions to Winston in their dinner exchange, highlighting the prosperity and growth of the free black community.[40]

These institutions within the black community addressed some of the community's needs, but the social status of African Americans continued to be marginal and uncertain. In 1838 the white community passed revisions of the Pennsylvania constitution that specifically disenfranchised black men; this move facilitated additional efforts to restrict African Americans that included "periodic attempts to limit the physical mobility and constrain the citizenship of black people" in Pennsylvania (34). One of the greatest struggles for the black community was the difficulties, as Berlin notes, "of an emancipation that promised no more than legal freedom" (27). Legal freedom without

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Justice in the City of Brotherly Love edited by Richard Newman and James Mueller, Louisiana State UP, 2011. 66-89.

[40] These black educational spaces also appear prominently in W. E. B. Du Bois's 1899 sociology monograph, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (reprinted in 2007 by the Oxford UP), and in Erica Armstrong Dunbar's *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City*, Yale UP: 2008.

rights as citizens and full access to education, employment, and housing was a crushing burden for freed slaves and the impoverished free black men and women that relocated to Philadelphia.[41]

Transformative hospitality fills a unique gap in this social hierarchy of antebellum Philadelphia. In lieu of interracial library or lecture spaces, Mr. Ellis's dining table and Mr. Walters's parlor become sites of transformative learning. Webb uses several plot-lines to highlight the segregated nature of institutions in the North. While Mrs. Bird entreats Mr. Whately to gain admission to a prestigious white academy for the young black Charlie Ellis, Mrs. Stevens is manipulating the young Miss Jordan to expel the mixed-race Garie children from her local school, and in the end all three children are barred from white educational institutions. In both instances, ingrained racism forces the segregation of these institutions. Mr. Whately notes that "I never knew prejudice more rampant than it is at this hour" (168) and Mrs. Stevens makes it clear that abolitionist ideas are a reproach, not a benefit, to Miss Jordon's school when she tells her that she must expel the Garie children and "see the necessity of doing something at once to vindicate yourself from the reproach of abolitionism"(175). With racism motivating the men and women who control the income of schools and teachers and the admittance of students to these schools, there is no formal learning environment where interracial learning can happen. As Mr. Ellis notes in his conversation with Winston, this

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[41] Comparisons can easily be made between *The Garies and Their Friends* (1857) and *Our Nig* by Harriet Wilson (1859) which is often praised for the way it highlights the degrading conditions of free blacks in the North and the violence and abuse that is present in indentured servitude as well as in chattel slavery.

segregation is active in institutions for the adult population as well. He tells Winston that "at the lectures of the white library society a coloured person would no more be permitted to enter than a donkey or a rattle-snake" (82). Mr. Ellis's comparison between a black person and a donkey or a rattle-snake echoes southern racist ideas that mark all black people as more akin to the animal kingdom than white humanity: they are beasts of burden or dangerous reptiles. Into this gap steps the host or guest intent on bringing transformative learning opportunities to their friends, neighbors, and acquaintances regardless of their racial identity.

Alongside theses social and legislative barriers to success, the black community also had to contend with rising violence. In *The Garies*, the dramatic tension in the plot peaks in the race riot, when rioters attempt to destroy Mr. Walters's home and succeed in killing the two adult Garies. This riot, though fictional, is based upon multiple historical instances of racial mob violence in Philadelphia in the 1830s and 1840s. As Winch notes, Philadelphia was "a city under pressure. … Long simmering tensions frequently boiled over into violence. Black people were not the only victims of enraged mobs … but they were handy targets, since it was well known that the authorities were unlikely to protect them" (84). As this history of violence and racism indicates, the black community in Philadelphia, although large and growing in the late antebellum period, was also considerably maligned and under frequent attack from mobs and from a legislature that wanted to limit severely, if not entirely remove, all rights to property and to movement in and around the community (Winch 84).

In the darkness of such a severely divided and rancorous community there shone a few bright lights of interracial engagement, including the interracial abolitionist societies

and their accompanying social service organizations. While existent in the actual world of antebellum Philadelphia, Webb illustrates fictionally how these interracial organizations brought white and black men together through the close relationship between Mr. Walters and the white lawyer Mr. Balch. Their friendship reveals that there were professional and social bonds that transcended racial divisions.[42] As Erica Armstrong Dunbar notes, "antislavery circles provided the first organized forums in which white and black men and women could come together as political activists, Christian brothers and sisters, neighbors, and, in some cases, friends" (72). While these worthwhile organizations did exist, they were in the minority in the community. The racist ideology that permeated white Philadelphia meant that the vast majority of educational and social institutions were either segregated or unavailable to black community members. Dunbar argues that "the strategy of social confinement [enforced by the white population]… helped to create a tightly knit black community" that was fertile ground for the growth of literary societies and debating clubs, culminating in the 1841 organization of "the Gilbert Lyceum for 'literary and scientific purposes'" (102).[43] Transformative hospitality, practiced with the aim of changing a person's understanding of the world, is particularly useful during a period of growth and social upheaval such as the one Philadelphia faced in the antebellum period.

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[42] Mr. Balch advocates on behalf of the Garie children after Mr. Stevens steals their inheritance (253-260), acts as a counselor to young Clarence Garie when he has to decide on what to do for his formal education—even personally taking him to a prestigious school in New York (271-278), and he is also present at Emily Garie's and Charlie Ellis's wedding in the Walters's home (351).

[43] *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City*, Yale UP: 2008.

The Theoretical Roots of Transformative Hospitality

Most scholarship on hospitality does not discuss the role of education, teaching, and learning in hospitality practice; or, if any of these are mentioned, it is only as a side note to a larger philosophical or political argument. In the scholarship of education, however, there is a robust and thoughtful debate about the merits of hospitality *in education*, particularly in composition studies, as well as frequent consideration of how hospitality and education influence and affect each other. One of the earliest theorists of the role of hospitality in education was the Catholic philosopher Henri Nouwen. In his 1975 text, *Reaching Out*, Nouwen explores the need for the classroom to be a more equitable space and delineates how the practice of hospitality engenders trust and breaks down binary relationships to allow learning to become a mutual practice. Central to his claims is the emphasis on what he calls "the unambiguous presence" of host to guest (and the inverse is also implied) (99). By requiring that a host and guest be present to each other without "hiding ourselves behind neutrality," Nouwen speaks to the cultural desire for authenticity in relationships that characterized much of the 1970s in the United States. But Nouwen is not alone in advocating for the benefits of hospitality in the classroom. Robert Tremmel takes the discussion of hospitality in the classroom and focuses particularly on the writing classroom. Tremmel focuses specifically on how an atmosphere of hospitality and invitation draws writing students into greater activity and engagement with writing practice and instruction "by making themselves at home" in the classroom (191). For Tremmel, hospitality in the classroom is the result of the attitudes and actions of an instructor who acts as host, not just a source of knowledge and instruction. For both Nouwen and Tremmel, the focus is on the way teachers can be

hosts to students with the resulting hospitality creating clear boundaries that are not perceived as restrictions but as delineating a safe place to explore and practice their work. Writing in *College Composition and Communication* in 2009, Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock also discuss hospitality in the composition classroom in terms of the practical application of social practices, rather than from the perspective of the growing field of hospitality theory. In a more theoretical vein, Rouyu Hung highlights how this conversation has developed over the early 2000s through the varied works of scholars outside the United States publishing primarily in the journal *Philosophy of Education* and *Educational Philosophy and Theory*.[44]

Much of this scholarship about hospitality in the classroom can be applied to learning opportunities in the practice of transformative hospitality. One particular example of this crossover between educational theory and hospitality theory is the relationship between being an educator and being a host. When we consider hospitality as a possible site of learning in *The Garies*, it is important to differentiate between the hospitable teacher and the instructive host or guest. A teacher who practices hospitality is an educator first and a host second, using hospitality as one way among many of engaging with her students. In *The Garies* there are no scenes that focus on the hospitable teacher; instead, the focus is on the way participants in hospitality can provide instruction or learning opportunities to each other during the practice of hospitality. The instructive host or guest, such as Mr. Walters, is, on the other hand, a prominent character

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[44] Some of the scholars Hung focuses on include Zelia Gregoriou (2003), Aparna Mishra Tarc (2005), Claudia Ruietenberg (2009, 2011, 2014).

in the novel. When Mr. Walters engages in transformative hospitality, he takes advantage of a teachable moment to educate his companions with the intention of changing their perception of the black community. In *The Garies*, the hosts (and occasionally guests) in the scenes I examine are hosts or guests first and educators second.

Whether as host or as guest, Webb's characters engage in many traditional hospitality practices: greetings and introductions, various social pleasantries, business transactions, and formal and informal meals; then, somewhere in the process, an educational moment arises and the characters engage in transformative hospitality with each other. While all hospitality has the potential to be transformative, most is not. For instance, the hospitality of Mrs. Thomas, examined in the next section, is practiced with the intent to solidify the status quo and secure support for her social positions and recognition from other wealthy and powerful members of society. Mrs. Thomas has no interest in changing the views of her guests or in helping them see the world and the community in a more complex and nuanced way. Mrs. Thomas uses various forms of hospitality, including the social visit and the dinner party, to maintain her social position and create a reputation for being popular and a good hostess. For Mrs. Thomas and her circle of acquaintance, hospitality is a tool to shore up their social capital and help them to advance in society.

In contrast to Mrs. Thomas's hospitality practices, Mr. Walters welcomes guests into his home for a greater variety of goals, including providing a safe haven for his friends during the riot, hosting community celebrations, or welcoming family and friends for social visits. Mr. Walters does not limit his hospitality to just reinforcement of the

status quo, however, and this is clearly seen in his interactions with Mr. Garie and his social engagements with the white lawyer, Mr. Balch. Mr. Walters's hospitality moves from a traditional social practice to a transformative learning experience when he willingly raises controversial topics with his acquaintance, or presses them to more fully examine their own convictions. Mr. Ellis acts similarly when he hosts his friend Winston. Key to transformative hospitality is the combination of sincere welcome alongside challenging interactions. Both men, and other hosts and guests in the narrative, speak out when racist assumptions are voiced in their presence (whether from black or white participants) and ask leading questions that invite their companions to examine what they thought they knew to be true. Whether it is an extended discussion of the library societies in Philadelphia or the examination of a portrait of a black military leader, the conversations that happen during scenes of transformative hospitality are pursued by host or guest with the intent to challenge and change the thinking of their companions.

Regardless of their background or nationality, or their focus on praxis or theory, all of the scholars mentioned above emphasize the trust relationship necessary in both education and hospitality, as well as the way that hospitality provides structure and practice to aid educators navigating the relationships between strangers inherent in education. In order for hospitality to be transformative, and for the host to facilitate learning, it is essential for the guest to see the host as someone known and trustworthy. As Nouwen argues, in order for a host to offer welcome, he or she must present to the guest an unambiguous presence in the act of hospitality. In other words, the host must be clearly known to the guest and he or she must clearly acknowledge any beliefs and practices that define who they are and how they interact with the world. An important

part of the give and take in hospitality is the establishment of trust between the host and the guest. This can happen in a variety of ways: Mr. Walters presents an unambiguous presence to his personal friends and business acquaintances through his personal appearance as a gentleman of means, publicly acknowledging his business practices, and creating a home environment of comfort and culture. Mr. Ellis presents an unambiguous presence to his visiting friend Winston by greeting him at the door, sharing a meal at the family table, and engaging in frank conversation about the community.

In *The Garies,* transformative hospitality usually arises in one of two ways—either the guest asks a question that prompts the host to take on an instructional attitude, or a guest expresses opinions or views that conflict with the host's understanding of reality and he or she feels the need to offer correction. Winston's inquisitiveness while at the Ellis home for dinner, and, later, Mr. Garie's inquiries about the portrait hanging in Mr. Walters's parlor are examples of the first type of engagement with transformative hospitality. Both men are open to revising their expectations or understanding of the black community because of the contrast between what they expected to see upon their visit to Philadelphia, and what they actually meet on the streets and in the homes of members of the black community. The second type of educational moment—the need for a host or guest to correct conflicting views on race—is exemplified by Mr. Garie's interactions with his racist neighbor Mrs. Stevens. When she makes derogatory comments about "quality" black people in Philadelphia, Mr. Garie feels compelled to correct her in defense of his wife's honor and reputation. Regardless of how it starts, once an educational moment arises, the host or guest steps forward with necessary information that will either answer the question or correct a misapprehension, and at that

juncture hospitality shifts from being a merely social act to being intentionally transformative.

Because of the reciprocal and interdependent nature of the relationships of hospitality, scholars discuss at length the necessity of listening in order to build trust in addition to being fully present as a guest or a host. Both Mr. Walters and Mr. Ellis excel at this, listening thoughtfully to their respective guests and then responding directly and straightforwardly to their inquiries.[45] In transformative hospitality, an exchange of knowledge experienced in a relationship of mutual trust is essential. For Winston, the comfort of his friend's home opens the door to an entirely new perspective on the free black community; as the meal closes, "the astonished Winston" requests "to see as much of [the free black community] as possible during [his] stay" (84). This curiosity about the black community is also a move away from Winston's original practice of identifying as a white man and instead shows him choosing to embrace a connection to the black community.

Not all moments of transformative hospitality are so immediately profitable, however, and the pursuit of greater understanding between the black and white communities of Philadelphia is fraught with risk as well as the potential for great change. As the scene between the Garies and Mrs. Stevens shows, there is a need for a clear point of stasis before a guest or host can facilitate a change of worldview. When discussing the

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[45] This is seen most clearly in the extended conversation between Mr. Ellis and Winston in chapter 4 (82-85) and the business exchange between Mr. Walters and Mr. Garie in chapter 11 (144-145).

visit with her husband, Mrs. Stevens relates that she "hadn't the remotest idea that [Mrs. Garie] was a coloured woman … You may imagine my astonishment—I was completely dumb—" (152). For Mrs. Stevens, meeting Mrs. Garie was supposed to be a neighborly connection with a white peer. The open disgust Mrs. Stevens displays toward black residents of Philadelphia demolishes any connection between them and ends not just the moment of hospitality, but Mr. Garie's attempts to challenge Mrs. Stevens's presuppositions about race and neighborliness. Transformation is easier, educational theorist Matthew Heard notes, when the guest and host are committed to the radical openness to the stranger that Derrida argues is fundamental to any true practices of hospitality. For Heard, "the beauty of radical hospitality is that it confronts us with our responsibility to welcome this other who disrupts us, who calls us away from safety, comfort, and habit" (330). When Mrs. Stevens entered the Garie home, she was not open to any disruption to her daily life or way of thinking. The interaction between the Garies and Mrs. Stevens reveals that any interracial hospitality practiced in Philadelphia in the late-antebellum period was a radical practice of hospitality, even if the guest and host appear to be social equals. Without the presence of some stasis, rooted in a relationship of trust or an openness to disruption or both, transformative hospitality becomes potentially dangerous to all participants as my argument at the close of this chapter explores more fully.

Putting Transformative Hospitality in Context: Northern Hospitality in Action

Looking closely at the way hospitality is practiced by the white community in this novel reveals the serious implications and ramifications of interracial and transformative hospitality in the North. Although there are various mentions of traditional social

practices of hospitality by white characters in the novel, the most extended account of white hospitality in *The Garies* is the description of Mrs. Thomas's household entertainments. Early in *The Garies*, Webb details the hospitality offered by Mrs. Thomas, the wealthy white former employer of Mrs. Ellis, a free black woman. As a representative symbol of northern society, Mrs. Thomas is anything but generous and welcoming. Webb characterizes her as someone whose desire to be fashionable beats out all other desires. She and her circle of acquaintance are pretentious and ambitious. As the narrator describes them, she and her guests were "two or three removes from the class whose members occupy the cobbler's bench or the huckster's stall" and they speak of their laboring or merchant backgrounds as "family, who, at an early period of their lives, were engaged in mercantile pursuits" (103). This jab at the "new money" status of Mrs. Thomas and her friends provides context for her social gaffes, but it also emphasizes her lack of sympathy for the ambitions and and the desire for greater opportunity expressed by Charlie and the Ellis family. To more firmly establish the security of the newly rich white portions of society, Mrs. Thomas and her friends must strictly police the dividing lines between classes and races; these divisions require frequent reinforcement because of the newness and instability of the financial and class hierarchy they inhabit and the performative nature of racial identity.[46]

Aside from the financial divides, however, the narrator indicates that Mrs. Thomas's desire to be a social leader totally compromises her ability to be truly

[46] I explore the performance of racialized identity at greater length in my first chapter, focusing on the dissonance and conflict inherent in the expectations of blackness and gentlemanly behavior in the performance of the fugitive slave Dred in Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel of the same name.

hospitable, even to her white friends. Her parties are characterized as events where there is little attempt to promote mutual understanding or real pleasure in the interactions of the guests. The narrator describes the parties through a series of negative details of the host, her guests and their practices, including Mrs. Thomas's habit of "smiling at conversations carried on in villainous French, of which language she did not understand a word"; her willingness to entertain uncongenial company because of their position, including "admiring the manners of addle-headed young men … considered quite the men of the world"; and eating food that she does not like and which makes her ill for days (103). In the highly Christianized northern society Mrs. Thomas inhabits, the Biblical imperatives to generous hospitality were a given aspect of society, but not a part of Mrs. Thomas's practices.[47] Not only does she neglect the poor and needy in her hospitality, she even follows fashion to the disregard of her intimate relationships. The narrator notes that "she had mortally offended several of her oldest friends by obstinately refusing to admit them," in accord with fashionable practices, at any time other than the few hours a week that she publicly held visiting hours (103).

Living in this vain and grasping situation causes Mrs. Thomas to look at her household, and especially the black child Charlie Ellis, as props to her fashionable

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[47] In Catharine Beecher's highly popular 1843 *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, she urges the American housewife to a high regard for and a frequent practice of generous hospitality: "There is no social duty, which the Supreme Lawgiver more strenuously urges, than hospitality and kindness to strangers, who are classed with the widow and the fatherless, as the special objects of Divine tenderness." She also notes that "… The most agreeable hospitality, to visitors, who become inmates of a family, is, that which puts them entirely at ease. … and this is the perfection of hospitable entertainment" (257-8).

presence, rather than as fellow human beings.[48] While Mrs. Ellis claims that Mrs. Thomas was a good mistress and employer, Mrs. Thomas's goodwill is tied directly to how her servants make her look in front of her powerful friends. Eventually Charlie frees himself from serving in her household by taking advantage of Mrs. Thomas's commitment to appearances over genuine hospitality. He publicly embarrasses her when he "secretly affixed a nicely crooked pin to the elbow of his sleeve … hooked it into her cap, to which he knew [her] wig was fastened, and in a twinkling had it off her head," revealing her baldness to an entire dinner party (106). This public display of Mrs. Thomas's fashionable contrivances makes her the laughingstock of her dinner guests. Even though Charlie's actions put her in a socially compromised position, Mrs Thomas does not recognize Charlie's rebellion as his distaste for working as a house servant. Instead of recognizing Charlie's rebellion as an assertion of his personhood, complete with opinions and values that differ from hers, she chooses to beat him and then try to put him back in his "place" as a fixture in her household. Mrs. Thomas keeps Charlie as part of her household in the face of his disrespectful actions because she wants him to continue to perform as the intelligent and dutiful house servant, a performance he despises. While she recognizes him as a superior support to her image because of his

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[48] A similar attitude is also seen later in the novel when the young black Charlie Ellis accompanies the white Mrs. Bird to her rural home to recover from an accident. When he is introduced into the household, the servants assume that he is there for their benefit. Alfred, the gardener, tells the other servants that he "asked [Mrs. Bird] before she went away to get a little boy to help me do odd jobs" and convinces the other servants that Charlie must be there to work. He tells them "I'm glad he's a black boy; I can order him round more, you know, than if he was white" (162). For Alfred and the other servants, Charlie is only a useful tool in the household. Alfred goes so far as to leave work undone, counting on Charlie to pick up the slack the next day (162).

intelligence and wit, she cannot view him as anything but a household tool and thus does not understand his assertion of his right to do work that is meaningful to him.

Charlie's treatment is emblematic of the relationship between the black and white communities in Philadelphia. Mrs. Thomas is taken aback at the idea that serving in her household is not honorable enough for Charlie; she "stood aghast at his unexpected declaration" that he does not "want your old button-covered uniform" and he would rather "be skinned" by the cook than apologize for any of his wrongdoings (110). Charlie knows that the only "place" which a black person can occupy part of Mrs. Thomas's household is as a servant, and she only chooses to be generous to Charlie because she "had a strong liking for Charlie—not as a boy, but as a footman" (109). For Mrs. Thomas, and for the northern white community at large, the welcome that they extend to the black community in their midst is contingent on their black "guests" filling roles that make the white hosts more successful and more attractive in their own communities. Like Charlie's rebellion against Mrs. Thomas's confining expectations for him, the black residents of Philadelphia push back against the confines of subpar education and the restricted opportunities offered to them by the white majority of the city. Instead of acquiescing to a life limited by racist expectations of inferiority, the black men and women of Philadelphia create their own educational institutions and attempts at independent businesses. The white community does not perceive this independence and initiative as a positive indicator of the value the black community brings to the city because these separate institutions illuminate the racism inherent in the actions and priorities of the white community. In response to this indirect accusation of unfair and racist treatment, the white community, like Mrs. Thomas, chooses to beat the black

community into submission through race riots, in hopes that they will give up their ambition to be anything more than unskilled laborers and domestic servants. While the city of "Brotherly Love" offers a superficial welcome to the free black community, this welcome is contingent upon maintaining a discriminatory status quo that keeps the black residents of the city in marginal positions as much as possible.

Mrs. Thomas wants to keep Charlie Ellis as footman, even after he publicly humiliates her more than once, because he looks good in her livery and is energetic and intelligent. Mrs. Thomas' nouveau riche friends readily ignore the plebeian pasts of their circle of acquaintance and will gladly "forget" her little mishaps in order to eat at her table and be seen as fashionable or successful in her circle. This social commitment to fashion, as opposed to morally upright behavior, bars her from recognizing the mutual humanity of both black and white individuals. In the same way that honor culture denied full personhood to southern black slaves because black skin was an impenetrable barrier to an identity as honorable and worthy of respect, the commitment to being fashionable and popular blinds Mrs. Thomas to her black household servants' position as fellow community members. Likewise, Philadelphia, and the northern communities that are pictured in *The Garies,* are characterized by a love of the appearance of respectability that espouses morality and noble values yet denies the generous and humane relationships with their black neighbors that those morals and values require. The racist ideology that shapes northern communities reinforces racial stereotypes and isolates residents in segregated neighborhoods. This segregation then allows ignorance about the real lives and pursuits of the free black community to grow unchecked. When transformative hospitality allows colleagues such as Mr. Garie and Mr. Walters to meet and build

intimacy across the boundaries of race or ideology, it is possible for Mr. Garie's racist beliefs to be converted into something more humane and egalitarian.

Webb's Illumination of Racism in the North

Repeatedly Webb returns to the same conflict: can black men and women be equal participants with white people in a society controlled by racist ideology? Harriet Beecher Stowe asks a similar question in her preface to *The Garies*: "Are the race at present held as slaves capable of freedom, self-government, and progress?" (41). Stowe's direct question and Webb's indirect one are not just theoretical concerns. The United States Supreme Court, in the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, ruled that black people living in the US were classified as property and therefore they were permanently barred from citizenship in the Republic. While this ruling showed that the law may come down on the side of slavery and the degradation of black personhood, as Stowe argues in her own writing and Webb does in this novel, the national narrative does not have to end with legal and social non-personhood for all black Americans.

Webb sets the stage for this conflict over black personhood in the very first chapter of *The Garies* when the narrator relates a conversation between Mr. Garie and Winston upon Winston's return from the North. In discussion of Winston's reception among his white northern acquaintance, Mr. Garie comments on the vehemence of northern racist attitudes. Mr. Garie laughs that his society friend, Mr. Priestly, a wealthy white man from New York, says publicly that "the existence of a 'gentleman' with African blood in his veins, is a moral and physical impossibility, and that by no exertion can anything be made of that description of people" (46). This prejudice is laughable,

since Mr. Priestly has only recently welcomed Winston, the cousin of Mr. Garie's slave mistress and a mixed-race former slave, into his home as a gentleman and equal in society upon Mr. Garie's written introduction. His welcome of Winston proves that Mr. Priestly is incapable of distinguishing the race of a gentleman in his home as long as that man can perform the role of gentleman acceptably and he does not have any obvious physical markers of blackness. Thus, in the first chapter Webb is already highlighting the performative nature of the racial identities used to demarcate northern society. Mr. Garie further expounds on his friend Mr. Priestly's views, and notes that while the man has written extensively about the degradation of free blacks in New York, still "on questioning him on the subject, I found he was entirely unacquainted with coloured people; profoundly ignorant as to the real facts of their case" (46-7).

Mr. Priestly's isolation from the free black community in New York does not keep him from writing authoritatively on their condition and in a way that influences his friends and larger circle of acquaintances among the powerful and wealthy of New York. Winston sees firsthand the racism that accompanies Mr. Priestly's views; he notes that these views are especially dangerous because their author "covers his prejudices with such a pretended regard for the coloured people, that a person would be the more readily led to believe his statements respecting them to be correct" (47). In the first five pages of the novel, Webb debunks the idea that being a gentleman is inherently a white identity, but it takes an entire novel for him to unfold the complexity and depth of black personhood evidenced in the varied cast of black characters he creates. Webb makes clear that he believes that Mr. Priestly's prejudice comes, in part, from his separation from the free black community in the North; Webb then deftly addresses this ignorance

(common to both the white characters in the novel and the white readers of the novel) when he puts the full breadth of free black identity on display for his audience.

This rampant racism causes a multitude of difficulties for the residents of Philadelphia; these are clearly seen when Mr. Walters locates a home for the Garies and deputizes Mrs. Ellis to furnish and prepare it. Mrs. Ellis, upon consideration of the long walk to the new house, complains: "How provoking it is to think, that because persons are coloured they are not permitted to ride in the omnibuses or other public conveyances! I do hope I shall live to see the time when we shall be treated as civilized creatures should be" (95). Mr. Walters, however, is not optimistic that Northern prejudice will soon be overturned in favor of social equality. His response is negative and even tinged with hopelessness:"'I suppose we shall be so treated when the Millennium comes,' rejoined Walters, 'not before, I am afraid;'" (95). By referencing the Biblical period where Jesus returns to earth and reigns for a thousand years, Walters is claiming that Northern prejudice is so ingrained that it would literally take the end of the world to bring equality to free black people.

While Mr. Walters's pessimistic response to Mrs. Ellis would seem to be just another piece in the back and forth of their conversation about the Garie family and their relocation, this comment has consequences for Mr. Walters's later engagement with the white community. As a wealthy property holder and money lender in Philadelphia, he has regular interactions with residents of the community across the spectrum of race, class, and wealth. As a wealthy man of culture and refinement he might expect a certain level of respect from the larger community, both black and white. However, Mr. Walters's wealth and culture is no protection from the racism and prejudice of the white

men and women around him. So, in the face of this regularly experienced discrimination and deeply ingrained prejudice, why does Mr. Walters engage in transformative hospitality? Why would he encourage other men and women of his community to try and educate their friends and neighbors about the value and success of the free black community in Philadelphia, if culture, education, and wealth cannot change their social position?

As the de facto leader of the free black community in Philadelphia, Mr. Walters carries the weight of the lives of the men and women around him. He also stands in for Webb himself: both are black men seeking to educate an ignorant but powerful community of white men and women. The need to educate the white community is pressing to both Webb (as author) and Mr. Walters because white men and women often hold the future of black individuals, as well as the welfare and very existence of the black community, in their power. Parallels can also be drawn between Mr. Walters and the slaves described in antebellum abolitionist novels and slave narratives. Like the man that sees no possible end to southern practices of chattel slavery, and yet attempts to escape again and again, Mr. Walters's attempts to change the racist beliefs of his white neighbors seems futile against the larger backdrop of racist northern society. Walters's infrequent experiences of understanding and respect from white members of Philadelphia society, like the brief taste of freedom for the slave, often seem to be enough to spur further dedication to change that otherwise seems impossible. As his repeated interactions with recalcitrant and even violent white men throughout the novel shows, Mr. Walters is a man who perseveres in pushing back against the prejudice and ignorance of the white community in the face of insurmountable obstacles. This perseverance

indicates a strength of will and firmness of character that make him well suited to lead the black community.

An Early Welcome into Black Philadelphia

Webb creates varied scenes of hospitality in the novel, from the simple domesticity of the Ellis family in their row house to the lavish welcome experienced by guests to Mr. Walters's mansion. Regardless of the location of the hospitality, however, when someone from outside the community is welcomed into a resident's home a potentially transformative moment is likely to arise. The first scene of African American hospitality, and the first scene of potential ideological transformation, is in chapter 4 of the novel, when the Ellis family hosts Winston for tea in their parlor. For Winston, a successful freed slave from Georgia who passes as white in his initial visit to the North, the comfort of the Ellis home is in conflict with the reports he has heard at the tables of the wealthy whites of Philadelphia and New York. Mr. Ellis is quick to tell him that the free black community has its own library societies and lecture circuit and that he owns his home outright. When exposed to these social benefits and successes, Winston assumes that they are anomalies:

> 'Why, you are getting on well! I suppose,' remarked Winston, 'that you are much better off than the majority of your coloured friends. From all I can learn, the free coloured people in the Northern cities are very badly off. I've been frequently told that they suffer dreadfully from want and privations of various kinds.' (83)

Up until this point in the narrative, Winston has moved exclusively in white society in Philadelphia and thus his views reflect the opinions and perspectives offered to him by

people outside the black community. He obviously desires to know more about the situation of free black people in the north, as his trip was designed to give him insight into their situation so that he could make an informed decision about where to relocate himself and his business endeavors. Winston's first mistake, however, is to assume that the educated and powerful white residents of the northern cities would be able to give him accurate information about the free black communities in their midst. This is not a safe assumption; Mr. Ellis is clear that racism is rampant in the North. Over the meal at his tea table, Mr. Ellis makes a short list of recent racist acts against the black community: black people are unwelcome at white library societies or lectures, legislature was proposed and almost passed to deport to Africa all the free blacks because they were falsely believed to be "a burthen upon the state," and Mr. Walters was forcefully ejected from a train car which belonged to a company in which he was a large shareholder simply because he was black (83). For Winston, this meal with the Ellis family is the first time he gets a detailed and accurate picture of life in the free black community in Philadelphia.

As will become clear in later scenes of transformative hospitality, guests are not always good students and what they learn does not always result in changed minds or softened hearts. For Winston, though, the meal at the Ellis home *is* transformative. He enters the house as a light-skinned, mixed-race former slave content to pass as white so that he can enjoy high society in the North, but he leaves the house prepared to put himself in the hands of a leader of the free black community, the businessman Mr. Walters, who "spent a week in showing him everything of interest connected with coloured people [in Philadelphia]" (85). So effective was this education that began at the Ellis tea table, that Winston "was greatly delighted with the acquaintances he made; and

the kindness and hospitality with which he was received made a most agreeable impression on him. It was during this period that he wrote glowing letters to Mr. and Mrs. Garie" (85). The Garies decide to relocate from Georgia to Philadelphia to join the community to which Winston introduced them in his letters sent to them during his visit. Winston enters the city ready to learn more about the life and conditions of the free black community and he faces conflicting lessons through his access to both the society of the wealthy white families and the successful free black community. In the end, it is not what he learns while passing as white in high society that most "delights" him; rather, it is the generous hospitality and the accomplishments of the free black community that win over his affections and interest (85).

Mr. Garies's First-Hand Education in the Free Black Community

When the Ellis family hosts Winston in their home, they initiate change that reaches much farther than their own small circle of acquaintance. The influence of their transformative hospitality, which began with Winston's revised views on the black community, reaches beyond Winston's plans for his own future to touch the Garie family. This transformative influence then extends farther, not just changing Mr. Garie's understanding of what his family faces under slavery, but his entire life. When Mr. Garie learns about the successes and advantages of the black community in Philadelphia from Winston, he uproots his family from his plantation in Georgia and relocates them to Philadelphia in hopes of greater freedom and opportunity for Emily (his slave mistress) and the children. Chapter 11 opens with the travels of the Garies to Philadelphia and closes with an important scene of hospitality in Mr. Walters's home.

While Mr. Garie has significant experience with the North and friends in Philadelphia, he is an outsider in the free black community. As DuBois notes in *The Philadelphia Negro*, the black community in Philadelphia was separate and isolated from most of the city and thus, is not a place you would go unless you had necessary business there (3).[49] For Mr. Garie and his family to truly become a part of the free black community they now call home, he must come to terms with the ways that he has passively absorbed and accepted the racist ideology of the antebellum period. Like Winston's introduction to the free black community by Mr. Walters, Mr. Garie's observations on the way to Mr. Walters's house challenge his expectations about the lives of free black people and make his own racist presuppositions visible. These presuppositions show that he is under the influence of the white supremacist values that drive both northern and southern views of black men. These racist values still direct his unconscious view of the world, even though Garie laughs at his friend Mr. Priestly's vehement assertions that there is a "natural antipathy of the Anglo-Saxon to anything with a drop of negro blood in its veins" and writes to him declaring Winston's mixed-race heritage in order to "convince him … that a man can he a gentleman even though he has African blood in his veins" (45). Mr. Garie does not require subservience from the free black people around him, in contrast to the other white characters like Mrs. Thomas, but he is also unprepared to accept that a man that is unmistakably not white (unlike the

[49] While DuBois is most interested in the black community in Philadelphia in 1899, he does spend some time on the social isolation inherent in the history of the city. Dunbar also notes that "Although elite societies and organizations created social barriers, geographic boundaries drew the wealthy and the poverty-stricken together within the African American community" (5).

light-skinned Winston) can also perfectly perform the role of gentleman and leader of men.

The isolation of the black community from the white community in Philadelphia guaranteed that anyone familiar only with the white community would meet with unexpected sights when they visited black neighborhoods in the city. Guests to this community, such as Winston or Mr. Garie, have to overcome the divisions that keep white and black individuals and neighborhoods apart. After Winston's initial instruction at the hospitable table of the Ellis family, the continued kindness and hospitality of the larger free black community furthers his understanding and his belief in the vibrancy and potential of the community in Philadelphia. It is the experience of both the initial *and* ongoing hospitality of his old and new friends that enables Winston to see the free black community clearly operating as a community and not just a slum or marginal urban space. For Mr. Garie, this process of discovery is reversed. It is his introduction to the larger black community prior to meeting Mr. Walters that paves the way for the revision of his convictions about black men and the free black community. Because of his newness in the black community, Mr. Garie walks the streets curious to see what it's people and neighborhoods are like.

Mr. Garie observes his surroundings less like a new resident, and more like a tourist on holiday, looking for a spectacle, and that is what the neighborhood surrounding Mr. Walters's home offers him. Shortly after crossing into the black neighborhood, "his attention was arrested by the number of coloured children he saw skipping merrily along with their bags of books on their arms" (143). Webb himself includes a footnote in the text that states that "It is a penal offence in Georgia to teach coloured children to read"

(143). When Mr. Garie remarks that the city "don't much resemble Georgia" it is clear that he has begun to process the differences between his home in the South and his new home in Philadelphia (143). Not unlike Mr. Winston's animated observations of free black Philadelphia, Mr. Garie is excited about what he sees on the street. His excitement and amusement indicate that Mr. Garie is open to the disruption to his views about the black community.

The process of seeking Mr. Walters's threshold is part of Mr. Garie's experience of the hospitality of the free black community as a whole. The representatives of the free black community that he interacts with, including the boy that he asks for directions, engage with him as if he were their equal. While Mr. Garie patronizes the boy he asks for help, even calling him "my little man," the boy's response is "waggish" and he uses "pompous wit" in answering back, joking with Mr. Garie. The child's playful disdain for Mr. Garie's ineptitude in finding the house does not result in his punishment or censure. This performance is surprising, in part, because such a bold response in the South would have resulted in a beating or even death. Unlike the servility required of slaves, there is freedom in the black community that provides a space for the boy to be a boy and interact with those around him without fear. This freedom is part of the black community but not, however, a general characteristic of the North. In other northern contexts, such as Mrs. Thomas's dining room, a sharp retort or talking back leads to punishment; the narrative reveals that submission and subservience is often expected of free black men and women when they are interacting with white people outside the safety of their own

neighborhood.[50] In this moment Mr. Garie must reconsider what he expects in his interactions with black children. The child demonstrates his wit and intelligence and when he "skipped lightly away" from Mr. Garie and his questions, his very body language indicates that he is comfortable in his freedom. Mr. Garie expands his understanding of black personhood by engaging with black individuals in a space where they feel safe and confident of their freedom.

Not long after his exchange with the boy, Mr. Garie reconsiders his expectations for black manhood, not just black boyhood, when he arrives at Mr. Walters's threshold. Mr. Walters's home reveals his success in business, but also in performing the role of a gentleman: his home is "quite a handsome residence" and is described by the narrator as a "stately house, with its spotless marble steps and shining silver door-plate" (143). These material details mark the house as the home of someone who is Mr. Garie's peer. There is quality, care, and wealth demonstrated by the physical presence of the house, even if it is on a street that is marked as still unfinished or disordered, including the numbering system that "quite perplexed [Mr. Garie] by their confusion and irregularity" (143).[51] The location of Mr. Walters's home, amid the disorder and "irregularity" of a

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[50] After a series of pranks and smart remarks that result in Mrs. Thomas's public embarrassment more than once, young Charlie Ellis is subject to a beating at her hands. Mrs. Thomas shrugs the offenses off until the dinner party mentioned at the opening of the chapter. After losing her wig in front of her friends she "almost demolished him in her wrath; not ceasing to belabour him till his outcries became so loud as to render her fearful that he would alarm the guests" (106). Similar violence is intimated during Charlie's initial time in Mrs. Bird's house (162).

[51] These details show that while there is much to be admired in the free black neighborhood, even down to Mr. Walters's grand home and the freedom and education of the children, it is still a space that is unevenly developed and vulnerable to abuse because of its peripheral status. If the houses and streets are not clearly and regularly numbered there is an implication of neglect or unregulated growth that sets the community apart from the more cared-for and intentionally

growing neighborhood, are also markers of the "new money" status of Mr. Walters's wealth. As a close examination of Mrs. Thomas's hospitality has shown, there are class practices that differentiate the newly wealthy from those who have a history of wealth; if these practices are not appropriately performed, access to the society of established wealth is limited or denied. Mr. Garie comes from long-standing wealth and his performance of the role of gentleman entitles him to entry into the society of the best and oldest families in the North. Mr. Walters demonstrates through the quality of his home, the care taken with his person, and the taste and culture evident in his furnishings that regardless of when he came into possession of his wealth. He is not defined by his recent acquisition of this financial capital because he does not expose himself through the undeveloped tastes evidenced in Mrs. Thomas and her acquaintance. Instead, his performance demonstrates his mastery of social and cultural capital that firmly aligns him with the most cultured gentlemen of the North.

Mr. Walters and the Disruption of Black Male Stereotypes

The visit Mr. Garie makes to Mr. Walters in this early part of the narrative is an essential scene of transformative hospitality; in this instance it is Mr. Garies views of black manhood that are subject to the disruption necessary for transformation. Upon meeting him for the first time, Mr. Garie's reactions reveal his discomfiture in the presence of an undeniably black gentleman. While his guest is already unsettled, Mr.

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developed parts of the city. As Du Bois notes, the period of the late 1830s-1840s was a time of enormous growth in Philadelphia because of the influx of immigrants; additionally, a growing free black population (and others who lived on the fringes of society) did not have access to the same order and development given to the older or more respectable parts of the city (15).

Walters makes his presence known to Mr. Garie through word and action and is even more directly instructional in his hospitality than Mr. Ellis is in his hospitality to Winston. The first social interaction between Mr. Walters and Mr. Garie reveals that while Mr. Garie may not hold the same racists beliefs as his fellow white men, as evidenced by his willingness to marry Emily and publicly claim their children as his own in the face of the deep disapproval of his family and friends, he still has absorbed many of the prejudicial ideas about black men that were common currency of the period. Timothy Buckner and Peter Caster argue that stereotypes of black masculinity active in the nineteenth century include the assertions that black men are defined by their "poverty, lack of intelligence, physicality, lawlessness, lying, capacity for violence, rapaciousness" (4). Jeffery Leak also includes "cultural depravity," or the idea that black culture is somehow inherently inferior and cannot produce a sustainable community, in this litany of stereotypes (xii). The picture drawn by scholars of black masculinity and manhood in the nineteenth century is that "the absence of bondage was not directly proportional to a secure sense of manhood" (Black 139).[52] In the face of these cultural uncertainties and

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[52] There are several recent notable texts about antebellum ideas about black manhood including *Black Masculinity and the Frontier Myth in American Literature*, Michael K. Johnson, U of Oklahoma P: 2002; *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men: Black Masculinity in U.S. History and Literature, 1820-1940*, edited by Timothy R. Buckner and Peter Caster, The Ohio State UP: 2011; *Constructing the Black Masculine: Identity and Ideality in African American Men's Literature and Culture, 1775-1995*, Maurice O. Wallace, Duke UP: 2012; *Masculinities in Black and White: Manliness and Whiteness in (African) American Literature*, Josep M. Armengol, Palgrave Macmillan: 2014; and slightly less recently, *Dismantling Black Manhood: An Historical and Literary Analysis of the Legacy of Slavery*, Daniel P. Black, Garland Publishing: 1997. For a contemporary discussion of racial difference that discusses the antebellum black male see *Negro-Mania: Being an Examination of the Falsely Assumed Equality of Various Races of Men*, John Campbell, Campbell and Power: 1851.

stereotypes, Mr. Walters's existence as a gentleman should be a social and cultural impossibility.

Webb emphasizes that Mr. Walters's social position as a wealthy, cultured black man makes him an enigma to much of the white community, represented in the novel by Mr. Stevens's comments about him in later chapters. Shortly after the narrator introduces Mr. Stevens as the Garies' neighbor, the reader is made privy to conversation between Mr. Stevens and his wife about Mr. Walters. Mr. Stevens, a shyster lawyer, is on the lower rungs of respectable whiteness and is shown in the novel regularly interacting with Irish ruffians whose own whiteness is questionable.[53] While his character and associations indicate that Mr. Stevens is not a gentleman or leader in any positive sense, he has no issue with passing judgment on Mr. Walters's performance of gentlemanly behavior because of his race. In the conversation with his wife, Mr. Stevens states that "I hate that nigger Walters, with his grand airs" and yet goes on to say that "there's not a better man of business in the whole of Philadelphia than that same Walters" (147). For Mr. Stevens, at least, Mr. Walters's performance of the black businessman is less offensive than his performance as a black gentleman of culture and means. Both performances, however, are a conundrum to Mr. Stevens, whose racist convictions do not allow him to accept that a man can be black and also a superior gentleman or businessman. Meeting Mr. Walters, who is both a businessman and a gentleman, allows

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[53] The conflicted nature of whiteness, especially as associated with the Irish immigrants in the novel, is explored at length by Nowatzki and in Anna Engle's 2001 article "Depictions of the Irish in Frank Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends* and Frances E. W. Harper's *Trial and Triumph*".

Mr. Garie's education about black manhood to take a jump forward because he is open to having his views revised through experiential knowledge, unlike Mr. Stevens.

Each step that Mr. Garie makes into Mr. Walters's life and home, however, challenges his assumptions about what to expect from a successful black man. From stoop to servant to living space, Mr. Garie's view of the world is continually disrupted. "The elegance of the room took Mr. Garie completely by surprise, as its furniture indicated not only great wealth, but cultivated taste and refined habits" (143). In most white households, it would be a reasonable transition to move from a stately and well-maintained entrance into space that continues to reveal a high level of care. For Mr. Garie, however, the "richly-papered walls," "paintings from the hands of well-known foreign and native artists," "rich vases and well-executed bronzes," the "elegantly-carved walnut table," and "charming little bijoux which the French only are capable of conceiving" are all unexpected manifestations of the wealth that he knows Mr. Walters possesses, although their presence also implies a cultural capital that Mr. Garie does not expect in a black man (143-4). What he sees in the room is evidence that the home is owned and furnished by a man of culture and taste with a level of refinement that would be unusual even in the home of white men of similar wealth. While wealth and social position should not be required as markers of racial equality, the similarities between Mr. Walters's and Mr. Garie's lifestyles allow Mr. Garie to see his own racist beliefs in greater relief.

As a man of culture and taste himself, Mr. Garie is at home in a space defined by these traits. His actions in Mr. Walters's home reveal that Mr. Garie is comfortable in such a space: he "threw himself into a luxuriously-cushioned chair" and starts studying a

portrait on the wall. This casual comfort and simple threshold crossing is made possible by the shared wealth and cultural capital of the two men. Visiting as a social act is implicitly about maintaining relationships of patronage or equality.[54] Mr. Garie visits to repay his social dues to Mr. Walters for the work he did in securing them a house could be perceived as patronage to a helpful businessman, but once he enters Mr. Walters's home the visit takes on a different tone. Mr. Walters's is not an inferior to be patronized, but rather meets and engages Mr. Garie with ease and authority. That Mr. Garie and Mr. Walters can meet as social and cultural, not just financial, equals is an amazing feat for a free black man and white slaveholder from Georgia. Meeting on this equal footing takes a simple moment of patronizing hospitality and shifts it into a disruptive moment that allows a transformative experience to take place.

Indirect instruction happens through Mr. Garie's presence in the neighborhood and when he is alone inside Mr. Walters's home. However, Mr. Garie's curiosity about the portrait on the wall and Mr. Walters's disruptive appearance create a direct transformational moment. The narrator initially describes the painting as "the likeness of a negro officer" (144). So "absorbed in contemplation" of the painting that he does not hear him enter, Mr. Garie is again overcome by surprise upon meeting Mr. Walters in

[54] This is particularly evident in the practices of southern hospitality discussed at length in chapter one of this project, but as I discuss in that chapter, southern hospitality was not only a regional practice, but influenced the entire American practice of hospitality as an American ideal and narrative of identity. Not only do southern authors of the period (and historians writing about southern antebellum practices) support this conclusion, but home economy manuals, such as the one mentioned earlier by Catherine Beecher, also uphold the idea that hospitality in various forms (especially in the social call or family dinner) are essential for social stability and maintenance of important relationships.

person. In fact, the narrator states that when Mr. Walters comes into view, Mr. Garie "started up, astonished at the commanding figure before him" (144). As a southern gentleman, Mr. Garie is deeply bound to southern honor culture which relies heavily on appearances to maintain a social order rooted in white supremacy.[55] The juxtaposition of Mr. Walters's elegant home and his very obvious blackness undermines the expectations of how a black gentleman (an impossible contradiction in light of the racism of both northern and southern culture) should appear to his guest. Mr. Garie has already had several disruptive experiences in a short period of time: the boy, the house, the art, and even the portrait of the "negro officer" is surprising enough to capture his attention so fully that he forgets the man he is waiting to see. Mr. Garie's gentlemanly good manners carry him through a traditional greeting and exchange of names, but it is not enough to hide his surprise at his host, which, the author notes, does not escape Mr. Walters's observation or take *him* by surprise. Mr. Garie's ideas and expectations about black culture and accomplishments are overthrown one after another, and into the ideological rubble that is left steps Mr. Walters, Webb's most impressive example of black manhood.

Mr. Garie is disarmed by the familiar comforts of Mr. Walters's home, although the finding them in the home of a black man is foreign experience for him. Even the comfort of the "luxuriously-cushioned chair" favorably prepares Mr. Garie for the new and challenging information that will be put before him in the person of, and in conversation with, Mr. Walters. Before the conversation begins, however, the narrator

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[55] See Kenneth S. Greenberg's *Honor and Slavery* for a detailed analysis of this phenomenon. It is also explored at greater depth in chapter one of this project.

gives an extensive description of Mr. Walters. As the narrator describes him, Mr. Walters is:

> above six feet in height, and exceedingly well-proportioned; of jet-black complexion, and smooth glossy skin. His head was covered with a quantity of woolly hair, which was combed back from a broad but not very high forehead. His eyes were small, black, and piercing, and set deep in his head. His aquiline nose, thin lips, and broad chin, were the very reverse of African in their shape, and gave his face a very singular appearance.... The neatness and care with which he was dressed added to the attractiveness of his appearance (144).

In addition to the physically imposing and clearly African features indicated by the phrases "jet-black complexion" and "woolly hair," Mr. Walters also embodies many of the physical qualities that the times would have likely identified with successful white manhood, in this case the ability to dress impeccably and tastefully. While several scholars have discussed the way that Webb mixes white and black physical characteristics in describing Walters, the emphasis of the passage rests on the fact that he is undeniably a black man.[56] The narrator describes Walters's "aquiline nose, thin lips, and broad chin," but neither Webb nor the narrator attributes these features to white blood or white parentage of any kind. Instead, I believe this move away from physical stereotypes of blackness is an overt attempt by Webb to present his readers with a more

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[56] See Nowatzki 34-38 for the most thorough investigation of this issue, but also Duane, Adkins, and Kohl address it as well.

varied and complex physical picture of black manhood as well.[57] While these "white" features may have made Mr. Garie more comfortable applying the identity of gentleman to Mr. Walters, they are hardly enough to negate the traits of blackness that so define Mr. Walters's appearance. Aside from allowing that no wealthy and cultured white man would be averse to dressing and carrying himself like Mr. Walters, there is no implication of attempts to pass as white in the novel. He is black, educated, and cultured.

Mr. Garie's understanding of black manhood is disrupted by both Mr. Walters himself and the military portrait on the wall of his parlor. Mr. Walters is an imposing physical figure, but neither his arrival nor the subsequent conversation pushes the portrait entirely out of Mr. Garie's thoughts. In fact, he cannot leave the room without once more stopping to look at the portrait of "the negro officer." Mr. Walters, in his role of host-as-educator, takes advantage of this disruption and comments on Mr. Garie's response to the painting: "'So you, too, are attracted by that picture,' said Mr. Walters with a smile. 'All white men look at it with interest. A black man in the uniform of a general officer is something so unusual that they cannot pass it with a glance'" (145). Like a good teacher, Mr. Walters notes Mr. Garie's curiosity and gives him an opportunity to ask questions

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[57] In an editorial titled "Negro Portraits" in Vol 19, No 16 of *The Liberator* (April 20, 1849) Frederick Douglass argues that black people need to be painted by black artists so that the full breadth of the variety of black personhood can be displayed, stating that even the best white artists depends on stereotypes when depicting African Americans in art. While there is no proof that Webb read this editorial, the presence of portraits of African Americans (including a portrait of Esther (Ellis) Walters and her children that is hanging in the Walters' parlor at the end of the novel) and the commentary that Webb includes on this portraits, indicate that he was well aware of African American participation in the middle- and upper-class practices of having family portraits painted. And as I mentioned in the opening of this chapter, Webb is very invested in depicting the breadth and variety or African American experience in the novel, so why not physical variety as well?

about the object of his interest. Mr. Walters also pointedly remarks that it is "white men" who are compelled to look more closely at the portrait. Mr. Garie's response to being observed, however, is off-hand: "'It is, indeed, rather a novelty,' replied Mr. Garie, 'particularly to a person from my part of the country. Who is it?'" (145). Mr. Walters answers that the portrait is one of Toussaint l'Ouverture, the leader of the Haitian Revolution. That Mr. Garie would not recognize the only well-known black military leader of the nineteenth century seems a bit ludicrous. In the period of the 1830s and 1840s,when the events of this narrative are supposed to be taking place, the fear of a slave revolt was at an all-time high and l'Ouverture was regularly caricatured and mocked in images and popular culture.[5858] Mr. Walters makes it clear that popular images of Toussaint l'Ouverture are different from the one the two men face in his study: "That…looks like a man of intelligence. It is entirely different from any likeness I ever saw of him. The portraits generally represent him as a monkey-faced person, with a handkerchief about his head" (145).[5959] While Mr. Garie's involuntary responses of surprise mark him as someone whose understanding of the world has been upset, his studied nonchalance in response to Mr. Walters's questions does not derail the

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[58] In her 2000 article on Harriet Martineau's biography of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Susan Belasco discusses the fear of slave uprisings in the 1820s-1840s in the US, noting that "white southerners lived in constant fear of uprisings by slaves" and that "during the 1830s and 1840s, rumors of rebellions abounded, and fears were high" (158)

[59] This comment is likely a reference to the frequently reproduced 1832 Nicholas Maurin lithograph of a full-profile bust of Toussaint l'Ouverture that shows him with exaggerated full lips and a strongly jutting jaw that lend a simian look to his face (for more detailed images of Toussaint l'Ouverture from the early antebellum period, see the online article "The Changing Faces of Toussaint Louverture: Literary and Pictorial Representations" by David Geggus for The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University).

transformative moment. Instead, Mr. Walters pushes on the tension between Mr. Garie's marked curiosity and his noncommittal response, drawing Mr. Garie into responding in a way that moves him closer to acknowledging his own uncertainties and opening the door to a changed perspective.

Mr. Walters defies the negative cultural stereotypes of black manhood, particularly the assumption of "cultural depravity" observed by Leak, through the demonstration of his intelligence, culture, wealth, and successful performance of gentlemanly behavior, just as the portrait subverts negative stereotypes about black military manhood demonstrated in the caricatures of L'Ouverture. Mr. Garie recognizes the rightness of the portrait when he responds that it "gives [him] an idea of the man that accords with his actions" (145). He follows his comment with another thoughtful gaze at the portrait and then departs. For Mr. Garie, this acknowledgment that there are discrepancies between common cultural images of Toussaint L'Ouverture and the reports of his actions in the Haitian Revolution reveals his growing awareness of the prejudices towards black men that he has absorbed. The quiet way in which he leaves Mr. Walters's home demonstrates the turmoil that all these disruptions have made in Mr. Garie's thinking about the black community. Although this exchange does not display the full transformation of thinking that is possible, Webb does indicate, through Mr. Garie's interactions with Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, and his growing intimacy with the black community in Philadelphia, that Mr. Garie is on the path to transformed thinking.

Central to this scene of transformative hospitality is the fact that the exchange between Mr. Garie and Mr. Walters takes place in Mr. Walters's parlor. The setting of this scene reveals an important variable of transformative hospitality: transformative

hospitality is ideally practiced in the home of the host or guest because intimacy and comfort are important to breaking down the barriers to transformation. The familiarity of the space, coupled with the welcoming nature of his hospitality, invites the guest and host into conversation about the objects around them and the ideas on their minds. Mr. Walters takes advantage of the sharing inherent in this moment of hospitality to challenge Mr. Garie's understanding of black manhood. This intentional hospitality allows Mr. Garie to linger over the portrait long enough to deeply excite his curiosity, and this chance to linger in turn provides an opportunity for him to engage in conversation with Mr. Walters long enough to get past a surface-level exchange about the image. Meeting in the comfort of his home frees Mr. Walters to speak openly about the history of the portrait and its role in his house, as well as about how Toussaint L'Ouverture, the subject of the portrait, is perceived by society. Mr. Garie leaves in an introspective mood and with the promise of an early visit from Mr. Walters that might allow them to continue the conversation. Thoughtful, feeling more connected to the community, and open to the need to reconsider his previous convictions, Mr. Garie can no longer trust his presuppositions. This entire exchange raises questions about southern honor culture and its definition of a gentleman as necessarily white and the northern prejudices that will not allow that a black man can be a gentleman and an equal in society. Through Mr. Walters's transformative hospitality Mr. Garie is given the opportunity to meet with difference and allow his worldview to be changed in a positive way.

Obstacles to Transformative Hospitality

Sociologist Virginia Olesen argues that selves can be changed through hospitality, in part because hospitality is dependent on "the interactive dialectics of sociability…the

necessity for both guest and host to balance moments of individual uniqueness and social connectedness" (190). This back and forth between guests and hosts creates "artfulness, solidarity, and intimacy," three values that Olesen considers essential to connecting "the intimate occasion of [hospitality] to other realms of social life" (191). This dialectic is not easy to produce or participate in, according to Olesen, and the difficulty is evidenced in the failure of transformative hospitality offered to Mrs. Stevens's by the Garies upon her first visit to their home. Her lack of social awareness is made plain in her first (and only) visit when she tells Mr. and Mrs. Garie that "ever since Mr. Stevens purchased our house we have been tormented with the suspicion that Walters would put a family of niggers in this; and if there is one thing in this world I detest than another, it is coloured people, I think" (150). She plows forward with her prejudiced opinions, totally unaware of the effect they are having on her listeners. By holding fast to her "individual uniqueness," her attempts at social connectedness fail because she entirely misjudges her audience. Rather than sharing Mrs. Stevens's prejudices, Mr. Garie is angered by them, and the implied slight to his wife. As noted earlier in this chapter, the end result of this meeting is Mrs. Stevens running back to her home and pouring out her distress and distaste to her husband, who supports her in all her prejudices and feelings of anxiety and frustration.

While my argument focuses on the way that transformative hospitality can reshape society promoting greater mutual understanding, Olesen points out that when a society experiences "shifts in societal ethos, egalitarianism, and market forces," the modes of hospitality can change apace with those who practice them (195). In the course of Webb's novel, the modes of hospitality shift dramatically after the race riot. Before

the riot there are moments of interracial hospitality where members of the black community reach out to white friends and neighbors in an attempt to build stronger connections between the two communities, most thoroughly depicted in Mr. Garie's visit to Mr. Walters. However, after the riot (which is planned and instigated by Mr. Stevens, husband to Mrs. Stevens, the Garies's racist neighbor), the black community ceases to reach out to their white neighbors. Instead, hospitality is confined to meals and celebrations of success in the black community, such as the marriage between Emily Garie and Charlie Ellis, or to offering extended hospitality to black community members in need, such as when Mr. Walters takes in the Ellis family after their home is destroyed.

It is easy to see the negative way that these scenes of hospitality play into "shifts in societal ethos, egalitarianism, and market forces" by examining the fallout of Mrs. Stevens's visit with the Garies. While accepting the hospitality the Garies have extended to her, Mrs. Stevens learns that her hostess is not white, and her disgust prompts her and her husband to look for ways to humble or ostracize the Garie family. The Stevens's subsequent actions, including forcing the Garie children out of the local school and instigating an attack on the Garie home by Irish ruffians, reflect on issues of societal ethos and market forces at work in antebellum Philadelphia; their actions are, however, also a racist response to the social egalitarianism extended to the black population under the law in Pennsylvania. Mr. Stevens chafes under his indebtedness to Mr. Walters because he is black and successful, but he also rebels against Mr. Garie's interracial marriage and family. As my earlier exploration of racial laws and practices in Pennsylvania show, being black in the North is often made more dangerous because of ingrained racial prejudice. Even small attempts at legal and social equality are met with

opposition by men like Mr. Stevens, whose lower social class puts him in a subordinate relationship to wealthy and more cultured African American inhabitants of the city.

Limited legal and social equality may prompt Mr. Stevens to look for violent means of revenge against Mr. Garie and Mr. Walters, but social and economic forces also allow for a more insidious and indirect control of black and white interactions. A prime example of this convergence of social and economic forces is seen when Mrs. Stevens marshals her friends as allies to get the young teacher, Miss Jordan, to expel the Garie children from her school. While Miss Jordan holds her own prejudicial views about interracial education that are in keeping with antebellum racist stereotypes, she is attached to the Garie children. Miss Jordan only bars the children from her school after admitting to Mrs. Stevens that the financial dependence of her family on her school keeps her from taking an ethical stand against the bullying actions of Mrs. Stevens and her friends (169-176). As this incident shows, the actions that result from Mrs. Stevens' humiliating experience as guest in the Garie home end up supporting racist societal ethos and damaging growing egalitarian relationships between white and black community members.

Olesen's theories are worked out in their most dramatic (and negative) form in the race riot at the center of the novel. Eventually, market forces (in the form of Mr. Stevens's greed and the realization that he is in line to inherit the Garie estate) prompt Mr. Stevens to plan a race riot to gain valuable property from the Garies and profit on investments in property in the black community. While this attempt at transformative hospitality in the Garie home leads to extreme negative results for the family and the black community, these social and economic forces do play out positively in the novel as

well. The most visible positive effects of market forces at work in relationship to hospitality in the novel are found in the life and situation of Mr. Walters. The ability of Mr. Walters to hold property and participate in business ventures in the Philadelphia area allows him to be host to any number of white men, including Mr. Garie and Mr. Stevens, who might otherwise never have reason to accept the hospitality of a black man. Thus, market forces at work in the community can also make way for an egalitarian hospitality that undermines racist societal ethos and allows genuine intimacy to grow between white and black members of Philadelphia society.

Conclusion

For the characters in *The Garies* who practice transformative hospitality, the risk of rejection or censure is high, but the cost of silence and inaction is higher. Mr. Ellis, Mr. Walters, and the converted Winston are all vocal advocates of the free black community of Philadelphia. They combat negative stereotypes of free black society, as well as blatant untruths that have grown out of ignorance and willful prejudice, through open conversation and a warmly extended welcome to the visitor and stranger. As people of color they care about the relationships between the black and white communities; it is important that their white and black acquaintances understand the full humanity and the richness of community for which the free black men and women of Philadelphia have fought and worked. Without this understanding from their friends and acquaintances, the African Americans in Philadelphia face damaging limitations to their self-respect as well as to their freedom and autonomy.

The openness of transformative hospitality, coupled with the willingness of hosts and guests to present themselves unambiguously, creates an atmosphere in which the exchange of ideas can result in mutual growth. Webb shows us that at the comfort of a fireside or around a tea table, conversations about difficult topics have a chance to grow and unfold at a pace that allows for reflection and consideration. Unlike the surface-level entertainments of Mrs. Thomas, these moments of transformative hospitality allow host and guest to meet on equal terms and cultivate (or attempt to cultivate) genuine connection. Webb invites his readers to join him as guest in the homes of free black men and women and the homes of their friends and families, allowing the reader, as well as the characters in the novel, to experience warm hospitality and the chance to reconsider and revise their understanding of what it means to be black and free in the face of ongoing chattel slavery in the South and virulent racism in the North. *The Garies and Their Friends* is one of the earliest fictional texts to call out northern racism, and it asks the reader to reconsider how their prejudices are a part of the systemic degradation of African Americans that may be as dehumanizing and prone to abuse as the degradations of chattel slavery.

Chapter Four: Slavery's Subversion of Hospitality in Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Harriet Jacobs's narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* has become a cornerstone for discussions of the slave narrative. Jacobs is praised for bringing attention to the plight of female slaves in a genre that is often dominated by male voices. In the character of Linda Brent, Jacobs has created a compelling and thoughtful heroine whose trials and sorrows are excellent bids for the sympathy of her readers. For scholars, the focus is often on Brent's choices and pursuit of her independence from the persecutions of the Dr. Flint, her aggressively manipulative owner. Scholars such as Stephanie Li and Mary Beth Noriani focus on Linda Brent's decision to take Mr. Sands as a lover and have children by him, arguing that her pursuit of sexual autonomy is essential as resistance to Dr. Flint's abuse.[60] What is often overlooked in discussion of Brent's pursuit of autonomy and full personhood is the precipitating event that sends Brent into the arms of Mr. Sands: Dr. Flint's construction, for Brent, of a "lonely cottage" far outside town. Before we can interpret Linda Brent's attempts at autonomy, we must look more closely at this cottage and what it represents in Jacobs's narrative. The cottage first makes its appearance in *Incidents* early in the text and is described to the reader in a relatively casual way that belies its importance in the narrative. Jacobs opens the chapter titled "A Perilous Passage in the Slave Girl's Life," which details her relationship with Mr. Sands, with the statement that Dr. Flint believed that the primary obstacle to Brent's submission to his sexual pursuit was "fear of [her] mistress" and he had a plan to fix that—he would

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[60] See Li, etc. for details on this argument.

"build a small house for [Linda], in a secluded place, four miles away from the town" (45). Dr. Flint is all generous kindness to Brent; telling her about "his intention to give [her] a home of [her] own, and to make a lady of [her]" (45). While Brent "shuddered" at this possibility and is "constrained to listen" to Dr. Flint's plans, he expertly uses Brent's desire for a home and for autonomy to screen the harsh reality his plan offers.

In a mere four sentences, however, Jacob's lays bare Dr. Flint's scheme and his masterful manipulation of the young woman's desires, a manipulation that Brent sees through immediately. While Dr. Flint frames the offer of the cottage as a generous gift and a singular opportunity for Linda Brent, Jacobs, in the voice of the narrator, makes it clear that this scheme is the last thing that Brent desires. Jacobs notes that "hitherto, I had escaped my dreaded fate, by being in the midst of people" and credits, as well, her grandmother's outspoken censure of Dr. Flint's bad behavior for protecting her from the worst of Dr. Flint's actions, if not from his verbal abuse (45-6). Brent has hopes that the plan will be foiled, like Dr. Flint's earlier scheme to move part of his household to Louisiana and take Brent with him. However, when Brent hears that Dr. Flint has begun construction of the cottage, we are given an extended insight into her intense reaction to this possibility:

> I vowed before my Maker that I would never enter [the cottage]. I had rather toil on the plantation from dawn till dark; I had rather live and die in jail, than drag on, from day to day, through such a living death. I was determined that the master, whom I so hated and loathed, who had blighted the prospects of my youth, and made my life a desert, should not, after my long struggle with him, succeed at last in trampling his victim under his feet. I would do anything, every

> thing, for the sake of defeating him. What *could* I do? I thought and thought, till I became desperate, and made a plunge into the abyss (46).

The abyss that Jacobs's references is, of course, her illicit affair with Mr. Sands that results in the birth of her two children. But rather than focusing on Brent's choice to have a sexual relationship with Mr. Sands, I propose that this cottage functions, not only as a pivotal event in the life of Linda Brent in the narrative, but also as a trope for the broken and abusive form that hospitality takes in *Incidents* when it is put under the pressures of slavery. This chapter examines the way that hospitality is deformed by the conflicting pressures that the laws of chattel slavery and the experience of slaves exert on any act of hospitality involving a slave. Focusing on hospitality engaged in by Linda Brent as both guest and host, this examination reveals that the dehumanizing rhetoric and legal precedent of slavery so distorts the practice of hospitality that it often becomes unrecognizable.

The Function of Obligation in a Gift Economy

To better understand the dynamics of hospitality and how they can be influenced by slavery, it is helpful to understand how the obligations of a gift economy come into play in the practice of hospitality. In his seminal book *The Gift*, anthropologist Marcel Mauss outlines a triad of obligations that shape a gift economy: the obligation to give the gift, the obligation to receive the gift, and the obligation to reciprocate the gift. Inherent in this triad of obligation is the assumption that to participate in a gift economy, participants must have equivalent autonomy and personhood. There may be power or authority differentials between the participants of a gift exchange, and in fact, the gift

exchange may exist to support or maintain those very power or authority imbalances, but all members of the exchange acknowledge that the parties are starting from a similar place of being. Even when gods and animals are part of the gift exchanges that Mauss examines in his anthropological study, these beings are considered to have a soul or a consciousness that allows them to be full participants in the cycle of obligation.

Mauss's triad of obligation provides a clearer perspective on the power at work in Dr. Flint's offer of the cottage and Linda Brent's firm refusal. Dr. Flint's offer of the cottage can, in its apparent generosity, compel a grateful acceptance from Brent. Dr. Flint manipulates the obligation to receive inherent in his offer to force Brent into a situation where she cannot escape her obligation to him. By framing the cottage as a gift to Brent in recognition of her superior value to him, Dr. Flint enters into the middle of Mauss's triad of obligation. The standards of a gift economy dictate that Dr. Flint's offer of the cottage would put Brent, as his slave and a single woman without family, under an inescapable debt to him. Regardless of how much she might want to avoid being indebted to Dr. Flint, Brent's position as a slave makes her powerless to resist his "gift." Once she has surrendered to the obligation of receiving the gift Brent must then respond with the final obligation of the triad: she must reciprocate the gift to relieve the obligation. The goal behind Dr. Flint's incitement of this burden of obligation is simple: because Brent cannot reciprocate the gift of the cottage in kind, she must offer up something of similar value. In her poverty stricken position, this means that she must offer herself.

Dr. Flint clearly understands the weight of obligation inherent in transactions in the gift economy. Although he frames the cottage as a benefit to Brent, declaring that it

will provide her an opportunity to have a home of her own, this offer is twisted by the laws of slavery that govern the relationship between master and slave. Jacobs recognizes that the cottage will never actually belong to her because, as she notes in the first chapter of the narrative (before Dr. Flint has even entered the story) "… according to Southern laws, a slave, *being* property, can *hold* no property" (10). Thus, in light of the law, the cottage functions as an extension of Dr. Flint's household and not as Brent's independent home. Dr. Flint's schemes are, as Jacobs characterizes him in an earlier chapter, diabolical, seen most clearly in his attempts to manipulate Brent into "willing" submission to his desires.[61] When his attempts to move Brent through offers cloaked in terms of kindness and generosity fail, Dr. Flint moves on to more aggressive means of control. He repeatedly berates Brent, telling her that she is not actually a person, but property and he has the right to control her which she cannot escape. Although her relationship with Mr. Sands, and the subsequent birth of her children, result in Linda Brent's expulsion from the Flint household and a brief respite from Dr. Flint's continual manipulations, the threat of the cottage never entirely disappears. In fact, the realization of Dr. Flint's threat to remove her to the lonely cottage is what, in the end, forces Linda Brent to attempt an escape and spend the subsequent seven years in her grandmother's attic. Several years after the first offer of the cottage the danger comes to fruition. Dr. Flint does build one for Brent outside of town and makes arrangements to bring her

[61] In chapter 4, "The Slave Who Dared to Feel Like a Man, Jacobs describes Dr. Flint as a man "whose restless, craving, vicious nature roved about day and night, seeking whom to devour," a direct reference to the description of the devil. This is almost a verbatim quote from 1 Peter 5:8 (King James Version) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

children to her with plans to move them all to the cottage whether they want to be there or not.

The cottage represents Dr. Flint's most long-standing seduction of Brent in the narrative. After ineffectual attempts to take advantage of her in his home, often foiled by his wife's jealousy, Dr. Flint decides to move Brent somewhere more isolated so that he can have unfettered access to her. Once she is indebted to him for his generosity, Flint can demand access to her body in lieu of the direct reciprocity the gift exchange entails and that she is unable to offer to him as a slave. While Dr. Flint clearly understands the obligations of gift exchange, he fails in his attempts to obligate Brent and thus force her submission. Dr. Flint is caught inescapably between his conflicting beliefs: his explicit claim that Linda Brent is not a person and therefore not entitled to her autonomy, and his implicit claim, expressed through his actions and desires, that what makes her desirable to him is her insistence of her full personhood and autonomy apart from his control as her master.

Hospitality and Obligation

In the practice of hospitality there is an exchange between host and guest that mirrors the exchanges outlined in Mauss's explication of the gift economy. When the guest arrives at the threshold the host falls under the obligation to extend hospitality (give the gift), the guest satisfies the obligation to receive by entering the home of the host, and finally, there is an obligation to reciprocate the hospitality that can either be satisfied by returning the gift in kind or by reciprocating with a gift of similar value. This cycle of

obligation is clearly seen in Brent's stay with the unnamed white woman who hosts her immediately before Brent takes up residence in her grandmother's garret.

Brent's grandmother, Aunt Martha, engages in regular hospitality to the white women of the community who buy her crackers and preserves, and who know her and her family from long-standing relationships in the community. These ties allow Aunt Martha to seek hospitality for Brent in her moment of need. The regular exchange of hospitality in Aunt Martha's community, in the form of visits and meals, places the women in relationships of mutual obligation that allows the freed slave access to hospitality in white circles that would otherwise be closed to her and her family. As Jacobs narrates the exchange that leads to Brent's hiding place in a white woman's home, it is clear that the woman who is visiting Aunt Martha is there as part of a regular exchange of hospitality: "At this crisis of affairs she called to see my grandmother, as she not unfrequently did" (80). In response to Aunt Martha's hospitality, her guest reciprocates with a listening ear: "She observed the sad and troubled expression of [Aunt Martha's] face, and asked if she knew where Linda was, and whether she was safe. … 'Come, Aunt Martha,' said the kind lady, 'tell me all about it. Perhaps I can do something to help you'" (80-1). This woman pities Brent's situation and seeks to assist her. The offer of hospitality made by this white woman carries three stipulations that indicate the risk involved, as well as the cost of such hospitality: 1) the hospitality must be short-term and contingent on the conviction that the woman believes "there is [a] chance of Linda's getting to the Free States;" 2) the woman requires complete anonymity for herself and her family, stating that if it was known that she was hosting Brent, "it would ruin me and my family;" and 3) the only person aside from the hostess who was allowed to know

anything about the plans was this woman's cook, Betty, who she characterizes as a woman who likes Brent and who "is so faithful that [she] would trust [her] own life with her" (81).[62] This offer is a generous response to Aunt Martha's need and it puts Brent under heavy obligation to the woman. Because she cannot fulfill the obligation of reciprocation by an in-kind gift, Jacobs offsets the obligation in the only way she can, with words of gratitude in the moment and memorializing the woman's generosity in her text. Jacobs relief upon finding a safe haven in this woman's home causes her to overflow with superlatives in describing her gratitude to the reader: "How my heart overflowed with gratitude! Words choked in my throat; but I could have kissed the feet of my benefactress. For that deed of Christian womanhood, may God forever bless her!" (82). In this scene Jacobs demonstrates that engaging in hospitality requires the participants to operate within Mauss's triad of obligation. In spite of the official limits of personhood outlined in the following section on the laws of slavery, the participants in the the exchange of hospitality successfully navigate the obligations of hospitality through a combination of generosity, in-kind exchange, and the acceptance of nonreciprocal gifts to balance the burden of obligation.

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[62] In fact, this woman is entrusting her own life to Betty by inviting her into the secret of Linda Brent's stay in the household. In later moments during Brent's visit it is clear that the only protection that this household has against Dr. Flint's extreme anger and hostility is the fact that no one even suspects that they are harboring the fugitive slave. Without the aid of the cook in hiding, feeding, and communicating with Brent, this white woman's hospitality would be impossible.

The Conflicts Over Personhood Under Chattel Slavery Codes

The dynamic of hospitality that Mauss's triad of obligation outlines is deformed by the force of chattel slavery codes. Under the legal boundaries of slavery, there is no provision for recognizing a slave's consciousness or personhood and thus it is inconsistent to expect a slave to be able to assert obligation or to be under obligation to a free person in any act, like hospitality, that is supported by Mauss's triad of the gift economy. Before I delve into the specifics of the legal code governing chattel slavery, I would like to address the conflicted way that law is understood in *Incidents*. Scholars have frequently noted the prominent role of the law and legal discourse in connection to Jacobs's narrative.[63] In her 1998 article "'The Laws Were Laid Down to Me Anew': Harriet Jacobs and the Reframing of Legal Fictions," Christina Accomando argues that Jacobs "reframes and rearticulates legal and cultural discourses of slavery and womanhood to uncover their fictive constructions" (229). She goes on to say that "as a multiply disenfranchised subject, Jacobs writes against the dominant voices of Southern slave law and the law itself," arguing that Jacobs is fighting back against a legal construction that "defined slaves and African Americans in specific yet contradictory ways—as nonhuman, with dangerous sexuality and nonexistent subjectivity" (229). In *Incidents*, Jacobs uses her understanding of the law to add to her authorial ethos while also providing an explanation for her degraded situation in the Flint household and her choice to pursue autonomy over traditional forms of feminine virtue.

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[63] In addition to Accomando's article discussed here, see Cope's arguments about slavery laws and Jacobs's claim to freedom as a participant in the capitalist economy and Henderick's careful examination of how colonial slave laws influenced the narratives of Douglass and Jacobs.

The chattel slavery code defined all slaves as property, classing them with animals and furniture, and thus depriving them of any form of personhood. In a brief recap of the comprehensive nature of chattel slavery law, scholars Mason Lowance and Jan Pilditch describe the many variables that the law controlled, touching every aspect of the life of a slave from labor to relationships to personal property. Although differing in specifics across the states and territories, these laws shared a common recognition that "slavery was hereditary and perpetual" and that slaves were property that owners could "buy and sell, mortgage or lease at will, … bequeath them or use them to pay off debts" (72). In 1827 George McDowell Stroud attempted to create an overview of all the slave laws in the United States, titled *A Sketch of the Laws Relating to Slavery in the Several States of the United States of America,* with some explanation of how these laws came about and how they functioned at the time.[64] Stroud notes that most slave-holding states do not have "entire written codes" to govern slaves and their relationships with their masters, but that there is still a general consensus on the status of slaves as property (22). In fact, Stroud argues (with copious supporting examples) that "the cardinal principle of slavery,—that the slave is not to be ranked among sentient beings, but among things—is an article of property—a chattel personal,—obtains as undoubted law in all of these states" (22-3). The property relationship is legally established in multiple ways and Stroud highlights several of these; the most overtly depersonalizing statement, however,

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[64] Published in Philadelphia, *A Sketch* appears to be an abolitionism-slanted text, although I have been unable to find any material that directly ties Stroud, or his publishers, Kimble and Sharpless, to abolitionist writings. Stroud's use of Jefferson's criticism of slavery from *Notes on the State of Virginia* in his opening preface, coupled with critical language in his commentary on various slave statutes, indicates that he was writing as a critic of slavery, not a supporter.

comes from a quote from a 1798 law from Maryland which states, "… the personal property of a ward shall consist of specific articles, such as slaves, working beasts, animals of any kind, stock, furniture, plate, books, and so forth …" (23). In addition to this clear inclusion of slaves in the list of animal and material property, Stroud also notes that Louisiana law states that "the slave is entirely subject to the will of his master, who may correct and chastise him" and that the master may "sell [his slave], dispose of his person, his industry and his labour" and goes on to state that a slave "can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing but what must belong to his master" (22).[65]

As Dr. Flint's interactions with Linda Brent illustrate, it materially benefited white slaveholders to uphold the legal confines of slavery. Accomando notes, "The official line on slavery declared that slaves had no subjectivity to speak of, yet there was tremendous anxiety that there be no public arena where such a subjectivity might somehow speak" (231). She goes on to say that "the official story suggested that slaves had no will, and no real arena in which to express such a will" but proceeds to list out slave experiences in the courts and the discussion of slave law by slaves in their

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[65] It should be noted, however, that while the laws of North Carolina (the state in which the narrative takes place) give a master the right to discipline his slave as necessary, the deliberate murder of a slave was punishable by death (Stroud 36). This law was easily circumvented, however, because it was acceptable to kill a slave if they were "outlawed by virtue of any act of assembly of this state, or to any slave in the act of resistance to his lawful owner or master, or to any slave dying under moderate correction" (Stroud 37). In his overview of this legal precedent, Stroud notes that killing a slave who was "resisting, or offering to resist his master by force" was considered reasonable under North Carolina law (37). As in any legal precedent concerning slavery in the South, the weight of discerning whether or not a death was justifiable fell with a white judge and jury. Additionally, the testimony of a black person was not allowed in the trial unless they were speaking *against* a slave, and even then, their evidence was not given under oath and could be dismissed if the judge or jury did not think it reliable or in accord with the rest of the evidence (Stroud 126).

narratives, that clearly illustrates the falsity of this "official story" of slavery. In *Incidents*, Jacobs uses the exchanges between Brent and Dr. Flint, as well as her own meditations on the condition of women in slavery, to forcefully undercut this legal suppression of the will of slaves. Jacobs masterfully illustrates the way that this assumption of a slave's "nonexistent subjectivity" hamstrings Linda Brent's dreams of marrying her first love, a free black carpenter, by delineating the danger of clearly expressed desire.

The primary conflict with Dr. Flint in the argument over Brent's black lover reveals that demonstrating that she has a definite desire for a specific man is more dangerous to her physical safety then her direct refusal of Dr. Flint's advances. During the confrontation between Dr. Flint and Brent, Dr. Flint tries repeatedly to deny Brent's ability to choose a lover while also persuading her to choose him instead. After Dr. Flint offers her marriage to one of his own slaves as an alternative to the lover of her choice, Brent responds forcefully in defense of her right to a will and to desire. She says, "Don't you suppose, sir, that a slave can have some preference about marrying? Do you suppose that all men are alike to her?" (35). She goes on to tell him that, yes, she does in fact *love* this free black man. As Accomando observes, Brent's declaration is a direct repudiation of what the law says about slaves: as a will-less non-subject, the slave is not allowed to have a "preference about marrying." Brent's honest assertion of her desire for her lover provokes violent outrage in Dr. Flint. His response, wrathfully shouting "Howe dare you tell me so!" reveals the irreconcilable conflict that Dr. Flint inhabits. He does not refuse to believe that Brent is especially attached to her lover. Her wrong lies in asserting that love to him, her master. Brent's claims directly contradict the story of slavery that

southern law and practice have laid out for Dr. Flint and his household and his anger is evidence of the vulnerability of that story in the face of Linda Brent's bold assertion of her own will and desire.

In this exchange, Brent's claim to know her own mind and heart not only anger Dr. Flint, they lead to a confrontation that directly undercuts the authority of the law in master/slave relations. Dr. Flint's statement, immediately following his outburst, is an attempt to bring Brent back in line with his will for her, and by extension, to bring her back into conformity with the law. He tells Brent that he "supposed [she] thought more of [herself]; that [she] felt above the insults of such puppies" (35). Dr. Flint's sidesteps the question of the existence of Brent's desires and attacks her personally. Instead of arguing whether or not she has to right to love whom she desires, Dr. Flint claims that her desires are inferior because she is willing to give her love to a black man. Dr. Flint oscillates between a commitment to the "official story" of Linda Brent's position as a will-less non-subject in his house whom he can treat in any way he wants and his excessive desire for her that demands a submission of her will to his pursuits. Dr. Flint cannot have both a will-less and infinitely pliable slave and a willing mistress. However, rather than reconsidering the legitimacy of his desire for her or the control granted him by the law, Dr. Flint allows the cognitive dissonance created by the conflict between desire and law to overflow into anger and violence toward Brent, striking her for the first time (35). Although Dr. Flint had used the threat of violence in his seduction of Brent, it was not until she flatly refused him, claiming that her black lover was more honorable than he was, that he actually turns to violence to subdue her. Although the law declared that Dr. Flint had the right to discipline his slaves as he saw fit, Brent refuses to accept this and

responds to his anger with her own: "… fear did not enable me to control my anger. When I had a recovered a little from the effects [of his blow], I exclaimed, 'You have struck me for answering you honestly. How I despise you!'" (35). Here Jacobs juxtaposes Dr. Flint's false discipline with her own honesty, implicitly criticizing the power the law gave to a slaveholder and asserting her own personhood and equality with Dr. Flint. In this exchange, therefore, Dr. Flint fails completely to bring Brent into line with either his will or the law and instead is forced to reckon with her assertion of her right to herself, her right to her desire, and her right to refuse the legitimacy of the authority bestowed on slaveholders by slave law. This interaction illustrates clearly Accomando's claim that "Jacobs constructs the law as *dis*honorable," a serious claim against one of the pillars of southern honor culture (240).

In defiance of the law that allows masters to control every aspect of the lives of their slaves, Brent responds with a different understanding of rights. Brent answers Dr. Flint's question by saying, "You have tried to kill me, and I wish you had; but you have no right to do as you like with me" (35). For Jacobs, there is a higher law than the slave codes that governs relationships between master and slave and she returns to her right to herself and to the sanctity of her body and mind repeatedly in her exchanges with Dr. Flint. In Jacobs's censure of slavery throughout the narrative, she returns often to moral law and biblical precepts as a foundation to a slave's right to herself and her right to be recognized as an autonomous person by her master and the people around her. She first asserts this right (and the failure of even good slaveholders to recognize it) when she discusses her first (unnamed) mistress's decision to will Brent to her niece rather than freeing her as everyone expected her to do: "My mistress had taught me the precepts of

God's Word: 'Thou shalt love your neighbor as thyself.' 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.' But I was her slave, and I suppose she did not recognize me as her neighbor" (11). Brent sees her mistress's failure to free her as an "act of injustice" that colors all the good that she did for Brent and the kindness she extended to her. Brent sees the conflict between the law of God, which calls men and women who claim a Christian identity to treat each other with kindness and respect, and the chattel slavery code which condones neglect and abuse of human beings because they are legal property of their owner. Because the slave code does not agree with biblical commands, Brent resists Dr. Flint's claims to dominance and holds fast to her claims of autonomy and the right to herself.

The key to understanding Harriet Jacobs's views of the laws of slavery and her relationship to them comes at the close of the narration of Dr. Flint's "persecutions" of Linda Brent after the birth of her two children. She states that her "master had power and law on his side; I had a determined will. There is might in each" (70). In *Incidents*, the law is overwhelmingly a thing to be feared rather than trusted. Jacobs relays the story of her grandmother's loan of $300 to her mistress when the family was in financial straits. As becomes clear very quickly, this generosity on her grandmother's part does nothing to improve her condition because, as Jacob notes, "the reader probably knows that no promise or writing given to a slave is legally binding; for according to Southern laws, a slave *being* property, can *hold* no property" (10). Jacobs returns repeatedly to the legal precedent that a slave is property and not a person multiple times in the narrative and every time her tone is scornful or angry. Whether she is talking about the law's relationship to her own personal position, or is discussing the laws of slavery more

generally, Jacobs often uses a disparaging or despairing tone. The reader is privy to this critical tone starting very early in the first chapter of the text.

Although Jacobs is quick to criticize the laws of slavery as both unjust and immoral, her tone does veer into despair when the failure of the law to protect her is most obvious. In defense of her decision to leave a virtuous path to have a sexual relationship with Mr. Sands, Jacobs excuses herself by accusing the law of failing to protect her: "Pity me, and pardon me, O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or customs; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of chattel, entirely subject to the will of another" (47-8). The failure of the law to protect her from Dr. Flint's licentious pursuit is one of Jacobs's greatest indictments of the laws of slavery. It is clear in this entire section of the narrative that Jacobs believes that the purpose of the law is protection. In the paragraphs that precede her plea to the reader she notes that her readers occupy homes "protected by law" and that the thing she longs for is that she too "would have a home shielded by the laws" (46). In fact, the only time that Jacobs speaks positively about the law in the entire narrative is when she is praising it for protecting marriage and family relationships and the sanctity and safety of the home.

Jacobs respects the power of the law to protect and establish positive social expectations, but she also sees the failure of the law in the South and despises the way it can be twisted to suit the licentious desires of slaveholders. This view of the law contrasts with the way that she discusses "principles" in the text. In the narrative of *Incidents*, the word "principle" appears far less often than the word law, but it is also held in higher esteem as something to be obeyed because it is grounded in morality or biblical precedents that are truer or better than the pragmatism of slavery law. The only time the

word is used negatively is when she discusses the way that slaves despise northern men with "southern principles," indicating that these principles are founded in something inferior to the moral law that she invokes at other times.

In the face of the laws of slavery, however, Jacobs eventually comes to the conclusion that principles are not strong enough to prevail against the powerful current of abuse that the law protects. This contrast is highlighted in Jacobs's narrative of her girlhood. She states that Dr. Flint "tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles [her] grandmother had instilled" and then she takes on a third-person perspective and tells the reader that "No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by fiends who bear the shape of men" (26). In the face of the moral laxity of the laws of slavery, slave women generally, and Jacobs particularly, cannot rely on the protection that respect for their principles or their virtue should provide. Jacobs is clear that the color of a slave woman's skin negates any right that she might have to principles or virtue. Accomando argues that for Jacobs, "the 'virtue' of slave women is different from that of free Northern women not because of nature or essence but because of legal status. White women have the protection of the law, while laws—and the men who make them—conspire against slave women" (238). The right to control of their property afforded slaveholders by the law trumps any other consideration or personal right of the slave. Thus, the compromise of Brent's virtue is rooted in, as Accomando notes, differences "of race and condition, not individual choices or shortcomings on [Jacobs's] part" (238). In Jacobs's moral failure the reader sees the

direct result of the vulnerability of principle when placed under the pressure of Dr. Flint's aggressions which he repeatedly supports by calling on the power of the law.

Linda Brent's Personhood Claims: Orphan Before Slave

In contrast to most slave narratives, Jacobs asserts that her personhood is founded in her experience of her nuclear family and the kind care of her early mistress, not primarily shaped by the brutality of slavery depicted in other slave narratives, such as Douglass's *Autobiography*. Hortense Spillers argues, however, that "the 'white' family, by implication, and the 'Negro Family,' by outright assertion, [are] in a constant opposition of binary means" (66). As I mentioned in Chapter 1 of this project, for the southern white slaveholder the black slave is the antithesis of honor. A slave is, in his essence and performance, not honorable. So it is not surprising that Spillers would see this formal antithetical relationship worked out in larger social concerns. Just as white cannot be black, that which belongs to whiteness cannot be duplicated in blackness.[66] As my second chapter shows, this antithesis of black and white not only shaped southern honor culture but was also influential in northern understandings of race and personhood. Under this pervasive and influential racial paradigm, while Jacobs's experience of the initial formation of her identity is similar to many of her white readership, her race makes it impossible to mark her experiences as equal with a white female child of the

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[66] This does not mean that there was not confusion about where the line between black and white identities and performances could be drawn, nor that that line was not continually under scrutiny because it was frequently crossed or blurred. However, under the ideology of southern honor culture (see Kenneth Greenberg's *Honor and Slavery* for more details on this argument) this antithetical relationship between black and white had to be maintained to preserve the stability of southern honor culture.

antebellum period. Spillers goes on to argue that under the laws and ideology of chattel slavery, the slave family has no opportunity to come into existence the traditional way (through marriage between father and mother and the procreation of children) because "kinship" relationships "*can be invaded at any given and arbitrary moment by the property relations*" (74).[67] The idea that kinship relationships between slaves are weaker than the owner/property relationship between slave and master is, in fact, what controls Brent's experience after being gifted into the Flint family. Furthermore, Brent's unwillingness to submit to this power dynamic with her own children is what finally prompts her to attempt an escape to the North. While I agree with Spillers racialized arguments conceptually, Jacobs's experience in the first twelve years of her life is not entirely defined by these limitations. And I believe that her lived experience gives Jacobs

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[67] This conflict over the existence and strength of African American kinship bonds under slavery are dramatically illustrated in *Incidents* when Brent's brother William is forced to choose between obeying the call of his father, a successful slave carpenter, and the call of Mistress Flint. When young William chooses to obey his mistress rather than his father, he is remonstrated by his father, who tells him, "You are my child … and when I call you, you should come immediately, if you have to pass through fire and water" (12). In this rebuke it is clear that Jacobs's father believes that he has full rights to his son and that their kinship relationship trumps any call that the Flints have on his son's life. Jacobs comments in the voice of the narrator that it was at this point in the life of her brother that he had to "learn his first lesson of obedience to a master" (12). For William, this conflict between father and mistress is a pivotal moment in his realization that he is a slave; and even in his ten-year-old heart he is unwilling to accept that this is his lot in life (two years later, when he is twelve, he fights his way out of an unfair beating by his young master, revealing that his attitude toward his position in slavery is unchanged) (19). Spillers attributes this conflict between kinship connections and property relationships to the fact that "if 'kinship' were possible, the property relations would be undermined, since the offspring would then 'belong' to a mother and a father" (75). This undermining can go both ways and that is exactly what happens to William in the scene outlined above: fear of Mistress Flint causes William to answer her call, rather than his father's, thereby privileging the property relationship over the kinship relationship.

a solid foundation for her convictions about her personhood that is different than most slaves living in chattel slavery.

These nuances are essential to our understanding of the uniqueness of Jacobs's story and experience because her birth into an intact family and her experience in early childhood is that of a child who knows herself as a child first and a slave second (or for the first six years of her life, not as a slave at all). Kimberly Drake argues that when Jacobs writes herself into existence through the production of her autobiography, that she is engaging in a model of psychological development that "charts a progression from a moment before identity is developed and language has been mastered to the possession of both a unique identity and language" (93). Drake notes that ex-slaves form an identity that comes into being with the mastery of literacy and the ability to put language to use to tell one's story, discussing how literacy "is also portrayed by many ex-slaves as crucial to their quest for freedom, a freedom which in large part is the ability to allow the consciousness to develop without restriction" (93). Drake's narrative requires freedom for a slave so that they can gain a more complete and independent personhood, but Jacobs's narrated experience breaks with that of most slaves at this point. Up until her removal to the Flint household at age twelve, Jacobs has the ability to "develop without restriction" under the care first of her parents and then her first mistress, who behaves more like a mother than a mistress. Understanding that she is a slave first breaks upon Jacobs's consciousness when she is six and her mother dies, but that is primarily due to the fact that she must leave her family's comfortable home and move into the home of her new mistress. With this woman, however, Jacobs is treated like an obedient and beloved child who is encouraged to play when she is tired of indoor work, who labors at

domestic chores at her adoptive mother's side, and who also learns to read and understand the Bible (and morality in general) under her adoptive mother's tutelage. Thus, like any orphan heroine of a sentimental novel, Jacobs lives as a daughter first and then is welcomed as an orphan in a congenial home before the death of her mistress tosses her headlong into the life of an ordinary slave. She must overcome the physical and psychological abuse of Dr. Flint and his household to become a full and mature adult, but she is starting from a place of well-founded identity that is allowed to grow and develop according to the lines dictated for female growth during the antebellum period.

Harriet Jacobs's/Linda Brent's Identity Development

To understand the way that slavery warps hospitality when Linda Brent is a major actor in a scene of hospitality, it is necessary to first understand how Jacobs portrays the development of and her understanding of her own personhood as an individual black woman. For Brent, her personhood is never under question, regardless of how she might be defined by the law or by the relationships dictated by her position as a slave. There are several factors that cause Brent to have a more fully developed sense of her personhood than is usual in slave narratives. Initially, Brent's complex personhood is shaped primarily by the intimate relationships she has with her biological nuclear family, her first adoptive mistress, and her grandmother. Jacobs describes these relationships in the context of her experience of and desire for home. Home is not just the space of her immediate family, however, but is tied to intimate relationships of multiple kinds. The ideas about her personhood are further developed through her relationships with her children and her more extended family, especially Aunt Nancy and Uncle Philip, as well as her close friendships with other slaves (and occasionally free white people). For

Jacobs, personhood is found and developed through intimate relationships with people who acknowledge an individual's worth and uniqueness in relationship to them and to others. Additionally, the strong web of relationships that surrounds her in her early childhood, and as she matures, allows her to view her own experience as that of a full person and her relationship with others as that of an equal on a fundamental human level, regardless of the power dynamics at work between them.

"Home" is a foundational experience in Harriet Jacobs's narration of her time inside and outside slavery. Early in the first paragraph of the first chapter, Jacobs informs the reader that she and her parents and younger brother "lived together in a comfortable home; and, though we were all slaves, I was so fondly shielded that I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise" (9). For Jacobs, the experience of home is in direct opposition to her social and legal position as a slave. In her first home she is just a little girl, beloved and cared for by her parents, living a carefree childhood. This experience of a safe and free home is bookended in the penultimate paragraph of the final chapter when Jacobs tells her reader that although she and her children are finally free, "the dream of [her] life is not yet realized" because she does not yet "sit with [her] children in a home of [her] own" (156). From the loss of her home in her early childhood, a longing for a place to be at home or to call her own home continually presses in on Jacobs's psyche, working as a measure against which every household she is a part of is measured.

Jacobs entire narrative is grounded in the opening scenes of the text and these formative incidents are focused on her experience of home and family. Brent is only six when her mother dies and she is removed from the home of her family to live with her

mother's mistress. For six years this home is defined by kindness and humane treatment: "my mistress was so kind to me that I was always glad to do her bidding … when she thought I was tired, she would send me out to run and jump; … Those were happy days—too happy to last" (11). While her mistress cares for her as a family member, her kindness does not extend to emancipation and at her death Brent is bequeathed to the niece of her mistress, the daughter of Dr. Flint. In just a handful of pages Jacobs outlines how a happy and safe childhood, although experienced in slavery, prepares Brent to understand the necessity and comfort of home, just as her access to home is rudely jerked from her life by the inconsiderate wishes of a (previously) kind mistress. In the opening pages of the narrative, Jacobs clearly attributes this moral failure of an otherwise loving and caring woman to the spiritual degradations of slavery.

Although her first mistress acts in accord with a loving interpretation of the paternalistic rhetoric of slavery that declares Brent is a part of her family, the legal limitations of chattel slavery laws dictate that as mistress she can and should treat Brent in a most unmaternal way. Instead of emancipating Brent, her mistress acts in accord with the rhetoric of slavery law and passes on Brent to a biological family member that is dear to her. This action confirms that she views Brent as a piece of her most valuable property rather than like an adopted daughter, regardless of how she treated her when alive. Even in such a safe and encouraging space as her first mistress's home, Brent is subject to a dehumanization that she identifies as inconsistent with the Christian faith professed by her mistress. As she tells her reader, her mistress taught her "the precepts of God's Word: 'Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself'" (11). But what Jacobs goes on to emphasize is that under slavery her mistress "did not recognize me as her neighbor"

and the cruel reality of freedom denied in turn colors all of Jacobs's memories of an otherwise kind and humane mistress.

Scholars have long been fascinated by the way that Jacobs presents herself in her narrative. For literary scholar Kimberly Drake, the central identity conflict that Jacobs faces in her identity construction is the way her personhood conflicts with gendered expectations for her as a slave and as a woman. She argues that Jacobs must "mediate between, on the one hand, her need to portray a 'masculine' self who throws off societal restraints and 'breaks' with the past the 'mother' (or maternal slave community) in order to free herself and start a new life, and, on the other hand, her desire and need to maintain a connection to the community" which Drake glosses as a distinctly feminine relational position (95). Earlier Drake argues that while slaves were inherently in a feminized position of dependence on the master, slave women were "forced to work like a man and to breed like an animal" (94). For Drake, these practices resulted in an alienated relationship with a feminine identity because a slave woman was "denied the ability to cultivate 'feminine' attributes" dictated by the cult of true womanhood and defined most frequently by virginity, physical weakness or frailty, and submissive dependence (94). This conflict between the requirements of slavery that both unsexed and hypersexualized African American woman and the sentimental discourse that required a femininity inaccessible to black women is evident throughout Jacobs's text. What scholars seem to often overlook, however, is that Jacobs has a unique claim on her white female readers because her early experiences align her life with theirs. Additionally, Jacobs shapes the opening of the narrative in such a way that the events over her early life and after her mother's death align her more closely with the the high-spirited and resourceful orphans

of popular sentimental literature than with her male counterparts writing slave narratives at the time.[68]

The move to the Flint family home upsets Brent's early understanding of home and forces her into a clearer understanding of the legal position of slaves under the law of chattel slavery. Brent is property to be willed away by her dying (adoptive) mother to a family that she does not know. Jacobs engages with the abusive potential of paternalistic rhetoric when she characterizes Brent's new living situation with the Flints as "our new home," but there is nothing homelike about the Flint household (12). Instead, Jacobs states that she and her younger brother "encountered cold looks, cold words, and cold treatment" (12). While they might be the property of the Flints and live in their house, the Flints do not offer the orphaned children anything that resembles a home. If her good mistress could not recognize her as her neighbor in the Biblical sense, is it any surprise that the abusive and dominating Flints are unable to make the adoption of the orphaned slave a move to truly integrate her into the family?

Although the Flint household refuses to acknowledge that Brent and her brother are fully persons and thus have emotional, psychological, and physical needs similar to their own, this abuse and neglect does not immediately undermine Brent's confidence in her own personhood. While Brent's strong sense of personhood is established in the home of her parents and her first mistress, that personhood continues to be cultivated

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[68] See Baym's 1998 article, "Women's Novels, Women's Minds: An Unsentimental View of Nineteenth-Century American Women's Fiction," for an extended treatment of the anti-sentimental actions of the most popular white sentimental orphan heroines which often parallel Brent's actions and resolution in *Incidents*.

through the ongoing support and care of her grandmother in spite of the dehumanizing attacks of the Flint household. Drake argues that "slave communities provide an oasis of support within an environment of the worse degradation and hardship imaginable; a network of fellow sufferers could alleviate some of the physical and psychological burdens of slavery" (97). Jacobs describes just such an oasis in her grandmother and in her home: "There we always found sweet balsam for our troubles. She was so loving, so sympathizing! She always met us with a smile, and listened with patience to all our sorrows. She spokes so hopefully, that unconsciously the clouds gave place to sunshine. There was a grand big oven there, too, that baked bread and nice things for the town, and we knew there was always a choice bit in store for us" (18). This description of affection, encouragement, and nourishment of both body and soul is in stark contrast to her earlier description of the Flint home and reveal a source of life for Jacobs in the midst of all the pain and turmoil of slavery.

The Limits to the Authority of the Slave Host

The tension between the law and the lived experience of slavery distorts the practice of hospitality when Linda Brent acts as host in her grandmother's home. With no home of her own (a fact the Jacobs laments repeatedly throughout the narrative), the reader expects that Brent will have no opportunity to take up the role of host at any point in her narrative. Jacobs upsets this expectation when she relates the experience of the community after Nat Turner's insurrection. She includes an entire chapter detailing the reaction of the local community to Nat Turner's insurrection, and provides the reader with a clear picture of the limitations of the former (or current) slave host living and acting in a slave community. The code of slavery law refuses to recognize the property

ownership of a slave, but as a freed slave still living in the community, Brent's grandmother lives in a marginal space where she can legally own her house, although her authority over it is limited. Aunt Martha's entrepreneurial skills enable her to buy a small home where she creates a refuge for her children and grandchildren who are still in slavery. For Aunt Martha, her home and freedom provide her with a limited ability to be a host on her own terms and in her own space.

Although her race and gender relegate her to the lowest rungs of society, Aunt Martha's financial independence enables her to create a home that is desirable and welcoming. While the reader gets hints of the delights of Aunt Martha's home throughout the first half of the narrative, it is only in the scenes following the insurrection that Jacobs goes into any detail about the space and Aunt Martha's homemaking skills. When the poor whites are mustered to search the homes of slaves and free blacks after the insurrection, Linda Brent uses this opportunity to show the superiority of her grandmother's home as a deliberate goad to the poor whites. Early in the chapter she states that:

> I knew nothing annoyed [poor whites] so much as to see colored people living in comfort and respectability; so I made arrangements for them with especial care. I arranged every thing in my grandmother's house as neat as possible. I put white quilts on all the beds, and decorated some of the rooms with flowers. When all was arranged, I sat down at the window to watch (54).

Brent's preparations reveal an attempt to leverage the expectations of southern hospitality as a weapon against the dehumanizing brutality of the posse. Brent prepares her

grandmother's house as any host would for a guest, laying out all the best furnishings and adding decoration, although she is expecting intruders rather than guests. By taking a proactive role in welcoming the intruders, Brent and Aunt Martha assert their right to the ownership of the space and the authority over the threshold. They know that they cannot actually refuse the posse, as the law gives them the right to enter the house if they believe that violence may be being plotted against a white person.[69]

Without access to any material weapons of defense of their home, Linda Brent and Aunt Martha take on the role of host as a way of asserting their right to control both their space and their persons. The position of Brent and her grandmother in the community is a respected one, but that does not protect them from the intrusion of the mustered whites into their home. However, by putting care and effort into the preparation and decoration of the home, Brent and her grandmother retain a modicum of their authority in their home. Jacobs notes that, in situations like these, that "the dwellings of the colored people, unless they happened to be protected by some influential white person, who was nigh at hand, were robbed of clothing and every thing else the marauders thought worth carrying away" (54). In the face of this legalized brutality and disregard for the property and lives of the black men and women of the neighborhood, Brent's performance of host is bold and dangerous. For Brent and her grandmother, however, the fear of robbery and violence is mitigated by Aunt Martha's respected

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[69] Stroud notes that "if any slave … shall refuse to submit to undergo the examination of any white person, it shall be lawful for any such white person to pursue, apprehend and moderately correct such slave; and if such slave shall assault and strike such white person, such slave may be lawfully killed" (99).

position in the community and the fact that her house is in the middle of town.[7070] In the face of this intrusion and potential violence, Brent and Aunt Martha are in a privileged position: "I entertained no positive fears about our household, because we were in the midst of white families who would protect us. We were ready to receive the soldiers whenever they came" (54). Again, their attitude reveals individuals who are confident in their role as host, even as they acknowledge the extremely unequal power dynamics at play. By characterizing their position as "ready to receive the soldiers," Jacobs puts herself and her grandmother in the dominant position, allowing them to take on the obligation to give welcome inherent in the act of hospitality.

This scene is the first instance in *Incidents* where we see the warping nature of the laws of chattel slavery on the sovereignty of a black person in her own home. Because she is black, Aunt Martha cannot exercise her right to refuse entry to the invading posse. While she can spend her money and purchase a home, the laws governing black bodies prevent her from protecting her property from vandalism or prosecuting an intruder who comes into her space uninvited, especially if that person is white. Legally, these men have the right to enter her home at any time if they have any suspicion that something is amiss. Nat Turner's insurrection gives the white community all the excuse they need to plunder and abuse the slaves and free black people in their midst with no fear of legal consequences. Because Brent perceives herself, and her grandmother, as persons with

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[70] Jacobs does acknowledge that their situation in town is somewhat of a protection when she relates to the reader the treatment of rural African Americans, including being framed for insurrection. When this happened "men, women, and children were whipped till the blood stood in puddles at their feet," and other inhumane tortures were inflicted (54).

full rights of ownership and mastery of the house which has been purchased by the hard earned dollars of her grandmother's labor, she prepares for the posse with acts that assert her right to use this space as a site of hospitality. While the invasion of a black home by white posse members is legally allowed, Jacobs challenges the legal expectations by taking the role of host in a space where there is no right of refusal.

The twisted nature of relationships between black and white community members under slavery results in a distorted practice of hospitality. Although Brent and Aunt Martha are "ready to receive" their uninvited guests, the posse does not acknowledge that Brent and Aunt Martha are engaging in hospitality with them. Instead of waiting for the greeting of their host at the threshold, "the door was rudely pushed open; and in they tumbled, like a pack of hungry wolves" (54). The posse considers their presence in Aunt Martha's home an invasion and they assert their right to invade the privacy of the home however they see fit: "They snatched at every thing within their reach. Every box, trunk, closet, and corner underwent a thorough examination" (54). Unlike guests in traditional practices of hospitality, the posse disrupts and disorders Aunt Martha's house with no acknowledgment that they are trespassing in any way. The posse also does not recognize their own obligation to receive hospitality from Brent and Aunt Martha, with the accompanying restraints expected of a guest in a southern home, since they consider their position to be one that is already in control of the situation.

The balance of power shifts back and forth between Brent and the posse throughout the scene. After the posse lays claim to a box of coins they found in their rummaging, Brent pushes back against their rude display of power by refusing to surrender to their greed. "When I stepped forward to take [the box] from them, one of the

soldiers turned and said angrily, 'What d'ye foller us for? D'ye s'pose white folks is come to steal?'" (55). The soldiers anger and protestations indicate that one some level he fears judgment and censure from Brent for his actions, his emotions and words tacitly acknowledging his failure to correctly play out his role as guest and Brent's right to be suspicious of his actions. Brent's response to the man's protestations is calm and measured, asserting her authority with the expectation that the man will acquiesce. In the face of his anger, she calmly replies, "You have come to search; but you have searched that box, and I will take it if you please" (55). Brent's measured tone and formal language, like the man's emotion and defensive words, set up a dichotomy of authority that is in direct opposition to the explicit and implicit claims of the laws of slavery. The white man demonstrates his brutality through his words and actions and Brent firmly aligns herself with educated and upright womanhood. In relating the scene of the posse's invasion of Aunt Martha's home, Jacobs leverages the expectations of hospitality to bolster her arguments for the full humanity of African Americans under slavery. While the men of the posse do not want to acknowledge the personhood of Brent and Aunt Martha and attendant responsibility to respect them and their possessions, they cannot entirely resist the obligations inherent in the practice of hospitality and their emotions betray them.

Regardless of how confidently Brent expresses herself to the posse member, however, she is cognizant of the tenuous position she occupies. In order to protect themselves and their possessions, Brent rights the power imbalance by inviting a "white gentleman who was friendly to us" to enter the house and join the party (55). In the presence of a white man of superior education and social position, Aunt Martha is also

emboldened to stand up to the degradations of the posse. When the men demand to know how she came to have all such a collection of bed and house linens, Aunt Martha, "emboldened by the presence of our white protector, said, "You may be sure we didn't pilfer 'em from *your* house" (55). While Brent's and Aunt Martha's earlier preparations are an attempt to assert their right to authority in the house, it is only when Aunt Martha's role of host is bolstered by a willing white guest that she can stand up against her unruly and antagonistic guests from the posse. Living under the burden of chattel slavery codes cripples Brent's and Aunt Martha's ability to take on the role of host without the added power attributed to whiteness. Jacobs uses this scene to demonstrate the way that legal expectations of slaves and free black members of southern society can be combated through a skillful manipulation of the expectations of hospitality and the judicious use of white authority.

Jacobs shows Aunt Martha and Linda Brent leveraging their white acquaintance to protect their home and it is clear in this moment and in other scenes of hospitality that without that ability to leverage the power of the white community, there is no way that they could perform the role of host. Unlike Dred's performance of the masculine southern host in Stowe's *Dred*, Aunt Martha and Brent to do not have the ability to fortify their home and protect against the incursion of unwanted white guests. In the same way that Dred makes use of the natural protections of the Dismal Swamp to hide his home and protect his threshold, Aunt Martha and Brent use the resources at hand to protect their home. Because their hospitality is complicated by both race and gender, however, it is continually operating in a marginal space that is contingent on the practices and presence of those around them. The soldiers are stopped from the worst trespasses

against Aunt Martha and her home by the presence of an influential white man. Aunt Martha's home is never entirely sacrosanct and knowledge of the permeability of her threshold (and the threshold of any black host) bolsters Brent's refusal of a cottage of her own outside of town. Without the ability to leverage white physical presence or white social censure, she knows that she has no ability to truly perform the role of host in a space allocated to her control.

The Reassertion of the Authority of the Black Host

While the persecutions of Dr. Flint dominate the narrative after the posse scene, there are glimpses of the hospitality practiced by Brent and Aunt Martha in Aunt Martha's home during this time. After the birth of her first child, Brent is expelled from the Flint home by Mrs. Flint and she takes up residence with her grandmother. Although the home belongs to Aunt Martha, and she is a free woman, Dr. Flint only tacitly acknowledges her right to authority over her home. Jacob notes that "when my grandmother was out of the way [Dr. Flint] searched every room" of her house intent on discovering the father of Brent's children (67). Like the posse, Dr. Flint has legal permission to investigate whether or not his slave is disobeying or plotting a rebellion. For Dr. Flint, however, his intrusion into the sanctity of Aunt Martha's home is limited by social expectations. Brent is his slave, and he may discipline her as he pleases. Aunt Martha is free, however, and his actions towards her are not protected by the law in the same way. Although he does not hesitate to berate and abuse Brent and her children when Aunt Martha is absent from her home, Dr. Flint cannot refuse her authority in her home without falling under social censure.

Aunt Martha's right to control over her home is compromised by the presence of her enslaved granddaughter in her home, but she uses the combination of social pressure backed by righteous indignation to force Dr. Flint into correct behavior in her home. The most telling example of her skillful use of this power over Dr. Flint comes during a scene of hospitality extended to a different enslaved black woman. In one of Dr. Flint's visits to Brent he meets a former slave, Rose, that he sold earlier to some traders. Although he is in Aunt Martha's home, and has no recognized authority there, this does not stop him from attempting to control the space. Jacobs tells the reader that "Dr. Flint always has an aversion to meeting slaves after he had sold them. He ordered Rose out of the house; but he was no longer her master, and she took no notice of him" (67). As guest in Aunt Martha's home, Rose has no obligation to Dr. Flint and, furthermore, his authority no longer has any weight. Jacobs notes that "his gray eyes flashed angrily upon her; but that was the extent of his power" (67). Like the soldier from the posse, anger is the only outlet for Dr. Flint's frustration with his lack of authority. Aunt Martha's hospitality, even when practiced in her absence, carries a power that Dr. Flint cannot entirely deny because it emboldens her guest to repudiate his attempts at control.

This scene offers an engaging view of Jacobs's manipulation of the concepts of rights that surfaces periodically in the narrative. The chapter opens with Dr. Flint asserting that Brent "don't belong to me. She is my daughter's property, and I have no right to sell her" when an agent of Mr. Sands attempts to buy her (66). Dr. Flint uses this legal fiction to defend his decision to keep Brent and pursue her sexually while also escaping social pressure to sell her. Jacobs clearly condemns Dr. Flint for this evasion early in the text and in this scene she turns the discourse of rights against him. In

response to his demands to refuse hospitality to Rose, Brent replies, "This is my grandmother's house, and Rose came to see her. I have no right to turn any body out of doors, that comes here for honest purposes" (67). Although Brent could easily turn Rose out of the house, and has acted in the role of host in that same house, she chooses to take on the role of guest in the house instead. This move allows her to abdicate her authority so that Dr. Flint cannot use his legal right to control her as his slave as a means to control this moment of hospitality extended to Rose. At this point in the conflict Dr. Flint is caught by his own twisted use of rights.

The locus of power in this moment of hospitality continually shifts as legal and social pressures come into conflict. Dr. Flint responds to Brent's impudence by giving her "the blow that would have fallen upon Rose if she had still been his slave," reasserting his authority in the exchange (68). This action also destabilizes his authority, however, because the argument draws Aunt Martha back into the house, where she reclaims her authority over the space. As Jacobs describes her, "she was not a woman to let such an outrage, in her own house, go unrebuked" (68). Earlier in the text Aunt Martha publicly castigates Dr. Flint for his immoral pursuit of Brent, but in this moment she has an added authority to her rebuke—Dr. Flint has abused her guest in her house. As host, Aunt Martha has the right and responsibility to defend her guests and this brings her authority as host into direct conflict with Dr. Flint's legal authority over Brent has her master.

In the conflict between Dr. Flint and Aunt Martha the balance of power seems clearly on Dr. Flint's side—he is a white man who is also the owner of one of Aunt Martha's guests. Unlike in the posse scene, Aunt Martha does not have a white male

figure invite into her home to add weight to her authority in this exchange. In spite of this imbalance, however, Dr. Flint does not come out the victor; instead, Aunt Martha asserts her right to control of her home. While Dr. Flint attempts to balance the power differential by blaming Brent for her insolence to him, Aunt Martha is not cowed by this vain attempt to assert control. Rather than mollifying or calming her, these assertions are entirely inflammatory to Aunt Martha: "Her indignant feelings rose higher and higher, and finally boiled over in words. 'Get out of my house!' she exclaimed. 'Go home, and take care of your wife and children, and you will have enough to do, without watching my family'" (68). By demanding his departure Aunt Martha claims the right of host to refuse her guest while also plainly limiting Dr. Flint's authority by telling him to go home. Aunt Martha's legal position is unstable. Brent belongs to Dr. Flint and the law gives him full authority over her. What the law does not give him, though, is full authority over Aunt Martha's space. In lieu of the power of the law, which only Dr. Flint can claim, Aunt Martha brings moral pressure on the doctor to balance her authority. She tells him that "you ain't got many more years to live, and you'd better be saying your prayers. It will take 'em all, and more too, to wash the dirt off your soul" (68). Aunt Martha's words call on her good reputation and social standing, as well as the recognition that she is an upright and honorable woman, to use moral condemnation to force Dr. Flint out of the house. This works and we see Dr. Flint leave the house "in a great rage" (68). In the face of social and moral authority, the power of the law and of physical force is not enough to give Dr. Flint control of the space or the situation and he must surrender to Aunt Martha's authority as host in her own home.

Hosting the Fugitive Slave

Hospitality to a fugitive is often a life and death decision that could bring death to both host and fugitive. Because of the drama inherent in the fugitive slave's situation, it is not surprising that one of the most commented on portions of Jacobs's narrative is the years that Brent spends hiding in her grandmother's attic in an attempt to free herself from Dr. Flint's control. While this experience is covered by less than twenty-five percent of the chapters of the text, the drama of the situation captures the imagination of readers and scholars alike and for many, this confinement is the climax of the narrative. When considering Brent's years as a fugitive, it is easy to overlook the time she spends with other hosts before she makes her way into her grandmother's attic. Brent first is a guest of an unnamed black host and an unnamed white host before she manages to hide away in the attic.

Evidence of the wrenching tension slavery law exerts on hospitality seen in the namelessness of Brent's hosts. As mentioned in the Introduction and first chapter of this project, naming is an important part of the practice of hospitality. The act of naming a host or guest establishes the connection between them and creates a rhetorical space where their respective roles can be performed. In *Incidents* this performance is complicated by Brent's legal situation as a fugitive slave. Although the action of the narrative takes place before the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, it was still illegal and socially unacceptable for a southern host to offer hospitality to a fugitive slave. To protect her hosts, even years after their hospitality was extended and received, Jacobs leaves them nameless in her text. This loss of identity through legal and social pressure also damages Brent's ability to satisfy the obligation of reciprocity invoked by her acceptance of her

hosts' hospitality. While her poverty keeps her from possessing a home of her own in which to welcome her hosts in an in-kind exchange, the silence required in discussing the hospitality she receives also keeps Brent from being able to offer her public thanks and gratitude as satisfaction for the obligation inherent in receiving hospitality. Mauss's triad of obligation and the practice of hospitality are both twisted and broken by the influence of slavery on the participants in hospitality to the fugitive slave.

By agreeing to host a fugitive slave, both Brent's slave friend and her free white female friend run great risk to themselves and their property. When Jacobs describes her initial flight from the Flint plantation, she goes into detail about stopping to see her children in the night and making plans to cover her tracks, but her initial host gets only a single sentence: "I ran on till I came to the house of the friend who was to conceal me" (79). As a slave harboring a fugitive slave, this host was endangering his or her own life and property and this becomes clear to Jacobs very quickly. She opens the retelling of her flight from the Flints with this reflection: "The search for me was kept up with more perseverance than I had anticipated. … I was in great anxiety lest I should implicate the friend who harbored me. I knew the consequences would be frightful; and much as I dreaded being caught, even that seemed better than causing an innocent person to suffer for kindness to me" (80). As a guest in her friend's home, Brent does not have access to the rest and safety often integral to the experience of being the guest. Her friend can offer her physical shelter and temporary reprieve from the presence of Dr. Flint, but cannot offer her any meaningful level of refuge because the law gives white men full right to search a slave's home under even the suspicion of wrongdoing. Brent has repeatedly discussed the way that the law allows men to violate the threshold of a black

host. When the search continues unabated after more than a week, Brent is beset by fear and concern for her host, a burden almost as heavy as the prosecutions she is attempting to escape. Her fugitive slave status makes her a legal and social liability to her host, regardless of their relationship to her and this legal definition of Brent's social position is more powerful than either the obligation of the host to give shelter or the sanctity of the host's home.

When Brent escapes from the slave's home to the house of the white slaveholder mentioned earlier in this chapter, her situation is more secure because of the protection provided by her host's whiteness. As her host's cook asserts, "Honey, now you is safe. Dem devils ain't coming to search *dis* house" (81). Brent's security is strengthened by the fact that her host, a slaveholder herself, is not likely to be suspected of harboring a fugitive slave. This social expectation and the power of her host's reputation are enough to provide a temporary reprieve from the searchers, but not enough to truly secure Brent's position as guest. The law's reach is extended into her host's home when a fugitive becomes her guest, however, and eventually the power of the law and Dr. Flint's pursuit overcome the authority of the host in her home. Several months after taking up residence in the white woman's home, suspicions are roused that Brent is still in the area and this time her host is not exempted, forcing Brent to hide in the cramped space under the kitchen floor and the long reach of the law in turn forces Brent from confinement in her white host's home into confinement in her grandmother's home.

The hardships that Linda Brent experiences in her years with her grandmother are compelling, but equally fascinating is the way the law wrenches Aunt Martha's hospitality out of any recognizable form and forces both host and guest into awkward

positions, both literally and figuratively. Much has been written about Linda Brent's time in her grandmother's attic and the particulars of her time there, including the physical damage done to her body and Brent's use of letter-writing to keep Dr. Flint's suspicions turned toward the North.[71] When Jacobs introduces the reader to her refuge in her grandmother's attic she calls it her "loophole of retreat" and goes to great lengths to describe how cramped and uncomfortable the space is for any person of normal size, and further dramatizes her position by talking about the rats, mice, and other bugs and vermin that had unfettered access to her body in that space. Jacobs describes her time in the garret succinctly and dramatically: "I suffered for air even more than for light. … It seemed horrible to sit or lie in a cramped position day after day, without one gleam of light. Yet I would have chosen this, rather than my lot as a slave" (92). To be pestered and consumed by vermin is preferable to the being persecuted by Dr. Flint's licentious demands.

Brent is not content, however, to embrace her confinement and pain as her rightful lot as a slave; she lays the blame for her pain directly at the feet of the law:

> With all my detestation of Dr. Flint, I could hardly wish him a worse punishment, either in this world or that which is to come, than to suffer what I suffered in one summer. Yet the laws allowed *him* to be out in the free air, while I, guiltless of

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[71] This is seen as early as 1986 (Doherty), again in 1991 (Doriani), 1992 (Nudelman), 1997 (Drake, who also revised and republished her article in a collection in 2014), 2002 (McClish and Bacon), 2007 (Wardop), 2008 (Kreiger), 2009 (Gomaa), 2013 (Green-Barteet), and 2015 (Green).

> crime, was pent up here, as the only means of avoiding the cruelties the laws allowed him to inflict upon me! (96).

Brent's accusations against the laws of slavery that kept her imprisoned in her grandmother's attic exemplifies the way the law warps Brent's experience of hospitality as a fugitive slave. Instead of confining persons guilty of moral violations, slavery law acts as a fetter to Brent's ability to escape violence and persecution while also leaving Dr. Flint free to continue acting in ways that clearly violate moral and spiritual law.

In spite of the threat of violence that the law and Dr. Flint's pursuit implies, Aunt Martha is a generous host to her trapped guest. She "would seize such opportunities as [she] could, to mount up there and chat with [Brent] at the opening," seeking to integrate her guest more fully into her life and household (92). Under threat of the law, however, these conversations "must all be done in darkness" (92). In addition to conversation, Aunt Martha provides food and drink, and even medical care— "the good grandmother gave me herb teas and cooling medicine" to combat Brent's allergic reactions to the bugs in the attic. While her body is confined, however, Jacobs also notes that the very audacity of the hiding place offers her more protection than she could find anywhere else. In fact, she closes the chapter that introduces her long-term hiding place by saying:

> The opinion was often expressed that I was in the Free States. Very rarely did any one suggest that I might be in the vicinity. Had the least suspicion reseted on my grandmother's house, it would have been burned to the ground. But it was the last place they thought of. Yet there was no place, where slavery existed, that could have afforded me so good a place of concealment (94).

For Aunt Martha and Linda Brent, slavery removes any possibility of true freedom to participate in unfettered hospitality as either host or guest. Aunt Martha's subversive hospitality to Brent could result in the total destruction of her home if her actions were public knowledge. Because Aunt Martha's position as host is tenuous at times she must bolster her authority and the assumption of her non-involvement in Brent's affairs in order to offer even a limited experience of hospitality to her granddaughter and she does this in a provocative way the following Christmas.

In the earlier scenes of hospitality in Aunt Martha's house, both she and Brent augment the authority preexistent in the role of host and homeowner by strategically using white presence or moral authority in addition to their correct performance of the role of host. While the secrecy of the arrangements surrounding Brent's arrival and residence in the attic and the general opinion that Brent has escaped to the North protect Aunt Martha from suspicion, she uses her practices of hospitality to further bolster her position and Brent's safety. The first Christmas of Brent's tenure in her grandmother's attic is bittersweet. Brent makes clothes for her children, but cannot participate in their Christmas celebrations. Aunt Martha uses her traditional practice of a Christmas feast, however, as an opportunity to use hospitality as a weapon of resistance. Jacobs describes her grandmother's arrangements in great detail:

> I was warned to keep extremely quiet, because two guests had been invited. One was the town constable, and the other was a free colored man, who tried to pass himself off for white, and who was always ready to any mean work for the sake of currying favor with white people. My grandmother had a motive for inviting them. She managed to take them all over the house. All the rooms of the lower

> floor were thrown open for them to pass in and out; and after dinner, they were invited upstairs to look at a fine mocking bird my uncle had just brought home. There, too, the rooms were all thrown open, that they might look in (95-6).

These guests, who Jacobs explains are deeply enmeshed in the pursuit, capture, and punishment of escaped slaves, are given free access to Aunt Martha's house, thus providing the clearest and strongest support for her innocence in her granddaughter's escape. In this moment Aunt Martha engages in overt public hospitality to men who she neither likes nor respects in order to obscure the covert hospitality she extends to a woman she loves deeply, relying on the conventions of southern honor culture to hide her illegal actions. Aunt Martha's shrewdness in creating the appearance of openness and welcome to her invited but unwanted guests allows her to continue to offer the hospitality to Brent in which she is so deeply invested.

Conclusion

Before closing this chapter, I want to return to Dr. Flint's cottage and the discussion that opens this chapter. As mentioned at the outset, the offer of cottage is what precipitates Linda Brent's decision to take Mr. Sands as a lover and to have children by him. Constrained by the laws of slavery which allowed Dr. Flint to stop Brent's marriage to the man of her choice, the offer and threat of the cottage shapes Dr. Flint's pursuit of Brent again and again, revealing that short of death or successful escape, she will never be free from his power. Even after she has publicly repudiated his offers by having two children by another man, Dr. Flint is not deterred. He again renews his offer of the cottage, framing it as an opportunity for freedom:

> He went on to say, 'I have seen very little of you of late, but my interest in you is unchanged. … If you agree to what I am about to propose, you and [your children] shall be free. … I will procure a cottage, where you and the children can live together. Your labor shall be light, such as sewing for my family. Think what is offered you, Linda—a home and freedom!' (69).

Dr. Flint uses the rhetoric of freedom and plays upon Brent's natural desire for a home of her own and freedom for herself and her children to disguise his demand for unfettered access to her body. Brent has already had the experience of limited, but still somewhat successful, attempts at being a host in the free space of her grandmother's house. Knowing the very exacting demands that this cottage would obligate her to surrender to Dr. Flint, Brent does not hesitate to refuse. In the face of separation from her children and life on the plantation, Brent is firm, "my master had power and law on his side; I had a determined will. There is might in each" (70). In the face of the overwhelming weight of "power and law," the scenes of hospitality that Brent and Aunt Martha engage in can be read as clever and subversive evidence of the "determined will" of a slave confident in her personhood and committed to resisting the dehumanization of slavery law and practice.

Harriet Jacobs's slave narrative provides a unique insight into the ways that slavery distorts the practice of hospitality because she overtly and repeatedly calls on the reader to recognize the fundamental contradictions between the laws of chattel slavery, the lived experience of men and women under slavery, and the social expectations of a Christian society. While these conflicts are often displayed in abolitionist literature and slave narratives more broadly, Jacobs's strongly developed personhood founded in her

experience of a loving and nurturing childhood allows her to tell a story of broken and distorted hospitality that mars the host/guest experience whenever a black person steps into one of these roles. For Jacobs, and all the individuals that people *Incidents*, hospitality must be twisted and bent out of recognizable form in order to be practiced by and toward slaves. The very essence of southern culture, and reciprocal practices in the North, cannot exist apart from slavery and must continually reckon with the tensions and conflicts inherent in a system that refuses to grant full personhood to whole swathes of American society.

Chapter Five: Back Over the Threshold

This project started with questions raised by the Black Lives Matter (#BLM) movement, and one in particular: How do you help Americans grasp the reality of race-based violence in the United States? When the #SayHerName campaign first took off in early 2015, it was clear to me as an observer that the #BLM had tapped into an important strategy for gaining supporters for a grassroots social movement: the power of story and personalization. For the activists in this campaign, the key to gathering more support for the fight against racialized violence was putting faces and stories to the alarming statistics. Sandra Bland's story became personal when people could see her as a woman with a variety of roles and relationships that were damaged by her brutal death. While this strategy seemed to swell the ranks of those in support of #BLM, I noticed something interesting and disturbing—while many people of color rallied behind these stories, the response by white Americans was lukewarm at best. Instead of identifying further with the victims and bereaved families, the otherness of African American bodies and experiences seemed to present an impenetrable barrier to widespread awareness and action. In the midst of stories of hate and violence, there were bright lights, particularly stories about brave men and women of color who welcomed white men and women into their homes and lives to help them grasp more fully the humanity that was being destroyed through the ongoing violence.

As I returned to the questions about how to engage white Americans in issues of racialized violence, poverty, and abuse I looked to the ways that Americans at different times attempted to bridge these divides, and this led me straight to late-antebellum and Reconstruction-era writings. In the limited scope of this project I focus on late-

antebellum narratives that directly address the dehumanization of African Americans through practices of hospitality. I envision this project expanding in two different possible directions: First, this project could benefit from crossing the dividing line of the Civil War to investigate Reconstruction-era texts that also address the issues of race, hospitality, and personhood, including *Like Unto Like* by Sherwood Bonner (1878), *A Fool's Errand, by One of the Fools* by Albion Tourgee (1879), and *Who Would Have Thought It?* by Maria Ruiz de Burton (1872). Second, I believe this project could expand laterally into other antebellum narratives and could benefit from including related texts such as *Our Nig* by Harriet Wilson (1859) for a deeper discussion of Northern racism and hospitality, *Blake, or the Huts of America* by Martin Delany (1859) for a more complex look at slave hospitality in varied contexts, or selections from Lydia Maria Child's writings to provide a greater context on white women's involvements in writing against the dehumanizing narratives of the antebellum period.

Finally, this project has brought to light ways that hospitality relationships in narrative texts can be more closely examined that would be fruitful in the discussion of texts of a variety of backgrounds and subjects. Like a three-dimensional Venn diagram, the triads listed below illustrate the conflicts between related actors, concepts, and actions in hospitality and provide scholars with a way to investigate the practices of hospitality without oversimplifying relationships and subject positions that are being shaped and influenced by a variety of opposing pressures. First, Mauss's triad of the gift economy: 1) the obligation of giving; 2) the obligation of receiving; and 3) the obligation of reciprocation illustrates the movement of obligation that pulls host and guest into relationship with each other when hospitality is enacted or attempted. Second, layered on

top of this tension is the often-conflicting way that nationalist ideology is worked out by the actors involved in hospitality relationships. This is clearly illustrated in the conflicts inherent in the ideology of slavery. Namely: 1) the rhetoric of paternalism in slavery situates slaves as family members, often in direct contrast to the hired servants common in Northern households; 2) the legal realities of chattel slavery place slaves and slaveholders into a property/owner relationships and/or keep them in that relationship even if their sentiments dictate a different relationship; and 3) the experience of personhood (versus life as an object or animal) under slavery often comes to slaves through intimate relationships with other slaves and with individuals inside and outside of the slaveholder's household. Finally, the ideological conflicts and the cycle of obligation exert force and influence on the basic triad of hospitality: 1) the host who is offering hospitality; 2) the guest who is receiving hospitality; and 3) the space in which the hospitality takes place, and which is essential to defining the relationship between the host and guest.

It is my hope that this work and the perspectives raised by it will prompt scholars to think more critically about the way that hospitality functions in nineteenth-century American literature. Rather than dismissing scenes of hospitality as banal or background, my project reframes the practices of antebellum hospitality as yet another form of nonviolent everyday resistance to racist ideology rampant in both the North and the South. This project furthers the ways that American literature scholars understand active resistance to racial oppression in the nineteenth century, putting hospitality on an equal footing with other subversive practices, such as learning to read or racial passing.

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Vita

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EDUCATION

2013	MA: English Literature "Alternative Domesticity, Social Freedom, and the Cultural Work of Sentimental Fiction" committee: Timothy Scherman (chair), Emily Garcia, Ryan Poll	Northeastern Illinois University
2007	BA: English *magna cum laude*	Berea College

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

University of Kentucky College of Arts & Sciences Certificate for Outstanding Teaching, Department of English, 2017.

Jean G. Pival Outstanding Writing Teaching Assistant Award, Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies, 2017.

Lexington Herald-Leader Fellowship, Graduate School, University of Kentucky, Spring 2017 $6,000.

Summer Research Fellowship, English Department, University of Kentucky, 2016. $4,583.

Northeastern Illinois University Research Community Grant, 2013. $5,000.

Olive Ruth Russell Fellowship, Berea College, 2012. $3,000 for excellence in pursuit of graduate study.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

2016-2018	Graduate Teaching Assistant – English Department, University of Kentucky
2015-2016	Writing Program Assistant/Teaching Assistant Mentor – Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies Department (WRD), University of Kentucky
2013-2018	Graduate Teaching Assistant – WRD, University of Kentucky
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