Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of American Culture and Literature

KARA WALKER'S EARLY INSTALLATIONS AS COUNTER-NARRATIVES TO *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* AND *GONE WITH THE WIND*

Feyza ÇELİKTAŞ

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2023

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To Kedo and Minik…

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ABSTRACT

ÇELİKTAŞ, Feyza. *Kara Walker's Early Installations as Counter-Narratives to Uncle Tom's Cabin and Gone with the Wind*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2023.

Uncle Tom's Cabin (1851) and *Gone with the Wind* (1936) still hold a prominant place in the American public memory. The first novel describes the immoral and unacceptable aspects of slavery in great length and is considered to be explicit support for the abolitionist cause in the US. Meanwhile, the second novel foregrounds a love story happening during the Civil War and Reconstruction Era in the South where people experience the loss of not only the war but also the idealized way of life in which everybody, including the slaves, was content. These novels are vastly different in terms of the ideas they want to convey, yet they were both instrumental in perpetuating negative stereotypes of African Americans. These novels are master narratives, and the readers take such texts for granted and do not feel compelled to question their authenticity. For the contemporary artist Kara Walker, creating counter-narratives is a way to deal with the repercussions of these two novels in her two early installations: *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* (1997) and *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart* (1995). In these installations, Walker masterfully links her art to the nineteenth century, a time period depicted in the novels in which slavery still existed, and presents alternative and disturbing panoramas of slavery conveniently absent in the novels. The viewers are often uncomfortable about the whole experience. They remember a point in history that is not palatable. For Walker, this is the only way in which the conventional historical narratives be challenged, and viewers feel compelled to confront the uncomfortable truths of slavery.

Keywords

Kara Walker, installation art, slavery, contemporary African American woman artists.

ÖZET

ÇELİKTAŞ, Feyza. *Tom Amca'nın Kulübesi ve Rüzgar Gibi Geçti Romanlarının Karşı-Anlatıları Olarak Kara Walker'ın Erken Dönem Enstalasyonları*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2023.

Tom Amca'nın Kulübesi (1851) ve *Rüzgar Gibi Geçti* (1936) romanları Amerikan toplumsal hafızasında hala önemli bir yere sahiptir. İlk roman, köleliğin kabul edilemez yönlerini detaylı bir şekilde anlatırken, aynı zamanda Amerika'daki köleliği kaldırma akımını destekler niteliktedir. İkinci roman ise Amerikan İç Savaşı ve onu takip eden yeniden yapılanma döneminde Amerika'nın güneyinde geçen bir aşk hikayesini anlatır. Güneyde insanlar savaşın yanı sıra, köleler dahil herkesin mutlu olduğu ideal eski yaşam stillerini de kaybetmişlerdir. Bu iki roman içerik olarak farklı olabilir ancak Afro-Amerikalı karakterleri benzer bir şekilde negatif stereotipler olarak tanımlarlar. Bu romanlar okuyucuların doğruluklarını teyit etme ihtiyacı duymadığı ana-anlatılardır. Afro-Amerikan kadın sanatçı Kara Walker için karşı-anlatı bu iki romanın negatif sonuçları ile baş etmek için gereklidir. Walker erken dönem enstalasyonlarından *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* (1997) ve *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart* (1995) ile sanatını köleliğin var olduğu ondokuzuncu yüzyıl ile ilişkilendirir ve ziyaretçilere romanların dışında bırakılmış rahatsız edici kölelik panaromaları sunar. Ziyaretçiler rahatsız olurken aynı zamanda tarihte kabul edilmesi zor bir dönemi hatırlarlar. *Tom Amca'nın Kulübesi* (1851) ve *Rüzgar Gibi Geçti* (1936) ana-anlatılarına karşı çıkan bu enstalasyonlar, ziyaretçileri köleliğin rahatsız edici gerçekleriyle başbaşa bırakır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Kara Walker, enstalasyon sanatı, kölelik, günümüz Afro-Amerikan kadın sanatçıları.

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INTRODUCTION

> I'm fascinated with the stories that we tell. Real histories become fantasies and fairy tales, morality tales and fables. There's something interesting and funny and perverse about the way fairytale sometimes passes for history, for truth.
>
> – Kara Walker

Kara Walker is considered to be one of the boldest contemporary African American woman artists, dealing with the issues of slavery, racial stereotypes, and her own experiences regarding race and gender. Her work continues to be exhibited and sought after in many different galleries worldwide. Even though her installations initially put her on the map, installation art is not her only focus. She is a prolific artist who uses a variety of other mediums such as sculpture, painting, printmaking, puppetry, and film making as well. Her works deal with the problematic aspects of gender, race, violence, and African American identity.

Though it is possible to think of the artist and artwork separately, attempting to do so in the case of Walker would be unthinkable, if not impossible. This is because her art is so inherently connected to her own experience as an African American woman artist. That is why, understanding her background makes it possible for the viewer to understand her art. Walker was born in 1969 in Stockton, California and lived there until the age of 13. Then, her family moved to Atlanta, which was her father's homeland. The reason for this move was that Walker's father, Larry Walker, who was a professor of art and also an artist himself, had accepted a job offer from Georgia State University to be the director of the art program there. They relocated to Stone Mountain, Georgia. The namesake of the city, the actual mountain, is a politically charged site. The resurgence of Ku Klux Klan in 1915 happened on top of this mountain (Rosenwald). The original members of the Klan did not wear the notorious white costumes, nor did they burn crosses. Only after this revival happening on top of Stone Mountain, did the members start practicing their rituals, which resulted in a more visible and frightening version of the Ku Klux Klan that comes to people's mind today (Rosenwald). In addition to being the revival site of this

white supremacist organization that terrorized and killed many African American people, the mountain also has a tourist attraction carved on it. This attraction is a Confederate memorial featuring a giant carving of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson who are three prominent Confederate leaders who fought hard in the American Civil War to maintain slavery in the South. Besides its significance for the Confederate supporters, the mountain was also included in Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I have a dream" speech, in which he said "Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia" in 1963 ("I Have a Dream"). This quote stresses the importance of the site as the place, from which the freedom for all will come. For all these reasons, moving from racially diverse and welcoming California to Stone Mountain in Atlanta whose history was riddled with racial tensions, was quite transformative for Walker. It was a move that shaped her because she became aware of her Blackness for the first time. In an interview, she recounts moving to Atlanta as the moment when she became Black, stating that this is an experience that every African American person undergoes at some point in their lives:

> There is I suppose, historically, this seminal moment in the lives of African Americans where one becomes black. Frantz Fanon and everyone talks about it. There is a moment when you go from subject to object and I guess that was my moment. […] in Georgia, in high school, things were very locked down into black and white. You were forced to determine your allegiance. (qtd. in Adams)

Indeed, Frantz Fanon discusses the concept of becoming Black in his seminal book *Black Skin, White Masks*, published in 1952. He writes that there is a crucial "moment of being for others," which is when the Black man realizes that he is "an object in the midst of other objects" (Fanon 82). He experiences his own being through the others' perspective. This is because the movements, attitudes, and glances of the other make the Black man who he is. Being Black is only possible "in relation to the white man," who robs the Black man "of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories" that are necessary "to construct a physiological self" (Fanon 83-84). This seminal moment also mentioned by Walker is when the Black man realizes that his or her identity is actually constructed by white people. Thus, the Black subject realizes his or her objecthood. It is a moment of dislocation and alienation experienced in a white dominant society. Growing up in the shadow of the Stone Mountain literally and figuratively led Walker to experience this moment, which has immensely influenced her art (Adams).

Overall, Kara Walker has been dealing with race in a deeply critical and thought-provoking manner since the beginning of her career as an artist. After receiving her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Atlanta College of Art in 1991 and her Master of Fine Arts degree from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1994, she created one of her first installations called *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart* the same year, followed by *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* in 1997. These installations, which will be abbreviated as *Gone* and *The End of Uncle Tom* from this point onwards, are significant because not only were they her debut as an installation artist, they also referred to two heavily popularized works of American literature in their titles, which are *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*.

The earlier of these two novels, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was written by Harriet Beecher Stowe and published in 1852. Shortly after its publication, it became the first best seller of American fiction. The novel was a politically charged work with a clear agenda. Stowe belonged to a family that were staunch supporters of the abolitionist cause; therefore, she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a means to garner support for it by eliciting sympathy for the enslaved. Doing so in the first half of the nineteenth century was an extremely difficult task because scientific racism towards African people was prevalent. In 1851, physician Samuel Cartwright published an article called "Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race" in *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* in order to prove the "deep, durable and indelible" differences between the two races that went beyond the color of their skin:

> It is not only in the skin, that a difference of color exists between the negro and white man, but in the membranes, the muscles, the tendons and in all the fluids and secretions. Even the negro's brain and nerves, the chyle and all the humors, are tinctured with a shade of the pervading darkness. His bile is of a deeper color and his blood is blacker than the white man's. … According to Scommerring and other anatomists, who have dissected the negro, his brain is a ninth or tenth less than in other races of men. (29)

It should be noted that Cartwright was not an ordinary slaveholder penning down his observations. He was actually a physician, and his article was published in a reputable medical journal of his time. To give his claims more legitimacy, he quoted other

physicians' research and gave a thorough anatomical account of differences for the first seven pages of his article, describing organs, blood, and nerves of Black people. He concluded that slaves were child-like and yet capable of being trained, but only to a certain degree and by white men, of course. Since there was no one contesting his expert medical opinions, these opinions passed for facts and helped to consolidate the inferior status of slaves in the public eye. Such medical accounts were instrumental in normalizing the injustice and horrors of slavery since they provided tangible reasons for white people. Based on this supposed abnormality, creating an inferior other could be a valid justification for white people to use them as slaves. Achille Mbembe, a renown African political theorist, stated that due to this treatment by white scientists, African people came to represent a new kind of "species"

> who, although human, barely deserved the name of human. It was not known whether this species really was human; the term "Black" was a major component of the taxonomy of segregation that dominated the discourse on human diversity … Suddenly, to call someone a "Black Man" was to define him as a being that was biologically, intellectually, and culturally predetermined by his irreducible difference. He belonged to a distinct species. (73)

This process is similar to a scientist making a discovery. When a scientist discovers a new kind of species unknown to humankind, the first step is to capture it. Then, the captured species are thoroughly studied, described, and categorized. From captivity to categorization, the exact steps were followed for Black slaves as well. They were stripped of their human status and treated merely as species. Those who described them used science, the validity of which is dubious, in order to assign their slaves a status beneath them. Toni Morrison, a prominent African American writer and critic, called this phenomenon "scientific racism" and wrote that it was used as a tool for identifying the outsiders so that one can define his or her own self; therefore, helping slaveholders "to maintain (even enjoy)" their difference and not having any "contempt for the categorized difference" (*The Origin of Others* 22).

The fact that Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote a novel that was able to sway white people's opinions towards the abolitionist cause at such a moment in history is commendable. It meant that her novel succeeded in having a great number of people disregard the scientific racism of the era and its justifications for maintaining slavery. Stowe achieved this by

using sentimentalism expertly. She wrote that Black mothers felt just as much love for their children as white mothers and did not want to be separated just as white mothers. She also explained in detail that Black people had the potential to be good Christians. For instance, the titular character, Uncle Tom, is a devout Christian. He suffers endlessly at the hands of a cruel Southern master who wants Tom to see him as his God, yet Tom never gives in to his master despite the harshest punishments, and turns to God instead like a saint. The readers, in turn, believe that through Christian love, it is possible to accept everyone just as Tom accepted his evil master, and overcome the ultimate challenge to Christianity, which was slavery. Although Uncle Tom is brutally murdered at the end of the novel, the ending is thought to be a happy one because his death affects everyone positively. Stowe attributes "the qualities of Christ" to Uncle Tom but her representation of him later becomes problematic when he is deemed to be a "negative stereotype" of a Black man who is "too eager to please" white people rather than having a mind of his own or resisting his condition (Rothstein). Other Black characters are stereotyped in the novel as well: Big Sam is the happy, carefree slave; Eliza, Cassy, and Emmeline are the light-skinned mulattos treated as sex objects, Mammy is the dark-skinned, affectionate motherly figure, and Black children such as Topsy represent unruly "pickaninnies" that provide comic relief by causing mischief (Appiah and Gates 544).

Despite the stereotypical characteristics attributed to African American characters, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* contributed to the abolitionist movement immensely. It had an emotional appeal as it presented a vivid and sympathetic portrayal of enslaved people and the suffering they endured. Enslaved people were humanized in the novel, so the novel garnered empathy for them and outrage against the dehumanizing institution. The cruelties and violence of slavery were exposed in the novel as well. Torture was a means used to discipline enslaved people even when they did not deserve it; familial separation happened often and children were torn away from their mothers by violence. These facts of slavery were stressed in the novel and in this way, Stowe revealed that slavery was not the benign institution people wanted to believe. When *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became a bestseller, its popularity helped to bring the issue of slavery to the forefront of public consciousness. In turn, it sparked conversations and debates about the moral implications of the institution, contributing to a growing anti-slavery sentiment. For this reason, it

played an important role in changing public opinion from tolerating slavery to opposing it. Even the president Abraham Lincoln is quoted as referring to Stowe as “the little lady who made this big war” in a White House party (qtd. in Bloom 11).

The next novel that Walker uses as her material, *Gone with the Wind* was written by Margaret Mitchell and published in 1936. It describes the effects of the Civil War (1861-1865) and the Reconstruction (1865-1877) on the novel’s heroine, Scarlett O’Hara. It is a retrospective novel as it was published seventy years after the Civil War ended. Interestingly, it was written at a time when Southern Renaissance was underway. In the 1920s and 30s, many prominent writers of the South such as William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, and Caroline Gordon entered the literary scene. They broke away from the previous writing conventions in the South as they were not writing about the heroic nature of the South during the war or praising the Southern traditional way of life. Rather, they were exploring the relationship between the past and present and trying to “come to grips with the tradition of the Southern family romance, white Southern racism, and the received truths about Southern political culture” in a self-conscious fashion where “the Southern tradition was not only raised to awareness, it was also progressively demystified and rejected” (King 8). In other words, their relationship with the South was problematic and complex. Margaret Mitchell is set apart from this group of writers despite being their contemporaries because of her love and yearning for the Southern tradition. In her only published novel, *Gone with the Wind*, the antebellum South is portrayed as a lost idyllic place where everybody, including slaves, exists peacefully like a large family. The novel emphasizes the elegance and charm of the South, and a sense of nostalgia for the bygone era and the Southern code of conduct that includes honor and chivalry for men whereas women carried themselves with grace and were involved in the domestic affairs. Yet, these positive traits were exclusive for white people both in the novel and in real life. The idealized plantation lifestyle and Southern traditions coexisted with the harsh realities of slavery.

Idealizing and longing for the Southern way of life is in line with the ideology of Lost Cause, which can be explained as a reimagination of the American Civil War from the Southerners’ perspective, in a way that presents them and their reasons favorably.

Creating a romanticized version of the South where nothing had been wrong to begin with enabled many white Southerners to find a version of history they were comfortable with. It also made it possible for them to evade the horrors of slavery since it was falsely imagined to be unproblematic. Rollin G. Osterweis, a professor of history in Yale University, explains the content of writings of the Lost Cause ideology:

> The Legend of the Lost Cause began as mostly a literary expression of the despair of a bitter, defeated people over a lost identity. It was a landscape dotted with figures drawn mainly out of the past: the chivalric planter; the magnolia-scented Southern belle; the good, gray Confederate veteran, once a knight of the field and saddle; and obliging old Uncle Remus. All these, while quickly enveloped in a golden haze, became very real to the people of the South, who found the symbols useful in the reconstituting of their shattered civilization. They perpetuated the ideals of the Old South and brought a sense of comfort to the New. (ix)

In fact, Mitchell is recreating a tale of comfort for the Southerners supporting the Lost Cause ideology. Throughout the novel, the main character Scarlett O'Hara expresses nostalgia for the way of life before the War. She works hard to maintain Tara, her family's plantation, even during the war and its aftermath. For her, the plantation is the reminder of the pre-war South with its prosperity, elegance, and privilege. However, the war and subsequent societal changes destroy this idealized way of life. Scarlett O'Hara is the New Southern belle, trying to survive at all costs after the Civil War irrevocably disturbs the idyllic South, causing chaos and destruction.

In *Gone with the Wind*, there is not a lot of representation of African Americans. They exist in categories assigned by Scarlett's mother. It is understood that Ellen O'Hara, Scarlett's mother, assesses the slaves in the plantation when they are young and decides their path on their behalf. As the mistress of plantation, she oversees their positions. If the male slaves show aptitude in a craft, they are sent to be trained in her father's plantation, and when they do not, they become field hands and lose "their claim to any social standing at all" within their group (Mitchell 51). In the novel, Mitchell ensures that the readers know it is this group of field hands that were tricked by the Northerners with freedom, an abstract concept they know nothing about. As for female slaves, being the Mammy is at the top of the hierarchy. It is a "graduation from a skinny pickaninny with brief skirts and stiffly wrapped braids into the dignity of a calico dress and starched white turban," which she considers to be "eminence" (Mitchell 121). After the war, though, this

hierarchy is disrupted, and it is implied that the new hierarchy puts former slaves in two categories: benevolent and insolent. The former category includes African-American slaves such as Mammy, Uncle Peter, Pork, Dilcey, and Big Sam who are loyal servants to the family even after being freed. They are simply not interested in their freedom and cannot imagine leaving the families of their masters, which they consider as their own. Yet, they still continue to work under them and accept being in lesser roles. The insolent slaves, on the other hand, are guilty of destroying the Southern way of life and causing unrest during the turbulent times along with the Northerners. They are attributed animalistic qualities such as "shoulders and chest like a gorilla" (Mitchell 658). In the novel, the insolvent slaves exist as violent stereotypes whereas the benevolent ones are stereotyped in other aspects such as being too simple or being at the service of their masters' families at all costs. However problematic this representation was, the story captured many people's interests. *Gone with the Wind* became an instant bestseller even though it was published during the Great Depression (1929-1941), an era when American people suffered economically. The story of endurance, growth, and perseverance of the main character Scarlett O'Hara might have cast hope for the American people experiencing the most difficult time of their lives, making the story more relatable. The popularity of the novel led to its adaptation to an even more successful movie in 1939 featuring the stars of the time such as Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable. Therefore, the story prevailed in the public memory just as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did. Due to the extensive readership of both novels, the inaccurate representation of slavery constantly replicated and consolidated in the minds of their readers.

This thesis argues that Kara Walker's *The End of Uncle Tom* (1997) and *Gone* (1994) function as counter-narratives for the two popular works of American fiction: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*. Chapter 1 deals with the novels by explaining the context the novels were written in. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was written in the height of the abolitionist movement as propaganda. It utilized sentimental tropes such as religion and motherhood as a means to gather sympathy, and succeeded at it. The readers sympathized with Tom because he was a good Christian even though he was enslaved, and with Eliza because she had to take desperate means to not be separated from her child. *Gone with the Wind,* on the other hand, is a retrospective novel that takes place during the Civil War

and the subsequent Reconstruction Era. While *Gone with the Wind* was not written during the time period the story takes place in, it was written during the Great Depression and Scarlett O'Hara's quest to survive and sustain Tara, the plantation of her family, gave readers hope that it was possible for them to pull through hard times themselves. For this reason, the significance of these time periods and the ways they are remembered are discussed in detail.

After the discussion of the context in which each novel was written, the narrative strategies that their authors use is discussed. To this end, the narrative theory of Mieke Bal[1] is utilized. According to Bal, every narrative consists of three layers, namely, text, story, and fabula (*Narratology* 5). The text is "a finite, structured whole composed of signs" in which an agent "conveys to an addressee ("tells" the reader, viewer, or listener) a story in a medium" that does not have to be language; it can also be visual imagery or sound (*Narratology* 5). The text is any cultural artifact that can be analyzed and interpreted from various disciplines and media. Here, the agent responsible for conveying the story is the narrator. Bal describes the content of the text as the story, and the last component, the fabula, is defined as a series of events experienced by the actors within the *story* (*Narratology* 5). These levels of narrative will be discussed in Chapter 1 with a special focus on *focalization*. Focalization is a narrative technique defined as "the placing of the point of view in or with a specific agent" within the story (Bal, *Narratology* 66). In other words, focalization is about the point of view through which the story is mediated or filtered, shaping the reader's or viewer's perception and understanding of the narrative text. Thus, it is an effective means of "subjectifying the story" (Bal, *Narratology* 66). It is the primary tool by which a narrative becomes subjective and invites the reader into a more immersive experience. By adopting different focalizing perspectives, the narrative allows the readers to access different characters' thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. This not only humanizes the characters, it also elicits a subjective and sympathetic response from the readers. How focalization functions in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind* with the purpose of making the readers sympathetic to the characters will

[1] Maria Gertrudis or "Mieke" Bal is a Professor of Literary Theory at the University of Amsterdam. Her book, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, has provided insight into narrative texts, both literary and non-literary since its first publication in 1985.

be discussed. Lastly, the problematic representation of African American characters and the responses of many prominent African American critics and writers such as James Baldwin and Toni Morrison to these novels will be explored.

Chapter 2 attempts to offer an insight into Kara Walker's installations, and how they function as counter-narratives to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind.* The Museum of Modern Arts describes installations "an art form that comprises visual elements in any medium and the space they inhabit" ("Installation"). It is a powerful and transformative medium because it gives the artist the ability to engage the senses of the viewers, and invite them into immersive experiences. Through its ability to transform spaces and provoke emotional responses, installation art transports the viewers into a different realm. In her installations, Walker tries to transport her viewers back in time to the post-Civil War America through the use of silhouettes and cycloramas so that they can experience a period when slavery was still in practice. Silhouette art was a popular medium to create portraits in the eighteenth and nineteenth century as it offered a relatively quick and affordable alternative to "more complex forms of portraiture" (Knipe 207). However, they were not only preferred by common people but also physiognomists, who claimed to assess a person's character or personality from their outer appearance—especially the characteristics of their face. They used silhouettes as a tool for "racial profiling," attributing inferiority to African people because of their physical characteristics during the antebellum period (Shaw 22). Therefore, the form is complicit in scientific racism as well. On the other hand, cycloramas which gained popularity as a form of entertainment in the mid-nineteenth century, were large panoramic paintings displayed on the inside of a cylindrical structure. The subject of these panoramic paintings varied widely, ranging from historical events and famous battles to natural landscapes and exotic locations (Ellis). Walker appropriates these forms so as to transport viewers back to the times when they were popular. In this way, her counter-narration to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind* is supported by the art forms that were their contemporaries. Through form, Walker also confuses viewers. Silhouettes are black, so in theory, viewers should not be able to distinguish who is black or white, but the physical characteristics as well as their clothes give silhouettes' race away, implying that the color line can never be blurred. Also, because of the blank form of silhouettes, viewers can never tell the emotions. Whether these silhouettes are in pain or enjoying these bizarre or

horrific acts is not clear, and there is no way of knowing. Here, Walker reclaims agency physically as she cuts out these silhouettes and pastes them on museum walls herself. She also confuses the viewers further by referring to the two novels in the titles of her installations and building up their expectations that they will see something familiar, and presenting them with disturbing scenes that do not exist in these novels.

Kara Walker's art is often labeled as post-Black because of the way she deals with the problematic history of slavery, along with her individual experience as a contemporary African American woman artist. Post-Black is a controversial term that some artists born after the Civil Rights Movement choose to identify with. They reject the artistic conventions established by the Black Arts Movement (BAM), which started as an outgrowth of Black nationalism in the 1960s when Black American artists started to reject "their longstanding cultural invisibility" in art institutions (Doss 193). They led protests against mainstream museums that did not include black artists who, in turn, formed their own art collectives and museums. This movement was not only about the lack of representation, it was also about what was "chosen" to be represented:

> In the beginning these national black art exhibits were selected by white art authorities and criticized by white art critics. Invariably the black artist fitting into the current "American art scene" is praised and back-patted while any artist deviating towards meaning for a black audience is condemned as "primitive, social or political." (Cattlet 11-12)

However, Black artists did not want to feel obliged to obey certain rules created by white dominated art institutions in order to be represented in them. Black art movement was born out of this need of Black artists to express themselves and be included in the art institutions even if what they produced might have been perceived as primitive, social or political. When the mainstream museums refused to do that on the basis that their work was dissenting to the American art scene, the Black artists chose to make their voices heard.

In 1969, an exhibition called *Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America* was organized by Metropolitan Museum of Art, which excluded the artists from Harlem and their artworks. Many artists from Harlem thought that the decision of this mainstream art museum not to "engage Harlem's art community" was a result of "patronizing

discriminatory racial politics," against which they protested strongly (Cooks 6). Wearing sandwich boards and carrying signs with messages such as "Tricky Tom at it Again?" "That's White of Hoving!," "Harlem on whose mind?," "Whose image of whom?," "On the Auction Block Again – Sold Out by Massa Hoving," and "Visit the Metropolitan Museum of Photography" (because the MET museum's exhibit only featured photographs) and distributing leaflets in front of the museum (Cooks 23-24). Meanwhile, the Studio Museum in Harlem responded to the Whitney Museum excluding Black artists from *The 1930s: Painting and Sculpture in America* exhibition, they started their own exhibition called *Invisible Americans: Black Artists of '3*0 (Compagnon). These efforts were to gain visibility in a white dominated art world and bring Black art into prominence as a movement. Within the BAM, Black women artists created so many important artworks and made themselves visible to the American public in the 1970s. For their identity politics, they employed different strategies and media. In 1972, Betye Saar created an iconic assemblage called *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima* for Black Heroes Exhibition. Aunt Jemima is a pancake brand which until very recently featured a black female character that was based on the Mammy stereotype on its box. Saar has multiple Aunt Jemimas in her assemblage. The background is tiled with Aunt Jemima pictures from the pancake mix boxes; in the middle there is an Aunt Jemima cookie jar figurine, holding a broom with one hand and a rifle with the other. In front of her, there is another Aunt Jemima portrayed in a picture holding a white baby, but there is a Black Power fist in front of her. The assemblage is placed on a bed of cotton. This artwork had so many implications on racial stereotypes. To begin with, the Mammy stereotype was still present at the time, in many films that featured "a large Black woman who worked in the kitchen [that] was always present but occasionally given a line to speak" and on popular TV shows (Cliff 39). The cookie jar figurine alludes to this as well because historically, her place is the kitchen belonging to a white family. In white people's minds, she is "a memory of belonging to someone else, of being at the service of someone else" (Cliff 39). However, in this artwork, she transforms Aunt Jemima from being an object into a subject. With the rifle and the Black fist and "as a warrior" against both physical violence and violence caused by "derogatory stereotypes and imagery," it is evident that Aunt Jemima will liberate herself ("Betye Saar").

Faith Ringgold is another important Black woman artist who created twenty paintings between 1963 and 1967 that she called *American People Series* (Smith 123). Her style at first was "super realism" because she felt that it was fit for her paintings, which were a direct response to the political climate which led to a feeling of ambivalence both for her and her contemporaries in a "period of dramatic social upheaval" (Smith 123). Ringgold switched from painting to quilting as a medium, which is quite traditional. She is well-known for her story quilts which blur the fine and folk art distinction, and they make viewers focus on an artistic medium that is "fully associated with women's work" (Smith 122). In fact, Ringgold learned quilt making from her mother who was a seamstress. In *Who is Afraid of Aunt Jemima?*, which is her first story quilt, she retells Aunt Jemima's story in a quilt consisting of fifty-six squares that include paintings of human figures, quilted fabric, and handwritten texts. In a video, she informs the viewer that she "rewrote the whole story" and in her story Aunt Jemima "is an entrepreneur and fabulous" ("Faith Ringgold: Artist & Activist"). Similar to Saar's work, she rescues Aunt Jemima from being an object into a success story through a medium that is not considered high art. In a sense, she is challenging many norms of the art world.

Both Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold are examples of women artists that appropriated and resisted against the stereotypes by retelling Aunt Jemima's story in a different way. They are against her portrayal by white people and offer their own interpretation. For this generation of African American woman artists, art is quite political and made for resistance while the next generation of African American woman artists such as Carrie Mae Weems, Ellen Gallagher, Renee Cox, Allison Saar, and Kara Walker have benefitted from the inroads made by their predecessors, so their representation of their experience, identity, and history within American culture are different. This results from the fact that they were born after the 1960s, and many fights regarding civil liberties had already been fought for and won. Consequently, their experience with race is different. This ultimately led to a shift from identity politics associated with the BAM towards a more inclusive approach, which is called post-Blackness. Before delving further into post-Blackness and what it entails, it is important to briefly discuss the implications of "post-" as a prefix. The first and most evident meaning of the prefix is temporal, referring to a time after a specific situation or an event. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the prefix

experienced an expansion in the meaning in the mid-twentieth century when it started to be used for different movements such as “post-national” or “post-racial,” and now it also has the meaning of “belonging to a time in which the specified concept has become unimportant or irrelevant” (“Word of the Year”). Post-Black also implies such transformation, seeing that the movement not only happened after the BAM, but also rejected the relevance of it with regards to the Black experience in the late twentieth century. Similar to the artists belonging to the BAM, post-Black artists are also “intensely cognizant of the legacies of slavery and the systematic patterns of anti-black racism that have grown out of it,” yet they do not subscribe the “melancholic historicism” that demands “persistent affective identification with the past” and welds “the present inextricably to the collective trauma of slavery,” which is quite different from the former group (Ashe and Saal 8). Post-Black artists seek to transcend the limitations and expectations of the BAM to conform to preconceived notions of art. Paul C. Taylor explains that for these artists, “the traditional meanings of blackness” are too confining as they live in an era where “new forms of black identity that are multiple, fluid, and profoundly contingent, along with newly sophisticated understandings of race and identity” (626). This quote signals a shift from identity politics associated with the BAM, which is a tenet of post-Blackness. Post-black artists do not feel the necessity to focus on race or conform to specific themes or styles; they aim to explore a wider range of subject matter than what the BAM allows.

In this thesis, only two of Kara Walker’s early installations will be examined: *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* and *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart*, which from this point on will be referred to as *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*. These installations are about her own experience with the two famous American novels, which constitutes the starting point for creating their counter-narratives through her art. Seeing that these two novels are canonical works whose fame has permeated their time, it would not be wrong to call them master narratives. Joseph Stephens and Robyn McCallum define master narratives, or sometimes also called meta-narrative, as a cultural agent ordering and explaining “knowledge and experience” in a “global or totalizing” fashion (6). In both novels, though different from one another, the reader is given a picture

of the American society when slavery still existed. What is similar, however, is that there are roles ascribed to slaves, their characteristics are overgeneralized, and they are only allowed to exist in certain categories. The popularity of these novels in American society shows their potential as master narratives that have the power to create and consolidate false representations of African Americans:

> One of the key functions of master narratives is that they offer people a way of identifying what is assumed to be a normative experience. In this way, such storylines serve as a blueprint for all stories; they become the vehicle through which we comprehend not only the stories of others, but crucially of ourselves as well. For ultimately, the power of master narratives derives from their internalization. Wittingly or unwittingly, we become the stories we know, and the master narrative is reproduced. (Andrews 1)

Therefore, it is not surprising that, as master narratives, these two novels have been criticized for reinforcing the African American stereotypes in the American psyche. A strategy for dealing with problematic master narratives is creating counter-narratives, which is an act of creating an alternative or opposing narrative which challenges or criticizes a master narrative. It is not simply a response but retelling of a story from a different perspective that is misrepresented or unrepresented in the original narrative. Counter-narration is necessary for the oppressed to construct their place in society because master narratives "provide the frame and the material to form one's own identity narrative, serving as the ready-made option" (Mclean and Syed 325). Master narratives act as templates that guide people on how to live and belong. The problem arises when they legitimize the inferiority of a certain group and keep its members in place. In her book *Damaged Identities, Narrative Repair* (2001), Hilde Lindemann Nelson writes that counter-narratives are "tools designed to repair the damage inflicted on identities by abusive power systems" because they aim to resist "the stories that identify certain groups of people as targets for ill treatment" (xiii). It should be kept in mind that to be a counter-narrative, an artwork needs to be a narrative first. For this reason, in this chapter, the qualities that make Walker's installations narratives will be discussed and an analysis of each installation will be provided. How they function as counter-narratives to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind* by means of playing with the expectations of the viewers will be discussed. The familiarity that the viewers have with these novels lead to certain expectations on their part when they visit Walker's *Gone* and *The End of Uncle Tom*. They expect to see familiar plot elements or characters but what they get instead is

the grotesque black silhouettes on the white walls of the museum that disturb them deeply. Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw who wrote *Seeing the Unspeakable: The Art of Kara Walker* (2001) and curated many of her exhibitions wrote about seeing *The End of Uncle Tom* for the first time:

> Many of my fellow gallery visitors stood before the piece, jaws slack and eyes wide, staring in puzzled disbelief at what they were seeing, or at least at what they thought were seeing. I, too, was stunned by the graphic nature of the piece … It was a moment of communal visuality in which the act of viewing within the space of the gallery became a spectacular spectacle, a cyclical scopic activity in which museum patrons watched other museum patrons watching them back. (1)

The viewers are shocked and perplexed, implying that the installation is visually striking and evokes strong responses from the viewers. They are in puzzled disbelief because their expectations are challenged, and they are faced with unfamiliar and unconventional imagery. The installation simply provokes them but they cannot figure out how. Within the installation, viewers also become a spectacle as they look at each other in addition to looking at the artwork. It is a communal experience because viewers react to the installation together, which adds intensity to the experience that this installation creates. Indeed, installation art is different from other forms of art in that the viewer needs to enter into and interact with it, making it a physical experience and at the same time eliciting a psychological response just as exemplified above by Shaw. This interactive element of installation art blurs the boundaries between the artwork and viewers, making them an integral part of the overall experience. In other words, viewers complete the artwork.

Walker's installations problematize the novels as well as the accounts of the authors that had the agency to write them. Both Harriet Beecher Stowe and Margaret Mitchell were white women who were outsiders to the experience of slavery; yet, they both believed that they had the agency to represent slavery in their books. Walker reclaims the agency to tell her own account of history. In her installations, it is possible to see the horrifying aspects of slavery that elude the novels of Stowe and Mitchell. Walker, as an African American woman, takes the power of dominant narrative that is used to describe her and subverts it. She goes from the object to the subject with agency. This re-telling or counter-narrating in the setting of a museum is significant since it is an official place associated with the role of preserving the cultural memory. The novels' account of history, although

it is unfair for African Americans, is challenged and undermined through her installations' explicit reference to them. For the spectator, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is no longer simply an anti-slavery novel; *Gone with the Wind* is not simply a representation of personal troubles of Scarlett O'Hara in times of war. The installations disturb the spectators on two levels: by their grotesque nature and by positioning them as spectators to the horrible acts, unable to act. They make the spectators feel complicit.

Kara Walker's installations function as counter-narratives that challenge the viewers to critically engage with the original narratives that shape American collective memory, which have perpetuated racism, inequality, and stereotypes. Indeed, Walker not only offers a more truthful and painful account of history but also problematizes the representation of African Americans in the iconic texts by Stowe and Mitchell. The fact that she is able to do so with such direct and horrifying imagery, unafraid of the controversy, makes her installations powerful and unique.

CHAPTER 1
THE NOVELS

1.1. *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*

Uncle Tom's Cabin was written in a period when abolitionism was a hot debate. The abolitionist movement was not a concerted effort since not every state was willing to provide freedom and equality for the slaves. This was especially the case for the Southern states where slavery was an indispensable source of free labor. For them, slaves were an investment rather than people. In order to relegate their slaves to a non-human status, the Southern slave owners were adamant on putting the blame on biology rather than themselves. As Franz Fanon explains that it is a strategy:

> This is how they have been able to tell themselves that "the black man makes all the animals behave like a lower order of human intelligence, the kind that the Negro himself can understand. The black man naturally feels that he is in closer touch with the 'lower animals' than with the white man, who is so far superior to him in every respect." (174)

The general tendency towards slavery in the South were in accordance with the sentiment above; however, for a small group of people in the North, it was becoming unacceptable. They demanded abolition, which was considered to be "an unpopular, minority cause" championed by people who were thought to be "dangerous, unsavory" and "trouble-making radicals" that did not have a place in "polite social circles" (Wolff 596). One of these radical groups in the North was, in fact, Quakers, whose abolitionist stance was nothing new. Their activism dated as far back as 1688, which was when "Germantown Quaker Petition Against Slavery" was issued by the German Quakers in Pennsylvania. This was the first petition of its kind, an evidence of the Quakers' abolitionist stance since the late seventeenth century. They were known for their explicit support to this cause.

In time, however, more and more people joined the plea for abolition in the North. Abolitionism as an organized effort started when The American Anti-slavery Society was formed in 1833. This was a key political issue in the nineteenth century, and there was no

agreement about it. The timeline for abolition was not the same for many states in the North. For instance, Massachusetts took a radical approach and declared all men equal during the Revolution in 1780, whereas the other Northern states, especially those that had a commercial interest in slavery, introduced gradual emancipation. For the pro-slavery Southern states, however, abolition would happen reluctantly only after losing the Civil War in 1865.

As slavery became more ingrained into the American psyche, a small group of people in the North started to question whether it could morally or democratically be justified. They were no longer sure whether it was in accordance with the American moral principles. One of the reasons why they started doubting the legitimacy of slavery was religion. While only a small number of groups from different denominations were strictly abolitionists, their clergymen were passionately preaching about the impossibility of slavery compatible with Christianity in any form. Evangelicalism, for instance, put forward that God granted every individual, including slaves, moral ability and free will but slavery "stood as an obstacle to salvation" because it "deprived its victims of unhindered use of these powers" (McKivigan 21). Once defined as a sin, the only way to repent was immediate emancipation. Many abolitionists were also questioning the role of the church in sustaining it because many clergymen were wary of championing such a controversial cause as abolition. In 1846, Albert Barnes, who was a Presbyterian minister supporting abolitionist cause, stressed the role and power of churches held that could end slavery:

> Let the time come when, in all the mighty denominations of Christians, it can be announced that the evil is ceased with them forever; and let the voice of each denomination be lifted up in kind, but firm and solemn testimony against the system-with no mealy words, with no attempt at apology, with no wish to blink at it, with no effort to throw the sacred shield of religion over so great an evil-and the work is done … There is no power *out* of the church that could sustain slavery an hour, if it were not sustained *in* it. (qtd. in McKivigan 7)

Barnes' call for action for the Christians to stand against such an evil as slavery was echoed by many other abolitionists from different denominations. They demanded their churches to take an antislavery stand instead of protecting "the interests of slaveholders" as they believed that different denominations "not only tolerated but in some ways even

condoned the practice of slavery" (McKivigan 23). This simply was incompatible with the principles of Christianity.

Another reason for the rise of the abolitionist movement in the North was the increase in the readership of slave narratives. While such narratives had already been in circulation since the late eighteenth century, during the abolitionist movement their popularity peaked. These texts, either written by the former slaves themselves or orally narrated to somebody else in order to be written down and published, were the accounts of former slaves' rite of passage to freedom. They wrote about violence and humiliation they experienced during their enslavement in detail. As they were the narratives of real people, readers did not question their objectivity. Questioning the truthfulness of the author was not a primary concern since so many slave narratives painted the same horrid picture of slavery anyway. The same kind of torturous treatment from slave owners and difficult journey towards freedom was explained again and again, just in different sentences by different authors. The experience was the same and ultimately, its authenticity could not be denied.

Slave narratives were not only a form of self-representation for the former slaves, but also a means for the white readers to get the other side of the story. No longer could the evils of slavery be swept under the rug because of these stories from the South. These stories also showed that Black people were humans and had feelings, just like the reader. They were not content about being kept in captivity, being tortured, being given away like an object or having their children taken away from them. They tried to escape at any cost. These narratives falsified the presumptions of white men about slaves being content with the care they received or needing somebody because they were not quite human. Also, being pious did not make slave masters less cruel. In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, published in 1845, the cruel treatment of a pious master towards a disabled female slave called Henny was described by Douglass:

> I have seen him tie up a lame young woman, and whip her with a heavy cowskin upon her naked shoulders, causing the warm red blood to drip; and, … would keep this lacerated young woman tied up in this horrid situation four or five hours at a time. I have known him to tie her up early in the morning, and whip her before breakfast; leave her, go to his store, return at dinner, and whip her again, cutting her in the places already made raw with his cruel lash. The secret of master's cruelty

> toward "Henny" is found in the fact of her being almost helpless … She was to master a bill of expense; and as he was a mean man, she was a constant offence to him. He seemed desirous of getting the poor girl out of existence … Master Thomas was one of the many pious slaveholders who hold slaves for the very charitable purpose of taking care of them. (Douglass 46)

On the very same page, Douglass went on to explain that his master would find passages from the Scripture so as to justify his whipping of Henny. Deemed to be nothing but an expense, her master could treat her in any way he wanted. Reading such a passage full of suffering with no cause made it impossible for the reader not to feel any sort of sympathy towards Henny. It was obvious that she would go through the same cycle of torture again and again until she died. It was also obvious that it was not only her, but also Douglass and many other slaves who went through the same experience. Upon reading many more gut-wrenching instances of such inhumane treatment, the readers from the North could no longer stay impartial to slavery. Slave narratives gave them an insight to the painful and humiliating life slaves suffered at the hands of cruel masters. They consolidated their idea that there was simply no moral or religious explanation that could make such suffering acceptable any more.

To make matters worse, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1950 brought about harsher rules and implications both for slaves who wanted their freedom and abolitionists who helped them to get it. This new version of the act made it compulsory for all citizens to help in capturing slaves that ran away, and even rewarded the government officers that were successful. Slave-hunters were allowed to capture slaves without a due process. In other words, slaves were not given fair treatment by the law as they had no citizen rights. While this act was put forward by Southern states in order to protect the institution, it did not work quite as they expected. Conversely, this act "furthered the antislavery cause" as "the draconian new law created new abolitionists in higher numbers than the slaves it returned to the South" (Ricks 219). For many abolitionists, implementing this law was the same as kidnapping in which they had to play a part even though they did not believe in the cause. In this era of resistance, women played a very important role by doing what they could, which included writing petitions, articles or even fiction that influenced the public opinion in favor of abolition.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, came from a family that was well-known for their evangelical piety and social activism. Stowe's father, Lyman Beecher and her brother Henry Ward Beecher were evangelical ministers who had a vision of a "Protestant, middle-class New England" that would act "as a stand-in for an idealized America … representing the best of republican values" (Robbins 2). Her sister, Catherine Beecher, believed in the responsibility of women in this idealized vision of America. For this reason, she was an advocate for women's education and founded Litchfield Female Academy where Harriet Beecher Stowe also worked at before getting married. Catherine Beecher wrote extensively about the role of women in raising children that would shape American society in the future. The emphasis on what women could do at home that would shape the whole nation was a novel idea of the nineteenth century called "true womanhood". The idea of "true womanhood" became prevalent among white Protestant middle and upper-class women exclusively. According to this new form of femininity, a true woman was a "protectress of religion" as well as the "civilized society" since she was considered "innately superior to men when it came to virtue" (Cruea 188). Women stayed in their spheres as mothers and wives whereas men played their part in expanding and industrializing the nation. Harriet Beecher Stowe and her elder sister Catherine Beecher were proponents of this ideology. They wrote about the duties of women and function of "home," which is not a shelter for protection against changing times:

> The image of the home created by Stowe and Beecher in their treatise on domestic science is in no sense a shelter from the stormy blast of economic and political life, a haven from reality divorced from fact which allows the machinery of industrial capitalism to grind on; it is conceived as a dynamic center of activity, physical and spiritual, economic and moral, whose influence spreads out in ever-widening circles. (Tompkins 145)

Since home was a center of activity in terms of cultural production and protection, "true women" had the most important task of making sure that moral and social values of society were protected. Women's role in the changing nation was just as significant as that of men; it just took place at home. As mothers, they were to bring up the prospective members of society. Therefore, motherhood was a powerful tool.

The proponents of the idea of true womanhood believed that "maternal selflessness" was the source of nation's wellbeing, and that motherhood was an "activity built around service to others" since mothers were responsible for educating citizens of the merging nation to be hardworking and self-disciplined as well as virtuous and concerned with the common good of the nation (DuBois and Dumenil 257). These women did not work for wages; however, their calling was special as they were selflessly working towards protecting the moral virtues of American society in the face of expansion and industrial change. To this end, they had to correct the social ills, leading to their involvement in the abolitionist movement. As a "true woman", it is not surprising that Harriet Beecher Stowe felt the need to write for this cause given her family's involvement in it, along with the social climate calling women to action. As a true woman, Stowe's standing is clear: she demands not only self-criticism, but also compassion from both Northern and Southern readers.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was a work of fiction that aimed to generate understanding and compassion from white people both in the North and South so as to have them reflect on their standing regarding slavery. It made use of the ideas of family, motherhood, and religion, all of which were relatable for the reader, making it impossible to resist the message of the novel.

1.1.1. Narration in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe is considered to be one of the greatest examples of sentimental literature. As a sentimental novel, it aims to evoke empathy in readers through emotional appeal and moral messages to shape the public perception regarding abolition. There is a plentitude of heart-wrenching scenes of separation, suffering, and sacrifice in the novel, which elicits emotions from its readership. The reason why the novel achieves to do that is because of the narrative strategies that sentimental novel genre allows. In this genre, it is possible to exploit "the reader's capacity for tenderness, compassion, or sympathy to a disproportionate degree by presenting a beclouded or unrealistic view of its subject" ("Sentimental Novel"). The

narrator of a sentimental novel will use sentimental tropes to have the readership invest in the novel emotionally.

The story starts on a winter day in 1850s, in Shelby family home in Kentucky, with an uncomfortable conversation between Mr. Shelby, and the slave trader Dan Haley. It is understood that Mr. Shelby has to sell his slave Tom in order to pay off his debts. While Mr. Haley is talking about getting another slave at the expense of Mr. Shelby's debt, a toddler named Harry runs in the room. Harry is the son of Eliza and George Harris, both of whom are slaves. Mr. Haley is interested in buying Harry as well because he believes that Harry will be very profitable in the slave market due to his fair skin. This is the point of no return for all of the characters. Tom is sold and his journey to the South begins. Eliza, on the other hand, flees the household in hopes of arriving in Canada so that she and his child will be free. Thus, the risk of family separation is present from the very first page onwards. The novel emphasizes the primacy of familial bonds. The possibility of them being broken is the reason for "Stowe's moral indictment of slavery," and the notion of family and its loss becomes "the bridge by which the reader can cross over to the inner world of the slave" (Riss 525). After Tom and Harry's sale, the readers learn that Eliza lost two infant children before; thus, they can understand how precious her son is to her just like it would be for any mother. The slave catchers chase Eliza, who has to physically run away in the cold carrying a child. When she reaches the Ohio River, it seems like the end for her, seeing that she cannot cross on foot and is about to be caught. However, in one of the most graphic and nerve-wracking scenes in the novel, she skips from one ice slab to another in the river instinctively. Miraculously, she crosses the river carrying Harry, which normally would only be possible on a boat. She becomes a "symbol of female peril and endangerment" as her maternal love gives her the strength to defeat the cold and desolation as she jumps from one chunk of ice to another shoeless and bleeding (Bloom 25). The narrator describes this impossible escape in vivid detail:

> The huge green fragment of ice on which she alighted pitched and creaked as her weight came upon it, but she staid there not a moment. With wild cries and desperate energy she leaped to another and still another cake; stumbling — leaping — slipping — springing upwards again! Her shoes are gone — her cut from her feet — while blood marked every step; but she saw nothing, felt nothing. (Stowe 61)

This scene garners a lot of sympathy for Eliza as a mother who will do anything, even risk her and her child's life, in order not to lose him forever. After escaping and crossing the Ohio River, they end up desolate at Senator Bryd's doorstep. To have Mrs.Bryd understand her predicament, Eliza asks her whether she has lost a child. In fact, her toddler died a month ago. Therefore, she can sympathize with Eliza who is faced with the risk of losing her child. Mrs. Boyd, as an ideal "True Woman" of her time, cannot turn a blind eye to these so-called fugitives being handed over to be separated and sold because she understands the irreplaceable bond between a mother and a child. She goes so far as to give the clothes of her deceased child to Harry. Mrs. Bryd, a white woman, empathizes with Eliza who is a slave; in turn, the readers emphasize with both women and understand why Eliza has to escape. In the novel, there are a lot of mothers who lost their children, too. Their despair is made evident by the narrator. It is also clear that not even a Christian community can replace the biological family. This is understood when Eliza and Harry then are taken to a Quaker settlement known for helping slaves escape. This settlement is led by Rachel Halliday, who is referred to as "mother" and her husband Simeon Halliday, who is referred to as "father." Together, in their settlement, they have created an alternative form of family in which they take care of those who need them. The members of this alternative family are bonded through Christianity. What unites them is the possibility of being a universal family in which biological relations are secondary; however, this can only be "an inadequate temporal family" as it can never replace the actual biological relations even if the Quaker community is sincere about accepting everyone into "its egalitarian family circle" (Riss 532-533). For this reason, even when Eliza is told that she is free to stay in this family forever, she refuses to do. She decides to go to Canada and find her husband George, who is her real family. Eventually, they are miraculously reunited in the Halliday household as George is notified of his family's location by Quakers helping him escape. Finally, as a family, they travel to Canada to be free. While Eliza's journey is a lucky one and she is not separated from her son, not every mother is afforded the same chance. The narrator painstakingly explains the process of family separation that slavery causes through the purchases of Mr. Haley, who is Tom's new owner. He buys a teenage boy whose old mother begs him to buy her as well. However, since she is too old and of no use to him, he refuses to buy her. She laments and questions her fate: "Couldn't dey leave me one? Mas'r allers said I should have

one,—he did" (Stowe 124). From her laments, readers can gather that he was her last child and she was promised that she could at least keep one child of hers. However, this promise has no bearing in the slave market and her last child is taken away from her as well. Then, Mr. Haley buys a young slave woman with an infant but then sells the infant when the mother is sleeping. Rather than accepting what happened, the woman jumps into water to commit suicide. For Mr. Haley, this is just bad luck as he loses an asset that he paid for. The readers understand that separation is always on the cards in slave trade and that slave owners falsely believe that they are just buying or selling assets without any moral repercussions. Instead, there is so much suffering experienced both by mothers and children in slavery.

Apart from the bond between the mother and the child, another sentimental trope used by the narrator is Christianity and its values such as forgiveness, being accepting and caring for others. Eva St. Augustine, who is the six year old daughter of Tom's second owner, is an angelic child. It is evident that Eva is adored by everyone around her as she has an "undulating and aerial grace" as if she is "a mythic and allegorical being" (Stowe 149). The narrator presents the disapproval of Eva's mother regarding her child's loving nature towards everyone, even the slaves:

> Eva always was disposed to be with servants; and I think that well enough with some children. Now, I always played with father's little Negroes—it never did me any harm. But Eva somehow always seems to put herself on an equality with every creature that comes near her. It's a strange thing about the child. I never have been able to break her of it. (Stowe 175-176)

She is extremely emphatic to slaves' feelings. When her Mammy, who is also her mother's maid, is ill, she volunteers to take her place but is rebuffed by her mother. When Topsy, an unruly slave child, is bought by her father to teach a lesson to her cousin Miss Ophelia, Eva is the only one that is truly kind to her. Through Eva's kindness, Topsy transforms into a well-behaved child and she even becomes a missionary when she grows up. Eva also has a special connection with Tom as both of them are very pious. She reads the Bible to him as he cannot read and Tom sings hymns to her. Reading the Bible together was an act that ascribed intricate inner lives to Black slaves during a period when a significant portion of Americans viewed them as nothing more "than beasts of burden" (Fuller 48). In time, Tom becomes indispensable to the household, manages the finances

with total honesty, and tries to help his master find his faith in Christianity. In a dramatic turn of events, Eva becomes ill, withers away and dies in a short period of time. Her father also dies shortly after in an accident. The ideal Christian family is shattered in such coincidental and drastic deaths; when the readers believe that Tom found a family in which he will be truly happy, he is sold to slavery once again and this time to an extremely cruel master.

Another sentimental trope used by the narrator is the cruelty and dehumanization caused by slavery. This is especially evident in the last part of the novel can be aptly named as the beginning of the end for Uncle Tom. He is auctioned off at the New Orleans slave market, the conditions of which do not seem foul. This is because men became adept at sinning expertly and genteelly so that they do not offend or shock respectable society members. In this slave market, it is possible to

> find an abundance of husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, and young children, to be "sold separately, or in lots to suit the convenience of the purchaser;" and that soul immortal, once bought with blood and anguish by the Son of God, when the earth shook, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, can be sold, leased, mortgaged, exchanged for groceries or dry goods, to suit the phases of trade, or the fancy of the purchaser. (Stowe 333)

The passage above stresses the fact that what is being bought and sold in this market is not mere goods, they are immortal souls; a fact which is conveniently ignored by those benefitting from this trade. In this market, readers are introduced to Susan and Emmeline, mother and daughter who were devoted servants of a kind and devout lady from New Orleans, who personally taught them "the truths of religion" (Stowe 336). Simon Legree, a prospective buyer, gropes and run his hands over Emmeline so as to check her condition as if she were an animal. Readers know that Emmeline is pious and this is extremely upsetting to read. Then, when a bidder tries to buy them together in order not to separate a mother and daughter, Simon Legree outbids and purchases Emmeline to be used for his own pleasure. Readers are immediately repelled by his character and lack of morals. He also buys Tom and together, they head to a large plantation where all slaves are miserable.

On this plantation, all slaves are worked to a state of mental and physical exhaustion picking cotton. At the end of the day, how much cotton they have picked are weighed and

those who do not meet Legree's standards are whipped. In these ruthless conditions, slaves do what they can to survive. When Tom helps an elderly slave woman by giving her what he has picked, Legree notices and asks Tom to whip the woman and become a slave driver. By having another slave overseeing others' work and rewarding him, Legree creates animosity among his slaves where one cannot trust another. Legree is always trying to break his slaves' spirits and denote them to a non-human status by constant humiliation and violence. Tom refuses to do so; consequently, he is whipped and beaten but refuses to bow down to his master. Even while he is being beaten down, with blood on his face he says: "[M]y soul an't yours, Mas'r! You haven't bought it,—ye can't buy it! It's been bought and paid for, by one that is able to keep it;—no matter, no matter, you can't harm me!" (Stowe 366). Tom's time on this plantation is almost like sainthood; he is beaten down; his faith is constantly tested but he never stops believing. Just like Christ, Tom will bear the burden placed on him and restore others' faith on this plantation. One of these people is Cassy, who is now replaced by Emmeline. Cassy was very similar to Emmeline at the beginning; like her, she is mixed and was raised to be religious. Forced to be Legree's companion and bearing children for him made her lose her faith. Readers are informed that all of her children are taken away from her except for the last one, whom she poisons so that he will not be sold into slavery. From then on, she goes half-mad and is feared by everyone on the plantation, even by Legree to a certain degree. She respects Tom and listens to him. Eventually, her faith is restored and she makes a plan to escape with Cassy. They become successful and it is revealed that Cassy is actually Eliza's mother. They are reunited in Canada. However, Tom does not have a happy ending. When Cassy and Emmeline escape, he is questioned by Legree. When he refuses to give any information, he is tortured to death. He does not fight back, accepting what is to come. His death is "as much political as religious" even though he is "pure and powerless" he has to die so that the powerful and corrupt can be saved (Tompkins 127-128).

The readers are further shocked in another twist when George Shelby, who is the son of Shelby family that was Tom's first owners, comes to rescue Tom but is too late. Tom dies when he arrives; he is only able to say a few sentences to his beloved former master. Tom's death is symbolic as it is not only a tragedy but also a "definite demonstration of social corruption" as slavery is unwilling to tolerate a good person when he is also black"

(Wolff 611). A man like Tom cannot survive as he is under harsh and inhumane conditions of slavery. Choosing to stay pious and moral only leads to his downfall, which he willingly accepts. His death moves those around him; George Shelby, who is now the owner of his father's plantation in Kentucky, frees all of his slaves and offers them equal share and payment. Cassy's faith is restored. Even Sambo and Quimbo, who are slaves that enjoy being slave drivers and inflicting pain on other slaves including Tom, repent and beg for his forgiveness as he is dying. By sacrificing himself, he affects characters in the novel and its readers deeply.

It is not only the tropes of sentimental novel that grabs the readers' attention. The narrator is a commanding force that makes the readers interested as well. The novel has an external narrator because the narrator does not refer to himself or herself as a character in the novel (Bal, *Narratology* 13). The narrator acts as a witness. For example, when the narrator is describing Eliza, he or she claims to describe her from memory because they "saw her, years ago, in Kentucky" (Stowe 11). This gives the narrator legitimacy since unsuspecting readers might feel that the narrator knows the characters in real life; therefore, he or she must be telling the truth. The act of witnessing can "convey compassion or other affective responses to the reader" or alternatively "influence the veracity of the narrative" (Bal, *Narratology* 20). Both of these functions work in the favor of the narrator; the readers can feel the emotion that is intended for them to feel or believe that they are being told the truth.

According to Robyn R. Warhol, the narrator of the novel assumes the role of a preacher who seeks "to arouse the egocentric feelings" of the readers to that they can "project those feelings into compassion for actual slaves" (815). For instance, the narrator describes the moment when Tom looks at his children for the last time as they are sleeping:

> Sobs, heavy, hoarse and loud, shook the chair, and great tears fell through his fingers on the floor; just such tears, sir, as you dropped into the coffin where lay your first-born son; such tears, woman, as you shed when you heard the cries of your dying babe. For, sir, he was a man,—and you are but another man. And, woman, though dressed in silk and jewels, you are but a woman, and, in life's great straits and mighty griefs, ye feel but one sorrow! (Stowe 40)

The narrator is not merely explaining Tom's feelings here. He or she is also asking the readers to put themselves in Tom's shoes and remember the death of their first-born son and the tears they shed into the coffin as they said their goodbyes. It is understood that Tom will never see his children again, just as the readers will not see their imagined children once the coffin is buried. The narrator does not just ask the readers to sympathize with Tom, he or she commands them to imagine such a terrible scenario as their child's death and basically tells them how to feel. For the narrator, the readers need to feel just as devastated as Tom does.

There are frequent insertions in the text coming from the narrator. These insertions are messages that often involve a direct call of action for the reader. At times, the narrator does not refrain from interjecting with his or her own thoughts:

> Liberty!— electric word! What is it? Is there anything more in it than a name— a rhetorical flourish? Why, men and women of America, does your heart's blood thrill at that word, for which your fathers bled, and your braver mothers were willing that their noblest and best should die? (Stowe 392)

This interjection does not have anything to do with what is being narrated at that point. George and Eliza Harris are already in Canada and free. Although this kind of non-narrative comment at first might seem displaced, Bal believes that through such non-narrative comments, the narrator can make ideological statements and convey "the text's overt ideology" (*Narratology* 23). In this quotation, the narrator points at the hypocritical nature of being excited for liberty when not every member of the society is allowed to experience it. This points to the abolitionist ideology that the narrator is fully in support of.

Dawn Coleman writes that the majority of the narratorial interventions in the text "borrow directly from the conventions of preaching" and are written "in the sermonic mode" (272). Often times, the narrator assumes the preacher role while directly addressing the reader:

> Patience! patience! ye whose hearts swell indignant at wrongs like these. Not one throb of anguish, not one tear of the oppressed, is forgotten by the Man of Sorrows, the Lord of Glory. In his patient, generous bosom he bears the anguish of a world. Bear thou, like him, in patience, and labor in love; for sure as he is God, "the year of his redeemed *shall* come." (Stowe 134)

This consolation coming from the narrator is almost like a passage from the Bible. Coleman calls it one of the most blunt "sermonic narratorial interventions" of the nineteenth century fiction as it "incorporates repetitive theological diction, the parallelism and anaphora characteristic of oratory, and biblical quotation" (273). Considering the fact that the novel aims to paint slavery as a moral challenge to Christianity, the narrator assuming a preacher tone undoubtedly works in favor of the intended message. The Biblical language is a point of familiarity for many nineteenth century readers, so to hear that from a narrator facilitates trust between the narrator and readers.

Focalization is crucial for being able to see the vision of the fabula. *Oxford Reference* explains focalization as a term meaning "'point of view'; that is, for the kind of perspective from which the events of a story are witnessed," which is different from the narrative voice because focalization is about seeing, not speaking. The subject of focalization is called the focalizer, and it is through their point of view that the events in fabula can be seen. The external focalizer is an anonymous agent outside the fabula that presents the way different characters see and experience the events (Bal, *Narratology* 136). Focalization as an act "introduces subjectivity" to the story as it is "a selective, value-laden rendering of events" (Pentland 720). The subjectivity of focalization in the novel is evident; the sympathetic characters are focalized more frequently so that the readers can sympathize with them. The lamentation of George Harris over the undeserved abuse of his master is a good example:

> My master! and who made him my master? That's what I think of—what right has he to me? I'm a man as much as he is. I'm a better man than he is. I know more about business than he does; I am a better manager than he is; I can read better than he can; I can write a better hand,—and I've learned it all myself, and no thanks to him,—I've learned it in spite of him; and now what right has he to make a dray-horse of me?—to take me from things I can do, and do better than he can, and put me to work that any horse can do? He tries to do it; he says he'll bring me down and humble me, and he puts me to just the hardest, meanest and dirtiest work, on purpose! (Stowe 16).

He is allowed to express his opinions and feelings of anger in so many sentences. Not all characters are given the same chance. Only those characters in support of the narrator's view point are allowed to express themselves. Whereas other unsympathetic characters do not get to defend themselves, they simply utter off-putting sentences or their

unfavorable point of view is already explained briefly by the narrator. For instance, in Chapter 22, a scene between Eva and her mother Marie is narrated, and Eva confesses that she would sell her jewels to free and educate the slaves (Stowe 269). Marie dismisses her thoughts, and tells Eva that she is giving her a headache, to which the narrator interjects by saying that "Marie always had a headache on hand for any conversation that did not suit her" (Stowe 270). From this implication, the reader can understand that Marie escapes conversation by feigning headaches. It is not surprising that Marie is one of the characters in the novel that supports slavery.

Lastly, the narrator relies on description, which is considered to be "a privileged site of focalization" as it helps "the imagined world of the fabula become visible and concrete" (Bal, *Narratology* 26). With the help of description, the fabula becomes more clear and participation in someone else's imagination is facilitated. The description of the Quaker settlement enables readers to visualize it and perceive its homeliness:

> A large, roomy, neatly-painted kitchen, its yellow floor glossy and smooth, and without a particle of dust; a neat, well-blacked cooking stove; rows of shining tin, suggestive of unmentionable good things to the appetite; glossy green wood chairs, old and firm; a small flag-bottomed rocking-chair, with a patch-work cushion in it, neatly contrived out of small pieces of different colored woolen goods, and a larger sized one, motherly and old, whose wide arms breathed hospitable invitation, seconded by the solicitation of its feather cushions,—a real comfortable, persuasive old chair, and worth, in the way of honest, homely enjoyment, a dozen of your plush or brocatelle drawing-room gentry. (Stowe 136)

Through her detailed description of the objects, readers are able to understand the welcoming atmosphere of the settlement. It is quite different from how the slave markets where people "can be sold, leased, mortgaged, exchanged for groceries or dry goods" are described (Stowe 333). It is quite clear that the narrator is partial to the Quakers.

Lastly, the narrative structure of the novel makes it an easy read. First of all, the text represents what Mieke Bal calls "a double linearity;" the written text is inherently linear in terms of its form, with one sentence following another; in the case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the events in the fabula are also linear since they follow one another as well (*Narratology* 64). There are no flashbacks; all events in the fabula are in sequential order. Therefore, the story is easy to comprehend and there is an eager narrator who will fill the

readers in. The potential of Uncle Tom's Cabin should not be undermined, though. Jane Tompkins writes that the sentimental novel is actually "a political enterprise, halfway between sermon and social theory, that both codifies and attempts to mold the values of its time" and not simply "an artifice of eternity answerable to certain formal criteria and to certain psychological and philosophical concerns" (126). Considered to be the first best seller in the United States, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* represents the struggles of its time period well. Through narrative strategies, it aims to help the readers realize that slaves are human beings just like themselves.

1.1.2. The Representation of African American Characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Uncle Tom's Cabin championed the idea that a good Christian needed to be moral and stand against slavery, which was the utmost form of immorality. The feelings of motherhood, family and unbearable pain of separation and not being able to do anything are stressed as equalizers between slaves and white people. Loss of family members is equally traumatizing for both. Christianity is another element that brings them together. Slaves can be just as pious as white people; therefore, they deserve freedom just like other Christians in the United States. Irreconcilable racial differences, which can somehow be overcome through Christianity, are constantly implied in the novel. The Black characters are described differently than white and mixed race characters. Unfortunately, these differences in literature lead to stereotypes, which are damaging because

> the stereotype erases a group's varied human relations and desires and thus erases the actual complex social and psychological relationships that turn groups of people into reifications or fetishes. The stereotype condenses the resulting distortions into a kind of objectivity, or object form, that manages what can't be managed otherwise. (Gordon 160)

In fact, the narrator in the novel assumes the omnipotent role in order to write about Black people that she does not really understand, under the pretense that she is a reliable narrator. In turn, white readers believe what they read and believe that all "negroes" are "not naturally daring enterprising, but home-loving and affectionate" (Stowe 97). This setting allows Black characters' existence only in accordance with certain categories that Stowe deems fit, rather than being actual people with complex personalities. The

stereotypical categories found in Stowe's novel are: the Good Slave, the Mammy, the Tragic Mulatto, the Pickaninny and Brute Negro.

The main character, Uncle Tom, is the Good Slave in the novel. He is loyal to his master, Mr. Shelby, to a fault. When he is sold for the first time, instead of running away, he submits to his fate without any protests. Escaping will tear Mr. Shelby's family apart; therefore, Tom has to sacrifice himself so that his master will not be affected at all. When he is leaving George Shelby, his young master, he speaks "in a voice as tender as a woman," reassuring him that everything will be okay (Stowe 104). Yet, when he has to leave his family and children behind, he does not show the same tenderness as he did to his young master. His dutiful nature compels him to prioritize his master's family rather than his own. William Gilmore Simms, a proslavery advocate, wrote in 1853 that Tom was a positive byproduct of slavery:

> That such a negro should grow up under the institution of slavery, is perhaps sufficiently conclusive in behalf of the institution. The North has no such characters. We shall not deny Uncle Tom. He is a Southron all over. He could not have been other than a Southron. We have many Uncle Toms. (qtd. in Riss 520)

Thus, he claimed that selflessness and heroism of Uncle Tom was only possible because slavery existed in the South. For him, the South helped to create "good slaves" just like Uncle Tom. Even when his last master, Mr. Legree, beats him up to break his spirits, Tom shows no resistance. Despite the fact that he is physically stronger than him, he does not even try to strike back. Being a devout Christian, he believes that his sufferings are justified and not even once does he question his fate or why he has to suffer so much. Therefore, he is ultimately "the good slave" that any master would wish to have.

In addition to being subservient, Tom is described as having a "soft, impressible nature of his kindly race, ever yearning toward the simple and childlike" (Stowe 150). Because of his race, he is as simple natured as a child. This idea resonates with the ideas of those who thought it was okay to keep Black people as slaves because they did not know any better, just like children; thus, they had to be taken care of. In fact, when George Shelby decides to free his family's slaves after Tom's death, they protest and say: "We don't want to be no freer than we are. We allers had all we wanted. We don't want to leave the ole place, and mas'r and missis, and de rest!" (Stowe 448). They are happy with their

condition because they have everything they wanted. The narrator's characterization of a simplistic Tom, unfortunately, perpetuates the stereotype of good, Christian slaves who were "submissive, pious, and dignified" and whose purpose in life was helping other slaves, Bible reading, and looking forward to "having an eternal rest" (Levy 271). However, this idealized characterization did not necessarily reflect the truth. Many resisted being enslaved, tried to escape or revolted against their masters.

Another everlasting stereotype in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is that of the Mammy, who is an elderly woman tasked with taking care of their masters' family. A Mammy is often characterized with having a soothing voice, being infinitely patient, having a loud laugh, being devoted to her master and their family, and understanding that she is inferior than whites (Wallace-Sanders 2). Uncle Tom's wife, Aunt Chloe, is the first character fitting this description in the novel. She is described as an excellent cook who takes pride in feeding the Shelby family. She also dotes on their son, George, to an extent that she ignores her own children. When she bakes her famous pound-cake, she chases away her children so that she can serve her young master first:

> Mose and Pete! get out de way, you niggers! Get away, Polly, honey,—Mammy'll give her baby somefin, by and by. Now, Mas'r George, you jest take off dem books, and set down now with my old man, and I'll take up de sausages, and have de first griddle full of cakes on your plates in less dan no time. (Stowe 23)

When George cannot eat any more cake, he calls Mose and Pete, Aunt Chloe's boys, as if they are some kind of animals: "'Here, you Mose, Pete,' he said, breaking off liberal bits, and throwing it at them; 'you want some, don't you? Come, Aunt Chloe, bake them some cakes'" (Stowe 26). Interestingly, readers can gather that he does not act like this in order to humiliate the slave children. It is just that this kind of treatment is okay, can even be considered as an act of endearment by Stowe. As the child of a white master, George holds a position of privilege. This privilege is not only about material possessions or status, it also about the unlimited attention and affection he will get from Aunt Chloe. As a stereotypical Mammy, she shows extreme devotion to her masters and their child at the expense of her own family.

The second Mammy stereotype in the novel takes care of Eva and her mother in St. Claire household. She is referred to as Mammy. She is a motherly figure, even more so than

Eva's actual mother, Marie St. Claire. When Eva returns home with her father, Augustine St. Claire, and her father's cousin, Miss Ophelia, she kisses her mother but is rebuffed because her mother says that Eva gives her a headache. When she goes to her Mammy; however, she receives a very warm welcome. Mammy does not reject her love or complain about her; on the contrary, she makes it clear that she missed her by hugging her, laughing and crying at the same time. It is obvious that she genuinely misses little Eva so much while she is away and is elated to see her back. In addition to being a mother figure, Mammy is a servant who has to put her mistress' needs first. When her mistress, Marie, got married to Augustine St. Claire, she brought her Mammy, the woman who raised her, with her to take care of her. Mammy has to be separated from her husband and children because her husband is a blacksmith who is needed at Marie's father's estate. He cannot come with her. When Miss Ophelia asks Marie about Mammy's children, she says:

> Well, of course, I couldn't bring them. They were little dirty things — I couldn't have them about; and, besides, they took up too much of her time; but I believe that Mammy has always kept up a sort of sulkiness about this. She won't marry anybody else; and I do believe, now, though she knows how necessary she is to me, and how feeble my health is, she would go back to her husband to-morrow, if she only could. I *do*, indeed … they are just so selfish, now, the best of them. (Stowe 173)

She is accused of being selfish by her mistress, Marie, for not wanting to be away from her husband and her kids. Marie also mentions that Mammy has been whipped only once or twice, which is something she should be grateful for and not want to go back to her family. This is because taking care of Marie has to be her utmost responsibility and she has to do so even when she is sick. Little Eva notices Mammy's sickness and asks her mother to have somebody else for a few days but Marie responds that Mammy is just exaggerating and does not want to work just like other slaves. This is ironic because Marie is the one feigning illness and neurosis. However, Mammy is not allowed to suffer from any illness or recuperate by resting a few days.

The narrator might have had the best of intentions in her portrayal of mammies, trying to show their motherly nature and domestic skills which are so necessary in their masters' families. In doing so, she also created the stereotypical Black female character Mammy who is simple, religious, motherly, domestic, and committed but not to their own family, instead, to the families of white people. Worst of all, they appear to be content with their

situation which involves their children being taken away or kept separate. In Aunt Chloe's case, her husband Tom, suffers a painful death. When George Shelby informs the family about Tom's death, Aunt Chloe says nothing initially, before commenting that "Jist as I knew 'twould be,—sold, and murdered on dem ar' old plantations!" and then leaving the room proudly (Stowe 447). Even for that, she apologizes to her mistress and says that she acted that way because her heart is broken. Instead of blaming the Shelby family for having sold him or being enraged, she accepts the situation and continues to work for the family. This stereotype of Mammy represents Black women in motherly roles who are only suited for domestic servitude and very content with their roles. Furthermore, it minimizes the agency of Black women by portraying them as passive subjects.

Mulattos also have a stereotypical representation in the novel as "tragic mulatto." *Cambridge Dictionary* defines the word mulatto as "a person who has one black parent and one white parent or is of mixed black and white origin." In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, characters of mixed race are employed in order to show that slavery is not one dimensional. It is not merely toil or domestic labor; for slave women, sexual abuse is also a reality. Their masters often abuse them because they are their property and can be used in any way. Also, the number of slaves, who can be put to work or sold for profits, increases through miscegenation. This results in mulattos, who are half Black; and the next generation consists of quadroons, who are only one quarter Black. Their position in society is peculiar because they are not officially recognized by their fathers and they are in slave status. Genealogically, they are half or three quarters white and yet, they cannot have the same status as whites. Furthermore, their exotic beauty makes them more valuable. Stowe writes about the "gifts" of quadroon and mulatto women which include

> … that peculiar air of refinement, that softness of voice and manner, which seems in many cases to be a particular gift to the quadroon and mulatto women. These natural graces in the quadroon are often united with beauty of the most dazzling kind, and in almost every case with a personal appearance prepossessing and agreeable. (Stowe 11)

These qualities explained as gifts also function as a curse. They are exotic property with more profit potential. Indeed, when Mr. Haley, the first slave trader, sees Eliza he exclaims: "there's an article, now! You might make your fortune on that ar gal in Orleans, any day. I've seen over a thousand, in my day, paid down for gals not a bit handsomer"

(Stowe 4). Of course, the reason for their high price is not an innocent one. Slaves of a mixed race are extremely vulnerable to sexual abuse. Unfortunately, they are victims of a vicious cycle since their mixed European and exotic beauty not only leads to their production but also makes her a target for "the next cycle of abuse" (Bentley 504). In the novel, Cassy, is an example. She is the daughter of her master and is recognized by him. She studied French, embroidery and music; however, when her father dies unexpectedly, his wife sells all of the slaves, not caring about her husband also being Cassy's father. From then on, she is sold a few times, has children but they are sold as well, and she poisons her last child so that he will not be sold into slavery like her. In the end, she is bought by Mr. Legree, who is an extremely cruel master, so that she can be his mistress. Whether she is miserable or not is of no concern because of her status as a slave. Emmeline, who is only fifteen years old, is Mr. Legree's next purchase. Yet, she does not share the same fate because at the end of the novel, she manages to escape with Cassy.

In the novel, the main characters of mixed race are able to escape slavery. Eliza also escapes when she hears that her son is going to be sold. George Harris, Eliza's husband, cannot take the maltreatment of his master any more. He confides to Eliza that he is "full of bitterness" and he "can't trust in God," questioning why and how he can "let things be so" (Stowe 17). His only fault is to be smart, which is something his master cannot accept. These qualities are attributed to mulattos, whose intellectuality and rejection of slavery come from his "white blood" (Brown 194-195). Indeed, all characters of mixed race escape slavery by using their intellect. They use their ambivalent status to pass for another group. Eliza travels up to the Ohio River without raising any suspicions because of her whiteness and could not "be known as of colored lineage, without a critical survey, and her child was white also, it was much easier for her to pass on unsuspected" (Stowe 52). After her escape from Mr. Legree's plantation with Emmeline, Cassy dresses up as a Spanish-Creole woman with Emmeline as her servant. Their appearance does not raise any suspicion either. George Harris dyes his hair black and uses walnut bark to make his yellow skin a genteel brown. In this way, he can hide his genealogy and pass for a Spanish person. He encounters the kind factory owner his master lent him to work for, who warns George about breaking the law and the consequences of being caught. George urges him to look at him and says:

> … Don't I sit before you, every way, just as much a man as you are? Look at my face, —look at my hands, —look at my body … why am I not a man, as much as anybody? … I had a father — one of your Kentucky gentleman — who didn't think enough of me to keep me from being sold with his dogs and horses, to satisfy the estate, when he died. (Stowe 114)

This passage reveals the legitimacy of George's claim to be a white man as any other. His face, hands, and body is just like the factory owner's. His father belongs to the same society as the factory owner. Yet, his tragic status does not necessitate his father to claim him as his own and make sure he is taken care of after his death. He is treated just like any other slave and sold away when his father is no longer in the picture. Upon hearing the stories of mixed race characters in the novel, it is impossible for white readers not to feel for them because these characters are created just like white characters and they are "so little like blacks" and the conflict that they have is a natural "result of racial forces" (Sollors 225). For this reason, the stereotype of tragic mulatto is employed frequently by white writers who want to elicit emotion from white readers. Stowe also uses it to engage her readers and inevitably her novel perpetuates this stereotype.

Less central to the novel are the stereotypes of pickaninny and brute negro. In the novel, Topsy represents the former. She is a Black child bought by Augustine St. Claire for his cousin Miss Ophelia as a test. He wants to see a New England woman like Miss Ophelia, who is so adamant on educating slaves, take on and educate an unruly child as Topsy. Reluctantly, she approaches "her new subject" Topsy, described as "dreadfully dirty, and half naked" as though she is approaching "a black spider" (Stowe 245). She is a dirty and mischievous Black child who has a "talent for every species of drollery, grimace, and mimicry,—for dancing, tumbling, climbing, singing, whistling, imitating every sound" (Stowe 254). She wreaks havoc in the household. No matter how much Miss Ophelia tries to educate her, she is resistant to it and finds a way to cause mischief instead. Also, Topsy is not afraid of being whipped and in fact encourages Miss Ophelia to do so, saying that "you must whip me; my old Missis allers whipped me. I an't used to workin' unless I gets whipped" and taunts her that her whipping could be stronger (Stowe 255). It can be said that she has internalized all the bad things said to her by her masters and keeps repeating them out loud. In her book *Racial Innocence*, Robin Bernstein writes about the general qualities of pickaninny characters:

> When threatened, pickaninny characters might ignore danger or quake in exaggerated fear; when attacked, they might laugh or yelp, but in either case, they never experience or express pain or sustain wounds in any remotely realistic way … It is this absence of pain that unifies the construction of the pickaninny across differences. The pickaninny … figure is always juvenile, always of color, and always resistant if not immune to pain. (34-35)

Indeed, Topsy is one. Her skin is scarred but she always declares to be unhurt. She starts dancing or singing when she is instructed to with a "whistle," just like when "a man would to call the attention of a dog" (Stowe 244). However, she is a child just like Eva, the angelic white child of the St. Claire household. Unlike Eva, she is brutalized and desensitized by slavery. Topsy internalizes all of the negative comments said about her and continues to act according to what others believe her to be. Having experienced only punishment from others, she does not know any kind of love. That is why, she is touched when Eva sympathizes with her and loves her because God loves everyone. After Eva's death, Topsy changes and becomes Christian. She goes from being a wicked child to one that follows that Christian principles, which does not discriminate who can and cannot be loved.

The other two characters that are transformed through Christian love are Sambo and Quinto. They represent the stereotype of "brute negro" because they are extremely violent towards other slaves even though they are slaves themselves. Readers can recognize them from "their coarse, dark, heavy features; their great eyes rolling enviously on each other; their barbarous, guttural, half-brute intonation; their dilapidated garments fluttering in the wind," and according to the narrator, they illustrate "the fact that brutal men are lower even than animals" (Stowe 354). Indeed, there is nothing human about them. The cruel owner of the plantation, Mr. Legree, trained them to be savages and as overseers of other slaves, they are truly tyrannical. Sambo and Quimbo's description match their actions. Every mention of them involves an act of cruelty. When they get a chance to "break in" Tom, these "two gigantic Negroes" have a "fiendish exultation in their faces, might have formed no unapt personification of powers of darkness" (Stowe 366). They are described as physically strong; however, not very smart. They blindly follow their master's orders and strive to inflict pain on others whenever they can. While Sambo and Quimbo are meant to be the representatives of the inhumane and violent nature of slavery, they also

perpetuate the stereotype of Black people having a savage nature. In the nineteenth century, one of the pseudo-scientific reasons why it was acceptable to have Black slaves was racial essentialism. A lot of doctors and scientists put forward the idea that Black people were an inferior race because of their savage nature, which needed to be tamed. Sambo and Quimbo represent this pre-human nature ascribed to their race and they are indeed tamed by Christianity when Tom dies. They ask for their forgiveness and Tom does forgive them and asks their souls to be saved. Eva and Tom's death drive Topsy and Sambo and Quimbo to Christianity. Topsy learns about Christian love, ceases to cause mischief and even becomes a missionary in Africa when she grows up. Sambo and Quimbo's souls, on the other hand, are saved thanks to Tom's prayers. These characters are damaging as stereotypes because they put forward the idea that without the guidance of Christianity, Black people are unruly savages.

2.1. *GONE WITH THE WIND*

The historical context for *Gone with the Wind* is twofold. This is because the novel is relevant for two different time periods. The story takes place during the Civil War (1861-1865) and the following Reconstruction Era (1865-1877). Yet, Margaret Mitchell published it in 1936, which was during the Depression (1929-1941). That's why, both of these time periods will be explored, with more focus on the earlier period that the novel takes place in.

Nine years after the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the Civil War broke out between the Union and Confederacy in 1861. The possibility of a mutual agreement on the subject of slavery between the North and South was not possible, and the longstanding tensions reached a peak. At the time, different economic and social systems were established in the North and South. The former embraced urbanization and industrialization whereas the latter relied on slave labor so as to sustain its agrarian economy. With the westward expansion of the nation, the debates regarding slavery being allowed or not in the newly established states intensified. This led to an even bigger disagreement between the Northern and Southern states since each was convinced that their standing over the issue was the right one. Therefore, when Abraham Lincoln, who had an anti-slavery stance,

was elected as the president of the United States in 1860, the Southern states started to secede from the Union due to their fears of slavery being abolished nationwide by the federal government. Seven Southern states had already formed the Confederate States of America and chosen Jefferson Davis as their president when the Civil War officially broke out in April 12, 1861. The Union aimed to restore the federal authority and preserve the nation whereas the Confederacy demanded independence and protection of the institution of slavery. President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which declared that all enslaved people in the South had to be set free in 1862; however, the war would last until 1865 which was when the Confederacy surrendered.

The next chapter for the Confederate states was Reconstruction, which was an era of unrest and turbulence that started after the war and lasted until 1877. After having lost the war, the South was to be reintegrated back to the Union, which was already a point of disagreement to begin with. The Southern States that had chosen to secede and now were forced to be a part of something they did not believe in. Also, they had to accept the Northern stance on slavery and free all of the enslaved people even if they did not wish to. They also had to accept enslaved people into political and social circles as well as give them opportunities for education, which were significant changes. The federal government was adamant that the Confederate states had to go through this transformation and undo the power structures they had created to sustain and support slavery. Racial equality and economic opportunities needed to be provided for formerly enslaved people; a more inclusive society needed to be created. To ensure that, legislative measures were implemented. Reconstruction Acts of 1867 demanded the former Confederate states to draft new constitutions in which Black people were granted rights to vote. The Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 afforded everyone equal protection under the law and citizenship rights. Ratifying this amendment was a prerequisite for the former Confederate states to be accepted into the Union. Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 aimed to protect the voting rights by prohibiting states from denying the right to vote on discriminatory grounds. These reforms were incompatible with Southern values and were met with much resistance, leading to difficulties in enforcement as well as the formation of extreme groups such as the Ku Klux Klan that believed in the superiority of white people; hence, had no reservations about terrorizing Black people. W.E.B. du Bois

explains that as a result of turmoil caused in the aftermath of the war, a "secret order" which aimed to systematize efforts to "subordinate the Negro" came to be established (*Black Reconstruction* 606).

For many white people in the South, Reconstruction was a force that disrupted the workings of their peaceful society. Never fully embraced, Reconstruction did fail in 1877 and the following period ensured segregation and offered justifications for it. From the late nineteenth century until the First World War (1914-1918), Columbia University professor William Archibald Dunning and his students wrote extensively on the Reconstruction period in an extremely sympathetic fashion for the Southerners. The blame was laid on the Union but more so on the freed men, which Dunning believed to have caused the problem of restoration:

> With the collapse of the Confederacy all the slaves became free, and the strange and unsettling tidings of emancipation were carried to the remotest corners of the land. As the full meaning of this news was grasped by the freedmen, great numbers of them abandoned their old homes, and, regardless of crops to be cultivated, stock to be cared for, or food to be provided, gave themselves up to testing their freedom. They wandered aimless but happy through the country, found endless delight in hanging about the towns and Union camps. (11)

Thus, freed men were guilty of abandoning their homes and not caring about growing crops or raising livestock. To add insult to the injury, they did not even know what to do with freedom. They are described as child-like beings who are incapable of grasping the meaning of freedom; therefore, they only wander around trying to test what it feels like, with no care in the world. It is implied that for them, the concept of freedom is beyond their understanding. Therefore, even though they are emancipated, they can never be equal to white men because they are lacking due to their race. These conclusions drawn by historian Dunning and his students at Columbia University would later provide legitimacy for segregation. This group came to be known as the Dunning School, and they were the first historians with a university degree to study this era. This name became a popular "shorthand for the interpretation" of the era, which was dominant in the twentieth century "historical writing and public consciousness" (Foner ix).

In his book called *Black Reconstruction in America*, W.E.B. du Bois criticized the Dunning school and other historians that admired him for their inaccurate statements

regarding the history of Black people in America so as to "paint the South as a martyr to inescapable fate, to make the North the magnanimous emancipator, and to ridicule the Negro as the impossible joke in the whole development," warning people that Dunning's account of history might be a "fine romance" and that

> it may be inspiring, but it is certainly not the truth. And beyond this it is dangerous. It is not only part foundation of our present lawlessness and loss of democratic ideals; it has, more than that, led the world to embrace and worship the color bar as social salvation and it is helping to range mankind in ranks of mutual hatred and contempt, at the summons of a cheap and false myth. (*Black Reconstruction in America* 645-646)

The fictional account of Dunning that claims legitimacy gives false justifications for the opposition against Reconstruction. It also accounts for the persistence of white supremacy, racial discrimination, and false beliefs about racial inequality after the abolition of slavery. However, it should be noted that Dunning's account served as a part of something much bigger, which was the Lost Cause ideology. This ideology, consisting of historical and cultural narratives that emerged in the Southern states after the war, sought to romanticize and reinterpret the Confederacy's cause, its leaders, and the institution of slavery for its own ends.

The Lost Cause ideology began to materialize after the American Civil War in the late 1860s in the South. The term, Lost Cause, first appeared in the title of Edward Pollard's book called *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* in 1866. This "new" account of Southern history aimed to reshape the narrative surrounding the war and this new narrative involved a heavy discussion of benefits of slavery and how this institution created "a peculiar and noble" civilization in the South:

> the relief of a large class of whites from the demands of physical labour … afforded opportunity for extraordinary culture, elevated the standards of scholarship in the South, enlarged and emancipated social intercourse, and established schools of individual refinement. The South had an element in its society — a landed gentry — which the North envied, and for which its substitute was a coarse ostentatious aristocracy that smelt of the trade … [the North] could never entirely subdue a sneaking sense of its inferiority. (Pollard 51)

Thus, he claimed that it was only out of jealousy regarding the better system of "landed gentry" in the South that led the Northerners to attack slavery. Pollard also claimed that slaves were protected by their masters and the system afforded them "a sum of individual

indulgences," which made them "the most striking type" in the South, a mythical place that he claims to be a "world of cheerfulness and contentment" for slaves (49). Edward Pollard coined the term, and his sentiments resonated with many other Southern people. David W. Blight, who is a professor of American history, writes that this ideology grew out of the post-war South where the "psychological trauma of defeat," racial violence, and "an abiding sentimentalism" were prevalent (258). The ideology was a remedy for their defeat, aiming to create a narrative which justified the Southern cause, praised its pre-war way of life that came to be destroyed by the Union in addition to downplaying the central role of slavery in starting the war. *Encyclopedia Virginia* describes the "six tenets" of this ideology, the first one of which is that the actual cause of the war was about the states' right to secede and not slavery; followed by the claim that African Americans were indeed loyal to their masters, content with their situation, and actually unprepared for freedom; in addition, the reason for the Confederacy's defeat was only because the Union had more men and resources; however, the Confederate soldiers were much more heroic and the most heroic soldier of all was the Confederate general Robert E. Lee and lastly, Southern women were also heroic and loyal to the Confederacy and sacrificed a lot for its cause (Janney). According to the defendants of the Lost Cause ideology, this idyllic place was destroyed by the Union. The Reconstruction period, in their view, was a time of oppression, corruption, and destruction of their values and perfect social order. Therefore, the federal government's attempts to integrate the South back into the Union were not only wrong, they were also futile.

It should be noted that the Lost Cause and its narratives were part of an ideology that aimed to distort history by justifying the Confederate ideals and minimizing the importance of slavery. For them, the war was not about slavery at all. It was regarding the states' rights to be able to secede and the Union's disrespect for states' inner workings. The narratives stressed that slaves were faithful, "natural-born laborers" under benevolent masters in the antebellum South; both of whom had to be protected by the States but became "broken symbols of lost glory" in the end (Blight 260). The discussion of slavery was impartial in these narratives where "everybody was right," and that the South was not to blame in "becoming its center" as it was "thrust upon unwilling helpless America" (DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America* 638).

Literature helped to disseminate the Lost Cause ideology even long after the period, making it a part of popular culture. Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* in 1936 and its film adaptation in 1939 is considered to be an important Lost Cause narrative. Within a few months after it was published, the novel sold more than a million copies, becoming the new best seller of American fiction after *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1937. More and more people flocked to buy the main character Scarlett O'Hara's plight in the face of the new South as a way to cope with a "crushed but ennobled South" after the war (Simpson 393). Indeed, Mitchell herself had a firsthand experience with this feeling. Born in 1900, that is thirty five years after the end of the war, Mitchell was a native of Atlanta and her family had been there for several generations. Her grandfather, Russell Mitchell, had fought in the war and Margaret Mitchell heard many stories about the heroic battles, bravery of the South, treachery of the Yankees, and the antebellum South all the time; she is quoted as saying that she did not realize the fact that the South lost until she was ten years old (Sunstein). She grew up internalizing Lost Cause narratives, and became even more interested in topics such as "how people felt during the siege of Atlanta, where casualty lists were posted, what they ate during the blockade" (Edwards 97). As she was working for *the Atlanta Journal Sunday* magazine, she had an ankle injury and had to take leave when she was twenty-five years old. That is when she started researching and writing the novel which took ten years and by the time she had spent "ten years of reading thousands of books, documents, letters, diaries, old newspapers, and interviewing people who had lived through those terrible times" (Sunstein).

It is interesting to note that Mitchell wrote her novel during the Southern Renaissance, a literary movement that spanned from 1920s to 1950s. Renown Southern writers such as William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Flannery O'Connor, and Zola Neale Hurston came to prominence during this period. The Southern Renaissance was a mainstream literary movement that was against the conformity that was enforced on writers before and after the Civil War that not only "stifled critical thinking and expression," but also damaged creative expression (Brinkmeyer Jr. 149). The writers of this movement departed from the Lost Cause ideology, and less significance was given to biography, history, and

politics in their writings. They also chose formalist aesthetics, and their works that dealt with "the refined order of traditionalism giving way to the rapacious forces of cultural modernism" (Brinkmeyer Jr. 151). They chose to come to terms with the past rather than glorify it. In addition to this shift of perspective, the subject matter changed as well. Southern Renaissance writers went beyond the plantation into the underbelly of the Southern society, writing about the marginal experiences in the New South; they experimented with the form as well (Gardner 4). There was a rebellion against the writing conventions of the Old South. Some writers adopted modernist literary techniques while others blurred the line between genres within a single work or employed stream of consciousness (Gardner 4). Even though Mitchell chose to stay out of this movement and revert to the old conventions and Lost Cause ideology, her novel is not free from the influences of modernism. The heroine of her novel, Scarlett O'Hara, survives through self-determination rather than nostalgia. She is not exactly the dainty Southern belle. She transforms "from flighty Old South coquette to ruthless New South lumber baroness," which represents the greed and materialism of modernity (Cobb 721). Yet, in the end, it was still a novel that foregrounded the nostalgia for the Old South and romance. Ever since its publication, the novel has been very popular in American culture. Sarah Churchwell, a professor of American Literature, goes so far as to call it America's "Homeric epic," where the war destroys the main character Scarlett O'Hara's whole world as well as "an old order" and just like Homer's *Odysseus*, she tries desperately to "journey back" to her home that she has long lost (Ch. 2). This was inspirational for American readership. When the novel was published, the nation had been experiencing the Great Depression for seven years. The story of Scarlett's persistence restored "the deep conviction that determination, intelligence, and a heavy dose of savvy" was enough to survive the Great Depression since "the very essence of America" consisted of "individualistic ambition and determined striving" (Marcus and Sollors 708). The novel restored people's hopes; consequently, it became a best-seller despite the fact that people were suffering economically.

It is evident that the novel holds a prominent place in American culture as it has been a literary success ever since its publication. Selling more and more copies each day, the novel has been one of the best sellers of fiction even today. The main characters of the

novel, Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler are iconic figures in popular culture; while the former is appreciated as an icon of female empowerment with her determination to persist in the hardest of times, the latter is remembered as a complex and charismatic figure. Furthermore, the novel also perpetuates the Lost Cause ideology as it has a nostalgic and idealized view of the antebellum South and laments its loss at the Civil War and the subsequent Reconstruction Era as well as being extremely critical towards the Union and Black people that want to be free. The novel functions as a historical fiction that supports a certain narrative despite many people thinking that it is a simple love story. However, in the background, three significant eras that shaped the country are being chronicled from the Southern perspective and these are the Antebellum Period, Civil War, and Reconstruction. Its film adaptation in 1939 made the novel even more popular. It received eight Academy Awards, which was a record at the time. Since then, many people have watched the movie starring Clark Gable and Vivienne Leigh, who were extremely popular movie stars of their time. Thus, it has been a critical and commercial success and it is considered as one of the classics in American cinema, helping to cement the novel's success even further.

1.2.1. Narration in *Gone With The Wind*

Gone with the Wind is a lengthy novel, consisting of five parts that have sixty-three chapters in total. It is over a thousand pages. Regarding the novel, William Faulkner is quoted as saying that "no story takes 1,037 pages to tell" (qtd. in Marcus and Sollors 1936). To be able to write an engaging book over a thousand pages can be considered a narrative success. The first three parts of the novel are about the Civil War and the last two are about the Reconstruction Era.

The first sentence of the novel starts with the narrator's announcement that "Scarlett O'Hara was not beautiful," but she was charming (Mitchell 3). Although it is unexpected to have the narrator start a story with a backhanded compliment, it gives the reader a clue regarding his or her opinions of the character. In the Southern antebellum culture where beauty meant a lot for women, to establish Scarlett as not beautiful from the very beginning also implies that she is different from other Southern women. The novel starts

a few days before the Civil War breaks out, Scarlett is bored of all the war talk and makes her "bored importance" known; as the narrator explains Scarlett could not "endure any conversation of which she was noy the chief subject" (Mitchell 7). Her beauty, or the lack of it, along with her self-centeredness are established at the beginning of the story. The readers know more or less what to expect from the character.

The war breaks out and Scarlett's first husband, Charles, dies in the war. It does not really faze her as she married him out of spite because she was rejected by Ashley Wilkes. Now, she has to play the widow role that she finds extremely restricting and boring. She can no longer go to dances or have fun. In addition, she is stuck with Melanie Wilkes because her husband is also at war; she and Scarlett's first husbands are cousins so they have to live together in Atlanta until the war is over. They live with Miss Pittypat, who is Melanie and Charles' aunt. Atlanta is like her, Scarlett finds, "raw and crude" and different from "the fine veneer" given to her by her mother and Mammy; consequently, she feels like she belongs here (Mitchell 127). However, life is hard in Atlanta as Scarlett finds Melanie annoying and she is repulsed by the wounded soldiers in the hospital where they volunteer. The soldiers call Melanie "the angel of mercy," a title that Scarlett would also have liked but she would never touch "men crawling with lice," check the throats of unconscious patients with her fingers to see if they have swallowed something accidentally or pick "maggots out of festering flesh" (Mitchell 133). The graphic depictions of war wounds and the desperate state that soldiers are in not only garner sympathy from the readers, but also show how different Melanie and Scarlett are. While Melanie "exemplifies the Lost Cause model of patriotic womanhood" in an "impeccably ladylike" fashion, giving all to the Southern cause, Scarlett is disgusted, bored, and feels that she is dealt an unfair hand, being a widow and left with a crying infant at the age of seventeen (Gallagher 47). The war and its aftermath will transform her into a survivor, but establishing her child-like temperament in these chapters is a strategy to show how significant her transformation is.

In the story, while Ashley Wilkes and Melanie Wilkes represent the Southern ideals, Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler are motivated by self-determination. They put their own needs above everyone else's. Through these characters, the narrator makes the distinction

between those who hold onto the values of the Old South, and those trying to establish themselves on their own terms in the New South. The narrator makes this separation clear for the readers by presenting situations in which these two parties act differently. For instance, when Ashley is taken prisoner at Rock Island, he refuses a deal to pledge allegiance to the Union and fight for them in the West. While Scarlett wonders why he did not take this deal and then desert the Union army, Melanie gets angry:

> How can you even suggest that he would do such a thing? Betray his own Confederacy by taking that vile oath and then betray his word to the Yankees! I would rather know he was dead at Rock Island than hear he had taken that oath. I'd be proud of him if he died in prison. But if he did THAT, I would never look on his face again. Never! Of course, he refused. (Mitchell 239)

Ashley is a proud soldier not abandoning the Southern cause even if he does not fully believe in it. Melanie is the sacrificing wife who would rather have an honorable Southern husband than to have him back alive in disgrace. Once the conversation is over, Scarlett comments that Rhett would not have done the same, and he agrees with her. The readers know by this point that Scarlett would not have, either. The devotion to the Old Southern ideals are questioned through the narration of the opinions of the realistic characters in the story. Rhett Butler is one of them. Even before the war, he announces that if a war broke out, the North would win:

> I have seen many things that you all have not seen. The thousands of immigrants who'd be glad to fight for the Yankees for food and a few dollars, the factories, the foundries, the shipyards, the iron and coal mines—all the things we haven't got. Why all we have is cotton and slaves and arrogance. They'd lick us in a month. (Mitchell 96)

This is an interesting take since everybody else in this scene are confident that the South would win. It also shows that the Southerners are blind to the advantages that the North has and they only have faith and confidence in their fighting abilities. Ashley, who used to think the same way, only realizes the truth after fighting in the war. He expresses his changed opinion and disappointment regarding the war in a letter, admitting that the war is a result of everyone's arrogance. He is not fighting for the states' rights or to get rid of Yankees, as he has come to the realization that he is "fighting for the old days, the old ways" he loved so much; however, they "are now gone forever, no matter how the die may fall," concluding that "for, win or lose, we lose just the same" (Mitchell 177). He

understands that all is lost and the old ways are something nostalgic that they can now only yearn for. This sentimental yearning for what cannot be retrieved is an important point for the proponents of Lost Cause ideology. Ashley will continue to fight as he is a hero, but he knows that all is lost. Rhett Butler has always known this fact and tried to warn people that the cause people are dying for is as sacred as they would like to believe:

> If the people who started wars didn't make them sacred, who would be foolish enough to fight? But, no matter what rallying cries the orators give to the idiots who fight, no matter what noble purposes they assign to wars, there is never but one reason for a war. And that is money. All wars are in reality money squabbles. But so few people ever realize it. (Mitchell 192-193)

He is realistic about the war and does not care about a sacred cause people are led to believe. Therefore, he only focuses on his own survival. During the war, Scarlett also focuses on her own survival and is determined to overcome the hardships she faces. After the war is lost, the hardships multiply; this time she needs to save her family plantation, Tara. To get the money she needs, she goes so as far to con her sister's beau into marrying her. This is because she knows that he has money and her sister would rather spend it on herself than saving Tara. Without delay, she carries out her plan and starts to manage her new husband's business. This surprises him as he realizes that Scarlett is not "the soft, sweet feminine person he had taken to wife," who was "timid and helpless;" now she goes after what she wanted "by the shortest route, like a man, not by the hidden and circuitous routes peculiar to women" (Mitchell 531-532). The readers understand that Scarlett is willing to go great lengths to not only survive, but also keep her family plantation alive. Once she gets what she wants, she takes off her "mask," which is "that of the Southern lady," and transgresses "the physical boundaries into a male space" (Gros 7). She is willing to overstep the boundaries of womanhood in the Southern society, which shows her level of determination. This is the theme for the rest of the novel also; the only difference is that she does not have to worry about survival. She is determined to get everything she wants.

Gone with the Wind is narrated by an external narrator who does not take part in the story as a character. Instead, he or she is only a telling agent that does not experience the events in the story personally. When the narrator does not appear or refer to itself, it is "reduced to being a voice, has the same status as one who constantly interferes, comments, or

identifies with an actor" (Bal, *Narratology* 7). Indeed, for the most part, the narrator lets the characters speak by directly quoting their conversation, thus becoming their voice in the story. It is interesting that only times the narrator interferes, comments, or identifies are regarding Scarlett. Only she is narrated more in depth and seems to be foregrounded by the narrator. The narrator seems to have a clear picture of Scarlett's thoughts as well as her feelings. He or she does not mind interjecting the story to comment on them, or letting the readers know about Scarlett's private thoughts such as when there is no food in Tara and she makes a promise to herself:

> Hunger gnawed at her empty stomach again and she said aloud: "As God is my witness, as God is my witness, the Yankees aren't going to lick me. I'm going to live through this, and when it's over, I'm never going to be hungry again. No, nor any of my folks. If I have to steal or kill— as God is my witness, I'm never going to be hungry again." (Mitchell 356)

These are unspoken words that other characters do not hear in the story. These are conveyed to the readers through focalization that Bal believes to be "the most important, most penetrating, and subtlest means of manipulation" (*Narratology* 141). Since it is the external narrator that conveys the actors' point of view in the fabula to the readers, he or she becomes the external focalizer (EF). This agent is called "a narrator-focalizer" and "has access to the minds and feelings of any character, and has knowledge, which the other characters may not have;" therefore, he or she is "a potentially powerful focalizer" (Song 100). The EF can shape the opinion of the readers by focusing on the experience of a specific actor and conveying it. According to Bal, there is "a possibility for manipulation" for the EF in unspoken words such as thoughts or internal monologues, where the readers have elaborate information about the opinions and thoughts of a character (Bal, *Narratology* 141). When the readers get so much information about a character and his or her experience, they may inevitably sympathize with the character especially if he or she is presented in a favorable way. In *Gone with the Wind*, the readers are exposed to the thoughts and feelings of Scarlett O'Hara so much that they know the reasons for her actions. Even though she appears to be an unlikeable character, the readers empathize with her because of the EF focus on her.

Focusing on one character and making the readers see the fabula through their eyes is one strategy employed by the EF. Another one is description, which helps the readers

visualize the experience of the characters. The descriptions made by the EF are never neutral or objective; every description "contains an implicit judgment or is inherently subjective" (Song 98). In *Gone with the Wind*, there are numerous descriptions of the physical effects of the war. An example would be the "strangely incongruous sight" Scarlett encounters on the streets of Atlanta:

> Throngs of women were coming up from the direction of the railroad tracks carrying hams across their shoulders. Little children hurried by their sides, staggering under buckets of steaming molasses. Young boys dragged sacks of corn and potatoes. One old man struggled along with a small barrel of flour on a wheelbarrow. Men, women and children, black and white, hurried, hurried with straining faces, lugging packages and sacks and boxes of food—more food than she had seen in a year. (Mitchell 298-299)

It is a sad sight of people's desperation as they are leaving the city and having to loot food because they fear that they will starve and die. Later on, when Scarlett has to leave the city herself, the narrator describes the horrible sight of Atlanta burning with "tall flames roaring up above the buildings threw street and houses into a glare of light brighter than day, casting monstrous shadows that twisted as wildly as torn sails flapping in a gale on a sinking ship" (Mitchell 319). The readers are presented with the extent of destruction that the war inflicts on Atlanta visually. The EF knowingly chooses not to give the reasons for this conflict and instead focuses on the suffering of civilians in Atlanta as they are being displaced. The narrator explains the Union blockades of goods, even cheap cotton, resulting in people bringing out their looms from the attic and spinning their own cloth for bandages, which is a heroic act in itself. Bloody bandages are washed and reused. The readers are made to understand that the situation is extremely dire for the South with the visual description and the supplementary explanation. Implicitly, the EF shows what side he or she is on, and conveys the extent of destruction caused by the Union soldiers only. When the readers come across such description, they will naturally sympathize with the suffering side and the aim of the EF will be realized.

While the focalization helps the readers interpret the events and sympathize with those who are being focalized, there is a large group of people that are not given the same opportunity. The African American characters in the story are treated as secondary, and their thoughts are never explored or they are never given more than one or two lines in

the story. They are spoken for by the other characters in the story. Their experiences and perspectives are overlooked, instead the focus is on the white characters and their struggles. While the white characters are narrated in depth, the African American characters are only attributed stereotypical qualities and not given a voice. In the story, Ashley comments that "things can get worse, even worse than they are now. Suppose we have a darky legislature? A darky governor? Suppose we have a worse military rule than we now have?" (Mitchell 632). Having a person of color in administration is unfathomable for the Southern society, and is considered worse than the war and its aftermath. Around this time, Scarlett is attacked by two men, one of whom is described as "a squat black negro with shoulders and chest like a gorilla," and with a "rank odor" (Mitchell 658). The African American character is dehumanized and used by the narrator to explain that Ku Klux Klan became a "tragic necessity" due to white people constantly being terrorized by freed slaves, and also because of "the peril of women" who lost their male protection at the war:

> The large number of outrages on women and the ever-present fear for the safety of their wives and daughters that drove Southern men to cold and trembling fury and caused the Ku Klux Klan to spring up overnight … The North wanted every member of the Ku Klux hunted down and hanged, because they had dared take the punishment of crime into their own hands at a time when the ordinary processes of law and order had been overthrown by the invaders. (Mitchell 545-546)

By calling this group a necessity, it is implied that the Southerners do not actually want to resort to violence and it is the fault of the African American characters somehow. The narrator-focalizer makes it sound like the Southerners are not complicit as they are simply protecting themselves, especially their women. Sympathizing with this point of view is extremely dangerous because it grossly disregards the fact that the Klan was extremely violent towards freed slaves and that it was actually a manifestation of violent racism in the South. Yet, the narrator-focalizer seems to be in favor of such tragic necessity and choses to depict it as a new sort of justice system.

The focalization engages the readers with the story and helps them to enter the fabula, which is the imaginary story world. Along with the amount of focalization, the linear narration also makes the text a pleasant read since the readers do not have to struggle to get the message of the story. The events are in a sequential order, and the readers can

easily follow them. Yet, the representation of African American characters, along with the space allowed for them in the story are quite problematic.

1.2.2. Representation of African American Characters in *Gone With The Wind*

If *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is credited for the popularization of certain stereotypes of Black people, it can be claimed that *Gone with the Wind* definitely solidified their place in popular memory. However, while the former novel is anti-slavery, the latter defends Lost Cause ideals, for which images of "faithful" slaves are crucial as it is where the ideology draws its "staying power" from (Blight 284). For its proponents, slavery is a necessary institution in which all parties are content and willing participants. Perhaps this is the reason why the experience of slaves themselves are not foregrounded. Those who stay faithful to their masters' families become a part of the narrative in a somewhat favorable fashion. Scarlett remembers the "loyalty and tiredness and love" of slaves that cannot be bought and how "faithful few" remained at Tara even though they had the chance to flee or join the troops "for lives of leisure" but they chose to be loyal to their white owners,

> protecting their mistresses while the men were at the front, refugeeing with them through the terrors of the war, nursing the wounded, burying the dead, comforting the bereaved, working, begging, stealing to keep food on the tables. And even now, with the Freedmen's Bureau promising all manner of wonders, they still stuck with their white folks and worked much harder than they ever worked in slave times. But the Yankees didn't understand these things and would never understand them. (Mitchell 562)

This type of unbreakable bond is something that will always elude the Northerners. Even when they are presented with the chance of freedom, it is implied that choosing slavery makes them more honorable and worthy. It is interesting that the narrator draws a distinction between former slaves on this criterion. Those who scorn freedom and choose to suffer "as severely as" their masters, especially doing manual labor that they did not use to do in the past, belong to "the highest caste" in slave population whereas the "field-hand class" that the narrator calls "trashy free issue niggers" are causing the most trouble (Mitchell 544). The narrator distinguishes between "house negroes and yard negroes" and explains that many plantation mistresses were able to choose the best slaves from "the pickaninnies" by means of "training and elimination," the result of which was to be assigned to "the positions of greater responsibility" (Mitchell 533). The narrator explains

that those assigned to fields "were the ones least willing or able to learn, the least energetic, the least honest and trustworthy, the most vicious and brutish" (Mitchell 544). It was these slaves belonging to the so-called lower caste that were causing the most trouble now that the tables were turned and it is heavily implied that they were granted rights that they did not deserve.

It can be seen that those who choose their own freedom are labeled dishonest, brutish, and vicious; those who do not are noble. There is a line differentiating between white Southern people and slaves, indicating the superiority of the former. Interestingly, there is another subcategory created under slaves, and those choosing the approval of their masters rather than freedom are deemed more worthy. It is a paradoxical Othering within Othering. The first group is less worthy than the white Southerners, and the second group is less worthy than slaves that agree with those Southerners in that the Northern depiction of slavery is ignorant propaganda fueled by their inability to understand the Southern culture. Therefore, it is not surprising that the sympathetic Black characters in the novel are those who choose to stay.

There are also notably fewer Black characters in *Gone with the Wind* and they only exist in the backdrop of Scarlett O'Hara's story. Their secondariness, regardless of their acceptance of slavery, is always present in the narrative. In this lengthy novel, Black people are never referred to as human beings. The narrator either uses words such as darkies, slaves, niggers, blacks, pickaninnies, mulattos, and negroes or resorts to using animals to describe them. In one instance, all slaves are called "black apes out of the jungle" (Mitchell 538). Even the sympathetic characters are not spared. For instance, Scarlett's hand disappears in Big Sam's "huge black paws" as they shake hands, or when he comes back to Tara, "his watermelon-pink tongue lapped out, his whole body wiggled and his joyful contortions were as ludicrous as the gambolings of a mastiff (Mitchell 253, 650). Basically, he is no different from a giant dog, both in terms of appearance and temperament. Also Mammy, who is a mother figure to Scarlett, is described as having "the sad bewilderment of an old ape" on her face when she is unhappy (Mitchell 828). This is a reminder of the nineteenth century when white people tried to justify slavery by attributing Black people an inferior status closer to that of animals. In the novel, it is

evident that loyal or not, Black people are the ultimate Other, occupying an inferior position in society. In the novel, they exist as the following stereotypes: The Faithful Mammy and Good vs. Ungrateful Slaves.

As the caretaker of Scarlett, Mammy is a representative of the Mammy stereotype: an overweight and dark skinned woman who is selflessly devoted to her masters' family, especially their children. She is a maternal figure who does not leave the O'Haras even after the war. Even though she is Black, "her code of conduct" and pride are "as high as" or even higher than that of her owners (Mitchell 24). Choosing her master's family over her freedom, she treats Scarlett as her own and goes to great lengths to protect her and help her get what she wants at any cost since "Scarlett was her baby and what her baby wanted, even though it belonged to another, Mammy was willing to help her obtain" (Mitchell 498). Indeed, she always takes care of Scarlett, chasing her with a shawl so that she does not get cold, ordering her to stay out of the sun to protect her white skin, or forcing her to eat. These acts of motherhood are not carried out by Scarlett's actual mother, Ellen. Therefore, it is not surprising that Scarlett yearns for Mammy's comfort and not her mother's during difficult times.

The Mammy stereotype always has an in-between status between being Black and acting white. Scarlett's Mammy takes it one step further; she looks down on other slaves such as those who work in the fields that she feels are beneath her status. This quality of the stereotype serves as "a testimony to the dynamic power of cultural manipulation," where Mammy stereotype is romanticized and "celebrated again and again as all that was ideal between the races before the destruction of the Civil War" (Wallace-Sanders 131).

There is another Mammy-like figure in the novel, who is Dilcey. She is different from Mammy in that she has Native American heritage. The narrator explains it as a biological feature "overbalancing the negroid characteristics" and setting her apart and this results in a type of dignity "that surpassed even Mammy's" since "Dilcey's was in her blood" while Mammy had to acquire this sort of dignity through hard work (Mitchell 55). Since she has just had a new child, she also functions as a wet-nurse for Melanie's baby. This

role cannot be fulfilled by Mammy due to her old age but it is evident that Dilcey will be the next Mammy of the plantation.

While in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the Good Slave stereotype was reserved for Black people who were pious and moral, *Gone with the Wind* tweaks this stereotype for its own agenda. Here, the Good Slave stereotype represents Black people that willingly stay with their masters' families after the war even when they have the opportunity to leave. In a way, they choose to continue their enslavement willingly. In the novel, Mammy, Dilcey, Pork, Big Sam, and Uncle Peter are the good slaves as they stay with the O'Haras. Even though they are legally free just like white people, they are not equals. They are still carrying out duties for them, even the hard ones they were not responsible for before the war. For instance, Dilcey works "like a machine" next to Scarlett on the cotton field despite being a house slave to begin with, on which Scarlett comments that Dilcey is "worth her weight in gold" (Mitchell 379). Dilcey's husband, Pork, risks his life and gets shot while stealing chickens from the neighbors so that nobody will go hungry at Tara in desperate times. Mammy always has Scarlett's back as if she is her own child. While Scarlett is trying to save Tara with all her might, good slaves offer their unconditional support and not asking for their freedom. When Big Sam runs into Scarlett in Atlanta, he says "ah done had nuff freedom," and he no longer wants to be free; he wants to go back to Tara and be taken care of (Mitchell 652). All the main characters want to go back there but Tara is no longer a physical place. It is rather a comforting memory. Being the ultimate reminder of how good life was before the war, Tara is a place of escape since "on the plantation the war and the world did not exist except as memories" (Mitchell 357).

As opposed to these good and faithful slaves that adopt their white masters' families without being adopted into it as equals, there are those who are simply inept. Prissy is one of them. She is the nursemaid of Scarlett's first son, Wade, but only because the war made it impossible for other and more adept slaves such as Mammy to leave Tara because many of the slaves left after emancipation. Being a nursemaid is a dignified task, and Prissy's "graduation from a skinny pickaninny" is too early for such "eminence" (Mitchell 121). It is clear that she cannot rise to the task; she is a lazy person and a liar, too. She claims to know all about childbirth just as her mother, Dilcey, who is a midwife. When she

admits her lie as Melanie's labor starts, Scarlett slaps her and threatens her to hurry and find a doctor as Atlanta is falling, or else she will sell her down the river (Mitchell 310). Her laziness and reluctance sets her apart from the good slaves in the novel. It is often implied that Scarlett has to bear with her due to the lack of skilled slaves.

Prissy is described as lazy but she is still committed to her masters' family. She is still one of the faithful few who chooses to stay. Former field hands who choose freedom are now at the top of hierarchy. The narrator explains that house servants used to be at the top this slave hierarchy but now suffer just as badly as their white masters because they are loyal; while "most ignorant ones," also called "trashy free issue niggers" by the narrator, are free and causing the most trouble:

> Aided by the unscrupulous adventurers who operated the Freedmen's Bureau and urged on by a fervor of Northern hatred almost religious in its fanaticism, the former field hands found themselves suddenly elevated to the seats of the mighty. There they conducted themselves as creatures of small intelligence might naturally be expected to do. Like monkeys or small children turned loose among treasured objects whose value is beyond their comprehension, they ran wild—either from perverse pleasure in destruction or simply because of their ignorance. (Mitchell 544)

The narrator explains that for these former field hands, freedom is something beyond their understanding and they are running around like animals or small children as a result of being handed freedom just out of Northern spite for the righteous Southern way of life. Indeed, slaves needing handling just like children is a message repeated in the novel. Scarlett criticizes the Northerners for not knowing that "negroes had to be handled gently, as though they were children, directed, praised, petted, scolded" (Mitchell 561). Their child-like nature makes it impossible for them to understand abstract concepts such as freedom; hence, they are idly running around with no purpose. By rejecting their masters' benevolence and guidance, they play into the hands of the Union, irreversibly altering the Southern values and way of life.

1.3. PROBLEMATIZING THE NOVELS

Even though Harriet Beecher Stowe championed the abolitionist cause and wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* so as to generate support from the public, she unknowingly contributed to

the discourse of Othering. Thanks to its popularity for being the earliest best seller of American literature and mass circulation beyond its time, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was instrumental in establishing the previously explained stereotypical characterization in readers' minds. In time, more and more critics focused on the aspect of stereotypical representations in the novel rather than its abolitionist agenda. These representations were criticized for their insidious role in ascribing the status of Other to black people. Not being able to stand the test of time, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* began to be criticized more often than it was applauded. Perhaps the most famous of these criticisms came from the prominent African American writer and critic James Baldwin. According to him, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is "almost totally undocumented" work of fiction that was responsible for the white people's attitude towards Black people for the last hundred years (610). Baldwin accused the novel of relying too heavily on "self-righteous, virtuous sentimentality," which has an extensive display of dishonest excessive emotion; in fact, it is just a "catalogue of violence" (12). Stowe's dependence on description of violence or Christian morality and love misses an important point because it takes away from what really needs to be discussed, which is what drives people to commit such horrible deeds instead of sentimental and extensive descriptions violence and Christianity's role in overcoming it.

In addition to unrealistic sentimentality, another point criticized by Baldwin is Stowe's inability to write about black characters. The marginal characters such as Topsy, house servants, and Aunt Chloe are "stock, lovable figures presenting no problem" whereas two of the main three characters, who are Eliza and George, are "as white as" Stowe can make them and the readers only know that they are Black because Stowe lets them know that they are indeed Black (Baldwin 13). The only real Black character, Tom, is an unrealistic one. By making him an "uncle" and something short of a "saint" with no real humanly desires, Stowe makes him less scary and more appealing to the reader:

> He is there, he endures, he will forgive us, and this is a key to that image. But if he is not uncle, if he is merely Tom, he is a danger to everybody. He will wreak havoc on the countryside. When he is Uncle Tom he has no sex – when he is Tom, he does – and this obviously says much more about the people who invented the myth than it does about the people who are the object to it. (219)

In other words, Tom is harmless, sexless, and mythical. There is no Tom in existence, nor can there ever be. This is contrary to the belief that Stowe's description of black characters

and their lives is a successful one. In fact, she does not really know how to write about them at all. Her imagination and sentimental style replace her lack of knowledge but the problem is that she presents her own mythical account as truthful one. Readers falsely believe that they are being presented a truthful account of enslaved black people's psyche. As a white woman, Stowe creates an unrealistic world. According to Baldwin, this unrealistic world is a result of a theological "terror of damnation," in which

> black equates with evil and white with grace; if, being mindful of the necessity of good works, she could not cast out the blacks - a wretched, huddled mass, apparently, claiming, like an obsession, her inner eye-she could not embrace them either without purifying them of sin. She must cover their intimidating nakedness, robe them in white, the garments of salvation; only thus could she herself be delivered from ever-present sin. (14)

Therefore, according to Baldwin, Stowe's actual purpose is her own salvation. To do that, she assumes the omnipotent role of the writer, which provides her unlimited power to create a myth where Christian love has the potential to overcome something as sinful as slavery. This is done at the expense of the truthful portrayal of black slaves' experience. Instead, what readers get is a modified version of reality, embellished with Stowe's own ideals. Baldwin claims that people tend to overlook this aspect of the novel and praise its role in abolition. Being an "American protest novel," with its noble aim to end oppression makes people ignore the fact that it is a "badly written and wildly improbable" piece of fiction, seeing that people prioritize the good for overall society than "niceties of style or characterization" (Baldwin 15).

Uncle Tom's Cabin could not stand the test of time when it was read against the grain by African American writers and critics. In *The Origin of Others*, Toni Morrison wrote that the novel was a literary attempt "to 'romance' slavery" in order to make it palatable or preferable was through "humanizing, even cherishing, it" (9). Indeed, the first chapters taking place in the Shelby household represent an ideal version of slavery where everyone belongs to a big, happy family with Christian morals. According to Morrison, Stowe is trying to appease the fears of her white readers by telling the following through fiction

> Calm down, she says. Slaves control themselves. Don't be afraid. Negroes only want to serve. The slave's natural instinct, she implies, is toward kindness—an instinct that is disrupted only by vicious whites who, like Simon Legree (significantly, a Northerner by birth), threaten and abuse them. (10)

In other words, Stowe is trying to ensure that feelings of fear and contempt are unwarranted. She does not preach directly; she uses the power of fiction instead. Morrison gives the example of a passage where George Shelby, the young master, visits Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe's home. Because George is a young, white boy entering black slaves' space, "excessive, benign signs of welcome" are required to soothe white readers' fears, so the entrance of their home is described "as outrageously inviting," which is "cultivated, welcoming, seductive" and yet, it is very excessive (Morrison 10). The concerns of white readers are silenced. After all, this novel is for the purpose of the white readership rather than black people. Morrison echoes this idea by writing that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was not intended for Tom, Chloe, Topsy or the other black characters, rather, it was for white readers "who needed, wanted, or could relish the romance" (10). While this idea of romance faded in time and Stowe's novel became a more of a "cultural shorthand" than an actual book for white readers; for Black readers, the novel was more than a comforting story about "black docility" in the South (Fuller 49). Therefore, they did not find any comfort in reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

On the other hand, *Gone with the Wind* might appear unproblematic at first glance.It is easy to consider the novel as a story of persistence of Scarlett O'Hara in the face of hardships she encounters during and after the Civil War, and her constant efforts to save her home, Tara. However, a close reading of the novel transforms it into a much more problematic work of fiction on the grounds that the novel presents a romanticized version of history that does not match with everyone's experience. In the novel, the antebellum South is described as a mythical place where everybody was content and "raising good cotton, riding well, shooting straight, dancing lightly, squiring the ladies with elegance and carrying one's liquor like a gentleman" were the only things that mattered for people (Mitchell 6). What destroyed this idealized society was that the Union did not understand or respect its values, especially regarding slavery, and wanted it changed. In the novel, slavery was portrayed as a world where masters indulged their slaves request and their benevolence was returned with loyalty from their slaves. Therefore, emancipation was lamented because it meant the loss of a way of life, and white Southern people equated the federal government's intervention in their affairs as a form of tyranny. However, this is a one-sided argument that conveniently omits the brutal realities of slavery that Black

people had to suffer every day. Their experience is missing from the novel as it was a tale of yearning for a period that did not really care about slaves' experiences. Only the slaves who choose to stay and be loyal to their masters are allowed in the story, and the brutal side of slavery that stripped people's rights away and dehumanized them, is dismissed completely. James Baldwin observes that in the novel, people are presented with a "myth of the happy darky," which is a legend that North Americans have created and appear to believe; however, "absolutely nothing in reality corroborates" this idea (811). In the novel, which is a container of these myths, former slaves that choose to stay with their white masters' families are not happy with emancipation and described to be suffering just like the white Southerners, which is presented as truth that is shared by many. The suffering of white Southerners after the war, and their yearning for what is lost, became "an impressive legend" which was sustained through "moral courage and self-sacrifice" of white people (Simpson 352).

What about many Black people that actively sought for their political and legal rights? The novel conveniently omits the feelings of "hurt and struggle" experienced by "degraded black millions in their fight for freedom and their attempt to enter democracy" (DuBois 638). This did not comply with the racial stereotypes of Black people in the novel, who are described as subservient, simple-minded and child-like, needing constant supervision from white people as they do not know any better. They are lacking agency and do not understand, nor have the ability to understand, the repercussions of freedom. However, this is a blatant attempt at justifying racism and in reality, many Black people did fight for their freedom, even after legal emancipation they had to. In the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine, George Schuyler criticizes the novel for spurting "the familiar southern white venom against Negroes and Yankees," accusing it of effectively arguing "against according the Negro his citizenship rights and privileges and sings Hallelujah for white supremacy" (qtd. in Silber). After all, the novel is an elegy for the end of slavery and the status it provided for white people. Floyd C. Watkins calls *Gone with the Wind* a bad novel because of what it leaves out, which is the "evil out of the garden of Tara" (92). However, it is not a personal evil but a collective one regarding slavery. Its horrors for Black people are missing only because Mitchell makes a conscious decision of leaving them out, which is the evil Watkin alludes to.

The problematic nature of the two novels can be considered as the starting point for Kara Walker's *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*. In her 2005 speech in Walker Art Center, she talks about the effectiveness of romance novels in terms of being manipulative since their authors have the agency to create a narrative that does not "have the reader's best interest at heart" ("Kara Walker with Philippe Verge"). By refusing to give a truthful account of the experience of the enslaved Black people and reducing them to stereotypes, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind* certainly does not have the contemporary Black reader's best interest at heart. Therefore, Walker chooses to engage with these narratives to subvert and challenge their representation of Black people by reimagining them. The result of this endeavor is the retelling of these narratives through installations, which are just as problematic as the novels.

CHAPTER 2
THE INSTALLATIONS

The Oxford Dictionary of Art defines installation as an art form that became famous in the1970s and features an assemblage created in a gallery and for a specific exhibition (253). An installation is quite different from traditional forms of art that are created by the artist in his or her studio, or another place specifically designated for its creation. There is a linear process here: the artist creates the artwork, which is placed in a museum or an art gallery; viewers appreciate it, and finally, it is sold or exhibited elsewhere. All of these stages are distinct and independent from each other. The artist and viewers have the utmost agency; the art work is there as a passive object, a thing to be looked at, appreciated, and perhaps be sold later on. Installations, on the other hand, function in a different way. They break the linear process of conventional art forms by being created on-site; thus, being connected to their place of conception. In addition, they require action from the viewers.

Installation art came into existence in the 1960s, a time of great change in the nation, when artists wanted to break away from traditional conventions and institutions. It was during this time that Pop Art, Conceptual Art, Performance Art, and Minimalism emerged, differing greatly in style from the classic art movements, along with Feminist Art and Black Art Movements, the artists of which differed from traditional white male artists that museums conventionally chose to represent. Art professor Julie Reiss explains that installation art came about in this time of change and it was “the temporary nature of Installation of art” that attracted many artists who were already questioning the authority of museums and used installation art as a way of protest (70). Rather than creating museum-worthy pieces of art, these artists problematized museums and their authority as the determiners of great art. For them, museums were not agents of authority but actual physical spaces that they could incorporate with their installations. For installation artists, physical spaces were just as important because they were an integral part of the art work.

This integration of art and space was not only effective in helping viewers to be "keenly aware of" what is around them, but also made them realize that the art work and they existed in the same place and at the same time (Reiss 111). This necessity of connectedness of art, space, and viewers was unique, but it was not the only unique quality of installation art.

Art historian and critic Claire Bishop explains that in addition to having a "site-responsive agenda," installation art also expects and depends on "the viewer's first-hand experience," further elaborating its dependence on viewer experience, seeing that installation art

> addresses the viewer directly as a literal presence in the space. Rather than imagining the viewer as a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work from a distance, installation art presupposes an embodied viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision. This insistence on the literal presence of the viewer is arguably the key characteristic of installation art. (6, 10)

Indeed, the experience of the viewers is so crucial for this type of art that, in a way, it becomes a part of the art work itself. Without the presence of viewers, an installation is not complete. Viewers can walk around it, walk into it or encounter it in the museum. Their physical presence is necessary to experience it, which sets installation art apart from other art forms. Not only requiring the viewers to be physically there, installation art also subverts their role in that they are no longer just there and surveying the artwork; they have to get involved in it physically and emotionally. In addition, having viewers physically interact with the art work also changes the whole atmosphere of a museum by changing the connection between viewers and art works, even going as far to destroy museum rules regarding proper decorum (Reiss 78).

Kara Walker prefers installation art as her medium since the qualities of installation art easily lend themselves to the kind of message that she wants to convey. These qualities also enable her to create the kind of response she demands from the viewers. What sets her apart from other contemporary artists is her distinct style, consisting of the exclusive use of black cut-out paper silhouettes that are pasted on white museum walls. In *Gone* and *The End of Uncle Tom*, these paper silhouettes are pasted on a cyclorama, which is a means of exhibition that was popular in the late nineteenth century. Silhouettes, on the other hand, became popular in the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries. As photography was not available back then, paintings or silhouettes were the only means of creating the images of people. Silhouettes were created by having a subject sit in front of a light source; in this way, his or her shadow would be cast on paper. Then, artists would trace the shadow of the subjects and either paint it or cut it out. In cut-out silhouettes, which were more popular, the produced cut-out was pasted onto a light background paper. In order to explain their popularity, Penley Knipe explains the advantages silhouettes had over painting in "American Portrait Silhouettes," and these were expense, speed, and availability (207). The artists only needed paper, scissors and a light source to create a silhouette portrait, and they could complete it in only one sitting as opposed to painting portraits that required multiple sittings. An advertisement from 1928 boasts that the artist was able to create and frame a portrait with a hanging hook in "two minutes and fifteen seconds" (Knipe 208). Silhouettes were not only popular with the public, they were also popular with the proponents of physiognomy in the nineteenth century, for whom the distinct facial features of people were indicators of their ethnic origin and even character. Johann Kaspar Lavater, who was a very famous Swiss physiognomist, also contributed to the rise of silhouettes because of his conviction in the power of shade:

> Shades are the weakest, most vapid, but, at the same time, when the light is at proper distance and fails properly on the countenance to take the profile accurately, the truest representation that can be given of man … The truest, because it is the immediate expression of nature, such as not the ablest painter is capable of drawing, by hand, after nature … No art can attain to the truth of the shade, taken with precision. (qtd. in Steffen 97)

Lavater developed theories suggesting that the character traits of an individual could be determined by their physical appearance, including facial features. Silhouettes were used in his so-called research to illustrate the physical differences between the people of different races. Not only for Lavater, but also for many other similar thinkers of the nineteenth century, silhouettes provided the scientific proof that they were desperately looking for so as to label those who they believed to be racially inferior. These "scientists" could simply attribute African Americans' so-called inferiority to their physical characteristics. The fact that Kara Walker employs the same tool of scientific racism is telling as it ties her art to the nineteenth century not only temporally, but also to the widely supported scientific racism of the era that includes physiognomy as a tool of Othering.

Figure 1. Kara Walker, *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven*, 1997, Whitney Museum, New York.

Walker uses the half-cyclorama format to link her art to the nineteenth century narratives. Cycloramas are panoramas that are exhibited in a special type of building. By their nature, panoramic paintings or panoramas offer an unbroken and unobstructed view of a whole scene that surrounds the viewers. They provided a completely sensual experience for the people in the nineteenth century. Shelly Jarenski explains that these panoramas of the nineteenth century were supplemented with music, guide books, and three-dimensional objects that together offered a unique combination of a visual stimulation, linear and unbroken narration, and overall an extremely immersive experience (127-128). The subject of panoramas were often landscapes or battle scenes. Preceding photography and film, panoramas offered visual entertainment that were also educational because they acted as a visual means of learning about other places or historical events.

Around mid-nineteenth century, cycloramas became popular in the United States. They were “a specially-designed circular building” that combined art and architecture in order to show people exotic locals or historical stories (Meier). They featured a continuous panoramic painting that depicted a scene and viewers could view this painting by standing in the middle of it. For Walker, the adaptation of cyclorama is intentional, as she explains in an interview:

> Well, from the moment that I got started on these things I imagined that someday they would be put together in a kind of cyclorama. I mean, just like the Cyclorama in Atlanta that goes around in an endless cycle of history locked up in a room, I thought that it would be possible to arrange the silhouettes in such a way that they would make a kind of history painting encompassing the whole room. (qtd. in Shaw 39)

The Cyclorama in Atlanta is an oil painting that is fifteen meters high, a hundred and nine meters long, and weighing more than four thousand five hundred kilograms. It was painted in 1886 and brought from Minneapolis to Atlanta in 1892. As suggested by its size, it is considered to be one of the largest historic monuments in American history that is still exhibited today. Atlanta History Center suggests that it is not merely a painting but an immersive experience as well that was the "equivalent of virtual reality" for people back then ("Cyclorama"). Even though it was painted only twenty years after the Civil War had ended, the Atlanta Cyclorama made the war seem like a distant event. This is because the violent and bloody conflict of the War only existed in the minute details of the image; it was "abstracted into vague chaos," and absorbed in the large scale of the painting (Jarenski 128). The painting presented a display of courage that evoked a nostalgic sense of a traumatic war despite it happening not too long ago to feel nostalgia for. Panoramic aesthetics helped the cyclorama to change the narratives of war and conflict into "narratives of unity and belonging," where both sides of the conflict were attributed with "a nostalgic sense of courage" (Jarenski 128). The historical importance of cyclorama in shaping the opinions of its viewers is indisputable. In the nineteenth century, it was a legitimate tool through which people were able to learn about history. Being exhibited in a cylindrical building with the viewers standing in the middle of it made it possible for them to have an unobstructed 360° view of the painting and story it depicted. The viewers' experience was unique in that they were engrossed in the depiction of a historical moment unraveling around them. They also had the privilege of witnessing an important event that was frozen in time just for them to look at.

Similar to the paintings in cycloramas, Walker's silhouettes are not moving as they are suspended and in the state of "arrested motion" (Crawford 173). It is as if they know they are caught in a transgressive act and they are shocked with the sense of being locked up in an endless cycle of history. When the viewers enter the installation space, the viewers go through a similar experience as those in the past, viewing history as it unwinds around

them even though the kind of history being presented in Walker's installations is much more problematic. These adapted versions of cycloramas that are featured in Walker's early installations such as *The End of Uncle Tom* form another link between the art work and time period of the two novels they offer a counter-narration for. In her book *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects*, Christina Sharpe writes that as it is a popular nineteenth century medium

> the silhouette allows Walker to produce the admittedly historically impossible and yet theoretically necessary imaginative work of placing herself and the viewer into the material conditions of the past that is not yet past ''using just the methods available to her'' in order to better understand the past's omnipresence in the present. (155)

Thus, Walker is able to transport the viewers to a point in time when slavery existed. Both the cyclorama and silhouette art are adapted and employed by Walker to create a link between the past and present so that she can convey a message about the problematic history of slavery. The cyclorama format in Walker's installations also helps to educate the viewers as the nineteenth century cycloramas, but it does not display a pastoral panorama or scenes of triumph as the historical cycloramas did. Instead, what Walker chooses to present and wants her viewers to learn is a painful and disturbing account of history. In addition, the silhouettes in Walker's installations are no longer small family memorabilia. Instead of portraits, they are full-body silhouettes that are caught in action.

The silhouette format moves away from being precious and "small to shockingly monstrous," which helps to establish the authority of installations in the museum, and enables the human-size silhouettes force their way into the viewer's physical space (Shaw 38). This shift in their size contributes to the commanding presence of installations within the museum space where the life-size silhouettes forcefully insert themselves into the viewer's vision and space. These silhouettes are no longer delicate household keepsakes; they are transported into the museum space in a bigger format. In fact, they are transformed into life-sized human bodies that are telling a disturbing story to the viewers. By telling a story, these silhouettes become narratives themselves and act as counter-narratives to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*.

2.1. *THE END OF UNCLE TOM* AND *GONE* AS NARRATIVES

Before arguing what kind of counter-narratives *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone* are, it is important to establish their narrative status first because it is equally important as their counter-narrative status. As the installations give more importance to the visual signs, they might be mistaken to be descriptive tableaux of a scene. For this reason, it is important to explain what exactly makes them narratives rather than descriptions. Georg Lukács[2] explains in his essay called "Narrate or Describe?" (1936) that narration and description are two dominant structural modes of creating a text. A description necessitates a "deliberate thoroughness" regarding every detail and is from "the view of the audience" rather than the characters; therefore, it implies an outside status where both the characters and readers are outside the text as merely observers (Lukács 111). A narrative, on the other hand, enables the readers to experience the story themselves. The characters in a narrative are active agents that have a "direct involvement" in the unfolding of events that impact their lives in the story, the readers can be involved in this process with them while reading (Lukács 116). The idea of experiencing the text is considered to be more important than being passive observers. For this reason, Lukács foregrounds narration since it can "establish proportions;" on the other hand, "description merely levels" (127). Here, he implies that description involves the depiction of details and provides vivid imagery and sensory information but has a tendency to flatten or equalize the importance of various elements. In other words, description tends to treat all details as equally significant; therefore, "levels" and flattens without emphasizing their relative importance within the overall narrative. A narrative establishes the relative importance and significance of different details and creates a sense of "proportion" due to its ability to emphasize or downplay certain aspects of the text.

[2] George Lukács (1885-1971) was a Hungarian Marxist philosopher, literary theorist, and critic. He was highly influential in the fields of literary criticism, aesthetics, and cultural theory.

There might be a tendency to think of Kara Walker's installations as descriptions since they are tableaux. That is to say, they are visual rather than linguistic and some might not accept them as texts. At this point, Mieke Bal's definition of a narrative text needs to be taken into account. According to Bal, a narrative text does not necessarily need to be linguistic; its language can also be "imagery, sound, buildings," and the addressee of a narrative text can be a viewer or listener instead of a reader (*Narratology* 5). In other words, the narrative text encompasses a variety of media and does not necessarily have to be a linguistic text. It only requires the act of telling a story to an addressee and three interconnected layers, which are the *text*, *story*, and *fabula* (*Narratology* 5). The *text* is a finite and structured whole composed of signs created with the use of a medium; the *story* is the way through which the events caused or experienced by the actors in the *fabula,* the imaginary story world, are conveyed (Bal, *Narratology* 5). As long as they have these necessary components, installations cannot be excluded from being narrative texts. This definition makes it possible to call Walker's installations as narrative texts. Another reason why Walker's installations cannot be called a description is their ambiguity. The way Walker constructs *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone* does not allow viewers to see details that are needed for clarity. As discussed before, descriptions involve a thorough depiction of details, often focusing on the physical attributes of characters, places, or objects. In other words, it provides clear and vivid imagery so that the readers, listeners, or viewers can visualize and make sense of the fabula of the narrative text. *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone* are constructed in a way that does not help the viewers see or make sense of what is exactly going on. Ambiguity is an important aspect of Walker's installations. She creates it by means of the blankness and indecipherability of the silhouette form, which greatly confuses the viewers. The events are narrated in a fragmented way, which is also confusing. In Walker's installations, viewers see silhouettes engaged in overly sexual, violent, and disturbing acts; however, what they cannot see is the emotions on Walker's silhouettes' faces because the form does not allow these details to be seen. While the first impulse of viewers might be to interpret the disturbing scenes in Walker's installations as those of horror and sexual violence, "elision within the outline" of these silhouettes also implies a possibility of desire circulating in the very same scene, and "certain kinds of affective responses" can never be guaranteed (Ioanes 115). That is to say, viewers cannot be sure whether these silhouettes are

suffering, nonchalant, or even okay with the situations they are in because they cannot see their faces or read their emotions. The nature of silhouettes undermines any sort of clear meaning by not providing viewers with enough details. A variety of responses are elicited from viewers because of "the blankness of the silhouette" as an art form (Shaw 177). Such ambiguity prevents the installations from being a description; in fact, Walker consciously leaves out many descriptive details to further confuse her viewers.

Another point regarding why Walker's installations are narratives is the nature of the medium she chooses to convey her message. Installation art has an immersive nature where the artist creates settings or experiences that deeply engage the viewer. Installation art often transforms the physical space in which it is exhibited. It also alters the viewer's perception of their surroundings as they are placed in a unique environment that envelops them and transports them into a different realm. This is in line with Lukács' claim that narratives require action instead of passivity. This action is twofold: both the characters in the story and readers/viewers facing the narrative text are active. This is in line with how Walker's installations function. The characters in them are not passive agents, they seem to be engaged in action no matter how terrible it is. Neither are the viewers, as they have to walk along and come face to face with life-size silhouettes in disturbing acts. Thus, Walker's installations are definitely narratives that include action.

The narratological analysis of installation art is quite difficult, though. Mieke Bal draws attention to this difficulty when she questions how visual works of art "that resist coherent figurative readings" are able to tell stories ("Narrative Inside Out" 103). Narratives tell a story to their recipients; however, the absence of linguistic signs presents a challenge to decipher the story. Even though Walker appropriates the nineteenth century panorama, she conveniently omits the representational supplements that were provided for those viewers back then, which included guide books, lectures, music, and even three-dimensional objects (Jarenski 126). Thus, in Walker's installations, the viewers are left in the dark and have to figure out the story and its implications on their own. The message needs to be deciphered without any external help. So, how do the three interconnected levels of a narrative, the text, story, and fabula, function within Walker's installations? The text is a story that is conveyed to the recipients through a medium and the narrator is

"the fictitious spokesman" at this level (Bal, *Narratology* 8). The narrator, as part of the text, is the voice or entity that is responsible for presenting the narrative to the recipients. It is a textual construct that has various functions such as delivering the story, providing commentary, and guiding the recipients' understanding and interpretation of the story. Finding out the narrator in Walker's installations is a mental activity in itself. Whether the narrating agent is an external narrator, in other words, not an actor in the fabula, or a character-bound narrator that has a function in the fabula, is unknown and can only be guessed. It is possible to conclude that the narrator is an actor among the other silhouette-actors and is a part of the narrative text, either as a witness or a participant. It is also possible to consider the narrator as an omniscient one that is external to the story and is telling it to the viewers. There is simply no way of being sure.

In her article "Representational Static: Visual Slave Narratives of Contemporary Art," Janet Neary draws parallels between Walker's installations and the nineteenth century genre of slave narratives in which ex-slave author-narrators need to be both the object and subject of their narratives in order to provide an eyewitness account of their own enslavement (160). In the nineteenth century, prominent African American figures such as Harriet Tubman, Harriet Jacobs, and Frederick Douglass wrote accounts of their enslavement, detailing all of the violence and dehumanization they experienced at the hands of their cruel masters. Their testimonies of enslavement and subsequent escape were instrumental in the abolitionist movement because white people could not have access to the same insight as the African American narrators who actually experienced slavery themselves. Neary writes that visual slave narratives had two functions: "to undermine visual fictions of race and notions of what it means to be an 'authentically' black subject" (160). If Walker's installations are considered visual slave narratives aiming to challenge and dismantle false visual representations of race, then the narrator could be an ex-slave who is giving his or her truthful account of slavery. Yet it should be kept in mind that without any guidance, arriving at this conclusion is only possible for a few people. In *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*, the viewers only get the names of the installations and then they see the installations. They have no access to specialized knowledge whatsoever.

Another difficulty for the viewers is the fragmented nature of Walker's panoramas. Traditionally, the nineteenth century panoramas offered an unobstructed view that surrounded the viewers. Enormous paintings engulfed the viewers due to their immersive nature and in turn, they could see what was being depicted clearly. The viewers knew what they were going to see, and were supplemented with information. As opposed to these panoramas that served a "comforting illusion that approximates reality," Walker's panoramas do not afford the viewers the chance to experience "the comforting pleasures of a single visual plane" (Jarenski 138-139). What the viewers get is fragmented narration, where individual scenes are floating with no physical connection to one another. These fragments simply do not allow a smooth and connected narration. This "refusal to integrate fragments," in turn upsets "such basic structuring notions as causality and logic," and prevents closure that the "narrative usually demands" (Hutcheon 121). The cause and effect relationship between the disturbing scenes cannot be established by the viewers, and the message remains unclear. Along with the cause and effect relationship, the emotions of the silhouettes are not evident due to the form. These silhouettes cannot show any emotions; consequently, the viewers do not get a clear picture of what is going on. They cannot have the satisfaction of a closure as they are stuck in a limbo. Jarenski calls the silhouettes of Walker's panoramas "a Rorschach test gone wrong" (138). Ink blots on a Rorschach test can mean anything, depending on who is looking at it as it is projective and indicative of their psychology. In Walker's narrative texts, silhouettes do not give away any clue that makes the panorama clear for the viewers or enables them to reach a conclusion. In this way, the viewers get a disturbing and confusing experience in place of the educative and pleasant one that the nineteenth century panoramas provided.

Both *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone* have a narrator that is difficult to pinpoint. They are also similar in terms of focalization. Bal explains focalization as "the relation between who perceives and what is perceived" (*Narratology* 7). The subject of this process is called the focalizer. While it is the narrator who is the agent that conveys a narrative text, focalizer is "an aspect of the story" that holds a point of view (Bal, *Narratology* 12). It is through the focalizers' perspective that the readers witness a story; they are engaged in an act of seeing the imagined world of fabula from the focalizers' point of view. That is

to say, what the focalizer presents is what they see and experience within the story. An external focalizer is an "anonymous agent situated outside the fabula" and does not participate in the action (Bal, *Looking In* 51). When the viewers stand in front of *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*, through whose eyes are they seeing the panorama? It is someone who is part of the panorama and within viewing distance to the characters, in other words, silhouettes and at the same time, not a part of the story being told. Therefore, it is an external focalizer. Bal explains that in both linguistic and visual narratives, it is possible to have an "external focalizer who is distinct in function but not identity from the narrator," meaning the external focalizer might also be "an internal, diegetic narrator" at the same time (*Looking In* 54-55). While these two entities might have the same identity, their functions should not be conflated. The narrator presents the signs that constitute the text whereas the external focalizer offers a subjective way of seeing. As Neary suggests, in both *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*, the narrator-focalizer is an ex-slave creating his or her own narrative. While they cannot be the same person because of the different locations these two stories take place, they serve the same purpose within the narrative text.

Both *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone* have a narrator-focalizer that is difficult to pinpoint and a narration that is fragmented and ambiguous, which makes it a challenge for the viewers to extract a clear message. Neary's suggestion that the narrator is an ex-slave presenting a visual narrative of his or her experience might be an interesting one although it is almost impossible for the viewers to figure that out when they come across Walker's installations for the first time on their own, with no textual help. Such conclusion can only come from specialized knowledge or intensive research that the viewers most probably will be lacking. In addition to an almost invisible narrator, the installations also present an unclear narration. They take away from the comforting and entertaining nature of the nineteenth century panoramas only to replace it with an uncomfortable experience. The narrator- focalizer and the style of narration are the common aspects of the two installations. Even though the two installations differ because they have different actors and locations, on the fabula level where the imaginary world of the story comes alive, the actors (silhouettes) are engaging in acts that "embody the repressed prejudices, desires, and obsessions that the contemporary American collective consciousness refuses to

acknowledge, visualize, and reconcile" (Raymond 85). The veracity of these acts in installations cannot be known, but what the viewers already know from slave narratives is that slave women are forced to perform certain acts, and the morality of Christian masters disappear completely when it comes to the sexual exploitation of their slaves. This is because they do not regard them as people, but as property onto which any fantasy can be inflicted.

2.1.1. *The End of Uncle Tom*

Figure 2. Kara Walker, *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven,* 1997, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

One of Kara Walker's earliest installations, *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* was first displayed in Whitney Museum of American Art as a part of their biennial in 1997. It is a large installation, 156 × 420 inches (approximately 396 × 1066 cm) in size, containing life-size silhouettes in various, disturbing poses. Because these silhouettes are life-size, viewers are on eye level with them and have to face them directly. According to Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, this installation's ambitious scale works in two ways; first, it establishes the authority of the art work in museum space and the size of individual silhouettes makes it possible for them to force themselves in viewer's physical and visual space (38). In the viewers' visual space, there are "spatializing elements - trees, clouds, road signs, the implied ground, and perhaps most importantly, the plantation house" (English 95-96). This makes the viewers realize that the characters are from a time when plantations existed; therefore, some of them must be slaves.

The name of this installation, *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven*, is a mismatch with the subject matter, confusing viewers. Even though the installation's name promises a grand allegorical tableau depicting Eva in Heaven which is where she supposedly ends up at according to the novel, what viewers get in reality is hardly a heavenly panorama. It is a grotesque one. Unsuspecting viewers who are unfamiliar with Walker's subject matter are first shocked by this irony. Similarly, having guessed that the phrase "The End of Uncle Tom" is a reference to the main character in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, viewers are confused about how this panorama is related to Harriet Beecher's Stowe's canonical novel. In the novel, Tom chooses death at the hands of his cruel master by not giving up his faith. He accepts his fate without questioning or resisting. Thus, his death is treated as a tragic event which transforms everyone in the novel for the better, as if it was a learning point for the other characters and readers alike. Yet, the installation does not provide such a redemption. Instead of the Christian faith and endurance dominant in the novel, the viewers get an account of horror, chaos, and confusion. Shaw speaks of her own experience when she saw the installation for the first time, both believing the artwork to be a "restaging of an apocryphal episode" from the novel but also getting confused when she sees the nastiness of it: "piles of excrement, children being sexually assaulted, and babies being murdered," which are elements that are not in the novel (4). Consequently, the installation becomes a paradox for viewers, casting doubts onto their experience with the novel. In addition, the installation not only evokes uneasiness for viewers due to the disturbing poses silhouettes are placed in, but also feelings of confusion because of the discrepancy between the installation's name and its content. In the end, the installation becomes a strong counter-narrative for the novel.

The story starts with a half torn image of a woman on the left and finishes with a half torn image of a man, giving the sense of a piece of paper having been torn. Indeed, this installation is half-cyclorama, so beginning and ending it with a torn image, as if it is a piece of paper torn from the larger picture, is appropriate. This is because through this installation, viewers are getting only a glimpse of the whole story. Missing pieces from these two silhouettes will begin or end another story. The remaining silhouettes are more

important to what Walker is trying to convey through this installation. There are three groups represented: women, children, and men.

After the half-torn woman on the left, viewers are faced with the silhouette of three women who are nursing each other. Viewers can understand that these are black women because their clothing and physical features give them away. They are all wearing head wraps and have pronounced foreheads and lips. At the bottom, there is an infant trying to reach for the woman's breast but is unable to do so. Historically, slave women were deprived of their bodily autonomy. They were used as wet nurses, meaning their milk was used for their masters' children rather than their own. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, there is an example of this situation. Tom meets a desolate character called Prue on Mr. Legree's plantation; she tells the story of how her own child died of hunger because she was forced to be a wet nurse for her master's child. Even when she begged to feed a little bit of her own milk to her own child, she is not allowed. These silhouettes have taken a break from their work, which is implied by the basket one is holding and they are receiving the milk deprived from them both as babies and adults. To do so, they have no one but each other to rely on. They are so desperate for it that the silhouette infant is ignored and cannot get any. Shaw calls this "an institutionally imposed mother hunger" because it is the institution of slavery that withholds milk, not their mothers; however, in this moment, their "desire for the lost maternal nurturing" is being fulfilled by each other (48).

It is also interesting that these silhouettes do not resemble the Mammy figure, who is usually described as a large, motherly woman. It is understood that these silhouettes are young. According to Rebecca Peabody, this is a strategy used by Walker so as to point viewers' attention to the fact that Stowe herself used "sexual desirability as a tool" in order to elicit empathy from her readers (45). In fact, Stowe describes Eliza, Cassy, and Emmeline as being very beautiful; a trait that is not afforded to other characters such as Aunt Chloe, Prue or Mammy in St. Claire household. The empathy elicited from readers for the abject situation of these desirable characters turns into discomfort for the viewers Walker uncomfortably juxtaposes installation, desire and tragedy, raising questions about "sexual and maternal identities" coexisting not only in her installation, but also in Stowe's

novel" (Peabody 45). Are being the big, motherly Mammy taking care of children or the attractive mulatto or quadroon that attracts tragedy the only options for black women? For the readers of the novel who thought so, this scene proves to be a problematic one.

In the middle part of the installation, viewers can see some children. Eva, who is the central character of this installation as can be understood from the name, sits on her throne with an axe above her head. She is caught in action. In front of her, there is a typical pickaninny toddler who is asking for something in his basket. What he is going to receive, though, is an axe blow to the head. On their left, there is another child, running with one boot and a knife, at the same time seems to have defecated the entire scene. Savage black children stereotype in the novel, who is always running around and happy to get into mischief, comes to mind. Behind Eva's throne, there is another child in house servant clothes. Rather than taking care of Eva, which is what she is tasked to do, she is about to stab her. As Eva and Topsy are described to be the same age and height, it can be assumed that this is Topsy. In the novel, Eva, with her endless Christian love, and her death, are transformative for everyone, especially Topsy. After Eva's death, Topsy stops misbehaving and becomes religious, even so far as choosing to be a missionary when she grows up. The angelic Eva in the novel is so central to the novel that even Walker makes a note of it:

> The other aspect of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that was of interest to me was how much more it had to do with little Eva, than the slaves who are kind of filling out the scene, insofar as she's the one who an audience, and who Harriet Beecher Stowe, has to cry over. So the central figure in *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* is Eva on the chopping block. (qtd. in Peabody 29)

Eva gets to be a central figure in the installation as well; however, she is different from her novel version in that she is not preaching about seeing the good in everyone or treating them well. In this allegorical tableau, Eva does not seem to have transformed Topsy or anyone around her for the better. Instead, she has transformed them to be violent and grotesque; in this tableau, a more distressing version of slavery is depicted. The idyllic household with happy slaves is just a dream.

Perhaps the most disturbing scenes in the installation is the part that features two male figures. In the first scene, viewers are faced with a prepubescent child whose gender is

not obvious holding onto a corn stalk and at the same time being raped by an older man with a wooden leg. The child becomes his other leg. The older man finds his balance by impaling a baby on the ground, cutting him or her in half. Both children function as posture support. The first instinct of viewers is that what they are seeing is a child being abused as "the extant cultural narratives surrounding the plantation, provoked by the iconography in this scene, compel viewers to make meaning from this silhouette" (Ioanes 114). It is not possible to see the child's expression due to the very nature of silhouette but it is clear that he or she is looking back at the man. Just like the gender of the child, his or her expression is also ambiguous. Is he or she shocked or surprised? What if it is a positive response? The thought of it being pleasant unsettles viewers. However, there is no way of knowing since silhouettes are shadow-like, not providing a clear picture for viewers. They are provided with neither physical nor mental clarity. The description of what is going on between these two silhouettes and "the ease with which viewers and critics identify" it being "a master is raping a slave girl," are undermined by the very form of silhouette art (Ioanes 115). Viewers have no way of being sure; they can only mirror their own thoughts and knowledge about slavery onto these two characters, just like they have to for every other character in the installation.

The other male figure seems to be praying after having delivered a baby. This is an unnatural scene and has viewers questioning. Could it be an allusion to Uncle Tom not being masculine enough in the novel, which is problematized by a lot of African American critics? In Walker's installation, he is feminized to the extent of giving birth, which is quite extreme. It would be more correct to say that he defecated the child because he cannot give birth. It is not a wanted child as the silhouette has turned his back to it and seems to be praying the infant away while its umbilical cord is still attached. Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw comments that it is a useless plea to be spared of the horror that is depicted in the installation, which is a male slave delivering a child; this plea is "for deliverance for and from" the baby that is attached to him (60). In the novel, Cassy poisons her infant so that he is not sold into slavery like her other children. There have been both literary and real life instances where slave mothers made the incredibly difficult decision to end their children's life rather than having them live a life of misery. Therefore, it is not

surprising to witness the instance where Tom is praying to have his infant taken away. Still, it is an extremely off-putting scene for viewers.

Tom's prayers end the installation and viewers leave the space feeling confused about what they should be getting from it. For viewers, the ambiguity of silhouettes is confusing; their violent and grotesque nature is upsetting. What is certain is that it is definitely not the story from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and there is no salvation for any of the figures in this installation.

2.1.2. *Gone*

Figure 3. Kara Walker, *GONE: An Historical Romance Of A Civil War As It Occurred B'tween The Dusky Thighs Of One Young Negress And Her Heart*, 1994, MoMA, New York.

In her ART21 interview, Kara Walker mentions her decision to work with *Gone with the Wind* as it was "the most fitting choice" of story and how she had prejudices before reading the novel; however, when she read it, she was surprised about being engrossed in the engaging and at the same time grotesque nature of the story and its storytelling which was "so rich and epic," exciting her in a way that "stories like that are meant to" ("The Melodrama of 'Gone with the Wind'"). Even though *Gone with the Wind* is more than a thousand pages long, the story is easy to follow. Scarlett O'Hara is a compelling

character, and her determination, survival instincts, and internal conflict captivate the readers' attention.

Gone: An Historical Romance Of A Civil War As It Occurred B'tween The Dusky Thighs Of One Young Negress And Her Heart was installed and exhibited at Drawing Center in New York in 1994. It is a large installation; its size is about 135 x 600 inches (396.2 x 1524 cm). It is Walker's first public tableau, and it is considered to be her debut in the contemporary art world. The title of the installation makes use of provocative language, hinting at the racial and sexual dynamics that the artwork will feature. In a way, it prepares viewers for what they are about to be confronted with, which are uncomfortable truths conveyed by silhouettes in disturbing poses. This confrontation is intentional on Walker's part because challenging traditional narratives and representations that paint the antebellum South as a pleasant place for all of its inhabitants, including the slaves, requires such uncomfortable confrontation. The viewers understand that this story is taking place in the South because there are "two large trees covered in Spanish moss that evoke the warmer climate of the American South," and the hoop skirt was "a symbol of morality and the quintessential fashion statement of Southern women before the Civil War" (Raymond 84). These details give away the time period as well as the location.

The story starts with a familiar sight on the left. It features a belle kissing a gentleman in a romantic scene. This is relatable to Scarlett O'Hara's endless quest for romance in the novel. However, a closer inspection reveals something odd in this romantic scene under the trees and the moon. Under the poufy dress of the Southern belle, there is a set of feet. According to art critic Eleanor Heartney, this image suggests "complicity and illicit intimacy between the classes" (174). This sort of dependency is evident in the novel as well; masters and their families who consider themselves to be racially superior to their slaves cannot function without them. Even when their slaves are legally free, masters and their families claim their ex-slaves services as their natural right. The slaves lives are interfused to that of their masters', and those who choose to leave are painted as ungrateful in the novel. Those who stay are narrated more in detail in the novel; however, their lives are secondary to their masters' and their only purpose is to make their masters' lives easier and help them sustain the feeling of superiority.

From this point onwards, the installation becomes even stranger and more disturbing. Right next to this couple that is actually made up of three people, there is a slave child playing with a dead goose. It might represent the fact that as pickaninnies, they are on their own. Their mothers are either working on the fields or acting as mammies to white children. Thus, they are left to fend for themselves outside; their toys might as well be dead animals since there is no one looking out for them. Next to this child, there is a woman whose body looks like a boat, which might be "referencing the horrific Middle Passage that brought the slaves to America," a traumatizing journey, the consequences of which have turned to a traumatizing everyday experience (Heartney 147).

In the middle of the installation, there is a prepubescent girl, the outline of whose head gives her away as a slave, performing fellatio on a white boy of similar age. Right next to them there is a boy floating in the air and his genitalia is engorged to a grotesque size. Below him, there is a Black girl that is giving birth to babies standing up, and just dropping them on the floor. This might be a reference to the fact that slave women were expected to not only give birth as frequently as possible to increase the number of workers on the plantation, but also not be a mother for them in the same way white women could, or have their slaves to do it for them. That is why in the installation, this woman's babies are falling on to the floor and splatting; she is not allowed to be a mother. Indeed, female slaves were expected to get up and go back to work like nothing happened, be it on fields or at their masters' home. To simply put it, they were not allowed to bond with their babies, be present for them, and have feelings about it.

The installation ends with a slave woman being carried by a white man but the viewers cannot be sure if she is simply being carried or thrown out of the installation. For some viewers, this could be an act of violence but the form simply does not allow them to completely understand what is going on between these two silhouettes. Others might believe that something sexual is about to happen between them once they are out of the installation. The lack of emotions due to silhouette form does not allow viewers to see expressions on silhouettes' faces; therefore, how they might be feeling is left up to the imagination of viewers. A complete understanding is neither what Walker's installation

asks for, nor it is something that the installation is "quite evidently not equipped or interested to supply," and it drags the viewers to an "unnarratable space" as Art History Professor Darby English explains:

> The lakeside kiss tells us, quoting the novel, that this is the eve of the Civil War. Right? Perhaps, but so too does the title shift the battle site to the unnarratable space "Between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart"—making *Gone* a fantastical retelling, squared. As if to demark fantasy as the primary modality in which it participates (as both artistic statement and viewing experience). (English 110-111)

Indeed, fantasy seems to be the starting point of Walker's installation, which is Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* that has "done more to keep the Civil War alive, and to mold its memory, than any history book or event" (Horwitz 296). It created a version of the South and its people that was nothing but a Lost Cause romance and Mitchell's own imagination, where every person, free or enslaved, was honorable and content until the Yankees came and tricked the slaves and granted them freedom that they were unprepared for, destroying this idyllic society. Walker is motivated overturning this fantasy and its falsehood by providing another account. It is an attempt to wake viewers up from their "collective unconsciousness of plantation slavery" by recasting Black antebellum characters from that era's narratives and creating a more truthful yet "twisted and literally perverse history" (Gordon 160). Viewers are made to confront the uncomfortable truths of slavery that they do not usually think about while reading the novel, as it is conveniently left out and they are under the impression of being handed a fictional but truthful account of the time period. Walker's *Gone* resists the novel and dares to be the counter-narration of it, just as *The End of Uncle Tom*.

2.2. CREATING POST-BLACK COUNTER-NARRATIVES

There are dominant texts in every society that are known by everybody and have been around for so long that they are never questioned. Their implications pass as truths and are internalized by the members of society. Such texts are the prominent "carriers of meaning" in a culture, spread through various means and existing "in a sometimes conscious, but also often largely unconscious manner" (McCallum and Stephens 64). Readers take these texts, called master narratives, for granted and do not feel compelled

to question their authenticity. According to Hilde Lindemann Nelson, master narratives constitute stories "from the cultural store," the circulation of which happens in a society and it helps to embody the shared understandings of that society (152). These stories can have a normative function for many members of that culture since they consolidate their identity as normal. Master narratives become a "blueprint for all stories," and people understand not only the stories of themselves, but also the stories of others as well (Andrews 1). Therefore, through these narratives, people can establish a sense of normalcy and reassure their position in their culture. The stories of others, presented in master narratives, are taken at a face value and not even doubted. Due to their dominance in a culture, master narratives present a false sense of authority and objectivity. However, it is an important question whether the others, whose stories are told for them, are represented truthfully in these narratives.

For Toni Morrison, a master narrative is any ideological script that people with authority impose on the others such as fiction or history, and it always has "a certain point of view" (*Toni Morrison* 36). In other words, master narratives are always colored by ideology, which can only work in favor of those who have the power and authority. Ultimately, these narratives define the standards of what people should aspire to be, always implying that the identity of the dominant group is the ideal one. What about those who do not or cannot be a part of the ideology promoted by master narratives? How are they positioned within these narratives? Lindemann Nelson explains that when master narratives are "morally compromised or flat-out evil," they define others as not having moral virtues or existing so as to serve other people (152). These "oppressive" master narratives contribute to the process of Othering by arrogantly attributing less than ideal qualities to those that differ from the dominant group:

> Because these narratives are arrogant, the norms embodied within them for evaluating the subgroup must inevitably produce the judgment that the subgroup members are cognitively below par. As viewed by the arrogant eye, subgroup members can't possibly know what they are talking about, can't be concerned with anything significant, must be stupid or unreliable or devious or crazy. (Nelson 173)

Considering their impact and pervasiveness even after their publication, it is clear that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind* reinforce master narratives. The former one identifies white, Christian, and abolitionist individuals as morally superior, who try to

lead readers to the right path and guide what they should feel for African American slaves. The latter depicts the conflict between the New Southern belle, Scarlett O'Hara, who does not care much for the Old Southern ideals, and characters like Melanie Wilkes, who are yearning for the Pre-Civil War times when everything was idyllic until the Northerners decided to ruin it. What they agree on, however, is that African American people should have never been freed as they do not know what to do with freedom. The depiction of African American people are similar in both master narratives because they both ascribe similar stereotypical qualities to them such as being simple-minded, less civilized, and so on.

For her installations, *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*, Kara Walker's point of departure are the two master narratives briefly discussed above. Her installations provide a counter-narrative or sometimes also called counter-storytelling for these novels. *Routledge Handbook of Counter-Narratives* explains that counter-narratives are "stories" that are in "in confrontation and apprehension" with and trying to "resist another narrative … often being, or being perceived as being, more powerful" (Lueg and Lundholt 4). This other and more powerful narrative is created by the people in power, to whom it does not look like any wrongdoing. Richard Delgado stresses that social reality is not a natural phenomenon but rather it is constructed; "narrative habits" and patterns shape what people see and become habitual; the cure to this situation for him is counter-storytelling (2416). This difficult task of counter-storytelling or counter-narration is not simply retelling the story in a different way. It is actively resisting to master narratives "by attempting to uproot them and replace them with a better alternative" (Nelson 67). In Walker's case, it is not a better but a more truthful alternative.

Those who create counter-narratives are members of groups that are marginalized and their voice and consciousness are "suppressed, devalued, and abnormalized," and through marginalization, they define the mainstream societies' boundaries (Delgado 2412). They resist the omnipresent. As an African American woman artist who is also a part of Post Black experience, Walker's experience is definitely marginal. Her two installations *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone* are her way of resisting the master narratives that are two heavily popularized American novels. The novels have maintained their popularity for a

certain group of people even if they might fallen out of favor for many of them. For instance, Harriet Beecher Stowe and her sisters were a part of "true womanhood" ideology of the late 1800s. Her writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to help the abolitionist cause is considered to be extremely political by a lot of feminist critics such as Jane Tompkins, who revisited the novel and wrote about it in 1985. The act of writing a novel for abolitionism is considered to be a small but very important step for women to not be confined into their homes and become somewhat political. *Gone with the Wind*, on the other hand, has been further popularized by the proponents of Lost Cause. Believing a romanticized version of the pre-war South that was ideal, yet ruined by the North, these supporters have cherished Margaret Mitchell's mythical account. Other readers have considered it to be a story of persistence of Scarlett O'Hara in the face of difficulties, or a story of romance that she chases after. No matter what they believed in, the majority of readers have either positive or neutral opinions regarding these novels. However, especially after the Civil Rights Movement of 1950s and 1960s, more and more critics started to read these novels against the grain and found the representation of African Americans very problematic. Even though *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was for abolition and is often credited to be a catalyst for it, the novel does not represent African Americans as equals to white characters. Rather, their representation is quite stereotypical, which is also the case with *Gone with the Wind*. Through them and their popularity, these stereotypes are constantly consolidated in the reader's mind. Thus, the novels became an effective tool for Othering. Therefore, it is not surprising that Kara Walker chose these two novels to offer a counter-narration for in her early installations.

Kara Walker's *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone* offer a counter-narration for the novels by resisting them through the creation of her own versions of the novels while also rejecting the conventions of the Black Arts Movement in the 1970s. Margo Natalie Crawford explains that the Black Arts Movement of 1970s (or BAM for short) called for exclusively Black art that was "too bold and radical" to serve a "white, dominant art establishment," and was insistent on a "black collection of blackness" with a strong "anti-museum ethos" (176). For them, art was not for art's sake and could not be treated as a museum exhibit. BAM was exclusive as it was insistent on Black art that delivered a message and deemed other types of artwork unworthy. Professor Paul C. Taylor explains

certain norms and constraints in place that commanded the Black artist, which were the obligation to "depict black vernacular cultures" as well as exhibiting only in "elite exhibition spaces only under the auspices of diversity programs" (634). Artworks had to have a mission: they needed to have a message (Crawford 6). Howardena Pindell, who came into prominence in 1970s along with Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold, can be considered a great example for this mission. At the beginning of her career, Pindell had a more abstract style that did not involve race as the subject matter. However, she explains that her work faced criticism in the Studio Museum in Harlem for being abstract, which led her to become more involved in racial issues in her art:

> I didn't really get involved in the women's movement until the early seventies. That was really a direct response to taking my work to the Studio Museum. I was told by the director at the time (late sixties) that I was not doing black art because I was not using didactic images. I was not dealing with information that would be helpful to the black community. (qtd. in Smith 127)

Consequently, her art departed from the abstraction and started to explore the notions of racism very explicitly because this was the responsibility expected from her as a Black artist and she undertook it for the sake of her community. The BAM stressed the importance collective becoming and collective movement for the consciousness-raising efforts necessary for the community, and as for the artist, only through "a collective performance" was "flourishing into presence" possible (Crawford 16). Kara Walker departs from the necessity of collectiveness underlined by the BAM, and in her installations, this kind of commitment to conveying a didactic message is missing. In fact, she belongs to a group of artists following the BAM who identify with the term post-Black.

The beginning of post-Blackness can be traced to the late twentieth century. In 2001, Thelma Golden coined the term post-Black in the catalogue of Freestyle Exhibition she curated, which she explained as a "shorthand for post-black art" (14). She wrote about the special condition of contemporary black artists that now live in an era succeeding the political activism of the 1960s, the essentialist and uplifting Black Arts Movement of the 1970s, multiculturalism of 1980s and globalist expansion of 1990s (14). Therefore, post-Black artists occupy a unique position. For post-Black artists, Blackness is "something to be embraced" but they do not necessarily find it "autobiographical, or specific to their

individual experience" (Murray 23). In fact, individuality is the point of departure for post-Blackness. Even though there is a Black community that should be celebrated as a community, individuality is just as important for post-Black criticism. This emphasis on individuality differs greatly from previous generations that made gains only by being united and having a sense of community. As the society did not allow them to express themselves as individuals, being a community became compulsory for them to be seen and heard. Therefore, it is not surprising that they find the post-Black generation's insistence on individuality unthinkable, and even treacherous to their own ideals. For post-Black generation, on the other hand, the "onerous ideology of racial advancement" that was promoted by African Americans belonged exclusively to the 1960s and 70s, and this generation did not experience "racial trauma" in the same way as their parents and grandparents did (Horton and Smith 4). The experience even differed within post-Black Americans themselves. For this reason, racial trauma is not a bonding experience for them. Neither does it bring post-Black generation together with previous generation, nor does it create a sense of community within their own generation.

In 2011, Touré wrote a book called *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?: What It Means to Be Black Now*, which was extremely controversial. In the book, a wide range of influential Black figures from various fields, including entertainment, politics, and academia are interviewed by Touré. Through these conversations, he aims to establish what it means to be African American in today's society is much more different from the experience of previous generations. He begins his book by writing about his own experience as a post-Black subject that he believes to be the same for many others today:

> My parents grew up in segregation with laws and society arrayed to attempt to keep them boxed in to niggerdom. Blacks had to fight a civil war - which, in many battles, was an armed insurrection - in order to become full citizens. Through the Civil Rights and Black Power struggles many – not all but many – of those visible and invisible chains were broken. I grew up in an integrated world without racist laws holding me back. (21)

He continues that by the time he was "old enough to hold a gun," there was not much "to take up arms about" (21). The conditions of what can be called the aftermath of many major movements make the experience of the post-Black subjects different from that of their parents and grandparents. The shift in the way African American people navigate

their racial identity is a response to the progress made in the Civil Right Movement, the diversity of Black experiences, and the desire to break free from limiting stereotypes and expectations. Post-Black artists also absolve themselves of such responsibility and focus on their own rendition of their individual experience. According to Golden, they do not want to be "labeled as black artists" while working to redefine "complex notions of blackness" at the same time (14). They do not distance themselves from racial themes; they just want to make art on their own terms rather than being restricted by norms and expectations of previous generations of artists as their experience with race differs greatly from those involved in BAM. Kara Walker is one of these artists. In his interview with Touré, Derek Conrad Murray, who is a professor of art history and visual culture, claims that there are two major figures in post-Black art and Walker is one of the two:

> When I think about post-Black I think about Kara Walker because that was the moment when the younger generation developed the courage to say, listen, mom and dad, I'm gonna do this my own way. I'm gonna live my life the way I wanna live it, unapologetically. I'm going to embody Blackness in a manner of my choosing. (qtd. in Touré 34)

To diverge from the previous generations, especially when they fought long and hard for their own and next generation's freedom, is not an easy task. It entails the rejection of what is demanded of the post-Black artist. In his interview, Professor Murray continues to talk about the pressure of being a Black artist who is "a cultural producer" that is expected to show his or her "love for Blackness," but Walker walks away from the responsibility (qtd in Touré 35). Rather than a didactic message regarding race, Walker conveys an ambivalent one through her installations. This, in itself, is an act of countering the BAM tradition, which put forward the idea that art "should produce positive, affirming representations" (Murray 24). Walker continues to stand by her own aesthetics despite the harsh criticism. Margo Natalie Crawford is one of these critics who strongly defends that post-Blackness is a "brand" that relies on "a fetishism of individuality and the dead end of exceptionalism" (Crawford 16). It prioritizes individual experiences to the extent of selfishness at the expense of collective identity and undermining the sense of collective struggle at the same time. Kara Walker is criticized for prioritizing her own individuality over the communal conventions and is even accused of "catering to the perverse tastes of a predominantly white art world" and selling the older generation of artists "down the river" (Ashe and Saal 143).

In the light of what has been discussed so far, Kara Walker's post-Black counter-narration entails her own way of challenging the master narratives. She problematizes historical narratives of importance, particularly those regarding slavery such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*. She does so by providing her own versions of them. Walker's first strategy is to establish connections with the conventions of the nineteenth century so that the viewers can form a link between the novels and installations. The full names of the installations are *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* and *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart*. These explicitly refer to the title of the novels. Here, Walker also makes use of the "convention of joining two titles" that was a nineteenth-century convention aiming to "engender reader interest by providing more information about the story contained within the pages" (Neary 163). Since the long names of installations are supposed to provide more information for the viewers, the expectations of the viewers are to see a grand allegorical tableau of heaven where the angelic child in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* ends up in heaven. The reality is quite different, though. Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw writes that seeing *The End of Uncle Tom* for the first time was confusing as she expected to see an artwork similar to Harriet Beecher Stowe's sentimental novel:

> I also saw piles of excrement, children being sexually assaulted, and babies being murdered, elements that didn't fit in with my memory of the book. Were these elegant black silhouettes actually doing the horrible and ghastly things that I imagined, or was I projecting my own nasty thoughts onto them? (4)

It is clear that while *The End of Uncle Tom* is a reference to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, their relation is not very clear and the installation does not afford the same sort of sentimentality that the novel did for its readers. The second installation, *Gone*, is not about the romance of Scarlett O'Hara with the Civil War in the background either; rather, the main character in the installation is a young negress instead and the phrase "between her dusky thighs" implies sexual relations, which is absent from the original work that is a romance novel. Instead of familiar themes from the novels, what the viewers have to face is what Darby English calls "a litany of transgressions," especially "sexual relations across the 'color line'" (86).

Another link between these installations and the nineteenth century is the use of silhouettes. A popular means to create quick and cheap portraits, the silhouette art flourished in the nineteenth century before the invention of photography. In the installations, silhouettes are not keepsakes, though. They are the means by which Walker creates ambiguity. First of all, every silhouette is black in the installations, which can be considered to be a play on the concept of "color line" introduced by W.E.B. Du Bois, who considered it to be the ultimate "problem of the twentieth century" that enabled race as a "feature of distinction" between white and Black people "regardless of worth or ability" (*Souls of Black Folk* 8). By creating silhouettes only in black, she attempts to blur this line that is an important marker of Othering that always places black below this line of separation. In fact, Toni Morrison wrote about this "act of enforcing racelessness," which in itself is a racial act, giving the following example:

> Pouring rhetorical acid on the fingers of a black hand may indeed destroy the prints, but not the hand. Besides, what happens, in that violent, self-serving act of erasure, to the hands, the fingers, the fingerprints of the one who does the pouring? Do they remain acid-free? (*Playing in the Dark* 46)

In other words, racial erasure is a strategy that can never be completely achieved. While the metaphorical fingerprints are destroyed by the metaphorical acid that Morrison writes about, the hand and acid are still there. This impossibility of racial erasure is employed by Walker as a strategy in her installations. Even though all silhouettes are black, viewers can guess which ones are Black or white characters. They can do so by looking at the clothes or at who appears to be more powerful in installations and conclude who is who. The difference between Black and white silhouettes is only clear when the viewers read them "through a lexicon of racist imagery that circulated in nineteenth-century postcards, romance novels, and minstrel fliers," in which "stock figures from Southern iconography such as the black-coded Mammy, her head in a kerchief, and the white-coded lady, in a hoop skirt and petticoat" are present (Neary 168). They can also look at the physical features of silhouettes and draw conclusions, which is a nod to Lavater and his idea of physiognomy that was used as a scientific proof for Othering. In a way, viewers do what Lavater and his contemporaries did; therefore, they become complicit in the scientific racism that was widespread in the nineteenth century.

The End of Uncle Tom and *Gone* are both panoramas placed in a half-cyclorama format. In the nineteenth century, panoramas were very popular because they offered an immersive experience that people could walk into and have a 360° view of the painting in the circular building. These panoramas were accompanied with music, leaflets, and lectures. Walker's panoramas are similar in that they also "utilize visual-spatial elements" such as "silhouettes (bodies) and cycloramas (landscapes)," but they are different because of the "disruptive aesthetic experience" they provide instead of a pleasant one (Neary 138). Walker's panoramas are not continuous paintings that encompass the viewer; they are rather ambiguous and fragmented. In addition, they do not offer the entertainment that their nineteenth century counterparts did. The viewers have a disturbing experience instead. By adapting the silhouette art and cycloramas to create installations, Walker establishes a connection with the past that the novels belong to.

Uncle Tom's Cabin and *Gone with the Wind* share some similarities in narration that are completely overturned in Walker's *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*. The novels are both linear narratives because the events are presented by the narrator in a sequential order. According to Paul Taberham, "the unproblematic 'linearity' of presentation" is authoritarian because as a form, it "locks the audience into a consequence that unifies the subject impotently with and within the narrative," and hinders the audience's "own construction of meaning" (27-28). The uncomplicated nature of linear narratives limits the audience's interpretation and renders them as passive recipients. In *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*, the narrative is fragmented. The scenes of abject acts are separated from each other physically. Finding the connection between them requires interpretation and even research. This is because Walker rejects the linear narrative and forces her viewers "to generate meaning independently, rather than having it served to them" (Taberham 30). In this way, her installations become a challenge for the viewers to figure out as well as counter-narratives. In the novels, the narrator provide everything that is in accordance with his or her beliefs. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the narrator even turns into a preacher, demanding their sympathy and action by using Biblical language. The narrator of *Gone with the Wind* explains everything in a painstakingly detailed fashion. In both novels, the readers are sure to understand what the narrator wants them to understand because it is laid out for them clearly.

The process of focalization is another point of difference between the novels and installations. By means of focalization, different perspectives "inherent within the text" are brought out that force the recipients "to identify from whose point of view the narrative scene is being presented" (Song 96). In both of the novels, focalization shifts between the characters so that the readers can see the story through their eyes and sympathize with them. It should be remembered that focalization focuses on the characters that the narrator wants to present in a better light. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the Southerners or slave masters are not focalized and they are given so little dialogue. On the other hand, *Gone with the Wind* does not focalize the Northerners or freed slaves that fought hard for their freedom. It is because the more a character is focalized, the more the readers understand their view point. Having them understand the motives of the characters that do not fit the novels' ideology would be redundant, so they are conveniently left out. In the installations, what is focalized is already visualized for the viewers and is in front of them. They can only assume that the narrator-focalizer is someone that is a witness to the story. The narrator has no linguistic trace, nor are there any clues regarding who he or she is. It can be guessed that the narrator is someone who experienced or witnessed this story and is telling it to the others. In this sense, Neary's explanation that the narrator-focalizer is a former slave writing about his or her own experience is fitting. In theory, the focalization of the installations should facilitate understanding since it is "the direct content of visual signifiers," which is "an interpretation, or subjectivized content" that is already there (Bal, *Looking In* 54). That is to say, while in linguistic narrative texts, the reader has to visualize the focalizers' point of view in their mind's eye, in visual narratives there is already visualization present. Yet, when the visual signs are difficult to interpret, their presence on the walls does not make the meaning-making any easier for the viewer. Thus, the difficulty of understanding the installations is not experienced by the readers of the novels because the narrator and focalization help the readers immensely.

Another difference between the novels and installations is the presence and absence of stereotypes. Even though Kara Walker reacts to the novels because of the incorrect representations of African Americans prevalent in them, she does not use all of the

stereotypes present in the novels. For instance, the Mammy is of utmost importance in both novels but she is nowhere to be found in Walker's *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone*. Because of their physical features and clothes, the viewers can understand which silhouette is black and which one is white. On the other hand, that is about all the information they have, matching them with the African American characters in the novels is not possible. Although the viewers can make predictions and draw parallels between the characters in the story and novels, there is no way of being sure. This is the same as the viewer's inability to tell how the silhouettes are feeling when they are engaged in overly sexual, violent, and disturbing acts. The installation does not allow the viewers to make certain conclusions.

While the first impulse of viewers might be to interpret the disturbing scenes in Walker's installations as those of horror and sexual and racial violence, "elision within the outline" of these silhouettes also implies a possibility of desire circulating in the very same scene, and "certain kinds of affective responses" can never be guaranteed (Ioanes 115). That is to say, the nature of silhouettes undermines any sort of clear meaning by not providing viewers with enough details. A variety of responses are elicited from viewers because of "the blankness of the silhouette" as an art form (Shaw 177). To understand what Walker tries to achieve with her silhouettes is like deciphering a secret message. To this end, one could consider them as the shadows of viewers that stand in front of them. Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, who has extensively written on Kara Walker and even got to curate her exhibition, writes that her silhouettes act as the "black paper doppelgangers" of viewers, aiming to bring their dark side and their imagination to surface because it is the only way they can they deal with the repressed guilt (42). Here, she refers to the collective guilt of the American psyche that comes from Othering they did and immense suffering Black people have had to experience as a consequence, which continues even today. According to Shaw, the silhouettes in obscene acts visualize the unspeakable and unknowable trauma of slavery that has been "disremembered in the public discourse," and their function in Walker's art is rememory through the "haunting visualization of the disturbing" (42). The trauma of slavery is repressed, both by the agents and subjects of it. Seeing its violent and grotesque aspects visualized right in front of them unearths the trauma from where it is hidden. Walker makes this possible through her silhouettes caught in violent acts.

However, it is not only their poses that are violent, the act of silhouette making in itself also denotes violence. Touré explains that as a Black woman, Walker takes “a knife to history” so as to recast it in her own way and he quotes Walker saying that she considers herself to be the master and silhouettes as her slaves and the whole installation as her plantation (35). Just like a master, Walker is the creator of violence and the viewers can do nothing but witness it uncomfortably.

CONCLUSION

Toni Morrison writes that identity politics of racism is the "oldest and most potent" strategy in American history, creating aliens, erecting fences, and using "literary criticism, history, and memoir" (*The Origin of Others* x). Indeed, literature was used as a tool to justify racism and sustain slavery. Even though *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe was published in 1852 to support the abolitionist cause, the identity politics are still at work but in a more subtle way. Morrison calls this a literary attempt "to 'romance' slavery, to render it acceptable, even preferable, by humanizing, even cherishing, it" (*The Origin of Others* 9). The novel starts with the explanation that Kentucky has "the mildest form" of slavery due to having agricultural responsibilities that have "a quiet and gradual nature" (Stowe 8). This indicates that the institution itself is not necessarily objectionable as long as the slaves are treated right. The narrator does not state that Black and white people are the same, except that they share similar feelings regarding motherhood and religion. In the nineteenth century, these two topics could strike a chord with a lot of readers in the United States. That is why, it is not surprising that the main characters in the story are Eliza, a young mother who has lost two children already, and Tom, an extremely pious man. They both embark on a life changing journey. Tom is sold down the river and does not even consider escaping or resisting his fate. Eliza escapes to the North because being separated from her child is inconceivable for any mother, even if they are enslaved. The novel became a best seller when it was published, but did not age well. The descriptions of African Americans are extremely problematic and stereotypical. The slaves are happy with their condition in the North, dependent on their white masters for their salvation, adopt the white family as their own while happily ignoring their actual families. It was the violent treatment of the South that dehumanized slaves, the novel claims, and real Christians could not turn a blind eye. Their morality made it necessary to save the slaves and as a good Christian, accepting everyone would make things right.

Gone with the Wind is the story of Scarlett O'Hara's determination to survive during the Civil War and Reconstruction Era. Even though the antebellum way of life in the South

is lost forever, many characters are still holding onto the idea. The Southern way of slavery is described as a desirable system where, in return for care and protection, slaves work for white families. The system bears some semblance of being a large family; however, the slaves in the novel are never treated as equals even when they choose to stay and serve the family after emancipation. They are still servants who are considered as inferiors. The highest rank they can reach is being the Mammy, and it is considered to be an honor even though Mammies have to abandon their own families. On the other hand, former slaves who choose freedom are described as idle and simple-minded, with no knowledge of what to do with an abstract concept as slavery and causing trouble all the time. Free or not, many Black people are described with animalistic qualities, too, as if it is factual which echoes the nineteenth century notions of scientific racism. Besides, the beatings, sexual assaults, and torture, that is, all of the horrific aspects of slavery are conveniently omitted from the story, as if it has never been the case.

Even though *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) and *Gone with the Wind* (1936) were written in different periods and clearly for different purposes, they were similar in that they were extremely popular, both being the bestsellers of their time. However, they both created and perpetuated the negative stereotypes of Black people. In both novels, there was a limited and one-dimensional representation of Black people. The complexity of their experience or identities was conveniently left out of the story. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, slaves are depicted as having the capacity for being trained and having family bonds, yet they are still not the equals of the white characters in the novel. The narrator-focalizer in this novel is against slavery but specifically the Southern version that is cruel. The only African American characters that are not simple minded are those of mixed race, such as Eliza and George Harris. In *Gone with the Wind*, the representation is even worse as African American characters are almost never focalized, except those who remain loyal to their families and do not wish to be free. They are represented as the best of their race, but with the system overturned, they find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy. The "insolent" ex-slaves are field hands that are depicted as ungrateful and child-like, to the extent that they are easily tricked by the Northerners into deserting plantations. They have freedom but they do not know what to do with it. Such representations are very problematic. In both novels, third-person narrators who also act as narrator-focalizers

chose to focalize the characters that they thought were important. These narrator-focalizers in these novels are potent because they have "access to the minds and feelings of any character," and have the "knowledge, which the other characters may not have" (Song 100). The selection of the characters to focalize entirely depends on the subjectivity of the narrator. For instance, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the abolitionist ideology is in effect; consequently, those characters who could sway the public opinion are focalized. In this case, it is mostly Eliza and George, who are only half-Black and passing for white to begin with. Those that are not focalized are also significant. In *Gone with the Wind*, the African American characters are never focalized. The readers only hear a few sentences of exchange regarding their duties and have to trust the narrator to give a truthful account of their experience. The role of narrative in shaping public opinion is undeniable. Mieke Bal recognizes that narrative is "a mode" and not simply a genre:

> It is alive and active as a cultural force, not just as a kind of literature. It constitutes a major reservoir of the cultural baggage that enables us to make meaning out of a chaotic world and the incomprehensible events taking place in it. And, not to be forgotten, narrative can be used to manipulate. ("Working with Concepts" 16).

In fact, the readers have been manipulated by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*. Their pervasiveness in popular culture made their manipulation even worse. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had extensive readership that caused people to act in support of abolition. *Gone with the Wind* is so masterfully marketed as a historical romance and its racism has remained insidious. With its adaptation to a popular movie, the story and its implications became even more widespread. Both of these novels reinforce the master narratives that are well-known by many in a culture and become "a blueprint for all stories," and a vehicle to understand the stories of not only other people, but also of themselves (Andrews 1).

Kara Walker realizes the potential of narrative in popular genres. She states that her installations are about her own experience with narratives and the fact that she is unable to find her own representation in them:

> I got very interested in romance novels . . . and I got to thinking about how amazing and manipulative that is, to create a narrative . . . that does not have the readers best interest at heart, especially a progressive woman or girl who reads her own absence in these stories. ("Interview with Philip Verne")

Recognizing the manipulation of the narratives and her own absence from them, she creates her own narratives as a response through counter-narration. In this way, Walker is able to challenge and subvert the master narratives, namely *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*. In her early installations called *The End of Uncle Tom* and *Gone,* she creates two counter-narratives so as to add what has been conveniently left out of the novels back into the picture. It is a deliberate act of resisting the racial erasure of these popular novels.

To explain the counter-narrative status of Walker's installations, first, their narrative status needs to be established. As these installations are composed of visual signs, there might be a tendency to assume that they are visual descriptions. Applying George Lukács' definition of what is narration as opposed to description is useful. According to Lukács, a description necessitates an intense attention to detail and is created by the author from "the view of the audience" rather than the characters; therefore, it implies an outside status where readers as well as the authors are outside the text merely as observers (Lukács 111). A narrative, on the other hand, enables the readers to experience the story themselves (Lukács 116). Due to the immersive nature of Walker's installations that necessitates viewer participation to be complete, viewers do not have the option to be outsiders. Installations elicit emotions from them; therefore, they cannot be outside, and they have a personal experience. The lack of details on the silhouettes also prevents the installations from being descriptions. Ambiguity does not allow the viewers to have a clear understanding of what is going on. The main feature of descriptions is to provide every minute detail for the reader but Walker's installations do not provide details at all.

Walker uses the artistic conventions of the nineteenth century to create a link between her installations and a reconstruction of the past when the slavery existed. Her installations feature black silhouettes on white museum walls. The use of silhouette is a reference to the nineteenth century, which is when the medium was at its peak popularity, and was also used "to image race and otherness" by defining racial features seen on them (Shaw 6). Therefore, by recognizing the silhouettes, the viewers become complicit in using them for racist purposes. In addition, with the assemblage of silhouettes, Walker "manipulates space to form panoramas" (Jarenski 131). The use of panoramas is another nod to the

nineteenth century because they were a pre-cinematic form of entertainment where people went to have an immersive and educational experience. While Walker uses these two historical forms, she makes it her own. The silhouettes are no longer portraits, but they are given a full body and they can act. Panoramas are fragmented and difficult to interpret, which is so different from the panoramas of the past that offered people a continuous painting that surrounded them.

Walker also subverts the narrative conventions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*. Instead of a linear narration with a sequential ordering of events, Walker's narrative texts offer bits and pieces in fragments and no connection is evident. As opposed to the engaged and present narrator-focalizers of these two novels, the narrator-focalizer in Walker's installations is not easily available. He or she narrates the overly sexual, violent, and disturbing acts in the installation. There are babies being murdered, children engaged in sexual acts, women nursing each other. Some of these silhouettes might be the willing participants of the actions they are performing. Yet, they are not behaving with proper decorum; these actions go beyond what is socially acceptable. Who tells this story of psychosis and through whose eyes the viewers see it are two interesting questions. Janet Neary proposes that Walker's installations are visual slave narratives and the narrator-focalizers are ex-slaves who have to provide visual details of all the transgressions and violence they experienced while enslaved (159). In this way, the ex-slave narrator-focalizers provide an eyewitness account of their own enslavement and all the socially unacceptable events that they experienced. However, only the most knowledgeable viewers might guess that it is an ex-slave conveying the story of her own enslavement, but that is not a given. For this reason, the meaning is not easily accessible for an average viewer.

Walker names her installations with a reference to the titles of novels and the tradition of joining two titles in the nineteenth century to provide more information about the narrative. The full names of the installations are *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* and *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart*. These explicitly refer to the title of the novels. Yet, what viewers are faced with is not exactly

matching with the plots of these novels. When they come with such expectations that they will see an installation relevant to the novels, what they are faced with instead are

> large black silhouettes of fantasy and nightmare slave narratives with Black and white characters of all ages interacting in hyperviolent and hypersexual ways—orgiastic scenes that can evoke horror, anger, laughter, tears, sometimes all at once. Her work is highly confrontational, pushing harsh visions of slavery into your face. (Touré 34)

Confronted with alternative panoramas of slavery in Walker's installations, viewers are often uncomfortable about the whole experience. They remember a point in history that is not palatable. Regarding history, James Baldwin writes that it does not "refer merely, or even principally, to the past," but people carry it within themselves and are "unconsciously controlled by it in many ways" with history being present in all they do (722-723). In a way, Walker is aiming for discomfort so that this unconscious history can be disturbed and questioned. Only in this way can master narratives be challenged, when viewers are disturbed enough to be compelled to confront the uncomfortable truths of slavery. So far, they have only been exposed to romanticized and sterilized versions of history in these novels, censoring the violence, trauma, and dehumanization that enslaved Black people experienced.

It is well known that Walker's art does not only disturb its viewers. It has also disturbed the earlier generation of Black artists who believe that the representation of Black people should be dignified and that Black art needs to have a didactic message. Eleanor Heartney explains that

> disagreements over the artistic use of such [degrading] imagery are the product of two very different philosophies: one grounded in a modernist belief in art as a purveyor of truth and authentic feeling, and the other in the postmodernist vision of "reality" as an ideological construct made up of representations that may have no validity in themselves. (172)

Indeed, Walker belongs to the latter group of artists who describe themselves as post-Black. When asked about what it means to be post-Black, she gives a simple answer: "individuality" and admits being "so ambivalent about learning how to be devout about Blackness," and when she was younger, she had a "churning sense of anxiety and ambivalence and disappointment and a kind of individualism" (qtd. in Touré 37). The expectations of previous generations regarding how to be the right kind of Black seem to

be crippling for Walker. According to Derek Conrad Murray, the previous generation adheres to “an essentialist cultural politics of the past – those whose romantic nostalgia … would transform blackness into a type of theology to be worshipped and feared, but never questioned” (3). Not wanting to be a part of the community, she chose to break away from the tradition so as to pursue her individual vision. Such an individualistic starting point is in line with her identification as a post-Black artist. How she chooses to create counter-narratives is to provide alternative panoramas of slavery, conveniently absent in the novels. The viewers are often uncomfortable about the whole experience.

Toni Morrison wrote that in time, she came to the realization that the actual “subject of the dream is the dreamer” (*Playing in the Dark* 17). In fact, the subject of Walker’s installations is herself, her own experience with Blackness, with *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*, and the problematic history of slavery. Her installations aim to add what is missing from the novels. Even though Walker’s silhouettes confuse the viewers, once they see them in the context they can understand that the unnarrated part of these novels were extremely disturbing, degrading, and cannot exactly be known, just like how the feelings of silhouettes cannot be told.

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