"We the human Family": Revisions of American National History in Contemporary Slave Narratives

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Abstract

The paper discusses two contemporary slave narratives, Octavia Butler's Kindred *(1979) and J. California Cooper's* Family *(1991) in order to demonstrate how African American women writers revision American past. More specifically, the paper demonstrates how both Butler and Cooper challenge the constructed ideas about American national identity, the understanding of which has been shaped by notions of family. Foregrounding miscegenation in their own specific ways (Butler via an interracial marriage that may be read as a "trope of integration"; Cooper via a "multicultural project" in which the history of humankind is presented as a narrative of miscegenation), both writers recast the American nation as a family whose members share a common history.*

Introduction

As Keith Byerman argues in his seminal book *Remembering the Past in Contemporary African American Fiction* (2005), "one of the prominent features of American culture since the late 1960s has been the flowering of interest in African American history" (1). A brief survey of African American literature indeed confirms that an increasing number of contemporary black writers have chosen to reconstruct the African American past in order to revise American history, making historical narrative their dominant mode of writing. This interest is reflected particularly in the blossoming of the contemporary slave narrative, a distinct American genre that adopts slavery as its subject matter, demonstrating both "a deep concern with history and its consequences for the present" (Sievers, 3).[1]

While much of the critical scholarship on contemporary slave narratives has focused on the issues of revision of the American past in connection with the distorted or missing descriptions of black experience under slavery and/or empowerment of black race, relatively little attention has been paid to the delicate issue of the co-existence of the black and white races, especially outside the realm of master-slave relations.[2] Yet if Keith Byerman is correct in his view that "the very choice of history as subject is

determined by authors' experiences of the recent past *and the present*" (Byerman, 2, emphasis mine), and if we accept Stephanie Sievers's proposition that "each literary text [is] a verbal expression in which [cultural and political] context is always contained" (Sievers, 14), then contemporary slave narratives could also be read as implicit commentaries on inter-racial relations in contemporary America.

In this paper, I attempt to analyze two contemporary slave narratives, Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979) and J. California Cooper's *Family* (1991), through the lens of inter-racial relations in order to demonstrate how African American women writers not only revision the American past but also, and perhaps more importantly, speak to present conditions by offering viable solutions to the still disparaging race relations in contemporary America.[3] In doing so, I argue that by challenging the constructed ideas about American national identity, the understanding of which has been shaped by notions of family, both writers creatively recast the American nation, always thought as one of white origins, as a family whose black and white members not only share a common history but are inextricably bound by blood from the moment of the country's founding.

Interracial Marriage as a Trope of Integration

Octavia Butler's *Kindred* is set in 1976. Its narrative unravels the story of Dana, a 26-year-old black woman, who is repeatedly snatched by the arm of history from her home in California and transported back in time to the antebellum South to save the son of a white plantation owner, Rufus, from certain death. As Dana gradually realizes during her time travels, she cannot escape the responsibility of ensuring that Rufus will grow to manhood because he must father one of her direct ancestors. In other words, Dana is forced to undergo the time travels and keep saving Rufus because her own existence depends on his survival: without Rufus, her family line would never begin.

The intricate relation between one's past and family is foregrounded by the novel's title, which, according to Lisa Long, poignantly "invokes the imperative of kindred: a notion of individuals bound by blood, unable to escape the history encoded in their bodies" (Long, 463). Yet living very much in the present, Dana has lost her connection to the past and is unable to feel the imperative. Having accepted the sanitized versions of American history presented by the media and books, she has no interest in investigating its truths and complexities. The fact that she has little awareness of the pain that saturates the African American past is best

illustrated by her careless description of the agency she temporarily works for—"[W]e regulars called it a slave market" (Butler, 52)—and her interracial marriage to a white man, Kevin.

For Dana, race bears no significance in making the choice of her "kindred spirit," especially when *equal to* her, and Kevin is "crazy enough to keep on trying [writing]" (57). Yet the society around her has, historically, deemed race a defining factor and prescribed two possible scenarios for interracial interaction. The first scenario sees the possibility of racial mingling as unacceptable and upholds that the trespassers be severely punished. In the novel, this scenario is invoked when both Kevin's sister and Dana's uncle refuse to accept the couple's interracial marriage, threatening to disown them. Although each racial side objects to the marriage for different reasons, their arguments are shaped by the very same paradigm of race relations formed during slavery. Whereas Kevin's white sister "wouldn't have [Dana] in her house—or [Kevin] either if [he] married [Dana]" (110) for fear of Dana's dark skin color contaminating the pure white blood, Dana's black uncle would rather will all his property to "his church than leave [it] to [Dana] and see [it] fall into the white hands" (112), the hands of the historically advantaged group that has grown rich on the unpaid labor of blacks.

The second scenario, which also owes its origin to the race relations paradigm created under slavery, allows the possibility of interracial mingling, but only under the condition that it be to the benefit or profit of the white race. In the novel, this scenario is invoked when Dana's black aunt does not object to the interracial marriage, because she sees it as a way of "lightening" the race. As Dana explains to Kevin, "[s]he doesn't care much for white people, but she prefers light-skin blacks" (111). Although Dana's aunt believes that the interracial coupling will be to the benefit of the black race, her theory, in fact, indicates the opposite for it proves that she has "bought into" the ideology of white superiority, ascribing more value to whiteness while considering blackness inherently less beautiful. Dana's white male co-workers also fit into the category of those who allow the possibility of interracial mingling, seeing blackness as an exotic and exciting element of their sexual fantasies. Their sly references to "chocolate and vanilla porn" (56) in front of the interracial couple readily indicate that in their racial and gendered understanding, a black woman (read as blackness) is not only subordinate to a white man (read as whiteness), but also prey to his sexual appetites (read as always inherently a sexual object whose fate is decided by the white subject).4

In both historically prescribed scenarios, the two races never exist on equal terms and/or as "kindred spirits" to each other—the way Dana

understands her relation to Kevin. At best, their interaction can be described as somehow deformed, as indicated in the way in which one of the women working for the same agency as Dana poignantly portrays Dana's relation to Kevin: " 'the weirdest-looking couple' she had ever seen" (57). Yet taking the pain of demonstrating how bigotry, racism, sexism, and slave psychology are still palpable in contemporary American society, Butler does not intend to depict the relationship of Dana and Kevin as utterly problematic or deeply unhealthy.5 Rather, I want to argue, she insists that it embodies a positive trope of integration, at the core of which is the recognition that one's past never exists outside of a national history, an imperative that Dana will also have to learn to understand.

In order to facilitate Dana's difficult task, which first and foremost entails finding her lost connection to the past, Butler employs the strategy of intimacy and immediacy of the protagonist's pain (Long, 462). Collapsing the two-hundred-year temporal distance of slavery —Kindred opens on June 9, 1976—by transporting Dana to the antebellum South, she forces Dana to live under slavery and feel the physical pain and suffering the slaves then had to endure. Having been threatened, beaten, humiliated, nearly raped and almost killed, Dana eventually comes to understand that no contemporary representation of slavery can "tell" the real "truth" and fully describe slavery's raw reality:

> I had seen people beaten on television and in the movies. I had seen the too-red blood *substitute* streaked across their backs and heard their *well-rehearsed* screams. But I hadn't lain nearby and smelled their sweat or heard them pleading or praying, shamed before their families and themselves. I was probably less prepared for *the reality* [of slavery] than the child crying not far from me.
>
> (Butler, 36, emphases mine)

As Lisa Long argues, "The suffering that ordinarily cannot be conveyed is invoked in [*Kindred*] as metonymic proof of a knowable past. The protagonists believe that history really happened to them because it hurts them" (Long, 460-61). Dana is hurt not only by what she is made to witness (and cannot control) but also by what she is made to endure: the physical and psychological tortures that leave her body and mind permanently scarred.

According to Butler, history not only physically hurts but also haunts the living psychologically for Dana is literally enslaved by her own history via the demands of her ancestors. Dana does not have any control

over rejecting the past or shaking off its invisible shackles; she cannot let go of it. She is forced to live it and live *in* it because her future — the future of her family — depends on it. As argued earlier, living in the past represents for Dana the responsibility for her lineage. Whenever Rufus is about to die, she is transported in time to save him; and it is only when she is afraid for her own life that she can return to the elusive safety of her contemporary home, from which she can be snatched again without warning. Her time travels, unpredictable in terms of their frequency, nature, and length, resulting in a feeling of loss of safety, security and control of her life upon return to the contemporary times, as well as of confusion stemming from temporal inability to fit in the present, bring home the psychologically damaging and disorienting impact of the Middle Passage, making it real.

Although Dana is at first able to keep the past and the present separate, thinking that she [and Kevin who happens to be transported in time via Dana] "weren't really in. We were observers watching a show. We were watching history happen around us. And we were actors" (Butler, 98), she soon learns of the pervasiveness of the past: history can try to get under your skin (Long, 467); it may attempt to possess and even rape you.[6] As Dana painfully realizes, her twentieth-century awareness is of no use to her in terms of survival for "[n]othing in my education or knowledge of the future helped me to escape" (Butler, 177). Moreover, she discovers that the more she engages herself in the past, the more easily she seems to accept slavery, getting used to and being numbed by its horrible experiences. As time goes on, Dana stops "acting"; she can no longer keep the distance between herself and the alien time: the two are collapsed.[7]

Dana learns the hard way how history is both encoded in and engraved on our bodies; the physical presence of Dana's scar and amputated arm (two visible wounds inflicted on her by the past) functions as a reminder of having one's painful past written on one's body as a text that never allows us to forget, or to have "enough of the past" (264); rather, it forces us to search for an understanding of the text. For Butler, we must learn to read the authentic historical narratives that reside within us, access to which is mediated by our pain, the experience of which will eventually become a resource for healing.

Having lost her connection to the past, it is only through her experience of slavery that Dana can gain a fuller knowledge of American history and her long forgotten ancestry, and learn the imperative of kindred. Essentially orphaned and estranged from her guardians by the choice of her career and husband, it is not until she travels to the nineteenth century to reconnect with her ancestors that Dana learns of the importance of kindred and *feels,* for the first time, the blood ties to her family, although,

paradoxically, this "wholeness" costs her an arm and the painful realization that one of her ancestors is a white oppressor and rapist, who, in terms of his physical appearance, is not entirely unlike her husband.

Having exposed the "messy nature" of white and black relations under slavery and the way in which the two races cannot be easily separated from each other, Butler problematizes American national history while also suggesting that perhaps its understanding is close at hand if only we approach it on different, collective terms. When Dana returns at the end of the novel to the place where she once experienced slavery in order to "try to understand. To touch solid evidence that those people existed. To reassure [her]self that [she's] sane," she wonders why she wanted to come, instead of letting the painful past go. Kevin, who accompanies her to Maryland, responds to her rhetorical question: "You probably needed to come for the same reason I did" (264).

Kevin, having also had a personal experience of slavery thanks to holding onto Dana while she was being transported in time, does not survive his experience of the past unscathed either, although initially, he seems better equipped to do so than Dana: his factual knowledge of black history is broad and his race and gender work to his advantage. Kevin's physical wound, the mysterious scar on his forehead, smaller than that of Dana's, is, I believe, of crucial importance, perhaps more so than his psychological wounds. It signals that Kevin must also come to terms with his own past, which will inevitably mark him forever; he must understand how his past is implicated in black history. By juxtaposing Kevin's story and his wound with those of Dana, who have only each other to tell about their experiences, Butler poignantly concludes that American national history, and its slavery in particular, must be addressed and overcome by both whites and blacks collectively because their stories are enmeshed; they have a shared past. It is only together that Kevin and Dana can seek and find healing, their future being the hope for next generations.

As Angelyn Mitchell suggests, "Butler's choice to foreground miscegenation and interracial issues … creates a trope of integration that one may read as a strategy to assist American society in its ongoing struggle with race relations." While not offering miscegenation as a solution to racial problems, Butler "emphasizes the necessity of integrated collective engagement and coalition building across the color line as a way of solving some of [American] contemporary problems." The interracial relationship between Dana and Kevin can be thus interpreted "as a metaphor for how America may be healed" (71): "Both black and white Americans […] confront[ing] their shared past of racism, […] acknowledg[ing] the pain and the scars of the past, and […] liv[ing]

together as kindred" (70); after all, they belong to one national family whose members share a common history and are bound by blood.

History of Humankind: Narrative of Miscegenation

If Butler's *Kindred* argues that white and black Americans share the same blood, J. California Cooper's novel *Family* takes the idea even further to suggest that the entire history of humankind is a narrative of miscegenation in which all the world's races and lineages are intertwined. The novel opens with an epigraph that can be read as a creational myth:

> And the earth mother asked the earth child as she handed it the succulent earth fruit, "and when does a tree bear fruit that is not its own?" And the earth child threw back its beautiful head, laughing, saying, "never, never..." Then took a bite from the heavy full fruit which sent the rich juice running down its chin, falling falling over the mountains of the earth child. Rolling, rolling down and into the river of love and hate called tears. Running, running even over the fields of time, until all the juices flowed again, blending, into the ocean of human life. The sun looked down ... The moon peered up. Listening, moving on, saying, "everyone knows that. That's what makes a family!" (Cooper, n.p.)

The epigraph is interesting in several ways. First, as Angelyn Mitchell argues, "it calls to mind the symbolic image of the family tree and posits the connection between the earth and all of its inhabitants, the family of humankind," and second, it "alerts the reader that … there may be times when the tree bears fruit it does not *claim* as its own" (Mitchell, 112, emphasis in the text). In doing so, the epigraph poignantly foreshadows the theme of the American family created under slavery, with all its "complex genealogical relations created through miscegenation" (108). The novel, with its pertinent title, *Family*, further develops the theme to demonstrate not only that "all members of the American family have not always been treated as 'family'" (110) but also, and perhaps more importantly, that the very meaning and history of the American nation as a family must be reconsidered.

Cooper's novel centers on the character of Clora, an enslaved black woman of brown color who recollects the history of her own lineage as one of endless miscegenation. According to Clora, "once upon a time," a half

African/half Greek man fell in love and married a sister of his half African/ half Italian friend. They had children and their children had children until "the slave catchers came" and "[s]ome of the couple's living children were taken. Stolen, separated and taken to many lands ... sold. A few lived on. They had children. These children had children by their owners and others. Portuguese, Spanish, English, Italian, French, Irish, Scottish, others. Men from lands all over the world. Until one day, near my time, a girl-child was born who was to be my grandmother" (Cooper, 2-3).

As Mitchell argues, in Clora's recollection "Cooper eliminates the binary of races as opposing or contrasting groups by interweaving the races to the point where they are virtually indiscernible to the human eye" (Mitchell, 112). This set-up, I want to argue, is strategic in that it allows Cooper later on in the novel to recuperate her argument in order to highlight the falsity of alleged visibility of racial identity, which nineteenth-century American society tried so vehemently to uphold. Moreover, just like the creational myth opening the novel which, by its very definition, suggests a "new way of looking at something that is already a part of us" (Beaulieu, 88), the opening lines about Clora's lineage serve to reposition our understanding of a personal history, destabilizing the certainty of racial and cultural belonging while, simultaneously, insisting on its significance.

Clora closes the rumination about her ancestry, imbued with a mythic quality invoked by "once upon a time" and filled with various factual holes, by making a statement with double emphasis: "I *do* know we *did* start out being black" (Cooper, 3, emphasis mine). This assertion gains more significance as Clora bears four children to her white slave master and begins to witness the gradual "watering down" of her family skin color —her light-skinned son Sun passing for white and marrying into a wealthy French family, as well as her light-skinned daughter Peach's marriage to a white Scot. Clora fears that miscegenation, whether voluntary or forced, may gradually lead to the complete disappearance of blackness, leaving no visible trace of its existence:

> I was trying to watch my children, my blood, but it was getting all spread out ... Now. I had wanted to stay round and watch my family blood, see my family grow, if it could survive slavery. And it was growin. But it was growin in so many different lands and colors. I wouldn'ta recognized my own children's children, my own blood, if I hadda met them comin down the street right in front of my face.
>
> (Cooper, 62-3)

Her anxiety, however, also reveals that perhaps what is at stake here is not the extinction of blackness but the rethinking of the concept of family, defined in narrow racial terms, a task that Clora has to undertake if she wants to be true to her blood.

Unlike Dana in *Kindred*, Clora accesses the living history of her blood line from a perspective of a disembodied spirit—for seeing no prospect in her life, she attempted to kill herself and her children to escape from slavery only to discover that her children survived and she remained a passive observer watching them grow from a distance. It is from her position of being at a distance, yet close, that Clora invites the reader to *see* her family situation, to *feel* the desperation of their lives, and to *understand* their hardships: "[. . .] always havin to harken to the white master of the Land and get another baby to lose out into anywhere-land, [they] just couldn't take it no more. *See*?" (Cooper, 5, emphasis mine).[8]

As James Weaver points out in his essay "Rehabilitative Storytelling: The Narrator-Narratee Relationship in J. California Cooper's *Family*," "Clora's aim in telling her story is to make us live her written history … for it is through that experiential identification with the narrator that her audience may … 'understand' … her family's predicament under slavery and during its aftermath" (Weaver, 111-12). Yet Clora's repeated insistence on *seeing* as a way of engaging the audience is significant for yet another reason; as Weaver contends, it "is deeply implicated in the historical power relations that define the various characters according to their racial appearance" (112). In other words, Clora's insistence on *seeing* is related to the visibility of racial identity, or rather "one's ability to *see* [it]" (112, emphasis in the text), an ability that Cooper exposes throughout the novel as highly problematic.

When Clora's eldest daughter, Always, gives birth to a child on the same day as her mistress, she is able to switch the babies without anyone noticing the difference, for both babies have the same white father and look alike; their racial identity is not visible to the human eye. Yet as Cooper reminds us, although racial identity cannot be ascribed to either of the babies based on their physical features (in particular, their skin color), in nineteenth- century America, it must be determined by other aspects (such as the status of their mother or the one-drop rule), for the black/white distinction is crucial to the maintenance of social order; race defines a person's status and position in society: whiteness implies security and privileges, while blackness is linked to enslavement and hardships (Weaver, 125). Knowing the fate that would await her biological son, Always switches the babies so she can set her son free. Her deed, in the end, turns against her for being raised as a white boy, Doak Jr. will

eventually become so "white" that he will come to hate blackness, wanting to kill his own mother so she cannot jeopardize his white life and dreams. Always thus learns that racial identity is not only invisible to the human eye but also socially constructed; for it is the environment, "the circumstance" that "confuse[s] you and make[s] your thinking go all crooked and wrong" (Cooper, 146).

Throughout the novel Cooper strives to demonstrate how "the circumstance" of slavery produces not only "crooked" thinking but also "crooked" familial relations, in which black families are routinely disrupted by the whites; black children are routinely born out of wedlock, as products of enforced sexual relations between white male slave masters and black female slaves, to increase the slave inventory of the masters and become servants to their white half-brothers and sisters; and black women are routinely subjected to unwanted sex and pregnancies, faced with the dilemma of how to love children fathered by their oppressors and cope with their loss when the children are taken away from them. In this context, Always faces yet another challenge: she must learn to divide her love between her biological son (who is growing up as white and privileged) and the white boy she is raising as her own "to be a slave nigger all his life" (146). The difficulty of this task is best illustrated by Clora's deft observation: Always "knew who her son was, where her blood was, and that always set her actions. She was careful, but she was a mother and sometime [*sic*] she forgot to be the right mother for the right son" (147).

Demonstrating the indeterminacy of race and family, and the impact of racial transgression under slavery, Cooper persuasively argues that race in America has complicated not only mothering instincts, but also the very definition of immediate blood relations. The complexities of the impact of racial transgression are fully revealed when Always's white mistress, Loretta, gets impregnated by Always's black son (himself a product of miscegenation), and her womb fills with a fruit that is at once her own niece and a grandchild to Always, her black slave.[9] Unlike the Earth child's negative response to her mother's query "WHEN DOES A TREE BEAR FRUIT THAT IS NOT ITS OWN?" Loretta knows that the fruit she bears she cannot claim for her own, since by definition of the one-drop-rule the child is black. Yet as Cooper argues, although this act of racial transgression is deemed in nineteenth-century America as socially unacceptable for being both a serious crime against the idea of pure white blood and a threat of its contamination, it cannot be perceived strictly as unnatural. For nature has allowed it (despite Loretta's serious efforts to abort the child), being much aware of the fact that a tree does not bear fruit that is not its own. This is the lesson that Clora, who is left with brining up

the child, and who had all her children by her slave master, comes to learn at the end of the novel: "we done always been relatives anyway" (162).
The idea of all people as members of one family can certainly be interpreted in a biblical sense, according to which we are all relatives since we are all descendents of Adam and Eve, but I believe that Cooper wants us to understand it specifically in the context of interracial relations. In this context, "having always been relatives" means acknowledging and accepting interracial mixing as an inevitable phenomenon over which humans have no control because human attraction and greed have no boundaries. Moreover, it also means shifting our attention from lamenting that miscegenation happened to celebrating the possibility of its "potential for recognizing a fundamental human connection" (Weaver, 112).

In this respect, the connection between Clora, the narrator of the story, and her audience is of great significance. As argued earlier, Clora's way of engaging the audience has several functions in the narrative; her use of the word "see" invites the readers to understand the hardships of slavery while insisting they pay attention to the (in)visibility of racial identity. Moreover, when combined with the adverbial "now," it also functions as a device to cross the temporal boundaries between the narrator and the reader, invoking a temporality in which the narrator and the audience are closely aligned, helping "to move the reader beyond the artificial and into a virtually 'real' identification with [Clora's] situation" (Weaver, 112). To render Clora's story even more immediate, Cooper employs the strategy of intimacy (albeit in a different way than Butler), allowing Clora to address her audience as "Chile." By doing so, Clora not only makes us, the readers, members of her extended family, no matter what blood and color we are, but she also forces us to confront the American slave past, which has, thanks to Cooper's strategic use of the device, become our past as well. Finding a connection between and among all cultures, Cooper in *Family* teaches us that we all share the same history. After all, as Clora concludes in the end of the novel: "We the human Family" (231).

Conclusion

As my analysis demonstrates, both Octavia Butler and J. California Cooper challenge the constructed ideas about American national identity, the understanding of which has been shaped by notions of family. Foregrounding miscegenation in their own specific ways—Butler via an interracial marriage that may be read as a "trope of integration"; Cooper

via a "multicultural project" in which the history of humankind is presented as a narrative of miscegenation—both writers creatively recast the American nation as a family whose black and white members not only share a common history but are inextricably bound by blood. Although not entirely new,[10] the idea of America as a nation of miscegenation is interesting precisely for the very reason for its re-occurance. Why do Butler in 1979 and Cooper in 1991, feel the need to return to the idea that had been developed by many of their literary predecessors?[11] The answer may lie in the argument presented in the introduction that texts always reflect the political and cultural context in which they are produced. If this view is correct, then the novels must be seen as two necessary and direct responses to "the ideology of colorblindness" that the newly emerging multicultural America in the 1970s brought about (Collins, 6). In this sense, their value is immense, for as the most recent book about the controversy of Thomas Jefferson's black lineage, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (2008), by Annette Gordon-Reed indicates, miscegenation is here to stay.

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Notes

1. While I use the term "contemporary slave narrative," scholars have also employed other terms to designate the genre. Bernard W. Bell coined the term "neoslave narrative;" Ashraf Rushdy uses the term "neo-slave narrative"; and Angelyn Mitchell prefers the term "liberatory narrative." For definitions, see Bell, 289, Rushdy, 3, and Mitchell, 4, respectively.
2. See, for example, Keizer's *Black Subjects*, Sievers's *Liberating Narratives*, Mitchell's *Freedom to Remember*, and Beaulieu's *Black Women Writers*.
3. For the description of race relations in contemporary America, see, for example, Collins's *From Black Power to Hip Hop*.
4. Thus black women become breeders and/or concubines, while black men are being emasculated, both figuratively and literally.

5. Butler does admit that the relationship may be problematic in gendered ways. This can be seen, for example, in the episode when Kevin is assuming Dana will type his manuscripts.
6. In the novel, Rufus attempts to rape Dana but Dana stabs him to death. Afraid for her life, she is transported back in time to her contemporary home but her arm remains stuck under the dead body of Rufus; in some ways, it is amputated by the weight of history.
7. Butler further collapses the temporal differences by suggesting that Dana and Alice are two halves of the same woman, and that there are many affinities between Rufus and Kevin.
8. Although this example concerns Clora's mother, rather than her children, I think it best illustrates Cooper's use of "see" as a verb with multiple meanings of seeing, feeling, and understanding.
9. The choice of this relationship (a white mistress and a black male slave instead of a white master and a black female slave) is deliberate. Like Smith, I believe that white women were more important for the formation of the American identity than men in that it was through their bodies that the American nation as a white man's country was perpetuated (16).
10. As early as in 1864, during his presidential reelection campaign, Abraham Lincoln was "smeared" as "the 'father' of a racially hybrid America" (Smith, 125), while many of his contemporaries (and adversaries) were busy "raising the stakes" with pamphlets about the theory of the blending of the races. For detailed information about the Miscegenation controversy see Wood, 53-79.
11. For a comprehensive list of these authors, see Felipe Smith's *American Body Politics*.

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