

**Region Complex Distinctions of Class, Gender and Race  
in *Tite Poultte* by George Washington Cable  
and *The Convent Girl* by Grace King**

**Yustin Sartika**

Fakultas Bahasa dan Sastra, Universitas AKI Semarang  
Jl. Imam Bonjol 15-17 Semarang  
Email: yustinsartika@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT**

*Writers, female and male, black and white all wrote about the hardship of being the culture that wasn't liked. Regional writers emphasized characteristics of specific geographic settings—the culture, speech (dialect), customs, and landscape. As they recorded and commented on the distinctive culture, speech and customs that distinguished specific geographical areas, these authors also struggled with the role of class, race and gender in local life.*

*Keywords: regional writers, class, race, gender*

**1. Introduction**

American literature is shaped to represent American life accurately with a new “realist” aesthetic during the second-half of nineteenth century. Realist literature differs from Romantic literature because it attempts to depict life accurately. Romantic literature is based on the conviction that intuition, emotion and imagination are superior to reason. On the other hand, realism, as the name implies, is rooted in reality.

Realism is a manner and method of composition by which the author describes normal, average life, in an accurate, truthful way” (Lars Ahnebrink, 1950:269). Realism is related to regionalism. Regionalism is an expression of the realist

aesthetic; in other words, if writers are to be accurate in representing their world, they must include the peculiarities of their world. For the past decade or so, regionalism has been making a triumphant return in American literature, enabling readers to get a sense of place as well as a sense of time and humanity.

Louisiana emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century as the most complex and vibrant geographic area in the country. Louisiana authors played important roles for the development of regional or local literature. Regionalist authors portray the specific traits of particular regions or areas. Grace King and George Washington Cable are also defined as “local color” or “regionalist fiction”.

George Washington Cable was born in 1844 in New Orleans. His mother was a puritan family from New England and his mother was a German from a Virginian slaveholding family. He started his career by writing columns for New Orleans Picayune. Even he didn't go to school but he spent his time most for reading and writing. He learnt much about the old New Orleans records; it supported his knowledge for many of his writings that would garner his national recognition then he crafted them into stories about the different regional culture.

Grace King (1852-1932) was born in New Orleans, but her family fled to their plantation after the outbreak of Civil War (1861) and the occupation of New Orleans. After they returned to New Orleans, King attended Catholic convent school. King wrote a lot about women, both white and Creole, and their experiences in impoverished Louisiana. She cited her mother's storytelling as an inspiration for her writing and often wrote about how things like marriage, education, and motherhood affected women specifically. In her nonfiction works King focused on women in history and the feminine side in historical studies. In *Creole Families of New Orleans*, she says history lays just as much "bits of old furniture, jewelry, glass, old miniatures,

portraits, scraps of silk and brocade" as in historical archives and the like.

## **2. Underlying Theory**

A commitment to capturing accurately the realities and peculiarities of regional culture distinguishes all of the regionalist writers by carefully embedding life narratives into the very plots and practices that their characters take up, regionalist writers transform their storytelling characters into producers and consumers of such life narratives. Those thrive across many media sources; the term is especially adaptable to the visual vocabularies of regionalism. "Mother", "Black" and "White" are some words that can be used to represent regionalist works.

On meeting the needs in multicultural society, people sometimes need to face some cultural obstacles like race, social class and gender. In multicultural society, race can be a sign which has been labeled, racial prejudice. Since it engages someone or a group's attitude to another then racial prejudice can be very sensitive. Physically race is different to another, skin color; hair, dialect and behavior, and those can be potential problems on communicating with others.

The prejudice is strengthen socially, stereotype which is built time by time in which racial groups have their own

interpretation based on racial and personality background than the cultural framework. On the other words, racial tendency emerges larger in someone's mind than the culture itself. Someone or group's feeling of being superior is the initial of discrimination. Discrimination leads to racism, treating people differently based on race and social characteristics. Racism become a problem since it doesn't only treat people differently but also used to insist a group's superiority to others.

According to Jusuf and Srivanto (2001: 13-15), there are two contradictive perspective of racism. The first is scientific perspective, it is used to identify and classify human based on physic ethnologically and anthropologically. Racism is also understood unscientifically as prejudice. In this concept, racism is as a belief that human can be classified into several races which the member of each race is inferior compared to another race.

According to George M. Fredrickson (2005: 13), racism has two components: difference and power. Racism comes from the mental attitude which looks at "them" different to "us" permanently. This different feeling provides some reasons to use superiority and power for treating "others" miserly and unfairly compared to the member of our groups.

As a way of life, racism has a belief that some groups have higher position than others so those who are inferior are deserved to be slaved, be destroyed and treated inhumanely (Darma, 2009: 127). Belief about superiority and inferiority has been used as social justification for discrimination, segregation, and slavery.

Live of women have always been interesting for regionalism's readers and writers. The phrase "women's lives" has appeared in and influenced nearly all the recent studies of women's regionalism. It reminding us not to take for granted that the lives featured in women's regionalism had often gone overlooked in earlier traditions of American literary history, those provide a central and anchoring term.

Reaching its peak in popularity between 1865 and 1914—in both magazines and novels—American literary regionalism has been both praised and admonished for its attention to smaller locations on maps and lives that we would not expect to read in memoirs, it is time to acknowledge just how invested this genre has been in granting women writers a place for interrogating and assembling women's lives: not just in featuring women characters more prominently and consistently, but in plotting the lengthier processes through which other characters

gather, report on and sometimes even silence the lives of women. When Elizabeth Hampsten studies the life writing of Midwest women, she acknowledges that, to her surprise, writing easily classified as regional does not read regionally: "These women's writings do not do that; their 'place' is not where we had expected to find them. In much of this writing, for all its particularity, it is hard to tell (if the postmark is missing) where the writers are, for they do not bother to tell us in words we are used to." Regionalism does not always behave regionally; often, other things are taking place. As Cecelia Tichi has put it, "They were regionalists—but not solely in the ways critics have conventionally thought. The geography of America formed an important part of their work, but essentially they charted the regions of women's lives, regions both without and within the self."

Reading across regionalism through its life narratives preserves the specificity of cultural differences and challenges us to understand the genre as a location for writers to portray life narratives as constructed, circulated and contested. Because critical conversations about regionalism are being had across regions, as well as within them, comparing the formations and possibilities of life narratives offers an especially productive method for considering how writers

approach regionalism as a genre for thinking through life writing, without turning only to their own lives as an example.

Regionalism defines the materials for creating life narratives collaboratively and discusses authorship collectively, as a cultural project of portraying life writing in, rather than as a single, finished product. At a moment when more women than ever were putting their lives in print, regionalism records an array of approaches into a written tableau, archiving the visual vocabularies that present lives to be seen, as well as read. Acknowledging the "we" behind the "I", as Larcom encourages, means reading these portrayals of authorship taking place among others, since one person's life must be told through many life narratives. While we can turn to autobiographies and biographies to study nineteenth-century lives, regionalism features the invaluable processes and discussions surrounding writers who seek to convey such lives: the conversations they have, the silences they encounter and strive to represent. By considering regionalism less as a fixed label—either a writer is or is not—and more as an adaptive engagement with portraits of both lives and places, we can evaluate regionalism as a changing genre for writers, a landscape of visual vocabularies. Though critics first turned to

the language of sketches to name nineteenth-century regionalism, twentieth-century regional writers develop this genre so that these later novels are brimming with collected photographs, portraits and media that surround a more collective “I” crafted out of many sources for relating that life. Regionalists may not be publishing their own autobiographies, but their fiction records an archive of possibilities: the collective processes of collecting life narratives, in uttering “we” to surround an “I.”

### **3. Discussion**

During the local color era Cable wrote of Creole New Orleans, and he has been called the most important southern artist working in the late 19th century, as well as the first modern southern writer. Cable was not a Creole himself, but he had deep roots in New Orleans since he was born and grew up there.

The story *Tite Poulitte* also takes place in New Orleans. There are three characters in this story, Zalli, Tite Poulitte and Kristian Koppig. Zalli is Tite’s mother. She is called as Madame John since she inherited a house from Monsieur John. Just if he had a wife, she would be also called Madame John.

To Zalli, of course, as to all “quadroon ladies,” the festivities of the Conde-street ball-room were familiar of old. There, in the happy days when dear Monsieur John was

young, and the eighteenth century old, she had often repaired under guard of her mother - dead now, alas! – and Monsieur John would slip away from the dull play and dry society of Théâtre d’Orléans, and come around with his crowd of elegant friends; and through the long sweet hours of the ball she had danced, and laughed, and coquetted under her satin mask, even to the baffling and tormenting of that prince of gentlemen, dear Monsieur John himself. No man of questionable blood dare set his foot within the door. Many noble gentlemen were pleased to dance with her.

In 1860 “color was closely correlated with status: 80 percent of all blacks were slaves and 70 percent of all mulattos were freemen” (Blassingame, 1860:21). These two factors in Louisiana’s demographics allowed for the emergence of a distinct class of mixed race women who became known collectively as quadroons.

These free women of color, also known as the *femmes de couleur libre*, occupied a complicated space in the social hierarchy of New Orleans. As part of the population of free people of color, the quadroons were in a class higher than slaves but lower than poor whites. Within this middle tier of society, there were established racial classifications that caused further division among the free population. This division was based on racial composition and therefore, it further separated these quadroon women into a group of their own: Among themselves, however, there were jealous and fiercely guarded distinctions: ‘griffes, briqués,

mulattoes, quadroons, octoroons, each term meaning one degree's further transfiguration toward the Caucasian standard of physical perfection' (Nelson, 2000:3-4). Quadroon women were very aware of their beauty in the eyes of white society. Clearly, white women felt threatened by them, and white men were attracted to them.

... a palish handsome woman, by the name - or going by the name - of Madame John. You would hardly have thought of her being "colored". Though fading, she was still of very attractive countenance, fine, rather severe features, nearly straight hair carefully kept, and that vivid black eye so peculiar to her kind. Her smile, which came and went with her talk, was sweet and exceedingly intelligent; and something told you, as you looked at her, that she was one who had had to learn a great deal in this troublesome life.

As quadroon, Cable describes Zalli as a very attractive countenance, nearly straight hair carefully kept and her vivid black eye was so peculiar to her kind. From the quotation above, it can be seen that Zalli is an intelligent "colored" woman. Her smile that come and goes with her talk shows that she is a black woman who has good manner. She is the "colored" woman who has to learn a great deal in this trouble life. Even she is a free woman, but since she belongs to "colored" woman, she still has to learn a great deal of troublesome life.

The lives of free women of color were far from easy, since racial and gender

boundaries were ever present and could not be easily overcome. However, there were free women of color who were able to earn their living independent from the sexual commodification of their bodies, through working as "laundresses, seamstresses, domestics, cooks" (Gould, 1568: 149). In addition, many free women of color worked as peddlers and merchants, selling goods in the port city of New Orleans. These women "owned more property than did either free men of color or white women."

Zalli is described as a woman who has to deal with troublesome life. Being "colored" isn't easy to live her life. Superiority and inferiority feeling that lead racism make people only want to see that their group is better than the other. People only want to see her as color woman.

New Orleans was the capital and epicenter of the entire Louisiana country that so much of the planned city, which was merely a glorified frontier outpost for decades, was below sea level posed significant problems for human life. Frequent hurricanes, seasonal rainstorms, and subtropical humidity year round provided a fertile breeding ground for both marine, land-based, and airborne pests. The smallest of these, the mosquito, posed the greatest threat to life, as its transmission of yellow fever and malaria to humans started dozens of epidemics

during the eighteenth century. Little did the French know that the slow moving, pest-infested bayous— not to mention the heavy, sticky, humidity-laden air— surrounding New Orleans symbolized Louisiana's squalid society and languishing economy during the eighteenth century.

"Why, you know! - she was" - said the wigmaker at the corner to Kristian Koppig - "I'll tell you. You know? - she was" - and the rest atomized off in a rasping whisper. She was the best yellow-fever nurse in a thousand yards round; but that is not what the wig-maker said.

Instead of telling her capability of being the best yellow-fever nurse, people prefer remember her as a woman who sell her inherited house since she couldn't manage it. People thought that Zalli is only a color woman who doesn't deserve to get those all.

"Many free women of color found themselves internalizing these racial gradations and saw their relative whiteness as a possession which granted them higher standing" (Harris, 1998:103-118). John H. B. Latrobe, a visitor to New Orleans in 1834, illustrated well the very significant, and yet very confusing, racial hierarchy that played such an important role in the lives of Louisiana's free women of color:

'Hah – what's that. A fine figure, a beautiful foot, an ankle like an angels – an air quite distingué, and then so strange, and characteristic – so Spanish, with that long black veil over the head' – 'Allons, we will pass her. Why she's a mulatto – Fie – not at all – don't let her hear you – that's a

quadroon. A Quadroon! Well, I'll know better next time. Are those quadroons on high there, in the balcony that projects from that Spanish looking house with ornamented cornice and window frames and flat roof. One of them has a veil, and all that I see are darker than she we have just passed. Heavens no, they are creoles – natives, whites – Spaniards and French mixed – born in the country – very good society. No indeed they are not quadroons. You must make the distinction (1986:43).

However insignificant the slight changes in skin tones might have been, they clearly had a strong social relevance that made it necessary for Latrobe to make the comment "don't let her hear you."

Even Zalli as a black woman but Tite, her daughter, was born with white skin. People even thought her as white as magnolia flower. Based on the quotation above, "So beautiful, beautiful, beautiful! White? - white like a water lily! White - like a magnolia!" shows that beautiful belongs to white people. Comparing to Zalli who is seen as a black woman who must deal with many problems, people thought Tite would be easily pass her life since she was born in white.

"But!" - the Creole lads in the street would say - " - her daughter!" and there would be lifting of arms, wringing of fingers, rolling of eyes, rounding of mouths, gaspings and clasping of hands. "So beautiful, beautiful, beautiful! White? - white like a water lily! White - like a magnolia!"

How they did chatter over her. Quiet Kristian Koppig had never seen the like. He wrote to his mother, and told her so. A pretty fellow at the corner would suddenly double himself up with beckoning to a knot of chums; these would hasten up; recruits would come in from two or three other directions; as they reached the corner their countenances would quickly assume a genteel severity, and presently, with her mother, Tite Poulette would pass - tall, straight, lithe, her great black eyes made tender by their sweeping lashes, the faintest

tint of color in her Southern cheek, her form all grace, her carriage a wonder of simple dignity.

Typically, quadroon women took pride in the white portion of their racial composition and identity, and therefore, it would have been an insult to call them mulattoes “as the quadroons on their part regard the negroes and mulattoes with contempt...[they would]...not mix with them” (Bernhard, 1828:61). As important as it was to not call a quadroon a mulatto, it was more important to distinguish between a quadroon and a Creole – a member of “very good society.” As Latrobe stated, “You must make the distinction.” Louisiana’s white society was well aware of the possibility for quadroon women to be mistaken for Creoles and Americans.

Most travelers of the time made note of the immaculately fair skin of many of the quadroon women as Latrobe stated “all I see are darker than she we have just passed.” In response to the implied threat of the quadroon, white women of New Orleans pushed for legislation that would mark mixed raced women as part of the second tier of society. In 1786, Spanish Governor Esténban Miro passed a law that required free women of color to “no longer...wear too many jewels or to deck their hair with plumes, and that from then on they would be required to tie up their

hair in a tignon—a kerchief used as a headdress—as a symbol of their lower status” (Haskins, 1986:25). The quadroon women’s response to this law, however, clearly indicates that they were unwilling to accept being a part of this imposed lower class.

According to scholar Carolyn Long, “Instead of being considered a badge of dishonor, the tignon...became a fashion statement. The bright reds, blues, and yellows of the scarves, and the imaginative wrapping techniques employed by their wearers, are said to have enhanced the beauty of the women of color” (Long, 2006: 21). While some chose to not wear the scarves at all, others fabricated scarves out of the best material and adorned them with jewels, to further accentuate their beauty. The beauty of the quadroon was celebrated by many writers. As previously mentioned, Latrobe described the quadroon on the street as possessing a “fine figure, a beautiful foot, an ankle like an angels—an air quite distingué.” Harriet Martineau, another traveler of the time, commented that “the girls are highly educated, externally, and are, probably, as beautiful and accomplished a set of women as can be found” (Martineau, 1837: 117). It is important to note that this perception of beauty was based on European tastes



which held the white, "pure" woman as the epitome of perfection.

Tite was born in completely white skin. People don't know the truth about her. That make Zalli thought that her daughter has no future. Tite is already seventeen years old but no man wants to take her out.

"Tite Poulette," said Madame John, "you are seventeen."

"True, Maman."

"Ah! my child, I see not how you are to meet the future." The voice trembled plaintively.

"But how, Maman?"

"Ah! you are not like others; no fortune, no pleasure, no friend."

"Maman!"

"No, no; - I thank God for it; I am glad you are not; but you will be lonely, lonely, all your poor life long. There is not place in this world for us poor women. I wish that we were either white or black!" - and the tears, two "shining ones," stood in the poor quadroon's eyes. The daughter stood up, her eyes flashing.

"God made us, Maman," she said with a gentle, but stately smile.

"Ha!" said the mother, her keen glance darting through her tears, "Sin made *me*, yes."

"No," said Tite Poulette, "God made us. He made us just as we are; not more white, not more black."

"He made you, truly!" said Zalli. "You are so beautiful; I believe it well." She reached and drew the fair form to a kneeling posture. "My sweet, white daughter!"

Now the tears were in the girl's eyes. "And could I be whiter than I am?" she asked.

"Oh, no, no! Tite Poulette," cried the other; "but if we were only *real white!* - both of us; so that some might come to see me and say 'Madame John, I want your pretty little chick. She is so beautiful. I want to take her home. She is so good - I want her to be my wife.' Oh, my child, my child, to see that I would give my life - I would give my soul! Only you should take me along to be your servant. I walked behind two young men to-night; they were coming home from their office; presently they began to talk about you." Tite Poulette's eyes flashed fire.

It is only Zalli who knows that Tite isn't her daughter. Tite is the Spaniard daughter. Zalli takes care of their when they got yellow fever. When they died because of the disease, Zalli takes care of the infant, Tite Poulitte. It is only Monsieur John who had already died who knew about it. According to Zalli being a black was a sin. There is no pleasure and fortune for being born as black. On a side, she feels guilty for taking care Tite as a black. She knows that being black will never be easy. But, on the other side she would feel guiltier if she don't take care of her. The distinction life between black and white made her thought that it would be better just if they weren't born as either black or white.

Tite tries to make her mother happier by telling her that being black or white is faith. Saying it make her looked wiser than her mother. But when she says "And could I be whiter than I am?" Tite looked more desperate than her mother.

"Tite Poulette, I want you to promise me one thing."

"Well, Maman?"

"If any gentleman should ever love you and ask you to marry, - not knowing, you know, - promise me you will not tell him you are not white."

"It can never be," said Tite Poulette.

"But if it should," said Madame John pleadingly.

"And break the law?" asked Tite Poulette, impatiently.

"But the law is unjust," said the mother.

"But it is the law!"

"But you will not, dear, will you?"

Sexual purity of white women has been a focus of the policing of the color line in. It has been less attentive to the role of white men in perpetrating miscegenation. The regional difference in the early period and during the civil rights period is likely explained by the greater suppression of black male/white female unions in the South. These results are consistent with ethnographic accounts from the 1930s that found black males in the South and black females in the non-South were the most likely members of their respective black communities to voice competition-based opposition to interracial marriage.

If suppression was the only method of achieving gender balance in the South, then these results suggest an underlying greater affinity between black men and white women than between black women and white men across time and space. Numerous theories explaining this affinity all posit a relationship to traditional gender roles and gender power. It is argued, for example, that white men may face less pressure to legitimate non marital sexual unions because they are at the apex of the gender-race hierarchy. White men may also pay a higher labor market penalty for interracial marriage than black men. Some scholars have also argued that the disparity may be related to the traditional role of the man in initiating courtship rituals.

According to status exchange theory, women's economic potential is less valued on the marriage market, and therefore high-status black men have a more exchangeable commodity than black women.

"Thou wilt not have my love, 'Tite Poulette?" No answer.

"Thou wilt not, beautiful?"

"Cannot!" was all that she could utter, and upon their clasped hands the tears ran down.

"Thou wrong'st me, 'Tite Poulette. Thou dost not trust me; thou fearest the kiss may loosen the hands. But I tell thee nay. I have struggled hard, even to this hour, against Love, but I yield me now; I yield; I am his unconditioned prisoner forever. God forbid that I ask aught but that you will be my wife." Still the maiden moved not, looked not up, only rained down tears. draw her.

" 'Tite Poulette?" So tenderly he called! And then she spoke.

"It is against the law."

"It is not!" cried Zalli, seizing her round the waist and dragging her forward. "Take her! she is thine. I have robbed God long enough. Here are the sworn papers - here! Take her; she is as white as snow - so! Take her, kiss her; Mary be praised! I never had a child - she is the Spaniard's daughter!"

New Orleans appealed to entrenched conceptions of white male dominance. Placage was an example of how racism can be perpetuated under false claims to altruism. Placage was a practice that existed in French and Spanish slaveholding territories, but that became particularly prevalent in New Orleans, in which free women of color entered into common-law marriages with white Creole men. While this system can be regarded as a path to opportunity for free women of

color, it also helps reinforce white supremacy by perpetuating the marginalization of mixed race individuals.

While there were a number of reasons for racial mixing in the early colony, the major cause of interracial relationships between white men and black women was the substantial racial and gender imbalance. White men were faced with a shortage of white women but an abundance of black women to choose from, and black women similarly outnumbered black men. Furthermore, there were marriage laws in place that limited, and practically eliminated, marriage prospects for free women of color. Marriage was outlawed between any slave and free person and between any white person and black. This meant that free women of color could not legally marry slaves or white men, but only free men of color. At the time, "free men of color of marriageable age were virtually unavailable" (Martin, 2000: 64). Thus, free women of color had no choice but to make the best they could out of their situation in finding a mate. Historian Joan Martin explains the inevitable turn to placage: "The free woman had to accept the fact that with her choice of a mate taken out of her hands, she was at the mercy of any man, white or black who chose to do her harm. Her decision to use the placage

system to save herself and her progeny was not only pragmatic, but, in a sense, ingenious" (Martin, 2000: 64). In many ways, placage opened up new opportunities to free people of color that significantly improved their qualities of living. Martin points out that "on the positive side, placage created a class of free people of color which was well-educated, cultured, wealthy, and powerful" (Martin, 2000: 69).

"Mother," he said to Madame John, quite a master of French in his delirium, "dear mother, fear not; trust your boy; fear nothing. I will not marry 'Tite Poulette; I cannot. She is fair, dear mother, but ah! she is not - don't you know, mother? don't you know? The race! the race! Don't you know that she is jet black. Isn't it?"

Such a positive interpretation of placage, however, ignores its blatant inadequacies. Because placage was not a legal marriage, the placée "lacked the social and legal protection inherent in marriage" (Martin, 2000: 69). The men could leave their mistresses at any time, though they were obligated to financially support them and any children they had together if they did so. The fickle nature of placage relationships drastically undermined their substantiality and emphasized how vulnerable its women were. The placée lived a life of servitude, totally confined by her financial and social dependency on a white man. In this way placage "mimics the exploitative power

dynamics and inequalities of slavery” (Li 88). *Plaçage* was in no way an ideal, but merely a preferable alternative to the destitution and physical abuse that could potentially befall an unmarried, free woman of color.

Another story *The Little Convent Girl* also took place in New Orleans. The girl isn’t mentioned the name, they just call them as the little convent girl since she is little and lives at convent. She has been lived there since she was an infant. Her father don’t let her to see her mother. After her father died, she is curious to see her mother and wants to see the outside world.

She is described to have the ideal beauty of little convent girl. Her hair had a strong inclination to curl that had been taken out of it as austere as the noise out of her footfalls. It was as black as her dress; her eyes seemed blacker than either, on account of the bluishness of the white surrounding the pupil. Her eye-lashes were almost as thick as the black veil which the sisters had fastened around her hat with an extra pin the very last thing before leaving. She had a round little face, and a tiny pointed chin; her mouth was slightly protuberant from the teeth, over which she tried to keep her lips well shut, the effort giving them a pathetic little forced expression. Her complexion was sallow, a pale sallow, the complexion of a brunette bleached in darkened rooms. King described the only color about the girl was a blue taffeta ribbon from which a large

silver medal of the Virgin hung over the place where a breastpin should have been.

The way how she never raised her eyes except when spoken to and how she walked with such soft, easy, carefully calculated steps showed that she was a little girl with good manner.

Every five miles, and sometimes oftener, the boat would stop to put off or take on freight, if not both. The little convent girl, sitting in the cabin, had her terrible frights at first from the hideous noises attendant on these landings - the whistles, the ringings of the bells, the running to and fro, the shouting. Every time she thought it was shipwreck, death, judgment, purgatory; and her sins! her sins! She would drop her crochet, and clutch her prayer-beads from her pocket, and relax the constraint over her lips, which would go to rattling off prayers with the velocity of a relaxed windlass.

Being a child of interracial marriage was as difficult as the black race itself. *Every time she thought it was shipwreck, death, judgment, purgatory; and her sins! her sins!* It shows how hard her life was. Her personality and identity (as her race) have been oppressed by people and their judgments.

Interracial sexual contact likely peaked sometime during the early colonial period, when white indentured servants and black slaves were in close contact in large numbers. The practice of keeping white indentured servants was on the decline and African slavery was on the rise, leading to a transitional period in which the two groups often lived and worked in close quarters. This interracial exposure at a time when folk ideologies of racial difference were still in their infancy

probably produced the highest level of interracial sexual contact ever observed in this country. As Edmund S. Morgan notes, "It was common, for example, for servants and slaves to run away together, steal hogs together, get drunk together. It was not uncommon for them to make love together."

The first time she heard the mate - it must have been like the first time woman ever heard man - curse and swear, she turned pale, and rang quickly, quickly into the saloon, and - came out again? No, indeed! not with all the soul she had to save, and all the other sins on her conscience.

Feeling sin of her race made her didn't have enough courage to have a mate. The rise of interracial sex led white elites to create anti-miscegenation statutes in an effort to define boundaries between white servants and black slaves, whom slave-owners feared might band together in open rebellion. The children from such unions also posed a potential problem for the emerging racial system as elites grappled with a classification of people that would reinforce the institution of slavery. Efforts to reduce the level of interracial sex were assisted by a decline in the practice of white indentured servant hood which increased the segregation of black slaves from white laborers. Her quietly desperate suicide and the fact that her body was never even found epitomize the ultimate oppression.

#### 4. Conclusion

New Orleans provided a historically unique setting that allowed for the emergence of a distinct caste of free women of color. These free women of color, working within the constraints of a racist society, determined their own destinies and that of their progeny. Cable and King vividly describe women of color that have been categorized as victims, New Orleans' unique social institution of Quadroon Balls and the related concept of plaçage. "Quadroons," as free women of color, were active agents who made conscious and calculated choices to utilize interracial sexual relationships to their financial and social advantage. While working within the constraints of a racist society, free women of color determined their own identities and destinies for themselves and their families.

#### 5. References

- Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach. 1828. *Travels through North America during the years 1825 and 1826*, Vol. 2. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey
- Blassingame, John W. 1973. *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Cheryl Harris. 1998. "Whiteness as Property" in *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to be White*, ed. David R. Roedige. New York: Schocken Books

- Dunbar-Nelson, Alice Moore. 2000. "People of Color in Louisiana" in *Creole: The History and Legacy of Louisiana's Free People of Color*, ed. Sybil Kein Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press
- Ester I. Yusuf; Ferdi R. Srivanto. 2001. *Rasisme : dokumentasi dokumen-dokumen internasional tentang rasisme*.
- Gould, Lois Virginia Meacham. 1991. "In Full Enjoyment of their Liberty: The Free Women of Color of the Gulf Ports of New Orleans, Mobile, and Pensacola, 1769-1860." Ph.D. diss., Emory University.
- , 1997. "A Chaos of Iniquity and Discord: Slave and Free Women of Color in the Spanish Ports of New Orleans, Mobile, and Pensacola." In *The Devil's Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South*, edited by Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie, 232-246. New York: Oxford University Press.
- , 2004. "Henriette Delille, Free Women of Color, and Catholicism in Antebellum New Orleans, 1727-1852." In *Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas*, edited by David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, 271-285. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Harriet Martineau. 1837. *Society in America*, Vol. II. New York: Saunders and Otley
- Harris, Cheryl. 1998. "Whiteness as Property" In *Black on White: Black Writers on What it Means to Be White*, edited by David R. Roediger.. New York: Schocken Books.
- James Haskins. 1975. *The Creoles of Color of New Orleans*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company
- Li, Stephanie. "Resistance, Silence, and Placées: Charles Bon's Octoroon Mistress and Louisa
- Long, Carolyn Morrow. 2006. *A New Orleans Voodoo Priestess: The Legend and Reality of Marie Laveau*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida
- Martin, Joan M. 2000. "Plaçage and the Louisiana Gens de Couleur Libre." *Creole: The History and Legacy of Louisiana's Free People of Color*, Ed. Sybil Klein. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press
- Picquet. 2007. " *American Literature* 79.1: 85-112. EBSCO Host. Web. 14 March 2013.
- Robertson, Claire. 1996. "Africa into the Americas? Slavery and Women, the Family, and the Gender Division of Labor." In *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, edited by David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, 3-40. Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- Samuel Wilson, ed. 1986. *Southern Travels: Journal of John H. B. Latrobe* (The Historic New Orleans Collection
- Sterkx, H. E. 1972. *The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Louisiana*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press
- Virginia R. Dominguez. 1986. *White by Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

Walker, Daniel E. 2004. *No More, No More: Slavery and Cultural Resistance in Havana and New Orleans*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press