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## One

### Memories of Slavery: Museums, Monuments, Novels

#### *Remembering/Forgetting Slavery*

In an interview in 1989, Toni Morrison clearly articulated the relationship between the memorialization of slavery and her fiction, particularly the novel *Beloved* (1987).

There is no place you or I can go, to think about or not think about, to summon the presences of, or recollect the absences of slaves; nothing that reminds us of the ones who made the journey and of those who did not make it. There is no suitable memorial or plaque or wreath or wall or park or skyscraper lobby. There's no 300-foot tower. There's no small bench by the road. There is not even a tree scored, an initial that I can visit or you can visit in Charleston or Savannah or New York or Providence, or better still, on the banks of the Mississippi. And because such a place doesn't exist (that I know of), the book had to. But I didn't know that before or while I wrote it. I can see now what I was doing on the last page. I was finishing the story, transfiguring and disseminating the haunting with which the book begins. Yes, I was doing that; but I was also doing something more. I think I was pleading for that wall or that bench or that tower or that tree when I wrote the final words.<sup>1</sup>

I quote Morrison at length because here she expresses many aspects of slavery's memorialization that I want to unpack, particularly in relation to the South. While the

final sentences seem to suggest that Morrison wishes for (more) public memorials to slavery, there is the distinct sense that she sees a fuller potentiality for cultural remembrance through literary, rather than literal, monuments. Though she “pleads” for benches or monuments (which has come true thanks to the creation of benches by the Toni Morrison Society), Morrison’s own fictional output testifies to the power and force of literature as an active ingredient in the recalling of a rooted and placed cultural memory, specifically of slavery (and the larger African-American past). This is true of her books about slavery—*Beloved* and *A Mercy* (2008)—as well as her most recent *Home* which monumentalizes the African-American past of the twentieth century, which I will be exploring in chapter four. Beginning with Morrison, then, frames this chapter’s argument: that particular regional memories, worked through and vitalized by literary texts, sustain regional identity in various ways. In revealing the deep roots of slavery in the region, these novels demonstrate a located sense of memory and place. This is not to discount or overlook the sense of slavery as a national and transnational phenomenon, nor displace the Black Atlantic “routes” of slavery in favor of “roots” (as Paul Gilroy would have it). Rather, this chapter wants to offer a reading of slavery that is localized, which in current transnational theory especially (and in new southern studies too) is often deemed less important than the global flows of slavery’s origins and effects. Thus, I wish not to reify slavery as a Southern institution alone, but to probe the regional shapes and textures of slavery, especially as this region was the stronghold for the institution. While the Northern states were implicitly entangled in the system, it is in the Southern states that we can most clearly see its devastating imprint.

“Toni Morrison’s statement,” Alan Rice writes, “is less true now than it was in the late 1980s. There is now more public acknowledgement of the slave past in the

transatlantic world than there was two decades ago, and this has manifested itself in plaques, memorials and events in many sites throughout the circum-Atlantic.”<sup>2</sup> While Rice lists examples from Liverpool, Haiti, London, Paris and New Haven, his only Southern example is in Sullivan’s Island, Charleston where, in fact, the Toni Morrison Society built its first “bench by the road.” Rice claims that “[t]hese all attest to an increased level of public activity over the last two decades.”<sup>3</sup> I want to slightly problematize Rice’s reading by suggesting that in the South particularly—which Morrison implicitly discusses in her above quote, and was the major site in the United States where slavery took hold—memorials and commemorations to slavery are not as widespread as they could be. There are two notions I want to connect here. Firstly, Rice’s interest in transnational memorials displaces localized Southern examples of memorial practice. While his scope is the Black Atlantic, his lack of focus on the South is exemplary: either because in the South there are few memorials solely to slavery and the black experience, or because the transnational mode becomes centralized. In either case, Rice demonstrates a particular de-regionalizing tendency that is dominant in contemporary critical theory. Instead of only looking to the transatlantic body of memorative work and practice, attending to the South’s relationship to slavery might produce more locally-inflected and specific memory work. To further unravel this, I turn to a recent example from memorial culture.

In 2001, L. Douglas Wilder announced plans for the creation of the United States’ first national slavery museum in Fredericksburg, Virginia. While in 2015 the completion of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (linked to the Smithsonian) in Washington will mark a distinct inscription of black history into the nation’s memorial center (the Mall), the Fredericksburg museum would offer something more particular about the institution of slavery. For, as a formative

phenomenon in national and Southern and cultural identities, it surely needs particular remembrance. Built mainly from glass, the museum would be in the shape of a slave ship, containing varied historical artifacts and immersive experiences. It was designed to physically materialize the slave history of America and the Middle Passage as the boat shape nestled into the landscape. In summer 2011, the museum's development came to a halt: with soaring debt of tax bills, the project stalled and the city subsequently put the land the museum was going to be built on up for auction. It can safely be posited that the museum is far from ever getting off the ground; it may never be built at all. If this example, so framed by Morrison's assertion, can tell us anything, it is that the legacy of slavery in cultural memory is still as conflicted, problematic, even amnesiac as ever.

On *Beloved*, Walter Benn Michaels writes, “[w]hat no one wants to remember, [Morrison thinks], is slavery and, whether or not this characterization is accurate, it succeeds in establishing remembering or forgetting as the relevant alternatives.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, Morrison's idea establishes that “although no white people or black people now living ever experienced it, slavery can be and must be either remembered or forgotten.”<sup>5</sup> It is clear that to forget slavery would be a disastrous thing—the failure of the slavery museum might gesture in this direction however—thus, we must remember it. Clearly, Erika Doss writes, “slavery's representation itself remains limited and highly contested.”<sup>6</sup> The cultural memories of slavery will be the principal focus of this chapter, as a way of identifying a continued regionalism because of its deep effects in the South, particularly its lingering sociocultural structures through Reconstruction, Jim Crow and beyond. While my chapter will not necessarily touch upon these later histories, it is worth saying that slavery's extensive social reach demands continued attention, whether it is at a local or international level. My work

focuses closely on the former, as a complementation of that broader geographical study.

Astrid Erll helps us understand cultural memory as “the way of remembering chosen by a community, the collective *idea* of the meaning of past events and of their embeddedness within temporal processes” (original emphasis).<sup>7</sup> While this may construct what Erll also calls normative versions of the past, cultural memory is an on-going negotiation, which is complex and various. It can, in this way “provid[e] the mental, material and social structures within which experience is embedded, constructed, interpreted and passed on. Memory is a kind of switchboard which organizes experience both prospectively and retrospectively...”<sup>8</sup> This embedding and working-through of slavery’s memories happens through various cultural forms, most noticeably literature. Illustrating this will be readings of two contemporary novels about slavery: Edward P. Jones’ *The Known World* (2003) and Valerie Martin’s *Property* (2003). However, “just like memory,” Erll continues, “media do not simply reflect reality, but instead offer constructions of the past” and thus “mediality represents [...] the very condition for the emergence of cultural memory.”<sup>9</sup> I will untangle this further with recourse to other memory theory, but here I am simply proposing the necessity of remembering slavery in the South through literature. To understand this more, I return to the slavery museum in Virginia.

Though the slavery museum has all but failed, the plan to build a national museum has meant that, Stephen Hanna argues, “slavery, emancipation, and resistance entered into public discourse over the meanings of Fredericksburg’s historical landscape for the first time in over a century.”<sup>10</sup> He continues, “until 2001, the slave block was the only permanent memorial to any aspect of African-American history” in the town.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the museum’s conception is a landmark in public

commemoration in Fredericksburg and, arguably, elsewhere in the region and nation. Correlatively, many critics agree that “[s]lavery has long gone unmentioned at southern historic sites,” so the building of a national slavery museum is a noteworthy and significant venture in the South’s landscape of memorialization and engagement with cultural memory.<sup>12</sup> It is not accurate to say that this landscape is completely barren: there are many plantations, small museums and monuments to the Civil War and slavery across the South.<sup>13</sup> The failure of a national slavery museum cannot but be seen to repeat the major absence of representation of this institution historically in America’s public realm. In the twentieth century, Ira Berlin writes, “slavery was excluded from public presentations of American history” and it seems that the twenty-first century might be beginning with a similar situation.<sup>14</sup> While Renée Ater would disagree, claiming that today “it seems there is a scramble to commemorate the slave past” internationally, there is still (a lack of) evidence to debate this point.<sup>15</sup> I am not suggesting that slavery has not been memorialized in American culture at all but there is not, in the twenty-first century, a *national* museum to this defining historical institution. This introductory sketch provides a framework for the present chapter, which attempts to connect forms of public memorial with literary ones.

Outside of the museum, other forms of public remembrance are untangling the relationship the South has to the memories of slavery. Public memorials and monuments have received much critical commentary in recent years and will be looked at here. Monuments, particularly relating to slavery and the Civil War, have been discussed pertinently by Kirk Savage in *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* (1997). In this book, Savage argues that statues, museums and memorials “are the most conservative of commemorative forms precisely because they are meant to last, unchanged, forever.”<sup>16</sup> Though Savage discusses the possibilities for reinterpreting

monuments over time—their potential afterlife—he cements the notion that monuments “attempt to mold a landscape of collective memory, to conserve what is worth remembering and discard the rest.”<sup>17</sup> Consequently, it seems fairly obvious that it is dominant cultures and communities who create monuments and, therefore, decide which histories are deemed worthy of remembrance. However, we need to also understand the complex work of interpretation that a monument’s viewer or museum’s visitor does, which inherently makes a monument subject to change. James E. Young’s work on counter-monuments can also be connected here as he explores, in *The Texture of Memory* (1993) the state of contemporary German monumentality which, Young argues, is framed by a fear that “conventional memorials seal memory off from awareness altogether.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, he explores a variety of “counter-monuments” that resist such tendencies.

We can, here, think about memorialization in other non-monumental ways. As Dora Apel writes of a public lynching memorial in Duluth, Minnesota, “[p]erhaps it is necessary [...] to imagine other forms of representation, other ways of acknowledging a traumatic past”—other, that is, than a traditional memorial.<sup>19</sup> While she notes something similar to Young’s countermonument—that recent memorials “often have assumed a more abstract and minimalist aesthetic”—I would posit that we have to think more dynamically about other forms of representation.<sup>20</sup> While Young has demonstrated how counter-monuments can rethink the relationship between society and history, I want to use this argument as a springboard to suggest other modes of remembrance like literature. Marcus Wood, particularly, posits that because “[t]he experiences of millions of individuals [...] is not collectable; it is unrecoverable as a set of relics,” slavery “must not be encapsulated with a history believed to be stable, digested and understood...”<sup>21</sup> This is because the history is “*not over and evolving*,”

not only because the memories continue to work through contemporary life, but because the long past of slavery is a foundational block of identity today (original emphasis).<sup>22</sup>

### ***Portable Monuments***

The field of memory studies would generally agree with Wood's notion of a moving and dynamic sense of slavery's histories and memories. As we saw in the introduction, memory is moveable, dynamic and constantly shifting. This understanding of memory correlates with, and informs, the transcultural and global sense of memorialization and remembrance; indeed, Erll writes, transcultural memory is the "incessant wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms, and practices of memory, their continual 'travels' and ongoing transformations through time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders."<sup>23</sup> In closer relation to the memories of slavery, Araujo's edited collection *Politics of Memory* (2012) stresses, "the resurgence of the public memory of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade [...] is gradually becoming a transnational phenomenon..."<sup>24</sup> Though this sense of memory—especially with regards to slavery—is necessary to take into account, we must also be aware, as Susannah Radstone points out, that as we emphasize and prioritize memory that moves, we must also be aware of its localized instantiations: to "buil[d] theory from the ground up [...] respecting memory's located specificities."<sup>25</sup> Thus, whether it be individual or cultural, the particular and defined location of memory-work should be attended to; that is, both in the origination of remembrance (the place and time) in addition to the particular contours and origins of the memory itself. As Ron Eyerman has similarly suggested, in relation to African-American

culture, “[m]emory can also be embedded in physical geography...”<sup>26</sup> This geography is as much topographical as it is social, moreover. Local particularity has as much to do with the land as those who occupy it. Cultural memory, therefore, while a complex and variegated process, should, I argue, oftentimes be read through the particularity of where and when the remembrance happens alongside more global readings.

I do not mean to set up these two conceptions of memory in a binary: “located” memory does not exist in opposition to “moveable” memory. Rather, I am positing that we need to pay attention to the particular locations and instantiations of memory, even while it moves; the two are read, thus, together and as mutually-informing. Stephan Palmié, on the memorialization of slavery argues strongly that this history is “by no means ‘over and done with.’ As a chronotopic referent, circulating in and through such discourses, ‘slavery’ now indexes a durational ‘past imperfect’ that continues to predicate present moral relationships.”<sup>27</sup> If our interest, following Radstone, is in the localness and regionalism of slavery’s memories, then Palmié’s argument inflects this with a moral import: slavery’s imprint continues to affect the present, and in the South particularly, this needs to be unfolded and unpacked (not least in the face of national and large-scale “forgetting,” as in Fredericksburg). The past imperfect tense lives on and through contemporary memorial work.

If the local and regional might be deeply important for remembering slavery, but the static monument is too petrified in its representation of the past, then might we not return to Morrison’s suggestion for textual memorials to slavery: literary works that engage and perform a rooted cultural memory? In this sense, we engage with Ann Rigney’s argument for the importance of literary texts as moveable and ultimately plural monuments to history. Texts can be read and re-read across time and space, reinterpreted and reread: thus history and memory become far less static and secure.

Because literary works are both dynamic (they are subject to reinterpretation and movement) and static (they themselves are unchanging) they, in Rigney's words, "partake both of 'monumentality' [...] and 'mobility'..."<sup>28</sup> This contrast mirrors the kinesis of memory itself, always moving and changing, but it also registers the place of memory: its origins, its location of instantiation and recollection, which I am foregrounding here. Clearly, Rigney's sense of literature as monument feeds directly into the present argument, and connects back to Toni Morrison's statement that I began by quoting. Literary texts, at the same time as moving and changing, retain and "enjoy longevity, stability, and normativity" as well as "in their original version or in some derivative form, they link people to the past."<sup>29</sup> Thus, in light of this, I am more interested in the ways that literary texts can enact and enable remembrance at a local and rooted level. While they have the capability to move also, texts nonetheless retain a quality of fixity and stability. In reading these portable and plural monuments to history we might be able to enlarge and open out the landscape of slavery's memories, especially (and perhaps ironically) at a local level: in the South. Indeed, I will argue, in representing memories of slavery, many novels are ultimately revealing the presence and location of the South in the twenty-first century because of their commitment to representing located memories of slavery, however "portable" (in Rigney's words) they are.

At this point, it is worth returning to the central theoretical propositions of this book. As many of the scholars outlined in the introduction assert, the phenomenon of slavery was not confined to the South alone – that slavery was as much a global and national system as it was a regional one. Deborah Cohn, for instance, considers "the South and Spanish America to be 'neighboring spaces' with similar 'personalities' deriving from shared histories";<sup>30</sup> Edouard Glissant, too, tells us particularly that

“[w]e already know [...] Louisiana is close to the Caribbean and especially to the Antilles: the plantation system, the thrilling persistence of Creole languages”,<sup>31</sup> or, as Jessica Adams says, investigation into South’s engagement with slavery involves looking to “circum-Caribbean cultures not only as they have been shaped by plantation systems, but beyond the direct legacy of the plantation.”<sup>32</sup> This scholarship of transnational flavor reads slavery and Southern memory through a global, deterritorializing lens. Shameem Black, too, argues that although most memorials “continue to be deeply local and historically specific” there is a growing body of forms emerging in the new century that is border-crossing and global.<sup>33</sup> These arguments use literal and literary memorials to slavery as representations of a history that transcends, at an important level, place and region. I want to complement this reading by locating Jones and Martin’s novels securely in the South; moreover, through close analysis, I want to demonstrate how these texts examine a very specifically regional instantiation of slavery. Rather than dismissing this global reading of slavery as unimportant, I suggest that much contemporary Southern fiction about the institution is less internationally engaged than theory might assert. Moreover, a regional reading of the novels identifies the cultural memories of slavery as still relevant, pertinent and powerful in the continued creation of regional identity. George Handley suggests that the new ‘trend’ of the transnational turn—globalizing globalizing American Studies—is “perhaps symptomatic of the fact that U.S. culture is beginning to take account of its history of amnesia.”<sup>34</sup> This chapter, however, wants to turn this assumption on its head and ask if this recent trend is, in effect, a re-working of historical amnesia.

In arguing this, I also engage elements of the postsouthern mode of interpretation so pervasive in Southern studies. I take Michael Kreyling’s *The South*

*that Wasn't There* (2010) here as indicative of this. Via a reading of Lars von Trier's film *Manderlay*, Michael Kreyling argues that von Trier sees the South as "a memory without a place to have it."<sup>35</sup> Kreyling, in concluding his book with this analysis, seems to agree with this statement, entirely offering a South that "wasn't" and "isn't" there in many ways. This chapter questions Kreyling's assertion, arguing that rather than the South being a memory disjointed from its regional roots, it might be kept alive by them. Thus, rather than memory being all that is left of the South, I argue that memory itself is a route to (root of) the region. No less complex than the South Kreyling and others outline, my picture of the region is primarily articulated and created by memory. Martyn Bone posits that "[i]t is precisely because the familiar southern 'sense of place' is defunct" that we should engage with the "'real and fictional' qualities of place manifested in postsouthern life and literature."<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Fred Hobson suggests that what the South "is and means—is changing radically because concepts of region, place, culture, and community are being reevaluated."<sup>37</sup> While Hobson's statement is surely correct, and Bone's question pertinent, this chapter hopes to show how cultural memory, so specifically rooted in place, as I reveal it, affects the contemporary South in such a way as to show how much it continues to live on. This book thus wants to turn Kreyling's statement around: *the U.S. South is a place because we have memories of it.*

### ***Slavery and the Novel***

There has been a significant glut of fiction and cinema about the South's history in recent years. Amongst others, there are texts that engage with the Civil War: E. L. Doctorow's *The March* (2005), Robert Hicks' *The Widow of the South* (2005),

Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* (1997), and its film adaptation by Anthony Minghella (2004). There are texts that explicitly revisit *Gone With the Wind*: Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* (2002) and Donald McCaig's *Rhett Butler's People* (2007). And those that investigate slavery in the South: Edward P. Jones' *The Known World* (2003), Valerie Martin's *Property* (2003), Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* (2008), Lars Von Trier's film *Manderlay* (2006), Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* (2012) and Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* (2013). This is but a highly abbreviated list. I want to propose here the unquestionable fact that this aspect of Southern history is still very much in cultural circulation and remains a fascination for writers and film-makers alike. The simple question is why, in the postsouthern era, people are writing novels about the South's history, so specifically located? Ira Berlin has suggested that "[t]he renaissance in the interest in slavery [...] has become an emblem, sign, and metaphor for the failure to deal directly with the question of race and the long legacy of chattel bondage."<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the long-term dissociative relation to slavery in America—as seen in the failed museum and the lack of memorials discussed above—needs to be contested and responded to. However, like Berlin, I posit that the wealth of interest in slavery as seen in these cultural texts is a sign or symptom of its widespread neglect in American cultural memory. Moreover, if as Ron Eyerman argues, "[s]lavery formed the root of an emergent collective identity through an equally emergent collective memory," it is necessary to understand slavery's effects and legacies if we are to truly grasp today's African-American communities and cultures.<sup>39</sup> For Eyerman, slavery is a "primal scene," or foundational trauma, that informs and shapes black identity in America. The collective memories and identities of African-Americans have to be viewed, Eyerman argues, in light of slavery and its effects. As a tear, or rip, in the fabric of black life, slavery is a

disruptive and traumatic past that continues to affect the present. Eyerman, too, places significance on the South as a particular site of this memory-work, and therefore this chapter wants to follow his argument, paying attention to the construction of black (and white) identities in light of this structural trauma that so deeply informs collective memories and identities in America, and in the South particularly. Thus Eyerman and I do not single out the South as the only site of slavery—it was a vast international network and system with various loci and geographical coordinates—but wish to foreground this region as a very specific instantiation of it. Thus, rather than simply representing slavery, this new renaissance of literary and cultural products is connecting this past to our present time. Regionally located memories—of slavery in the South—are emerging through cultural texts that in turn become regionally charged.<sup>40</sup>

Tim A. Ryan in *Calls and Responses* (2008) provides some further backdrop for the historical fictions I am looking at. While Ryan suggests that slavery “remains a national shame, an ugly, gaping crack in the mythology of the United States”—and and this finds a corollary with the above acknowledgment of slavery’s absence in the public realm—he nonetheless claims, accurately, that slavery “is the unspeakable thing that is frequently spoken in the American novel.”<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Ryan claims that representations of slavery have always been “defined by multiplicity rather than singularity” and that “the cultural conversation about slavery is—and always has been—characterized by intertextual, interdisciplinary, and interracial exchange.”<sup>42</sup> Thus, the history of the slavery novel is nothing if not complex, ambiguous and shifting. On this, Ryan notes the ubiquity of the novel of slavery across history: from *Gone With the Wind* (1936) to the recent novels I have listed, it seems that slavery is something to which we continue to return, however ugly a “gaping crack.” This point

may need further stressing, as there is a large history of novels narrating slavery. We could think, to return to Morrison, of *Beloved*, which has become ossified across critical fields as the definitive text of slavery. From psychoanalysis, to trauma theory, to feminist study, to American and Southern studies, Morrison's famous novel has undergone, since its publication, something of a canonization. Thus, I am not attempting to claim that Martin and Jones' novels are original or breaking with the long tradition of slavery's novelistic representations. Merely, I am arguing that their perspicuous memory-work in the twenty-first century tells us much about the contemporary South's relationship to its past.

Gary M. Ciuba's book *Desire, Violence and Divinity in Modern Southern Fiction* (2007) is helpful in introducing Jones and Martin's novels as it looks to three defining aspects of Southern identity and literature. Ciuba writes, "the rites of the Old South tried to express violence through an array of ordered forms," whether they be race, sex or class.<sup>43</sup> Writing on the potency of slavery as a defining institution of the South he argues that "slavery was not a single inaugurating murder but an on-going sacrificial institution in the South," thus signaling a key element of slavery's power in the region.<sup>44</sup> Similarly attentive to the structures of slavery, Christina Sharpe wants to "see and think anew about slavery" in order to understand more fully its multifarious effects, especially in relation to the body—what Sharpe calls "monstrous intimacies."<sup>45</sup> "Thinking about monstrous intimacies post-slavery," she writes, "means examining those subjectivities constituted from transatlantic slavery onward" and charting the variegated imprint of slavery and its oppressions, both physical and mental.<sup>46</sup> Significantly though, Sharpe looks at the "internalization and perpetuation of that violence" of slavery and its aftermath in "various forms of power and desire among the formerly enslaved and those who claimed ownership over them."<sup>47</sup> What

Sharpe is ultimately looking at, therefore, is the afterlife of slavery: the lingering traces of slavery's intimate violence on black bodies. The wide-reaching institution of slavery described here is laid bare in the novels of Edward P. Jones and Valerie Martin. Both novels represent slavery as an all-pervasive system that socially organizes and forms the Southern region, and the people within it. Interpolating Southerners into a complex web of power and mastery, slavery had vast social and ideological weight. The central tenet of this chapter, then, is that the novels' representations of slavery's pervasiveness will be read as not only fleshing out our existing notions of slavery in the South, but more significantly as indicative of an entrenched, particularly Southern, experience that is informing a specifically Southern cultural memory. Moreover, not only do Jones and Martin's novels explore this Southern memory, but also they dramatize the very processes of regional remembrance. Both novels contain acts of, or scenes that are metaphoric of, memory-work itself.

### ***The Master(s) Narrative: Edward P. Jones' The Known World***

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, Edward P. Jones' *The Known World* is a sprawling novel of intersecting narratives that charts the institution of slavery in the fictional Manchester County, Virginia in the early 1800s. At the center of Jones' novel is Henry Townsend, an African American bought out of slavery, only to subsequently become a slave-owner himself. This would have been a rare occurrence in the South, but Jones uses this marginal detail of history to explore the wide-reaching nature of slavery in the region. The novel charts Henry's life from building a plantation, to his death (which opens the book). Interspersed in this story are many

narrative threads that flesh out various characters from Manchester County. Jones textures his novel with overlapping stories, interconnected characters, and varying narrative styles. The novel's form is decidedly postmodern, featuring multiple storylines that veer off in varying directions and interlink with a shifting chronology, and self-conscious notions of narrative and history.

The novel can be situated within a postmodern framework of storytelling, but with the aim of actually revealing a particular moment of Southern history from a decidedly marginal position. Following an essay by Susan Donaldson, this chapter suggests that what this cultural memory of the South tells us is that monolithic versions of Southern history (slavery particularly) must be dismantled, but equally we need pay attention to the smaller narratives of the past that emerge "in place." Even though, in Donaldson's words, the master (and slave-master's) narrative is debunked through postmodern methods of narration, Jones' novel nonetheless testifies to the pervasive power of slavery as an interpolating social system and an important cultural memory.<sup>48</sup> Reaching forward and back across time and people, Jones' novel eventually serves to suggest the potency of slavery as a defining regional memory. Further, in its time-travel—the collapsing of temporality by the narrator, flitting from one event and historical period to another—the novel dramatizes the processes of remembrance activated in a literary text, as illuminated by Rigney. That is, the novel's foregrounding of the past and the articulation of it insists on memory-work. The novel might be said to confirm Madhu Dubey's contention that "speculative novels suggest that the truth of the past is more fully grasped by way of an antirealist literary imagination that can fluidly cross temporal boundaries and affectively immerse readers into the world of slavery."<sup>49</sup>

In her essay, “Telling Forgotten Stories of Slavery in the Postmodern South,” Susan Donaldson analyses Jones’ *The Known World* through, as the title suggests, a postmodern lens. Her argument claims that it is one text among many “postmodern novels written for a postmodern South and a postmodern age...”<sup>50</sup> Unwritten in this sentence is the connecting “postsouthern” which Donaldson is surely signaling to some extent. My analysis differs in emphasis from Donaldson’s in that I think Jones’ postmodern strategies are ultimately shaping a regional locatedness and rooted memory, rather than merely complicating the South and its sense of history. Ultimately, the postmodern elements of the novel (in form and content) would seem to suggest that *The Known World* is indicative of the postsouth so many theorists have identified. In contrast though, like the speculative fictions Dubey analyses, Jones’ novel might just be more complex than we first think. Donaldson claims that the twenty-first century South—that she sees as postmodern (postsouthern)—“requires a new kind of historical novel, one that underscores its own provisional status by calling attention to its literary operations...”<sup>51</sup> This is a staple analysis of postmodern fiction; because the narrative calls attention to its own making and remaking, it is therefore conditional: aware of its literariness, its linguistic form, and the problems therein. Jones’ novel does just this, playing with narration and knowledge, always flagging its own fictional form. But I would argue Jones is using such strategies to different (less referential) ends.

There are many examples of historical time-shifting in *The Known World*, as Jones’ narrator omnisciently provides the reader with information across places and times. We move from a time after Henry’s death, to his early childhood, to characters contemporary to his adulthood and then to the present day. This fractured narrative style, so replete with temporal and spatial movement, underscores Jones’ insistence

on not reading the book as a traditionally realist novel. By calling attention to the novel's own temporality—and time generally—Jones plays, in a postmodern way, with notions of history, narrative and knowledge. In so doing, Jones intimates that we read the book's title as something of a question or dialogue: what, ultimately, is known about the South of the novel? What world-view do we have access to? The “known world,” Amy Hungerford suggests, is both the novel itself and the entire fictional world it creates. Thus, she continues, “[i]f the novel is the ‘known’ world, it is known omnisciently by the narrator,” and moreover—even though the narrator provides us with oftentimes incomplete (or false) information and dubious “historical sources”—“the vertiginous shifting” between past and present “dramatizes how much more this narrator knows than his characters, more than any being ever could.”<sup>52</sup> While we will return to the idea of knowledge and godly omniscience, here it may merely be posited that *The Known World* is engaged, from its very title, in epistemological query, not least regarding slavery and its multifarious effects in the South.

The narrator, for example, draws attention to various fictional historians who have commented on the lives of Manchester County, such as one “whose book was rejected by the University of Virginia Press and finally published by the University of North Carolina Press.”<sup>53</sup> In another example, the narrator informs the reader that “[i]n 1993 the University of Virginia Press would publish a 415-page book by a white woman, Marcia H. Shia, documenting that every ninety-seventh person in the Commonwealth of Virginia was kin, by blood or by marriage, to the line that started with Celeste and Elias Freeman” (352). The specific details of this historian and her book testify to the omniscience of our narrator and his knowledge of historical documents (however fictional) that compliment or complicate the narrative that he is

telling. More interestingly, though, because this wealth of omniscient knowledge is so foregrounded, Jones makes the narrator conspicuous to the reader.

Another example concerns the character Anderson Frazier, a Canadian pamphlet writer who appears a few times in the novel. The narrator informs us that “[t]he pamphlet on free Negroes who had owned other Negroes was twenty-seven pages, not including the six pages of drawings and maps. There were seven pages devoted to Henry Townsend” (107). We further learn, however, that it is called “*Curiosities and Oddities about Our Southern Neighbors*” which explores (among other things) “The Economy of Cotton [...] The Flora and Fauna. The Need for Storytelling” (106). The last in this list—storytelling—shows us that however postmodern and playful his attitude towards historical documents, or history itself, Jones is highly aware of the importance of storytelling in the South, in addition to how any document of slavery or the region is part of this process. Although some have argued that “the creative omniscience of the novelist seems more compelling than the compromised empiricism of the historian,” Jones ultimately illuminates the power of narrative generally (not necessarily fictional) in presenting slavery and Southern history.<sup>54</sup> Tim Ryan writes that Jones “accepts that history may only be available to us as unreliable narrative, but texts are finally the only kind of access we have to very real processes, events, and consequences.”<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the time-shifting that heightens such narrative importance is utilized by Jones as one way to insist upon the affectiveness of this history in our present time. As Dubey suggests of other texts, such “temporal doublings [...] obviously intended to reveal the persistence of the past in the present...”<sup>56</sup> *The Known World*, thus, not only attempts to reveal something about the particularities of slavery through a literary form of cultural

memory, but intends to demonstrate, though time-shifting, how these memories work on and in our present.

Returning to Donaldson's essay, she further mounts her argument about Jones' postmodernism through analysis of the central character Henry Townsend because he is a black slaveholder. The novel, she suggests, "interrogat[es] mastery itself, and by implication master narratives of history..."<sup>57</sup> This latter investigation is a central strategy of postmodern writing. The logic of postmodernism, as particularly seen in the writing of Jean François-Lyotard, is very much concerned with undoing our dominant narratives about the world. Skeptical of the definitive, especially in relation to the past, postmodernism points to the limitations in our traditional conception of history as static, teleological and concrete: ideas that have defined history and historical discourse. Rather, we need look, in this logic, to histories (plural), that are not dominant but highly contingent and multiple. In the case of *The Known World*, for instance, the master narrative of slavery and white slaveholding is unraveled. The novel, in deconstructing the master narrative of history—via the disrupted chronology and mixture of storytelling with historical "documents"—also deconstructs the slave master's narrative. Through focusing on a black slave owner, Jones upturns our existing notions that usually take slavery to be the site of white mastery and black servitude. Focusing on a marginalized narrative, Jones "problematizes history by unearthing discontinuities, anomalies, and multiple possibilities and by posing alternative content and alternative forms."<sup>58</sup> Jones' narrative troubles what we take to be a widely "known world" of the antebellum South. However, this postmodern novel might not be indicative of a postmodern South or postsouth which is radically changing in relation to its past. I want to argue that the text's playful surface belies a

depth of history and memory in place that Jones wants to unearth and imaginatively claim.

This memory, to re-state, is fundamentally regional and built from the ground-up. The past, Stephen Hanna writes, is “a definitional aspect of place and place-based identities.”<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Ira Berlin writes that “[t]he memory of slavery [...] is constructed on different ground from its history. Rather than global, it is local. Memories generally derive from the particular...”<sup>60</sup> Memory, thus, in this and my argument, is an active ingredient in the shaping and keeping-alive of regional identity. There are a number of ways in which this can be seen in Jones’ novel, but principally we can see it in the effects of slavery on the characters throughout *The Known World*. Patrick O’Donnell identifies the novel as an investigation into the wide-reaching effects of slavery in the South. The focus on a black slaveholder is, for O’Donnell, indicative of the ways in which the system of slavery reached systemically across the region. Of the black slave-owner, he writes, “Jones uses this cruelly ironic historical development to convey the overwhelming nature of a dominant ideology, and the fact that brutality and the desire for mastery knows no racial bounds.”<sup>61</sup> As we will see with the power-struggles in Valerie Martin’s novel that reach beyond the race line into gender, Jones focuses on such a figure of unfamiliar history so as to explore the all-pervasive nature of slavery and its social reach. While we can at once view this small narrative (and thus the disruption of a grand narrative) as part of a postmodern discourse on the multiplicities of slavery and its history, it is also useful to argue, I think, along with O’Donnell, that this further illuminates the depth of slavery’s reach in the South because of the ways in which slavery’s effects transcend our usual conceptions of it.

Jones' narrator takes us back to the moment when Henry, not yet a slaveholder, tells his parents about his entry into this social system of ownership; they are understandably shocked by their son's decision. Asking him why he does not see the wrong in his actions, Henry says that "[n]obody never told me the wrong of [slaveholding]" (137). Henry's indignation towards his parents' apparent lack of understanding is revealed when he says "Papa, I ain't done nothin I ain't a right to. I ain't done nothin no white man wouldn't do" (138). Henry's father Augustus responds to this by beating his son, making him fall to the ground, claiming "Thas how a slave feel!" (138). Though for Henry's father, slavery is something that has oppressed black people for numerous years and thus is, in itself, abominable, Henry merely sees slavery as something that has always taken place in this region and his involvement on the "other side" of the power line as a natural occurrence. Augustus takes issue with his son's logic of doing only what a white man would do because they are not white: for him, slavery is a racial phenomenon and exists along a racial boundary. He sees his son becoming a slave-master as not only an insult to his family that has lived in servitude for many years, but also an inversion of the slave system. Jones thus illuminates the deep-rooted psychology of ownership and slaveholding.

Tracing this mental structure back into Henry's history might unravel this further. When Augustus buys himself out of slavery and years later his wife also, he cannot fully free his son too. As Augustus takes his wife from the plantation, they have to leave Henry in the care of a friend:

Augustus knelt beside his wife and promised Henry that they would be back for him. 'Before you can turn around good,' he said, 'you be comin home with us.' Augustus repeated himself, and the boy tried to make

sense of the word *home*. He knew the word, knew the cabin with him and his mother and Rita that the word represented (16).

This quotation principally informs us of Henry's internalization of the plantation as home; further, this home is a maternal space which is not occupied by his father who is "free" and thus "away" from home. The abandonment of Henry as a young boy to William Robbins the slave-master must have a profound effect. Indeed, "it took far longer to buy Henry's freedom than his father had thought" for "Robbins would come to know what a smart boy Henry was" and how to use him on the plantation (17). Thus, not only in being left at the plantation by his parents, but also in his slow alignment with Robbins, Henry's psychology is rooted (quite firmly) in and on the plantation. Henry arguably internalizes its social structures too at this point.

Echoing the scene recounted above where Augustus hits his son to teach him "how a slave feel," this pattern of paternal anger has a precursor. During the winter months when Henry's parents go to the plantation to visit him, Henry sometimes does not go to them. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but there is obviously a separation of child and parent occurring. One cold day, the narrator tells us, "after they had waited two hours beyond when he was supposed to appear on the road, Augustus grabbed the boy when he shuffled up and shook him, then he pushed him to the ground. Henry covered his face and began to cry" (19). If this event were not clear enough to Henry, the next week the slaveholder Robbins is waiting: "I heard you did something to my boy, to my property," he says, repeating the sentiment: "I won't have you touching my boy, my property" (19). The move from "boy" to "property" is telling not only for the obvious point that Robbins claims his slaves as possessions, but also for the implicit idea that Henry might now be Robbins' boy, his "son." If

Henry is already somewhat separated from his parents (who, in his mind, *left* their home together in being free) and is connected to the slave-master who values his intelligence and abilities, might the plantation architecture (socially and psychologically) not form Henry's identity in particular ways? The plantation as home and the economy of land-work is, for Henry, a matter of personal and regional identity. As a black man himself, he sees no issue (later in life) with owning people of his own race because of the depths that the system of slavery reached in him, and the social conceptions so crystallized within it. Where his parents separated from slavery and freed themselves, Henry was not given the opportunity—and even, in a sense, learned the perils of what someone leaving the plantation might mean—and thus the place of his childhood becomes the final place of his life.

We can connect this to a scene later on in Henry's development as a slave-master. Henry's entrance into this world happens under the tutelage of the slaveholder Robins. Jones' narrator documents the building of the plantation house by Henry and his (first) slave, Moses. As they are in some ways friends, during one afternoon of building, they end up play-fighting in the yard. Robins witnesses them "tussling" when he comes to visit Henry, looking upon their closeness with disdain. While the tussling could be read for its homoerotic potential (which would have interesting corollaries with the later discussion of *Property* and its female slave-owner erotically claiming her slave's body), this moment reveals much about the relationships Henry and Robins have to the institution of slavery. Robins chastises Henry for befriending, and playing with, Moses, arguing that "the law expects you to know what is master and what is slave. And it does not matter if you are not much more darker than your slave. The law is blind to that" (123). In this ironic twist of logic, the system of ownership becomes solely focused on power relations and people, not skin color. By

treating Moses as an equal, Robins says to Henry “[y]ou will have pointed to the line that separates you from your property and told your property that the line does not matter” (123). Henry thus has a different relationship with slave-holding to the one that Robins holds: that of the dominant ideology of ownership. Indeed, in order to “own” Moses as his property, but simultaneously play with him in a filial bond, Henry must in some way disavow the structures and powers of slaveholding, which further complicates his role in the plantation system. The depths and contradictions of slavery’s social and psychological reach are thus evidenced in Henry’s complex relationship to ownership. As Donaldson proposes, the master (and master’s) narratives of slavery are problematized here. We find this expounded and complicated further in the opening pages of the novel.

*The Known World* opens with the slave Moses who, when hearing of his master Henry’s death, lies down in the plantation field. Jones writes, “Moses closed his eyes and bent down and took a pinch of the soil and ate it with no more thought than if it were a spot of cornbread. He worked the dirt around in his mouth and swallowed” (1). Eating dirt was common amongst slaves for, among other things, its possibly hunger-quelling effects.<sup>62</sup> However, Jones’s narrator tells us that Moses “was the only man in the realm, slave or free, who ate dirt” (1), and we learn later that he does it to check the soil’s fertility for when planting should begin. The narrator further informs us that “the eating of it tied [Moses] to the only thing in his small world that meant almost as much as his own life” (2). The importance of land to Moses—and to slavery in general—is illuminated here to the point at which a slave would ingest the soil because it is so central to his very being. Of all the novel’s known worlds, Moses’ “own world is confined, in a sense, to the handful of dirt he eats...”<sup>63</sup> Here, slaves are thus inextricably tied to their role as land-workers on the plantation; Donaldson

suggests that, though problematic, “that act of eating dirt serves as a form of self-identification...”<sup>64</sup> As an institution of land-work, slavery in the South has always had a literally deeply-rooted connection to the soil. As Ron Eyerman consolidates: “[i]n the rural areas of the antebellum South, identity was rooted in land and locality, with a particular area and region.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, not only does regional identification occur in a general sense here, but also in a more precise and locally “grounded” way. These notions, however, should not go un-problematized: historical connections between Southerners and land have often been saturated by ideological bias. For example, the Southern Agrarians who valued Southern soil over and above the encroaching forces of modernity did so through the displacement of the black presence that had literally built the region’s planter economy in the past. Their connection to land is thus from the start a deeply contentious one, so suggesting intimate ties between Southerners and their soil must be posed with acute awareness of this historical legacy. With that said, the opening of Jones’ novel persuasively suggests the bond between slave and land (different to a white Southerner and land). As the connection between master and slave is equally forceful and complex, so too is the relation of slave to the land he works.

To unpack Moses’ earth-eating further, we can read it psychoanalytically, according to notions of mourning and melancholia. In brief, mourning is understood as the working-through of loss. The mourner gradually understands that something has gone and, as Eric Santner writes, this mourning “culminates in a reattachment of libido to new objects of desire...”<sup>66</sup> Melancholia, Freud and others tell us, is in some ways a counter-point to mourning as it is the psychological state of refusing to accept the loss. Instead of working through it, the melancholic acts out and denies the loss; melancholia, in Santner’s words, “attaches itself *to* loss; it says no! to life without the

object” (original emphasis).<sup>67</sup> Often this happens through some sort of internalization of the lost object: so as to prove that it has not gone (it is inside them). Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok have written substantially on this. In their essay “Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation,” they argue that when refusing to mourn a lost object, the bereaved (melancholic) can often ingest the loss in interesting ways. They write, “in order not to have to ‘swallow’ a loss, we fantasize swallowing (or having swallowed) that which has been lost, as if it were some kind of thing.”<sup>68</sup> Although here they treat incorporation metaphorically, they also argue that “[w]hen, in the form of imaginary or real nourishment, we ingest the loved-object we miss, this means *we refuse to mourn* and that we shun the consequences of mourning” (original emphasis).<sup>69</sup> Therefore, whether through actual or metaphoric eating and swallowing, Abraham and Torok suggest that melancholic reactions often lead a person to internalize the loss itself.

Thus, Moses’ dirt-eating could be seen as an example of melancholic incorporation. This scene occurs after the death of his master Henry and thus Moses feels bereft and experiences a profound loss, partly because without a master, his own identity as a slave is thrown into question. “All his life,” Donaldson writes, Moses “ha[d] been ‘someone’s slave,’ the property first of one white man, then another...”<sup>70</sup> As suggested, his eating dirt connects him to slavery in an intimate way because it forms his conception of self. However, in the light of his master’s death, Moses’ actions possibly incorporate Henry’s death melancholically. His refusal to mourn allows Moses to continue believing in the power structures of the South that he sees as defining him. Disavowing the death quashes the feelings of loss he experiences, and allows his continued identification in his bond with the Southern soil and social system. This reading can then be taken further when, after eating the earth, Moses

begins to masturbate onto the soil as it starts to rain. In a symbolic moment, the rain and ejaculate are twinned as fertilizing liquids for the soil. Though it is usually work and toil that produces fecundity—and it is the slave, such as Moses, who does this work—here it is Moses’ pleasure that metaphorically enlivens it. Though he is in a complex process of mourning, tinged with melancholia, Moses reaffirms his connection to Southern soil through his sexual act. Because of Henry’s death, Moses psychologically re-establishes his deep-rooted connection to the land that he has worked on for his entire life. By ingesting it, and then personally “fertilizing” it, Moses acts in any way possible to remain connected to the soil that defines him as a slave. As a deeply-rooted ideology across the South, slavery comes to define everyone caught up in the system: ideologically, psychologically and bodily.

To bring this discussion of Jones’ novel to a conclusion, I look to a scene at the end of *The Known World* that I think is indicative of Jones’ literary act of cultural memory. The text here dramatizes the process of remembrance. We thus return to Ann Rigney’s sense of novels acting as conduits for memory; this comes into focus through a reading of the artistic practice of one of Jones’ characters which interestingly parallels his own work. We might want to define this memory further, suggesting not only that it is regional, but perhaps also (in Michael Hanchard’s terms) “black.” Hanchard’s essay “Black Memory versus State Memory” is concerned with the identification of black memory as a form—in Anna Hartnell’s gloss—“of memory that [...] works against the ‘amnesia’ and ‘forgetting’ that often characterizes ‘state memory.’”<sup>71</sup> Hanchard identifies a number of themes that can be seen as “constitutive” of black memory: “Racism, slavery, reparations, nationalism and anticolonial struggle, and migration...”<sup>72</sup> Listing such social experiences and historical occurrences as being formative of black memory is to suggest the

importance of them as defining markers in the history of African-American identity itself. In my argument, this notion might be helpful as, in resisting the “master narratives” of slavery, Jones’ novel actively seeks more particular and often local memories of slavery that are fundamentally rooted in black experience. Thus, the memories at work in *The Known World* are at once regional, and particularly (as Hanchard would have it) black.

In the final chapters, we read a letter that Henry’s wife Caldonia receives, long after Henry has died, from her brother Calvin. Calvin is now a young man, living away from Manchester County, and in the letter to his sister, he tells her of his visit to an art gallery in Washington. Calvin informs Caldonia about two large works of art that document Manchester County; they are mixed-media maps: part tapestry, part painting, part sculpture. He learns that the works were created by Alice, the slave on the Townsend plantation whom everyone thought mentally disabled. One of the artworks depicts the entire county with its plantations and homes; the other is specifically about the Townsend plantation. In one sense, therefore, Alice’s maps are creative works of memory that attempt to convey her sense or vision of the past and its sites or places. Her artworks are vehicles for her own specific memories that in turn inform a larger cultural memory of the region. The second map is so detailed that, Calvin notes, “[t]here is nothing missing, not a cabin, not a barn, not a chicken, not a horse. Not a single person is missing” (385). Although they are seemingly maps, Calvin writes that “‘map’ is such a poor word for such a wondrous thing” (384) because of their detail, particularity and richness. Donaldson comments on the totalities represented in the works, arguing that the vast overview of people—black and white, slave and master—“testif[ies] to the central truths denied by slavery [...] not the rigid separation of master and slave, and white and black, but the close

intertwining of the two...<sup>73</sup> The all-pervasive nature of slavery and its entanglement of people of all races and social positions is, in Donaldson's view, always hidden and disavowed by the structures of slavery itself. Alice's "maps," conversely, cast an all-seeing overview of the plantation that attempt to undo this erasure.

In many ways, it is obvious that Alice is a double for Jones himself: "both in her knowledge [...] and in her capacity for invention."<sup>74</sup> In addition, her artworks are, in their attempt to see the whole county, metonymic of *The Known World*. Another character in the novel, Sheriff John Skiffington, has his own map titled "The Known World," which is—signaled by its name—linked both to the novel that we are reading and, as I am arguing here, Alice's creations. Skiffington's map, by contrast to Alice's wide-ranging work, is constrained by its "limited" viewpoint. The map that Skiffington owns is a European engraving that crudely and simply delineates the Southern region from a traditionally limited cartographic perspective. While, Tim Ryan tells us, Alice's maps could easily be interpreted "as an authentic African American alternative to the dubious European metanarrative of Skiffington's 'The Known World,'" he warns us to read them not in opposition to each other, but as mutually contextualizing.<sup>75</sup> After all, as postmodernism has taught us, any map will always be limited in some way as it cannot be fully comprehensive. However, Calvin claims that the overview Alice's maps provide is "what God sees when He looks down on Manchester" (384), a sentiment that has filtered throughout Jones' novel. The omniscience of Jones' narrator, and the endless shifting of viewpoints and timeframes are, although part of his playful postmodern discourse on history, Jones' way of revealing his survey of slavery in the South, and illustrating the movement of memory and remembrance. This logic could lead us to read Jones' novel as replacing one form of mastery and master narrative with another, that of the novelist. I would

argue though that the narrator's presence in the novel is a highly visible one. The narrator does not, as with traditional realism, "disappear" from the text and foster the illusion of unmediated telling, but remains permanently in the reader's "sight": ever present. Thus, in a stylistic trick, Jones' narrator both claims realist all-knowingness and complicates this realism by foregrounding his very act of telling and seeing. While not complete, his striving for authorial and artistic reach testifies to the complexity and importance of documenting history in the twenty-first century.

In Alice's second artwork, Calvin notes that "[e]ach person's face, including yours [Caldonia], is raised up as though to look in the very eyes of God" (385). There is not only an allusion to Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* here (a definitive African-American text), but the insight suggests a dual process of looking. Simultaneously then, Alice's maps (and Jones' novel) survey plantation life from a god's-eye view, but the characters themselves return this gaze: they are aware of the watcher and demand a witness to them. This breaking of the literary "fourth-wall" illuminates the cultural work of memory that Jones' novel undertakes. Alice's artwork, and *The Known World* itself (we have already seen how they are twinned), thus both reveal the call for memories of slavery being met. Katherine Bassard writes, "[t]his God's eye-view in Alice's very human creation represents the irruption of the vision of another world into the text of the novel, the promise of an alternative way of seeing that is not confined to a 'map' or 'narrative' but is at once immanent and transcendent."<sup>76</sup> Both human and god-like, omniscient but flawed, fictional yet seemingly factual, Jones' narrative points to that space in Southern fiction that attempts to reach back into history and lay bare the ambiguous and complex relationship the present has to it. Moreover, as Bassard claims, the transcendence of Jones' final vision, where the characters return the stare of the watching novelist/god,

demanding address, demanding a reader as witness, illuminates the deep connection the South has to its past that lives on in the present. In returning (and thus requiring) the gaze, Jones' characters exceed the frame of the "map" or artwork and metaphorically act out the call of memory working through the novel. While the map cannot contain such memory in itself, this does not mean that memory flows just anywhere; the roots of memory are still firmly in place, even as the cultural tools to express that memory cannot delimit it. Recognition of this memory, and the usage of it in the present, not only flows out of Jones' characters (through their direct address to the reader), but the novel itself. Rigney claims that "memorials suffer from erosion and need to be continuously re-inscribed if they are to remain legible and, to the extent that texts resemble monuments, the same susceptibility to erosion applies."<sup>77</sup> In continuously connecting to the reader, and erupting with memory (and the demand for recollection and remembrance), Jones's novel enacts this re-inscription.

If *The Known World* is overflowing with memory of a particular place and time, we need to pay attention to the erosion of memory elsewhere in Southern culture and theory that this is complimenting. Jones' novel thus lends itself to the thesis I am posing, which argues for the literature of slavery as indicative of a Southern cultural memory that informs a particular sense of regionalism. As Richard Crownshaw posits, the form of *The Known World* is a "reminder of the fundamental operation of cultural memory, its construction and reconstruction of the past moment according to the desires that inform the moment of remembrance."<sup>78</sup> Just as Radstone suggests that we always identify cultural memory's placed origins, Crownshaw points to the specific moment of remembrance and the impulses that shape it. Jones' novel suggests an afterlife of slavery—a rich site of rooted and localized memory—longing and calling for representation.

*Slavery's Tentacles: Valerie Martin's Property*

Valerie Martin's Orange Prize-winning *Property* is narrated by Manon Gaudet, a plantation-owner's wife in Louisiana. The story focuses on the relationship between Manon, her husband, and their servant Sarah. These three main characters are at the center of a narrative which charts the death of both Manon's mother and, after a slave uprising, her husband. Manon is left with Sarah who then escapes and tries to live in the North of the United States. Manon, however, has her tracked down and returned to her New Orleans home, enacting complete control over her "property." The novel's title insists, then, that we read the book in terms of ownership—most obviously, that of slaves—but opens out the multiple meanings of this to include land, buildings and, revealingly, wives and womanhood. Thus we see the impact of slavery across the region and the significance of this as a Southern cultural memory that is embedded in the novel's substance. Further, the visible processes of cultural memory—like Alice's artwork—are also particularly demonstrated in a scene late in *Property*. Unlike Jones' novel, this is not what Blanchard would necessarily call "black memory"—Martin is white, as is her protagonist—but nonetheless, the memories represented are of an antebellum system and people, both black and white.

Manon Gaudet is a woman wholly distanced from her husband and the plantation on which they live. The novel closely follows the relationship between Manon and her servant Sarah. We find out early on that Manon has not had a child with her husband—they rarely even have sexual relations—but he has borne one with Sarah. The child, Walter, features in the narrative as a symbol of the interconnecting relationships on the plantation, and the complex web of power relations that is thus

produced. The gulf between Manon and her husband is referenced a number of times in her narrative; one of the most indicative comes when, after attempting to make love, Gaudet tells his wife “I’ve not much interest in making love to a corpse.”<sup>79</sup> Manon laughs and thinks to herself, “[h]ow wonderful that he would call what we were doing ‘making love,’ how amusing that he drew the line at a corpse. ‘If I am dead [...] it is because you have killed me’” (61). Caustically dark, Manon’s interior dialogue reveals much about the inner life of a slaveholder’s wife. In contradistinction to many plantation myths represented in novels and films, this relationship is loveless and sexless. Moreover, Manon indicates that taking on the role of wife is to be cast into death. Figured as a corpse, Martin suggests the degree to which—contrary to the idealized conceptions of the white Southern Belle figure at the heart of traditional plantation stories—women in the antebellum South were sublimated and repressed. This idea becomes complicated further when Manon asserts a certain kind of agency, as I will go on to explore.

Beyond this social marginality, *Property* looks closely at the connected relationships within the plantation household. Central to the novel’s narrative are the bonds between Gaudet, Manon and Sarah. From the beginning we are aware that Sarah has borne Gaudet’s child (where Manon has not) and thus uneven power relations in the house are established. Manon, narrating to herself, says: “Manon Gaudet has no children, but her husband is not childless. It was a common enough tale; no one would think it a paradox” (31). No-one would think this a paradox because of the prevalence of interracial relationships in the antebellum South, however much they were unspoken. Though she does not love her husband—she frequently tells us this—Manon’s role as wife is made problematic by the presence of

Walter. When visiting a doctor to investigate her lack of childbearing, Manon confides in him, rhetorically asking:

[w]ould the fact that the servant I brought to the marriage has borne him a son, and that this creature is allowed to run loose in the house like a wild animal, would that be, in your view, sufficient cause for a wife to despise her husband?" (41)

The doctor's prosaic response is that this situation is all too common. The anger Manon reveals here is indicative of the extent to which her husband's relations with Sarah are enough to destabilize the illusory symbol of white womanhood that the slave wife—the "Southern Belle"—was meant to uphold.

In describing Walter as "running loose like a wild animal," Manon indicates the way in which she perceives the mixed-race child as feral and sub-human. Another depiction of Walter, as "scurr[ying] across the bricks into the azaleas and squatt[ing] down in the dirt" (37), adds to her image of him as animalistic. Manon's relation to Walter is complex, but Martin seems to suggest is that this mixed-race child is something of a thorn in Manon's side, if not evidence for the ambiguous and far from transparent relations in the antebellum South. Undercutting her role as slave-mistress, Walter symbolizes Manon's marginalized position not only in the region but also in her own household. What Martin's novel attempts to reveal, therefore, is a Southern memory (of the plantation household) that is complex, fraught with emotional instability and built on oppressive Southern power-dynamics.

The noun of the title seems obvious to read in light of slavery; the above discussions have noted the various webs of ownership within antebellum plantations.

What Martin's novel investigates further is the way in which the rules and structures of ownership shift. One such indication comes from Manon's aunt, who tells her simply that "[a] woman's property is her husband's" (90). Talking of Sarah, the aunt makes the point that anything Manon owns is far from hers alone, but actually always Gaudet's in the first instance. Nothing is merely hers. More interesting, however, is that with a little syntactical shifting, the sentence also suggests another meaning: "a woman is her husband's property." This idea runs through *Property* and the complex relations between Manon and Gaudet. While ownership and propriety are central to the system of slavery—across the racial border, primarily—the notions have wider implications throughout the slaveholding region. Structures of property are clear (and well-known) when viewed in relation to slaves, but *Property* illuminates the other mechanisms of power that follow the same logic, albeit within the white household. Manon is nothing other, at the bottom line, than the property of her husband. While this is worth exploration in its own right, the power structures take on a powerful dimension late in the book, after Manon's mother has died.

Soon after the death, Manon receives a letter from her husband back on the plantation. She sees no "sympathy" or "love" in it, thinking that "[h]is letter was a perfect miniature of the monument to falsity he has made of my life" (79). Thus, while in despair over her mother's passing, and having this solidified by the perceived lack of emotion between her and her husband, Manon at this moment is distraught and psychologically unmoored. Her subsequent actions therefore reveal much. After watching Sarah breastfeed her baby, Manon fixes her stare on Sarah's bare breast. Manon "drop[s] to [her] knees" in front of Sarah and, "hands upon her wrists" begins to suckle at Sarah's breast, "guid[ing] the nipple to [her] lips and suck[ing] gently," tasting its "sweet" milk (81). Amy K. King suggests that as this scene follows her

mother's death, Manon "seek[s] a vital mother figure in Sarah..."<sup>80</sup> The breastfeeding is thus part of her claim on Sarah's body as a maternal one; she almost recasts herself as an infant. While not entirely infantilized (indeed, there is some adult eroticism at work here), Manon does seem to seek out a motherly female body at an important emotional juncture. Tim Ryan argues, however, that the violent act "is a double violation: it is a form of rape that also defiles a woman's maternal role."<sup>81</sup> Watching Sarah feed her own child stirs something within Manon; presenting not only a physical sign of Manon's childlessness, the baby equally serves to highlight Sarah's fertility and her child (with Gaudet): Walter.

However, within this scene, there is a deeper dynamic at work. Manon is a slave-holder's wife and thus would have little direct contact with slaves, except for the house servants. Thus her role on the plantation is far more limited than her husband's. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese notes that where in the North during this era, the home was cemented as a primarily female sphere, in Southern slave society, the home and plantation "reinforced gender constraints by ascribing all women to the domination of the male heads of households..."<sup>82</sup> In this way, the slave-mistress has far less control over the plantation's slaves than her husband. This has interesting ramifications in *Property* as, with Gaudet gone, Manon has to fulfill a role within the house that she has not yet embodied in this way. Thus, Manon's actions, with her husband absent, respond to the gender dynamic instituted in the society. As King astutely notes, "Manon choses to embrace the very attributes she despises in her husband to gain her own foothold in Southern society," and thus "[t]he line between male and female slaveholder disintegrates."<sup>83</sup> Manon's interior narration informs us that during the sexual act she imagines "[t]his is what he does" (81). She is therefore not only positioning herself as Sarah's overall master in *lieu* of her husband, but

adopting his sexuality and masculinity too. In the latter half of the novel, moreover, when Sarah escapes to the North, Manon is determined not to let her succeed in her venture. Employing an investigator to find Sarah is in some ways the apogee of Manon's embodying of a slave-holder's role. While Manon does not particularly like Sarah, she would rather have her tracked down at a great cost than be "defeated" in her dominating role. Tim Ryan argues that Manon's social position rests upon patriarchal power in the South and thus "[r]ather than seeking to liberate herself from patriarchy, Manon chooses to perpetuate it, claiming for herself the patriarchal authority to which she was once subject," which he sees as fully embodied in Manon's search for Sarah.<sup>84</sup>

Returning to the breastfeeding scene, Amy King's essay investigates the lesbian undercurrents in *Property*, but here she sees Manon's actions not as the emergence of a repressed homosexual desire, but as a spectacle of sexual domination inherited from slave society: "Manon feels pleasure not because she *shares* pleasure with another woman but rather because she *takes* it" (original emphases).<sup>85</sup> Rather than an (un)requited lesbian desire, Manon's is possessive: as with the novel's title, she is claiming her bodily property in Sarah. Where Sarah's body was once a commodity for Gaudet, now Manon replicates this procurement from within the gender line. She is both masculine and feminine in terms of stereotypical gender attributes and actions. Manon further admits to the reader that "[Sarah]'s afraid to look at me, I thought. And she's right to be. If she looked at me, I would slap her" (82). This possibility of mindless violence underscores her attempt at domination over Sarah, not only claiming and abusing her body, but staging a scene of master-slave relationality. As Crownshaw explains, "[t]he scene dramatizes a Hegelian master-slave dialectic, the slave master's (mistress's) constitutional dependency on the

slave”; that is, even when Manon “forcefully imposes herself on the world (Sarah’s body) she can only reveal her dependency on it...”<sup>86</sup> Thus, even while Manon is attempting to gain mastery while her husband (the “real” master) is absent, her relational existence to slaves is apparent.

The point I take Martin to be making here is that the notion of property and ownership is so central to the system of slavery that it finds visible effects across race and gender in Southern society. What this leads us towards is Martin’s investigation into the deep-rootedness of the slave system in the South. As Ciuba writes, the “victimization of slavery was so central to the South that it helped to support not just the plantation economy but the entire social order of the region.”<sup>87</sup> Interesting to note here, is the particular aspect of slavery that is being remembered in Martin’s novel. Ciuba argues that slavery’s institutional victimization and domination was not only central to the system of labor itself, but to the social organization of the region as a whole. What Martin’s novel depicts is a plantation and region founded on this very principle. As I will conclude below, master/slave and black/white relationships channeled deep into Southern identity. Though nonetheless complex, the tangled race relations in antebellum society affected those across the region, in various and different ways. Connected to this chapter’s argument, therefore, we must pay attention to this memory of slavery’s varied impact on the South and Southerners; we are looking at a memory rooted not only in slavery’s depth, but its localized instantiations. The memory comes to the surface of both the region and the text itself. As Jones’ novel produced cultural memories of slavery from within an African-American context (Hanchard’s “black memory”), *Property* similarly depicts a process of remembrance, but this time from a white South, though it is nonetheless “raced.”

One of the key scenes in Martin's novel comes when Manon witnesses her mother's death. Upon entering her bedroom, Manon sees her mother dying from a disease that has consumed her. The description of her death is particularly gothic and sensational: "from her mouth, nose, eyes, and ears, a black fluid gushed forth" (74). The mother's body is riddled and consumed with an unknown black substance that secretes itself from any pore and orifice: it is toxic and overwhelmingly black. Martin continues, "[h]er skin had turned blue, as if she were suffocating, and the veins in her neck and hands stood out against the flesh like spreading black tentacles" (74-75). While this scene would fit aptly in a discussion of Southern gothic, within Martin's novel it stands out prominently, as the text is a highly realist one. The body's blackness thus needs unpacking, especially in this context. As the widow of an esteemed slaveholder, and mother to a daughter with slaves, the novel's thematic of property and race-relations become illuminated. It is as though the black/white split has reached a tipping point—a slave uprising is contemporaneous to this, which leads to the death of Manon's husband—and is issued forth literally via the mother's body. The disease that has consumed Manon's mother is symbolic of slavery's interior effects. Furthermore, I argue that it might be a particular Southern memory itself that is also gushing out of this text, signaling the inability of it to stay contained in the past. While not the specifically "black memory" of Jones' novel, this memory is nonetheless informed by, and indicative of, blackness and race. As a powerful cultural memory from the region, it—like the black fluid—cannot but emerge in all its potent and overwhelming form. To push this further, Erll states that literary forms "are not simply 'vessels' to hold content, but carry meaning themselves," thus signaling the possibility of Martin's text acting *as* memory, not simply representing it.<sup>88</sup> That Erll uses the term "vessel" also feeds into Martin's image of containment and fluidity. The

overflowing black fluid, or memory, in the novel is demonstrative of the text's own erupting past as well as itself emerging from the region and its local histories.

Earlier in the novel there is a correlative sentence of overflowing blackness from Manon's point of view: "everyone knows a drop of negro blood does sometimes overflow like an inkpot in the child of parents who are passing for white, to the horror of the couple" (6). While this tells us much about the notion of miscegenation and race relations in the South (and the novel: Walter is a figure of this) it also uses the image of over-spilling black fluid. Where Manon ultimately sees this as a negative notion—the thought of racial "impurity" troubles her—we can connect it linguistically to her mother's death. Blackness in both can be read as a fluid concept (it is embodied as a fluid) that has a reach far greater and deeper than the white people attempting to control and subjugate it ever concede. Christina Sharpe calls this the "fuliginous stain": "residual blackness, blackness that won't be erased," "blackness that illuminates what is otherwise unreadable, unseeable."<sup>89</sup> Patricia Yaeger consolidates this, arguing that the notion of "white panic"—racial fear—is "a moment of spectacular terror when racial boundaries that had seemed impermeable become unexpectedly porous": an accurate description of this moment in *Property*.<sup>90</sup>

Manon's mother is a symbolic vessel that represents (female) whiteness. This vessel is overcome with a disease that consumes her from within: the disease being slavery. Slavery's all-pervasive nature (that articulates and informs regionalism)—as evidenced in each of this chapter's novels—is visible here too: the gushing blackness is an excessive, deep-rooted illness that infects, and infected, everything in the South. One issue in reading texts about slavery, Christina Sharpe warns us, is that race and slavery are too often "read entirely about black people..."<sup>91</sup> Slavery, thus, is not merely a "black issue," a black body-economy; rather, it integrally involves people of

all races and therefore the social landscape of an entire, and particular, region. The imagery of the above scene is pertinent also because the black fluid spreads through Manon's mother's veins and fills them on the skin's surface, "like black tentacles." Slavery was, connotatively, a raced, tentacular system, rooting itself deep in the South, spreading out in every direction: there was not, in theory, a single black person in the region outside of slavery during the antebellum period. Nor, importantly, were there those not black who were not relational to slavery. The roots burrowed deeply. As a working-through of cultural memory then, *Property's* aim, I suggest, is to complexly and interestingly reveal the pervasiveness of slavery as an institution and unearth some of these roots. That the blackness is overflowing, furthermore, suggests that these racial roots might be making themselves visible, emerging from below. Moreover, the novel foregrounds itself as a work of cultural memory. Martin's book is a memory text in every sense: containing, igniting and dramatizing Southern memory and remembrance.

### *South to an Old Place*

In concluding, we circle back to the notion that cultural memories of the South, from both black and white Southerners, are in fact keeping the region alive today through their charging of literary texts. While some museums and monuments to slavery do exist in the region, the South (and America at large) is struggling to deal with the long history of this institution in the public arena. The failure of a national museum to slavery in the South highlights something of this difficulty. What novels of slavery seem to suggest, particularly the ones investigated here, is that literature might just counter the lack of other memorialization. Particularly when such texts overflow with

memory in place, it seems that even a memorial such as the Toni Morrison Society's "bench by the road" cannot quite accomplish the same memory-work as a Morrison novel itself. As the "tentacles" and roots of slavery plunged deep into the South, and interpolated everyone into the system, so too can we see the roots of slavery in other metaphorical ways. Valerie Martin and Edward P. Jones' novels have their foundations in the Southern past: they become, in Ann Rigney's words, portable monuments that continue to work as instigators and sparks for cultural memory. As an entrenched cultural memory in the South, slavery and its remembrance continue to do cultural work in the region. Furthermore, the tentacles of Southern history and memory are finding contemporary resonance; what if, these texts ask, the past (as memory and history) is far closer to the surface of the Southern region than we admit? This is a notion that I pose in the following chapter about Hurricane Katrina, in which I argue that the storm was a Southern one in that it unearthed, and brought to the surface, older regional memories and histories of race-relations.

Where transnational postsouthern scholarship is sometimes dislocating Southern memory from the region itself—Kreyling's memory "without a place to have it"—the texts I have looked at might gesture towards other readings. The memory-roots of the South that I am teasing out in this chapter and elsewhere can be connected to their regional contexts to reveal significant insights. Attending to the global routes of slavery is useful to explore and understand our transnational past and present, and this book will elaborate a sense of rooted (in place, in time) memory to widen our understanding of this past. Through novels that testify to the all-pervasiveness of slavery as an institution in the antebellum South, contemporary writers are doubly illuminating the presence of the memories themselves as regionally creating and sustaining.

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<sup>1</sup> Toni Morrison, "A Bench by the Road," *The World* 3, no. 1 (1989).

<http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/117810.shtml>.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Benn Michaels, *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 135.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 292.

<sup>7</sup> Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, translated by Sara B. Young (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 32.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen P. Hanna, "A Slavery Museum? Race, Memory, and Landscape in Fredericksburg, Virginia," *Southeastern Geographer* 48, no. 3 (2008): 329.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>12</sup> Derek H. Alderman and Rachel M. Campbell, "Symbolic Excavation and the Artifact Politics of Remembering Slavery in the American South: Observations from Walterboro, South Carolina," *Southeastern Geographer* 48, no. 3 (2008): 339.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Alderman and Campbell's above essay, or Jessica Adam's *Wounds of Returning* (2007).

<sup>14</sup> Ira Berlin, "American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice," *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 4 (2004): 1257.

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<sup>15</sup> Renée Ater, “The Challenge of Memorializing Slavery in North Carolina: The Unsung Founders Memorial and the North Carolina Freedom Monument Project,” in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, edited by Ana Lucia Araujo (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 141.

<sup>16</sup> Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 28.

<sup>19</sup> Dora Apel, “Memorialization and Its Discontents: America’s First Lynching Memorial,” *Mississippi Quarterly* 61, no.1-2 (2008): 231.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America 1780-1865* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 7, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>23</sup> Erll, “Travelling Memory,” 11.

<sup>24</sup> Ana Lucia Araujo, “Introduction,” in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, edited by Ana Lucia Araujo, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Radstone, “What Place is This?” 118.

<sup>26</sup> Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 8.

<sup>27</sup> Stephan Palmié, “Slavery, Historicism, and the Poverty of Memorialization,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, edited by Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 368.

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- <sup>28</sup> Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott*, 19.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.
- <sup>30</sup> Deborah N. Cohn, *History and Memory in the Two Souths: Recent Southern and Spanish-American Fiction* (Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press, 1999), 2.
- <sup>31</sup> Edouard Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, translated by Barbara Lewis and Thomas C. Spear (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 29.
- <sup>32</sup> Jessica Adams, "Introduction: Circum-Caribbean Performance, Language, History," in *Just Below South: Intercultural Performance in the Caribbean and the U.S. South*, edited by Jessica Adams, Michael P. Bibler and Cécile Accilien (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2007), 3.
- <sup>33</sup> Shameem Black, "Commemoration from a Distance: On Metamemorial Fiction," *History & Memory* 23, no. 2 (2011): 43.
- <sup>34</sup> George B. Handley, "A New World Poetics of Oblivion," in *Look Away!* edited by Jon Smith and Deborah N. Cohn, 47.
- <sup>35</sup> Kreyling, *The South That Wasn't There*, 194.
- <sup>36</sup> Bone, *The Postsouthern Sense of Place*, 52.
- <sup>37</sup> Fred Hobson, "Introduction," in *South to the Future: An American Region in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Fred Hobson (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2002), 3.
- <sup>38</sup> Berlin, "American Slavery in History," 1259.
- <sup>39</sup> Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma*, 1.
- <sup>40</sup> It may be worth noting here that Jones and Martin's novels are not representing the same memories necessarily; there are obviously differences between a black and white writer's depictions of slavery. I would not want to conflate the two authors, nor

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their very discrete works, and rather wish to signal that bringing their texts together is important for understanding the complexities of this regional memory.

<sup>41</sup> Tim A. Ryan, *Calls and Responses: The American Novel of Slavery Since Gone With the Wind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 1, 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, 211.

<sup>43</sup> Gary M. Ciuba, *Desire, Violence and Divinity in Modern Southern Fiction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 17.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Christina Sharpe, *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 26.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Susan V. Donaldson, "Telling Forgotten Stories of Slavery in the Postmodern South," *The Southern Literary Journal* 40, no. 2 (2008): 268.

<sup>49</sup> Madhu Dubey, "Speculative Fictions of Slavery," *American Literature* 82, no. 4 (2010): 785.

<sup>50</sup> Donaldson, "Telling Forgotten Stories," 268.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>52</sup> Amy Hungerford, *Postmodern Belief: American Literature and Religion since 1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 139.

<sup>53</sup> Edward P. Jones, *The Known World* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), 44. Quoted in text from here on.

<sup>54</sup> Ryan, *Calls and Responses*, 195.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>56</sup> Dubey, "Speculative Fictions of Slavery," 791.

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- <sup>57</sup> Donaldson, "Telling Forgotten Stories," 268.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.
- <sup>59</sup> Hanna, "A Slavery Museum?" 319.
- <sup>60</sup> Berlin, "American Slavery in History," 1265.
- <sup>61</sup> Patrick O'Donnell, *The American Novel Now: Reading Contemporary American Fiction Since 1980* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 144.
- <sup>62</sup> Yaeger, *Dirt and Desire*, x.
- <sup>63</sup> Donaldson, "Telling Forgotten Stories," 271.
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>65</sup> Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma*, 35.
- <sup>66</sup> Eric L. Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 89.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>68</sup> Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, "Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation," in *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1*, edited and translated by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 126.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.
- <sup>70</sup> Donaldson, "Telling Forgotten Stories," 271-2.
- <sup>71</sup> Anna Hartnell, *Rewriting Exodus: American Futures from Du Bois to Obama* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 3.
- <sup>72</sup> Michael Hanchard, "Black Memory *versus* State Memory: Notes Toward a Method," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 47.
- <sup>73</sup> Donaldson, "Telling Forgotten Stories," 281.

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- <sup>74</sup> Carolyn Vellenga Berman, “*The Known World* in World Literature: Bakhtin, Glissant, and Edward P. Jones,” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 42, no. 2 (2009): 237.
- <sup>75</sup> Ryan, *Calls and Responses*, 206.
- <sup>76</sup> Katherine Clay Bassard, “Imagining Other Worlds: Race, Gender, and the ‘Power Line’ in Edward P. Jones’s *The Known World*,” *African American Review* 42, no. 3-4 (2008): 418.
- <sup>77</sup> Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott*, 221.
- <sup>78</sup> Richard Crownshaw, “Perpetrator Fictions and Transcultural Memory,” *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 80.
- <sup>79</sup> Valerie Martin, *Property* (London: Abacus, 2003), 61. Quoted in text from here on.
- <sup>80</sup> Amy K. King, “Valerie Martin’s *Property* and the Failure of the Lesbian Counterplot,” *Mississippi Quarterly* 63, no. 1-2 (2010): 223.
- <sup>81</sup> Ryan, *Calls and Responses*, 180.
- <sup>82</sup> Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 39.
- <sup>83</sup> King, “Valerie Martin’s *Property*,” 222, 224.
- <sup>84</sup> Ryan, *Calls and Responses*, 176.
- <sup>85</sup> King, “Valerie Martin’s *Property*,” 225.
- <sup>86</sup> Crownshaw, “Perpetrator Fictions,” 83, 84.
- <sup>87</sup> Ciuba, *Desire, Violence and Divinity*, 29.
- <sup>88</sup> Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 159.
- <sup>89</sup> Sharpe, *Monstrous Intimacies*, 168.
- <sup>90</sup> Yaeger, *Dirt and Desire*, 89.
- <sup>91</sup> Sharpe, *Monstrous Intimacies*, 173.