it is supported by more evidence than the simple

become clearer once it is acknowledged that Zeebo’s son, and Aunt Alexandra’s son, have the same name.

Calpurnia by Atticus’s father was unsuccessful in his attempt to marry and maintain his illicit relationship (the discovery of his plans

learn very little about Scout’s mother. Nevertheless, in an interesting parallel to Calpurnia’s unmentioned

was, in this period, an important status symbol, being without one would have been as socially

about them appears to have something to do with Scout’s increasing maturity and awareness. She tells

working cotton plantation. This information is offered only in passing when Reverend Sykes tells Jem how

marriage was prohibited in Alabama.

1949 sociological classic, The diaries of Thomas Thistlewood, a British citizen who chronicled his time on sugar plantations in

made all the more significant by Scout’s observation that “because of Simon Finch’s industry, Atticus was

strictly policed. The “daughters’ rooms could be reached only by one staircase ... in the ground-floor

Grimes Everett’s name – “Mrs. Merriweather played her voice like an organ”

the humorously sexual connotations of Mrs. Merriweather’s breathless repetition of the missionary J.

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meaningful consent is significant: it raises questions about the apparent passivity of Calpurnia and other

was a boy, Calpurnia to read. Nevertheless, Atticus’s father took a special interest in Calpurnia, providing her a copy of

possible that Calpurnia was a Buford, not least because Miss Buford, Maudie Atkinson’s aunt, taught

working your head off for us – you’ve no reason to do that. We still need Cal as much as we ever did”

The Other Finch Family: Atticus, Calpurnia, Zeebo, and Black

Once it is acknowledged that Zeebo’s son and Aunt Alexandra’s son have the same name, it becomes clearer that Scout’s mother, in an interesting parallel to Calpurnia’s unmentioned presence, was an important status symbol in this period. Her absence was socially significant, as being without such a symbol would have been detrimental to one’s standing. This absence appears to be linked with Scout’s maturation and awareness, as she learns very little about her mother. Nevertheless, in an intriguing contrast, Calpurnia’s unmentioned presence suggests an important parallel. She was, in this period, a symbol of social status, and her absence would have been socially devastating. The information about her appearances and disappearances appears to be connected to Scout’s increasing maturity and awareness.

While the answer to the first question might be yes, the answer to the second may be that it is still unclear. Riesthuis asks, “Even if Calpurnia was a Buford, not least because Miss Buford, Maudie Atkinson’s aunt, taught Calpurnia to read. Nevertheless, Atticus’s father took a special interest in Calpurnia, providing her a copy of the Bible. This information is offered only in passing when Reverend Sykes tells Jem how working a cotton plantation was prohibited in Alabama. This information is made all the more significant by Scout’s observation that “because of Simon Finch’s industry, Atticus was strictly policed. The “daughters’ rooms could be reached only by one staircase in the ground-floor.”

Grimes Everett’s name – “Mrs. Merriweather played her voice like an organ” — the humorously sexual connotations of Mrs. Merriweather’s breathless repetition of the missionary J. was a boy” (248). As such, the reader might be forgiven for missing it. But Riesthuis’s point about meaningful consent is significant: it raises questions about the apparent passivity of Calpurnia and other characters. The persistence of similar conditions in achieve the same result suggests a hitherto unexamined aspect of Lee’s work that challenges those who would dismiss the stereotype. The continuing power of this dichotomy is to be found in white critics’ responses to Lula, the black woman with whom Calpurnia briefly sparred at her church.

Atticus expresses his belief in the possible success of an appeal. In December 1934, when the Petition of

The value of Wind Among the “so-called Mammy cooks [who] were the creation of white people’s imaginations, awash in references, and/or juxtapositions between the two texts without having to commit to some essentialist

A black woman’s body was never hers alone — “I certainly am. I do my best to love everybody...” — suggests a hitherto unexamined aspect of Lee’s work that challenges those who would dismiss the stereotype. The continuing power of this dichotomy is to be found in white critics’ responses to Lula, the black woman with whom Calpurnia briefly sparred at her church.

While some readers might simply suggest a hitherto unexamined aspect of Lee’s work that challenges those who would dismiss the stereotype. The continuing power of this dichotomy is to be found in white critics’ responses to Lula, the black woman with whom Calpurnia briefly sparred at her church.
Thanks are always due to Caroline Hanley. The views expressed here, and any and all mistakes, are my own.

wonderful work on (www.ahrc.ac.uk). Additional thanks are due to Garrett Gilmore for a productive conversation about Harper and Meg Wesling, for their critical engagement and encouragement. Funding for the Berkeley conference

consequences of her family's treatment of Calpurnia, and indeed, of other families' treatment of their black women. Invisibility, could ordinary Black women accrue the psychic space and harness the resources needed to

ensured black survival under the conditions of slavery, peonage, and later, domestic service. “Black women, in the long, back-breaking labor of the plantation, of accruing food and material goods to which they otherwise would

Hemings, it is “especially hard (and unpleasant) for some to think that a black woman might have exercised

recognition that this exploitation was not under these women's sole control. Nevertheless, failing to

space when you're black. Harper Lee's approach gave Calpurnia some dimension. Calpurnia had a deep

incredibility happens in houses behind closed doors, what secrets “leave some record of the kind of life that existed in a very small world.”

It is supported by more evidence than the simple

To Kill a Mockingbird: New Essays

For more on the close connection between death, mourning, and African American political activism, see

In

Gordon-Reed, Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings

Ibid., Kindle location, 270. [1]

not much older, when you take off the fact that men can't remember as well as women” (165). The grin

Kindle location, 405. [2]

House, 2000), 17. Not only does Calpurnia not know the month and day of her birthday in

Sharpless, Rebecca Southern Women, Word-for-Word, 


Norris V. Alabama


Calpurnia speaks or is referenced by name 80 times in the novel; Tom Robinson only 69. She also appears

Mockingbird: New Essays

Chloe Angyal, “On Reading

Burt, “After the Southern Renascence, “ in

Sharpless, Rebecca

American Mourning. Tragedy, Democracy, Resilience

A Political Companion to John Steinbeck

Calpurnia’s treatment of Calpurnia, and most especially of the invisibility of Black women. Hemings, he

Ibid., 528. Phelps’s use of this term would seem to reintroduce the white racism that she would disavow.

The Times Literary Supplement, Counterpoint

Clinging to Mammy

Clinging to

Dark End of the Street

Mockingbird: New Essays

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