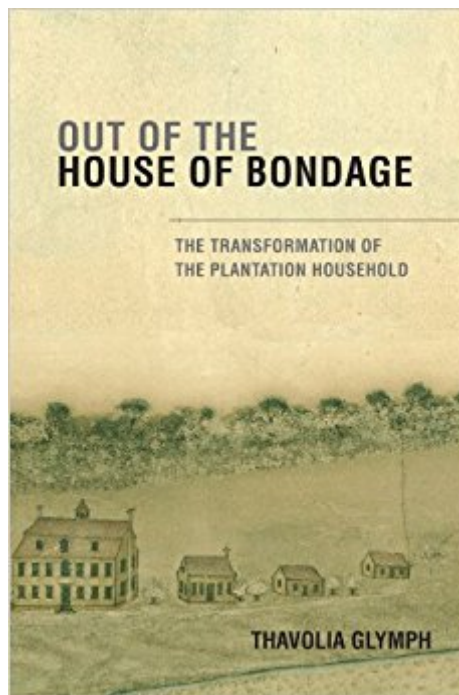




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Out Of The House Of Bondage: The Transformation Of The Plantation Household



Synopsis

This book views the plantation household as a site of production where competing visions of gender were wielded as weapons in class struggles between black and white women. Mistresses were powerful beings in the hierarchy of slavery rather than powerless victims of the same patriarchal system responsible for the oppression of the enslaved. Glymph challenges popular depictions of plantation mistresses as "friends" and "allies" of slaves and sheds light on the political importance of ostensible private struggles, and on the political agendas at work in framing the domestic as private and household relations as personal.

Book Information

Paperback: 296 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press; First Edition (US) First Printing edition (June 30, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0521703980

ISBN-13: 978-0521703987

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.6 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (8 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

In this well written and thoroughly researched volume, Glymph argues that the terms "public" and "private" are not accurate enough to define how the plantation household changed or to describe the gendered ideology of the South. Instead, the author contends, the management of labor became the driving force in households. Furthermore, the very nature of what constituted a household changed as the Civil War was fought and slaves were emancipated. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of this book, though, is Glymph's persuasive attempt to challenge the myth of the antebellum southern plantation mistress and house servant. And that is the beauty of Glymph's work. One does feel as though they get a picture of women in the plantation household, not just white women or black women, but both. Glymph argues early in the book that too many historians have not given a complete analysis of the plantation mistress, the power she wielded, the

violence she meted out, and the role she played in enforcing slavery. As Glymph points out, it was the plantation mistress who had day-to-day contact with slaves whereas the male master may not. Because Glymph uses sources from both white and black women, it gives a fuller picture of the antebellum household. The post-war South saw white women entering the market as employers, but, Glymph argues, it was black women who had more experience in negotiating wages. Furthermore, black men and women began to use public displays such as parades and celebrations to celebrate their freedom, which unnerved white women. Perhaps the chief accomplishment of Glymph's work is to raise questions about relationship of black and white women after emancipation and what it means in terms of freedom in the post-war South.

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