



Right Feelings: On Sentimentality, Philosophy, and Religion in Harriet Beecher Stowe

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**Right Feelings: On Sentimentality, Philosophy, and Religion
in Harriet Beecher Stowe**

**A dissertation presented
by
Amy Rae Howe
to
The Committee on the Study of Religion**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the subject of
The Study of Religion**

**Harvard University
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Abstract

Harriet Beecher Stowe provides one of antebellum American culture's most significant lettered intellectual accounts of the development of morally persuasive literature in the cause of anti-slavery. This dissertation explores the philosophical and religious resources that shape Stowe's literary aim of cultivating the "right feelings" among her readers. By looking to the moral contours of Stowe's published and unpublished writing, I argue that feelings are not exercised merely for the pathos of experience in Stowe's novels and correspondence, but are understood as dynamic and cultivable, central to the formation of moral judgment, and intended to lead to humanitarian action. Here, Stowe follows in a Scottish Enlightenment and faculty psychology tradition that aims to cultivate the moral sensibilities of the modern, liberal subject. However, as this dissertation argues, Stowe's invocation of "right feelings" cannot be understood apart from racial and imperial structures of power. The affective terrain of sentimentality and the cultivation of sympathy and "right feelings," for Stowe, *is* the cultivation of Anglo-American sympathy that will hopefully remediate the problem of slavery and liberty. In the spaces of character sketch, family correspondence, and transatlantic literary gift exchange, this dissertation traces the contexts and limits for the cultivation of sympathy and "right feelings," as told through Harriet Beecher Stowe's fictive and nonfictive moral universe. In scope, this dissertation attends

to the Stowe corpus of correspondence and literature at the height of her career and literary acclaim between 1851 and 1859, including *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), *Sunny Memories in Foreign Lands* (1854), *Dred* (1856), and *The Minister's Wooing* (1859). The dissertation contributes to scholarship on the role of religion and sentimentality in nineteenth-century American culture.

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At Harvard, the North American Religions Colloquium read early versions of chapters three and five and was a continued space for lively intellectual exchange among faculty and doctoral students. Versions of chapters three and five were also presented as accepted papers to the Canadian Comparative Literature Association (2016) and the Twentieth Anniversary Harriet Beech Stowe Society Conference (2016), where they received the generous intellectual engagement with scholars of Stowe and nineteenth-century British and American literature.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Affective Returns

From these elements, however, genealogy retrieves an indispensable restraint: it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history—in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles.

-Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 1977.¹

Across disciplines in the social sciences and humanities in the early twenty-first century, the “affective turn” is receiving a great deal of attention, prominence, and scholarly investment. A host of scholarly works, edited volumes, and conferences attend to the tracking and understanding of affect, emotion, and sentimentality in the fields of cultural and literary studies, anthropology, history and American studies, race and ethnic studies, and the study of religion. Broadly these studies ask about the cultural contingency of emotion, the human and nonhuman transmission of affect, and the politics of sensibility. Bringing new, or different, attention to the role of emotions and sensations of material worlds, the “affective turn” generally characterizes

¹ Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed., D. F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 76.

itself through its focused attention on charting the felt, energy-rich (and energy-depleted) landscapes and languages (verbal and otherwise) used to interact with, describe, shape, and understand the engagements in the world by humans and other sentient beings. In so doing, it challenges modern philosophical categories of will, cognition, rationality, reason, agency, and belief. The affective turn insists on the visceral, the corporeal, and the intermediary not only as a way to interpolate one's world, but also as a way to grasp the mediating forces that signal what it means to act and be ethically integral to—or, dispossessed from—one's social, political, and natural worlds.² However, the moral and ethical force of emotion has long occupied the critical thought of Western philosophical and religious traditions, specifically in their concern with the management of errant emotions, the cultivation of benevolent desire, and the preoccupation with persuasive emotional appeal in political and social movements. Thus, in many ways, rather than a new turn, the affective turn might better be understood as a *re-turn* to the exploration of the “genealogy” of the “sentiments, love, conscience, instincts” in history's “unpromising places,” as Michel Foucault's reflection on the value of Nietzschean historical methods encourages.³ This study explores Harriet Beecher Stowe's use sentimental literature in order to interrogate how “sentiments, love, conscience, instincts” have sought to shape American moral and political life.

² For edited collections representing parts of this scholarship, see Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) and Patricia T. Clough and Jean Halley, eds., *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Key texts from this recent body of scholarship that inform this dissertation include Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Catherine Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod, eds., *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Philip Fisher, *The Vehement Passions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); and Lauren Berlant, ed., *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of An Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

³ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 76.

For this dissertation, one particular debate in the genealogy of sentiment is of central importance: the worries raised by mid- and late-twentieth-century American literary critics and historians about the effects of sentimentality on a rapidly changing public sphere. When Ann Douglas launched a critique of nineteenth-century sentimental culture in her seminal 1977 *The Feminization of American Culture*, she reflects an ethos shared by a larger cohort of mid-twentieth-century literary critics and historians lamenting a perceived loss of a rigorous, rational, public, intellectual discourse in the United States.⁴ The production and consumption of sentimental novels, stories, and sermons by the nineteenth-century's middle-class women and Protestant ministers not only softened intellectual culture and theology, as Douglas claims, it also bolstered an enmeshed and effeminate domestic sphere that would serve as the basis of therapeutic culture and consumerism run amok a century later.⁵ In particular, Harriet Beecher Stowe's "influence" serves as the iconic model for Douglas's invective.⁶ Though Douglas lauds Stowe's astute analysis of Calvinism in the case of *The Minister's Wooing* and the sermonic feat *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she ultimately finds Stowe succumbs to a fashionable and sentimental solipsism as exemplified by her later novels.⁷ However, is it not the sentimental mode that gives force to what Douglas finds both problematic and laudable?

⁴ Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Noonday Press/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. Originally published in 1977).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 9-11.

⁶ While this opening chapter is not interested in a sustained analysis of Douglas's uses of Stowe, it is worth noting that her argument begins with her autobiographical remarks in the preface recalling her enjoyment of reading about the Little Eva scene of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a young reader, and then later ruminates over the "pink and white tyranny" of sentimental readers.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 245-250.

A decade later, Jane Tompkins' 1985 *Sensational Designs* response served as the most cited rebuttal to the Douglas thesis (hence the discussion was named the "Douglas-Tompkins debate," by Laura Wexler).⁸ Tompkins argues instead for the aesthetically productive and culturally empowering uses of the sentimental by authors and their readers. The sentimental mode, she asserts, was a central source of cultural power precisely because it sought to shape a social vision that included female authority.⁹ Stowe is important for Tompkins, as Stowe represents the achievements of literary and cultural influence made by female authors in their historical moments, despite their exclusion from accounts of American literary, religious, and cultural history. Many feminist scholars have earnestly followed in Tompkins path in the project of recovering the importance of nineteenth-century sentimental discourses, judged as uniquely available to women writers and readers interested in challenging the authority of patriarchal-dominated political and cultural spaces.¹⁰ While this scholarship paves the way for an interrogation of the value of sentimentality, it sometimes stops short in its celebration of recovered sentimentality in and of itself. This risks leaving as under-interrogated sentimentality's ability to enforce gendered and racialized norms, disciplinary practice, and designate privileges, inclusions, and exclusions. However, by questioning the value of sentimentality itself, the literary, religious, and racial discursive terrain of the work and registers of sentimentality are

⁸ Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). On the "Douglas-Tompkins debate" as a critical point of reference for literary scholars, see Shirley Samuels, ed., *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁹ Ibid. See, for example, the centrality of mothers and children to Tompkins analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 122-126.

¹⁰ See discussion below.

opened up for interrogation. By refusing to allow these discourses to be settled in certain domestic spheres of middle-class white women, sentimentality must be understood as coming to power in the terrains of racial, colonial, and class differences.

A great deal of scholarly attention has been paid to emotion and affect in history, philosophy and literature. These scholarly works operates on a number of fronts ranging from the demonstration of the many social and political registers of sentimentality; to the emotional linkages of charity, love, and pity to those of fear, violence, and self-interest; and finally to the ways race, gender, and emotion generate new and different terrains of power. However, a robust return to Stowe and her philosophical and theological engagement with sentimentality—or, as she terms it, “right feelings” —has yet to happen.¹¹ This project contributes to that end. By closely attending to the moral contours of sentimentality in the writing of Stowe, this dissertation argues that sentimentality is deployed not merely for the pathos of experience, but in the hope that the persuasion of feelings through the imaginative work of literature will move readers to public and political social action. As this project will show, Stowe’s understanding of sentimentality (“right feelings”) is dynamic and cultivable, central to the formation of moral judgment, and intended to lead to humanitarian action.

¹¹ For attention to women’s authorship and the political novel, wherein emotions subvert public and private norms, see Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Julia Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). For attention to sentimentality and gender and sexuality norms, see Mary Chapman and Glenn Hendler’s edited volume, *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), which looks to sentimentality in cultures of masculinity, including poetry, abolition, mourning practices, temperance narratives, and bachelorhood. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) is a full study of the intersections of sentimentality and homosocial prohibitions.

A central assertion and assumption of this project is that Stowe did not undermine nineteenth-century intellectual culture, but was herself a key contributor to it as a public intellectual. Her craft, expertise, and passion are none other than morally persuasive literature. While not a formally trained minister like her father and brothers, she was hardly peripheral to the formal theological and political materials and debates that served as fodder for regular Beecher family discussion and debate. When Stowe began writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1851, she was equipped with substantial rhetorical training, both as a student at Litchfield Academy and as a student and instructor at Hartford Female Seminary. She also had written a growing collection of short sketches and stories celebrated by her fellow Cincinnati Semi-Colon Club members, engaged in a strong reading practice, and had done a great deal of research on the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Like some of her siblings, she inherited Lyman Beecher's passion, even if his theology was less than palatable to her. Combined with her strong (albeit, ambivalent) moral stance against slavery, Stowe's early novels should be read in light of these sources and moments.

My suggestion here, in other words, is that these factors must, at least, hold equal weight in the well-trodden accounts of Stowe's career launch in the midst of a highly-gendered domestic scene. Yes, Stowe managed a household of children, an eccentric husband, boarders, extended family, a return move to New England from Cincinnati, and relied on her sister Catharine's assistance—as well as the employed black and immigrant labor to assist with laundry, cooking, and other household chores. Despite, or in spite of, her domestic reality, Stowe persisted in her career of writing and thinking about her work of authoring a literature of moral persuasion. In character sketches, research for novels, hurried stories written on demand—and, especially in her

correspondence—she demonstrates one of antebellum culture’s most significant lettered intellectual accounts of the development of morally persuasive literature in the cause of anti-slavery.

Stowe was a firm believer in the power of sympathy as a moral faculty and its cultivation in one’s self, in others, and in the world more broadly. As such, part of my argument about Stowe’s intellectual character is her reliance on Western philosophical traditions of sympathy as the exercise of “moral sense” (also referred to as the “moral sentiments”), notably those arising from the Scottish Enlightenment. In this tradition, sympathy lays claim to an identification with the suffering other and is committed to the managed cultivation and persuasion of emotion and response to this suffering.¹² By placing Stowe in this comparative context, her uses of sentimentality toward morally persuasive literature engages notions of the nature of moral sensibility, the logic of sympathy, the role of divine design and judgment, as well as the social claims to the rights of liberty, education and a fair justice system.

A second key assertion is that Stowe’s intellectual biography and project of morally persuasive literature cannot be told without a critical examination of racial formation in her period—and its legacy to the present. Throughout the project, I argue that Stowe uses her black characters to think about how sympathy, moral persuasion, and liberal benevolence are enmeshed in the problem of slavery and liberty. The affective terrain of sentimentality and the cultivation of sympathy and “right feelings,” for Stowe, *is* the cultivation of Anglo-American sympathy. By racializing sympathy, I aim to draw attention to how it is marked by guilt,

¹² See the second chapter in this dissertation.

paternalism, and imaginative uses of blackness in order to advance liberal ideals of education, family cohesion, and national honor that subsequently privilege whiteness.

In his famous critique, “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” James Baldwin indicts Stowe’s sentimental project as a social and political project that cares more about the formation of the sentimentalist’s panic than the remediation of oppression or the revelation of human paradox.¹³ His important critique brings attention to how sentimental portrayals of black suffering and abjection are central to the long and malignant racist histories that pathologize black moral character through the rendering of white sentiments as universal—even if they are contingent on the very static and stock emotionalism of black characters like Uncle Tom—(and black persons, as is the case with Stowe’s portrayal of Sojourner Truth). A return to Stowe’s uses of the sentimental is also a return to the formations of white moral imagination and the role of fear in American racism. While Stowe’s troublesome and problematic uses of blackness to articulate “right feelings” may be perceptible to a contemporary eye, they should also haunt the way we understand the operations of “good intentions,” social engagement, and humanitarian appeals today, for they offer a space to learn about the entanglements of whiteness and liberal benevolence in the modern West.

It is my hope that this dissertation makes a few important scholarly contributions. First, by approaching Stowe as an intellectual, this dissertation advances claims long made by feminist studies of religion, literature, history, and philosophy—namely, we must continue the work of challenging gendered inclusions and exclusions in American canons of literature, historiography,

¹³ James Baldwin, “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984. Originally published in 1955). See also Richard Wright, *Uncle Tom’s Children: Four Novellas* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938).

and the scholarship of religion. Second, as Stowe is an intellectual whose craft is the literature of moral persuasion, I aim to surface the theological and philosophical traditions she engages and revises. These include the uses of moral sensibility, sympathy, and the authority of experience found in thinkers of the Sentimental Enlightenment; the emergence of appeals to “humanity”; the troubling force of prophetic dread and divine judgment; the critique of the doctrine of election; and the reconfiguration of disinterested benevolence and divine election. Affect and sentimentality traverse not just the sentimental novel, for Stowe, but these varied sources of literary, philosophical and theological texts, correspondence, gifted materials, and historical documents. Third, as will be discussed below, this project is indebted to extensive and intensive work with the still largely unpublished records of Stowe’s correspondence. It asserts the central place of the epistolary space in how Stowe thought about the work of literature, politics, moral instruction and cultivation, and the nature of God in relation to her work as an author of fiction. Fourth and finally, because the nineteenth-century is a moment to which contemporary conversations on American sentimentalism appeal, I aim to contribute a reading of Stowe’s sentimental literature that can serve as a lens through which we can better understand broader issues concerning the social and cultural religious inheritances of the cultivation of sympathy and its import for racially-coded religious and social practices of benevolence, charity, reform, and humanitarianism.¹⁴

¹⁴ Talal Asad notably makes this argument about Christianity, redemption, and the secular in *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). Recently, Didier Fassin asks about the language, values, and affects of humanitarianism’s “fantasy of a global moral community” in *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). Others such as Erica Bornstein in *The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality and Economics in Zimbabwe* (New York: Routledge, 2005) and Miriam Ticktin in *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011) have pointed to the relationship between religion, the mobilization of compassion, and humanitarian action.

Discursive Sentiments

The discursive understandings of sentimentality and emotion, specifically Stowe's discursive uses of "right feelings," is important to the dissertation as a whole. By discourse, I mean the multiple and culturally contingent techniques that shape how sets of ideas and practices are communicated, interpreted, and operate in relations of power. "Right Feelings" does not have a static definition for Stowe, but evolves and operates in different settings and in the face of different political demands. In her influential essay, "What is Sentimentality?" June Howard rejects any attempt to "advocate some purification of terminology" and instead pursues the question of "what we are doing when we call something 'sentimental,'" and, "Just what sort of mixed bag is sentimentality?"¹⁵ By attempting to adjudicate the authenticity and sincerity of emotion (as in the case of the Douglas-Tompkins debate), scholarly inquiry loses sight of the discursive processes that allow for the recognition of emotions as *always* socially constructed and culturally invested and mediated. In what follows, I examine a set of discursive fields of scholarship that explicitly and implicitly ground my project. These conversations include the role of literary imagination; the affective *re-turn* to Scottish Enlightenment sources; the discursive terrain of race, difference, and emotion; the relationship of sentimentality, suffering, and violence; and finally, the genealogy of humanitarian sensibility.

American sentimentality and its traditions are hardly monolithic. There are multiform strains and registers of the sentimental—even within the same author, on the same page. In one scene in *Dred*, for example (discussed further in chapter four), both Milly and Dred make

¹⁵ June Howard, "What is Sentimentality?" *American Literary History* 11.1 (1999), 63-81.

contradictory sentimental appeals to the right feelings that will affect social change. As Adela Pinch argues in *Strange Fits of Passion*, there have always been many names and paths of circulation for emotions and the adjudication of their values. Rather than invest in fixed moments of emotional coherence, Pinch encourages an approach that tracks how emotion travels, which she calls the “vagrancy of emotion.”¹⁶ Like Pinch, Julie Ellison also insists that emotion is “never univocal” and calls on scholars to challenge the interiority of emotion by attending to how emotion inheres and takes on different meanings and social and political power among different publics.¹⁷ Of interest to this study are the ways in which Pinch and Ellison track histories of sentimentality among prominent British sentimentalist and early American republican men. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century men of their studies felt, articulated, and cultivated social passions, or “right feelings,” toward the management of their sense of “masculine tender heartedness” and also of social need.¹⁸ This masculine pre-history to the American sentimental tradition is significant insofar as it marks both the multiply gendered discourses and the multiply racialized ones. In my reading of Stowe’s work, the sentimental can be traced not only across gendered bodies, but also across racial bodies, including the corpulent and excessive emotional markers of the black female characters of Milly and Candace, the visionary emotion required of self-sacrifice and prophetic discernment in Uncle Tom, Dred, and

¹⁶ Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 10.

¹⁷ Julie Ellison, *Cato’s Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 6.

¹⁸ Ellison, 9. See also Glenn Hendler, *Public Sentiments: Structures of Feeling in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Chapman and Hendler, eds., *Sentimental Men* (1999).

Harry, and the ambivalently trained sympathetic composure of Stowe's white male characters of Clayton, St. Clare, and Dr. Hopkins.

Literary imagination

This dissertation is interested in how morally persuasive literature relates to the history of the sentimental novel and the rise of the novel itself. Literature on the historical emergence of the novel importantly attends to changing public and private reading practices, a shifting eighteenth-century focus on notions of modern interiority and self-reflection, and how the early novel captured emotional dissent and the moral navigation of liberal principles of nationhood and moral sentiment. Cathy Davidson's influential work, *Revolution and the Word*, has set much of the scholarly stage for the American novel to be read as a discursive site unto itself for moral negotiations of the politics of literacy, aesthetic pleasure, nation-building, and the role of dissent.¹⁹ Faye Halpern's recent work, *Sentimental Readers*, advances this argument with attention to the form and practices of sentimental reading pedagogies, arguing that reading practices themselves are "the how of sentimentality."²⁰ Engaging each of these works, this project aims to demonstrate how Stowe saw the importance of her work in shaping moral subjectivity and national belonging through the practices of reading themselves, as attested by the intra-textual reading pedagogy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* Eva and Tom and its long histories.

¹⁹ Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*, Expanded edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Originally published in 1986).

²⁰ Faye Halpern, *Sentimental Readers: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of a Disparaged Rhetoric* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013), xxi.

The form of the novel demands an imaginative engagement by author and reader that follows the logic of sympathy itself insofar as it asks a reader to consider the suffered plight of the characters she meets in the pages of the novel. The recognition of this suffered plight not only mediates the recognized feelings and moral subjectivity of the reader, but it is also reveals many of the aims and anxieties of managing and experiencing one's feelings, both as reader and author. Writers and readers of all types, including philosophers as Adela Pinch observes in the case of David Hume's narrativized moments in his *Treatise's* "Of Passions," draw on the imaginative work of literary story to explore what's at stake in the recognition of their own sentiments and in the formulation of the operations of the faculty of sympathy.²¹ As discussed in chapter five, this is certainly true for Stowe, who processes the grief of the loss of her son Henry through her characters' engagement with the doctrine of divine election. Here, Stowe fashions surrogates to test and express her own critiques. Indeed, among the interesting insights of this project is the discovery of the ways in which the textual appearance of emotion is often evasive, sublimated into other voices, and carries out projects against the grain of an author's apparent intention for a character or plot development, as in the subversive political and theological plots of *Dred* and *The Minister's Wooing*.

Affective re-turns

In recent studies of affect and the turns it putatively produces ("affect turn," "turn to emotion," etc.), there is earnest attention to the "structures of feelings" that catalogue the unique

²¹ Pinch, 17-50. See also Elizabeth Barnes, *States of Sympathy: Seduction and Democracy in the American Novel* for a similar reading of sympathy's troubling force to writerly and readerly experience (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

expression and force of feelings in various social spaces. However, this often falls short of the deep wells of philosophical and theological resources that have long bolstered the techniques of cultivating affect in the service of moral and political subjectivity, including the morally-invested human states of freedom, slavery, benevolence, and virtuosity.²² Scottish Enlightenment thinkers like David Hume, Adam Smith, and their predecessors, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson and Joseph Butler, theorized sympathy as part of the early formulations of modern liberalism.²³ The modern subject, according to these thinkers, cultivated sympathy (through a reflective assessment of right passions and feelings) as part of his (and it was “his”) moral engagement with the world. Emotions and passions were the raw material for the cultivation of “moral sentiments” (as it is called by Hume and Smith; however, their predecessors referred to it as a divinely endowed “moral sense”). Important to this tradition is not only the role of emotions and passions, but the processes by which emotions and passions shape moral and ethical judgment, including the cultivation of one’s self and the benevolent sensibilities required of a growing cosmopolitan economy with confessed liberal values. In my second chapter, I set Stowe’s key claim of “right feelings” against the background of the cultivation of sympathy in

²² The phrase “structures of feeling” is from the oft-cited eight-page “Structures of Feelings” chapter in Raymond William’s *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). Two works that make a similar argument about the limitations of a “structures of feeling” approach (while not of the Deleuzian body of affect studies scholarship) are June Howard in her “What is Sentimentality?” and Maurice Lee’s terrific argument in *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature 1830-1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²³ Key texts of the Scottish Enlightenment include Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, “An Enquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit” (1711); Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725); Joseph Butler, *Five Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel and A Dissertation Upon the Nature of Virtue* (1726); Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728, 1742); David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principle of Morals* (1748); and Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).

order to argue that Stowe is not seeking a fleeting and ephemeral sentimental experience, but one that is rooted in sympathetic cultivation (sensing, reflecting, approving) of moral feelings that lead to moral and political action.

Furthermore, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers were also interested in literary stories and the power of imagination as the site for the work of an individual's moral faculty. Not only did novelists among their contemporary render this "man of feeling" in literature, the philosophical articulation of sympathy readily lent itself to the development of moralized fiction, as well as literatures that documented civilizing efforts and benevolent social reform projects within the nation and the world (missionary memoirs, reports, travelogues).²⁴ For Stowe's project of moral persuasion, literary imagination is crucial to the work required for moral and social action. And it also raises the important question of how one acts benevolently in the world and, what (emotional, rational, intuitive, etc.) authority and experience persuades and validates this action.

Race, difference, and emotion

This project investigates the discursive relationship of sentimentality and racial formation in a few important ways. First, it attends to how the British and American anti-slavery cause became the crucial site for the formation of a moralized whiteness in the nineteenth-century. As my third chapter argues, "the sentiments of universal Christendom" are central to the moralized

²⁴ See, for example, Henry Mackenzie's early sentimental novel, *The Man of Feeling* (1771). Other early sentimental literature includes Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue, Rewarded* (1740) and *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady* (1748). On the relationship of affect, the public, reform, and colonization, see Julie Ellison, *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (1999); Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion* (1996) and Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1801-1867* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

whiteness of anti-slavery, which includes notions of Christian guilt, sin, redemption, and social zeal protecting an imperial and paternalist white benevolence. Here, I draw on scholarship in whiteness studies that tracks how the coalescence of Anglo-Saxonness and whiteness during the nineteenth-century was marked by a sense of imperial superiority, and entangled with power structures of paternalism, benevolence, and imperial guilt.²⁵ Secondly, this project also traces the “romantic racialization” of Stowe’s patterned uses of blackness in the characters in the novel, in stories such as “Sojourner Truth; A Libyan Sibyl,” and in her personal correspondence. In these exoticized, romanticized, and pathologized representations, Blackness both haunts and enables a white literary, political, and moral imagination. George Frederickson’s concept of “romantic racialization” and Toni Morrison’s examination of the “Africanist presences” in white literary imagination are particularly illuminative to these discussions.²⁶

Racialized differences, furthermore, often present the very limits and inevitable failures of sympathetic identification itself. The logic of sympathy presumes (often, forcefully so) a profound amount of sameness in order for difference to be imaginatively commensurable in

²⁵ See Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010); Matthew Fry Jacobsen, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Susan Ryan, *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Karen Sánchez-Eppler, “Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolition,” in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth Century America*, ed., Shirley Samuels (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 92-114; Dana Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading “Race” in American Literature, 1638-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Amit Rai, *Rule of Sympathy: Sentiment, Race and Power, 1750-1850* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

²⁶ George Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992); and Curtis Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

sympathetic identification. The observer's situation must be distant enough so that she is not in the throes of suffering itself, but close enough that she understands the needs of hunger, affection, practices of liberty, and family cohesion. Importantly, sympathy assumes that the morally and racially coded privileged, sympathetic observer is the one who is empowered to breach this needy divide. As a result, this "facile intimacy," as Saidiya Hartman calls the operation of sympathy in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, erases otherness and makes black bodily pain understandable and useful to white sympathetic pain and feeling.²⁷ In marking the very failure of sympathy, this "facile intimacy" lays bare the features of racial, economic, gender, and colonial power that undergird sympathetic force. Here, this project is interested in the failures of the logic of sympathy and sentimentality, and in how the formations of sympathetic and benevolent subjects in the modern West are those of incorporation, judgment, distance and difference.²⁸

Humanitarian Sensibility

A goal of this project is to situate Stowe's appeal to "right feelings" within the genealogy of humanitarian sensibility in the modern West. Indeed, for Enlightenment thinkers, "humanity" and "sensibility" were interchangeable terms, signifying the moral force of sentimentality and

²⁷ Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 19.

²⁸ Recent theories of affect dealing with compassion, disinterest, and sentimentality include: Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Lauren Berlant, ed., *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of Emotion* (2004); Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (2008); and Elizabeth Barnes, *States of Sympathy: Seduction and Democracy in the American Novel* (1997), and *Love's Whipping Boy: Violence and Sentimentality in American Imagination* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

subjectivity in the face of social need and injustice.²⁹ My analysis engages not only figures from the Sentimental Enlightenment whose contribution to modern liberal notions of sympathy arise out of the new forms of global political and economic relations (much like present-day humanitarian discourse emerges within the context of globalization, development, and new forms of social enterprise), it also engages the humanitarian narratives that place the anti-slavery cause at their origins. What's at stake in these narratives? Recent scholarly attention to the history of humanitarianism and human rights places its origins in modern liberal moments ranging from the Declaration of the Rights of Man, to the rise of anti-slavery, anti-torture and benevolent societies, and to the formation of the United Nations.³⁰ Like Stowe's moral appeal to the teleological work of millennialism and faith in the divine providence of the United States, as discussed in chapter three, the history of human rights also tends to give an account of Western social and moral progress, as reflected in its origin stories and in appeals to interventions in humanitarian crises across the world.

Furthermore, central to the logic of humanitarian sensibility is the pornographic portrayal and appeal to moral pity in the face of suffering and violence through the process of sympathetic identification. For Adam Smith, sympathy occurs at the site and sight of the suffering other ("my brother on the rack") and invokes the centrality not only of suffering, but also of nearness, distance, visuality, and the abilities of recognition. Scholars such as Elizabeth Clark, Elaine

²⁹ G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

³⁰ See, for example, Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010) and *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (New York: Verso, 2014); Joseph Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007); and Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

Scarry, Laura Wexler, Susan Sontag, Elizabeth Barnes, and Karen Haltunnen have all attended to the spectatorial fascination with bodily pain and suffering as a part of the formation of notions of compassion, benevolence, and humanitarian sentiment in literature.³¹ Stowe's suffering characters are fashioned as moral exemplars who are able to render deep sympathy and pity for their plights from her white readers (especially in the cases of Eliza's flight and Tom's tortuous death). This project advances the important critique of the conflation of suffering and virtuosity by asking whose suffering is socially legible through the process of sympathy, and, whose is not; and what new disciplinary practices and structures of power are formed through the "good intentions" and "right feelings" of charity, compassion, and sympathy.³²

Right Feelings in the Archives

When I entered the archival world of Stowe's correspondence, I quickly realized its critical importance to a fuller understanding of her vocabularies of emotion and moral persuasion. Not only do her letters express a great deal of concern with the moral work of feelings, but they are also a mode unto themselves for how she processed her social and

³¹ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Laura Wexler, "Tender Violence: Literary Eavesdropping, Domestic Fiction, and Educational Reform," in Samuels, ed., *The Culture of Sentiment* (1992), 9-38; Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003); Elizabeth Barnes, *Love's Whipping Boy* (2011); Karen Haltunnen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," *The American Historical Review* 100.2 (1995), 303-334; and Marianne Noble, *The Masochistic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Notably, Berlant (*Compassion*, 2004) questions whether compassion is an ineffective feeling or the "apex of affective agency," 8.

³² In many ways, this is an extension of Judith Butler's persistent question of whose life is grievable. See "Introduction: Precarious Life, Grievable Life," *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso Books, 2009). Susan Ryan, "Charity Begins at Home: Stowe's Antislavery Novels and the Forms of Benevolent Citizenship," *American Literature* 72.4 (2000), 760, 774.

intellectual work as a novelist, writer, educator, mother, sister, wife, and friend. As demonstrated in the epistolary composition of *Sunny Memories in Foreign Lands*, Stowe prized the voice she found in correspondence for its ability to communicate her intimate concerns, offer guidance, weigh political events, and refashion theological commitments. Collections of letters to her students while an instructor at Hartford Female Seminary, for example, speak to the important work of “writing” correspondence in order to nurture “christian feeling.”³³ Letters to her siblings Edward, Charles, Catharine, and Henry repeatedly work through feelings about the calling and training of ministers and the palatability of Calvinist theology (as exemplified in correspondence surrounding *The Minister’s Wooing*). And correspondence with her daughters often encourages the development of their “correct feelings” on matters related to theological discernment and spiritual growth.³⁴

My research on Stowe’s correspondence began with a careful study of the published letters appearing in *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe: Compiled from Her Letters and Journals* (1890), edited autobiographically by her son Charles Edward Stowe as she neared the end of her life, and the collection of *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1898), edited by her closest friend and confidant, Annie Fields, shortly after her death in 1896.³⁵ A summer spent with the Beecher-Stowe papers at Schlesinger Library, however, introduced me more fully to Stowe’s

³³ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Sarah Ann Terry. Not dated, but sometime in 1826 (revival year). Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, CT. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

³⁴ Harriet Beecher Stowe to “My dear Girls.” 1 June, 1862. Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

³⁵ Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Edward Stowe, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe: Compiled from Her Letters and Journals* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1890); Harriet Beecher Stowe and Annie Fields, *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898).

intimate writing style and voice. Through the often-painstaking work of deciphering her handwriting, I began to recognize patterns of sentiment in the material weightiness and movement of her cursive strokes and her syntactical notations of emphasis and pause. For example, Stowe is fond of underlining key words for emphasis and chooses dashes as her preferred punctuation over periods, commas, and semicolons. (In fact, she was no fan of punctuation, as an 1861 letter to her publisher declares: “My manuscripts are always left to the printer for punctuation — as you will observe — I have no time for copying”).³⁶ Some letters demonstrate the hurried attempt to finish a thought before space on a page runs out, while other letters are indecipherable due to the effects of bleeding ink saturating both sides of the paper. These writerly practices—of emphasis, flow and material use of space—shape the sentimental pace and intimate candor of Stowe’s voice. And, as may be expected, these are not features of the neatly edited published Stowe and Fields biographic collections of the late nineteenth-century, which feature tidy sentence structure and unaccounted-for redactions, among other editorial decisions, in the effort to represent a coherent figure worthy of celebration and easy readerly consumption.

While my research includes work with collections at Yale, University of Virginia, and the Huntington Library in Santa Monica, most important was time spent over the course of two years at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center in Hartford, Connecticut. Located at the site of Stowe’s Hartford home, the Center houses Stowe’s correspondence and personal items and offers historical tours and community space, hosts social justice-oriented events, and maintains a

³⁶ Harriet Beecher Stowe to James Fields. 16 January, 1861. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, CA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

bookstore.³⁷ Over the course of my numerous research visits to the Stowe Center, I met other researchers working with Stowe material and memorabilia, enjoyed lunches and breaks in the neighboring Mark Twain Center café and under the large canopy of treed lawns and neatly manicured gardens shared by the two Centers, witnessed the major planning and undertaking of the historical renovations required of Stowe's home (and the careful movement of her materials and belongings out of the home), observed countless daily tours describing the Stowe legacy to visitors, tourists, and school children, and reflected on the location of the Stowe and Twain Centers in the middle of a mostly black and economically depressed area of Hartford, marked by towering blocks of late twentieth-century public housing projects.

My time at the Stowe Center grew exponentially because of a major unpublished resource acquired by the Center in 2005 and not yet widely in use among Stowe scholars: the E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.³⁸ Indebted to and named after the tremendous scholarly life's work of E. Bruce Kirkham, Professor Emeritus of English at Ball State University, the Kirkham Collection is a semi-finished manuscript of the transcriptions of nearly all of the available Stowe correspondence residing in 1,000 library and collection locations across the United States.³⁹

³⁷ In *Sensational Designs*, Tompkins describes her inspiration for considering the legacy of Stowe as arising from her living in the basement of the Isabella Beecher Hooker home, which neighbors the historical Stowe house and serves today as the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center's offices, meeting rooms, library, and archive collection, 122-123.

³⁸ I have yet to see the Collection cited in scholarly work. The Stowe Center's acquisition of the Collection followed Joan Hedrick's publication of her 1994 Pulitzer-prize winning biography, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³⁹ Kirkham's project began as a dissertation on the textual study of the various published versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the sources of the story: *The Building of Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1977). Upon discovering that early biographers "had done strange things with the texts," he concluded "the texts of the published letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe were not trustworthy. So I undertook to create the definitive edition of the letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe." With two student secretaries ("one secretary typed inside addresses on the mimeographed letters and another typed the 5,000 envelopes") and a

Spanning more than 2,300 pages in length, and chronologically ordered across her life, the letters were collected and carefully transcribed over the period of twenty-five years. The transcriptions preserve Stowe's syntax with carefully coded marks and also provide annotations of relevant source information, as well as on comparative edits and corrections when letters have previously been incorrectly published.

Over the course of my time at the Stowe Center reading through the Kirkham Collection, my research produced a number of findings. First, the syntactical annotations continued to lend insight to the sentiments at stake in the material composition of Stowe's letters. Second, I discovered that the editorial work of the early Stowe and Fields collections include important theological content redactions. In chapter five of this dissertation, for example, I explore a significant letter from Stowe to her sister Catharine expressing profound theological grief and doubt following the death of her son Henry. As it appears in the Stowe and Fields collections, the gravity of the doubt has been foreshortened to redact the doubt and focus instead on her theological resolution. Third, Stowe's correspondent writing on theological matters is incredibly vast and could be the subject of countless scholarly works. Beginning in her childhood, her letters to her siblings grapple with the signs and assurance of her conversion. A number of letters written to her brother Edward while he was at Yale Divinity School, for example, chart her struggling with the distance of God and ultimately assert God's "interestedness" in and parental-

postage budget, they received responses and found over 1,000 locations of Stowe's letters. The collection, transcription, and research to identify names and locations within the letters, would consume the remainder of his academic career. See E. Bruce Kirkham, "Libraries, Mrs. Stowe, and Me," The first annual Kirkham Lecture given by the Friends of the Alexander M. Bracken Library, 28 March 2001. Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

like love for her spiritual development.⁴⁰ Fourth, key sentimental terms such as “sympathy,” “religious affections,” and “interestedness” (that is, God’s interestedness in humanity and creation) pervade Stowe’s correspondence in both mundane and profound ways. And finally, the theological questions of Calvinist election, regeneration, and a sense of moral calling begin early for her as she forms her own conception of God as Father and Friend to her and to creation, and extends through to the Civil War and the embracing of Episcopalian practices, teaching, and liturgy (especially the catholic recognition of a body of saints, living and dead).

My research on Stowe’s correspondence, both in published and unpublished forms, pairs with my close readings of her published works and other historical texts and materials that situate the development of her intellectual work. With a canon of works numbering thirty-seven books and hundreds of essays, this dissertation focuses on her most noteworthy works and materials: 1) her first three novels, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), *Dred* (1856), and *The Minister’s Wooing* (1859); 2) the important works, *A Key* (1853) and *Sunny Memories* (1854), which further contextualize her goal of moral persuasion within the political and religious discourses of her period; 3) some of her periodical contributions, especially those appearing in *The Atlantic*, such as “Sojourner Truth, a Libyan Sibyl” (1863); and finally, 4) the material objects gifted from her transatlantic admirers in honor of the anti-slavery cause.

The earliest biographies of Stowe by Charles Edward Stowe and Annie Fields— assembled at the end of Stowe’s life—read as storied and memorialized accounts of her life created through narrativized selection from her correspondence. Though the correspondence is

⁴⁰ Note that Stowe uses this language when she is sixteen-years-old (and Henry, who is known for advancing the fatherly love of God some years later in his career as minister and theologian, is but fourteen-years-old).

highly edited, the biographies acknowledge the depth and breadth of the influences on Stowe's work, notably the significant ways in which religion, family, and her European travels shaped her projects, as well as recognition of the transatlantic literary acclaim she received in the mid- and late nineteenth-century. Other early biographies include Florine Thayer McCray's controversial *The Life Work of the Author of Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1889), which precipitated the hurry of both the Stowe and Fields biographies as response to her critiques of Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Stowe's grandson, Lyman Beecher Stowe's *Saints, Sinners and Beechers* (1934) and Forrest Wilson's *Crusader in Crinoline: The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1941).⁴¹ By the mid-twentieth century, Harriet Beecher Stowe (and other important women writers such as Emily Dickinson) were either barely represented or entirely absent from scholarly debates around the American literary canon. Stowe receives literary acclaim only briefly in the mid-twentieth-century and only in two key places: there is ambivalent recognition of Stowe's importance in Alexander Cowie's *The Rise of the American Novel* (1948) and her importance to regionalist literature and the question of her religious influence, particularly in the New England novels, can be found in Charles Foster's *The Rungless Ladder* (1954).⁴² Foster understood his work to be a "major discovery of [Stowe's] New England novels" in response to F. O.

⁴¹ Florine Thayer McCray, *The Life Work of the Author of Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1889); Lyman Beecher Stowe, *Saints, Sinners and Beechers* (Indianapolis: Bobs-Merrill, 1934); and Forrest Wilson, *Crusader in Crinoline: The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1941).

⁴² Alexander Cowie, *The Rise of the American Novel* (New York: American Book Company, 1948); and Charles H. Foster, *The Rungless Ladder: Harriet Beecher Stowe and New England Puritanism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1954).

Matthiessen's claim in *American Renaissance* (1941) that Hawthorne was "our one major artist in fiction yet to have come out of New England."⁴³

By the 1970s and 1980s, scholarship such as Marie Caskey's *Chariot of Fire: Religion and the Beecher Family* (1978) and Lawrence Buell's *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution Through Renaissance* (1986) increasingly became interested in attending to the role of Calvinism in the work of Stowe, Hawthorne, and others, but attended less to its implication for sentimentalism or the corpus of Stowe.⁴⁴ Simultaneously, an expansive terrain of scholarship opens up following and alongside Tompkins reclamation of sentimentalism as a form of cultural power. Treatments of Stowe's work at this moment often focus on the redeeming role of women as mothers, nurturers, and spiritual guides; the "women's sphere" spaces of parlors, kitchens, quilting groups; and the collective narrative voice and female imaginary shared among these characters and in these settings.⁴⁵ Indebted to the critical investigation of narrative voice, setting, and the recovery of Stowe's literary acclaim, recent scholarship has sought to attend to Stowe's work in ways not constricted to the conflation of sentimental literature with womanhood and

⁴³ Foster, x. See also F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941).

⁴⁴ Marie Caskey, *Chariot of Fire: Religion and the Beecher Family* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Lawrence Buell, "Calvinism Romanticized: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Samuel Hopkins and *The Minister's Wooing*," *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 24 (1978), 119-32; and Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution Through Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁴⁵ On the redeeming role of women, Dorothy Berkson, "Millennial Politics and the Feminine Fiction of Harriet Beecher Stowe," in Elizabeth Ammons, ed., *Critical Essays on Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), 244-285; Gayle Kimball, *The Religious Ideas of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (New York: Mellen Press, 1982); and John Gatta, "The Anglican Aspect of Harriet Beecher Stowe," *New England Quarterly* 73.3 (2000), 412-431. On domestic spaces, see Joan Hedrick, "'Peaceable Fruits': The Ministry of Harriet Beecher Stowe," *American Quarterly* 40.3 (1988), 307-332; Nancy Lusignan Schultz, "The Artist's Craftiness: Miss Prissy in *The Minister's Wooing*," *Studies in American Fiction* 20.1 (1992), 33-44; and Susan Harris, "The Female Imaginary in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing*," *New England Quarterly* 66.2 (1993), 179-98.

motherhood. As part of an effort to move “beyond *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” recent scholarship engages critical questions concerning racial formation, comparative work with other nineteenth-century writers, material culture, and the transatlantic circulation of texts and ideas that appear in scholarship on *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* to Stowe’s other work.⁴⁶ Finally, Joan Hedrick’s Pulitzer-Prize winning biography, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (1994) remains the most authoritative biography to date.⁴⁷

Project Scope and Chapter Outline

This dissertation chooses the period from 1851 to 1859 as its focus for a few reasons. First, it marks the height of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s career and literary acclaim. Second, it is a period when national and personal events shape her intellectual work a great deal. Vital to understanding Stowe and her work are the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 and its aftermath; the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854; Stowe’s return move from Cincinnati, Ohio to Brunswick, Maine, and then to Andover, Massachusetts; Calvin’s faculty appointment at Andover Seminary; her first two European tours; and the raising of her seven children and the deaths of two of them, Samuel Charles and Henry. In this decade, Stowe’s invocation of “right feelings” attains incredible force in shaping national and transatlantic moral sentiment. The invocation also faces painful limits in ascertaining the signs of personal and national divine election through the

⁴⁶ Silvia Mayer and Monika Mueller, eds., *Beyond Uncle Tom’s Cabin: Essays on the Writing of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Madison, WI: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011); Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, Emily Todd, eds., *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2006); and Alison O’Harae, “Theology, Genre and Romance in Richard Baxter and Harriet Beecher Stowe,” *Religion and Literature* 37.1 (2005) 69-87.

⁴⁷ Hedrick received the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

experiences of family loss and the dreadful witnessing of a country in violent conflict over slavery. While this introductory chapter sets the stage for the importance of re-reading Stowe as part of the study of sentimentality, the following chapters are organized around key moments at the height of Stowe's career. I choose these moments for the rich correspondence that exists around them and the way in which they respond to each other, revealing complicated discursive sentimental terrains for Stowe's work in devising morally persuasive literature.

The second chapter, "*Uncle Tom's Cabin: What Is to Be Done?*" reads the purpose of the novel in hindsight from her famous concluding inquiry and answer: "right feelings." By presenting a cast of literary characters for sympathetic identification and dis-identification, Stowe illustrates her faith in the influential role of moral sensibility, cultivated through story, in shaping the nature of the self and society. The sympathetic identification with pain and suffering in her characters (problematic as it is) aims to shape and cultivate the proper feelings, reflection, and judgment that are necessary for moral action among her eager readership.

Chapter three, "Anglo-American Sympathy: Stowe in Europe" explores the articulations of sympathy, benevolence, moral force and humanity in the transatlantic reception of Stowe's novel before and during her first European tour. My argument in this chapter is that sympathy and humanity are articulated through the register of a racialized Anglo-American identity that is enmeshed in the providential assurances of Christian universalism and the privileges and guilt of empire. Through an examination of two moments of gifted exchange—a massive petition collection and Address, and a peculiar gold-chained bracelet—I explore how the legacy of sympathy in the modern West is represented in the intimate material objects that bind people,

material, and movements of the Atlantic world and is authored by the literature and racial and gendered acts of transatlantic slavery, sympathy and reform.

Stowe's second anti-slavery novel, *Dred*, is the subject of the fourth chapter, "*Dreadful Sentiments: On the Limits of Moral Persuasion*." In this chapter, I argue that dread figures as a central component to Stowe's use of the sentimental in the cultivation of moral faculty. As the characters of *Dred* endure the foreboding weight of their political and theological landscapes, dread amplifies moral unease and tests the limits of "right feelings" in response to prophetic warning. I explore the historical and imaginative affectively-rich space of the swamp as setting for a murky and unresolved (and unresolvable) space to think about the unfolding events of Bleeding Kansas and abolitionist uses of Nat Turner, specifically the prophetic appeals of armed resistance in the name of patriotism and divine judgment. Through close readings of Stowe's characters, I argue that dread occupies the limits and troubles the certainty of Stowe's own aims of moral persuasion literature.

In the fifth chapter, "*The Minister's Wooing: Ministers and Mothers*," I explore how Stowe intellectually grapples with the religious sources of anti-slavery moral sentiment and action, the preparation of ministers for the nation, and the discernible signs of Calvinist election—all behind the guise of a captivating marriage plot and cast of comical characters set in the "keen New England air that crystalizes emotion." By reading Stowe's intimate correspondence alongside her character portrayals of Mrs. Marvyn and Milly, I explore how black surrogacy makes possible Stowe's theological intervention with the doctrine of disinterested benevolence.

Finally, my concluding chapter, "A Genealogy of Humanitarian Sensibility" positions Harriet Beecher Stowe as a significant historical intellectual in the genealogy of humanitarian

sensibility. Through a reading of “Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl,” I explore the ways in which Stowe’s legacy represents the import of moral sentimental literature in both marshaling the causes of humanitarianism, as well as surfacing the problems of the representations of otherness, uses of suffering and abjection, and the collapsing moments of sympathy. By thinking about “right feelings” as akin to the contemporary problem of “good intentions,” I weave together conclusions about the ways in which eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literatures of moral sentiment are entangled in the theorization of modern liberal humanitarian feelings and in the disciplines of domestic, metropolitan and colonial projects.

Chapter 2

Uncle Tom's Cabin: What Is To Be Done?

Mrs. Stowe is all instinct [...] Noble, generous, and great the heart which embraces in her pity, in her love, an entire race, trodden down in blood and mire under the whip of ruffians and the maledictions of the impious. ... We should feel that genius is heart, that power is *faith*, that talent is *sincerity*, and finally, *success is sympathy*, since this book overcomes us, since it penetrates the breast, pervades the spirit, and fills us with a strange sentiment of mingled tenderness and admiration for a poor negro lacerated by blows, prostrate in the dust, there gasping on a miserable pallet, his last sigh exhaled towards God.

—George Sand, *La Presse* 17 December 1852¹

During the serialization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in *The National Era*, Stowe received many letters from readers eager to applaud, and condemn, the suffering plights of the characters in the story. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* certainly aroused many feelings in its national and international reading publics and caused many to ask what could be done with and after the arousal of these feelings. One reader asked of Stowe, “But what can we do? Alas! Alas! What *can* we do? This storm of feeling has been raging, burning like a very fire in my bones all the livelong night, and

¹ In Harriet Beecher Stowe and Annie Fields, ed., *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898), 152.

through all my duties this morning it haunts me, —I *cannot* away with it.”² By the final installment, and to-be last chapter of the novel, Stowe directly responds to her “dear reader” and other readers who ask, “What can any individual do?” Her reply: “Of that, every individual can judge. There is one thing that every individual can do, --they can see to it that *they feel right*.”³ Recognizing that the novel and the scenes it represents arouse moral feelings, Stowe’s instruction begins with seeking the *right* feelings.

Stowe’s answer claims a few important things: first, each individual has the capacity, or the sense, “to judge,” to actively engage, and to reflect on their reading experience and the material presented to them. Second, it is not only in the reader’s capacity, but it is the reader’s duty to seek right feelings because right feelings are indicative of morally-formed persons who recognize the immorality and evil of slavery and seek social change. Here, Stowe is explicit about the logic and purpose of the novel—she has set out to craft morally persuasive literature through story, scene and character sketch in order to help readers cultivate the right moral feelings that fuel the cause of ending the horrors of the American slave system.

Stowe’s proposition is actually a bold one because it presumes the self-evident working of right feelings toward moral influence and social change. Since it is in human nature to have sympathetic influence, then “right feelings,” for Stowe, can be cultivated toward positive—and Christian—social ends, as indicated in the continuation of her answer,

An atmosphere of sympathetic influence encircles every human being; and the man or woman who feels strongly, healthily and justly, on the great interests of humanity, is a constant benefactor to the human race. See, then, to your sympathies

² Ibid., 150.

³ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Norton Critical Edition. Edited by Elizabeth Ammons. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010. Originally published in 1852), 404.

in this matter! Are they in harmony with the sympathies of Christ? or are they swayed and perverted by the sophistries of worldly policy?⁴

Feelings, for Stowe, can certainly compel a great deal of pathos, but they are hardly shallow, fleeting, and self-centered. Right feelings, Stowe argues, are cultivated through the working of sympathy (the reflective act of engaging in imaginative suffering with the other) and compel religious and political moral convictions in “the interests of humanity.” Stowe’s recognition of the work of feeling right is also a recognition of the accomplishment of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a morally persuasive novel that compels questions of moral sensibility. In this chapter, I argue that Stowe achieves the sentimental work of her novel through her commitment to the putatively perennial use of stories that invite readers and listeners into an imaginative world in which they must affectively negotiate moral questions of freedom, sacrifice, justice, divine chosenness, education, family cohesion, and racial structures of power, privilege, and oppression. The sentimental mode, for Stowe, is a process of using stories and character sketches in cultivating attention to the adjudication of right moral feelings.

This chapter explores the question of “What is to be done?” primarily through Stowe’s use of the character sketch and deployment of sympathetic identification. Following a description of the significant reach and influence of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, I turn to a discussion that aligns Stowe’s use of the narrated character sketch with understandings of moral sense and sympathy by philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, including David Hume and Adam Smith. I apply this analysis in structured character pairings, as the nature of intersubjective

⁴ Ibid., 404-405. The Norton Critical Edition of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is reprinted from the original 1852 book edition published by John P. Jewett and Company in Boston, Massachusetts. Footnoted textual annotations in this critical edition helpfully include citations of biblical cross-references.

character development serves to bring affective dimensions into contrast and relief. I look first at Eva and Uncle Tom; then St. Clare and Miss Ophelia; and finally Eliza and the Birds. Here, sympathetic identification and disidentification with fictional characters is the terrain of Stowe's sentimental mode. Stowe's imagined readers of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in asking the question of "what is to be done?" are encouraged to identify with the Birds, but to disidentify with the monstrosity of Simon Legree; to feel ambivalent about St. Clare, embarrassed at some self-recognition in Miss Ophelia and her charitable condescension toward Topsy; and to recognize the sacrificial valor of Christian faith and longsuffering in both Tom and Eva. The analysis of these character pairs foregrounds the techniques of sympathetic identification and the cultivation of moral sentiments, as well as places the claim of sympathetic identification within the surrounding discourses of racial formation, the nature of suffering, and the role of the Christian church in providing moral leadership for the cause of anti-slavery. Finally, I conclude with notes toward a reflection on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a persuasive artifact on white benevolence and black suffering.

The Making of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

First captivating a serialized reading public, then becoming the best-seller novel of the nineteenth-century, what proved to be the fertile ground and inspiration for this Great American Novel of unplanned fame? The germs of the novel owe can be found in a number of places. While the Beecher family had varying degrees of involvement in the anti-slavery cause for some years (precipitated in part by the famous 1834 Lane Seminary debates that pressured Lyman Beecher and the faculty to take a firmer anti-slavery stance), it was the passage of the Fugitive

Slave Act in 1850 that propelled most of the Beechers to become more vocally involved in the anti-slavery cause. Many historical and literary accounts credit the encouragement and influence of the Beecher family for the writing of Stowe's novel, including the initial plea to "write something" from Harriet's brother Edward and sister-in-law Isabella's following the Congressional passage of the Fugitive Slave Act.⁵ Stowe was certainly also indebted to her sister Catharine's guiding vision of the civilizing work of women, as well as her persistent practical presence at helping Stowe care for her children and manage the Stowe family move from Cincinnati to Brunswick, Maine during the writing of the serial installments.⁶

Moreover, Stowe's experience of Cincinnati during the 1830s and 1840s shapes the scenes and characters of the novel. Cincinnati lies on the Ohio River and shares a border with the slave state of Kentucky; Stowe's proximity to and interaction with freed and fugitive black persons differed tremendously from the Connecticut of her childhood and adolescence. In Cincinnati Stowe was more familiar with the plights of slavery through daily interactions as well as in newspapers and a heated abolitionist press. In Stowe's Cincinnati, black women employed to help with housekeeping (including by Stowe) were often fugitive and former slaves,

⁵ On her way to visit what would become her new home in Brunswick, Maine, Stowe spent time in Boston, Massachusetts visiting her brother Edward and sister-in-law Isabella. The ordained pastor at Park Street Church, Edward (and Isabella) were steeped in the ministerial debates about the Fugitive Slave Act. Stowe became convinced of the need for something to be done at this meeting. A letter from Isabella after the visit states, "Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something to make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is." (Stowe and Fields, 130). According to family memory, after Stowe read the letter aloud to family, she "rose up from her chair, crushing the letter in her hand, and with an expression on her face that stamped itself on the mind of her child, said: 'I will write something. I will if I live.'" (Ibid., 130).

⁶ See Catharine Beecher's important *The Duty of American Women to Their Country* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1845), which proclaimed that women held a higher calling to instill and transmit moral values not only through motherhood, but also as schoolteachers and members of reform movements and benevolent societies.

abolitionist presses were the subject of attack during regular race riots, and stories of the plights of slavery made their ways through her network of New England émigrés in the literary Semi-Colon Club in which she and her husband Calvin were active members.⁷

Furthermore, as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* gained wide readership and acclaim, stamping the story to Stowe's identity herself, Stowe often credited the inspiration of the novel to scenes out of her most intimate experiences of prayer and motherhood. The first scene of the novel that she wrote, as she often told it, was not the opening sketch of the Shelby plantation, but the suffering death of Uncle Tom, which came to her in personal vision "while sitting at the communion table in the little church in Brunswick." At this moment, Stowe was "perfectly overcome by [the vision], and could scarcely restrain the convulsion of tears and sobbings that shook her frame."⁸ As will be discussed later in this chapter, the loss of her infant son, Charley, to a cholera epidemic just one year before the beginning of the serialization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would shape the way Stowe understood and painted the painfulness of motherhood in the face of the loss of a child.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, as first conceived and written, is a story intended to be read in episodic installments, allowing time for characters and their travails to cement in the imagination of their readers. For nineteenth-century readers, this also allowed time to provoke debate and discussion among reading publics, whether in the form of family and friends or in the pages of newspapers. Between June 1851 and March 1852, readers followed the plights of George, Eliza, Uncle Tom, and others as they endured, resisted, and advanced American slavery under the rule

⁷ Stowe and Fields, 143.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 146.

of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Beginning with the scene of the Shelby sale in Kentucky, the novel coalesces around the plight of Uncle Tom and the plight of Eliza. Sold “down river” by Mr. Shelby, Uncle Tom is then purchased by Augustine St. Clare at the behest of his young daughter, Eva. While Tom’s friendship with, and the death of, Eva organize much of the legacy of the novel’s sentimental appeal, the death of St. Clare after his unfulfilled promise of manumission to Tom is what places Tom at Simon Legree’s plantation, where he is tortured to death in an effort to break his Christian faith. Eliza’s plot, on the other hand, is one of fugitive flight in order to protect her child and preserve her maternal bond. She and her (also fugitive) husband George eventually arrive in Canada, but only after a series of harrowing escapes and the intervention and assistance of Senator and Mrs. Bird and a Quaker community. With reunited family members, George, Eliza, and their child travel to France and then Liberia where they settle and join other former American slaves. Finally, an important secondary plot is that of Miss Ophelia, St. Clare’s reluctant and curmudgeonly sister, who takes guardianship/ownership of Topsy upon the deaths of Eva and Augustine St. Clare. As Miss Ophelia’s heart warms to Topsy, Topsy receives an education that enables her to join the rest of Stowe’s surviving black characters in returning to colonization projects in Africa—not as a refugee/ex-patriot, but as a missionary.

During its publication in the anti-slavery newspaper, *The National Era*, Stowe observed the story’s quick rise in popularity, as demonstrated in the rise of her letters and correspondence, and published reviews and press attention on both sides of the Atlantic. In response to critics who cried foul over her unfavorable representations of slavery, and for those who might yet to be persuaded by the immorality and evil of slavery, she also assembled an arsenal of evidence

accounting for the wrongs of slavery—an arsenal that was first intended to be the research sources for many of her character sketches. In less than a year after *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* completion, Stowe published *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* to substantiate the sources of her novel as inspired by daily accounts found in slave narratives, newspaper advertisements, church meeting records, and legal decisions.⁹ Inspired in part by the fact-finding projects of famed abolitionists Thomas Clarkson in the British Empire and Theodore Weld and Angela and Sarah Grimke in the United States, Stowe's construction of *A Key* is a presentation of facts and conditions for the purpose of persuading a nation against its systems of slavery.¹⁰

At completion of its serialization, the novel was published by John P. Jewett and Company in Boston, Massachusetts. It immediately broke records: over 10,000 copies sold in its first week alone. Stateside, the novel went through several print runs, selling over 300,000 copies in its first year, and eventually rising to at least one-half million copies by its second year. Internationally, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would eventually be translated into at least sixty-three

⁹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin; Presenting the Original Facts and Documents Upon Which the Story is Founded* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1853). Examples of sources in *A Key* include: various notices of slave auctions and fugitive slave notices and advertisements in newspapers; excerpts from Calvin Stowe's lectures comparing Hebrew slave law and American slave law; court cases and petitions exempting slave owners from harm done to slaves; church denominational records on anti-slavery debates and stances (or, lack thereof); and many excerpts of anti-slavery sermons.

¹⁰ Thomas Clarkson's first and most influential publication, *An essay on the slavery and commerce of the human species, particularly the African, translated from a Latin Dissertation* (1785), is credited for bringing together those committed to an abolitionist movement in the British Empire through the founding the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. In 1839, Theodore Dwight Weld, and his wife Angela Grimke and sister-in-law Sarah Grimke, published *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witness* (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839) to document the horrors of the slave system through first-hand accounts. Of important note, Stowe excerpts parts of *American Slavery As It Is* in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

languages, selling an estimated one and one-half million copies in Great Britain and its colonies. (Many, many more were sold and circulated in pirated form due to limited copyright).¹¹

Beyond the novel, part of the enduring legacy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* into the twentieth-century lies in the “Tom-mania” phenomenon. Adaptations of the novel were undertaken for decades to come in theaters, dolls, games, textbooks, music, film, merchandise, and countless other ephemeral items designed primarily for white audiences, demonstrating a long and ready consumption of black stereotypes.¹² Its reception, both in its time and over the years, undoubtedly marks it as the most popular American novel, launching Stowe onto a national and international anti-slavery stage, and leaving a legacy of the relationship of race, gender, and the sentimental in American (and European) culture and its literary canons.

¹¹ On publication numbers and the evolution of the story as a publication, see E. Bruce Kirkham, *The Building of Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1977) and Forrest Wilson, *Crusader in Crinoline: The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1941), 326-341. Joan Hedrick notes that Stowe received 10% of sales, which amounted to \$10,000 in the first month (Joan Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 221-224. On international publication and acclaim, Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer and Emily Todd, eds., *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), xiii-xvii; and Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957). Because *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did not initially have British copyright, it was published in numerous forms.

¹² Sarah Meer's *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005) provides a thorough treatment of this phenomenon. See also the website, “Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture: A Multi-Media Archive” directed by Stephen Railton, University of Virginia. <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/>, which holds amazing collections of press attention of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Harriet Beecher Stowe, as well as countless illustrated images, theater scripts, recordings, and other ephemera. The phenomenon was also the subject of early historical treatment, to be sure. As accounted for by Forrest Wilson in *Crusader of Crinoline* (1941), “Tom-mania” was a term coined by *The Spectator* newspaper for the regular logging of “Anti-Tom” counter literature, 325-327.

Sympathy, Moral Sentiment, and the Character Sketch

Stowe's interest in the cultivation of moral feelings pervades her novels, often through the voices of her characters or the interjection of her omniscient narrator instructing readers to attend to how characters make sense of and evaluate their moral surroundings. Early in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for example, in the chaos of discovery that Eliza has fled the Shelby plantation and an infuriated slave-catcher team is assembled, the dialogue between two plantation slaves, Andy and Sam, reflects the quotidian and persistent working of moral sensibility in Stowe's writing:

“Well, yer see,” said Sam, proceeding gravely to wash down Haley's pony, “I 'se 'quired what yer may call a habit of o' *bobservation*, Andy. It's a very 'portant habit, Andy; and I 'commend yer to be cultivatin' it, now yer young. [...] Didn't I see which way the wind blew dis yer morning'? Didn't I see what Missis wanted, though she never let on? Dat ar's *bobservation*, Andy. I 'spects it's what you may call a faculty. Faculties is different in different peoples, but cultivation of 'em goes a great way.”¹³

Here, Sam instructs Andy on the importance of observation as a kind of cultivated attention to the significance, or force, of unfolding events and surrounding desires (so despite providing instruction to assist the slave-catching team, Mrs. Shelby's unspoken and intended desire is to see Eliza and her son remain together, even as fugitives). Moreover, to be human, as Sam asserts, is to possess the faculty of observation *and* to engage in the work of cultivating faculties of perception and understanding in order to evaluate their significance and relation to other faculties that lead to action. Didactic moments such as this one are common narrative practices across Stowe's writing, as she often places the work of moral understanding and instruction into

¹³ Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 44-45. Emphasis original.

character description, dialogue, and soliloquy. This scene, however, also indicates the vocabulary of faculty psychology that shapes Stowe's understanding of the cultivation of moral sentiments.

Moral Sentiments, Sympathy, and the Scottish Enlightenment

Harriet Beecher Stowe's faith in the project of cultivating moral sentiments (right feelings) can be read as belonging to a long and complex tradition of Scottish moral philosophy concerned with the modes by which an individual cultivates good (and bad) affections and comes to value and demonstrate a human and divine benevolent faculty (to self, to others, to God).

During the Scottish Enlightenment (also known as the Sentimental Enlightenment), thinkers such as Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Butler, and Lord Shaftesbury set out to counter the egoist claims of Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville, who argued that the individual was incapable of producing a benevolent faculty that did not have a selfish or private good as its sole aim.¹⁴ The early sentimentalists, on the contrary, argued that a benevolent faculty *was* possible because although there was indeed an intrinsic desire for self-interest, there was also an intrinsic desire to do good for others. Hutcheson and Shaftesbury would call this the "moral sense," while Butler would call it "moral conscience." Moral sensibility—which was instilled by God in order to achieve God's ends—consisted of the sense of right and wrong (approbation and disapprobation), as well as the desire to do good and feel right (individual and social virtue).¹⁵

¹⁴ See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651) and Bernard Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees* (1714).

¹⁵ Key works include Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, "An Enquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit" (1711); Francis Hutcheson, "Treatise II: Concerning Moral Good and Evil," *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725); and Joseph Butler, *Five Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel and A Dissertation Upon the Nature of Virtue* (1726). See also Michael Frazer, *The Enlightenment of Sympathy: Justice and the Moral Sentiments in the Eighteenth-Century and Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

The proof of the faculty of moral sense, they maintained, was in the human capacity to observe and reflect on one's actions, surroundings and feelings in ways that were not merely good, but also achieve virtuous personal and social ends.

Among David Hume and Adam Smith's immense contributions to the Scottish Enlightenment was the affirmation that the cultivation of moral sensibility—or, "moral sentiments," as Hume calls them—is a constant process of engagement with one's world through the approval and disapproval of affections as they arise. In other words, moral sentiments are subject to constant cultivation as part of the daily experience of being human. Hume, however, rejects the divine design and ends of moral sentiments in favor of asserting an empiricist understanding of human nature capable of cultivating individual and social moral beings. Hume and Smith also provide an elaboration of the faculty of sympathy as the vehicle by which moral sentiments are contemplated and cultivated. Through the faculty of sympathy, the affections (for example, suffering, joy, pleasure, discomfort) of others are communicated by affective perception to the sympathetic individual, who then associates the affective perception with ideas in her/his mind and evaluates these associations for levels of liveliness and vivacity (personal relatability). If the level of vivacity is high (if the sympathetic person has a high sense of relatability because of past experiences or a shared social situation), the individual forms an impression, which then generates the direct experience of suffering or joy for the individual herself.¹⁶

¹⁶ David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739/1740), especially "Book II: Of the Passions."

Hume's model then becomes the basis for Adam Smith's articulation of sympathy itself as "fellow feeling."¹⁷ Rather than a mechanistic operation producing moral sentiments, Smith asserted moral value itself is found in the working of sympathy. Sympathy itself may lead to the personal pleasure of seeing another person happy through the alleviation of suffering. According to Smith, at the observation of suffering (and it is suffering that is the mediating experience for Smith and the operation of sympathy), the imagination acts as a mirror and is able to form a like impression of suffering. "By our imagination we place ourselves in [our brother's] situation," Smith writes in *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. He continues, "we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations."¹⁸ While qualified with the statements "as it were" and "in some measures," Smith's choice to illustrate the power of sympathy through the inhabiting of another's body in order to feel the same sensations actually does a lot to illustrate the presumptions of power and privilege that are also operative in the spectatorial relationship of sympathetic subject and object.

Historians of American intellectual and social life highlight the broad inheritances of Scottish Enlightenment conceptions of moral autonomy, liberal self-cultivation, and republican citizenship.¹⁹ The place of moral feelings and the process of sympathy in American thought and culture, too, owe themselves in large part to the Scottish Enlightenment tradition.²⁰ As argued by

¹⁷ Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759, 1790).

¹⁸ Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 13-14.

¹⁹ See Herbert Schneider, *History of American Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947) and Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

²⁰ David Walker Howe, *Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Daniel Walker Howe in *Making the American Self*, early American political, social, and theological thought is marked by the faculty paradigm of psychology and role of emotion in social ethics that shaped Scottish moral philosophy. Jonathan Edwards, for example, was an avid reader of Scottish moral philosophy as it was found in sources such as *The Spectator* and his theological system demonstrated an incorporation of a theory of moral sentiments in the service of benevolent affections and action.²¹ While human nature was designed to understand moral categories of good and bad, true virtue itself was a benevolent affection available to the “born again” Christian who could cultivate it toward benevolent ends. The conversion experience, in other words, gave religious urgency to the cultivation of virtue for a Christian life committed to the work of God in the world.

Sympathy, Stowe, and the Character Sketch

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s literary appeal to right feelings and sympathy owes itself to the legacy of this tradition in a few key ways. First, Stowe is deeply committed to the operation and power of sympathy as part of human nature itself, as demonstrated in her response to her “dear reader”: “An atmosphere of sympathetic influence encircles every human being; and the man or woman who feels strongly, healthily and justly, on the great interests of humanity, is a constant benefactor to the human race.”²² Stowe’s statement recognizes sympathy as an influential energy that can work toward “the great interests of humanity.” Stowe, moreover, like Hutcheson, Butler, and Shaftesbury (and Edwards), see the teleological goal of the cultivation of the moral sense as

²¹ Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections* (1746). For Howe’s discussion of how Edwards formulates moral sentiments and true virtue, see *Making the American Self*, 33-44.

²² Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 405.

the carrying out of the work of God in the world. Second, Stowe understands that in order for feelings to be right feelings, they must be subject to cultivation through the exercises of imaginative sympathy and the demonstration of their effects. Stowe sets out to do this primarily through her literary technique of the character sketch, as she tells her readers in the preface to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "The object of these sketches is to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race ... to show their wrongs and sorrows" in the attempt to do away with the cruel and unjust system of slavery.²³ She also accomplishes this through the illustrations of sympathetic scenes of shared pathos intended to evoke tears as a sign of the sympathetic experience. For example, during the selling of the Shelby slaves, Mrs. Shelby, Aunt Chloe, Tom, and others gather together and weep. Stowe writes: "And in those tears they all shed together, the high and the lowly, melted away all the heart-burnings and anger of the oppressed. O, ye who visit the distressed, do ye know that everything your money can buy, given with a cold, averted face, is not worth one honest tear shed in real sympathy?"²⁴ For Stowe, weeping is a sign of the power of sympathy—including its effacing of human differences.

Through her use of the character sketch, Stowe aims to cultivate right feelings and sympathetic effects toward the goal of moral instruction. In the first official biographical account of Stowe's life, her own autobiography as facilitated and edited by her son Charles Edward Stowe in 1890, a short handwritten dedication page from Stowe's aged pen describes her desire to "leave behind me, some reflections of my life." It concludes with the following hope:

If these pages shall lend those who read them to a firmer trust in God and a deeper sense of His fatherly goodness throughout the days of our earthly pilgrimage I can

²³ Ibid., xiii.

²⁴ Ibid., 88.

say with Valiant for Truth in the Pilgrim's Progress, I am going to my Father's and tho with great difficulty, I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the troubles I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage and my courage and skill to him that can get it.²⁵

Invoking a text that contains a cast of moral characters vital to the traditions of Western literary consumption, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Stowe's benediction to her reader reveals how she also wants people to read and appreciate her life and work as part of a legacy of Christian moral instruction.²⁶ Like *Pilgrim's Progress*, the power of Stowe's work is in the moral force of narrated character archetypes and their storied plights. Stowe's characters, especially those in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, represent archetypal moral positions in which readers learn by instruction how to develop and cultivate right feelings as part of their sympathetic engagement with the characters of the text.

For Stowe and the sentimental fiction forbearers she grew up reading (under strict supervision and petition in her Beecher home)—namely, Sir Walter Scott, but also Samuel Richardson—fictional characters provide the tableau for the cultivation of moral sentiments for her readers.²⁷ Like Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748), and Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820), Stowe understood the space of the novel to be an experimental object for the imaginative work of feeling sympathetically for the suffering and unfortunate plight of

²⁵ Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Edward Stowe, *The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe Compiled From Her Letters and Journals* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1890).

²⁶ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, from This World, to That Which Is to Come* (1678).

²⁷ Stowe and her Beecher siblings were introduced to the literature of Sir Walter Scott and poetry of Lord Byron by their Uncle Samuel Foote, brother to her deceased mother, Roxanna Foote Beecher. As children, Lyman Beecher purportedly gave permission in the following statement, "You may read Scott's novels. I have always disapproved of novels as trash, but in these is real genius and real culture, and you may read them." Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 159, and Stowe and Fields, *Life and Letters*, 36-37.

another.²⁸ Moreover, these early sentimental novels prioritize the literary device of the character sketch in order to teach readers (often, very didactically) what is required to negotiate and arrive at right feelings, as well as what is required to avoid the corrosive qualities of evil. Importantly, with moral cultivation as their aim, they are able to make the pathos of readerly pleasures of fiction—a worry with the rise of the novel—seem less dangerous.

And yet, the project of moral sentimental reading admits something critically important about the logic of sympathy and the character sketch itself. While these characters represent historic and ever-present social plights, they also bear the markers of social power relations, including race, gender, and other forms of difference. This then begs the question of what it means for a white reader to sympathize with the suffering of Uncle Tom, Eliza, George, Topsy, and others nonwhite characters. In other words, teaching mostly white readers to sympathize with the suffering plight of black characters is also to recognize that black characters must suffer in order to make white sympathy legible. This is what Saidiya Hartman adeptly points to as the collapse of sympathy in literary and cultural representations of blackness and black suffering for reading and viewing consumption.²⁹

In what follows, I offer a reading of the techniques of moral sensibility and sympathy made available in the character sketch. Despite my tracing of the emergence of sympathy as an intellectual and literary value, my aim here is not to valorize sympathy, but to problematize it by

²⁸ I want to note here, with others, that the beginnings of sentimental fiction—at least in terms of pathos-rich scenes for moral instruction—did not, historically speaking, begin with female authors. Sir Walter Scott, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*, as well as William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), which is credited as the first American novel, demonstrate that the pioneering life of sentimental fiction began with male authors.

²⁹ Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

exploring its effects. I aim to do so on Stowe's own grounds in the character sketch. Each character sketch offers ethical contours to consider the limitations of sympathy in achieving commensurability of suffering despite human difference. The possibilities of sympathetic understanding, as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its critical reflection make clear, are predicated on—and even bolster—relations of power, privilege and structures of racism and oppression.

Eva, Tom, and the Racialization of Sacrifice

The central moral exemplars of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are Uncle Tom and the young Eva St. Clare. In Tom and Eva, Stowe illustrates exaggerated states of innocence, loyalty, and devotion that solicit the sympathies and desires of fellow characters and her readers. Moreover, and relatedly so, the long-suffering of Eva's childhood consumptive death and Tom's tortuous death by flogging each model benevolent and pathos-rich Christ-like suffering in which they sacrifice themselves for the redemption of others. In what follows, I explore the character features of Eva and Tom, both in life and in their imminent deaths, and the ways in which their characters and suffering deaths are racialized.

In the opening scenes of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe's readers are invited into a conversation between two men of "humanity." The first is Mr. Shelby, a kind plantation owner whose financial state requires him to sell property, for which he chooses two highly-valued slaves (Uncle Tom and Eliza's son, Harry). The second is Haley, a deceitful slave-trader who boasts of his humane treatment of enslaved persons. In this scene, Tom is announced by Shelby to be his most "steady, honest, capable" slave.³⁰ Tom's honesty and loyalty—which, to the smart

³⁰ Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 2.

reader's eye, stand in contrast to the "humanity" of Shelby and Haley—are repeated again and again as Shelby describes how trustworthy Tom is at managing the responsibilities of the farm with little oversight, including traveling away for business errands and faithfully returning. As Stowe's "daguerreotype for our readers" persists in the opening pages, we learn that Tom's "morale" is celebrated and regarded with respect and emulation by other slaves, in part because he's "got religion."³¹ The fact that Tom's "got religion," serves to substantiate Stowe's sympathetic character sketch and to prepare readers for his eventual death by martyrdom. Religion not only functions to mark the features of loyalty and forbearance in Tom's character but also models the Bible-reading practices that cultivate his moral sensibility. Tom's Bible is his prized possession and source of discernment and inspiration. While the young George Shelby and Little Eva provide literacy instruction, reading Tom's Bible to him and others, Tom's Bible remains decipherable to him in the marked margins that remind him of favorite passages and stories.³²

As Tom is purchased by Augustine St. Clare at Eva's request, Tom's moral exemplarity is extended to the domestic hearth itself. Through his admiration for and friendship with Eva and St. Clare, which render him a spiritual and family confidante, Tom is a safe and welcomed slave. The early sketch of Tom's character reads as appealing to both the kindly pro-slavery and anti-slavery readers alike. To the sympathizer with the system of slavery, Tom is a trustworthy worker, contributes to the morale and spirit of the plantation community (and may be a product

³¹ Ibid., 19, 27, 88. Later in the novel, St. Clare will also observe that Tom's "got religion" in the statement, "Tom has a natural genius for religion," 169.

³² On descriptions of Tom's Bible-reading scenes, see Ibid., 19, 132, 169.

of it), and is a good person who is welcomed in the family hearth (as he is regarded later by Augustine St. Clare). To the anti-slavery sympathizer, Tom's patiently virtuous temperament makes the contrasting horrors of the slavery system all the more pungent.

Like Uncle Tom, the young Eva St. Clare occupies a sort of moral untouchability in the narrative of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. While both achieve ideal exemplarity, Eva's virtuosity is not described in terms of humility, loyalty, and "perfect submissiveness," as Tom's is, but in terms of purity and "the perfection of childish beauty."³³ She emulates (super)natural angelic innocence that transcends even the innocence of childhood. Like other children, Eva plays, sings, and laughs, but unlike other children, she is incapable of participating in mischief, making mistakes, or become dirtied and soiled. "Evil rolls off Eva's mind like dew off a cabbage-leaf," Augustine St. Clare declares of his daughter.³⁴

In Stowe's description of Eva's character, purity and innocence quickly collapse into whiteness and femininity (or, rather, pre-femininity girlhood). However, it is through Eva's position in contrast to Topsy that the virtuosity of whiteness stands in the most glaring relief. In contrast to Eva's purity, Topsy is soiled, naughty, willful, and dark. Though Topsy also theoretically occupies the position of childhood innocence, she is not naturally afforded it. It is only by Eva's model of sympathy toward Topsy that Topsy is redeemed in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and understood as loveable. While Stowe is clear that Topsy requires Eva, the structure of sympathy also demands that Eva requires Topsy in order to be the morally and racially pure and benevolent exemplar.

³³ Ibid., 132, 133.

³⁴ Ibid., 227.

The demonstration of this benevolent sympathy to Topsy is central to Eva's death scene. To Topsy, who has come to believe, through the conditions of slavery and the color of her skin, that she is unloveable and evil ("If I could be skinned, and come white, I'd try then"), Eva responds, "But people can love you, if you are black, Topsy [...] O Topsy, poor child. *I love you!*" while "laying her little thin, white hand on Topsy's shoulder." Eva continues, "I love you, because you haven't had any father, or mother, or friends;--because you've been a poor, abused child! I love you, and I want you to be good. ...it really grieves me, to have you be so naughty. I wish you would try to be good, for my sake."³⁵ Eva's declared love for Topsy, rich in emotional appeal, also instantiates a racialized relationship of benevolent power wherein Eva, as white innocence, is the benefactor of love and goodness to the black child incapable of goodness because of the abuse she's suffered under slavery and the state of her "heathen soul," and in the recognition of her blackness. Indeed, Stowe illustrates this in the very postures of Eva and Topsy as this scene concludes, writing:

The round, keen eyes of the black child were overcast with tears;--large, bright drops rolled heavily down, one by one, and fell on the little white hand. Yes, in that moment, a ray of real belief, a ray of heavenly love, had penetrated the darkness of her heathen soul! She laid her head down between her knees, and wept and sobbed,--while the beautiful child, bending over her, looked like the picture of some bright angel stooping to reclaim a sinner.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., 258.

³⁶ Ibid.

Tangled in this passage is the effect of the operation of sympathy: the potent collapse of spiritual redemption with whiteness and blackness— “the ray of heavenly love” facilitated by Eva, “the beautiful child” and “bright angel” who “penetrat[es] the darkness of [Topsy’s] heathen soul.”³⁷

Eva’s sublime death is told through evangelical language and images. Like Christ, Eva’s sense of the coming time of her death shapes her moral instruction and comfort to her family, namely in the form of encouraging regular Bible reading practice, inspiring goodness among slaves like Topsy, and in encouraging her father to find moral fortitude in faith. Eva understands her death as possessing sacrificial and hopeful qualities, confessing her disinterested benevolence (a true mark of the purity of her soul) to Tom--“I’ve felt that I would be glad to die, if my dying would stop all this misery. I *would* die for them, Tom, if I could”—and in providing a locket of hair as a symbol of hopeful assurance to those assembled at her death bed, so that “When you look at it, think that I loved you and am gone to heaven, and that I want to see you all there.”³⁸ To Stowe’s readers, Eva’s death evokes tears not for the pain Eva suffers, but for the beauty and promise of the demonstration of her unconditional love—even as it instructs readers of its racialized conditionality in the relational structures of sympathetic benevolence.

Eva and Tom’s death share similarities in the foreshadowing cues of their character sketches, as well as in the evangelical purpose of their sacrificial deaths. Like Eva, Tom’s death is foreshadowed through a willingness to sacrifice himself; but unlike Eva, it is a willingness understood through the demands of the slavery system, which compels his sacrifice rather than makes it solely his own. When Tom learns that Mr. Shelby has sold him to the trader Haley, he

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 252, 264.

has the opportunity to flee the plantation with Eliza (at Aunt Chloe's encouragement). Tom chooses otherwise because it would violate his integrity of being loyal to his master, and he is willing to sacrifice himself for the preservation of the remaining Shelby plantation. "If I must be sold, or all the people on this place, and everything go to the rack, why, let me be sold," proclaims Tom.³⁹ Tom's sacrificial awareness appears in other scenes, including his explicit statement of his devotional self-sacrificial love for Augustine St. Clare soon after Eva's death ("I's willin' to lay down my life, this blessed day, to see Mas'r a Christian") and in his understanding of the imminent sacrifice of self at the recognition of Simon Legree's intent to break his spirit.⁴⁰

Also like Eva, Stowe narrates the significance of Tom's sacrificial death in evangelical terms. Tom's flogging provides an opportunity for Tom to share his faith with Cassy, in part by asking her to read to him from his Bible and instructing her on the holiness of suffering and in part by renewing her hope and faith in a future life not bound to the horrors of the Legree plantation. (Cassy's flight from the Legree plantation with Emmeline would eventually reunite her with Eliza, her long-lost daughter; and Emmeline with George, her long lost brother.)⁴¹ Other

³⁹ Ibid., 36. This statement reminds me of the scene that begins Adam Smith's description of sympathy:

Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. [...] By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him [...] His agonies, when they are thus brought home to ourselves, when we have thus adopted and made them our own, begin at last to affect us, and we then tremble and shudder at the thought of what he feels. (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 30).

⁴⁰ Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 276, 320, 324.

⁴¹ Ibid., 327-330.

characters also find salvific redemption as a result of Tom's death. Sambo and Quimbo, Legree's enslaved slave drivers and executors of Tom's floggings, ultimately provide the final comfort of washing Tom's wounds, as Tom shares the gospel message resulting in their proclaimed salvation. In a scene mirroring the two thieves at the crucifixion of Christ, Stowe writes, "They wept, --both the two savage men." Tom then prays, "Poor critters! ...I'd be willing to bar' all I have, if only bring ye to Christ! O, Lord! give me these two more souls, I pray!" And the scene ends with the narrator's proclamation, "That prayer was answered!"⁴² Not only does Tom's suffering and sacrificial death offer salvation to the Legree slaves, but it also serves as cause for the young George Shelby to manumit the Shelby plantation slaves. Here, George Shelby models how to act out of proper moral sentiments (a manumitting action St. Clare fails to do) by proclaiming that he "will *do what one man can* to drive out this curse of slavery from my land!"⁴³

Eva's sacrificial death, however, is not one of martyrdom in the face of violent flogging and brutal suffering demanded by an evil system of slavery. Eva is not made to endure the martyr's "true test," which for Tom is the enduring of the preservation of a faith that resides not in his body, but in his heart, as described by Stowe: "But the blows fell now only on the outer man, and not, as before, on the heart. Tom stood perfectly submissive..."⁴⁴ From the death of Tom, the reader does not learn to admire an exemplary benefactor of pure benevolence. Rather, the reader learns to "enjoy," through heart-rending sympathy, an object of meditation on Christ-

⁴² Ibid., 377-378.

⁴³ Ibid., 383.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 359.

like sacrificial death, and Christian humility and servility. Like the racialization of Eva's benevolence as white, Tom's acceptance of the test of suffering is also racialized as a feature—and requirement—of blackness. In Stowe's concluding reflection on the death of Tom, the character of Tom is quickly substituted for and subsumed into the entirety of "the African race," an entire group of people characterized as a model race "of all the races of the earth" for "receiv[ing] the Gospel with such eager docility" and for reflecting "the principle of reliance and unquestioning faith," which is "more a native element of this race than any other."⁴⁵ In other words, black suffering is legible only insofar as it is something to be "enjoyed" as an object of meditation, even as it serves to mobilize anti-slavery passions.⁴⁶

Augustine St. Clare, Miss Ophelia and the Limitations of Right Feelings

Augustine St. Clare and Miss Ophelia, are cousins born of brothers with similar temperaments despite being raised in different Northern and Southern environments. (Ophelia's father is "a pretty willful, stout, overbearing old democrat;" St. Clare's is "a willful, stout, old despot.") The cousins represent for Stowe many of the regional and religious dangers that

⁴⁵ Ibid., 360. Stowe's final exhortation: "Pity him not! Such a life and death is not for pity! Not in the riches of omnipotence is the chief glory of God; but in self-denying, suffering love! And blessed are the men whom he calls to fellowship with him, bearing their cross after him with patience," 383.

⁴⁶ In *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman explores the meaning of the verb, "to enjoy"—"to have, possess, and use with satisfaction; to occupy or have the benefit of"—in order to describe the sympathetic pathos and pleasure of consuming black suffering in American abolitionist literature, 23, 17-48. For Hartman, enjoyment (of "innocent amusements" and instructive scenes of servility and forbearance) function to reify hierarchies of master and slave in the structure of American racism. Terrific treatments of the uses of pain and suffering to mobilize anti-slavery sentiments include: Elizabeth Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America," *Journal of American History* 82:2 (1995), 463–493; Karen Halttunen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," *American Historical Review* 100:2 (1995), 303–334; and Elizabeth Barnes, *Love's Whipping Boy: Violence and Sentimentality in the American Imagination* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

threaten the cause of anti-slavery.⁴⁷ While both characters speak with a great deal of candor, representing some of the best traits or ideal types of the good northerner and the good southerner, St. Clare and Ophelia share an inability to sympathize, stemming from misguided moral feelings. St. Clare, who is kind to his slaves and holds idealistic social values, ultimately lacks moral fortitude and pragmatic action. Miss Ophelia, on the other hand, remains too rigid in her ways to enact the kind of paternalistic care necessary for a gradualist system, let alone immediatism.

Readers are introduced to Augustine St. Clare as a passenger with his daughter on a steamship traveling south to New Orleans. Stowe describes him as a “graceful, elegantly-formed young man,” poised in his space of business dealings (including the purchase of Tom), and an observant spectator, “listening, with a good-humored, negligent air, half comic, half contemptuous” to the business of the Southern slave trade on the ship.⁴⁸ His physical features mirror those of his daughter’s – he has a similar “noble cast head,” “large blue eyes,” and “the same golden-brown hair”-- but St. Clare’s is a lost and disillusioned innocence, possessing a “misty, dreamy depth of expression” and his “proud and somewhat sarcastic expression” and “easy superiority” betray him as “wholly of this world.”⁴⁹ As the scenes unfold of St. Clare’s debates with other characters in the novel, St. Clare reveals himself to be at once morally contemplative and morally bereft—and even has the self-awareness to recognize it with chagrin, describing himself as “a piece of driftwood...floating and eddying about.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 209.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 212.

St. Clare adores the innocent faith of his daughter and that of Tom, but abhors the hypocrisy he sees in issues surrounding the church and slavery, and enjoys goading Ophelia about her own religious commitment commitments to benevolence and the anti-slavery cause. To St. Clare, the Southern church preacher who uses religion to justify slavery as part of religious and racial hierarchies makes religion “bend and turn, and descend and ascend, to fit every crooked phase of selfish, worldly society.”⁵¹ St. Clare, on the other hand—a slaveholder himself, who sees the irony of talking about the “*abuses* of slavery” for “the *thing itself* is the essence of all abuse!”, admits to the selfish convenience of the slavery system and sees this admission as more honest than justifications of religious and racial hierarchy.⁵²

Here, it is interesting that Stowe mobilizes such a perceptive critique of Christian views of slavery through the character of St. Clare, whom she ultimately decides is morally awash. St. Clare is both right and wrong. In the death of Eva and St. Clare’s own foreboding death, he is presented a chance to solidify his moral sentiments into convictions. St. Clare listens to Eva’s petition to manumit Tom and the rest of the family’s slaves. He intuits an approaching political and religious judgment day, as described in a set of moving scenes including the reading the Book of Matthew scene of judgment with Tom following Eva’s death (“For I was hungry and you gave me no meat...”), and a nostalgic yearning to sing “that grand old Latin piece, the ‘Dies Irae.’”⁵³ Rather of cultivating feeling toward conviction and action, however, St. Clare instead

⁵¹ 167.

⁵² 167, 204.

⁵³ 284-285.

chooses to resign himself. In the moments preceding his untimely death, St. Clare announces to Ophelia:

My view of Christianity is such...that I think no man can consistently profess it without throwing the whole weight of his being against this monstrous system of injustice that lies at the foundation of all our society; and, if need be, sacrificing himself in the battle. [...] I have had only that kind of benevolence which consists in lying on a sofa, and cursing the church and clergy for not being martyrs and confessors.⁵⁴

Here, Stowe seems to warn her readers that this self-described “dreamy, neutral spectator” is not neutral. His resignation, despite his better judgment of recognizing the right thing to do, results in the forestallment and eventual failure of securing their safety and freedom.

Miss Ophelia, St. Clare’s northern cousin arrives from her quintessentially industrious Vermont town to New Orleans to help manage the estate’s home because of Marie St. Clare’s perpetual state of illness. Miss Ophelia represents the many well-intentioned, zealous, New England, Calvinist characters of Stowe’s personal and fictional life, as represented in Ophelia’s description as “the absolute bond-slave of the ‘ought.’”⁵⁵

While Ophelia is efficient in managing the logistical care of the home, her strident earnestness presents challenges to carrying out the moral and practical cultivation of sentiments of those in her charge. When St. Clare introduces the young Topsy as “a purchase for [her] department,” Miss Ophelia is given the challenging task of carrying out the missionary zeal of her faith.⁵⁶ Indeed, Ophelia serves to represent northern attitudes about race and slavery, for the

⁵⁴ 286.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 217. On St. Clare’s critique of Christian missionary societies, 219.

demands of emancipation and Christian education, lauded as they are by Northern reformers, must also be put to the test under the question of “what is to be done?”⁵⁷ Ophelia becomes exasperated again and again at her failures—or rather, Topsy’s supposed failures—to educate and mold Topsy into her vision. Yet, she is moved by witnessing Eva’s proclamation of unconditional love for Topsy and its effects. In this moment, Ophelia admits her prejudice and aversion (“I’ve always had a prejudice against negroes...and it’s a fact, I never could bear to have that child touch me; but I didn’t think she knew it.”)⁵⁸ and reconciles herself to Topsy, assuring her “I can love you; I do, and I’ll try to help you to grow up a good Christian girl.”⁵⁹ With such a bold act, as Stowe assures her readers, Miss Ophelia “acquired an influence over the mind of the destitute child that she never lost.” Ophelia, unlike St. Clare, is capable of moral cultivation and influence.

Eliza, the Birds, and the Power of Sympathy

Like Tom’s flogging scene, Eliza’s dramatic escape with her young child remains fixed in the lasting cultural imagination of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Victimized by the Fugitive Slave Law, Eliza risks her life for the futurity of her child. After a harrowing scene of crossing the icy Ohio River into a free state, yet one forced to comply with the Fugitive Slave Act, Eliza finds refuge through the actions of Mrs. and Senator Bird, who must willingly disobey the law of the land to harbor, protect, and provide safe passage for Eliza.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 162, 287.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 258.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 273.

For Stowe, the sketch of Eliza's character represents the sacred and civil rights to family cohesion. Perhaps the greatest cause of moral indignation for Stowe was the separation and rupturing of families under the slave system. When slaves are bought, sold, and traded in Stowe's novels, she consistently emphasizes the trauma caused to family and kinship systems, with the separation of a mother and child accounting for the most grievable of sins. When Eliza learns that her husband George Harris intends to steal away because he is to be sold to a trader (and remarried to another), and that her young son has been offered a hefty sum for value as young entertainment and future house servant material, Eliza chooses to forsake the only home she knew in the Shelby plantation (including the kindness of a Christian and maternal education shown to her by Mrs. Shelby) for the risk of flight in order to protect a future life for her and her young child.

Eliza's harrowing flight leads her to the Birds across the Ohio River. After returning from the congressional vote to pass the Fugitive Slave Act, Senator Bird returns home to the scene of the fugitive mother and child. Stowe illustrates this scene on a few registers. First, is that of the pervasive "shadow of the law," which regards human beings as things and properties to be exchanged, rather than as persons deserving rights of safety and prosperity afforded to family, education, and citizenship.⁶⁰ Senator Bird voted for the passage of the law of the land due to "public reason," even though his sympathies are putatively with the plight of the slave. When Mrs. Bird provides welcome refuge to Eliza and her son, the Senator's duty to the law is called

⁶⁰ It is under "the shadow of the law," as Stowe opens her novel, that some humans are "but a thing," 8, 11. Stowe's first subtitle to her novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin: The Man Who Was a Thing*, emphasizes the gravity of the law, before she changed it to the *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Or, Life Among the Lowly*.

into question: will he aid and facilitate Eliza's flight, making him culpable under the new law of the land?

Eliza's sketch would not be complete without a hearth-side scene of her sharing the story of her plight with the Birds. As they listen to the trials and achievements of Eliza's journey, undertaken for the loving protection of her child, the Birds are each moved to tears and "heart sympathy."⁶¹ Here, the logic of sympathy works in a number of different ways. While the Birds have already chosen to house Eliza for the moment, it is through the listening of her story that they are moved to greater sympathy and decide to more fully commit to her flight by arranging clothing and further transportation. In many ways, this demonstrates the ways in which Stowe would like her readers to respond in cultivating right moral feelings: when presented with a harrowing account of suffering, one must be able to fully imagine the pain as one's own.⁶² But the sympathetic identification in this scene also relies on the Birds own experience of the recent loss of their own child. The "heart sympathy" they experience is, in many ways, a return to their own grief. As described by Stowe, the Birds are able to sympathize not because they understand or can imagine the plights and sufferings of slavery, but because they understand the unbearable pain of the loss of a child.

This scene most closely echoes Stowe's own sympathetic identification with her characters. In 1849, just a year before the Fugitive Slave Act and the ideas of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

⁶¹ Ibid., 76-77.

⁶² Another layer to this subplot is the fact that Eliza's mother is Cassy. In telling her own story to Tom of the loss and estrangement of her children, she admits (like Cora in *Dred*) to giving her child a lethal dose of laudanum, preventing him from being taken away from her to an unknown future in the slave system, Ibid., 334-335.

began to take shape, Stowe dealt with the illness and loss of her infant son during a cholera epidemic in Cincinnati (during which she also fell ill). She mourned the loss of Charley and often returned to the story when expressing both her love for her children and her sympathy with the plight of enslaved parents whose children are torn away from them. In a letter to her son Charles (born a year later and named after the lost Charley) some twenty-five years after the novel's publication, Stowe reflects on her pained identification with the figure of the enslaved mother separated from her children, writing, "I remember many a night weeping over you as you lay sleeping beside me, and I thought of the slave mothers whose babes were torn from them."⁶³

Each of these character sketches (and the many more character-rich scenes in the novel) are windows into the way Stowe imagines the work of fictional stories to cultivate right moral feelings in her readers. Eva and Tom model moral instruction and exemplary suffering. But, as I have argued, the supposed innocent exemplarity of each of these figures is only legible through the moralization of race and racial difference. This is described in Eva's white benevolence (which requires Topsy's blackness to achieve full legibility) and Tom's patient suffering (that requires his brutal bondage). For Augustine St. Clare and Miss Ophelia, the need for civil-minded moral leadership is laid out in their failures and challenges within their own sphere of influence, including in relationship to Topsy, Tom, and the rest of the St. Clare slaves. St. Clare possesses the abilities to observe and often astutely judge good and bad character, hypocrisy, and even a coming judgment day, but his sympathies do not lead him to action, as the failure to

⁶³ Stowe and Fields, *Life and Letters*, 132-133. Charles Stowe would end up editing his mother's letters and biography for publication in 1890, six years before her death in 1896.

manumit Tom and the rest of the St. Clare slaves before his untimely death attest. Miss Ophelia, in contrast, represents the inverse. She is earnest in moral commitment and action, but blunt in the sensitive cultivation of feeling and understanding. Finally, Eliza and the Birds represent the power of sympathetic identification in supplanting the force of an unjust Fugitive Slave Law. Even Senator Bird, who voted for its passage, cannot uphold it in the face of the suffering plight of an enslaved mother who refuses to be torn away from her child.

While each of these character sketches raise important answers to the question of “what can any one do?” by modeling interpersonal sympathies, identifications, and disidentifications, they also each facilitate questions about how the crisis of slavery will shape the future of a divinely-ordained country. In the concluding chapter of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Stowe shifts to a sermonic tone, encouraging her various groups of imagined readers—“readers of the South,” “mothers of America,” and “America” as a whole—to attend to their spheres of sympathy and action by recognizing the horrors of the slave system and preparing for the reception and education of fugitive and former slaves.⁶⁴ While this sermonic moment is a clear answer to what she would like readers to do, politically, after following the travails of her characters, I want to pause to recognize that Stowe’s novel prepares readers for this question. Through character sketch and scene, Stowe not only mobilized sympathies for the enslaved person’s plight, but also legitimated this mobilization through the positionality of white benevolence and sympathy.

⁶⁴ Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 403-406.

“Everybody’s Protest Novel”

It is impossible to read *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* except through its cultural legacy, which raises the important question of what the continued reading and critique of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* demands. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* gave shape to a number of character types in the American literary and cultural imagination, including the paternalist rendering of the faithful black slave willing to endure violence for his own redemption. In “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” James Baldwin famously presents one of the most forceful and insightful critiques of the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a representation of the deep entanglements of white sentimentality, American theology, and racism. His critique offers one of the most important ways to think about the relationship of sentimental literature, race, and theology, as represented in this novel and more broadly in American cultural imagination.

An essay in Baldwin’s collection, *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), “Everybody’s Protest Novel” (and “Many Thousand Gone”) probes the inextricability of race and theology in the American imagination.⁶⁵ Baldwin uses the characters of Tom in Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright’s *Native Son* to insist on the limitations of the protest novel and how the deep theological currents of atonement theology shape the racialization of goodness as white, and forbearance, suffering, and violence as black.⁶⁶ Baldwin’s descriptions of Stowe’s novel and the sentimental mode are severe and unforgiving. It is “a very bad novel,” “perfectly horrible,” overwrought with “self-righteousness” and “virtuous sentimentality” (with

⁶⁵ James Baldwin, “Everybody’s Protest Novel” and “Many Thousands Gone,” in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984. Originally published in 1955).

⁶⁶ See Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940).

sentimentality defined as “the ostentatious parading of excessive and spurious emotion”), and written by one who “was not so much a novelist as an impassioned pamphleteer.”⁶⁷

However, Baldwin’s critique is aimed not just at *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, but at the tradition of the protest novel itself. He faults it for relying on “virtuous rage” and betraying the real “business of the novelist,” which is to refuse the easy and violent desire for moral categorization and instead carry out the hard work of representing human paradox and complexity.⁶⁸ According to Baldwin, the sentimental “virtuous rage” impulse of the social protest novel is sourced in the “medieval morality” of the battle for salvation against the “terror of damnation.”⁶⁹ In American culture, Baldwin argues, this “theological terror, the terror of damnation” enacts (and, exacts) itself in racial terms by equating blackness with evil and whiteness with goodness. It then becomes the work of whiteness to purify blackness, lest both white and black be damned.

Baldwin declares:

Uncle Tom’s Cabin, then is activated by what might be called a theological terror, the terror of damnation; and the spirit that breathes in this book, hot, self-righteous, fearful, is not different from that spirit of medieval times which sought to exorcize evil by burning witches; and is not different from that terror which activates a lynch mob. One need not, indeed, search for examples so historic or so gaudy; this is a warfare waged daily in the heart, a warfare so vast, so relentless and so powerful that the interracial handshake or the interracial marriage can be as crucifying as the public hanging or the secret rape. This panic motivates our cruelty, this fear of the dark makes it impossible that our lives shall be other than superficial⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Baldwin, 14-15.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 17, 15. Though one might ask of Baldwin whether “the business of a novelist” in representing human paradox and complexity follows its own sense of a certain kind of liberal morality.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 13, 18.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 18.

Baldwin proves the force of this “theological terror” in Stowe’s central use of Tom in her novel. As a black man, Tom’s salvation and freedom is capable of being embraced only through the moralized demands of forbearance and a suffering, murderous death. As Baldwin asserts, “it is only through humility, the incessant mortification of the flesh, that he can enter into communion with God or man.”⁷¹ Yet it is not Tom’s salvation that is at stake here, according to Baldwin. It is Stowe’s salvation—and the salvation of her white reading public—that is at stake. He writes, “She must cover their intimidating nakedness, robe them in white, the garments of salvation; only thus could she herself be delivered from ever-present sin, only thus could she bury, as St. Paul demanded, ‘the carnal man, the man of the flesh.’”⁷² Baldwin’s theological reading of the purpose of Tom’s death shapes his reading of Bigger’s own violent redemption and this pervasive atonement demand in protest fiction.⁷³ For Baldwin, “[T]he contemporary Negro novelist and the dead New England woman are locked together in a deadly, timeless battle,” because they are beholden to a medieval morality that requires racialized atonement wherein, “the one uttering merciless exhortations, the other shouting curses. And, indeed, within this web of lust and fury, black and white can only thrust and counter-thrust, long for each other’s slow, exquisite death . . . so that they go down into the pit together.”⁷⁴

Baldwin’s prescient critique, on my reading, provides a model for understanding the logic of sympathy and the uses of the character sketch in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Baldwin rejects the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 17-18.

⁷³ See especially, “Many Thousands Gone.”

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

desire for categorization that motivates the character sketch itself, insisting that it is illusory and dishonest and it ultimately reinforces many of the conditions of oppression. Not only is Tom an unrealistic character, the drama of his death is only legible through a white need for salvation. By pointing to this logic, Baldwin reveals the solipsistic limitations of a kind of sympathetic identification that rewards itself for its feelings of righteous indignation. In other words, Baldwin's demands to carry out "the business of the novelist"—that is, the revelation of human paradox and complexity—requires the work of critique, which demands that understanding of sympathy and the desire for "right feelings" be located within their discursive entanglements of theological and racial fantasies.

Chapter 3

Anglo-American Sympathy: Stowe in Europe

We in America ought to remember that the gentle remonstrance of the letter of the ladies of England contains, in the mildest form, the sentiments of universal Christendom.

–Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1854.¹

Humanity in England, like liberty in France, has now become an export article for the traders in politics.

–Karl Marx, “English Humanity and America,” *Die Presse*, 1862.²

Soon after the completion of serialization and publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1852, Stowe made the first of three voyages to Europe. At each juncture of this trip (receptions, speeches, dinners, gifts, leisure time, and site-seeing), Stowe documented her bewildered impressions of the sweeping sentiments of British readers transfixed by her literary portrayal of the plights of the enslaved. Common across the anti-slavery conversations, events, and gifted exchanges of this 1853 tour is the articulation of sympathy, benevolence, moral force and

¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*. 2 vols. Introduction by Calvin Ellis Stowe, (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1854), 1:299.

² Karl Marx, “English Humanity and America,” *Die Presse*, 20 June 1862. In Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States, Second edition*, ed., Andrew Zimmerman (New York: International Publishers: 2016. Originally published in 1937), 114.

humanity. In this chapter, I trace how this vocabulary of sympathy and humanity is articulated through the register of a racialized Anglo-American identity that is bound to the providential assurances of Christian universalism and the privileges and guilt of empire.

This chapter focuses on two gifted exchanges. The first is the presentation of “The Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland To Their Sisters The Women of the United States of America” and its 546,000 petition signatures. The second gift is a peculiar gold-chained bracelet memorializing the anti-slavery cause given to Stowe by the Duchess of Sutherland. My questions in this chapter are how does the Address, in content, materiality, and transatlantic reach, come to be celebrated by Stowe as the emblematic object of universal Anglo-American Christian sentiments? Moreover, how does the receipt of a gold-chained “slave bracelet” serve to bind Anglo-American women in the work of educating and emancipating enslaved African women, men, and children?³ Through a close examination of these two gifted objects, I argue that what is at stake in the exchange of these gifts is the making of Anglo-American sympathetic identity. This identity is marked not only by the gendered relations of Stowe, the Duchess, and the many thousands of women they claim to represent, but also by the articulation of their racialized vision through what they hold to be common: shared Christian faith and Anglo-world origin, shared inherited crime of slavery, and shared cause in commitment to its abolition. Here, the networks of transatlantic slavery of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries give rise to the networks of mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American sympathy and humanity. The legacy of sympathy in the modern West, as I maintain

³ The phrase, “slave bracelet” is attributed to her brother Charles Beecher in his journal, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe: The Journal of Charles Beecher*, ed., Joseph S Van Why and Earl French (Hartford: Stowe-Day Foundation, 1986), 36.

more broadly, is one that intimately binds the people, material, and movements of the Atlantic world as authored, inscribed and marked by the racial and gendered acts of transatlantic dispossession, slavery, sympathy, benevolence, and reform.⁴

In order to theorize the role of these gifts in relation to Stowe and her transatlantic work, I draw on notions of gifted and capital exchange in Marcel Mauss and Karl Marx. For Mauss, in his influential *The Gift* (1950), the free gift does not exist. Rather, all gifts not only retain the interestedness of the giver and recipient but are also part of a “total system of exchange” that enacts social and economic bonds within and outside of their social groups.⁵ When Marx theorizes the role of the commodity in capitalism in *Capital, Vol. 1*, (1867) he insists that the commodity must be understood as an historicized object and idea, which always bears the imprint (though concealed through its fetishization) of the labor and exchanges of its production.⁶ Here, I offer a reading of the Address and bracelet as bearing and producing the material and social historical bonds of slavery’s common origin, crime, and cause.

In addition to finding Marx and Mauss useful in understanding the power of the gifts to Stowe, it is also fascinating that both of these thinkers draw on religious and transcendental language to describe the force that binds social relations in the valuing of the gift and commodity. The display of the gift, for Mauss, carries “the force of things,” is “animate” and is

⁴ See discussions in chapters one and two on the historicization of sympathy, especially the discussion on Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment. For Smith, sympathy denotes fellow-feeling, arising from the work of imagination (*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 14-15).

⁵ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans., W.D. Halls (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990. Originally published in 1925).

⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans., Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin Books, 1976. Originally published in 1867).

even “spiritual.”⁷ When Marx describes the commodity, he adopts the magical language of “fetish” to describe the hold of the commodity on those who participate (even unwittingly so) in its exchange without the recognition of its production.⁸ In placing Stowe and her work in conversation with Marx and Mauss, I illustrate how Anglo-American identity is shaped by the powerful sentiments and social relations of these transatlantic gifted exchanges and their contexts of slavery, sympathy, and reform.

While the rise and effects of the modern West’s capitalist systems haunt both the works of Marx and Mauss, their treatments of gifted and commodity exchange are focused primarily on the English working classes and “archaic” aboriginal groups, respectively. Neither thinker explicitly addresses the development of racial categories as part of the transatlantic African slave trade and its legacy in developing capitalist modes of production and exchange in the modern Atlantic world.⁹ Here, my argument extends the reach of their ideas to how sentimental and racialized transatlantic literary and political spaces shape Stowe’s moment (as well as the sentimental histories received and gifted by Stowe and the legacy of her work).¹⁰

⁷ Mauss, 43-45.

⁸ Marx, 164-165.

⁹ Though Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels do write at length on the American Civil War, as discussed later, the racist dimensions of American slavery remain undertheorized in their attempts to think through broader class-based revolutionary struggles.

¹⁰ Key literature that influences my approach to transatlantic studies on the relationship of slavery, empire and Western liberalism include: Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capitalism, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights* (London: Verso Books, 2011); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014); Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of*

Most literary and historical treatments of the cultural influences on and of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* examine its national impact on debates around slavery, as well as its central place within antebellum and sentimental literature. By situating Stowe, her text and its reception, within a transatlantic space, my project circumvents the dominant nationalist reading of the reception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and contributes to emerging treatments of Stowe and nineteenth-century authors in their transatlantic worlds.¹¹ Stowe and the novel's cultural work belong in a broader sentimental intellectual tradition that uses affective appeals to the plight of the slave and the poor as part of its reckoning with its own participation in the transatlantic slave trade, the rise of Western capitalism, and the social needs that shape religious reform.

This chapter begins with an overview of the British circulation and reception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It then turns to show the ways in which accounts of Stowe's British tour, as described in her *Sunny Memories in Foreign Lands* travelogue, present anti-slavery work as an Anglo-American religious movement, or, as Stowe describes it, "the sentiments of universal Christendom." The Address, as I read it, is a profound articulation of Anglo-American sympathy as religious, racialized, and gendered. The chapter then turns to the bracelet as fetish *par*

American Capitalism (New York: Basic Books, 2014); and Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

¹¹ For recent collections extending the national boundaries of Stowe scholarship—and, importantly, insisting on her inclusion in transatlantic literary studies, see: Silvia Mayer and Monika Mueller, eds., *Beyond Uncle Tom's Cabin: Essays on the Writing of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011); Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer and Emily B Todd, eds., *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006); and most recently, Beth Lueck, Sirpa Salenius, and Nancy Schultz, eds., *Transatlantic Conversations: Nineteenth-Century American Encounters with Italy and the Atlantic World* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2016). While this collection of scholarship represents recent shifts in attending to Stowe, Forrest Wilson's mid-century biography of Stowe also makes the claim that Stowe's British reception was unprecedented and central to understanding Stowe's first novel (*Crusader in Crinoline: The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1941), 344-386.

excellence of the Anglo-American bond between these women, engaging both Marx and Mauss in an analysis of the debts, profits, and exchanges involved in these bonds. Finally, this chapter addresses Stowe's return stateside, the representation of the British tour, the sparse accounting of gifted offerings, and her decade-later response to the Address—an indictment of a shared “inquisition in blood.”

Uncle Tom's Cabin: Transatlantic Reception

The reception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* launched Stowe onto both a national and international anti-slavery stage, leaving a legacy of the relationship between race, gender, and the sentimental in American (and European) culture and its literary canons. In the immediate years after its publication, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold an estimated one and one-half million copies in Great Britain and its colonies. (Many, many more were sold and circulated in pirated form due to limited copyright.)¹² Railroad copies of the novel were reportedly found everywhere; and by newspaper and popular accounts, every British household seemed to have its own copy of the book. Internationally, the novel was translated into at least sixty-three languages, including translations designed to aid in the purpose of teaching the English language. The international reception of Stowe's novel has led recent historians of literature to claim Stowe's place as the

¹² On international publication and acclaim, see Kohn, et. al., *Transatlantic Stowe*, xvii-xxvii. Because *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did not initially have British copyright, it was published in numerous forms. Obtaining British copyright for *Dred* was thus reason for Stowe to make her second trip. On publication numbers and the evolution of the story as a publication, see E. Bruce Kirkham, *The Building of Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 150-165; and Wilson, *Crusader in Crinoline*, 326-341. See also, David Reynolds, *Mightier Than the Sword: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Battle for America* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011).

“most internationally visible American writer of her time.”¹³ No doubt her authorial acclaim arose from enraptured reading publics moved by her ability to portray a national epic of the sins of slavery as experienced in the plight of the American plantation slave.

Fanfare accompanied Stowe at all stops in the British Isles. Passing through one village, Stowe wrote, “people came and stood in their doors, beckoning, bowing, smiling, and waving their handkerchiefs, and the carriage was several times stopped by persons who came to offer flowers.”¹⁴ When touring servants’ homes, she marveled that “all of them had read Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and were full of sympathy.”¹⁵ Newspapers regularly published itineraries and accounts of her movement, catapulting her further into celebrity status. For example, Stowe’s shopping trips were regularly documented in the papers, reflecting both growing fashion and consumer sensibility, as well as controversy over seamstress labor practices.¹⁶ At the largest of gatherings in Exeter Hall, headquarters to the great reform and philanthropic societies of the day, the enthusiasm was not only overwhelming, but unnerving to Stowe, who wrote, “There is always something awful to my mind about a dense crowd in a state of high excitement, let the nature of that excitement be what it will.”¹⁷ While the hosts and handlers of Stowe’s trip may have been

¹³ Kohn, et. al., *Transatlantic Stowe*, vii, xi.

¹⁴ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:38.

¹⁶ On the *Times* coverage of the silk dress and Stowe’s response, *Sunny Memories*, 2:83, 94. An (often lamenting) description of the press coverage can be found throughout Charles’s journal.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:33. Additional accounts describing the enthusiasm of reception, police escorts, and “Harriet’s magnetism,” in Charles’s account, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe*, 22, 36, 51-52, 122.

British elites, the widespread appeal of the novel marked Stowe as a truly popular American celebrity abroad.

The British reception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* owes a great deal to the legacy of British abolition, namely the role of Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, and others who led an evangelical charge in the cause of abolition. In this tradition, the abolition of the slave trade is part of a narrative of divine providence and moral progress. Clarkson's work as a leader of the British anti-slavery movement, and as its first historian (as Christopher Leslie Brown has argued), was crucial in constructing a national and abolitionist narrative that credited the end of the slave trade not simply to economic concerns, but to the progressive rise of moral conviction in the face of the evils of slavery. Moreover, this conviction marked British identity as participant to divine providence and liberal progress of history.¹⁸ British abolitionists, according to Clarkson, represented the advances of the work of civilization across the globe, beginning with their own empire.¹⁹ This sentiment is certainly reflected in how Stowe's British friends celebrated *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for participating in this Anglo-American advance of moral progress. "Our Lord has sent out this book," Lord Shaftesbury proclaimed, "to prepare his way

¹⁸ Christopher Leslie Brown, in *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), argues that Clarkson's early historical narrative has shaped the interpretive framework used by imperial and later historians invested in notions of moral and civilization progress and decline.

¹⁹ Thomas Clarkson's work began with the 1786 pamphlet, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African, translated from a Latin Dissertation* (an essay first submitted for a Latin essay competition). Following the work with William Wilberforce and Granville Sharp in the founding of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade and campaigning for the eventual passage of the 1807 Slave Trade Act, Clarkson published a two-volume history of British abolition, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade by the British Parliament* (1806).

before him.”²⁰ From the beginning of *Sunny Memories*, Stowe declares the British anti-slavery cause to be a divine one, writing, “That question has, from the very first, been, in England, a deeply religious movement. It was conceived and carried on by men of devotional habits, in the same spirit in which the work of foreign missions was undertaken in our own country.”²¹ Indeed, in many ways, this first European trip was a welcomed British pilgrimage reminding Stowe of the religious sources of her own anti-slavery moral convictions.

Sunny Memories of British Lands

Departing by steamship from Halifax on March 30, 1853, the Stowe party arrived ten days later in Liverpool, a city not only central to the anti-slavery movement but also a city whose modern wealth was built just a generation earlier as the preeminent British transatlantic slave trade and finance port. The British leg of the trip was at the formal invitation of two acclaimed abolitionist groups (the Glasgow New Ladies Anti-Slavery Society and the New Association for the Abolition of Slavery) and was followed by a time of respite and site-seeing in France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland and Belgium.²² Grand fanfare greeted the celebrated author and

²⁰ Lord Shaftesbury to Harriet Beecher Stowe, 14 December 1852. Reprinted in the introduction to the 1879 edition of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, xxv-xvi.

²¹ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:22-23.

²² Indeed, many anti-slavery groups welcomed and donned Stowe with gifts, such as the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society that organized a gift of 1,800 pounds (Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lydia E. Sturge and Mary R. Moorsom, 8 Feb 1854. Printed in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 20 May 1854. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection). Unfortunately, Stowe was too ill and fatigued to travel to Scotland as planned after her Continental site-seeing. Her letter of regret to the Glasgow group was also a public commendation of a “deep and earnest conviction having its roots both in “religion and humanity” (Harriet Beecher Stowe to Ladies New Anti-Slavery Society of Glasgow, 18 November 1853. Published in *North British Daily Mail*, 16 December 1853, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection).

her party at all turns of their British and continental tour. In Liverpool, crowds gathered at the docks to catch a glimpse of the arrival of the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* author on the steamship *Canada*.²³ The crowds were a surprising spectacle to Stowe, who, in a frazzled attempt to address the first of many gathered crowds, waved a large, bulky towel rather than a proper, dainty kerchief. The scene, as told in her brother Charles' journal, not only caused a riotous laugh among those sharing her carriage but also represents the often-bewildered attempts of Stowe and her family members at navigating her quickly growing celebrity.²⁴

Those accompanying Stowe included her husband Calvin, who held the primary duty of accepting invitations to speak on the anti-slavery cause, as Stowe did not speak publicly due to the gendered limitations of women addressing public audiences.²⁵ Stowe's younger brother Charles Beecher filled Calvin's role after his early departure from the trip. Charles is arguably the unsung hero of the trip for his masterful coordination of the diary, correspondence, and maintenance of Stowe's busy social schedule.²⁶ Stowe's sister-in-law, Sarah Buckingham

²³ Stowe and her biographers used the name *Niagra* for the ship. With the recent publication of Charles' diary, and confirmation of steamship schedules, the voyage actually took place on the steamship *Canada*.

²⁴ Charles Beecher, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe*, 22. As discussed later, note the candor of this telling.

²⁵ Though, on at least two occasions, Calvin shared a note of thanks on her behalf. One wonders what role Stowe had in the preparation and composition of these speeches. Based on the shared language within *Sunny Memories*, the language of the speeches certainly represents a shared composition of ideas and discourse among Calvin, Charles, and Stowe.

²⁶ Charles seems to have been excellent for the job as an organized scheduler and meticulous record-keeper. In his journal, he remarks on his ability to handle the inundation of letters and requests of the trip, and often wonders whether Harriet and Calvin (both of whom were not known for their organization of matters) could handle the trip without his presence. Of note, Charles was also beginning to work on Lyman Beecher's *Autobiography* during this year, a project Harriet would later take on while working on *The Minister's Wooing*.

Beecher, her brother William, and their son, George, were also party to the trip, although they largely remained involved only in site-seeing activities.

While accounts of Stowe's first voyage and tour may highlight the naïveté of her party's navigation of British social culture (and there was a good deal, as all except Calvin were first-time transatlantic travelers), Stowe had long been a part of a transatlantic world of reform literature and ideas, including her obsession with the moral reform novels of Sir Walter Scott, her envy of Calvin's first European trip soon after their marriage in 1836, and her membership in a family of Beecher ministers and reformers with libraries full of the philosophical and theological texts of British and continental thought.

By the time of the trip, Stowe was privy to much of the press attention already garnered across the Atlantic by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and had corresponded with many of the literary and political figures she would meet, including Lord Shaftesbury and his already heated press attention for the Address.²⁷ She also understood it as a moment to influence British investment in American anti-slavery and moral progress, writing to Charles Sumner, "I can do some good" for the cause of "universal Christianity and humanity," a sentiment echoed in letters to British friends, describing the march of British and American moral progress to influence the "public sentiment of the world."²⁸ In addition to shoring up moral sentiment for the anti-slavery cause, the first trip was also to be the beginning of key friendships with British aristocrats and social

²⁷ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lord Shaftesbury, 6 Jan 1853, in Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Edward Stowe, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe Compiled from Her Letters and Journals* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1890), 170-174. See also, Harriet Beecher Stowe to Duchess of Sutherland, 24 March 1853, Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

²⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Charles Sumner, 25-31 December 1852. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lord Carlisle, 6 January, 1853, in Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 164-69.

reformers who would shape and influence Stowe's future work. For example, lengthy and intimate correspondence remains in Stowe's archives between her and the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Argyle, and, perhaps most infamously, Lady Byron. Friendships were also established with reformers such as the Quaker Joseph Sturge and the family of Thomas Clarkson. Moreover, this first trip laid the groundwork of introductions that led to friendships with British literary figures: Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and George Eliot (which earned Eliot's praise for Stowe's later novels, *Dred* and *Oldtown Folks*). Finally, Stowe's transatlantic literary friendships would later, during her second trip in 1856, cement what would be perhaps the closest confidant of her lifetime, Annie Fields, fellow writer, and wife to Stowe's later publisher and editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, James Fields.²⁹ Most certainly, Stowe was indebted to these transatlantic networks and spaces for their cultivation of personal friendships and fertile direction to her literary career (and the careers of others authors finding new readership audiences on both sides of the Atlantic).

On her return home, Harriet Beecher Stowe composed *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands* (1854) as an account of "the impressions, as they arose, of a most agreeable visit," a description that belies the highly composed nature of the travelogue.³⁰ Two volumes in length, the majority of the 758-page narrative is in epistolary form addressed to family and friends in the United States about the events of the voyage and her reflections on them. The first seventy-five pages are introduced and edited by Calvin and contain texts of speeches and addresses given by him

²⁹ Annie Fields would edit Stowe's first posthumous biography, *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1897).

³⁰ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:iii.

and key dignitaries at various public and private events. The archival record indicates Charles undertook the role of transcribing and editing these speeches for Stowe family records (and newspaper dissemination), and that Calvin provided his name to the additional editing of speeches for publication in the travelogue. It remains unclear what role Stowe herself may have had in co-writing Calvin's (and later, Charles's) speeches.³¹ As the division of the first volume differentiates the record of the trip into a preamble of notable speeches followed by the intimacies of illustrative letters—including some composed after the trip-- it functions to fix Stowe's authority as anti-slavery cause célèbre to an epistolary genre where anti-slavery persuasions sit alongside domesticated descriptions of gardens, meals, and countryside vistas.³²

Stowe's *Sunny Memories* "letters" read as affectionate addresses to her closest family and friends and contain rich and enthusiastic descriptions of her encounters with nobility and commoners, historic and scenic sites, grand artwork, roadside foliage, pristine gardens, and fine meals—much as a tour guide or author of travel literature translates the foreign (in this case, the Old World) to her (New World) readers at home. Indeed, the first letter of the collection, addressed in familial intimacy to "My dear children," evokes a transatlantic kindred bond. "Say what we will," she writes, "an American, particularly a New Englander, can never approach the old country without a kind of thrill and pulsation of kindred."³³ The letters as a whole paint her

³¹ The collection of speeches and lectures cover a range of anti-slavery -related subjects including new forms of "free labor," alternatives to cotton, and the temperance movement.

³² "The *Letters* were, for the most part, compiled from what was written at the time and on the spot. Some few were entirely written after the author's return," 1:v. Of note, Stowe had already written fictive letters as a specialty in her participation in the Semi-Colon Club while in Cincinnati. In a letter to her sister Mary, she writes, "I conceived the design of the writing a *set of letters*, and throwing them in, as being the letters of a friend..." (Stowe and Fields, *Life and Letters*, 83-84, emphasis original).

³³ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:18.

British friends and crowds in the most favorable ways: recognizing their charity and defending the honor of their estates; vividly painting the humble and steadfast devotion of the poor and working classes; conjuring nostalgic impressions of the literary homes of Sir Walter Scott and William Shakespeare; and rousing awe for the Scottish countryside and Swiss mountains through her own artistically sketched illustrations.

The familial intimacy of the letters in *Sunny Memories* invite Stowe's imagined American reading public to enter by proxy into the intimate accounts of kindred British supporters and friends and the development of universal Anglo-American moral reform sentiments.³⁴ In the preface, she describes her readers as those whose hearts share in "sympathy" with hers—those who "are sincerely pleased to have their sphere of hopefulness and charity enlarged."³⁵ To the skeptical reader, on the other hand, she pointedly warns, "if those who are not such begin to read, let them treat the book as a letter not addressed to them, which, having opened by mistake, they close and pass to the true owner."³⁶ Unlike *A Key*, which is addressed to her critics, *Sunny Memories* is explicitly addressed to Stowe's agreeable choir of readers.

Hardly inclined to present events and reflections of the trip in a sunny manner, Charles Beecher's journal is a much more matter-of-fact, and often witty, account of the trip. It achieves a different tone of addressed intimacy because Charles created this account at Stowe's request (as credited by Stowe in her preface) and for family members attuned to the comfort of candid

³⁴ There is a doubleness here too. While *Sunny Memories* served as a lens of British and European experience for American readers, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *A Key* served as a curious lens of American life for European readers.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:iv

³⁶ *Ibid.*

descriptions of family news. Perhaps because Charles repeatedly warned that the journal was not permitted for publication, it was not until the end of the twentieth-century, in 1986, that it was finally published by the Stowe-Day Foundation as *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe: The Journal of Charles Beecher*.³⁷ The journal provides an account of daily events. It evinces a deep, if befuddled, adoration of his sister, “Hatty.” Charles conveys the angst of managing the schedule of the trip (he mentions several times the many hours spent each day reading and replying to letters and coordinating social visits). He shows humor at the mishaps of the trip and describes family laughter along the way (for example, he provides an amusing description of Hatty’s “vortex of London” messy room and recounts an overly eager site-seeing Hatty dealing with an obstinate donkey in the Swiss Alps). Finally, he writes with exasperation of handling aristocratic titles in record-keeping (in fact, often after referring to “Lord Somebody,” “Lady So-and-so,” and “Lady Somebody-else,” Charles cautions that the journal is not intended for publication).³⁸ When read next to each other, the intimacies of candid (Charles) and careful (Stowe) composition stand in relief to one another. While the “primary source” candor of navigating travel logistics and the exhausting demands of Stowe’s increasing celebrity status comes to the fore in Charles’s account, the careful attention to a considered composition of *Sunny Memories* emerges in much clearer relief in Stowe’s.

³⁷ The Stowe-Day Foundation is now the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center. Charles Beecher’s journal is an important addition to scholarly studies of Stowe, as early and mid-century biographies and studies did not have had this as a source, leaving much of the interpretation of this first European journey to Stowe’s *Sunny Memories* collection. On indicating its confidentiality, see Charles Beecher, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe*, 38, 44, 48.

³⁸ Charles repeatedly refers to the exhausting work of coordinating the trip, including the several hours each morning responding to letters. In his 27 April entry, for example, he replied to fifty letters (*Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe*, 58-59). On describing “Hatty’s” room as a “vortex of London” for its accumulation of gifts, clothing, and souvenirs, 140. On aristocratic names, 58, 69, 136.

Furthermore, an initial reading of *Sunny Memories* may reveal to a contemporary reader a gendered division of political thought along public and private lines: Calvin and Charles serve as public speakers, while Stowe is assigned to describing with aesthetic splendor and enthusiasm the people and places of the tour. In reading Stowe alongside Charles's journal, however, one reads the subtle craft that constitutes Stowe's authorial voice. Not only do her epistolary addresses greatly rely on Charles's own artful descriptions of settings (for example, Stowe's descriptions of the Duchess and her Stafford House explicitly draw from Charles' language), the designation of Calvin and Charles as "authors" of the public speeches allows Stowe as author and editor of the travelogue to incorporate this political content in both the substantial introductory section of the first volume, as well as in the carefully referenced weaving of anti-slavery discussion and social reform work into site-seeing accounts of homes, countryside, and benevolent projects. In the second letter, for example, Stowe effortlessly moves between a conversation with a leading minister about the religious origins of the anti-slavery movement to sketches of primrose, bluebells, and evergreen sprigs.³⁹ To her literary contemporaries such as Andrew Peabody (then editor of the *North American Review*), *Sunny Memories* reflected an author who not only worthily portrays British "labors of philanthropy," but also who "wields a vigorous masculine pen, versatile in its adaptations, capable of the highest themes, yet not too dainty for the simplest and rudest forms of human feeling and experience [...] She has no talent for merely fine writing."⁴⁰ Indeed, *Sunny Memories* accomplishes a great deal: it provides an

³⁹ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:14-40.

⁴⁰ Andrew Peabody, "Sunny Memories in Foreign Lands," *North American Review* 79:165 (October 1854) 423-441. It concludes by paying homage to the "genus" of the Beecher family and its aging patriarch, reminding his readers of Lyman Beecher's "dialectic keenness, scathing invective, pungent appeal, lambent wit, hardy vigor of thought, and concentrated power of expression; but he always fumbled over an extra-

account of a socio-cultural moment—complete with primrose sketches and Exeter Hall speeches—when the American (and British) anti-slavery cause was in service to a bold Anglo-American moral reform identity.

An Affectionate and Christian Address

One evening in May, 1853, at the height of Stowe’s British tour, the doors of the palatial Stafford House of London were opened to the Stowe party to greet its guest of honor. Hosted by the Duchess of Sutherland, this event, like many others, involved the socializing and niceties of gift-giving, the most splendid of fine art and furnishing viewing, and the discussion of the anti-slavery cause with Great Britain’s most notable dignitaries. In a letter addressed to her sister Catharine Beecher that appears in *Sunny Memories*, Stowe describes the dizzying experience of absorbing the splendor of the aristocratic home. “Each room that we passed,” she wrote, “was rich in its pictures, statues, and artistic arrangements; a poetic eye and taste had evidently presided over all.”⁴¹ Charles also describes at length the “high grandeur” of the carriageway, marble, columns, statues, grand artwork gallery, and furnishings.⁴² Indeed, much more of Stowe’s and Charles’s accounts are devoted to the palatial descriptions than the actual occasion

Scriptural metaphor, and exhibited little beauty except that of strength and holiness.” In Stowe’s letter thanking Peabody for his kind review and acknowledgement of her father, she makes a fascinating remark: “Your very kind, words in relation to my dear Father...deeply touched my heart –The days are coming at last when differences of theological opinion will not prevent good and true men from mutual love and esteem. – Dr Channing and Dr Beecher will be seen, in future years as co laborers, --though differing widely and earnestly in their day” (Harriet Beecher Stowe to Andrew Preston Peabody, 9 November 1854. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection).

⁴¹ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:287-292.

⁴² Beecher, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe*, 82.

for the gathering. It was, nevertheless, the delivery of the Address, with the many thousands of names appended, that were the cause for the day. By this May evening, Stowe had already received a number of gifts, including penny offerings, a silver inkstand, a bust of Wilberforce, a locket of Clarkson's hair, and many invitations for her own portrait and bust sittings. As tributes to the cause of anti-slavery, these noble dinners, coin offerings, and silver and gold gifts represent some of the many transatlantic exchanges of the goods and people of empire. On this day, Stowe received both a gold-chained bracelet from the Duchess and the Affectionate and Christian Address, penned by the singular dignitary Lord Shaftesbury and backed by one-half million signatures.

Inscribed and presented on ornate vellum, "An Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland to Their Sisters, the Women of the United States of America" marks itself as a bold and prestigious material proclamation of offered solidarity from British women to their American counterparts across the Atlantic (Figure 1).⁴³ Appealing to a common identity and cause, the Address invokes a common Anglo-American sisterhood in the cause to end slavery. The boldness of the Address, however, hardly rivals the voluminous pages of petition signatures that would accompany it and serve as a testament to the ardent work of female canvassers (Figures 2 and 3).⁴⁴ In the end, thousands of pages containing

⁴³ Reprintings of the Address can be found in multiple newspapers of the time such as *The Times*, *Morning Herald*, *Morning Advertiser*. This chapter quotes my own transcription (Appendix 1) of the ornate, vellum image of the Address found in the frontispiece of Charles Beecher's journal.

⁴⁴ Though an image of the Address appears in the front matter of Charles's journal, a reader can assume this was an editorial decision at publication because Charles does not include the text or mention of the address and petition in his description of the Stafford House event at all. One wonders when and where Stowe and her family encountered the actual twenty-six volumes. Accounts of the event and correspondence with Lord Shaftesbury and the Duchess of Sutherland do not seem to provide a defined time when the folios were sent and received. In Stowe's later response (discussed in the Coda of this chapter), one learns of the breadth of

more than one-half million signatures were collected and gathered into twenty-six large, black, Moroccan leather folios, each embossed with the American bald eagle. For Stowe, the boldness of the Address and number of signatures evidenced not only a strong public sentiment marshaled toward the cause of anti-slavery that she hoped would spread in the United States, but also a shared religious genealogy of that sentiment. The Address and petition was a demonstration of “the sentiments of universal Christendom,” Stowe proclaimed.⁴⁵ Yet, how did this text represent a “universal” movement that was and must be religious in origin and cause? Moreover, in its religious appeal, how does the Address shape an Anglo-American identity of moral reform?

petition signatures, including women from all walks of life, leaving one to imagine the spaces and practices by which signatures were collected (streets, churches, markets). See also Hamand Venet, *Neither Ballots nor Bullets: Women Abolitionists and the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), a treatment of the role of women abolitionists involved in their own work and in organized anti-slavery societies. Notably, the title of Venet’s work, *Neither Ballots Nor Bullets*, is owed to Susan B. Anthony’s 1863 address before the American Anti-Slavery Society where she declared, “Women can neither take the ballot nor the bullet...therefore to us, the right to petition is the one sacred right which we ought not to neglect.” (American Anti-Slavery Society, *Proceedings of the American Anti-Slavery Society at Its Third Decade*, (New York, 1864. Quoted in Venet, 1-2). The British Chartist movement culture of petitioning in the preceding decade also surely influenced this vast canvassing effort.

⁴⁵ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:299. Calvin Stowe in his address at Exeter Hall also echoes this sentiment, “The Christian feeling which had dictated efforts on behalf of ragged schools and factory children, and the welfare of the poor and distressed of every kind, had caused the same Christian hearts to throb for the American slave” (*Sunny Memories*, 1:lvii).

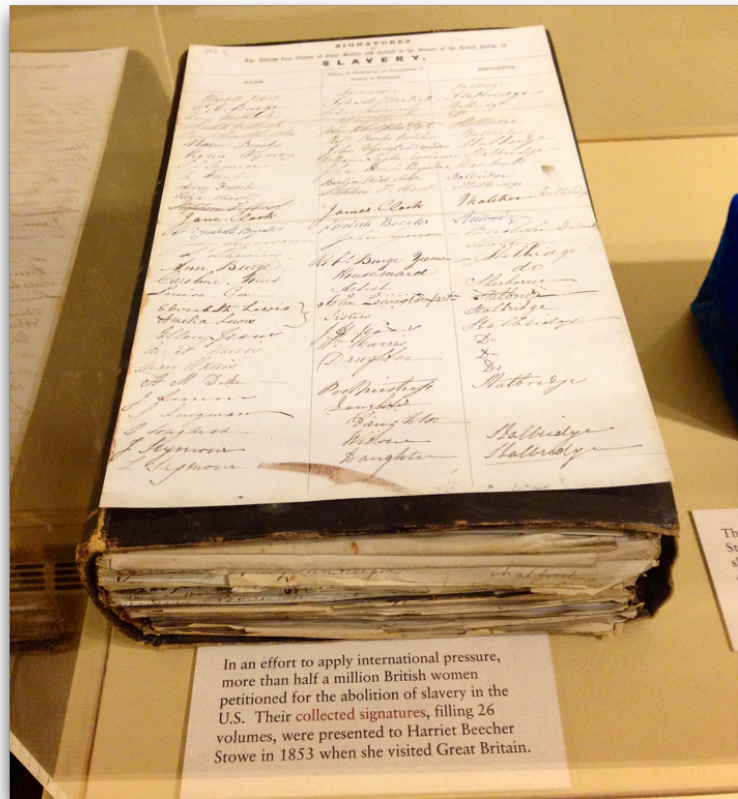


Figure 3.1. “An Affectionate and Christian Address” petition page. On display at Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, Connecticut. (Photo: Amy Rae Howe, 2013)



Figure 3.2. One of twenty-six folios. On display at Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, Connecticut. (Photo: Amy Rae Howe, 2013)

The Address itself begins with the proclamation of “a common origin, a common faith, and we sincerely believe, a common cause” in order to unite Anglo-American women reformers and sympathizers on both sides of the Atlantic in ushering an end to the “system of Negro slavery.” The Address then appeals to the Word of God as the source of “the inalienable rights of immortal souls.” In this appeal, the Address merges concepts of liberty held central to Western modernity (“inalienable rights”) and its forms of Christianity (“inalienable rights of immortal souls”). This appeal allows British women of the Address to rest their claim to natural rights and the “laws of your country” on a higher authority: the divine authority of the Word of God. This is further exemplified in the atrocities of violating these natural rights as the violation of the rights to family cohesion (“the sanctity of marriage with all its joys rights and obligations which separate at the will of the master the wife from the husband and the children from the parents”) and rights to a Christian Gospel education (“interdict[ions against] ...the truths of the Gospel and ordinances of Christianity”), both primary domains of domestic reform and, increasingly, women’s spaces of nation-making.⁴⁶ It then ends with a statement of confession that the common crime and dishonor of slavery can, together, be “wiped away.”

As the most frequent word of the Address, “common” draws attention to a cohered and shared identity, history, culture, cause, and crime. In doing so, the Address follows the structure of sympathetic identification: the authors and petitioners invite their readers and listeners to

⁴⁶ On women and nation-making, see Nancy Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835*, Second edition. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). Cott argues that middle-class white women’s involvement in antebellum public and private spaces was often in service of cultivating a discourse of domesticity, marked by new nuclear family and economic values. Notably, the preface to the second edition argues for the importance of thinking about domesticity as a discourse of social power not limited to the uses of or on white middle-class antebellum women, xv-xvii.

identify in shared (“common”) sentiments on behalf of the dispossessed other (in this case, the enslaved African).⁴⁷ In this sympathetic identification, “common” constructs a shared British-American sisterhood, born in empire, charged with the work of literally embodying the “common origin” and “common faith” required of women in nation and empire making—and re-making. “Common” also invokes the “common cause” of wiping away the system of African slavery and advocating a set of natural rights to marriage, family, and a gospel education. (Notice again that rights of full civic and economic liberty are not identified in this Address). Finally, “common” indicts the shared imperial history of the slave trade as a “common crime” and “common dishonor,” marked by felt guilt, shame, and complicity in this “great sin.”

Finally, in offering a “common” felt narrative of a shared Christian history, the Address works to engage its subjects in the act of redemption by concluding with a pointed confessional statement on the sins of slavery:

We acknowledge with grief and shame our heavy share in this great sin. We acknowledge that our forefathers introduced, nay compelled, the adoption of slavery in those mighty colonies. We humbly confess it before Almighty God and it is because we so deeply feel and so unfeignedly avow our own complicity that we now venture to implore your aid to wipe away our common crime and our common dishonor.

By “acknowledg[ing],” “compel[ling],” and “deeply feel[ing]” grief and shame over shared involvement in “this great sin,” the “we” voices who authorize the text (Shaftesbury, the Duchess, the abolitionist and women’s groups, the many thousand women who signed the petitions) engage in a confessional act to be resolved *and absolved* by “imploing your aid” in

⁴⁷ Again, see chapters one and two in this dissertation for discussions on the history of “sympathy” in the modern west, especially in its work through literature.

ending slavery. In other words, bringing an end to this great “common crime” will restore national and racial Anglo-American honor. This confessional moment of sin at the hands of a common Anglo-American history functions as a performance of a crisis of racial identity (the “we” of the sin) in which Anglo-American racial identity is marked by crime and dishonor, *as well as* aid and redemption. And, it is through the work of abolition that these women must restore this shared Anglo-American racial identity.

This confessional moment of sin at the hands of a racialized identity resonates profoundly with Stowe’s description of her visit some days later to the family home of Thomas Clarkson. In her account, the religious confession of slavery and need for abolition are integral to the formation and redemption of Anglo-Saxon identity. Stowe’s visit to the Clarkson home (where she received a relic locket of his hair) provides her the occasion to reflect upon and construct a genealogical history of Christian and Anglo-Saxon led anti-slavery work. In so doing, Stowe provides a profound account of the cultural history of an imperial, Anglo-Saxon “we.” As she explains,

We Anglo-Saxons have won a hard name in the world. There are undoubtedly bad things which are true about us. Taking our developments as a race, both in England and America, we may be justly called the Romans of the nineteenth century. We have been the race which has conquered, subdued, and broken in pieces other weaker races, with little regard either to justice or mercy. With regard to benefits by us imparted to conquered nations, I think a better story, on the whole, can be made out for the Romans than for us.⁴⁸

Like the confessional tone of the Address, Stowe conjures the misdeeds of the “common origin” of an Anglo-Saxon heritage as conquerors “with little regard either to justice or mercy.” Yet, it is

⁴⁸ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 2:65.

precisely through acknowledging and confessing these Roman misdeeds of domination that Stowe can posit a redemptive possibility for the “race.” She continues,

In Anglo-Saxon blood, a vigorous sense of justice, as appears in our habeas corpus, our jury trials, and other features of state organization [have produced] a style of philanthropy peculiarly efficient. In short, the Anglo-Saxon is efficient, in whatever he sets himself about, whether in crushing the weak or lifting them up.⁴⁹

Anglo-Saxon racial identity, according to Stowe, holds both the historical legacies of conquering and subduing, on the one hand, and the efficient philanthropic development and deliverance of justice and mercy, on the other. It is a fraught racial identity, relying precisely on its misdeeds for its redemptive possibilities. The vigorous efficiency of Anglo-Saxon blood is both its sin and its redemption.

These reflections serve to preface Stowe’s saintly story of Clarkson. Born into a British slave trade society, Clarkson’s conversion was one to right sentiments aligned with “divine providence,” “charity,” and “sublime and happy feelings” about the necessity of the abolition of the slave trade—thus began his extensive publication on the conditions of the trade and the cultivation of the British (and, as Stowe would like to suggest, the Anglo-American) anti-slavery movement as a necessarily religious movement.⁵⁰ In fact, it is Clarkson’s experience, at once

⁴⁹ Ibid. Interestingly, “efficient” echoes Max Weber’s description of the influence of the Protestant ethical notion of “calling” as it relates to the pursuit of wealth and work in the emergence of Western capitalism. Weber, translated Talcott Parsons, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2001. Originally published in 1930).

⁵⁰ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 2:69-70. Participating in the Clarkson hagiography, Stowe writes,

The abolition controversy more fully aroused the virtue, the talent, and the religion of the great English nation, than any other event or crisis which ever occurred [...] By the labors of Clarkson and his contemporaries an incredible excitement was produced throughout all England. The pictures and models of slave ships, accounts of the cruelties practised in the trade, were circulated with an industry which left not a man, woman, or child in England uninstructed. In disseminating information, and in awakening feeling and conscience, the women of England

Anglo-Saxon and Christian in origin and cause, that Stowe credits for “the beginning of this great *humanitarian* movement in England” —a religious *and* humanitarian movement to be inherited a generation later by the Shaftesbury Address.⁵¹ For Stowe, Clarkson and the early British abolitionist movement’s ability to influence public opinion in such a way as to impress the British government to abolish the slave trade not only achieved an important victory for political and social progress, but it birthed an imperial moral consciousness. She writes,

At this time the religious mind and conscience of England gained, through the very struggle, a power which it never has lost. The principle adopted by them was the same so sublimely adopted by the church in America in reference to the foreign missionary cause: ‘The field is the world.’ They saw and felt that, as the example and practice of England had been powerful in giving sanction to this evil, and particularly in introducing it into America, there was the greatest reason why she should never intermit her efforts till the wrong was righted throughout the earth.⁵²

Here, Stowe continues the valorization of efficiency and progress toward good: the powerful energy that gave sanction to slavery might also be the powerful energy to redeem it. It is a British-American imperial subjectivity that is marked and moralized by its very redemptive claims to universal authority, progress, and reform “throughout the earth.” Stowe’s account shares the language of the Address in its insistence on what is linked and shared across the Atlantic: the Anglo-Saxon is simultaneously origin, faith, cause, crime, sin, dishonor, and redemption.

were particularly earnest, and labored with the whole-hearted devotion which characterizes the sex (2:71, 74-75).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2:124. Emphasis mine. Note the early appearance of the term “humanitarian” here. “The beginning of the great humanitarian movement in England was undoubtedly the struggle of Clarkson, Wilberforce, and their associates, for the overthrow of the slave trade,” 2:124.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 2:76.

Finally, Stowe's interest in identifying a universal religious movement was reflected not only in the vocabulary of the Address (and the demonstration of so many signatories), along with the legacy of early Christian abolitionists such as Clarkson, but also in the kind of Christian leadership demonstrated by its primary author, Lord Shaftesbury, and its circulator, the Duchess of Sutherland.⁵³ Stowe's portrayal of Shaftesbury throughout *Sunny Memories* is one of a social reformer deeply rooted in his religious convictions. The Address, according to Stowe, had "its first origin in the deep religious feelings of the man whose whole life has been devoted to the abolition of the white-labor slavery of Great Britain."⁵⁴ Calvin Stowe also echoed this sentiment in his speech at Exeter Hall, stating, "The Christian feeling which had dictated efforts on behalf of ragged schools and factory children, and the welfare of the poor and distressed of every kind, had caused the same Christian hearts to throb for the American slave."⁵⁵ While the Stowes surely understood the differences between the working conditions of the poor and working classes in British industrialism on the one hand, and the chattel trade and bondage of large-scale plantation slavery in the American South on the other, their comparison strategically conflates these systems of labor and "distress of every kind" in order to point to "the deep religious feelings" capable of fueling a range of moral and social reforms. In other words, the American

⁵³ Notably, Stowe refers to the Scottish Enlightenment Shaftesbury lineage in *Sunny Memories*, writing, "While I was walking down to dinner with Lord Shaftesbury, he pointed out to me in the hall the portrait of his distinguished ancestor, Antony Ashley Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury, whose name he bears. This ancestor, notwithstanding his skeptical philosophy, did some good things, as he was the author of the habeas corpus act," 2:16. The Duchess of Sutherland, and her eldest daughter, the Duchess of Argyll, served as first signatories and primary hosts to the petition.

⁵⁴ No doubt this framing of the movement also served Stowe well in the disagreements she had with stateside abolitionists such as Garrison and Douglass over their critique of the role of the church in slavery debates.

⁵⁵ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:lvii

anti-slavery cause sits comfortably alongside other notable moral and social hygiene reform campaigns led by Shaftesbury and others, including lunacy and workhouse reforms, child labor and factory laws such as the Ten Hour Bill, and the establishment of Ragged Schools for orphaned and “street” children.⁵⁶

Steeped in the work of Poor Law reforms, and tract and aid societies, Shaftesbury understood his intense involvement in social issues as part of the nearing return of Christ to the world.⁵⁷ *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was part of this work too. Writing to Stowe on its publication, he declared that “Our Lord has sent out this book...to prepare his way before him.”⁵⁸ Indeed, that Lord Shaftesbury is credited for authoring the Affectionate and Christian Address comes as little surprise given his deeply held millenarian views, which would have considered such a statement to be emblematic of required work of ushering in the Kingdom of God on Earth. Stowe, Calvin, and Charles all resonated with this “firm belief in the near personal advent of Christ as the world’s only hope” that marked Shaftesbury’s reform zeal.⁵⁹ When dining together one evening, Charles probed Shaftesbury, asking how millenarianism related to his social reform activities, for

⁵⁶ The institution and practices of slavery played a central role in the development of reformer knowledge of labor, education and hygiene training and management in the nineteenth-century. See Saidiya Hartman on labor and obligation in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Catherine Hall on the relationship of missionary practices in British social reform at home and abroad in *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), and Lisa Lowe’s *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015) on the central role of slavery and empire in fashioning Western liberal culture and values of freedom.

⁵⁷ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:299. Shaftesbury took Stowe to visit one of his Ragged School (2:110). On Shaftesbury’s leadership in Poor Law reforms, see Georgina Battiscombe, *Shaftesbury: A Biography of the Seventh Earl, 1801-1885* (Constable, 1998), 33-46; 77ff; 191.

⁵⁸ Lord Shaftesbury to Harriet Beecher Stowe, 14 December 1852. Reprinted in the introduction to the 1879 edition of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, xxv-xvi.

⁵⁹ Beecher, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe*, 100.

in the United States, millenarianism faced critique for “its unfavorable influence on benevolent efforts.”⁶⁰ According to Charles’ account, Shaftesbury described millenarianism as “furnish[ing] the highest, the only, stimulus. He felt that Christians must prepare the way of the Lord. And that the more they did, the sooner they would see His blessed appearing” —all of which gave Charles “great satisfaction.”⁶¹

No doubt Shaftesbury’s bold commitments and religious vision gave the Beecher siblings great comfort—for it signaled that the anti-slavery cause could and must rest firmly in Christian sentiment and a vision of a world expecting the return of Christ. However, to what political and social reform ends would this millennial zeal serve? Would it bring about the abolition of slavery? An atrocious civil war? In fact, it was precisely because “there is to be a day of judgment,” that Charles Beecher penned “The Duty of Disobedience” in 1851.⁶² In this sermon turned pamphlet, Beecher argued that the fugitive slave law, as determined by “common sense,” did not represent the law of God. It was the duty of the church and of a Christian humanity to directly and indirectly resist.⁶³ The bold example that he was in the mid-nineteenth-century, Lord Shaftesbury had his limits in terms of the American anti-slavery cause and would eventually support Southern secessionism. Meanwhile, the millennial zeal shared by the Beecher-Stowes would fuel the sense of a looming day of judgment and atonement that would justify war. Stowe

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Charles Beecher, “The Duty of Disobedience to Wicked Laws. A Sermon on the Fugitive Slave Law.” 18 November 1851. Beecher repeatedly appeals to common sense philosophy in this sermon, including: “The deep instinct of every heart pronounces sentence here, as it will on judgment day. Common sense decides. The slave is a man. He has a right to be free.”

⁶³ Ibid. See discussion of Senator Bird in chapter two of this dissertation.

and the Beecher siblings would often refer to Charles' sermon; and, as the war drew nearer, most would eventually support increasingly active disobedience in the Kansas cause, arguing for the morality of armed resistance.⁶⁴

The shared language of common origin, crime, and cause rests in a specific socio-historical moment during which the claim to “sentiments of a universal Christendom” did important work for Stowe and her British abolitionist friends. That work was the moralizing of an Anglo-American identity. In its appeal to the sentiments of universal Christendom, the sentiments of the Address circulate –and animate—a specific and localized transatlantic moment of anti-slavery cause in service of a racial and imperial religious identity. They are sentiments not of a universal Christendom but of a *provincialized* Anglo-American religious and humanitarian sentimentality that arises out of the transatlantic labor and material networks of slavery, including its “labors of philanthropy.”⁶⁵

Before Stowe's arrival in England, Karl Marx was among those who took to the newspapers to critique the Address. In his March 1853 article in *The People's Papers*, “The Duchess of Sutherland and Slavery,” Marx accuses the Duchess of “philanthropic grimaces,” characteristic of the “class of philanthropy” styled by British aristocracy.⁶⁶ This class, according to Marx, “chooses its objects as far distant from home as possible.” Focusing on anti-slavery abroad in the United States, Marx argued, only functioned as a smokescreen intended to distract

⁶⁴ As discussed in chapter four of this dissertation.

⁶⁵ I am indebted to Dipesh Chakrabarty's historiographical intervention in narratives that universalize the modern West. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ Karl Marx, “The Duchess of Sutherland and Slavery,” *The People's Papers* no. 45. 12 March 1853.

from the violent history of rural dispossession and wage labor abuse in their British home, including that of the Sutherland estate itself.⁶⁷ With the Sutherland estate in the Scottish Highlands at her charge, the Duchess inherited the largest and perhaps most violent Highland clearance plans (carried out from 1811-1820 by her father-in-law and mother-in-law). In order to make room for a modern landed gentry's sheep pastures and hunting forests, the clearances involved the forced and violent removal of indigenous Gaelic communities from their feudal farmland societies in the Highlands to new modes of living and labor in coastal city factories and by forced immigration to the United States, Canada, and Australia. Here, Marx proclaims, "the history of the wealth of the Sutherland family is the history of the ruin and of the expropriation of the Scotch-Gaelic population from its native soil."⁶⁸ Others too would join in critiquing the dispossessions at the hand of the Sutherland family, including the firsthand recollections of Donald MacLeod published in the *Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle* between 1840-1841. Bearing critical homage to Stowe's own travelogue, the later republication of these letters in 1856 and 1857 as a pamphlet was entitled *Gloomy Memories in the Highlands of Scotland: Versus Mrs.*

⁶⁷ Of note, this was an argument also made by many Southerners and Southern sympathizers, including Julia Gardiner Tyler, first lady to President John Tyler, "A Letter to the Duchess of Sutherland from a Lady of South Carolina" *New York Daily Times*, 5 February 1853. See "A Letter to the Duchess of Sutherland from a Lady in South Carolina" and "British Philanthropy and American Slavery," in ed., Richard C. Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 350-360, 281-320.

⁶⁸ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:301-313. Of note, Stowe's defense of Sutherland is twice the length of her account of the Stafford House event. See also: Alexander Mackenzie, *The History of the Highland Clearances: Containing a Reprint of Donald Macleod's "Gloomy Memories of the Highlands"; Isle of Skye in 1882; and a Verbatim Report of the Trial of the Braes crofters* (Inverness: A & W Mackenzie, 1883). On the history and interpretation of the Highland clearances, see Eric Richards, *A History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions, 1746-1885*, 2 vols (London: Croon Helm, 1982-1985), and *The Leviathan of Wealth: The Sutherland Fortune in the Industrial Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2007. Originally published in 1973).

*Harriet Beecher Stowe's Sunny Memories In (England) a Foreign Land: Or a Faithful Picture of the Extirpation of the Celtic Race From the Highlands of Scotland.*⁶⁹ Proclaiming Stowe's work to be a "whitewashing" attempt, the pamphlet denounces Stowe's celebration of the Sutherland family and reminds its audience of the history of its defiled wealth.⁷⁰ Like Marx's critique, this pamphlet seeks to provincialize the splendor of the Stafford House and its moral causes as owing to the systematic and violent dispossession of native communities in its homeland.

Both in the *Sunny Memories* account and surrounding correspondence, and later accounts of her relationship with the Duchess of Sutherland, Stowe was not only quite aware of the pervasive critiques of the Sutherland estate's Highland clearances but also defensive of the name of a friendship she would hold very dear throughout her life. During this first European trip, Stowe and the Duchess (who was also a close friend to Queen Victoria) became fast friends, spending much time together at the Stafford House and beginning what would become a rich lifelong correspondence of shared personal and family encouragement and admiration.⁷¹ In a lengthy defense of her friend's property and labor practices, Stowe asks her *Sunny Memories* readers to regard the Duchess in a "charitable" manner because of her deep care for the cause of anti-slavery.⁷² Not only should the Duchess be exempt from the judgment of the practices of her predecessors, as Stowe repeatedly argued, her charity for moral cause should instead be

⁶⁹ Donald MacLeod, *Gloomy Memories in the Highlands of Scotland: Versus Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Sunny Memories In (England) a Foreign Land: Or a Faithful Picture of the Extirpation of the Celtic Race From the Highlands of Scotland* (Glasgow: A. Sinclair, 1892).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, i.

⁷¹ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 1:301-313. Beecher, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe*, 74.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1:301-313.

recognized in the stewardship of the Sutherland estate's development of roads, schools, churches, and the existence of "well-clothed people."⁷³ For Stowe, the history of the Sutherland estate should not tarnish the character and work of the Duchess, who "represent[ed] in herself the whole sentiment of English womanhood."⁷⁴ Instead, the history of the Sutherland estate should be marked by a Duchess whose "nature was as magnificent in its wealth," as in the "affectional and emotive powers" of her "large and generous heart."⁷⁵

Marx's critique, however, resists unquestioned assertions of moral charity that obfuscate the multiple relations of labor at stake in the formation of an aristocratic-shaped Anglo-American philanthropy and its objects of sympathy. The selection of a distant object for this "class of philanthropy," as Marx argues, serves to distract critique of wealth accumulated by way of violent dispossessions. I want to extend this critique of the uses of philanthropy in service to an aristocratic class-consciousness and to suggest that philanthropy's use of a distant object is in the service of *both* a class *and* race consciousness. Both class and race are necessary to articulate a particular aristocratic and bourgeois Anglo-American racial identity that is simultaneously distinct as a racially superior benefactor to the poor, racial other, *and also* distant from the somewhat racially similar lower, peasant classes that must be dispossessed. In other words, the "grimaces" of the aristocratic "class of philanthropy" of Marx's critique is a class that is marked by its aristocratic power and its discourses of Anglo-Saxon whiteness.

⁷³ Ibid., 301. Harriet Beecher Stowe to Calvin Stowe, 15 September 1856 (Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 275-77).

⁷⁴ Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Tribute to the Memory of a Noble Woman," *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1869 (242-250), 245.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 243.

If discourses about Anglo-Saxonism and the racial superiority of whiteness are coalescing in the mid-nineteenth-century, then the anti-slavery movements of England and the United States are key sites to explore the racialization of Anglo-American sympathy and social reform.⁷⁶ Because Anglo-American philanthropic identity stands in a benefactor-positioned contrast to slavery and blackness, and seeks to ignore indigenous dispossessions wrought by capitalist industrialization, it functions as a central arbiter of the formations of whiteness and its aristocratic-influenced sense of racial privilege and superiority. In this regard, the “philanthropic grimaces” described by Marx, alongside the appeal to common origin and cause of the Address are central to the Anglo-American social reform imagination.

In summary, the transatlantic proclamation of the Address summons the formation of Anglo-American womanhood in an empire faced with a shared shame and sin of slavery and need for redemption. Here, Anglo-American identity is confessionally performed in order to rally attention to the wiping out of slavery, while also shoring up new formations of whiteness. British women, inspired by the sympathetic experience of reading and hearing Stowe’s novel, nonetheless view the enslaved African at a distance. This distance allows them to invoke the

⁷⁶ In *The History of White People* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), for example, Painter argues that the mid-nineteenth-century American intellectual culture exemplified by Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *English Traits* (itself a travelogue of sorts) preceded later nineteenth-century ethnological theory of the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon genealogy. Emerson’s obsession with the genealogy of Saxonism, including its brutality, became a celebration of the “double distilled English” of his New England home, 162. See chapters “The Education of Ralph Waldo Emerson” and “*English Traits*,” 151-183. Matthew Frye Jacobson’s *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) also locates the proliferation of discourses of Anglo-Saxonism as racial superiority in the early- and mid-nineteenth-centuries, following the 1790 Naturalization Act. See also Ibram X. Kendi’s treatment of William Lloyd Garrison’s relationship to emerging discourses on scientific racism in *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016), 177-190. Finally, see the important account by Reginald Horsman in *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

“common origin” and “common faith” of their American sisters to form the affectionate bonds of an Anglo-American identity marked by its sympathetic ability to seek absolution for the crime and dishonor of slavery. The enslaved African becomes the object to new formations of whiteness and its styles of philanthropy. It becomes the object of Anglo-American sympathy and “deep religious feeling.” Yet, is it as distant as Marx would suggest? Or might Marx’s own theory of capital insist on the presence of the distant object in the very material commodities of its production?

“the memorial you placed on my wrist”

Following the grand tour of the house, and before the delivery of the Address, the Duchess of Sutherland drew Harriet Beecher Stowe away to a private women’s gathering. Here, Stowe shared a few remarks with the assembled women on the subject of slavery and confided in the Duchess her nervousness about the formalities of the large event to follow. In this meeting, the Duchess presented Stowe with a gold bracelet consisting of ten links fashioned to represent the shackled chains of slavery (“massive,” as described later by Stowe’s son). “We trust it is a memorial of a chain that is soon to be broken,” reads the inscription of one link.⁷⁷ The dates of the abolition of the British slave trade and slavery in its colonies, the number of signatories to the anti-slavery petition, and the eventual dates of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment were and would later be etched into the precious metal bracelet (Figure 4). After the event, Stowe wrote to the Duchess,

⁷⁷ Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 233-234.

Dear, lovely, gifted friend— [...] the memorial you placed on my wrist will ever be dear to me—mournfully dear. I may not live to have engraved there the glorious date of Emancipation in America, but my children will if I do not—and I trust that date shall yet be added to this chain.⁷⁸

A “mournfully dear” memorial, Stowe immediately names this sentimental emblem of British admiration.⁷⁹ A prized gift from one of her dearest lifelong friends, the gold bracelet was designed to represent the importance of her work and the anti-slavery struggle that bound reformers across the Atlantic. Yet if the Address invokes what is commonly held in origin, crime, and cause among the British and American women, the bracelet as a gifted commodity, I argue, fetishizes the bondedness of slavery alongside the bondedness of their sympathy, friendship, and moral cause. Through the exchange of this bracelet, the bonds of the enslavement of Africans across British and American colonies and states—bonds “soon to be broken”—become fetishized in order to bind together, in cause and friendship, these two women and the many thousands of women they claimed to represent to each other and to their nations.

⁷⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe to the Duchess of Sutherland, 9 May 1853. Beecher, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Europe*, 89.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*



Figure 3.3. Gifted bracelet to Harriet Beecher Stowe from the Duchess of Sutherland. On display at Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, Connecticut. (Photo: Amy Rae Howe, 2013)

In the following decade in which Marx published the first volume of *Capital* (1867), he claimed that the use value of commodities too often parades as an objective value; and, as such, a commodity's value must appear as natural in order to participate in the conditions of its exchange within capitalism.⁸⁰ Marx instead insists that the commodity always, and necessarily so, bears the imprint of the labor that produces it and provides value to the worthiness and profitability of its exchange. Marx's theory of the commodity, then, calls for an account of the marks and journeys of the socially-determined and -valued labor required for the production and exchange of commodities, including this gifted bracelet. Thus, his theory asks: what transatlantic

⁸⁰ Marx, *Capital*, 125-177.

crossings of labor and materiality made this “mournfully dear” memorial of a bracelet not only *valuable*, but *possible*?

The gold chains of the gifted bracelet not only seek to be a “mournful” memorial of friendship, a shared moral cause, and the victory of the abolitionist cause, but are also likened to the uses of the iron shackles of the human coffle—an impossible reality for these Anglo-American women.⁸¹ Even so, the precious metal of the gold bracelet, like the silver inkstand and many coin offerings (and, less like the iron of bondage) mark the consumer desires of the goods and essential labor of a wealthy empire. The growing, seemingly insatiable desire for gold and silver among a forming consumer culture at the mid-nineteenth-century fueled silver and gold rushes across the world, including those in the Gold Coast colonies of Africa, the Victoria Gold Rush of Australia, and the California Gold Rush in North America.⁸² Despite the abolition of the slave trade, growing consumer interests in the raw goods and materials obtained through slavery and indentured labor systems remained at the fore of British colonial economic interests. At the time, these concerns ranged from continued interest in slave-grown cotton and sugar in the western Atlantic to the drive to search out inexpensive cotton labor in India and China. The latter of these efforts was often lauded as “free labor” among reformers such as Joseph Sturge, a claim echoed several times in the speeches of Calvin and Charles during their tour.⁸³ Stowe herself

⁸¹ In *Scenes of Subjection* (1997), Saidiya Hartman theorizes the significance of the slave coffle both in the enjoyments of spectacles of suffering and in the conceptions of disciplined work and debt bondage. See her chapters “Innocent Amusements: The Stage of Sufferance” and “Fashioning Obligation: Indebted Servitude and the Fetters of Slavery,” 17-48, 125-163.

⁸² See Brian Roberts, *American Alchemy: The California Gold Rush and Middle-Class Culture* (Charlotte: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) and H.W. Brand, *The Age of Gold* (New York: Anchor, 2003).

⁸³ “Free labor” is an important feature of Calvin’s speeches in *Sunny Memories*. It is often the subject of conversations among Charles, Calvin and Harriet, Joseph Sturge. Calvin and Sturge saw “free labor” as a moral response to British cotton consumption demands. At the Exeter Hall rally, Calvin (and others) pointed to

would celebrate the new opportunities for inexpensive labor in her correspondence with the New Ladies Society. “Coincidentally,” she wrote, “through the immigration of the Chinese to our Western shores, a very cheap and industrious free labour population is being introduced into our country.”⁸⁴

Indeed, links to imperial and settler colonial projects pervade not only the production of the bracelet but also the production of the texts and the correspondence of Stowe and her British reformer and philanthropic friends. These reformer networks were not only interested in circulating the sins, pleas, and gifted memorials to end the slave trade but also in colonization and social hygiene projects aimed at managing displaced populations and cultivating new forms of labor in the service of empire. While explicit African colonization projects are not mentioned in *Sunny Memories*, other reformer-led imperial colonization projects are described.⁸⁵ For example, Lord Shaftesbury invited Stowe to a celebrated viewing of a departing ship of “ragged children” set to join British families in Australia as part of the Family Colonization Loan Society (reflecting another social reform group among many moving dispossessed people to new imperial lands).⁸⁶ Embedded in the craftsmanship of this gifted gold bracelet, then, are the social

England’s culpability in America’s slavery system for its consumption of four-fifths of American cotton, asking “has the cotton consumer no conscience?” *Sunny Memories*, 1:lvi. See also, Donald Ross, “Sunny Memories and Serious Proposals,” in Kohn et. al., eds., *Transatlantic Stowe* (2006), 136.

⁸⁴ Harriet Beecher Stowe to The Ladies New Anti-Slavery Society of Glasgow, 18 November 1853, *North British Daily Mail*, 13 December 1853. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

⁸⁵ Note also Topsy’s missionary return to Africa in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

⁸⁶ According to Stowe, the “Family Colonization Loan Society...plac[ed] orphan children and single females under the protection of families,” *Sunny Memories* 2:36. On the similar movement of pauper and orphaned children to frontier and imperial lands in the United States, see Linda Gordon’s *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), which features Charles Loring Brace, founder of the Children’s Aid Society. Not mentioned in Gordon’s account, Brace was a Beecher cousin to Stowe. Soon after his founding of the Children’s Aid Society in 1853, and before its orphan train programs, he toured British

and political bonds of the many materials, wealth, bonded labor and bodies, and moral causes and social reform projects shared in the crossings of the Atlantic triangle's routes. They are the bonds that would fix the legacies of African slavery to the heights of the British empire, the emergence of the American, and the expansions of both.

By obfuscating, and promising as natural, the conditions and sources of its production and value, Marx argues, capitalism's commodity presents itself in a chimera form. The "commodity fetish," as Marx calls it, is dislocated, or "transcendent," from its material production.⁸⁷ In order to hold and hide the labor relations of its production, Marx draws on the "mystical realm of religion" to describe the metaphysical "mediating" power of the commodity fetish.⁸⁸ While Marx might be broadly read as attending to the disillusioning qualities of religion—and the commodity, in this case—it is nonetheless important and interesting that Marx chooses to draw on the religious and metaphysical language of transcendence and mediation to name what remains elusive and illusive about the commodity fetish. For while this gifted bracelet bears the imprints of the complex, circuitous, and transatlantic material and social conditions of its production (and the production and uses of the iron shackle that is its analogue), it also carries and is authorized by the affective and religious sentiments of origin, crime and cause held and represented by the Duchess and Stowe. Religion appears here not just in legitimizing and constructing universal sentiments but also in the very animation of its commodities.

urban reform programs in part due to the introductory letters made by Stowe for Brace to Shaftesbury, Sturge, and Lady Byron in 1859.

⁸⁷ Marx, *Capital*, 163-168.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

As a gifted object, the bracelet takes on another circuit of exchange. Like Marx, who rejects the purported illusive objectivity of the commodity by insisting on its location within its material and social production, Marcel Mauss rejects the notion of a free gift by way of locating the practice of gift giving within a “system of total services.”⁸⁹ For Mauss, there is no such thing as a disinterested gifted act, but rather each gift and its surrounding practices are part of a set of social interests and investments in the affections and responsibilities of alliances, family, and friendship. Gift giving is interested in social bonds and cohesion. In the case of the slave bracelet, there are at least two key systems of total services. The first is the system Stowe and her British readers construct, that of a white Anglo-American social reform identity and its purported universal Christendom. The literary gifts of this system carry the language and sentiments of common origin, crime, dishonor, and cause. In the case of the bracelet, each link carries the engraved marking of this shared history. The bonds of this system, however, are predicated on a second “system of total services”: the bonds of the system of slavery and its commodification of bodies. The bracelet itself conveys the doubleness of these two systems in its likeness to the iron shackles moving the services of enslaved bodies and their labor.

In a parallel fashion to Marx, Mauss not only traces the system of relations that give rise to the exchange of the gift (or, commodity) but also arrives at an ineffable moment in describing how the gifted thing, or gifted act, takes on a “force” and has “a soul.”⁹⁰ In its ability to travel in social spaces, the gifted material object becomes “animate,” “living,” and even “spiritual.”⁹¹ As a

⁸⁹ Mauss, 5, 13.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

gift, the bracelet does not bypass the exchanges of wealth accumulation but instead comes to represent the living and “animate” history of such wealth in the very material of commodities and gifted objects (as Mauss argues, the gifted exchange predates the commodity). That a gifted object such as the bracelet can be felt as “mournfully dear” and carry a “moral force” is the animation of a shared bond of Anglo-American history.⁹²

Sourced, produced, and gifted in transatlantic space, the “slave bracelet” stands as an object that memorializes and commodifies race through its invocation of the white creation, deployment, and rendering profitable of blackness. In memorializing (by repeating the desire to forget) commodified chattel bodies, it signifies the fetish of racial bondage by white women: to their nations, their friendships and their moral causes. The gold links not only represent the iron coffles of slavery, but they also bear the marks of the distant labor and sources required for the bracelet’s material circulation, and they shore up the imaginative links of sympathetic identification between white women and their benevolent role in the political emancipation of enslaved Africans.

The Address and bracelet represent and illuminate the force of Anglo-American sentimentality in the transatlantic spaces shared by Stowe and her British admirers. They encapsulate a set of memorialized desires and sentiments at stake in the provincial formation of Anglo-American sympathy, social reform, philanthropy, and claims to a universal Christendom. When Stowe wrote of the Stafford House event, she proclaimed, “The most splendid of English

⁹² In a letter to Duchess in 1854, Stowe evokes an apocalyptic hope following the Missouri compromise, where crisis leads to the arousal of a “moral force”: “I look from this crisis to seeing the moral force of every church school college and clergyman at the north against slavery as fully as in Old England.” Harriet Beecher Stowe to Duchess of Sutherland, 16 March 1854, Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

palaces has this day opened its doors to the slave.”⁹³ Perhaps, though, the enslaved African had long stood there, but not welcomed through the opened doors. Perhaps her shadows of her presence are felt in the goods and wealth made from her enslaved labor and used in the redemptive politics of empire. Her presence as a “distant object” would persist by enabling new formations of whiteness, animating the sympathies of literature and proclamation, re-commodified in offerings and gifts such as the gold bracelet, haunting past, present and future transatlantic voyages, and moving in the cities and spaces that moved (and continue to move) the material, sentiment, and the labor of literature and moral reform.

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate how textual objects and materials (travelogue, correspondence, the Address and petition, the bracelet and gifts) exist and are negotiated in a transatlantic network of materials, bodies, and movements. These objects of gifted exchange are all forms of sympathetic appeal, linking together new configurations of sympathy, philanthropy, desire for political and social reform, and the theological reckoning of empire and slavery as part of the fabric of the racial construction of whiteness in the presence of pervasive blackness.

And yet the British tour also served as a time to reflect on the power of fiction precisely in these historical and geographic movements. Indeed, Stowe’s British tour represents the power of fiction to produce and be produced by sociopolitical commitments and identities. Early on in her trip, she wrote,

I have seen in all these villages how universally the people read. I have seen how capable they are of a generous excitement and enthusiasm, and how much may be

⁹³ Stowe, *Sunny Memories* 1:298.

done by a work of fiction, so written as to enlist those sympathies which are common to all classes. [...] The power of fictitious writing, for good as well as evil, is a thing which ought most seriously to be reflected on.⁹⁴

The moral reform impulse behind Stowe's use of fiction resonated widely in the Anglo-American literary and popular world. Two days before the Stafford House event, Stowe dined at the Lord Mayor of London's house where she, along with Charles Dickens, were both recognized "as having employed fiction as a means of awakening the attention of the respective countries to the condition of the oppressed and suffering classes."⁹⁵ Their literature, as toasted and proclaimed by Justice Talfourd, should henceforth be referred to as "*Anglo-Saxon literature*."⁹⁶ Lost to the biographies and historical accounts of Stowe and Dickens as they assumed different gendered spaces in English Victorian and American antebellum literary canons, this declarative moment of "Anglo-Saxon literature" not only points to one of the first pronouncements of a shared British-American literary tradition, but also reveals a founding cause of the Anglo-Saxon work of fiction: the cultivation of moral identity. The Talfourd toast not only declares the formation of a body of literature but also celebrates the moralization of Anglo-Saxon racial identity.⁹⁷

Like the declaration of "Anglo-Saxon literature," the Address, petition and bracelet also declare that the power of fiction—Stowe's fiction—lies in the cultivation of the proper feelings

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1:76-77

⁹⁵ Ibid., 1:264.

⁹⁶ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

⁹⁷ See chapter five in this dissertation for a discussion of *The Atlantic Monthly* and the shaping of the mid- and late-nineteenth-century American literary canon.

and sentiments for the causes of “universal Christendom.” They attest to how the materials surrounding moral literature shape and nurture racial identities (mournful and proud) through configurations of race, gender, empire, and benevolence. They also attest to the peopling of those friendships on the trip (Shaftesbury, the Duchess, Sturge, the Clarkson family, the half-million petitioning sisters), which solicits the admiration and sentimental identification of Stowe’s *Sunny Memories* readers. Stowe ultimately marks their work as evidence of a decidedly religious movement.

Coda: “Inquisition in Blood”

What became of the gifts, petition, and funds “for the cause of the oppressed” following the publication of *Sunny Memories*?⁹⁸ A total of about \$20,000 was collected in Stowe’s name for American anti-slavery efforts.⁹⁹ Many donors understood their offerings would support the “Underground Railway,” “the Negro Cause,” and compensation lost to Stowe in the pirated publications of the novel. However, most funds were not designated, and only about one-third of the penny offerings and donations collected on the European tour were accounted for.¹⁰⁰ When Stowe initially heard of the petition and growing penny offering, she proposed to the Duchess that she would organize a committee under the charge of Catharine Beecher upon her return to

⁹⁸ Stowe, *Sunny Memories*, 2:431.

⁹⁹ Joan Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 240, 248.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 248. This accounting is addressed in Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lord Carlisle, Lord Shaftesbury and Joseph Sturge, [~] February 1856. The Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

the States with the petition, but no such committee appears to have been formed.¹⁰¹ In the coming years, Stowe sponsored the trip of Calvin, Charles, and other clergymen to Washington D.C. in an attempt to shape Congregationalist anti-slavery positions, indicating her continued belief in the leadership role of the church in bringing about an end to slavery.¹⁰² She also began organizing a lecture series requiring that those in attendance “should be cultivated and nurtured from sentiments to convictions.”¹⁰³ She also donated some funds to the Myrtilla Miner’s school in Washington D.C. She denied Frederick Douglass’s request for funding support of his trade school, however, despite continued support for his paper.¹⁰⁴ As Stowe was not actively involved in organized anti-slavery groups (or organized women’s groups), her funds (and ongoing request for the support of the battle against slavery from her British friends) had little overall direction. Her most recent biographer, Joan Hedrick, has concluded that the money was simply absorbed into the Stowe family budget as they shifted from very limited to more comfortable means, including the family’s move from Brunswick, Maine to their new Andover, Massachusetts home.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Duchess of Sutherland, 24 March 1853, Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

¹⁰² Harriet Beecher Stowe to Duchess of Sutherland, 16 May 1854, Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

¹⁰³ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Henry Ward Beecher, 13 January 1854. Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

¹⁰⁴ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lord Carlisle, Lord Shaftesbury and Joseph Sturge, [~] February 1856. The Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

¹⁰⁵ Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 240.

While other Beecher siblings would become much more publicly active participants in the American abolitionist movement (most prominently Henry, Edward, and Isabella Beecher), Stowe's involvement stayed almost singularly with her pen. In addition to her second anti-slavery novel, *Dred*, she wrote for Henry's *The Independent*, often anonymously, about slavery debates and the moral direction of the nation.¹⁰⁶ Among these contributions include a poem, "The Holy War," and a plea to women to petition and pray for the nation following the Kansas-Nebraska bill.¹⁰⁷ Stowe would also spend a lifetime corresponding with some of her closest British friends, including the Duchess of Sutherland and her daughters. While a post-bellum 1879 edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would later celebrate the British reception of Stowe by reprinting a number of congratulatory letters and reviews from dignitaries in its frontispiece introduction, some of these friendships, in fact, fell out of Stowe's favor during the mounting American Civil War. While the Duchess celebrated with Stowe and other abolitionists the news of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Lord Shaftesbury, for example, saw Abraham Lincoln as an agitator and opposed the war, which infuriated Stowe.¹⁰⁸

Nearly ten years after her first British tour and well into the Civil War, Stowe finally authored her response to the Address, entitled: "A Reply to 'The Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, To Their Sisters, The Women of the United States of America.' By Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, In Behalf of Many

¹⁰⁶ Under Henry Beecher's leadership of *The Independent*, the readership in the years leading up to the Civil War more than doubled in size, with an estimated 70,000 readers in 1862 (Venet, 71).

¹⁰⁷ Harriet Beecher Stowe, "The Holy War," *The Independent*, 9 May 1861. Stowe and Fields, *Life and Letters*, 210-12.

¹⁰⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Charles Sumner, 13 Dec 1862, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

Thousands of American Women”¹⁰⁹ It was written en route to her first and only visit with President Lincoln to discuss his promise of the forthcoming Emancipation Proclamation. (Stowe had just been to visit her son Frederick, who was injured in the First Battle of Bull Run.)¹¹⁰ After she confirmed Lincoln’s intent, Stowe published her “Reply” on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1862, in *The Atlantic*.¹¹¹ In her “Reply” (which claims to represent Many Thousands of American Women, although she did no canvassing), Stowe fashions a the genealogical history of the abolition movement, featuring the authors of the United States Constitution, the moral leadership of British abolitionists, and the North’s “holy” and emancipatory goals. These served as the moral bulwark against the Southern-led atrocities and bolstered the claim that the war was indeed about slavery rather than a “mere struggle for power,” as British critics such as Shaftesbury maintained.¹¹² Her critique condemned the official British silence on partiality in the war, as well as reports of British naval support of the Confederacy—ships, as she described,

¹⁰⁹ “A Reply: The author of Uncle Tom’s Cabin urges her the women of England to action against slavery” in *The Atlantic*, January 1863. Also published as a pamphlet for British distribution (London: Sampson Low, Son and Company, 1863). It is also included in Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 374-389.

¹¹⁰ It was during this visit when President Lincoln is attributed (by Stowe family legend) with naming her “the little lady who started the war.” On the transmission of this anecdote, see Daniel Vollaro, “Lincoln, Stowe, and the ‘Little Woman/Great War’ Story: The Making, and Breaking, of a Great American Anecdote,” *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, 30.1 (2009), 18-34.

¹¹¹ Stowe, “A Reply.” Harriet Beecher to James Fields, 13 November 1862, The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, CA, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

¹¹² In a letter to Duchess of Argyll, Stowe writes, “Exeter hall is a humbug — pious humbug like the rest — Lord Shaftesbury — well let him go — he is a tory — and has after all the instincts of his class,” Harriet Beecher Stowe to Duchess of Argyll, 31 July 1862, Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Also in Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 368-371. Stowe also writes a public letter to Shaftesbury, which receives a great deal of attention on both sides of the Atlantic, dividing editorialists in support or against Stowe’s critique of Shaftesbury. Notably, in “The American Question in England,” Karl Marx supports Stowe’s critique of Shaftesbury. *New York Daily Tribune*, 11 October 1861 (Marx and Engels, *The Civil War and the United States*, 28-36).

“built for a man-stealing Confederacy with English gold in an English dockyard, going out of an English harbor.”¹¹³ In the end, Stowe delivered a forceful blow linking the American sons of this holy war (and she deeply believed it was a holy war) to their English origins. These are sons who “give their blood in expiation of this great sin, begun by you in England, perpetuated by us in America, and for which God in this great day of judgment is making an inquisition in blood.”¹¹⁴ The “Reply” concludes with a return to Shaftesbury’s own introductory Address language: “A common origin, a common faith, and we sincerely believe, a common cause [...] for the removal of this affliction and disgrace from the Christian world.”¹¹⁵ The passionate composition of this account led one reviewer to describe it as demonstrating “a woman’s feelings, a logician’s mastery”; Nathaniel Hawthorne commended Stowe for “making John Bull blush.”¹¹⁶

Sunny memories turned to bitter grief and indignation for Stowe. For her, the “sentiments of universal Christendom” were betrayed. She wrote to her friend the Duchess of Argyll (and daughter of the Duchess of Sutherland), “the utter failure of Christian antislavery England in those instincts of a right heart which always can see where the cause of liberty lies has been as bitter a grief to me as was the similar frustration of all in American religious people in the day of the fugitive slave law.”¹¹⁷ Stowe’s “we” of the Reply conjures another chapter in the life of the

¹¹³ Stowe, “A Reply,” 53.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹⁶ Venet, *Neither Ballots Nor Bullets*, 80-81.

¹¹⁷ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Duchess of Argyll, 31 July 1862, Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Also in Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 368-371, emphasis original. Also in this letter, Stowe requests of the Duchess: “Please give my best love to your dear mother—[...] I am going to put on her bracelet the other dates that the abolition of slavery in the D. Columbia.”

Address. It reveals how much could change in the “agreeable” relations of Anglo-American friendship and exchange. In the midst of the carnage of a bloody and costly war, Stowe desperately attempted to persuade her British admirers in understanding the religious necessity of the Civil War, but to no avail. The appeal to common language nonetheless continued: common origin, cause, dishonor, complicity and a shared “inquisition in blood.”

Chapter 4

Dreadful Sentiments: On the Limits of Moral Persuasion

A month after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published in novel form, Stowe wrote to Gamaliel Bailey, friend, and editor of *The National Era*, on the form and setting of her next project. She describes her desire to author another anti-slavery novel, but one that does not begin as a serialized piece, so that it “would now command something in England” (presumably referring to the lost profits from pirated British and continental copyrights of her first work).¹ She also makes an interesting request for research assistance, asking about a setting that has recently come to her attention: the Great Dismal Swamp. She asks:

There is one scene and subject that I regard with the utmost interest and curiosity—the great Dismal swamp—Who could tell me about the population of refugees that I am told form a sort of community there—What a theme for romance! –what description! –If I were only a man I would go and explore it –Can I get any body [sic] to tell me about it who has explored? –could I get anybody to go there to explore it[?]²

Stowe's inquisitiveness about this mysterious terrain was most certainly inspired by her expansive reading of contemporary news sources and her solicitation of accounts of slave life, a

¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Gamaliel Bailey, 18 April 1852, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Emphasis original. Stowe also writes a few months later to Calvin in July 1852 that she has inspiration to begin a story about the coast of Maine; a story that would become *The Pearl of Orr's Island* (Boston: Ticknor Fields, 1862). During this time, the Stowe household was in the midst of moving from Brunswick to Andover upon Calvin's appointment to Andover Seminary.

² Ibid.

practice demonstrated by the robust research contained within *A Key To Uncle Tom's Cabin*. However, the interest in this particular southern swampy landscape remains an intriguing one for the kind of *dreadful* story Stowe would tell about American slavery. Why not stick to the architecturally pristine and well-ordered spatial arrangements of the many hundreds and thousands of acres of Southern plantations? Or, why not set the novel in the continued movement across known and unknown Underground Railroad systems with which Stowe was already acquainted? Why did she choose a murky and mysterious marronage swamp? Why did she develop a set of characters who navigate the sentiments of dread and the space of the swamp in incongruous ways? How does this gothic image of the Southern swamp and its prophetic maroon character advance Stowe's sentimental project aimed at moral persuasion? Indeed, does it? Does the swamp actually confound and figure as a site to carefully and dangerously imagine the possibilities for resistance and disobedience—and to understand the sentiments of dread, fear, and indignation required to justify a holy civil war for a divinely ordained nation?

In this chapter, I argue that dread figures as a central component to Stowe's use of the sentimental in the cultivation of moral faculty. As the characters of *Dred* endure the foreboding weight of their political and theological landscapes, it is the space of the swamp and the sentimental language of dread, fear, and terror that Stowe asks her readers to morally engage and navigate. Dread amplifies moral unease in descriptions of characters, scenes, and events, as in “a dreadful man,” “dreadful realities,” and “dreadful news,” “dreadful evil” and “the shuddering dread” of approaching “the last dread day” of judgment.³ It is an emotion charged with anxious,

³ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, ed. Robert Levine (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000. Originally published in 1856), 4, 62, 339, 343, 361, 367, 369, 371, 497.

brooding, mournful, fearful, gloomy, and foreboding energy. It is palpable and felt viscerally, as if spread by an infection or electrical current. Indeed, Stowe often uses the term “electric” to describe scenes affectively rich in dread in the novel. The “electric excitement” of the Canema camp-meeting, as Stowe describes it, for example, is marked by a “creeping awe” and a “vague, mysterious panic” at which those in attendance face “the dread and mystery of their own immortal souls.”⁴

However, dread is not only an excitable feeling of fear. It also functions as a clarion call to those who recognize danger on the horizon. To feel right, for Stowe, very often involves feeling the cold dread, woe, and indignation at the uncertain eternal state of the soul and the fearful possibility of divine reprisal for the national sins of slavery.⁵ Recognition of dread is not only recognition of this prophetic warning, but also of dread’s *prophecy*. Two forms that best illustrate the force of dread in Stowe’s novel are the swamp and the Nat Turner –inspired character of Dred. Both are dark, brooding, mysterious harbingers of divine judgment and atonement. Both signify the limits of the nation-state’s borders and notions of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And both draw on natural and prophetic appeals to divine justice. Thus, Stowe’s aptly named “Tale of a Great Dismal Swamp” uses the murky, dreadful, gothic setting of the swamp and its woeful maroon prophet to test the reach of the cultivation of moral faculty and the certitude of its knowability.

⁴ Ibid., 250, 263.

⁵ My argument in this chapter is parallel to the argument made by Kevin Pelletier in his recent work, *Apocalyptic Sentimentalism: Love and Fear in U.S. Antebellum Literature* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015). Pelletier brilliantly and rightly argues for the persistent expression of apocalyptic fear as part of the antebellum sentimental tradition. My assertion that dread is important to Stowe’s understanding of “right feelings” is in agreement with Pelletier on this point and its particular source in religious belief in divine retribution. I differ slightly, though, in asking how dread unsettles spaces of moral certitude.

The attention to dread as an affective force introduces a number of questions about the reach and efficaciousness of moral persuasion and its operations of sympathy and “right feelings,” as well as to whom it belongs to and when. What racialized bodies are object and subject to dread? Embodied in a swamp and its dark prophet, saturated as they each are with ominous life giving and life demanding forces, how does dread serve as a prime location for testing the very limits of feeling and moral conviction? As the affective work of sympathetic moral persuasion risks falling short of inciting political and theological change, what emotional terrains are most salient and best able to point to different possibilities and dangers on the horizon? In what ways does dread mark the limits of sympathetic moral persuasion, the need for alternative strategies and spaces, and the possibilities for disobedience and resistance? And finally, how does dread help Stowe understand and respond to the fraught political milieu of the events surrounding Bleeding Kansas, including the Northern abolitionist invocation of Nat Turner and other insurrectionaries considered prophets and patriots as national conflict mounted?

The chapter begins by contextualizing the historical and imaginative uses of the Great Dismal Swamp and Nat Turner’s insurrection alongside the events of Bleeding Kansas. Then, as with my discussions of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *The Minister’s Wooing*, I analyze Stowe’s characters for their ability to navigate the sentimental terrain of dread, to cultivate “right feelings,” and to formulate moral action. The chapter concludes with a discussion of *Dred*’s reception and considers the important ambivalences of white dread in the face of black resistance.

Contextualizing *Dredful Sentiments*

The Great Dismal Swamp

The Great Dismal Swamp holds a rich and mysterious history as a marronage outpost and home to self-exiled enslaved persons, or “fugitive slaves,” during the antebellum period. On the border of Virginia and North Carolina, the Great Dismal Swamp earned its name in 1728 from the colonial survey expedition of William Byrd II, who deemed it a “vast body of mire and nastiness.”⁶ Spanning as much as 360 square miles a century later, the swamp was surely a curious site for the imagination of a nation in the throes of debates about slavery and expanding settler colonial frontiers.⁷

In 1842, twelve years before Stowe’s own inquiry into the swamp, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow penned “The Slave in the Dismal Swamp.” The poem describes how the escaped slave, “H,” finds protective shelter in the swamp, “where hardly a human foot could pass, / Or a human heart would dare, --.” As described by Longfellow, the swamp is

Where will-o’-the-wisps and glow-worms shine,
In bulrush and in brake;
Where waving mosses shroud the pine,

⁶ William Byrd, *Description of the Dismal Swamp and a Proposal to Drain the Swamp*, ed., Earl Greg Swem (Metuchen: Heartman, 1927. Originally published in 1728-1737), and *History of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (New York: Dover, 1967. Originally published in 1728). Also discussed in Daniel O. Sayers, *A Desolate Place for a Defiant People: The Archaeology of Maroons, Indigenous Americans, and Enslaved Laborers in the Great Dismal Swamp* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 90, 96, 221-222 nn3-5. Notably, Byrd also saw the swamp as a source of profit for the English Crown, proposing projects to build canals and harvest lumber as a goal of his survey. Labor would be obtained through the purchase of enslaved African Americans, including women and children to ensure a reproductive labor pool for the longevity of the proposals.

⁷ Today, the Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It covers approximately 112,000 acres, or 175 square miles. Recently, in 2012, the Swamp opened The Underground Railroad Education Pavilion. See: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Dismal_Swamp/

And the cedar grows, and the poisonous vine
Is spotted like the snake;
[...]
All things above were bright and fair,
All things were glad and free;
Lithe squirrels darted here and there,
And wild birds filled the echoing air
With songs of liberty!⁸

For Longfellow, the impenetrable mystery of the swamp—once the human heart dares enter it—yields to the fertility and liberty of the natural order. Like the Longfellow poem, Stowe’s description of the Great Dismal Swamp also teems with this paradox. Behind descriptions of “creeping plants running wild in their exuberance” and “vegetable monsters [that] stretch their weird fantastical forms” lies a swamp that is abundant and desolate, tranquil and wild, murky and salubrious, daunting and mysterious, protective and anarchic.⁹ Its dense perimeter gives way to a life-giving ecosystem replete with “balsamic properties” and hospitable for human habitat.¹⁰

As demonstrated in her letter to Gamaliel Bailey and in *A Key*, Stowe appears to arrive at her knowledge of the Great Dismal Swamp by way of scouring newspaper advertisements concerning the status of fugitive slaves, reading about Nat Turner’s rebellion during which it was a purported rendezvous site, and encountering the image of the swamp in contemporary narratives and poetry such as the 1842 Longfellow piece. Common to all of these sources is a highly charged imaginative fascination with the exotic, dangerous, and protective possibilities of

⁸ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Slave in the Dismal Swamp,” 1842. Stowe quotes the Longfellow poem (and a Whittier poem about a rice-swamp) in *A Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1853), 86, 151.

⁹ Stowe, *Dred*, 209-210, 212, 239, 254, 264, 273, 445.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 239-240.

the swamp. Despite these representations, however, the historical record remains thin as to the actual forms of maroon life harbored and sustained by the swamp. Fatefully, the impenetrability recognized by these representations has also persisted in the scarcity of documentation of the ways in which many thousands of self-exiled inhabitants lived and thrived within its terrain.¹¹

Soon after the British colonial survey exploration of Byrd, state and private engineering projects were underway to develop the waterways and lumber sources of the swamp; this began with George Washington's effort to "drain the swamp." Digging a north-south canal (known today as the Washington Ditch) to drain water for fertile agricultural land and to establish a waterway suitable for the moving of goods and the lumbering of the swamp's cypress wood forests, Washington's initiative, named the "Adventurers for Draining the Great Dismal Swamp," was carried out in large part through the "renting" of enslaved labor from neighboring plantations.¹² Even at this time—and certainly in the decades to follow—rented enslaved workers were "registered" by name, owner, and physical features and markings to distinguish them from the known existence (and unknown identities) of maroon individuals and communities who lived in the swamp (that is, to ensure the protection of propertied labor over and against the hunting out of the fugitive slave).¹³ In fact, it would be the fictionalized

¹¹ See Daniel O. Sayer's discussion, "The Documented Great Dismal Swamp, 1585-1860," in *A Desolate Place for a Defiant People*, 84-113. See Appendix II in *Dred* for North Carolina statutes that required slaves entering "swamps, woods, and other obscure places," to surrender themselves to the county sheriff upon being summoned, 572-573. Furthermore, the appendix of *Dred* and *A Key* demonstrate Stowe's collection of fugitive slave accounts published in newspapers across the country.

¹² Sayer, 98. Adventurers for Draining the Great Dismal Swamp later became the Dismal Swamp Canal Company.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

representation of this community of canal laborers that would provide a sailing vessel and path for an escape to the North for the characters in *Dred*.¹⁴

In the antebellum canal company surveys and reports by Byrd, Washington, and others over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, encounters with indigenous and maroon inhabitants of the swamp occasionally appear, although the accounts remain mired in exotic representational language. Much closer to the time of Stowe's work on *Dred*, Frederick Law Olmstead, David Hunter Strother (and Porte Crayon), and other Northerners with journalistic intent, also published accounts of encounters with maroons in their travels to the South.¹⁵ An 1856 Strother piece in *Harper's Monthly* describes, in sensational detail, a sketched journey through the swamp, including its enslaved worker encampments, new canals, and an encounter with a maroon man. "About thirty paces from me I saw a gigantic negro, with a tattered blanket wrapped about his shoulders, and a gun in his hand," Strother writes from an undetectable voyeuristic position; "his purely African features were cast in a mold betokening, in the highest degree, strength and energy."¹⁶ In a tone akin to an encounter with a wild animal in its native habitat, he states that "The expression of the face was of mingled fear and ferocity, and every movement betrayed a life of habitual caution and watchfulness."¹⁷ While not experiencing

¹⁴ Stowe, *Dred*, 520.

¹⁵ Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey to the Seaboard Slave States in the Years 1853-1854, with Remarks on Their Economy* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856). David Hunter Strother and Porte Crayon (illustrated), "The Dismal Swamp," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, 13.76 (1856), 441-455.

¹⁶ Upon returning to their camp, Porte Crayon sketches the figure and learns his name is Osman. The sketch of Osman is enveloped in brierwood, animals, and moss. His darkness of figure, rifle, large hand, and pronounced facial features occupy the center of the image. *Ibid.*, 452.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 453.

a maroon encounter of his own in his travels through the seaboard slave states, Frederick Law Olmstead's account ponders the "born outlaws" and "educated self-stealers" who lived their entire lives in the swamps, "constantly in dread of the approach of a white man."¹⁸ For both Strother and Olmstead, life in the swamp was described in terms of exotic mystery, fear, and fascination, but contained little actual description of the forms and ways of maroon life.

In addition to the documentation of enslaved and contracted labor, journalistic fascination, and news advertisements for fugitive slaves, there are a some published slave narratives that provide evidence of the forms of human life and community fostered in and by the swamp during the antebellum period. In James Redpath's 1859 collection, *The Roving Editor*, a "Canadian runaway," Charlie, gives an account of being hired to work in the swamp soon after he escapes slavery.¹⁹ In this "dreadful healthy place to live," Charlie encounters a thriving system of workers, inhabitants, livestock, and gardens. Testifying to the longevity, secrecy, and protection of the maroon communities, he describes, "Dar is families growed up in dat ar Dismal Swamp dat never seed a white man, an' would be skeered most to def to see one. Some runaways went dere wid dar wives, an' dar childers are raised dar."²⁰ Important to Charlie's account is the claim that some maroons were born and raised in the middle of the South with little, if any, firsthand knowledge and experience of racial slavery. Moreover, when Charlie readies himself to escape north to Canada, he recounts a vow to protect this refuge knowledge of the swamp,

¹⁸ Olmstead, 159.

¹⁹ James Redpath, *The Roving Editor; or, Talks with Slaves in Southern States* (New York: A. B. Burdick, 1859), 289-295. This slave narrative is borrowed by Redpath from a Mrs. Knox of Boston. It seems to be the sole narrative referenced in secondary scholarship on the swamp. Presumably others exist, but this may be the most detailed firsthand account.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 293

“spect I better not tell de way I comed: for dar’s lots more boys comin’ same way I did.”²¹

Indeed, the tradition of slave narratives such as Charlie’s is central to accounts of maroon life in African-American social history, including Herbert Aptheker’s influential historical work on slave rebellion, as well as to the early social anthropology on the history of African-American communities and institutions by E. Franklin Frazer. Both of these important figures claimed that the Great Dismal Swamp harbored one of the largest, if not the largest, maroon communities in the United States.²²

In the last decade, Daniel O. Sayer’s archaeological research has bolstered what these important African-American social histories have long maintained about the swamp’s vibrant and critical role as both a short and long-term setting for maroon individuals and communities. Sayer’s archaeological findings measure the longevity of human settlements in the swamp, specifically the surge of self-exiled African Americans and the maroon communities they developed in the mid-nineteenth-century.²³ Thousands of collected artifacts such as cookware, coins, ammunition, and tools demonstrate that goods and material moved between identifiable canal and lumber worker sites and maroon community dwelling areas in the swamp during the antebellum period. Furthermore, permanent architectural footprints of cabins across several sites,

²¹ Ibid., 295

²² Herbert Aptheker, “Maroons with the Present Limits of the United States,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 24.2 (1939) 167-184. This influential essay is among the earliest of scholarly studies of maroon life within the United States itself. Interestingly, Aptheker cites Stowe’s *Dred* among his sources for his claim about the maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp, 168. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (New York: MacMillan, 1949) 94. See also, Herbert Aptheker’s *Nat Turner’s Slave Rebellion* (New York: Humanities Press, Inc. 1966).

²³ This archaeological research has also evidenced a great deal of early colonial contact with indigenous Americans, who also lived in (and possibly fled to) the swamp.

especially on the interior Lake Drummond islands, indicate that thriving and growing settlement communities existed with permanent intention across multiple generations in the swamp.²⁴ In other words, much as Charlie's narrative attests, marronage life was not only a temporary stop but also existed and thrived over generations in the Great Dismal Swamp. It was not just a small or temporary hideout; but thousands of acres of habitable home and community. Despite, and in spite of, a country violently wrought in brutal conflict over slavery and secession, the swamp tells a secreted story of community livelihood not bound to the categories of the free man, propertied slave, fugitive of law, and state jurisdiction.

Finally, the fact that it is a secret story is significant for how the legacy of the swamp is, and has been, understood and represented. While "dreadfully healthy" and safe for the fugitive slave, it was dreadfully impenetrable and mysterious for the white voyeur. Speaking to the value of the secrecy of setting and knowledge, the narrator of Stowe's *Dred* declares, "In all despotic countries, however, it will be found that the oppressed party became expert in the means of secrecy."²⁵ This is represented by the novel's narrative arc itself; for, despite its namesake, it is actually not until halfway through the novel that readers are introduced both to the setting of the swamp and the character of Dred. With the introduction of both, readers are invited in on what is to some the open secret that the refuge swamp is as close as their backyard, and is supplied and sustained by neighboring plantation slaves and poor whites. They also learn that Dred has been a

²⁴ Sayer and his team have named this area the "nameless site" as a placeholder name to allow the possibility of "an historically used name to come to light...Perhaps an old map or diary will someday suggest or indicate a name used by site residents," *Ibid.*, 224n3. It is one of a cluster of five islands in the center square mile of Lake Drummond and where most of the long-term antebellum dwelling structures have been discovered.

²⁵ Stowe, *Dred*, 495.

known and familiar figure all along to the black characters throughout the novel as they welcome him, call him by name, and readily trust his invitation to find protective home and community in the swamp. The power of the swamp as the setting of the novel and as a historical marronage site of subterfuge living, thus, lies in its ability to function clandestinely, secretively, and yet, ever-present.

Nat Turner

Stowe is explicit about her use of the accounts of Nat Turner as inspiration for the development of her main character, Dred.²⁶ Both Turner's and Dred's communities are in Southern Virginia and in proximity to the Great Dismal Swamp. Like contemporary representations of Nat Turner, Dred invokes a self-assurance and purpose in carrying out a divine plan, as evidenced by a precocious childhood, devotion to Bible reading and prayer, and belief in signs, giftedness, and prophecy. While scholars agree that little historical evidence exists to attest to the specific character traits and motivations of the historical person of Nat Turner, the representations of Nat Turner in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America have long functioned as both a harbinger of racialized anxiety about black armed resistance and a historical icon of black liberation struggle and revolution.²⁷

²⁶ The name Dred likely comes from the name of one of Turner's associates. Though, Stowe knew of the Dred Scott decision making its way through the Supreme Court at the time of her writing of the novel. In 1857, the year following *Dred*'s publication, the Supreme Court issued its decision on the Dred Scott v. Sandford case. Citizenship was prohibited to those enslaved and free of African descent, thus making it impossible to bring suit in federal court. As a result, the federal government was exempted from regulating slavery in new territories (such as Kansas and Nebraska).

²⁷ See the online exhibit and scholarly resource, "Revisiting Rebellion: Nat Turner in the American Imagination," a joint project by the American Antiquarian Society and the Schomburg Center's Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery. It includes various accounts and renderings of Turner over time: <http://americanantiquarian.org/NatTurner/>

In the spring of 1831, Nat Turner planned and carried out, with some fifty to sixty enslaved African-Americans, the killing of white people across the plantations of Southampton County, Virginia. After two days, at least fifty-five white men, women, and children were killed before some eight-hundred militia and federal troops were mobilized in forceful response to the insurrection. While most of the Turner insurgents were immediately killed or captured, tried, hung or sold out of state, hundreds and thousands of enslaved people across the region were terrorized in the cause of insurrectionary suppression and the search for Turner, who remained at large for six long weeks. Newspaper accounts documenting the panic that swept across southern plantation society attest to the level of surveillance and the strategies of intimidation carried out by slaveholders, local militia members, and federal troops in the fear that another Nat Turner awaited his turn.²⁸

Published by attorney Thomas R. Gray just weeks after Turner's execution, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* claims to be the primary source for Nat Turner's character and motivations. Putatively told by Nat Turner from his jail cell in the days before his execution by hanging²⁹ and published for "the gratification of public curiosity," the Nat Turner of Gray's *Confessions* is cold and composed. He cites a profound prophetic religious calling as motivation for the necessity of his rebellion—a calling that manifested itself through a precocious childhood

²⁸ Most extensive newspaper coverage appears in the *Richmond Enquirer*, *Richmond Compiler*, *Norfolk Herald*, and *National Intelligencer*. I am indebted to the following critical historical works on the Nat Turner rebellion: Patrick Breen, *The Land Shall Be Deluged in Blood: A New History of the Nat Turner Revolt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), David F. Allmendinger Jr., *Nat Turner and the Rising in Southampton County* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), and Kenneth S. Greenberg, ed., *Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

²⁹ Thomas R. Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner, The Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, VA* (Baltimore: Lucas & Deaver, 1831).

of “uncommon intelligence,” self-taught literacy, devotion to prayer and fasting, and the patience required to await divine revelation.³⁰ “I was intended for some great purpose,” states Turner.³¹ In *Confessions*, Gray’s Turner provides a methodical timeline of the planning and execution of his rebellion, including the details of the houses visited, white persons murdered, by whom, and the slaves recruited in their march forward. Upon his capture, after six weeks in hiding, Turner reportedly did not resist and did not confess guilt before the court, for he felt none. Asked by Gray, “Do you not find yourself mistaken now?” Turner replied simply: “Was not Christ crucified?”³²

Gray’s description of the “character and motivations” of Turner conveys a fascination with the exotic and a judgment of one who “is a complete fanatic, or plays his part most admirably.”³³ Gray writes,

The calm, deliberate composure with which he spoke of his late deeds and intentions; the expression of his fiend-like face, when excited by enthusiasm still bearing the stains of the blood of helpless innocence about him; clothed with rags and covered with chains, yet daring to raise his manacled hands to heaven, with a spirit soaring above the attributes of man. I looked on him, and my blood curdled in my veins.³⁴

Gray’s indictment of Turner as a mad fanatic, however, refuses to give credence to Turner’s claim of divine motivation and devotion, even as Gray’s account acknowledges Turner’s

³⁰ Ibid., 8.

³¹ Ibid., 7.

³² Ibid., 11.

³³ Ibid., 18.

³⁴ Ibid., 19.

prophetic reputation among those who knew him before the insurrection and were inspired to join in the cause. No doubt Gray's language of a "fiend-like" and "fanatic" Turner and his "band of savages" carried the sensational, blood-curdling allure required to satiate "public curiosity," but how might readers understand the divine claims made by Turner alongside the atrocities of the rebellion?

Stowe includes an edited version of Gray's *Confessions* in *Dred*.³⁵ Appearing as the first item in the appendix, the *Confessions* is followed by two collections of news, church, and legal debates and decisions referenced in the novel.³⁶ Much like *A Key*, the material in the appendix serves to substantiate the "true events" that inspire the novel, inviting readers into a deepened ethical assessment of the contemporary political and moral questions surrounding slavery. There are two interesting aspects to Stowe's editorialized use of the *Confessions* in the appendices *Dred*: first, Stowe chooses to preserve Turner's religious language; and second, she bowdlerizes the reported series of murders.

First, Nat Turner's religious language of a day of judgment magnetizes Stowe. She attributes many of Turner's prophetic characteristics to Dred, among them his claim to a divine calling, his ability to read signs and wonders, his sympathy with nature. Like Turner, Dred is a prophetic preacher with knowledge of the biblical prophetic scriptures; he evokes an aura of dread and terror and shows careful discernment in the timing of the insurrection (which arrives

³⁵ Stowe, *Dred*, 551-561.

³⁶ Appendix II contains court cases in which slaveholders and masters are protected from prosecution in the injury and deaths of their slaves, the North Carolina statutes on the laws of outlawry, and advertisements for rewards upon the capture of fugitive slaves. Appendix III, "Church Action on Slavery," contains Southern and Northern Presbyterian and Methodist conference resolutions on the issues of slavery. Some of the material in Appendix III also appears in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

for Turner; for Dred, it does not). What she omits, however, is indicative of the kind of religious and political worries that may have occupied her thought. Signaling the excerpted text, Stowe tells her reader, “We will not go into the horrible details of the various massacres, but only make one or two extracts, to show the spirit and feelings of Turner.”³⁷ This choice conveys a few things. Practically, a nearly six-hundred-page novel and forty-two-page appendix from the nation’s most celebrated anti-slavery author would surely allow space for three additional pages giving details of the massacre. If not a matter of space, then her discretion must be one of protecting her readers from further exposure to accounts of the violence done to the white victims of the insurrection. However, are these not also the readers already familiar with her (and other abolitionist writers) spectacted scenes of violence done to black persons, especially those violent scenes of abuse under the chattel slavery system—spectacted scenes designed to evoke sympathy and foster indignation, at best?

This omission is illustrative of the ways in which black suffering and white suffering and atrocity have been allowed to be, variously, depicted, sensationalized and protected in the representation of Turner in American literature. Stowe was certainly not alone in this. Thomas Wentworth Higginson and others, in their accounts of the Nat Turner insurrection, also participate in the censoring of violence done to white people through the bowdlerization of accounts of the massacre of the Southampton plantation slaveholding families. Not only is this a question of the depiction of whose suffering bodies are material for literary sentiment and the imaginations of sympathy, it is also a question of the possibilities of violent political resistance in the years leading to the Civil War. Does the censoring of white suffering and violence also

³⁷ Ibid., 558.

cancel the possibilities of black subterfuge and the ability to tell the story of armed resistance? Perhaps the possibility of black armed resistance and retributive violence is the subject of white dread, even for its liberal and benevolent defenders.

Abolitionist Uses of Turner & Bleeding Kansas

Stowe was not alone in this anxious attraction to Nat Turner in the years leading up to the Civil War. Soon after the insurrection, William Lloyd Garrison proclaimed that *The Liberator* (also founded in 1831, the year of the Turner insurrection) predicted a coming revolt and its bloodshed. In its inaugural issue, Garrison describes the insurrection as “the first step in an earthquake” and “the first wailing of bereavement.”³⁸ William Cooper Nell, the publisher to Frederick Douglass’s *The North Star*, also included Turner in his 1855 account of American patriotism, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* (a collection of biographical sketches with an introduction by Stowe).³⁹ Nell describes Turner as one who “studiously wrapped himself in mystery...and saw white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle.” The voice Turner hears, according to Nell, says, “Such is your luck; such you are called to see; and

³⁸ William Lloyd Garrison, “The Insurrection,” *The Liberator*, 3 September 1831, 143.

³⁹ William Cooper Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution: With Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons: To Which Is Added a Brief Survey of the Conditions and Prospects of Colored Americans* (Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1855). “The Southampton Insurrection” and “The VA Maroons” appear 223-230. From Stowe’s introduction to Nell’s work:

In considering the services of the Colored Patriots of the Revolution, we are to reflect upon them as far more magnanimous, because rendered to a nation which did not acknowledge them as citizens and equals, and in whose interests and prosperity they had less at stake. It was not for their own land they fought, not even for a land which had adopted them, but for a land which had enslaved them, and whose laws, even in freedom, oftener oppressed than protected. Bravery, under such circumstances, has a peculiar beauty and merit (Stowe, “Introduction,” 5).

let it come rough or smooth, you must bear it.”⁴⁰ And, in 1861, the same year as the start of the war, Thomas Wentworth Higginson’s “Nat Turner’s Insurrection” appeared in *The Atlantic*.⁴¹ Like Stowe’s *Dred*, Higginson’s piece was also especially interested in the discernible features of divine revelation, a sense of justice, and the “moral faculties” that give rise to insurrection, including the prophetic and visionary claims made by those who should be regarded as heroes of liberty.⁴² Moreover, Higginson’s treatment of Turner validates his religious inspiration; Higginson writes that “The religious hallucinations narrated in his Confessions seem to have been as genuine as the average of such things, and are very well expressed. It reads quite like Jacob Behmen.”⁴³ In this interesting comparison to the seventeenth-century German Christian mystic, Jakob Böhme, Higginson normalizes Turner’s prophetic sensibility within a Christian tradition of radical visionaries. Furthermore, avoiding an account of the white murders, Higginson’s piece instead draws attention to the “Reign of Terror” exacted by local and federal troops in response to Turner. “In shuddering at the horrors of the insurrection,” Higginson writes, “we have forgotten the far greater horrors of its suppression.”⁴⁴ The significance of Nat Turner

⁴⁰ Nell, 224.

⁴¹ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, “Nat Turner’s Insurrection,” *The Atlantic*, September 1861, 173-187. Higginson’s piece also provides some commentary on Stowe’s *Dred*, describing it as a faithful account of his religious motivations, albeit “dim and melodramatic of the actual Nat Turner,” 185. Of Gray’s account, he describes it as “a sort of bewildered enthusiasm,” *ibid.* Of note, this is also the same *Atlantic* issue that Stowe’s *Agnes of Sorrento* began its serialization. See the following chapter in this dissertation for additional context on *The Atlantic*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 174.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 179. He includes an account from Lydia Maria Child of her slave narrative of Charity Bowery, who states, “The brightest and best was killed in Nat’s time,” 180.

for Higginson, Nell, Garrison, and Stowe, is the opportunity it provides to explore the morality of choosing and being chosen for patriotic and divine resistance and violence. In these accounts and others, Turner is both patriot and prophet, announcing the doom of divine retribution on a nation for its system of slavery. While neither Stowe nor Higginson justify the Turner insurrection and the events that followed, like Garrison and Nell, they both see it as a prophetic moment in a larger national and cosmic narrative. Higginson's treatment of the Turner insurrection on the eve of the Civil War portrays Turner as a patriot and prophet who resisted the horror and terror of a tyrannical slaveholder society. For Stowe, five years earlier, the possibilities of armed resistance were still just taking shape. The Bleeding Kansas crisis was foremost on her mind as a moment when the duty of disobedience and resistance was increasingly marshaled toward a violent and unknowable future.

In a letter to the Duchess of Argyll (daughter of the Duchess of Sutherland) during the final months of work on the novel, Stowe describes how she understood the context and purpose of her work:

The book is written under the impulse of our stormy times—How indignant yet how undaunted we are—how the blood and insults of Sumner and the sack of Lawrence burn within us I hope to make a voice to say—God only knows dear friend how it will end—⁴⁵

With the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act undermining the Missouri Compromise, pro-slavery Border Ruffians and free-state settlers increasingly faced off in the Kansas territory. Many Northern abolitionists began calling for armed resistance by establishing groups such as the New England

⁴⁵ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Elizabeth Georgiana (Leveson-Gower) Campbell, Duchess of Argyll, 17 June 1856. Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Emphasis original.

Emigrant Aid Company and sending rifles and munitions to settlers.⁴⁶ The important phrase, “Beecher’s Bibles,” derives from this fury of abolitionist activity, attributed to Henry Ward Beecher’s claim that the Sharp rifle was more important than the Bible in the cause of freedom in Kansas. Armed self-defense in the territory, Beecher believed, was a religious duty.⁴⁷ In May 1856, with the sack of Lawrence, John Brown’s response at Pottawatomie Creek, and the life-threatening attack on Charles Sumner by South Carolina congressman Preston Brooks with a gutta-percha cane on the floor of Congress, many northern abolitionists saw the inevitability of civil war.⁴⁸

Surely, Stowe could not have anticipated these events and their uses for the anti-slavery story of her novel when she wrote to Bailey in 1852 inquiring about the Great Dismal Swamp. Nevertheless, with the swamp as its setting, the events of Bleeding Kansas permeate *Dred*. The spirit of John Brown and his associates is invoked. Tom Gordon and his mob friends are described as “Border Ruffians.” And a gutta-percha cane is the weapon used by Tom to attack both Harry and Clayton.⁴⁹ The allusions to these events bolster Stowe’s construction of a story

⁴⁶ The Kansas-Nebraska Act, passed by Congress on 30 May, 1854, effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which prohibited slavery north of the 36° 30’ latitude line. The new Act replaced the prohibition with a policy allowing the citizens of the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide for themselves whether their proposed state constitutions would determine their states to be free states or not. After several failed elections and claims of fraud, Kansas would eventually become a free state in 1861.

⁴⁷ Henry Ward Beecher, *Independent*, 9 April 1856. As quoted in the account of fundraising with Sharp rifles in Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York: Image Books, 2006), 281-282.

⁴⁸ On the uses of indignation following the Sumner attack, see Michael Woods, “The Indignation of Freedom-Loving People: The Caning of Charles Sumner and Emotion in Antebellum Politics,” *Journal of Social History*, 44.3 (2011), 689-705.

⁴⁹ Stowe, *Dred*, 388, 493, 499, 506.

that questions the legitimacy of federal law and constitutional protections, the moral role of the church in society, and the forms of mob violence in the south. Here, the sentiment of dread travels across these events, plot developments, and broader questions, echoing the unknown woe captured in her letter to the Duchess of Argyll: “God only knows dear friend how it will end—”

In my attempt to contextualize the sentiment of dread in Stowe’s socio-historical moment and its influence on her selection of setting and character inspiration, I aim to show how Stowe’s thought over these short few years following *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* tacks tremendously from a general (and commonly held) fascination with the possibility of maroon life in the swamp. By the time of *Dred’s* publication, the muses of the swamp and Turner appear to allow space for the dread of contemporary politics and the questioning of what sort of moral persuasion and action remains in the apprehension of the inevitability of war. This matters because Stowe actively participates in and shapes a Northern sensibility at the time (fascination with the swamp, invocation of Turner, and dread over the unfolding events begun by the Border War of Kansas). As a result, she fashions a novel where the swamp represents a confusion of the Southern social order: slaves are not passive here, but revolutionaries; biblical literacy does not guarantee meekness, but enflames dangerous, violent, and liberatory action; and the chaos of the swamp stands in relief to the ordered plantation. The figure of Nat Turner, as channeled through the character of Dred, moreover, allows Stowe to traffic in theological language about divine retribution and punishment. This language serves to mark white panic itself insofar as it must consider the possibilities of black armed resistance as part of the claims of divine retribution. In the context of Bleeding Kansas, the characters of the “Tale of a Great Dismal Swamp” allow for

a meditation on the felt dread of a nation—as it entered a new, murky national terrain “where hardly a human foot could pass, / Or a human heart would dare, --”

Characterizing *Dredful* Sentiments

The plot of *Dred* is one that follows an ensemble of characters who, like those of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, are navigating the moral decisions forced on them by the institution of slavery, including brutal violence, separation of family, the impotent and harmful role of the church, the limits of legal appeals, and the failed and fortuitous imaginings of alternative living. The plot begins with the young plantation heiress, Nina Gordon, who is naïve, spendthrift, and leaves the daily responsibilities and weight of financial decisions to rest on the household slave (and, unbeknownst to her, her half-brother) Harry's shoulders. Without surviving parents, Nina is nurtured primarily by Milly, her personal slave, but is under the guardianship of a curmudgeonly Aunt Nesbit. Of courtship age, Nina meets Edward Clayton, who emerges as the novel's primary protagonist and, I argue, functions as Stowe's “man of feeling.” The sentimental plot of the novel hinges on Nina's death scene as she falls suddenly ill during a cholera outbreak. Not only is her death preceded by two key religious scenes—an emotional evangelical revival (and tempestuous weather event) where Dred makes his first audible appearance; and Nina's own conversion upon reading the Bible as a literacy lesson to the slave Old Tiff—it shifts the plot to one that introduces dread as that which the surviving characters must navigate.

Harry and his wife Lisette are faced with the dilemma of whether to flee or remain in the hopes of obtaining Harry's promised manumission; Milly returns with bodily injuries after being rented out to work on another plantation; and Clayton is overcome by the limits of existing legal

and church debates to change the system of slavery, the real threats of mob violence, and the possibilities of fugitive slave insurrection. As these crises come to a head, the characters escape or are rescued away to the swamp by the maroon, Dred. In the swamp, there are many other inhabitants, life is communal, and Dred's power is sourced in both natural and prophetic revelation. Insurrectionary plans are foreshortened, however, by Dred's death. At Clayton's plea, Harry's interest in armed revolt as retaliation is not pursued. Instead, a plan of escape to Northern states and Canada is carried out. The novel concludes not with fight, but flight. Milly resides in New York City in a tenement home full of fostered and adopted street children. Clayton establishes a new community in Canada to be governed by the former slaves, and to which Harry and Lisette are leaders. Old Tiff settles in New England and is cared for by the formerly poor, white children who had been previously under his care.

Like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the characters of *Dred* each represent a different kind of cultivation of moral faculty (moral sense derived from feeling and reflection)—as stated explicitly in Stowe's narrative commitment to *dramatis personae*, or character development by way of navigating their situations.⁵⁰ However, *Dred* is a far more morally challenging piece. Not only do these characters have incongruous aims that sometimes respond to each other (and sometimes do not), the plotlines and character development often escape Stowe's didactic narrator and want for neat interpretation. This yields a richer interpretation that asks about the duty of disobedience, the effects of prophetic speech and theological commitment, and the possibilities of alternative modes of living as acts of resistance. As such, *Dred* reveals Stowe's

⁵⁰ As Stowe often does through the voice of her narrator in her novels, she makes this technique explicit to her reader, "But we linger too long in description. We better let the reader hear the *dramatis personae*, and judge for himself," *Dred*, 18.

own grappling with the role of morality in the face of a foreboding sense of national violence. In what follows, I argue that dread, as an affective sense of woe that things are not as they should be, exposes the sympathetic limits of moral persuasion and certitude. Dread troubles the sentimentalized safety of home, faith, and nation. In the characters of Nina, Harry, and Milly, dread haunts the plantation order in Nina's death, Harry's miscegenation, and Milly's parental plight. For Dred and Milly, dread represents conflicting appeals to divine justice and the practice of faithful indignation. And for Dred and Clayton, dread is at the political limits when moral persuasion is no longer efficacious and demands fight or flight action.

Nina

As a young “coquettish” woman just out of boarding school, Nina's knowledge of plantation life is “saucy” and carefree.⁵¹ While unable to effectively manage the oversight of the plantation, Stowe paints Nina as one who still merits the love and admiration of those of her plantation, namely Harry, Milly, and Old Tiff. Like Little Eva of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—also the primary white female protagonist—Nina's naiveté is one of moral innocence. It allows her enough sensibility to judge the difference of Milly's authentic and natural love from that of the demands and hollowness of Aunt Nesbit. “Like many other young persons,” Stowe's narrator declares, “Nina could *feel* her way out of a sophistry much sooner than she could think out of it.”⁵² However, despite serving as the plantation heiress, Nina's innocent sensibility requires cultivation through Clayton's courtship and positioned male guardianship. In one scene, for

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 167.

example, Clayton discerns the aesthetic potential in Nina, stating, “O, I see it in you, just as a sculptor sees a statue in a block of marble”; to which Nina responds, “And are you going to chisel it out? [...] Well...I’m much obliged to you for all the sense you find in my nonsense. I believe I shall keep you to translate my fooleries into good English.”⁵³ This gendered moment, sharpened by Stowe’s witty pen, indicates that Nina’s innate sensibility, even if subversively clever, requires cultivation. Nina is naturally intuitive—and yet, she is dependent on a male guardian and courtier to discover and guide her development as a young Southern woman.

Moreover, Nina also requires the black surrogacy of Harry, Milly and Old Tiff as confidants, nurturers, and spiritual guides. In addition to managing the plantation, they provide the emotional labor of consoling and guiding her in the right feelings of courtship, familial love, and loyalty. They also help her achieve the right feelings of faith in her conversion experience. Nina, like Little Eva, finds herself in a Bible-reading and literacy scene with a slave that reveals the power of revelation through reading practices. Asked to teach him to read, Nina realizes that Old Tiff understands the Bible better than she does. While she instructs him in literacy, he instructs her in the power of the gospel message.⁵⁴ “I felt perfectly sure that Jesus is so good that he would make me feel right, and give me right views, and do everything for me that I need,” she later states to Clayton.⁵⁵ Here, Clayton (again) authorizes Nina’s experience as authentic and true. He responds:

Your childlike simplicity of nature makes you a better scholar than I [...] Don’t trouble your head, dear Nina, with Aunt Nesbit or Mr. Titmarsh. *What you feel is*

⁵³ Ibid., 215-217.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 338.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 347.

faith. They *define* it, and you *feel* it. And there's all the difference between the definition and the feeling, that there is between the husk and the corn.⁵⁶

As such, Nina instructs Stowe's readers on the pleasures of simple sensibility and childlike faith. While Stowe wants to emphasize that Nina's intuition and the revelation of the gospel message lead to her conversion, nevertheless it can only be understood in gendered and racial terms. Nina's moral sensibility is made possible by the enslaved emotional support and male guardian relations that ensure she remains a celebrated and benevolent daughter of the plantation order. Her feelings of faith are produced and validated within these spaces of patriarchal relations and the privileges of whiteness bestowed on the Southern heiress.

As the plot leads to Nina's death, the vocabulary of dread saturates the environment and is embodied by a regional cholera outbreak that takes Nina's life. Within a few short days, cholera takes over the Canema plantation. By now, Nina's conversion has served to mature her as she takes on the moral leadership of caring for the sick of the plantation. As Clayton approaches the house that awaits Nina's impending death, he "[feels] a dim brooding sense of mystery and terror creeping over him" and becomes "sensible of that shuddering dread," at the premonition of unknown misfortune.⁵⁷ As the pathos takes hold with Nina passing away amongst Clayton and the Canema plantation members, not just the Gordon home, but the historical moment is permeated with unknown dread. Nina's death—the death of innocence—inaugurates

⁵⁶ Ibid., 348. Emphasis original.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 373, 371.

the dread of unknown realities. The Gordon house, like the national domicile, “may be truly called a haunted house,” the narrator proclaims, for it enters an “unknown realm.”⁵⁸

Dread and the limits of the moral cultivation of a domesticated sympathy are revealed through Nina’s character and death in a few key ways. Though her innocence and childlike faith are lauded, they do not last. While a flat sentimental read of her death conveys a pathos of a life tragically lost too soon, a sentimentality that involves the worry of dread leads to a reading where the capriciousness of cholera is able to take hold of Nina and the purported innocence she represents—an innocence that signifies the illusive myth of idyllic Southern life. Dread seems to be no friend to privileged innocence and demands a more complicated reckoning of faith. Dread, taken seriously, may also reveal the disquieting truth of the racial power that allows Nina to die amidst the familial loyalty and moral surrogacy of a brother she never knew as one and, like Augustine St. Clare, a cherished group of enslaved persons whose promise and hope of manumission dies with their benevolent slaveholder.

Harry

The character of Harry tells the story of miscegenated loyalty. Born the son of the plantation patriarch and his slave mother, along with his sister Cora, Harry is given stature in the Canema plantation by his ailing master, Nina’s father, in exchange for the promise of manumission. The conditions of his manumission—it depends on Harry saving enough money to purchase his papers—would be met once Nina reached adulthood, was properly married, and thus able to ensure the plantation would not fall into the hands of her (and Harry’s) younger

⁵⁸ Ibid., 374.

brother, Tom Gordon, who belonged to a “class of whites” known for their “barbarism.” (Here, “class” refers to a moral state, but still collapses into that which it signifies: poor whites.)⁵⁹

Harry’s introduction in the novel is one of unfeigned loyalty to Nina, so much so that he gives more attention to her wellbeing and financial solvency than to his own plans to redeem his promised manumission. Yet in the events following her death, Harry emerges as a revolutionary with a fierce desire for armed revolt in the spirit of Dred.

Early in the novel, Stowe uses Harry’s loyalty to Nina to reveal Harry’s parentage. His loyalty of “character” is derived from his miscegenated blood lineage. His dark complexion is exotically offset by “deep, full blue eyes,” and his “high forehead and finely formed features,” much like George Harris in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, indicate the talent, ability, care and thoughtfulness inherited from “his Scottish parentage.”⁶⁰ As a result, Harry is portrayed as being capable of living with “the perfect ease of a free man...[who has] forgotten even the existence of the chains whose weight he never felt.”⁶¹ Yet he is still enslaved. For Harry, his blood loyalty to Nina, rewarded in house stature and education, has come at the price of a tormented conscience that yearns to fulfill the loyalty to his wife Lisette and the life they hope to live together upon his manumission.

Harry’s loyal “illegitimacy” stands in contrast to Tom Gordon. Indeed, that Harry is considered more legitimate in loyalty, character, and leadership than Nina’s recognized brother works to expose the fault lines within the plantation family order. As the primary antagonist of

⁵⁹ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 8, 38. On the miscegenated features of George Harris, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 98.

⁶¹ Ibid., 38, 39.

the novel, Tom embodies the racial and class markings of Stowe's morally bankrupt imagined South. Tom is of the ilk of poor white barbarians who squander their resources (unlike their more industrious and temperate poor white Northern brethren), are opposed to reason and education, and enact vigilantism. It is largely because of this that any possible form of gradualism cannot take hold (the preferred means of emancipation by Clayton; and, arguably, Stowe).⁶² They are the engine of a backwards southern moral economy in which enslaved persons, such as Harry, have no hope for emancipation—for poor white barbarism will continue to uphold a plantation social order that will reward Tom his estate's inheritance.

For Stowe, Harry's loyalty is a tragic one, and his situation is one that can only require fight or flight. The dread that saturates Nina's death is the dread of a lost promise of manumission as his papers quickly become void and Tom attempts to take Lisette as his personal slave. Upon confronting Tom, Tom strikes Harry with a gutta-percha cane. Returning a blow to Tom, Harry then flees to the swamp with Lisette, becoming "tenants of the wild fastness in the centre of the swamp."⁶³ Yet if dread marks a tragic loss of emancipation for Harry, it also marks the full emergence of his revolutionary spirit and loyalty to a new kin network. In the swamp,

⁶² This is best displayed in Clayton's voice throughout the novel. In one scene, Nina and Clayton discuss the backwards character of the South (151), sourcing it in part to its refusal of valuing general education. As Clayton concludes, "a society which is built up in this way constantly tends to run back towards barbarism," 152. Stowe's voice reveals much about a Northern class analysis and judgment of Southerners, as she also discusses "poor white trash" in *A Key*. See Jennifer Rae Greeson's *Our South: Geographical Fantasy and the Rise of National Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) for a terrific treatment of how the South operates as the internal Other—and confined space of national moral failings—in the national imaginary. While Greeson masterfully attends to race and colonialism (including Stowe's own), an analysis of the moralizing of class differences among both working classes and elites of the north and south (and their imbrication in racial and colonial political and social configurations) would extend this argument of internalized otherness in incredibly rich directions.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 388-389.

Harry is cultivated and apprenticed by Dred for insurrection. He understands the coming judgment on the nation for the sins of the slave system, and he commits his loyalty to a new family and nation: to those in flight, the oath of the brethren, Jegar Sahadutha, “the camp of the Lord’s judgment.”⁶⁴

Unlike Uncle Tom, who finds the values of meekness and suffering in the New Testament, Harry and Dred find justification for revolutionary resistance in the Hebrew Bible’s language of divine retribution. While Dred quotes biblical scripture, Harry’s choice for the grounds of his revolutionary appeal are the principles of American democracy as told through the Declaration of Independence and the legacy of patriots demanding a government of, by and for the governed. While not referenced, there is little doubt that Stowe draws upon Frederick Douglass’s well-known 1852 speech, “The Meaning of July Fourth For the Negro,” as her key source and inspiration for Harry’s language, both in the letter addressed to Clayton when he escapes and in his Fourth of July rally speech at Jegar Sahadutha.⁶⁵ Like Douglass, Harry describes the hypocrisy of those who celebrate a founding document earned through resistance to tyranny and boasting liberty and rights for *all* men, even while keeping so many men, women and children enslaved. If the Declaration of Independence can celebrate revolutionary patriotism,

⁶⁴ Ibid., 212, 453-454. Jegar Sahadutha refers to the biblical story of Jacob’s flight to Gilead from Laban. As Laban pursues him, the God of Jacob warns him not to do anything to Jacob. When they meet at a camp on the hillside of Gilead, Laban and Jacob make a covenant to protect each other by establishing a rock pillar called the “Jegar Sahadutha” by Laban and the “Galeed” by Jacob. Genesis 31:44-49.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 435-436. Frederick Douglass, “The Meaning of July Fourth For the Negro,” A Speech Given in Rochester, New York, 5 July 1852. Here, again, there are resonances with George Harris of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* who recites the Declaration of Independence during the shootout between his and Eliza’s Quaker protectors and the band of fugitive slave hunters led by Tom Loker (*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 100-102). George also appeals to democratic principles of national belonging in describing his reason for leaving the United States for Liberia (Ibid., 593ff).

then, asks Harry, like Douglass, “Well, how was it with our people in South Carolina? Denmark Vesey was a *man*! His history is just what George Washington’s would have been, if you had failed.”⁶⁶

Primed with a passion of purpose, justified by both biblical and democratic tradition, and having taken an oath of protection to his brethren of the swamp, Harry’s insurrectionary potential is nevertheless ultimately foreshortened by Stowe. Clayton does the thwarting of Harry’s potential by urging him in the course of patience; “I know it seems a very unfeeling thing for a man who is at ease to tell one, who is oppressed and suffering, to be patient; and yet I must even say it.”⁶⁷ When Harry resists this call for patience, seeking to take up arms in revolt against Dred’s death and to carry out Dred’s plan, Clayton again dissuades him, arguing that the better path is one of flight to the North. Despite his loyalties, Harry is thus denied both his manumission and the revolutionary possibilities nurtured by the swamp. Liberty, for Stowe in the character of Harry, is found not in revolt but in the establishment of a new domicile outside the borders of the United States and its failed political promises and possibilities. As a result, Harry’s character reveals the tensions and ironies of dread and freedom. Harry’s conflicted loyalties work to both entrap and foster revolutionary desire for the promises of liberty and freedom—and ultimately succumb (at least in the space of the novel) to the tempered paternalistic dissuasion of armed resistance.

Milly

⁶⁶ Stowe, *Dred*, 435. Emphasis original.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 442.

Like the primary female domestic slave characters across Stowe's novels—specifically Aunt Chloe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Candace in *The Minister's Wooing*—Milly represents, and quite literally embodies, a sagacious fullness of spirit and affection. “Heaven had endowed her with a soul as broad and generous as her ample frame,” Stowe's narrator announces.⁶⁸ Portrayed in a majestic, corpulent, and excessive manner—a “tall, broad-shouldered, deep chested African woman” with skin like “black velvet” and eyes “expressive of wishfulness and longing,” for she was “a fine specimen of one of those warlike and splendid races”—Milly is the hearth of the home, the refuge of comfort for Nina, and the astute religious counterpart to Dred.⁶⁹ In what follows, I focus on how Milly's work in the novel can best be understood as the peaceable interlocutor with the fervent prophetic emotion of Dred.

Milly represents Stowe's vision of and desire for the redemptive salvific and civilizing work of the gospel. Her story before arriving at the Gordon plantation is one of “dreadful trials” and “dreadful sorrows” spent enslaved for the sole purpose of the reproduction of children—all fourteen of whom were sold away from her as part of the accelerating demands of the domestic slave trade market.⁷⁰ Through these injustices and sorrows, Stowe announces, “Christianity entered as it often does with the slave, through the rents and fissures of a broken heart.”⁷¹ As Milly tells her tale to Nina, readers learn of the influence of Christianity on her life. When her mistress broke her promise to allow Milly to keep her last child with her, Milly prayed in rage to

⁶⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 42-43, 49-50, 69-71. On the romantic racialization of Candace, and these “mammy” characters, see my discussion in the following chapter.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 261, 176-177.

⁷¹ Ibid., 51.

God for her death as divine vengeance.⁷² In recounting this desire for vengeance as a sin, Milly says, “Dem was awful words, chile, but I was in Egypt den.”⁷³ For Milly, her conversion delivered her soul from a hate-filled lost state with a “rush of love”:

O, chile, I saw how he loved us!—us all—all—every one of us. ...O, chile, I saw what it was for me to be hatin’, like I’d hated. ...And O, chile, dem der comes such a rush of love in my soul! Says I, ‘Lord, I ken love even de white folks!’⁷⁴

For Milly, racial reconciliation is the sign of conversion. The testimony of her conversion recognizes the error of hate and replaces it with a love that could be so expansive that it could include “even de white folks!” This is an unsettling scene in which the bodily and parental traumas wrought on Milly by the slave system’s reduction of her to a breeding and domesticated animal are supplanted by the radical “rush of love” experienced in the moment of conversion. This love, Milly insists, erases an angered desire for retribution. While Milly remains assured in her convictions and the possibilities of the love of God, it is also a moment that foreshadows the conversation she has with Dred in the swamp—where the love for “even de white folks” stands at redemptive and pacifist odds with a claim to divine justice and vengeance.

Milly’s flight to and arrival at the swamp interrupts the assembled Jegar Saddutha oath of brethren scene where the swamp’s black men gather to rally behind Dred’s cause. Amidst the invocation of vengeance, Milly interrupts and counters with the model of a suffering Christ. If

⁷² Ibid., 179-181.

⁷³ Ibid., 181.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 183. Milly’s regret for asking vengeance on her masters, along with her firm non-violence stance echoes Stowe’s later representation of Sojourner Truth based on their 1853 meeting. Harriet Beecher Stowe, “Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1863. I discuss this incredibly problematic piece in the concluding chapter of my dissertation.

Christ suffered, so can we, Milly insists, for Christ understands the experience of the wilderness: “O, brethren, pray de Lord to give ‘em repentance! Leave de vengeance to him. Vengeance is mine—I will reap, saith the Lord. Like he loved us when we was enemies, love yer enemies!”⁷⁵ In this moment, Milly offers a theological critique of the idea of God’s vengeance, insisting that vengeance should not reside in human hands. Yet, the problem is that Milly’s option of finding sympathy in the suffering-with, or pathos, of Christ, will not work for the prophetic demands of Dred, who understands himself as a chosen instrument of divine vengeance. We see here a theological tension in the novel around how to respond to keen prophetic discernment, often felt as dread itself, of divine doom and a calling to resistance and disobedience. When is resistance found in long-suffering; and when in the suffering of violence? Leaving this moment unresolved, Stowe reveals the limits of Milly’s model of sympathy: though ideal, long-suffering nonetheless remains unconvincing for the political and theological response to prophetic dread.

Finally, Stowe advances Milly’s surrogacy work into the post-Dred and post-swamp world of escape to the North. In flight, Milly takes her grandson Tomtit and opens a foster and orphan home for street children in New York City.⁷⁶ Welcoming a visit from Clayton, Milly is “surrounded by a dozen children, among whom [are] blacks, whites, and foreigners”:

⁷⁵ Ibid., 462. Of note, Milly’s mammy equivalent in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Aunt Chloe, resists the command to pray for one’s enemies. Upon news that Tom has been sold and his counsel to Aunt Chloe, “Pray for them that ‘spitefully use you, the good book says,” Chloe responds, “Pray for em!...Lor, it’s too tough! I can’t pray for ‘em,” *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 50.

⁷⁶ Described as a “creature” and “incarnate joke” who is “breezy, idle, careless, and flighty,” Tomtit, like Topsy, serves as the comic foil in many of *Dred’s* early scenes, 46-48.

“Laws, yes,” said Milly, looking complacently around; “I don’t make no distinctions of color—I don’t believe in them. White chil’en when they ’haves themselves, is jest as good as black, and I loves ‘em jest as well.”⁷⁷

Noting the subversive barb that white children can be just as good as black children when they behave themselves, Milly’s new home and career represents a different kind of alternative domicile and kinship family. Described as interracial (representing various race and ethnic identities of the city’s immigrant and migrant populations), dynamic (many children will come and go through Milly’s doors over this career), and modeled in a northern city (in contrast to the plantation, the western homestead, or the New England family farm), Milly’s home reconfigures the domicile and antebellum model of republican motherhood, while still demanding the capacious qualities of black surrogacy that Milly represents. The celebration of Milly’s interracial project reveals both the enthusiasm and the limits of Stowe’s understanding of sympathy. Stowe notes to her readers that this scene is based on a “real-life account” of a former slave who raised over forty children “on the humble wages of a laboring woman.”⁷⁸ What evades Stowe here, though, are the structural inequities of this continued unpaid affective domestic labor, and of the Northern city that shapes the necessity of this racialized surrogacy work and sets the stage for the new racial injustices of labor, migration, and dispossession that would mark post-Emancipation United States.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ibid., 546.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 547.

⁷⁹ For excellent analysis of Milly’s interracial project, see Susan Ryan, *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race & the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 143-162.

The questions about the proper religious, familial and emotional authority and judgment that permeate the exchanges of Milly, Harry, and Nina also extend through to the characters of Dred and Clayton. Clayton's persistent hope that Southern-styled gradualist reason would win out over prejudice in legal and doctrinal debates is not only met with the limits of existing law, but with mob violence. And Dred's insurrectionary potential is not only situated among the inhabitants living in the swamp (as an alternative domicile), but also deeply rooted in authoritative biblical claims of the coming day of divine judgment.

Dred

It is not until halfway through the novel that readers meet Dred, who first appears encountering Harry at the edge of the swamp. Stowe's white readers now learn that subterfuge is, and has been, ever present; for while Dred may be introduced to readers at this moment, the enslaved characters, in keeping "profound secrecy," have already known him and his pervasive presence.⁸⁰ As is Stowe's pattern, she spends a great deal of time providing physical descriptions that illustrate the temperament and character traits of her black characters. Exotic is an understatement for Dred's introductory character sketch. His "skin was intensely black and polished like marble," he possesses a "neck and chest of herculean strength," "muscles of a gladiator," and a "large and massive head" representing robust "perceptive organs" in the "reflective and perceptive department" of "moral and intellectual sentiments."⁸¹

⁸⁰ Stowe, *Dred*, 212.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

In addition to the ability to read Dred's prophetic status on and through his bodily features, Stowe describes Dred's peculiar genius and insurrectionary potential as belonging to a unique family lineage. Like the mother of Nat Turner, Dred's mother detected his peculiar genius from a young age, claiming "this child was born for extraordinary things."⁸² Born the child of Denmark Vesey and a mother born of "African sorcerers," Dred's life is predestined for insurrection.⁸³ The influence of his father is represented in Dred's sole possession: the Bible that belonged to Vesey.⁸⁴ More than a nostalgic keepsake, the Bible is an active revelatory instrument in Dred's life (much as it is also an active, transformative object in scenes with Tom and Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and Nina and Old Tiff earlier in *Dred*). For Dred, it is the "herald of woe and wrath" that he finds in his Bible—precisely what many white slave-owners feared might happen in teaching their slaves to read.⁸⁵ Moreover, as a child of his mother, his peculiar genius is marked by racialized spiritual capacities belonging to a lineage of "African sorcerers." Perhaps drawing on accounts of Gullah Jack, Vesey's co-conspirator, Stowe uses pseudo-ethnographic language to offer an evolutionary explanation of the Africanness of this supernatural capacity. "The African races are said to be mesmerists and to possess, in the fullest degree," she writes,

⁸² *Ibid.*, 208.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 208, 274.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 210. Of note, the Bible believed to belong to Nat Turner was recently donated to the Smithsonian Institute in 2013. Stored first in the Southampton County courthouse storage until 1912, it was then given to the descendants of a surviving family of the 1831 insurrection. It is now on display at the National African American Museum of History and Culture. Notably, it is missing the Book of Revelation. Victoria Dawson, "Nat Turner's Bible Gave the Enslaved Rebel the Resolve to Rise Up," 13 September 2016, *Smithsonian.com*.

“that peculiar temperament which fits them for the evolution of mesmeric phenomenon.”⁸⁶ It is the disposition and cultivation of these “supernatural impulses,” sourced to his mother and father, that produces Dred’s intuitive sympathy with nature, ability to discern prophetic signs, and a profound sense of divine retributive justice.⁸⁷

For Stowe, Dred’s moral sentiments are instinctive, natural, and nurtured in and through his movement in the swamp. Dred is “in complete sympathy and communion with nature, and with those forms of it which more particularly surrounded him in the swamps.”⁸⁸ His “savage familiarity with nature” and “habits of a wild and dangerous life” in the swamp produce agility, “stealthy adroitness,” and “discernment of spirits.”⁸⁹ This instinctive faculty finds moral harmony with the natural order as divine revelation; or, as Dred puts it, “I have found the alligators and snakes better neighbors than the Christians.”⁹⁰ There is so much sympathy between the natural order and Dred that the passionate energies of a weather storm and indignant prophetic pronouncement, or the darkness of night and prayerful discernment, are better understood as collapsing into each other, rather than as distinct phenomenon. By emphasizing the instinctive qualities of sympathy and the natural order, Stowe provides a (super)natural space

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 274. Hardly an exotic feature of “the African races,” spiritualism and mesmerism was certainly not so foreign to the Stowe. Both she and Calvin were attracted to the growing nineteenth-century popularity of animal magnetism; and Calvin Stowe would later seek out a medium upon their son Henry’s death.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 264, 496.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 278.

for dread (and Dred) in the cultivation of moral faculty. Both dread and sympathy are felt intuitively, even as they must be discerned and nurtured.

Naturalizing these traits, furthermore, gives credibility to the calling and substance of Dred's prophetic language and sermons. Over the course of the novel, Dred's language reads as biblical in tone and content, much of which is quoted in direct words from the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, including Joel, Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekial, and others who warn of divine retribution for the sins of greed and the injustices done to the poor and oppressed within the nation of Israel. In Dred's camp-meeting sermon alone, astute readers hear, in the voice of Dred, Joel's proclamation, "Blow ye the trumpet of Zion! Sound an alarm in my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble! For the day of the Lord cometh!" and Amos's warning, "In that day I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and darken the whole earth! And I will turn your feasts into mourning and your songs into lamentation! Woe to the bloody city!," along with scripture excerpts from Isaiah, Exodus, and Nahum.⁹¹ By drawing on this language, Stowe fashions a biblically-literate character whose "moral constitution" and high-natured "sentiment of justice" are not only firmly located within a Judeo-Christian tradition of prophetic voice for the justice of God, but also within the American jeremiad tradition and its indebtedness, in large part, to Stowe's own Puritan New England.⁹²

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 262-263. The biblical scriptures include portions of Joel 2, Amos 5 and 8, Exodus 13, Isaiah 14, and Nahum 3. These cross-references are owed to the explanatory notes provided in the Robert S. Levine, ed. edition of *Dred*. Stowe, as she often does in her published and unpublished works and correspondence, does not cite her use of these scriptures.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 497.

The American jeremiad tradition draws on this particular biblical language of prophetic moral and political dissent, warning the nation of decline and retribution should it not face repentance and renewal. Like the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah, the American prophet speaks from within the boundaries of the nation-state. To invoke and situate Dred within this tradition, Stowe draws on both her deep familiarity with the rich tradition of the jeremiad among the divines of Puritan New England and Gray's *Confessions of Nat Turner*. Scholars of American cultural and religious history, including Sacvan Bercovitch's influential 1978 *American Jeremiad*, have rightly pointed to the important role New England preachers had in shaping a complex American jeremiad rhetorical tradition. This tradition, as exemplified in the political sermon, draws on theological narratives of sin, declension, repentance, and renewal.⁹³ Stowe, like other Northern anti-slavery agitators, could certainly draw deeply from this well of theological and political persuasion to invoke moral dread, woe, and penitence. As a Beecher, she was especially talented in its vocabulary and composition.⁹⁴ However, the prophetic language of Dred also owes a debt to Nat Turner. In the *Confessions*, Turner does not trace his insurrectionary motivation to a New England political and religious dissent tradition, but rather to his own Bible reading, literacy, and ability to interpret natural signs and wonders to guide his insurrectionary plans. Stowe goes to great length to indicate these are Dred's sources too: self-taught literacy, natural capacities

⁹³ Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978). See also Jonathan Kahn's chapter "Rewriting the American Jeremiad: On Pluralism, Nationalism and a New America" in his *Divine Discontent: The Religious Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). Kahn importantly shows that Du Bois' deployment of the jeremiad makes two key contributions: it rejects an exceptionalist sense of an inherent chosenness of the nation; and it advances "a nation within a nation" through the use of the jeremiad form.

⁹⁴ Apart from two minor footnotes, Stowe receives only a passing mention in Bercovitch's treatment of the tradition and what he considers to be its most important antebellum literary figures.

producing sympathy with the natural world, and an exceptional moral faculty. In other words, while Stowe may draw on her familiarity with the New England history of the jeremiad, she claims that the source of Dred's prophecy is not New England religious influence, but a moral faculty attuned to divine revelation in nature and scripture reading. The seeds for the American jeremiad may persist in the rocky New England soil, but they also find fertile ground in the reading practices of the fugitive American swamp.

Understanding himself as an "instrument of doom," Dred is certain of the judgment to come, but prayerfully awaits "the opening of the seals" to participate in it.⁹⁵ According to biblical scripture, the "opening of the seals" or a sign of "the loosed seal" is the inaugural apocalyptic moment of divine judgment when divine justice rolls open an account of the history of sorrows and lamentation.⁹⁶ Rather than a step in the continuation of sentimental moral persuasion, the loosed seal promises to pair moral conviction with forceful action. In a scene bearing deep resonance to Stowe's persistent literary and political moral question, "what is one to do?", Harry petitions Dred, "But, what can we do?" Dred responds:

Do? What does the wild horse do? Launch out our hoofs! Rear up, and come down on them. ...If they bruise our head, we can sting their heels! Nat Turner—they killed him; but the fear of him almost drove them to set free their slaves! [...] I tell you, Harry, there's a seal been loosed—there's a vial poured out on the air; and the destroying angel standeth over Jerusalem, with his sword drawn!⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Stowe, *Dred*, 341, 446.

⁹⁶ See Ezekial 2 and Revelation 5. Note that Stowe draws on apocalyptic language from the New Testament, as well as the Hebrew Bible.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 341.

Here, the answer is certainly not “see to it that they feel right,” as it is at the end of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and in *A Key*. Right feelings and conviction, as portrayed in Stowe’s prophetic character, Dred, are already divinely ordained, and as discernable and palpable as the dread, fear, and woe that permeates the historical moment. Evoking the fervor of Turner and the pride of inciting white terror (though, Turner’s case is a telling reminder that white panic holds the power to exact with overwhelming force police-state violence in response to black armed resistance), Dred’s language drips with anticipation of violent insurrection.

However, insurrection does not come for Dred as it does not for Harry. Stowe foreshortens this possibility with Dred’s death (and Harry’s flight)—but, not before she places Dred in a pathos-rich scene reminiscent of Gethsemane. As danger draws nearer to the swamp with Tom Gordon’s relentless pursuit of Harry, Dred is in private prayer petitioning God regarding timing and plans, like Jesus awaiting the events of the final days leading to his sacrificial death. Describing the scene, Stowe writes, “As a thunder-cloud trembles and rolls, shaking with gathered electric fire, so his dark figure seemed to dilate and quiver with the fire of mighty emotions.”⁹⁸ With his hands uplifted, Dred cries,

How long, O Lord, how long? Awake! Why sleepest thou, O Lord? Why withdrawest thou thy hand? ... We see not the sign! ... Art thou a God that judgest on the earth? Will thou not avenge thine own elect, that cry unto thee day and night?⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Ibid., 458.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 460.

Despite his Christ-like long-suffering, Dred does not see the culmination of his cry for justice. He dies a patriot and martyr for a war yet to be fought, as the dread of Stowe's own day indicates is on the horizon.

The prophet dies, but the sources of his inspiration and the marronage refuge of the swamp remain. What would have happened had Dred not been killed? Would he have followed in the path of Nat Turner? We, as readers, do not know. In *Dred*, Stowe is able to entertain the exotic and prophetic possibilities of racial, religious, and political imagination in ways she herself is not quite prepared or equipped to answer or think through—and perhaps finds dreadful to do so.

Clayton

With the character of Clayton, Stowe is able to regulate the force and work of dread and Dred. He serves as a moral character who is presumably open and wise enough to navigate the social and political impossibilities of a dreadful national landscape, but not succumb to it. Portrayed as an intuitive, moral exemplar of “fastidious moral sense,” Clayton vigilantly pursues the project of moral persuasion amidst legal and clerical institutions, but to no avail.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the grand narrative arc of *Dred* is that even the work of the hero Clayton, as also for the sub-heroes Dred and Harry, is thwarted; the social and political work of building resistance to the slavery system by way of sympathy and moral persuasion does not, and cannot, transpire within the conditions they face.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 17.

It is through an examination of the character of Clayton that I find the fullest test of the limits of sentimental moral persuasion in Stowe's first three novels. Functioning as Stowe's sentimental character par excellence, Clayton possesses the traits of moral faculty and the positionality as an educated, white, land-owning man that should enable him to influence change. But he is unable to do so. Read in the tradition of the Sentimental Enlightenment, Clayton is the tragic "man of feeling," who, as Stowe describes, is "never to be what the *world* calls a *successful* man."¹⁰¹ Like the hapless Harley in Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*, Clayton is equipped with a generous moral faculty that must seek to resolve the changing demands of charity, education, and justice wrought by the distances and new relations of a changing economic and political landscape that proclaims the liberty and independence of some at the expense of many.¹⁰² Clayton does this by pressing the limits of American legal and religious communities.

Clayton is described in far fewer visceral words than those chosen for Dred and Stowe's other black characters. As the ideal, Southern genteel "good master," he and his more pragmatic sister, Anne, take a "disinterested course" in managing their plantation by educating their slaves and advocating (after their education and preparation) for their gradual emancipation.¹⁰³ As a suitor, he guides Nina in her moral development. As a successful lawyer, and son to the prominent Judge Clayton, he finds comfort in the artful and reasoned structure of legal

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 22. Emphasis original.

¹⁰² Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, ed., Brian Vickers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Originally published in 1771). Among the earliest recognized sentimental novels, *The Man of Feeling* poses the central question of whether the sympathetic subject is too wise or too foolish for this world.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 17, 24.

precedence. When Milly returns to the Gordon family's Canema plantation with injuries from having been rented out, Clayton takes this as a cause to advocate her humanity as plaintiff in a legal case for wrongs suffered to her. The court, led by his father, returns a verdict upholding the "principle of guardianship," echoing the 1830 *State vs. Mann* case that ruled a slave as property to her master and not as a human able to lay her own claims.¹⁰⁴ A case documented extensively by abolitionist publications, Stowe describes the court record papers as demonstrating "fiend-like cruelty," drawing, interestingly, a direct phrase from Gray's grisly description of Turner's "fiend-like cruelty" in *Confessions*.¹⁰⁵ As a result, Clayton struggles with deep ambivalence toward the letter, limit, and reach of the law, much like Stowe's Senator Bird in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Dr. Hopkins in *The Minister's Wooing*, who each attempt to also adjudicate legal restrictions on human liberty and dignity. Clayton, however, ultimately resolves to resign and abandon his profession in the practice of law, for it is a legal system he can no longer ethically support. At his father's advice that the law is changed by public opinion, Clayton instead seeks out a convention of ministers to consider ways in which moral conviction can shape and change law. This effort also fails, as the clerical conference refuses to aid in the disunion of slavery interests, even if they wish "that something could be done."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 350-359. Stowe excerpts almost the full text of the *State of North Carolina v. Mann* ruling here. Additionally, the ruling is featured in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Garrison also publishes it in *The Liberator*; and Theodore Weld also includes key paragraphs in his *Slavery As It Is*. For a masterful reading of *Dred* that centers Stowe's use of this case, see Laura Korobkin, "Appropriating Law in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 62.3 (December 2007), 380-406.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 563.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 419, 433. Again, the novel's appendix is an important space to understand what current events Stowe saw herself responding to. The failures of legal and clerical institutions occupied her thought and hope in the structural and political work of moral persuasion—and its failure. Stowe concludes Appendix III (and the full appendix material) with the following indictment of ecclesiastical bodies:

While much more can be said for the failings of these legal and clerical institutions in which Stowe herself held hope, one last social institution definitively demonstrates the limits of Clayton's work: the Southern vigilante mob. Responding to Clayton's fervor to mete out justice, Clayton's friend, Frank Russell, warns him to begin carrying pistols in self-defense. "As long as you wrestle with flesh and blood," he says to Clayton, "you had better use fleshly means."¹⁰⁷ Stowe takes great effort to describe the mob as the epitome of despotism: a despotism fueled by the barbarism of the South, but also by the vacuum created by the moral effeminacy of clerical, legal, and political leaders. With the same gutta-percha cane used to attack Harry and Milly (which "proved his eligibility for Congress," Stowe notes, "after the fashion of the chivalry of South Carolina"), Tom Gordon attacks Edward Clayton as part of a masked mob.¹⁰⁸ Stowe is not shy in pausing over the violence done by beatings, as demonstrated in the pathos of Tom's flogging in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; but Clayton's beating is the first and only of depiction of a white character in her novels suffering life-threatening violence on behalf of the anti-slavery cause.¹⁰⁹ Clayton's life is subsequently rescued by the intervention of Dred and Harry who are themselves

In 1856 we are sorry to say that we can report no improvement in the action of the great ecclesiastical bodies on the subject of slavery, but rather deterioration. Notwithstanding all the aggressions of slavery, and notwithstanding the constant developments of its horrible influence in corrupting and degrading the character of the nation, as seen in the mean, vulgar, assassin-like outrages in our national Congress, and the brutal, blood-thirsty, fiend-like proceedings in Kansas, connived at and protected, if not directly sanctioned and in part instigated, by our national government; --notwithstanding all this, the great ecclesiastical organizations seem less disposed than ever before to take any efficient action on the subject. This was manifest in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church North, held in Indianapolis during the spring of the present year, and in the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church, held at New York at about the same time (Ibid., 593).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 468.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 493.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 492-494.

equipped with a rifle, suggesting the necessity of armed self-defense in a social order where vigilantism thrives in the absence of legal and moral order.

Nursed back to health in the swamp, Clayton faces his own decision of whether to fight, as a self-appointed leader to the exiled Gordon plantation slaves, or to fly. Perceiving Harry's plans for insurrection, his counsel for flight to the north bears a few interesting features. First, Clayton does not deny the rights to liberty and the sure threat and guarantee of continued violence and enslavement in the Southern system. However, he discourages the insurrectionary means to achieve the ends of liberty. Describing his "belief in the inalienable right of every man to liberty," Stowe writes, "he had at this time a firm conviction that nothing but the removal of some of these minds from the oppressions which were goading them could prevent a development of bloody insurrection."¹¹⁰ Throughout the novel, Clayton not only remains committed to non-violence but also committed to a firm gradualist and relocation philosophy.¹¹¹ To his friend Frank Russell, upon his plans to escape North, he states:

[T]he only sure defense against insurrection is systemic education, by which we shall acquire that influence over the minds which our superior cultivation will enable us to hold. Then, as fast as they become fitted to enjoy rights, we must grant them.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 520.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 393-394. Clayton, first and foremost, says he wants "to give" the slave the right "to bring suit for injury and to be a legal witness in court ... [to] repeal the law forbidding their education, and [to] forbid the separation of families." 393.

¹¹² Ibid., 530.

Education and training must precede emancipation in his model (and failure) of the “kind,” benevolent plantation, in his intolerance of rebellion and armed violence, and in his national civic vision—all at the assurance and guidance of “our superior cultivation.”

Like Stowe’s surviving characters of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, establishing home and community in the Northern states does not ultimately resolve the fugitive status of the formerly enslaved, the failures of the country’s legal and social institutions, or the visions of mission and charity often possessed by her favorite characters (Milly’s interracial urban project is a key exception to this). Clayton’s Canadian flight participates in this national exile. Hardly the secretive, insurrectionary domicile of the swamp, Clayton’s Canadian community of former Gordon plantation slaves (“tenants”) is modeled on values of education, training, and communitarian living (much like the famous Elgin community it evokes). After settled, Harry and Lisette become its community leaders.¹¹³

These selected character sketches of *Dred*, as I have tried to argue, reveal how Stowe advances different moral projects as a way to sort through the dreadful questions of the anti-slavery cause: Will (white, female) innocence survive and inspire? In what ways does miscegenation shape loyalty and the reconfigurations of family, home, and national allegiance? How much faith can one have, not just in a God who promises to exact justice, but in the institutions of court and church? And, what does one make of the shared prophetic tradition that shapes the dutiful causes of insurrection and resistance? Whose deaths are redemptive—and why?

¹¹³ Ibid., 544.

And yet— there is one last character sketch that requires an account. It is not of a central character, but of a minor one in a minor sub-plot—and, upon my reading, it is significant to the inquiry of these questions. It is the story of Harry’s sister Cora—a story powerfully laden with the ethics of miscegenated family, the suffering-with sympathy of love and sacrifice, and an extremely sober refusal of *both* hope and dread.

When Harry flees the Gordon plantation, he writes to Clayton to request a favor: to please find his sister. Born also of Colonel Gordon (Nina and Harry’s father) and the enslaved mother shared by Harry, Cora eventually arrived in the free-state of Ohio, married to her former master, and bearing and raising their two children together.¹¹⁴ When Cora’s husband unexpectedly dies, the Gordon estate issues a demand for his property, which including Cora and her children. Rather than turn her children over to enslavement by way of an Alexandria, Virginia slave auction, Cora instead decides to commit filicide. “I killed them!” Clayton witnesses Cora proclaim to a courtroom, “Because I loved them! –loved them so well that I was willing to give up my soul to save theirs!” Cora then explains, “I was not in a frenzy; I was not excited; and I did know what I was doing!”¹¹⁵ As jolting as it may read to Stowe’s audience, the murder of Cora’s children, committed with sober intention, as Cora argues, is out of her sense of incommensurable love as a mother and willingness to sacrifice herself for their eternal redemption. Cora understands that she has fully given up the state of her soul for the safety of

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 62-63.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 439. Contemporary readers will find resonances of this in Sethe’s act of filicide in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 1987). In *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Cassy also unapologetically admits to killing her third child by laudanum in desperation of not seeing him torn away from her and into the systems of slavery, 334-335.

theirs in a heavenly world where they will not know slavery. Cora is aware of the consequences of her actions. With resolute composure that echoes Gray's telling of Nat Turner, she asserts, "They say this is a dreadful sin. It may be so. I am willing to lose my soul to have *theirs saved*. I have no more to hope or fear."¹¹⁶ It is not the heroic flight of Eliza, the Christ-like long-suffering of Tom and Milly, the prophetic vision of Dred, or the righteous indignation of Harry, but Cora's justification language is nevertheless saturated with filial love, religious sacrifice, and an indictment against the injustices of slavery.

Dred's reception

Harriet Beecher Stowe completed her first non-serialized novel on the 15th of August, 1856. "To triumph —Its done! —and I send it. You may have it published as soon as you please," wrote Stowe to Moses Dresser Phillips, her new editor at Phillips, Sampson and Company (and soon to be the founder of *The Atlantic Monthly* a year later in 1857 with Francis Underwood). "Congratulate me! —I hardly thought I should do it — but its done — and it suits me and I hope it will suit you."¹¹⁷ And with the manuscript off to her publisher, Stowe set sail again to Europe ten days later to secure British copyright for *Dred* and return to her recently formed friendships.

In the immediate months following its publication, *Dred* received great praise—perhaps the most noteworthy came from Queen Victoria herself, who reportedly enjoyed *Dred* more than

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 442. Emphasis original.

¹¹⁷ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Moses Dresser Phillips, 11 June 1856. The Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Emphasis original.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, was “provoked when [Nina] died” and “angry that something dreadful did not happen to Tom Gordon.”¹¹⁸ The novel also earned the praise of George Eliot, setting the stage for their notable literary friendship.¹¹⁹ In her October 1856 review in *Westminster Review*, Eliot not only lauded the novel’s “exquisite landscape,” “scenes of humour,” and “uncontrollable power” of reform spirit, but also credits Stowe for having “*invented* the Negro novel,” which, for Eliot, is a kind of novel that could incite readers’ sympathetic emotional responses over the social differences.¹²⁰ According to Eliot, Stowe belonged to “the highest rank of novelists who can give us a national life in all its phases—popular and aristocratic, humourous and tragic, political and religious.”¹²¹ The moral force and political critique were also recognized in early reviews of *Dred*. A postscript note in a letter to the Duchess of Argyll describes Stowe’s response to a reviewer convinced that a woman could not have authored the strident social and political themes of the novel:

By the bye a reviewer of *Dred* amuses me — He admits that all the trifling parts are by me — but says that some parts are so far above the ordinary range of us women that some of the earnest men spirits of America must have chosen me as their Pythoness to hand their oracles out to the public. Think of my being made a myth of while alive and walking — I really begin to think of pluming myself on this.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Letter to Calvin Stowe, 16, October 1856. Stowe and Stowe, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, 285.

¹¹⁹ On the letters they exchanged, see Marlene Springer, “Stowe and Eliot: An Epistolary Friendship,” *Biography* 9.1 (1986) 59-81.

¹²⁰ George Eliot, “Belles Lettres,” *Westminster Review* (October, 1856), 571-573. Emphasis original.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Harriet Beecher Stowe to Elizabeth Georgiana (Leveson-Gower) Campbell, Duchess of Argyll, 15 September 1856. Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

While Stowe's ability to handle this with apparent good-natured amusement is laudable, the account of the review displays the growing gendered divisions in accounts of Anglo-American fiction at the mid-century—a division of the labor of literature that Stowe would encounter more frequently in her publications of later novels, as well as in journals and periodicals such as *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Selling over 200,000 copies, *Dred* was a publication success. While its immediate reception was much anticipated and praised, it would ultimately not sustain the cultural power of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* over the remainder of the nineteenth-century. What might explain its want of fuller recognition in Stowe's canon? The fact that it is longer and more meandering work in character and plot development than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, while irksome to twentieth-century literary critics, did not dissuade reviewers attuned to the genre and Stowe's pen during her time. If not style and structure, then what influenced this receptive difference?

Drawing on Higginson's attention to white panic in his treatment of Nat Turner, I want to argue that discomfort with white dread may be part of what influenced the varied reception of Stowe's novels. Like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Dred* invokes righteous indignation at the wrongs of slavery. In both novels, readers are asked to respond with sympathetic sorrow, anger, and distress at the plights of enslaved characters and those trying to call for social reform. Like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Dred* appeals to Northern anti-slavery audiences who want to distinguish themselves from a regressive Southern slaveholding culture that is morally bankrupt and unable to elicit change without the Northern intervention of morality, education, and industry. But unlike *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Dred* draws much more fully on prophetic religion and insurrectionary patriotism to warn of a coming day of divine judgment. Even if tamed by Stowe, as I've sought to

demonstrate in my above analysis, the characters of Harry, Milly, Dred, and Cora are far more literate, complex, and pregnant with resistance possibilities than Tom, Eliza, and George. While Stowe renders the character of Dred more palpable than Nat Turner, he certainly is not as consumable as Uncle Tom.

In his “Nat Turner’s Rebellion,” Thomas Wentworth Higginson provides a lengthy account of the quick-moving hysteria invoked across the Southern states by Turner’s insurrection. “[T]he panic of the whites” manifested itself in an increase of reported suspicious activity, the studying of known slave insurrections across the western Atlantic hemisphere, the implementation of new laws and practices prohibiting the gathering and education of slaves, and an increase in armed vigilantism.”¹²³ Furthermore, Higginson offers a very prescient interpretation of this white panic:

[I]t was the suspicion eternally attached to the slave himself,--the suspicion that a Nat Turner might be in every family,--that the same bloody deed might be acted over at any time and in any place,--that the materials for it were spread through the land, and were always ready for a like explosion.¹²⁴

¹²³ Higginson, 181-183. Indeed, the panic was thought to be of international proportion. Higginson writes,

Such were the terrors that came back from nine other Slave States, as the echo of the voice of Nat Turner; and when it is also known that the subject was at once taken up by the legislatures of other States, where there was no public panic, as in Missouri and Tennessee,--and when, finally, it is added that reports of insurrection had been arriving all that year from Rio Janeiro, Martinique, St. Jago, Antigua, Caraccas, and Tortola, it is easy to see with what prolonged distress the accumulated terror must have weighed down upon Virginia, during the two months that Nat Turner lay hid (Ibid., 183).

¹²⁴ Ibid. 186. A century and a half later in 2017, there are few things that continue to seem more American than the eternal suspicion of the black man and the constant smoldering of racialized white panic, as evidenced today in police violence, privatized prison systems, stand-your-ground laws, racist immigration policy, and the rhetoric and demonstration of white nationalism and supremacy.

Higginson rightly points to the source of panic: the eternal suspicion of the black man who is in every family, across time and place, possibly armed and waiting to exact his own justice. By racializing the panic as white, moreover, Higginson offers an illustration of how emotions of panic, dread, and fear adhere to constructed racial identities.

Stowe herself participates in this white panic by fashioning not only the reclusive character of Dred, but also the domesticated character of loyal Harry as suspect of insurrection potential. Like the articulation of sympathy for Anglo-American benevolent identity, Stowe's use of dread may best be understood in its relation to a white slaveholding nation haunted by the possibilities of black armed resistance and retribution. While Stowe refuses to write a plot where Dred and Harry are able to carry out their divinely and patriotically -sourced plans, the dread of a nation awaiting divine retribution nevertheless remains. Perhaps this residual national panic explains the difference in popularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dred* amongst a readership that embraces Uncle Tom's Bible and cheers for Eliza's escape, but is frightened of Dred's Bible, disturbed by Cora's decision, and aware that legal, political, and moral institutions increasingly hold little hope.

The goal of this chapter has been to map the uses of the sentiment of dread across Stowe's *Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*. Here, I have explored the historical and imaginative space of the swamp as setting, but also as a murky and unresolved (and unresolvable) space to think about and with the unfolding events of Bleeding Kansas. By attending closely to Stowe's characters and the moral landscapes in which they act, I have mapped how dread figures in Stowe's vocabulary of sentimentality and is contingent on race and gender—Nina's white innocence, Milly's corpulent surrogacy, Dred's masculine terror, Harry's brooding

insurrectionary potential and miscegenation, and Clayton's well-exercised "superior cultivation." Dread troubles each of these—providing a resistance narrative, even against the grain of Stowe's own character sketch tropes and plot features. Dread allows for the death of innocence, the exposure of miscegenated loyalties, the flaws and failures of legal and moral systems, and the persistent sensibility that a judgment day still remains on the haunted horizon.

Finally, while not reaching the same popularity as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Dred* further cemented Stowe's authority both as an anti-slavery writer and as an internationally recognizable American novelist. Stowe's persistent political and religious questions about slavery would continue to shape her following projects, including writing for Henry's *Independent* on slavery issues and participation in literary conversations about the role of fiction in the creation of national literature. In particular, the question of election, disinterested moral action and benevolence, and the history of anti-slavery religious voices find new voice in the literary work of her next novel, *The Minister's Wooing*.

Chapter 5:

*The Minister's Wooing: On Ministers and Mothers*¹

The clear logic and intense individualism of New England deepened the problems of the Augustinian faith ... No rite, no form, no paternal relation, no faith or prayer of church, earthly or heavenly interposed the slightest shield between the trembling spirit and Eternal Justice. The individual entered eternity alone, as if he had no interceding relation in the universe. This, then was the awful dread which was constantly underlying life. ... And this it was that was lying with mountain weight on the shoulder of the mother, too keenly agonized to feel that doubt in such a case was any less a torture than the most dreadful certainty.

–Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, 1859.²

Bleeding Kansas would only be the beginning of mounting violence and increased antagonism between Northern and Southern states. After returning from her third European trip, Stowe took to writing for her brother Henry's *Independent*, often anonymously, providing critical commentary on national events and the anti-slavery cause. She also began work on her third novel; focused on a marriage plot set two generations earlier in historic Newport, Rhode

¹ The subtitle of this chapter refers to Ann Douglas's third chapter "Ministers and Mothers: Changing and Exchanging Roles" in *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Noonday Press, 1977). While the organization of this chapter around these themes was not inspired by or indebted to the specific Douglas chapter in which she lists thirty ministers and women engaged in literary sentimentalism and responsible for producing the feminization of culture, it does offer a strong case for Stowe's sophisticated theological knowledge, command of historical New England culture, and concern about ineffective ministerial pedagogy. Ironically, Stowe represents the very thing that Douglas mourns.

² Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1999. Originally published in 1859) 198.

Island, *The Minister's Wooing* raises the question: why would the country's most visible anti-slavery novelist choose a plot and period so removed from the frontlines of a national moral and political battle?

Some historians and critics of Stowe, including her most recent biographer, Joan Hedrick, point to Stowe's astute attention to a literary market with increased interest in "domestic fiction."³ Unlike her experimental penning of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe now firmly saw her career as a novelist and sought to write stories that would be of interest to reading consumers. Meeting consumer demands, moreover, would also meet her own expenses as she pursued a progressively upper-middle-class way of life. Furthermore, the literary market, as Hedrick argues, was becoming increasingly segregated into gendered writing projects, secluding female writers to specialists of home, hearth, and "local color."⁴

In this chapter, I argue that Stowe's quaint historical fiction and romantic regional work is more than an adaptation to segregated market demands (though it is also that). Rather, *The Minister's Wooing* engages long-fermenting concerns with the legacy of Calvinist notions of election. The novel has national reach because of its exploration into national origins and it arguably qualifies as her *third* anti-slavery novel. Behind the guise of a captivating marriage plot and a cast of comical characters set in the "keen New England air that crystalizes emotion," Stowe grapples with the religious sources of anti-slavery sentiment and action, the preparation of

³ Joan Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 288-309. This is a claim that is also central to Douglas's thesis.

⁴ Ibid.

ministers for the nation, and the discernable signs of Calvinist election.⁵ Stowe remains preoccupied with the national soul—and, like the project of history itself, returns to an earlier period to find sources that speak to the moral negotiations of her present day.

Central to this exploration is the doctrine of disinterested benevolence, a barometric test by which one knows whether one is among the elect, or chosen, of God. According to this doctrine, a sign of election is whether one is truly willing to sacrifice one's life for the eternal state of another. For Stowe, the doctrine first and foremost articulates how a mother's heart experiences the grief over a lost child (albeit, providing little satisfaction in response to the psychic agony of divine election itself), as modeled in Mrs. Marvyn's grief over the reported loss at sea of her son. Mrs Marvyn's sorrow echoes Stowe's own grief at the unexpected death of her son just months before the beginning of this novel project. Most importantly, perhaps, the doctrine of disinterested benevolence provides the religious basis for the cause of anti-slavery, motivating benevolent social reform. We see this in Stowe's account of the historical figure of Samuel Hopkins and his translation of disinterested benevolence into a social and political anti-slavery ethic. Owing to the legacy of Hopkinsian theology, the doctrine is also a vehicle for thinking about the training of ministers and their ability to offer palatable theology. Finally, with

⁵ Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, 16. My argument here also builds upon, but differs slightly from, the important recovery readings of *The Minister's Wooing*, most of which carry the same themes of Stowe's theological refashioning project. On the redeeming role of women, Dorothy Berkson, "Millennial Politics and the Feminine Fiction of Harriet Beecher Stowe," in Ammons, ed., *Critical Essays on Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), 244-258; Gayle Kimball, *The Religious Ideas of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (New York: Mellen Press, 1982); and John Gatta, "The Anglican Aspect of Harriet Beecher Stowe," *New England Quarterly* 73.3 (2000), 412-13. On the importance of domestic spaces in *The Minister's Wooing*, see Joan Hedrick, "'Peaceable Fruits': The Ministry of Harriet Beecher Stowe," *American Quarterly* 40.3 (1988), 307-32; Nancy Lusignan Schultz, "The Artist's Craftiness: Miss Prissy in *The Minister's Wooing*," *Studies in American Fiction* 20.1 (1992), 33-44; and Susan Harris, "The Female Imaginary in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing*," *New England Quarterly* 66.2 (1993), 179-98.

its publication in the newly formed *Atlantic Monthly*, whose mission of developing a national literary culture base on New England exceptionalism, Stowe's theological and social project in this novel can also be read as an ethical inquiry into the historical and theological roots of a divinely elected nation.

In addition to the novel, this chapter draws on significant and intimate correspondence between Stowe and her family during the penning of the novel. The letters provide sharp and rigorous insight into Stowe's interior and intellectual life as she navigates grief and doubt, in attempting to fashion a more capacious theology of a loving God. After an overview of the novel itself, this chapter is organized into three parts. I begin with a discussion that sets the stage for the significance of New England regionalism to the national cultural mission of *The Atlantic*. The second section looks at the preparation of competent and sympathetic ministers for the nation, describing Stowe's worry with the Hopkins archetype. Finally, the third section is an analysis of loss, the doctrine of divine election, and Stowe's uses of black surrogacy to refashion its context and reach.

The Minister's Wooing

Published in 1859, Stowe's third novel was first serialized in *The Atlantic* between December 1858 and December 1859 as the magazine's inaugural serialized novel following its founding in 1857. A work of historical fiction set in 1790s Newport, Rhode Island, the novel foregrounds the embeddedness of New England Calvinist theology in the daily social patterns of

household work, tea time hospitality, dress-making, love, loss, and early New England anti-slavery debates.⁶

Two major plots structure the novel, both of which feature the Calvinist minister, Dr. Hopkins, and his doctrine of disinterested benevolence. The first plot is a marriage plot and a love triangle. The young protagonist and the congregation's exemplar of sublime religious devotion, Mary Scudder, begins the novel in love with James Marvyn (though, unbeknownst to her), confessing this "love" through the language of self-sacrificial disinterested benevolence in concern for his soul. Tragic news arrives when the ship James sets voyage on is lost at sea. The news produces profound anguish and sorrow in Mary and the Marvyn family, as there appears to be no clear evidence of the regenerative state of his soul. Candace, the household slave to the Marvyn family, consoles Mrs. Marvyn, assuring her that she might trust her motherly intuition of James' elect status. Meanwhile, Dr. Hopkins, who resides in the Scudder home, realizes his own love for Mary and, with the encouragement of her busybody mother, Katy Scudder, proposes marriage. Mary's deep admiration for Hopkins and the influence of her mother compel her to accept his proposal. On the eve of the marriage, James returns from sea (in regenerative splendor) professing both his love for Mary and assurance of his spiritual state. Dr. Hopkins, in realizing Mary's residual love for James, despite her loyal commitment to their betrothal, "sacrifices" his proposal as an act of romantic disinterested benevolence. The plot concludes with the marriage of Mary and James, officiated by Dr. Hopkins.

The second major plot involves Dr. Hopkins applying the doctrine of disinterested benevolence to the cause of anti-slavery (drawing in large part on the writings of the historical

⁶ Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, 16.

Calvinist minister and theologian, Samuel Hopkins). Because slavery is an offense to benevolence, Hopkins sets out to convince members of his congregation to divest their participation in slavery, both as slaveholders and as beneficiaries of slave trade wealth (arguably the primary source of wealth for the shipping industry of Newport at this time). The Marvyns manumit their slaves Candace and Cato (who remain working for them as household servants). Simeon Brown, the “richest and most liberal supporter of the society” through his wealth as a ship owner in the slave trade, begins the novel boasting of his ascription to the doctrine of disinterested benevolence as one pertaining to the soul, but refuses Hopkins’ extension of its social reach and leaves the congregation in protest for a rival Newport congregation that reflects his narrow belief.⁷

Regionalism and the Making of a National Literature

Writing to Francis Underwood, founder and first associate editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Stowe celebrates the beginning of her project as a masterful representation of New England religion. She writes,

[T]hus far, it is racy full of pungency poetry and power true as powerful – nobody but “the church termagant” will make a fuss and she perhaps may not like to put on the cap. Mr. Stowe is much delighted with it and says amen with all his heart – it is one of the strongest if not the strongest thing we have had yet the view of New England religion is masterly.⁸

⁷ Ibid., 86, 106. The rival Newport congregation is that of Dr. Stiles, who is based on the historical figure of Ezra Stiles, leader of the “Old Light” Congregational church in Newport, and a slave-holder.

⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Francis Henry Underwood, 30 March 1858. Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Emphasis original.

Stowe's representation of New England religion is indeed sharp, poetic and powerful. She produces a regional work that impressively transforms New England into a character unto itself, shaped by and shaping its people, weather, soil, doctrines, and "faculty" ("faculty" is defined in this novel as "yankee for savoir faire").⁹ Perhaps the most fitting example is her description of Mary Scudder, whose religious interests may have produced "beatific visions" had she been born in a warm, sunny, Italian climate; "but," as Stowe's narrator writes,

[U]nfolding in the clear, keen, cold New England clime, and nurtured in its abstract and positive theologies, her religious faculties took other forms. Instead of lying entranced in mysterious raptures at the foot of altars, she read and pondered treatises on the Will, and listened in rapt attention, while her spiritual guide, the venerated Dr. Hopkins, unfolded to her the theories of the great Edwards on the nature of true virtue.¹⁰

New England, according to Stowe, affectively hardens "many a poetic soul" with "the keen New England air [that] crystalizes emotions into ideas."¹¹ From New England's rocky soil and "rigid theological discipline," the fortitude of "strength and purity" is produced not for enjoyment and happiness, but for noble and "practical living."¹²

Its publication in *The Atlantic* conveyed a great deal of esteem for Stowe and the world she represents in the novel. No one else could have masterfully written such a work of New England culture, according to poet and early editor of the magazine, James Russell Lowell, whose celebratory review pronounces:

⁹ Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 61.

In the materials of character already present in the story, there is scope for Mrs. Stowe's humor, pathos, clear moral sense, and quick eye for the scenery of life. We do not believe that there is any one who, by birth, breeding, and natural capacity, has had the opportunity to know New England so well as she, or who has the peculiar genius so to profit by the knowledge.¹³

For Lowell, furthermore, Stowe not only captures the New England character, but she accomplishes the important cultural preservation of "New England habits and tradition" for the national project of historical fiction. He argues that "There is no other writer who is so capable of perpetuating for us, in a work of art, a style of thought and manners which railways and newspapers will soon render as palaeozoic as the mastodon or the megalosaurians."¹⁴ At stake for Lowell (and on behalf of *The Atlantic*) is Stowe's ability to capture the lasting character of a culture whose time had passed, not only in the style and character of a masterful sketch, but also with the aim of allaying the worry about the waning influence and hegemonic power of New England culture for the nation.

The Atlantic Monthly

The appearance of *The Minister's Wooing* on the American literary landscape not only follows the publications of Stowe's first two novels and travels to Europe at great literary and political acclaim, but also the emergence of an increasing interest in the project of forming an influential American literary elite centered in New England. Founded in 1857 with a cultural mission "to guide the age," *The Atlantic* sought to produce and preserve an authoritative tradition

¹³ Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Edward Stowe, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Compiled from Her Letters and Journals* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1890), 332.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 330.

of New England culture as a way to influence the character of the nation in the midst of a growing mass culture.¹⁵ The “Yankee humanists” involved in the founding of the magazine include Francis H. Underwood, James Russell Lowell, and James T. Fields. In its early years, *The Atlantic Monthly* garnered regular contributions from Thomas Wentworth Higginson, J. Elliot Cabot, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, among others.¹⁶ For *Atlantic* readers, for example, installments of *The Ministers Wooing* were enjoyed alongside Oliver Wendell Holmes’ celebrated “Autocrat of the Breakfast Table” column.¹⁷

Based on her well-received contributions alone, Harriet Beecher Stowe was central to the formative years of *The Atlantic Monthly*. While *The Minister’s Wooing* was the first serialized publication to run in the periodical, Stowe also contributed several short stories, including: “The Mourning Veil” in its inaugural issue; “A Reply” (discussed in the third chapter) in 1862; “Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl” (1863); the “Chimney Corner,” a regular column (1864-1866) under the pseudonym of Christopher Crowfield; “Oldtown Fireside Stories,” another

¹⁵ Ellery Sedgwick, *The Atlantic Monthly 1857-1909: Yankee Humanism at High Tide and Ebb* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 1, 29.

¹⁶ Ibid. See also Hedrick’s chapter “*The Atlantic* and the Ship of State: 1859-1864,” in *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 288-309.

¹⁷ See Dorothy Baker’s “Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Conversation with the *Atlantic Monthly*: The Construction of *The Minister’s Wooing*” in *Studies of American Fiction* 28.1 (2000), 27-38. Like Stowe, young ministers were the subject of many of Holmes’ pieces. Evidence suggests Stowe and Holmes engaged in a literary conversation of sorts within their works in *The Atlantic*.

regular column (1869); and “The True Story of Lady Byron’s Life” (1869).¹⁸ While Stowe’s Byron Affair piece garnered salacious attention and much disapprobation, Stowe’s early contributions to the formative literary and cultural voice for *The Atlantic* should not be underestimated. Despite the many gendered barriers of New England literary elite writing groups, such as the men’s-only Saturday Club at the Revere House, Stowe’s popularity and publication in *The Atlantic*, marked her as an exemplar for her literary contemporaries who were interested in shaping a New England-centered American literary and cultural elite ready for readership consumption and influence.¹⁹ Unfortunately, while Stowe was excluded from these literary circles that used and celebrated her regional work for their cultural politics of nation-making, Stowe’s legacy would later be confined by mid-century literary historians who considered the reach of regionalism to be limited and overly associated with womanhood, even as they celebrated its thick description a socio-cultural regional mentality.²⁰

¹⁸ In 2010, *The Atlantic* stated its interest in making fiction a more regular part of its continued publications, recognizing its importance to its literary history and citing Stowe’s story, “The Mourning Veil,” as example of fiction appearing in its founding issue. See James Bennet, “A Long Story,” *The Atlantic*, April 2010.

¹⁹ Joan Hedrick argues that this is during a time before the American literary canon becomes more hegemonically male. *The Atlantic*’s literary acclaim coincided with the formation of a male literary elite. Hedrick writes, “The establishment of the white male canon of American literature began in these Cambridge men’s clubs, whose members supported one another’s literary reputations, taught the first American literature courses, and wrote the first literary histories of the United States” (*Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 291).

²⁰ The term “local color” actually first appeared in the pages of *The Atlantic* in 1864 under the editorial leadership of James T. Fields (Sedgwick, *The Atlantic Monthly 1857-1909*, 95). “Local color” would become associated with a post-Civil War phenomenon to reevaluate national history on the regional scale. By the end of the nineteenth-century, it became associated with a counter-tradition of female writers interested in rural, agrarian, and matriarchal themes, according to Josephine Donovan (*New England Local Color Literature: A Woman’s Tradition*, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1983). Alice Crozier does not place Stowe in the “local color” school, but does see her work as prototype to the work of other female novelists (*The Novels of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). For a celebration of Stowe as one of the “region’s two greatest writers of historical fiction” (the other being Nathaniel Hawthorne), see Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (1986), 240.

Rocky New England Soil

In many ways, *The Minister's Wooing* is a return to Stowe's first literary subject interest: New England. The first fictional publication bearing her name was "A New England Sketch," published in 1834 during her time in Cincinnati and later renamed as "Uncle Tim" and then "Uncle Lot."²¹ As an active member of the Cincinnati Semi-Colon Club, Stowe found her voice writing short sketches and stories conjuring and celebrating regional nostalgia among the group's New England emigrants.²² Stowe's third novel, then, was to be the first of several novels set in the historic and cultural landscape of her childhood and later adult home. Published in 1862, *The Pearl of Orr Island* (a project she began before *Dred*) was set in Maine and inspired by her time at Brunswick when Calvin taught at Bowdoin College. In 1869, she published *Oldtown Folks*, set in Natick, Massachusetts, and long regarded as her favorite novel. And, finally, her last novel, *Poganauc People*, published in 1878, was based in her childhood hometown of Litchfield, Connecticut. Moreover, as Henry Ward Beecher's 1868 *Norwood* attests, Stowe was not the only Beecher to write a regional novel considering the intricacies of New England culture.²³

In 1859, however, the country's most celebrated anti-slavery novelist began her third novel not in her present moment, during the contentious aftermath of the Fugitive Slave Act or

²¹ Stowe, "A New England Sketch," *Western Monthly Magazine*, April 1837. It would later be renamed "Uncle Tim" in 1843 and "Uncle Lot" in 1855.

²² Many of these stories were later be published in *The Mayflower: And Miscellaneous Writings* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co., 1869). See also the edited collection, *Regional Sketches: New England and Florida*, edited by John R. Adams (New Haven: College & University Press, 1972).

²³ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Pearl of Orr's Island: A Story of the Coast of Maine* (Boston: Ticknor Fields, 1862); *Oldtown Folks* (Boston: Fields Osgood, 1869); *Poganauc People: Their Loves and Lives* (Boston: Fields Osgood, 1878); Henry Ward Beecher, *Norwood; Or Village Life in New England* (New York: Scribner and Company, 1868).

Bleeding Kansas, but in “Pre-Railroad Times.”²⁴ Set not in the southern plantation or dismal swamp (places she had never actually visited); it would be a novel set in the familiar “rocky New England soil” of homespun, theological debate, and congregation gossip. As a work of historical fiction, the novel provides an opportunity to search out a “pre-railroad time” origin of the theological and political questions of nation making. Under the banner of *The Atlantic’s* mission, the novel celebrates the founding of a national culture and character centered around small farms, hard work, and earnest ministers. Yet is also an economy based on slavery. The anti-slavery question does not disappear for Stowe, but is enfolded into the church debates of the ethical reach of the doctrine of disinterested benevolence. Slavery, in *The Minister’s Wooing*, is an economic and moral problem not of the South, but of the North as well, with the wealth of Newport indebted to its port of slave trade ships. When Stowe’s narrator asks, “What shall a man do with a sublime tier of moral faculties, when the most profitable business out of his port is the slave-trade?” the question of the efficacy of the work of theology as both a personal and social ethic is delivered as a central question of the novel, even if potentially obfuscated behind a nostalgic New England setting and the devoted characters produced by its soil.²⁵

Across her character sketches and scenes, Stowe raises important questions about whether the characters produced by this culture can effectively guide the nation. This is especially true for the character of Dr. Hopkins, as the significance of New England, according to Stowe, is the significance of its ministers. New England is not just the climate, but the

²⁴ “Pre-Railroad Times” is the title of the first chapter of *The Minister’s Wooing*.

²⁵ *The Minister’s Wooing*, 6. Newport, Rhode Island was a main port of registry for American-owned slave ships. See Anne Farrow, *The Logbooks: Connecticut’s Slave Ships and Human Memory* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2014).

interiority, the intellectual and emotional landscape represented in and nurtured by characters such as Dr. Hopkins and his theology.

Preparation of the Nation's Ministers

On March 8th, 1859, in the midst of the serialization of *The Minister's Wooing*, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote Hatty and Eliza, her eldest twin daughters, a lengthy letter from the Brooklyn home of her brother Henry Ward Beecher and his wife Eunice.²⁶ With the opening instruction to “Read this Sunday Morning,” Stowe marks the letter as a sermonic one -- its aim is to instruct, edify, and share a familial message with daughters an ocean away in a Paris boarding school. After providing a bit of news concerning the deteriorating health of their grandfather, Lyman Beecher, Stowe excerpts pieces of Henry's “beautiful” sermon. “Among other things [Uncle Henry] said, ‘It is God's nature to be giving himself’ for us — to make himself the remedy ‘for our sins’ —” she writes. Henry's assertion of the nature of God, she describes, stands in contrast to ministers who represent “the dreadful way in which the old theology represented God — burning with wrath — scorching scathing so that the sinner could not get at his feelings or his heart without some arrangement and machinery to get him right.”²⁷ The majority of the letter then reads as a continuation of the sermon in Harriet's own voice, extending motherly admonitions to view God as fully generous and noble (the antithesis of the God of machinations and systems). Such counsel provides insight into the theology Stowe

²⁶ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Harriet Beecher Stowe II and Eliza Tyler Stowe II, 8 March 1859. Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

²⁷ Ibid.

desires for her children: a moral formation grounded in an unselfish love for others and based on the generous heart of God.

One in a collection of ten letters written to Hatty and Eliza between March and June 1859, this particular letter brings together most fully Stowe's theology of the love of God and others, as well as her clearest opinion of the influence of ministers, especially tragically misguided ones. As a whole, the letters reveal a great deal about how Stowe understands the constructive work of theological edification—she warns of “morbid thoughts” and “injurious forms of religion,” and encourages her daughters to “take your ideas of God” from the New Testament.²⁸ As a critical part of Stowe's robust correspondence, these letters provide an intellectual terrain to understand what is at stake in her literary illustrations of Calvinist doctrine, ministers, and their work in the nation.

In this “Sunday Morning” letter, Stowe reflects extensively on the role of some ministers who “have built up a cold dry technical system” that obscures the “noble and generous heart” of Christ's teachings and the experience of the unselfish love of God and others. Ministers possess the ability to either represent God in “the dreadful way” of “old theology,” or as “a wide generous soul.” While Henry is Stowe's exemplary model of the minister who represents the generous soul, other ministers, though “good men,” spend their time giving “just the wrong medicine.” She writes:

It is a melancholy thing to see the misdirected efforts of good men. To see a Doctor come with the most earnest face, and careful step and after long thinking and the most careful attention give — just the wrong medicine to a patient whom he would give his heart's blood to save, — to see a good conscientious minister get up in a pulpit and obscure the simple light of Christs words — deny and contradict

²⁸ Ibid.

the very essence and spirit of the new testament — give such a view of God as one gets by looking into a cracked distorted looking glass and call this — preaching the gospel — The reason why men do so is that they have not in themselves the sympathy to understand God —²⁹

Not only does this read as a character sketch for the Dr. Hopkins of the novel, but it also reads as Stowe's worry about the preparation of competent young ministers who—through the working of sympathy—are able to understand God and the service of ministry. While this letter reflects her nearness to Henry at the time of the letter, it also reflects her nearness to the pedagogy of Andover Seminary under the leadership of Edward Park. Indeed, much of what preoccupies this letter and the novel is shaped by her observation of the training of ministers and their theological development at Andover.

While the character of Dr. Hopkins draws from the historical figure of Samuel Hopkins, Stowe had countless sources of inspiration as the daughter, sister, and spouse to many trained ministers in the Calvinist tradition. While gender prohibited the Beecher women from official ministry, Harriet and Catharine were nevertheless also steeped in Calvinist theological language and served as critical and esteemed interlocutors to the male ministers of the family. Each was trained in the meat of doctrinal debates, as reflected in Catharine's later treatise and in the young twelve-year-old Harriet's award-winning school composition (her first piece of recognized writing), a response to the question "Can the immortality of the soul be proved by the light of nature?"³⁰ If anything can be seen as most characteristic of the Beecher family, it was the long theological debates about the nature of God and role of ministers, as reported and documented in

²⁹ Ibid. Emphasis original.

³⁰ Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 15-21.

their family correspondence. Furthermore, with Calvin Stowe on the faculty at Andover after appointments at Lane and Bowdoin, Stowe developed an engaged and invested knowledge of ministerial pedagogy and school politics.

Like the Dr. Hopkins of the novel, the historical Samuel Hopkins presided over a congregation in Newport, Rhode Island and was steadily at work in the 1790s on his *System*.³¹ He also, as Stowe admirably profiles him in her “New England Ministers,” published in Sprague’s *Annals*, was among the first Protestants (Quakers excluded) to champion the anti-slavery cause in early New England culture.³² In “New England Ministers,” Stowe celebrates Hopkins as an exemplar of New England moral reform, one who was “well knowing that there was no logic like that of consistent action.”³³ For Hopkins, slavery was an offense against the logic of divine benevolence, preventing the presence of the gospel in both the lives of slave and slaveholder. Stowe was also well aware of the fact that Hopkins was drawn to the religious devotion of women, editing memoirs of his parishioners, Sarah Osborn (1798) and Susannah Anthony (1796).³⁴ The Dr. Hopkins of the novel’s intellectual earnestness, commitment to anti-slavery reform, and admiration for Mary Scudder’s devotion no doubt derive from Stowe’s

³¹ Samuel Hopkins, *System of Doctrines Contained in Divine Revelation, Explained and Defended, Shewing Their Consistence and Connexion with Each Other, to Which Is Added, a Treatise on the Millennium*, 2 vols. Second edition. (Boston: Lincoln & Edmands, 1811. First published in 1793), in *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D.* 3 vols. edited by Edwards Amasa Park (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1852).

³² Harriet Beecher Stowe, “‘New England Ministers’: A Review of W. C. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (1857), 485. Hopkins major anti-slavery work is *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans, Shewing It to be the Duty and Interest of the American States to Emancipate All Their African Slaves* (1776).

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ On the devotional life of Sarah Osborn, see Catherine Brekus, *Sarah Osborn’s World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

familiarity with the life and work of Samuel Hopkins. Stowe's liberties with the Hopkins character come in his social grace (or, lack thereof) and the romantic plot (for the historical Hopkins was not a bachelor boarder, but married with eight children during his Newport ministry).³⁵ Stowe's rendering of Hopkins as among "the hard old New England divines," is at once appreciative of his bold theological innovations ("as the pioneer leader of a new theology, in a country where theology was the all-absorbing interest"), admiring of his "subtile refinements of argument and exalted ideas of morals," shrewd in his sympathetic shortcomings as a "specimen of life in earnest," and invested in his application of the doctrine of disinterested benevolence to the anti-slavery cause.³⁶

Given her ongoing reference to her robust reading practices, Beecher family, New England upbringing, and marriage to a biblical scholar, Stowe had deep familiarity with Edwardsean Calvinism first hand, including access to the works of Samuel Hopkins. Not only was Stowe involved in the editing of Lyman Beecher's *Autobiography* during these years, and thus exposed to regional and family sources of history, the Stowe family residence at Andover Theological Seminary placed Stowe near to Edwards A. Park's project, the recently edited and still standard edition of Hopkins writing, including his *Memoir of the Life and Character of Samuel Hopkins, D.D.* (1852) and *The Works of Samuel Hopkins* (1852).³⁷ Indeed, Stowe's

³⁵ See also Joseph Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England Between the Great Awakenings* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1981) and Charles Foster, *The Rungless Ladder: Harriet Beecher Stowe and New England Puritanism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1954).

³⁶ Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, 19, 53, 56, 139.

³⁷ Lyman Beecher and Charles Beecher, *Autobiography, Correspondence, etc. of Lyman Beecher* (New York: Harper, 1865). Among the interesting sources from the biographical material that Stowe uses for her novel is a

correspondence with Edwards Amasa Park, a Hopkins protégé and President and Professor of Christian Theology at the Seminary, indicates that she conferred with both Professor Park and his wife, Anne Marie Edwards Park (who, in the microcosm of New England and Calvinist genealogy, was the great-granddaughter of Jonathan Edwards) on her portrayal of Hopkins. A March 1859 letter from Stowe to the Parks announces her receipt of the proof of the next serial installment of *The Minister's Wooing*, which she invite them to review and discuss. She writes,

[I]f you and the Professor will come and drink tea here tonight I should like to read it to him as the number is specially devoted to the Doctor, and as the Doctor is his special and patron saint I shall hope if he thinks I have done him justice every body else will besides I have introduced the character he suggested — Will you com Truly Yrs³⁸

A hand-written response on the letter reads “I will go, if I can/ get away at 8 o'clock.”³⁹ The letter and response provide proof that Stowe found the Parks’ to be important and invested interlocutors in the development of the Hopkins character and the New England story of *The Minister's Wooing*. No doubt this resulted in a work in which astute Calvinist readers would intimately recognize the voice and prose of their intellectual training in Stowe’s treatment of Hopkins, even as they navigated the demands Stowe places on the theology.

However, Park figures as more than the arbiter of Hopkins work. Though welcomed tea time guests, Stowe also held a deep concern for Park’s pedagogy given his role at the helm of an institution training young seminarians in Hopkinsian theology. A letter to Henry and Eunice

letter from her mother, Roxanna, to Lyman. Mary Scudder’s assurance of knowing the love of God to Dr. Hopkins is excerpted directly from Roxanna’s letter. See Foster, *The Rungless Ladder*, 114-115.

³⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Ann Maria (Edwards) Park, undated, before April 1859. The Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Emphasis original. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

³⁹ Ibid.

Beecher just a few months after this letter to the Parks expresses angered dismay over expelled students who challenged Park's theology in the classroom.⁴⁰ The letter begins with an introduction and recommendation to Henry of a young seminarian, Mr. Nichols, in hopes Henry will take him under his wing. Nichols and a small group of men, "cultivated and accustomed to think for themselves began to push theological enquiries in Parkes classes [sic] just as bright young men did in Dr Woods days among whom Parke [sic] was then foremost." Stowe then describes Park as "cowardly" in the face of student inquiry and critique because of his fearfulness of accusations of heresy. To Stowe, his cowardly fear prohibits students from thinking for themselves. She continues, "[he] dares not allow his young men to go one step beyond his lectures for fear they will implicate him and Andover." Stowe sympathizes with the young men who find wanting the version of Calvinist theology taught by Parks. The quelling of their critique, she seems to say, contributes to a weakened Hopkinsian theology. In a revealing statement to Henry and Eunice, she candidly writes, "Proff Parks dry shingle palace of Hopkinsian Theology looks to them about as hopeless as Father's system of theology did to you. They cant [sic] open their mouth and swallow it dry —— and Proff Park admits of no gravy—— ." For Stowe, the palpability of this theology is not only one of tone and style, but also one of the capaciousness of the doctrine of election itself in the Calvinist tradition. She writes, "[T]he Hopkinsian arithmetic method of disposing of a great majority of the human race up to our day and on to the millennium as damned without the benefit of clergy," leaves the students feeling

⁴⁰ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Henry Ward and Eunice Beecher, 30 August 1859. Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection.

hungry and desolate. Finally, in appreciating Henry and Eunice for allowing her “to let off some steam,” she concludes with a remarkable statement:

How is a good boy in a black coat, who has learned by heart ProffParkes [sic] lectures and never doubted to get along among young men, who have heard and seen and thought—been brought up in that country of “Don’t-care-a-dam” which the Methodist minister speaks of. Instead of turning out all the thinkers who dare to differ they ought to send every term for Theodore Parker and let him say his strongest things and teach these fellows that there are two sides to the question and then if ProffPark can hold his own with them—there is some hope of making ministers worth having—“Bless my soul what de ignorance is!”

A great deal of indignant truth is encapsulated in closing words of the letter. Stowe asks about the efficacy of training ministers who are not allowed to question, doubt, or think for themselves—especially among the “don’t-care-a-dam” country of the Methodist minister (presumably the expanding frontier sites of mission and church settlement). A robust theology should be as engaging as it is defensible—if it fails at being engaging and only requires defense, then it remains ignorant and irrelevant. And, as will be discussed in the next section, the final “bless my soul what de ignorance is!” deploys Stowe’s pattern of resorting to black ventriloquism when leveling the most forceful of her critiques.

Loss, the Doctrine of Election, and Black Surrogacy

“Doctor Hopkins has proclaimed to the citizens of Newport their duty,” announces Stowe’s narrator. Their duty, according to Hopkins, is to be “so wholly absorbed in the general good of the universe as even to acquiesce in their own final and eternal destruction, if the greater

good of the whole might thereby be accomplished.”⁴¹ Disinterested benevolence, a doctrine developed first by Jonathan Edwards (*The Nature of True Virtue*, 1756) and advanced by his protégé Samuel Hopkins (*An Inquiry Into the Nature of True Holiness*, 1773), describes how individual virtue is achieved by an alignment with the good of the universe—or, benevolence to Being in general.⁴² Because self-love, or interestedness, always stands as a threat to an individual’s benevolent virtue, Hopkins insisted on the disinterested nature of benevolence, describing this “holy love” in the following way:

Self-love is wholly an interested affection, as self is the only object of it. Holy love has not regard to self, as self, but is a regard to the greatest general good and interest, the glory of God in the highest glory of his kingdom, and the greatest good of the creation. So far as a man exercises holy love, he has no other interest but this, as all is devoted to this, and given up for the sake of it.⁴³

Hopkins expands the nature of virtue and benevolent affections to include a radical self-disregard in the willingness to devote and forsake all for the good of God and humanity.⁴⁴ At stake here is one’s own election—or, more precisely, that one’s own self-interest in one’s election negates “holy love.” For Stowe, however, the test of the authority and reach of the doctrine is not in how

⁴¹ Stowe, *The Minister’s Wooing*, 30.

⁴² Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue*. Edited by Samuel Hopkins (1756); Samuel Hopkins, *An Inquiry Into the Nature of True Holiness* (1773).

⁴³ Hopkins, *Inquiry*, in Park ed., *The Works of Samuel Hopkins*, 3:30.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:22-31. I am indebted to the following sources to help contextualize this doctrine: Joseph Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement* (1981); E. Brook Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought From the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1907); and Joseph Haroutunian, *Piety Versus Moralism: The Passing of New England Theology* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932). Finally, see Douglas Sweeney and Allen Guelzo, eds., *The New England Theology: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) for an abbreviated collection of Edwardsean tradition thinkers, including Hopkins and Edwards the Younger’s pieces on slavery, as well as excerpts from Stowe’s *The Minister’s Wooing* and *Oldtown Folks*.

characters navigate the abstract features of the doctrine, but ultimately in how they navigate its intimate entanglements of self-interest and disinterest, love and loss, a sense of divine justice, and the relationship of benevolence to wealth in the face of both James' regenerative status and the ethical demands of the anti-slavery cause.

When news arrives that James Marvyn's ship is fatefully lost at sea, the question of James' fate and election takes center stage. On hearing the unfortunate news, the first words from the mouth of Dr. Hopkins land with blunt force. He asks: "What was his spiritual state?" This question sends the characters into a tailspin, but it is nonetheless a question that already haunted their imagination long before Hopkins gave it voice.⁴⁵ While Mary deals with the heartbreak of her lost love and suitor, and Mr. Marvyn is despondent, Mrs. Marvyn remains tormented by profound grief made all the more agonizing by the indeterminacy of her son's eternal state. Reflecting on the psychic agony of election, she laments,

The number of the elect is so small we can scarce count them for anything! Think what noble minds, what warm, generous hearts, what splendid natures are wrecked and thrown away by thousands and tens of thousands! How we love each other! how our hearts weave into each other! how more than glad we should be to die for each other! And all this ends—Oh God, how must it end?⁴⁶

Mrs. Marvyn not only wishes to take the place of her beloved son, but also expresses the indicting and sorrowful anger over the justice of a God who could demand such psychic torture of the living.

⁴⁵ Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, 185. The question echoes the storied account of Lyman Beecher's response to Catharine at the death of her fiancé, a memory that may have informed Stowe's curt letter to her father at the death of her son Henry (discussed below).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

And yet, these are not the only characters who grieve and speak to the theological doctrine of election. It is not James' mother, father, or Mary, but the Marvyn house slave, Candace, who is described as knowing James the most intimately and confidently. Candace is not only the keeper of the family kitchen but also the mediator of the family soul. In what follows, I argue that Candace is the key character through whom Stowe delivers the force of her theological critique. Candace serves this purpose for Stowe because she is represented as intuitively refusing the rigid, exclusive interpretation of doctrine for a more capacious and confident certitude of divine election based on the natural moral authority of a mother's heart. In the background of this novel's grappling with the question of election and loss is Stowe's own wrestling with the doctrine of divine election following the tragic drowning death of her son just months before she began the novel. Examining Stowe's correspondence following her son Henry's death alongside the critical theological language of grief placed in the voices of both Mrs. Marvyn and Candace, a fuller theological landscape emerges, one in which vital questions are asked: on whose authority, knowledge, and experience do the doctrines of divine election and disinterested benevolence rest? Referring to a similar line of inquiry challenging the authority claims of the "faith of her father," Lawrence Buell calls Stowe's masterful theological work in this novel the "creative use of orthodoxy."⁴⁷ I want to extend this argument. On my reading, Stowe's "creative use of orthodoxy" occurs through processes of racialization that are not only inextricably linked to, but *require*, Candace's intuition and theological appeal to natural

⁴⁷ Lawrence Buell, "Calvinism Romanticized: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Samuel Hopkins and The Minister's Wooing," in *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, 24 (1978), 119-32. In *The Rungless Ladder*, Foster refers to Stowe's theological work as a "homemade doctrine," 104. Note that these creative and domestic terms are deployed by some of the mid- and late-century academic treatments that actually take seriously Stowe's writerly skills and knowledge of Calvinism.

authority. Here, I draw on George Frederickson's notion of "romantic racialism" and Toni Morrison's articulation of the "black surrogacy" of white literary imagination to explore how black literary and cultural characters become the fixed tableau for white literary imaginations—and, I argue, for Stowe's version of a Calvinist white theological imagination.

Romantic Racialism

Stowe's character sketch of Candace is thickly painted in racialized language. She describes Candace as possessing a "wide, joyous, rich, physical abundance of nature," having a "hearty abandon of outward expression," and displaying "a sort of savage freedom about her."⁴⁸ While she begins the novel enslaved, Candace (and her husband, Cato) are proclaimed free by Mr. Marvyn when Dr. Hopkins visits the Marvyn home to discuss the renunciation of the system of slavery.⁴⁹ Model slaves that they are, they respond in gratitude and ask to remain working for the Marvyns (much like the Shelby plantation slaves under the manumitted leadership of the young George Shelby in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). Insofar that they remain, it is Candace's "savage freedom"—a naturalized intuitive freedom demonstrated in her theological beliefs—that is the operative display of her freedom (rather than her manumitted freedom). Candace's selectively exotic character traits are naturalized and made safe in her role as a happy, domicile servant—a sort of New England (Calvinist) mammy. Before and after the manumission event, Candace continues to offer comfort and comic relief, meals and song, aid and gossip from her location at the kitchen hearth of the Marvyn home. From this location in the novel, Candace represents a

⁴⁸ Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, 69.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

warm, honest and comforting alternative theology in the face of the cold New England Calvinist systems.

The conceptual category “romantic racialism,” introduced to literary critics by historian George Fredrickson, describes the appeal of the black figure in American social and literary discourse. The black figure, according to Fredrickson, is one whose “peculiarities” are admired for what “Anglo-Saxonism” (also an emerging identity term in the nineteenth-century) cannot readily provide because of its lack, crucially, humility, servility, patience, good nature, expressive emotion, and even musicality.⁵⁰ Drawing on romanticism’s interest in the purity of the noble savage in the face of disillusionment with colonial conquest and violence, as well as the claim to the “heart religion” of growing evangelical movements, “romantic racialism” constitutes characters such as Uncle Tom, Milly and Candace as objects of intrigue and emulation for their ability to understand “the ultimate Christian virtue” of simple love and grace.⁵¹ (This sympathetic appeal to inherent Christian virtue found sympathizers and proponents on all sides of the slavery debate, to be sure. Abolitionists, liberal anti-slavery reformers, and pro-slavery defenders all found convenient the cooperative, good-natured African American to their cause.)⁵² For its ability to point out the characteristics lacking in Anglo-Saxonness,

⁵⁰ George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). See chapter 4, “Uncle Tom and Anglo-Saxons: Romantic Racialism in the North,” 97-129. Fredrickson traces intellectual and social discourse on the fascination with “unique characteristics” of blackness in order to bring Anglo-Saxonness into relief. See also Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

⁵¹ Fredrickson, 102. This also echoes Stowe’s description of “the negro race” in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*: “in their gentleness, their lowly docility of heart, their aptitude to repose on a superior mind and rest on a higher power, their childlike simplicity of affection, and facility of forgiveness. In all these they will exhibit the highest form of the peculiarly Christian life,” (*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 185).

⁵² Fredrickson, 102. Fredrickson uses William Ellery Channing as one example. For Channing, “We are holding in bondage one of the best races of the human family. The negro is among the mildest and gentlest of

Frederickson argues, the black figure is understood “more as a symbol than as a person, more as a vehicle for romantic social criticism than as a human being with the normal range of virtues and vices.”⁵³ Like Uncle Tom whose “truly African features were...united with much kindness and benevolence,” and Milly who is “majestic” and “broad and generous” in soul and body, Candace, who “watched the light in Mary’s eyes with the instinctive shrewdness by which her race seems to divine the thoughts and feelings of their superiors,” is also articulated through these romantic racialist terms by Stowe in the combination of the vocabulary of sentimental and theological intuition.⁵⁴

Mothers’ hearts

In June of 1857, days after her return from her third trip to Europe, Harriet Beecher Stowe arrived at her Andover home to find it full of weeping young college men. They were her eldest son Henry’s friends—and they had brought with them Henry’s dead body. The news of Henry’s death had reached Harriet by telegraph that day, leading her to rush from Brooklyn to Andover. At the age of 19, Henry died in a drowning accident in the Connecticut River near the Dartmouth campus in Hanover, New Hampshire—just days before he planned to return to Andover for a visit to hear of his mother’s travels.⁵⁵ This was not the first child lost prematurely to Stowe. Samuel Charles died as an infant in a cholera epidemic when the family lived in

men. A natural candidate for Christian perfection, “he carries within him, much more than we, the germs of a meek, long-suffering, loving virtue,” 106.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 68; *Dred*, 50; and *The Minister’s Wooing*, 84.

⁵⁵ Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 315-318.

Cincinnati, leaving readers of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to surmise Stowe's own self-insertion into the grief of Mrs. Bird. Because the Beechers and Stoves did not hold to the strict Calvinist possibility of infant damnation, Stowe could find some comfort in the eternal resting place of her suffering baby. Yet both Harriet and Calvin Stowe struggled greatly with the death of these two children.⁵⁶ Henry's death, however, plagued Stowe with a grief made all the more unbearable by the haunting questions of the state of his soul (much like her older sister Catharine was plagued by the death of her fiancé at sea): Was Henry regenerate? Did God consider him so? How did she know?⁵⁷

Stowe's archive teems with correspondence attesting to her processing of this grief, both immediately afterward and as she returned to it in the following years.⁵⁸ In a short letter to her father, Stowe answers the persistent and presumed "eternal estate" question, writing, "Lest your kind heart should be too much distressed for me, I write one word...In regard to Henry's eternal estate I have good hope—The lamb of my flock he was I rested on him as on no other and He

⁵⁶ Arguably, Stowe's son Frederick later became the third son to be lost to her. Frederick struggled with alcoholism during his teens and young adulthood. After becoming sober, he enrolled in Harvard Medical School, but then left during his first semester to join the Union Army. After becoming injured in the First Battle of Bull Run and later becoming an official casualty in the Battle of Gettysburg from artillery shell injury to his head, Frederick returned to a struggle with alcoholism. Following the war, after attempts to become sober, he ultimately left his family and home of Hartford, first to (unsuccessfully) manage their Florida plantation, and then to San Francisco where he was never heard from again.

⁵⁷ The question of a soul's regenerancy, however, runs strong for Stowe throughout her life when she questioned the state of her own soul at a young age (at the behest of his sister), and then watched Catharine struggle with the grief of the loss of her fiancé at sea. Unfortunate and untimely death of children would send a shockwave through the Beecher family again in 1867 when three adolescent Beecher cousins die in a boating accident (two daughters to Stowe's brother Charles, and one son to her brother Edward).

⁵⁸ While some of these letters are captured in the edited biographies of Charles Edward Stowe and Annie Fields, many more reside in archives. To date, Stowe scholarship has yet to explore the terrain of this well-documented theological reckoning of loss and election, including the careful editing out of some of Stowe's more indicting critiques out of these early published collections. See my comment below on the analysis of the Catharine letter.

who has taken will care for him.”⁵⁹ In contrast, letters written in the same period to her twin daughters, Hatty and Eliza, sister-in-law, Eunice, and friend, the Duchess of Sutherland, speak more candidly of the profound agony of grief and her continued search for assurance concerning the state of Henry’s soul. These letters mark Stowe’s anguish over “the inexorable silence” of death and ask searing questions: “Can anybody tell what sorrows are locked up with our best affections, or what pain may be associated with every pleasure?”⁶⁰ They also describe Stowe’s motherly love through the self-sacrificial language of disinterested benevolence. In an unpublished letter to her daughters, Hatty and Eliza, she writes,

I long to say “Oh remember the thing you love may die”—I love my children with such an overwhelming love—I can understand what Paul says when he says I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren’s sake—I could offer up my eternal salvation willingly if it might secure that of my children[.]⁶¹

Invoking the precise Pauline language of Romans 9:3, which was the key biblical text for the doctrinal appeal to disinterested benevolence, Stowe positions the doctrine in such a way that her grief absorbs and incorporates the test of faith with the “overwhelming” love of a mother.

A letter to her sister Catharine most fully charts the theological territory of her grief.⁶² In this letter, one sees most vividly the emotional landscape Stowe navigates to express the state of

⁵⁹ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lyman Beecher, after 9 July 1857. Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, CT. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Emphasis original.

⁶⁰ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Eunice Beecher, 26 July 1857. Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT. Kirkham Collection. Harriet Beecher Stowe to Harriet Beecher Stowe II and Eliza Tyler Stowe II, 8 March 1859. Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Stowe and Stowe, *Life*, 319-322.

⁶¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Harriet Beecher Stowe II and Eliza Tyler Stowe II, 27 July 1857. Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. Emphasis original.

⁶² Harriet Beecher Stowe to Catharine Esther Beecher, 17 August 1857. Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. E. Bruce Kirkham Collection. The first three paragraphs of this lengthy letter are

her own intellectual reasoning concerning the state of Henry's eternal soul. Surely sharing in Catharine's experience with her fiancé's death at sea some years earlier, Stowe describes the "dagger thrust to her heart," "the most agonizing doubts," and facing "the Devil's" question of, "and where is he—[?]" While she responds in agreement with a proposition made by Catharine of a text used to challenge the doctrine of election (Christ preaching to those in the prison afterworld between his death and resurrection in 1 Peter 3:19), Stowe instead appeals to a knowledge of the state of Henry's soul "on other basis" irreducible to the strictures of textual interpretation. A close reading of this letter reveals a logic to this emotional and intellectual turmoil as Stowe deploys a rhetorical structure of claim, evidence, counter-claim, and a final rejoinder.⁶³

"My hope for Henry is founded on other basis," Stowe first claims. That basis is "the knowledge I have had of his mental history for the greater part of his life" and the "tender sympathy" they shared together. Though "his piety did not always assume the technical approved form," he possessed other evidence: a "great self mastery attained thro religious principle in the

not in the Stowe and Stowe *Life* version of the letter. Only the fourth and fifth paragraphs appear in *Life*, 321-322. Not only is Stowe's syntax changed (complete sentences, commas), but some sentences are reworked to shift meaning, and one sentence is missing entirely ("that it is an impossibility that Christ would not have been for years the daily confidant of all my cares for Henry walking with me in intimate communion and working in his childhood and for many of the years of his life in an evident and universal manner and at last when his mind was in a most hopeful and progressive state hurrying him away unprepared"). This raises an important question of why and how Stowe's profound opening assertion of Henry's death ("My hope for Henry is founded on another basis...") was chosen to be edited out.

⁶³ This clear rhetorical structure arrives with ease for Stowe, whose childhood and young adult education and training was in the arts of rhetoric under John Brace at Litchfield Academy and as a "Proffesoress of Rhetoric" at Catharine's Hartford Seminary. Furthermore, engaging in robust theological debate with Catharine is a common feature of Catharine's correspondence, especially during this period when she is completing her three-volume theological treatise, *Common Sense Applied to Religion, or the Bible and the People* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1857).

points he felt most deficient,” engagement with “the Bible and christian system,” and commitment to living a life “as christians ought to lead —such as every real man ought to lead.” Why then, Stowe petitions, was this “beautiful development...not permitted in this world to expand into a mature and perfect form to the glory of God and the good of man”?

Here is where Stowe positions a counter-argument in a voice plagued by affliction, disappointment, and the experience of the “dagger thrust” of “the Devil,” who torments and interrogates: What is Henry’s state? How do you reconcile trusting the belief in God’s love and the “perfect confidence that he would never take your child till the work of grace was mature” with the sobering reality that “he has hurried him out without warning without a moments preparation”? And, again, the question “where is he—[?],” which haunts the letter and expresses doubt both about where Henry may be, but also about the presence and assurance of God’s care.

Stowe’s rejoinder then describes how these doubts and questions are ultimately “irrationable” and “dishonorable to God.” Stowe instead finds solace in the appeal to a relatable Christ who serves as the “daily confidant of all my cares for Henry,” who “walk[s] with me in intimate communion” and who “work[ed] in his childhood and for many of the years of his life in an evident and universal manner.” It is impossible that such a life lived with Christ could be erased, she insists. It is Stowe’s own heart that vows the rationality and hope in this:

He who made me capable of such an absorbing unselfish devotion as I feel for my children so that I could willingly sacrifice my eternal salvation for theirs.—He certainly did not make me capable of more love more disinterestedness than he has himself—He invented mothers hearts—and he certainly has the pattern in his own and my poor weak rush light of love is enough to show me that some things can and cannot be—⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Ibid.

In an adept move, Stowe reckons not a test of her faith through the language of disinterested benevolence, but a test of God's divine design. If God invented mother's hearts—my heart, she seems to say—then God must be as benevolent and disinterested as I am. In other words, God's heart must be patterned after hers. This reversal of authority, based first in an appeal to the natural state of a mother's heart as Stowe experiences it is not just a “creative use of orthodoxy,” but a powerful theological reconfiguration of the Calvinist doctrines of disinterested benevolence and divine election. By describing a mother's singular disinterested benevolence arising from the claim “He invented mothers hearts,” she marshals her rhetorical skills to move the doctrine from a “technical” space to a theologically generative space of affective knowledge that includes both the promise of an intimate communion with Christ and the moral certitude that intuitive, heart knowledge, and the demonstration of “a life Christians ought to lead,” count as proofs of divine election.

Stowe's letter to Catharine not only paints a stunning picture of the emotional and intellectual turmoil of grief but makes a theological intervention in which the doctrine of disinterested benevolence proves a more capacious doctrine of divine election. While her sister chose to wage her critique of the Calvinist doctrine in the composition of her three-volume treatise, *Common Sense Applied to Religion, or the Bible and the People*, published a decade earlier in 1857 (and 35 years after her fiancé's death), Stowe uses the form of the novel to level her own public display of this intervention.⁶⁵ In *The Minister's Wooing*, Stowe uses the exchange of Mrs. Marvyn and Candace to encapsulate this theological terrain.

⁶⁵ Catharine's Hartford Female Seminary was founded in part as a response to her fiancé's death. Catharine used the small inheritance she received to establish it.

Black surrogacy

The climactic point in *The Minister's Wooing* is the scene in which Mrs. Marvyn, Mary, and Candace gather together at the Marvyn household soon after hearing the news of James' presumed death at sea. Contained within the chapter, entitled "Views of Divine Government," Stowe's prose here is the most profound in the novel, weaving together the psychological turmoil of regeneracy and disinterested benevolence and the larger existential questions of Calvinist election and divine design. In many ways echoing Stowe's letter to Catharine, Mrs. Marvyn and Candace voice a biting critique of the doctrine's scope and insist on a revision of the evidence and sources of disinterestedness, benevolence, and election. Ultimately it is Candace who solves the theological and existential dilemma—thus, functioning as Stowe's primary surrogate for her theological intervention and revision.

If Mrs. Marvyn serves to shore up the profound angst over a "hard, unjust, cruel" eternity, doubting a divine schema that cannot answer her question, "Why were we made to love so, to hope so, --our hearts so full of feeling"?⁶⁶ Candace provides a different voice, which echoes Stowe's rejoinder in her letter to Catharine. As "the only one to know James," she shifts the appeal of authority from a legalistic one to an intuitive and experiential one.⁶⁷ Election, for Candace, is not located in the psychic agony of intellectually working through the complicated doctrine, but it is located in her heart and arrived at through her own understanding of her gospel education and the love and respect of familial bonds. Candace insists,

⁶⁶ Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, 199.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

‘Tell ye, dat ar’ boy honors his fader and mudder, ef he don’t do nuffin else,—an’ dats de fus’ commandment wid promise, Ma’am; an’ to see him a-settin’ up every day in prayer-time, so handsome, holdin’ Missus’s han’, an’ lookin’ right into her eyes all de time! Why, dat ar’ boy is one of de ‘lect, —it’s jest as clare to me; and de ‘lect has got to come in,—dat’s what I say. My faith’s strong,—real clare, ‘tell ye.’⁶⁸

On this basis and rationale, she is the first and only one to proclaim James among the elect.

When Dr. Hopkins responds, “Well, Candace [...] we all hope you are right,” she argues back, “*Hope, Doctor! —I don’t hope,—I knows.*”⁶⁹ Candace challenges the limitations of the doctrine of election based on her scriptural knowledge and an unabashed self-assertion of her faith. By enlargening the possibilities of the doctrine, she refuses its exclusion.

In *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison explores the relationship of race and imagination in early American literature. While the work of challenging the power and privileges of American literary canon formation should continue, Morrison also argues for an additional for of criticism that explores how the “dark presences” of blackness operate in literary texts by white authors and readers. “Africanist presences” indicate “the impact of racism on those who perpetuate it” and “the effect of racist inflection on the subject” by operating as surrogates to ways of “contemplating chaos and civilization, desire and fear, and a mechanism for testing the problems and blessings of freedom.”⁷⁰ Reading for “Africanist presences” can offer a critical window into the interiority of race in early American literary consciousness. For Stowe, Candace

⁶⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁷⁰ Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 11, 7, 63.

is a paradigmatic black surrogate for her own theological contemplation and critique. Explicit examples abound. When Candace responds to Dr. Hopkins with “*Hope, Doctor! –I don’t hope, –I knows,*” for example, Stowe describes the doctor as privately admiring Candace, by contemplating the “scandal and disgrace to the Protestant religion, that Christians of America should openly practice and countenance this enslaving of the Africans!”⁷¹ While this contemplation includes an insertion of anti-slavery sentiment, Candace mediates Dr. Hopkins’ ability to indict the moral failings of white American Christians.

Candace, moreover, is surrogate to Stowe’s critique of Calvinist theology. Morrison’s analysis of the “white literary imagination” can also be understood, in Stowe’s work, as an analysis of the *white theological imagination*, in which blackness is in service to an affirmation of intuition and the authority and experience of a mother’s heart. It is, after all, Candace who brings solace to Mrs. Marvyn, giving an uncannily similar voice to Stowe’s own bold theological claims about the power of mothers’ hearts. To Mrs. Marvyn, Candace encourages,

‘*Look right at Jesus. Tell ye, honey, ye can’t live no other way now. Don’t ye ‘member how He looked on His mother, when she stood faintin’ an’ tremblin’ under de cross, je’ like you? He knows all about mothers’ hearts; He won’t break yours. [...] I’m clar Mass’r James is one o’ de ‘lect and I’m clar dar’s considerable more o’ de ‘lect dan people tink. Why, Jesus didn’t die for nothin’, —all dat love a’n’t gwine to be wasted. De ‘lect is more’n you or I knows, honey! Dar’s de Spirit, —He’ll give it to ‘em*’⁷²

Candace asserts that Jesus understands mothers’ hearts because he looked on his own mother as he died. The suffering of both Christ and his mother are operative here. His death, witnessed by

⁷¹ Stowe, *The Minister’s Wooing*, 85-86.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 202.

his mother, would not be “for nothin’.” Candace offers encouragement and theological correction and represents something other than the demands of an agonizing and agonized theological system. That Candace is the bearer of comfort and truth, in Stowe’s writing, is nothing new, given her ability to introduce romantically racialized emotional forms of religion for herself and for her white readers in other characters such as Uncle Tom, Milly, and Dred (although Dred’s religion is depicted as more dangerous to white interests). In *The Minister’s Wooing*, Candace attends to the failure of white theological imagination and allows for the introduction of a more capacious theology of the doctrine of election, one that includes intuitive knowledge and experience, including that of a mother’s heart, as recognized by Jesus himself at the moment of his own sacrifice.

This uncanny parallel ultimately draws attention to Stowe’s intellectual moment and the resources available to her to work through a deeply personal theological problem. For in the end, the imaginative work of black surrogacy, as argued by Morrison, is ultimately a “meditation on the self.” Morrison argues that

As a writer reading, I came to realize the obvious: the subject of the dream is the dreamer. The fabrication of an Africanist persona is reflexive; an extraordinary meditation on the self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the writerly conscious. It is an astonishing revelation of longing, of terror, of perplexity, of shame, of magnanimity. It requires hard work *not* to see this.⁷³

In asserting the reflexivity of the uses of blackness by white authors and readers, Morrison’s reading practice allows for an interpretation of the ways in which the figuration of Candace and her characteristic—marked by intuition, excess, savage freedom, comfort, childlike faith,

⁷³ Morrison, 17.

boldness—provide a surrogate safe harbor for Stowe’s fears and desires for a more comforting and capacious theology for herself, for her lost and surviving children, and for an equipped ministry for the nation.

This chapter has explored how the novel provides key contours of disinterested benevolence and the doctrine of election for Stowe at the time of writing *The Minister’s Wooing*, doctrines responsible for great psychic agony *and* the social import of mission, ministry, and benevolence. I have aimed to demonstrate its affective political work as a doctrine influencing intense spiritual interiority, threatening—and, validating—family cohesion in the face of grief and loss, and serving as the basis for a social ethics of the anti-slavery cause. As embedded in the landscape of New England, these doctrines and Calvinist theology, as Stowe argues, are part of the celebrated mind of the New England cultural past and its offered legacy to her present moment. Through the critical use of her unpublished correspondence during this period, my argument probes the depths of Stowe’s robust knowledge and investment in a reconfigured theology that disabuses the “dreadful old theology” with a more capacious theology of God’s love—fashioned of the divine design of mothers’ hearts. Central to this reconfiguration is the imaginative uses of blackness, both the interjection of black speech into her private correspondence and the sharp portrayal of Candace. *The Minister’s Wooing* is most certainly an exemplary novel of regional character and national reach for its consideration of the morally influential role of New England within and beyond the nation and its moral problem of slavery; it also is the most intimate of novels for its ability to probe concerns Stowe held most dear to her: the nation’s ministers and the authority of mothers’ hearts.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: A Genealogy of Humanitarian Sensibility

“Says I, ‘Lord, I ken love even de white folks!’”

-Milly, *Dred*¹

“Lord, Lord, I can love *even de white folks!*”

-Sojourner Truth, “Sojourner Truth; The Libyan Sibyl”²

In 1863—four years after *The Minister’s Wooing* and one year after “A Reply to the Affectionate Address”—Harriet Beecher Stowe penned “Sojourner Truth; The Libyan Sibyl” for the April issue of *Atlantic Monthly*.³ The article describes a meeting between Stowe and Truth a decade earlier in 1853 when Truth paid a visit to Stowe’s Andover home in the midst of the critical acclaim for Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The article reads not as a meeting of minds invested in the moral, political and social work of the abolitionist cause, but as an amusing and paternalistic account of entertaining—and being entertained—by the exoticized *character*, not the *person*, of Sojourner Truth. In what follows, I explore the ethical contours of white literary and moral imagination in the readerly pleasures elicited by the portrayal of moral sentiments and humanitarian appeals. In this troubling biographic representation, Stowe reveals, perhaps most

¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Dred: A Tale of a Great Dismal Swamp* (Norton Critical Edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000. Originally published in 1856), 183.

² Ibid., “Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1863, 476.

³ Ibid.

strongly in her writing, the sensational uses of blackness in the productive service of moral and aesthetic whiteness. I have selected this reading to frame the conclusion of this project not only because I think it should be considered in the corpus of Stowe's literature of moral persuasion, but also because it represents my ethical concerns with the shaping of moral and racial imperial subjectivity as part of social reform and humanitarian literature.

"Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl" begins by setting the scene in the parlor of Stowe's Andover home. Sojourner Truth's visit to the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* author is unplanned but welcomed in a home "already full" (literally or figuratively, we do not know) with "eminent clergyman" company.⁴ Stowe's first impressions are predictably physical. To Stowe, Truth appears as a "full-blooded African," a "fine specimen of the torrid zone," "a tall form," "gloomy eyes," "a dark face," "self-possessed"—and accompanied by her grandson, "a little African puck" (reminding an astute reader of Stowe's characters Topsy and TomTit). Their conversation begins with Truth:

"So, this is *you*," she said.

"Yes," I answered.

"Well, honey, de Lord bless ye! I jes' thought I'd like to come an' have a look at ye. You's heerd o' me, I reckon?" she added.

"Yes, I think I have. You go about lecturing, do you not?"

"Yes, honey, that's what I do. The Lord has made me a sign unto this nation, an' I go around a-testifyin', an' showin' on 'em their sins agin my people."⁵

Inviting her company into the parlor, Stowe gives Truth "what she wanted": purportedly, "an audience." Truth stumbles at the formalities of introductions before Lyman Beecher, Calvin

⁴ Ibid., 473.

⁵ Ibid. Emphasis original.

Stowe, and a few other ministers, and then proceeds to give a storied account of her conversion experience and her experiences in the abolitionist and women's rights movements. As represented by Stowe, Truth's stories are peppered with humor and spiritual insight. In the midst of her conversion testimony, Truth breaks into the singing of a hymn "that seemed to impersonate the fervor of Ethiopia, wild, savage, hunted of all nations, but burning after God in her tropic heart, and stretching her scarred hands toward the glory to be revealed."⁶ (Note that the descriptions here—"wild, savage, hunted of all nations, but burning after God in her tropic heart"—collapses a female-personified Ethiopia with Sojourner Truth.)

Stowe's piece also provides an account of Sojourner Truth's confrontational question to Frederick Douglass, "Frederick, *is God dead?*", a story that continues to follow Truth in legacy and historiography. Truth's "question" allegedly challenged Douglass's proclaimed loss of hope in the possibility that white people would cooperate in efforts to seek full justice for the wrongs done to black people as a result of the American slavery system.⁷ It is a question, as Stowe tells it (through an account she received from Wendell Phillips), that also echoes word-for-word the language of *Dred's* Milly, who insists that the love of God is not dead, but alive and demands reconciliation and forgiveness.⁸ Like Milly, Truth arrives at this theological assertion only after the sinful feeling of desiring retribution on a former white master. The sign of the work of God in both Milly and Truth, as mediated by Stowe, is the wiping out of angered injustice by the

⁶ Ibid., 477.

⁷ Ibid., 480. See also Nell Irvin Painter's account of Truth's question, "Frederick, is God dead?" in *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996). Painter asserts that this storied account is factually inaccurate. Truth actually asked the question, "Is God gone?" of Douglass not at Faneuil Hall in Boston but at a meeting in Salem, Ohio, 160-162.

⁸ Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl," 476.

proclamation of racial reconciliation. Stowe attributes to Truth (as she did to Milly) the words, “Lord, Lord, I can love *even de white folks!*”⁹

Staying at the Stowe home for several days as “a welcome guest,” Truth was hardly considered a fellow friend and intellectual partner in the anti-slavery cause. Rather, she was an exotic object of curiosity and entertainment for the Stowe household. Despite a decade devoted to the development of an impressive oeuvre of anti-slavery sentimental and political works and correspondence with a number of black intellectuals and activists, Stowe nevertheless recounts Truth’s visit in highly sensational language. Truth is a figure for entertainment, Stowe, suggests, writing,

Her conversation was so strong, simple, shrewd, and with such a droll flavoring of humor, that the Professor was wont to say of an evening, “Come, I am dull, can’t you get Sojourner up here to talk a little?” She would come up into the parlor, and sit among pictures and ornaments, in her simple stuff gown, with her heavy travelling-shoes, the central object of attention both to parents and children, always ready to talk or to sing, and putting into the common flow of conversation the keen edge of some shrewd remark.¹⁰

Stowe is explicit here about the consumption of Truth as entertainment, assuaging the feelings of homely dullness. Truth is *literally* objectified as an actual “living, breathing” *object d’art* arranged among Stowe’s collections of gifted objects and pictures (soon to be included among them, a display case containing the petitioned signatures of the Affectionate Address), full of mineable stories designed to evoke laughter, tears, indignation, wonder, and curiosity. In many ways, it offers a parallel to the frequent scenes in Stowe’s novels in which white characters

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 478-479.

(benevolent and cruel) call upon black characters (enslaved and manumitted) to sing, dance, tell stories, and provide spiritual comfort and inspiration.¹¹

The article concludes with Stowe's account of telling the story of Sojourner Truth to the Boston-based sculptor William Wetmore Story and other American literati and artists during a visit to Rome on her second European visit.¹² Story reportedly found himself so inspired by Stowe's account of Truth that he credits it as inspiration for his own muse and memorial: not by pen and publication, but by sculpture and exhibition. In 1861, he set out to fashion a statue, describing it as "my anti-slavery sermon in stone" and naming it *Libyan Sibyl*.¹³ "The history of Sojourner Truth worked in his mind," according to Stowe, "and led him to the deeper recesses of the African nature, --those unexplored depths of being and feeling, mighty and dark as the gigantic depths of tropical forests, mysterious as the hidden river and mines of that burning continent whose life-history is yet to be."¹⁴ The *Libyan Sibyl* statue, in white marble, and inspired also by powerful Egyptian mythological sources (rather than the "cold elegance of Greek lines"), was received with great acclaim in the European-American art world, earning a

¹¹ *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for example, opens with a scene in which Shelby asks Eliza's son to dance for him. Later in the novel, St. Clare asks Topsy to sing and dance upon her purchased arrival to the estate for Miss Ophelia. And still later, Simon Legree asks Sambo and Quimbo to sing and dance. *Dred* also has a number of impish humor scenes at the hand of Tomtit. And, in *Dred* and *The Minister's Wooing*, as discussed in this dissertation, Milly and Candace are called upon to offer religious consolation and emotional comfort.

¹² Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, The *Libyan Sibyl*," 480. While this dissertation has attended to the first voyage, Stowe's most important literary relationships, including with Annie Fields, were solidified during this particular Rome moment. This is also the trip that her son Harry joined her in, leaving early to return to Dartmouth and his subsequent accidental drowning death.

¹³ William Wetmore Story, *Libyan Sibyl*, 1861. Marble. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. For a public domain image and description of the statue, see: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/12650>.

¹⁴ Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, The *Libyan Sibyl*," 481.

coveted spot for display as “the most impressive work of art” at the World’s Exhibition in 1862.¹⁵ A year later, in 1863, the *Atlantic Monthly* readership would learn that the statue’s history was credited in part to the force of Stowe’s story, a story that “led [the artist] to the deeper recesses of the African nature.”

Important to any reading of “Sojourner Truth; A Libyan Sibyl,” is the fact that Stowe gets a number of things wrong in her account of Sojourner Truth’s visit. Stowe attributes an excessive amount of Southern black dialect to Truth, which did not reflect Truth’s own speech as a resident of upstate New York whose first language was Dutch. Stowe also describes Truth as born in Africa when she was in fact born in Ulster County, New York. Furthermore, Stowe portrays Truth as skeptical about the cause of women’s rights despite her well-documented speeches at both women’s suffrage and abolitionist gatherings, including her 1851 “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech delivered at the Ohio Women’s Rights Convention. Perhaps most egregious, is Stowe’s reference to Truth in the posthumous past tense, describing her as having “passed away from among us.”¹⁶ In 1863, when Stowe wrote this piece, Sojourner Truth was not dead, but alive and well in Battle Creek, Michigan, living in the Millerite community of Harmonia—Sojourner Truth would, in fact, live and work another twenty years until her death in 1883 at the approximate age of 86.

For her part, Sojourner Truth immediately responded in the press with corrections to Stowe’s account. In a letter to the editor of the Boston-based *Commonwealth*, Truth made two things clear: first, “My grandmother and my husband’s mother came from Africa, but I did not,”

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 480.

and secondly, “I never make use of the word honey.”¹⁷ Truth’s second claim is particularly powerful. It’s a refusal of an endearing and intimate practice of address. It’s a refusal of speech that is part of the persistent linguistic practice of Stowe’s writing: the construction and attribution of exaggerated black dialect to her black characters. And it is a refusal to be one of the ventriloquized black characters in Stowe’s corpus. On my reading, Truth’s response joins other practices of resistance in and to Stowe’s writing. The corrections, however, did little to correct the actual force of this story among abolitionist and others in the American reading public. In fact, Truth’s corrections received little attention; for many Truth remained “Mrs. Stowe’s African Sibyl” for the rest of her career and legacy.

“Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl” is not only a disturbing and vivid account that extends the gross reach of what Toni Morrison terms the “white literary imagination”; it is also a piece that represents the force and amusements of white *moral* imagination in the celebration of the work of social reform. While this dissertation has largely attended to the power of the characters of fiction in the service of the “right feelings” of moral persuasion literature, “Sojourner Truth; The Libyan Sibyl” asks what sort of moral cultivation occurs in the reading of non-fiction biography, also meant for amusement, by an author whose work catalogues and cultivates the moral sentiments of anti-slavery and humanitarian cause. How does this piece, in other words, reveal the ethical limits and problems of imagined black surrogacy when the object of imagination is not a character, but another “living, breathing” historical individual? Indeed, does it even matter to the logic of white moral imagination if the object is fictive or real? While Stowe’s article illustrates the imaginative aesthetic and amused work of the surrogated white

¹⁷ Painter, 163; “Letter from Sojourner Truth,” *Commonwealth*, 3 July 1863.

literary imagination, what does it say more broadly about the logic of the pleasures of surrogated white *moral* imagination and its uses of blackness and the suffering/object other?

By way of conclusion, I want to explore these questions by drawing on Friedrich Nietzsche's insistence on the intellectual work of locating power-laden historical investments in moral sentiments and values. In *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Nietzsche critiques the practices of valuing morality itself by arguing that liberal values such as justice, equality and compassion are not *a priori*, but instead are constructed for, of, and by the modern will to power.¹⁸ The "new demand" of philosophers and historians, according to Nietzsche, is "to call the value of these values into question."¹⁹ Nietzsche's argument is not a simple attempt to disregard these values, but rather to excavate their genealogies. In my examination of Stowe's literature of moral persuasion, I find that Nietzsche's refusal to assign inherent positive value to the moral sentiments (and to compassion, charity, justice) is incisive and useful in advancing an analysis that asks how, exactly, moral sentiments work to shape and racialize social reform and humanitarian appeals. Nietzsche's demand is for a more complicated analysis of how moral sentimentality, as a value, becomes valued, takes force, produces certain discursive terrain, and achieves specific moral and political aims, often ambivalently so.

Such an analysis attempts to follow after the question Nietzsche poses as the conclusion of his first essay in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in which he writes,

¹⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans., Walter Kaufman (Vintage: New York, 1967). Originally published as *Zur Genealogie der Moral: Eine Streitschrift* in 1887) 4-8. Nietzsche's work generally understands the will to power as a sort of instinctual drive of humans toward domination. In *Genealogy*, he illustrates this through the telling of a story about the birth of morality when "good/evil" supplants "good/bad" as part of slave morality's response to the aristocrat/powerful.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8. Nietzsche again returns to this demand at the end of his discussion of the "ascetic ideal" in the third treatise of *Genealogy*.

The question: what is the value of this or that table of commandments and ‘morality’? should be examined from the most varied perspectives; in particular, the question of its value *to what end?* Cannot be examined too closely. From now on, *all* disciplines have to prepare the future task of the philosopher: this task being understood as the solution of the *problem of value*, the determination of the *hierarchy of values*.—²⁰

For Nietzsche, the key demand is an account of the processes by which certain moral sentiments, including compassion, achieve power in their valuation. Rather than assume the values of equality, liberty, justice, and compassion are universal imperatives, Nietzsche’s critique instead asks how such values come into existence and what relations of power enable their force—either through new structures of power, or forms of resistance and revolt. Rather than an appeal to the “good intentions” of historical actors, plagued as they may be by their socio-historical conditions of racial and gender attitudes and practices, Nietzsche presses for an inquiry into how such “good intention” practices come to be valued and protected in their moments and in their legacies.²¹

This dissertation has probed the force of Stowe’s claim to “right feelings,” including how friendships, characters, material gifts, and labor are enmeshed in Anglo-American humanitarian appeals, moral subjectivity, and theological possibilities. In my introductory chapter, I argued that sentimentality for Stowe must be understood as necessarily discursive, occurring across multiple registers, and linked to how affective appeals to “right feelings” arise out of Anglo-American racial discourses of sympathy, benevolence, and moral reform. Stowe’s intellectual

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 38. Of important note, compassion is a subject that consumes Nietzsche’s Zarathustra.

²¹ See Susan Ryan’s *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) for an analysis of how benevolent attitudes and practices shape cultural power and who is determined to be a worthy recipient of charity. This dissertation shares much with Ryan’s approach in its treatment of Stowe’s literary work and probes further into the formation of moralized whiteness.

positioning as the author of a literature of moral persuasion not only draws on the resources and narratives of the anti-slavery movements, as demonstrated in *A Key*, *Sunny Memories*, and the materials that accompany *Dred*, but also advances several casts of characters that function to train readerly sensibilities in “right feelings.” This is the force of the argument about *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in my second chapter. *Dred* and *The Minister’s Wooing*, however, present their own literary challenges to moral persuasion, by allowing for sentimentalized prophetic appeals and reconfigurations of the affective terrain and investments of Calvinist theology. Even the “creative uses of orthodoxy,” as I maintain, depend on the imaginative and surrogated deployment of blackness.

For Stowe, her literature and its reception—as I’ve suggested throughout this dissertation, and especially in “Sojourner Truth; A Libyan Sibyl”—produced sentimental appeals to the cause of anti-slavery alongside of, and in service to, benevolent formations of moralized whiteness. As such, Nietzsche’s method of inquiry into the valuation of moral sentiments also invites a critical analysis of how these valued sentiments violently construct moral and political subjects. While Nietzsche’s description of the development of compassion as one of “the greatest plagues of man,” and the identification of morality as a “sinister” cultural development in *Genealogy* can each be read as strong denunciations, they can also be read as efforts to disabuse these values of their imperative status by instead placing them in the difficult interplay of formations of power—including how the work of moral imagination moves across fictive and nonfictive terrains. We see this in Stowe’s reading of Sojourner Truth, in Marx’s critique of the “class of philanthropy”

represented by the Sutherland estate that finds blinded comfort in distant objects, and Cora's refusal of both dread and hope in *Dred*.²²

Drawing on Nietzsche, then, my reading of Stowe's life and works during this decade of her literary career, arrives at the following conclusions and persistent questions in order to advance critical inquiry into Stowe, her American cultural, literary, and religious moment, and the legacies of these moments into the twentieth and twentieth centuries of American culture.

First, the literary power of the story—and the character sketch in Stowe's writing—models the multiform possibilities and limitations of the logic of sympathy itself. As discussed in my second chapter, the logic of sympathy in the Western Scottish Enlightenment tradition draws on empirical observations of suffering and distance (Hume, Smith), an appeal to a universal human moral sense through the working of imaginative reflection and evaluation (Hutcheson, Butler, Hume), and an uncanny use of stories and metaphor in order to communicate the very limitations of moral feelings arising from the real and imagined perception of the suffering other (Smith, Hume, Mackenzie).

Born and raised in a family of ministers, educated in the traditions of Western rhetoric (including teaching as a professor of rhetoric at Hartford Female Seminary), and an astute observer of her current national events, Stowe's ability to marshal the power of storytelling to shape nineteenth-century public social, political, and theological worldviews is an intellectual feat unto itself. To read is to experience the logic of sympathy—or, what makes a character more or less an object to identify with in their plights, opinions, and ability to handle unknowable

²² Nietzsche, 7, 104. See chapters three and four in this dissertation for discussions of Marx's critique and Cora's action.

experiences to the outside reader. As argued throughout the dissertation, sentimentality in Stowe's work has a primary purpose of cultivating moral feelings leading toward moral action, even if it also has other purposes for amusement and pathos. Stowe's character sketches are first and foremost pedagogical, aimed to introduce readers to model characters to emulate and appreciate (Uncle Tom, Eva, Eliza, George, Mrs. Bird, Milly, Harry, Clayton, Mary, Dr. Hopkins, Candace), immoral characters to abhor (Simon Legree, Tom Gordon), and ambivalent characters to examine sentimental traits and behaviors that stunt and limit moral action (St. Clare, Miss Ophelia, Senator Bird, Judge Clayton). In the recognition enabled by evaluating character sketches—whether through narratorial interjection or readerly reflection—the ethical work of imaginative sympathy is laid bare. Yet, as Nietzsche might ask, the persistent question is sympathy to what ends?²³ Stowe instructs the readers of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that it is a sympathy to understand and to influence others. Yet, Stowe's literary uses of blackness demonstrate, sympathy's purported understanding of racial difference is in the service of a white subjectivity that enables romanticized moral outrage, redemptive reform, prophetic warning, and surrogated theological grief and critique. The messy terrain of sentimentality permeates more than the character types of Stowe's novels and stories, but also the "deeper recesses" of the nineteenth-century Anglo-American literary and moral imagination.

Secondly, the arguments of this dissertation may lead to new questions about the ways in which Stowe's work provides a lens to think about the legacies of humanitarian sensibility in the

²³ One may argue that an impetus for Nietzsche's writing of *Genealogy of Morals* was as a response to the tradition of English moral philosophy. In his preface, Nietzsche comments on a recent reading of Paul Rée's *The Origin of the Moral Sensations* (1877), which draws on empiricism in an attempt to locate the origin of altruistic feelings. Nietzsche places Rée's work within the tradition of "English psychologists" and "English Utilitarians."

nineteenth-century and today. My chapter on Stowe's first European trip places Stowe's literary work in a broader nineteenth-century transatlantic space of humanitarian zeal. The materiality of gifts and movement across the Atlantic show that a transatlantic blackness wrought by the transatlantic African slave trade not only shores up the guilt of empire, but also the formation of a benevolent Anglo-American identity and its humanitarian cause. The very materiality of gifts such as the gold-chained bracelet, money offerings, and the representation of a grand collection of petitioned signatures all draw attention to the ways in which the traveled networks of the material and labor of empire, slavery, and social reform are inextricably linked. Here "right feelings" are imperial both in the violent history of the slave trade and in the redemptive work of abolition and other social reform and missionary projects. Like Nietzsche's attention to show how moral sentiments work toward the service of power, Anglo-American benevolent identity is rooted in the sins of empire and draws on religious language for its political redemption.

While contemporary scholars and historians of Western humanitarianism and human rights movements debate its historical and discursive origins, this dissertation sides with scholars interested in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rise of sentimental discourses and the role of slavery, empire, and abolition movements.²⁴ Indeed, this dissertation provides a great deal of

²⁴ Contemporary scholars such as Samuel Moyn in *The Last Utopia: Human Rights In History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) and *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (New York: Verso, 2014) situate modern notions of humanitarianism and "human rights" language in the post-World War II birth of the United Nations and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Moyn's argument is a critique of scholars such as Lynn Hunt in *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2007), who place the historical origins of "human rights" in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century revolutions, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789. Central to Hunt's argument is the role of literature and philosophy in giving an account for how rights become self-evident—that is, how notions of individual moral autonomy arising from Enlightenment thought are reflected the work of imagined empathy with the rise of the novel. I find Hunt's argument more convincing, not only in its claims for the significance of political revolutions and philosophies, but also for its understanding of how humanitarian sensibility—that is, "imagined empathy"—suffuses the cultural spaces of novels during this time period. Indeed, this is reflected in Stowe's work. For example, the characters of George

evidence that Stowe observed and understood her participation in the “great humanitarian cause” of her day, in the celebration of British abolitionist tradition and the work of millennial social reformers like Lord Shaftesbury and the activity of Exeter Hall, and in the foreboding sense of a holy civil war. By locating part of the contemporary scholarly discussions in the growing field of critical humanitarianism in this eighteenth- and nineteenth-century moment, it offers ways to think further about the racialized and imperial power of this Western tradition. For example, within recent and emerging critical humanitarian scholarship introducing analytical concepts such as the “white savior industrial complex” and “femonationalism” as ways to problematize Western humanitarianism’s long and troubled histories of cultural imperialism and intervention under the sacred aegis of “good intentions,” some scholars such as Lila Abu-Lughod are interested in the fictive and nonfictive forms of writing that cultivate new humanitarian sensibility.²⁵ In *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Abu-Lughod probes the phenomenon of “pulp

and Harry appeal to the language of the eighteenth century Declaration of Independence, as discussed in chapters two and four of this dissertation. And Stowe herself locates her work in “the great humanitarian movement” begun in England by Thomas Clarkson, as discussed in chapter three of this dissertation. See also histories of the abolitionism as origin of Western humanitarianism, as discussed in chapter three, including: Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire’s Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), and Thomas Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility,” in Thomas Bender, ed., *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism As a Problem in Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 105-160.

²⁵ Teju Cole, “The White Savior Industrial Complex,” in *Known and Strange Things* (New York: Random House, 2016), which began as a twitter essay and then was published in *The Atlantic*, March 2012; Sara Farris, *In the Name of Women’s Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); and Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013). See also: Liisa Malkki, *The Need to Help: The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Makau Mutua, *Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Michael Barnett, *The Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); and Elizabeth Bernstein, “The Sexual Politics of the ‘New Abolitionism’,” *differences*, 18.3 (2007), 128-151; and Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012) and “Noli Me Tangere: The Moral Untouchability of Humanitarianism” in *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism Between Ethics and*

non-fiction” as widely-popular contemporary literature genre that serves the purpose of “authorizing moral crusades” around themes of Western moral autonomy and emancipatory politics.²⁶ Authors of “pulp non-fiction” range from esteemed Western journalists, NGO founders, and “former victims” of trafficking or other forms of human rights abuses. Pulp non-fiction authors craft sensational stories (for mass paperback, news websites and blogs, viral videos, and social media) of suffering, rescue, redemption, and the need for readerly sympathy and moral outrage leading to action. What this dissertation offers is evidence that pulp-nonfiction draws on a long and strong history of Western humanitarian appeal writing, including Stowe’s own anti-slavery fictive and non-fiction writing. Indeed, a careful study of Stowe’s work and its reception offers a template for the character sketches (fictive and real, as in the case of Sojourner Truth) and viralization of the stories themselves into new reading, theater, and student audiences, as the Uncle Tom’s mania attests. Like Stowe’s rendering of Sojourner Truth, these literary representations use the biographical material of abject suffering to craft non-fiction stories of moral fortitude and courage for the amusement of audiences who desire to enact the power of their own modern liberal moral sentiments.

Politics, eds., Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2011), 35-52.

²⁶ Abu-Lughod borrows the term “pulp nonfiction” from literary scholar Dohra Ahmad (“Not Yet Beyond the Veil: Muslim Women in American Popular Literature,” *Social Text* 27.99 (2009), 105-131). Examples of pulp nonfiction that Abu-Lughod analyzes include Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (New York: Knopf, 2009) and Anthony Appiah, *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010). See also Saba Mahmood’s important critique of Western liberal emancipatory politics and feminism in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) and “Feminism, Democracy, and Empire: Islam and the War on Terror,” in *Women’s Studies on the Edge*, ed. Joan Wallach Scott (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

Appendix 1: Key Dates

- 1811-1832 Born in Litchfield, Connecticut as the seventh of nine children to Lyman and Roxanna Beecher. Roxanna Beecher dies in 1816 when Harriet is five years old. Harriet and Henry are then cared for by their Aunt Harriet Foote, who teaches them both Congregational and Episcopalian catechisms. Educated at Litchfield Academy and Hartford Female Seminary. Teaches rhetoric at Hartford.
- 1832-1850 Cincinnati, Ohio years. Moves in 1832 with Beecher family when Lyman Beecher takes the helm as president of Lane Theological Seminary. Marries Calvin, professor of sacred literature, in 1836. Births of children, Eliza and Harriet (1836), Henry (1838), Frederick (1840), Georgiana (1843), and Charley (1848). In 1849, Charley dies from cholera. Stowe is involved in the Cincinnati literary group, the Semi-Colon Club. First publication, "A New England Sketch" (1834) and other published short stories appear in *Western Monthly Magazine*.
- 1850 Fugitive Slave Law is passed.
- 1850 Moves to Brunswick, Maine. Calvin joins faculty at Bowdoin College. One more child, Charles (1850) is born. Catharine lives with them and helps with home and children while Stowe writes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- 1851-1852 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is serialized in *The National Era* and published 1852.
- 1852 Moves to Andover, Massachusetts. Calvin joins faculty at Andover Theological Seminary.
- 1853 *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- 1853 Stowe's first European trip.
- 1854 *Sunny Memories in Foreign Lands*.
- 1856 *Dred; A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*.
- 1856 Second European trip.
- 1859 Third European trip.
- 1859 Stowe's son Henry dies at the age of nineteen from an accidental drowning in Connecticut River near Dartmouth College.
- 1859 *The Minister's Wooing* is serialized in *The Atlantic* and published 1859.

- 1861-1865 The American Civil War. Stowe's son Frederick is injured in First Battle of Bull Run and becomes a was casualty during the Battle of Gettysburg.
- 1862 *Agnes of Sorrento* (serialized first in *The Atlantic*).
- 1862 *The Pearl of Orr's Island*.
- 1862 "A Reply to the Affectionate Address" in *The Atlantic Monthly*.
- 1863 Lyman Beecher dies.
- 1863 The Emancipation Proclamation.
- 1863 "Sojourner Truth: The Libyan Sibyl" in *The Atlantic Monthly*.
- 1863 The Stowes move to Hartford, Connecticut after Calvin retires from Andover.
- 1864 Stowe joins St. John's Episcopal Church in Hartford.
- 1867 Stowe and Calvin establish a winter home in Mandarin, Florida where she envisions carrying out domestic missionary work including establishing schools.
- 1869 *Oldtown Folks*.
- 1869 "The True Story of Lady Byron's Life," in *Atlantic Monthly* and later published as *Lady Byron Vindicated* (1870).
- 1871-1875 Society novels: *Pink and White Tyranny*, *My Wife and I*, and *Palmetto Leaves*.
- 1872 Beecher-Tilton scandal.
- 1878 *Pogonuc People*.
- 1886 Calvin dies.
- 1890 *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe: Compiled from her Letters and Journals* (edited by Charles Edward Stowe).
- 1896 Harriet Beecher Stowe dies at her home in Hartford at the age of eighty-five.
- 1898 *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (edited by Annie Fields).

Appendix 2: Transcription of the Address

The Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland To Their Sisters The Women of the United States of America

A common origin a common faith and we sincerely believe a common cause urge us at the present moment to address you on the subject of that system of Negro slavery which still prevails so extensively and even under kindly disposed masters with such frightful results in many of the vast regions of the western world.

We will not dwell on the ordinary topics on the progress of civilization on the advance of freedom even where on the rights and requirements of the nineteenth century but we appeal to you very seriously to reflect and to ask counsel of God how far such a state of things is in accordance with His Holy Word the inalienable rights of immortal souls and the pure and merciful spirit of the Christian religion.

We do not shut our eyes to the difficulties nay the dangers that might beset the immediate abolition of that long-established system we see and admit the necessity of preparation for so great an event but in speaking of indispensable preliminaries we cannot be silent on those laws of your country which in direct contravention of God's own law instituted in the time of man's innocency deny in effect to the slave the sanctity of marriage with all its joys rights and obligations which separate at the will of the master the wife from the husband and the children from the parents Nor can we be silent on that awful system which either by statue or by custom interdicts to any race of man or any portion of the human family education in the truths of the Gospel and ordinances of Christianity.

A remedy applied to these two evils alone would commence the amelioration of their sad condition. We appeal to you then as sisters and wives and as mothers to raise your voices to your fellow citizens and your prayers to God for the removal of this affliction from the Christian world. We do not say these things in a spirit of self-complacency as though our nation were free from the guilt it perceives in others. We acknowledge with grief and shame our heavy share in this great sin. We acknowledge that our forefathers introduce nay compelled the adoption of slavery in those mighty colonies. We humbly confess it before Almighty God and it is because we so deeply feel and so unfeignedly avow our own complicity that we now venture to implore your aid to wipe away our common crime and our common dishonour.

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