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# "As the Work had its origin in love": Masculine Responsibility and the Economy of Sympathy in Anti-Tom Novels, 1852-1854

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**“As the Work had its origin in love”:  
Masculine Responsibility and the Economy of Sympathy in Anti-Tom Novels, 1852-1854**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in English from  
The College of William and Mary

by

Eleanor A. Pace

Accepted for \_\_\_\_\_  
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)

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### *Acknowledgements*

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### *Dedication*

The work of Anti Tom novels trades upon a vast number of people whose voices and humanity they systematically deny. This work is dedicated to those who suffered and died under the system of slavery in the United States. It is also dedicated to any whose voices are denied because of racial injustice.

**“As the Work had its origin in love” :  
Masculine Responsibility and the Economy of Sympathy in Anti-Tom Novels, 1852-1854**

When *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was first serialized in 1851, it sparked the latest wildfire in an already smoking controversy: the national debate on the future of slavery. The importance of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel to the American literary public can hardly be overestimated, even if President Lincoln's alleged epithet for her ("The little woman who started the great war") is an exaggeration. The novel is notable first for its overwhelming ubiquity: "The popularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had no precedent. . . [T]he book sold more copies than any book in the world except the Bible. It kept fourteen power presses running day and night, made the publisher rich and the Stowes comfortable for the rest of their lives, and turned Harriet Beecher Stowe into the most celebrated author in the world" (Ammons viii). It is also known for its power to influence the thoughts of its readers through sympathy: "No book in American history molded public opinion more powerfully than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. . . Sympathetic readers of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were thrilled when the fugitive slave Eliza Harris carried her child across the ice floes. . . They cried over the death of the angelic little Eva and were horrified by the fatal lashing of Uncle Tom" (Reynolds, xi). Stowe's ability to bend the will of the audience by playing upon their sympathies was celebrated at the time: "we confess to the frequent moistening of our eyes, and the making of our heart grow liquid as water, and the trembling of every nerve within us. . . . The effect of such a work upon all intelligent and humane minds. . . to awaken the strongest compassion for the oppressed and the utmost abhorrence of the system which grinds them to the dust, cannot be estimated" (Garrison). Clearly, Stowe's ability to evoke sympathetic feelings through sentimentalism was always viewed as a political tool.

That same ability won her harsh criticism. Some accused her of distorting the truth with sensationalism: “Abolitionists do not help their cause by misrepresentation. It will do well enough, in a book of romance, to describe infants torn from the arms of their shrieking mothers, and sold for five and ten dollars. It tells well, for the mass of readers are fond of horrors; but it is not true” (Eastman 271). Mary Henderson Eastman’s worry that readers would be easily deceived by Stowe reveals her suspicion that Stowe was in fact helping the abolitionist cause a great deal. In the political heat of the Fugitive Slave Law (1851) and the Compromise of 1850 that parceled out the territories won in the Mexican-American War as slave or free, sectional tensions were already high, and Stowe’s powerful mobilization of an ever-stronger abolitionist cause provoked serious anxiety and opposition. As one sympathetic reviewer put it: “Mrs. Stowe has done what multitudes would much rather she had not done. She has made the public realize, to a most alarming extent, the unspeakable wickedness of American Slavery” (“Literature of Slavery” 589). Proslavery writers were filled with the urge to talk back: “The highly exaggerated accounts of the cruelty of Southern masters towards their slaves, to be found in Northern publications, having done great injustice to the South, call imperiously for truthful statements of the consequences and incidents of the relation of master and slave as it now exists in the Southern States” (Page v). One way that political opponents of the abolitionist cause fought back was through fiction.

The term “Anti-Tom” refers to novels written in response to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* between 1852 and the Civil War. One common misconception is that these are universally Southern responses to Stowe’s Northern aggression, but as Stephen Railton points out, they are a fairly diverse group of texts: “These novels were written by men and women, northerners and southerners. They adopt a variety of polemical strategies, from defending the plantation as a

good place to attacking the North for its treatment of ‘white slaves’ (the working class) to depicting blacks as either happy in slavery or racially unfit for freedom” (Railton, “Anti Uncle Tom Novels”). The full complement of Anti-Tom novels numbers around thirty, but it can be further limited to a smaller number of sentimental novels. Some Anti-Tom works are more in the genre of memoirs or political essays (such as *The Planter; or Thirteen Years in the South*, by David Brown), or are novels whose tone is sarcastic or satirical (like *Mr. Frank: The Underground Mail-Agent*, by Vidi). Most scholars have been more interested in novelists who seem to use the same sentimental methods or even the same plotlines as Stowe: “It’s telling to see which of Stowe’s characters and scenes get evoked, and how they get rewritten” (Railton, “Anti Uncle Tom Novels”). Much has been made of Stowe’s ultimate goal: to move her readers to “feel right.” In many ways, Anti-Tom novels undertake the same mission.<sup>1</sup>

They are perhaps the best evidence for Cindy Weinstein’s position that although the work of all sentimental novels is at heart “feeling right,” the “alternative models of sympathy” and “multiple ways in which sympathy was imagined and practiced” can be used “as a litmus test for assessing a text’s politics” (Weinstein 1-3). Sentimental Anti-Tom novels are arguably using the same tools of feeling and identification as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, but their sympathies function and flow in a different way. A comprehensive study of the political work of Anti-Tom novels requires giving their premises enough credit to follow their internal arguments, which are more complicated than one might expect.

Anti-Tom novels attempt to alleviate the uncomfortable focus of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* on the spiritual and intellectual equality of black people and the injustice of slavery. They select specific parts of what they interpret as Stowe’s argument, then dispute them. So, if they consider Stowe’s argument to be focused on the mistreatment of slaves in the South, they argue that the

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the general characteristics of Anti-Tom novels, see Reynolds, 151-158.

workers struggling under the oppressive industrial capitalism of the North have it worse off. Dismayed by Stowe's supposed attacks on the family ties between master and slave, they create black characters whose affection to their masters is the centerpiece of their lives and white characters who nobly care for their inferior dependents. While Stowe shows George and Eliza escaping slavery to a better life in the North, driven by a natural human desire for freedom and the right to live as a family, Anti-Tom novels have black characters escape, often hoodwinked or "stolen" by Northern abolitionists, only to find horrific injustice and poverty in the north. Those fugitives often realize they would have been happier if they had only been obedient and content with their lives in the South. Most dramatically, anti-Tom novelists respond to a growing fear that the work of Stowe, along with the inflammatory rhetoric of other abolitionists, was creating a growing chasm between North and South. These novelists respond to that threat by upholding the difference between Northern and Southern "ways of life," while also trying to promote understanding between Northern and Southern citizens.

Anti-Tom authors often claim to be presenting more truthful pictures of "Southern Life as It Is" (as Mary Henderson Eastman subtitled her novel *Aunt Phillis's Cabin*) as a corrective to Stowe's supposedly mistaken vision of the South. Eastman scoffs: "The whole history is an absurdity. No master would be fool enough to sell the best hand on his estate; one who directed, and saved, and managed for him. No master would be brutish enough to sell the man who had nursed him, and his children, who loved him like a son.... Preposterous!" (Eastman 266). They accuse Stowe of deliberately manipulating readers' emotions to perpetuate falsity in the service of political agitation. Many, like Charles Jacobs Peterson, emphasize the truth value of their own work: "Now should the author of this work be asked if it is a faithful transcript of real life, he would answer that he has himself witnessed all the scenes described, or those similar" (Peterson

3). The novels often respond to meddling Northerners by throwing the accusation of immorality back at them. The slave-holding society is not the problem; rather it is the abolitionists who “steal” slaves, provoke civil unrest, and threaten Southern prosperity who are to blame for any instability in the system.

But in addition to arguing for a more “truthful” or perhaps “fair” depiction of what American life really is, the novels have an interest in showing what life *should be like*. Though at times they echo Stowe’s stories in an attempt to edit or deflect her claims about slavery, they are more than defensive. They also mount a crusading campaign for a more ordered, prosperous, and moral society. Sometimes this necessitates a critical look at the slave-holding South in order to identify ways in which it might be reformed. It also entails a comparison between the North and South, usually resulting in the argument that though both have misfortune and problems, those in the heartless industrial North outweigh those of the idyllic South. This contrast maintains the ideological distance between North and South—which itself is a source of anxiety. At times, novelists do the work of reforming the North to resemble the South. By proposing an ideal society, Anti-Tom novels maintain the precarious illusion that the impending crisis of civil war might be avoided. The same kind of deflective work is done when they locate the blame for sectional controversy in the camp of the abolitionists, a move which allows them to maintain an air of moral authority when defending racial slavery.

In order to understand the agenda of these novels in their own time and political culture, it is necessary to examine what and whom they laud or deplore, the ways they locate power in society, how they relate the personal experiences of characters to the larger environment of American life, and what they define as destabilizing or negative forces in society. I will argue that the novels depend on and promote a patriarchal and hierarchical structure of economic

power, which doubles as a moral and emotional structure of caring or sympathy. The slave-holding system is legitimated and upheld as a way of ordering society that enables a white male “owner” or “master” to control a large group of workers, who may in turn depend on him for care, employment, housing, education, and even love. This system in turn rests on the master’s internal reinforcement of ethical standards of manly responsibility.

I have chosen to focus on a select group of Anti-Tom novels that utilize both sentimental narrative and political debate to argue in favor of slavery: *The Cabin and the Parlor, or Slaves and Masters* by Charles Jacobs Peterson (under the pseudonym J. Thornton Randolph) (1852); *Aunt Phillis’s Cabin*, by Mary H. Eastman (1852); *The Lofty and the Lowly; or Good in All and None All-Good*, by Maria McIntosh (1853); *Uncle Robin in His Cabin in Virginia, and Uncle Tom Without One*, by John W. Page (1853); and *The Planter’s Northern Bride*, by Caroline Hentz (1854). These novels represent the most chronologically immediate responses to Stowe, since *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was published serially in *The National Era* between 1851 and 1852, and then published as a cohesive novel in 1852. It is quite possible that several or all of the novels above were in production as the authors read the serialized version of Stowe’s novel.

The novels in this study make no qualms about their quarrels with Stowe’s work; they fully acknowledge that their novels aim to talk back to her. One of the ways they do this is to feature “debate” scenes, wherein several characters, standing in for different political views or agendas, engage in the debate over slavery. The clarity of the proslavery agenda in these scenes is one reason these novels are so productive for study together, but their political message is hardly less subtle in the narrative plots of the novel. To uncover the internal proslavery arguments of Anti-Tom novels in general, I have chosen a set of characters, plot events, and emotional constructs that echo across multiple novels. The commonalities between these five

texts include narratives that coexist in the North and South which elicit political and economic comparisons between the two; patriarchal planters and irresponsible sons; the issue of debt; fugitive slaves; romantic marriage plots; and certain character types.

Of course, Anti-Tom novels mount a defense of slavery in many different ways. Joy Jordan-Lake has undertaken a comprehensive study of a broad range of these novels in order to determine what strategies they use to combat abolitionism and defend slavery. She is particularly interested in the ways that women authors defend a domestic view of plantation life, and her argument hinges upon the introduction of salvific mother figures throughout the novels. Jordan-Lake sees the foundational moral paradigm of the novels as a mutation of Christianity—what she terms a “‘theology of whiteness,’ a framework that manipulates religious language and ideology to support the economic interests of a white patriarchal culture, including the creation of a deity in its own image: white, male, indifferent to injustice, and zealous in punishing transgressions across the racial, gender, and class lines it has drawn” (xvi). Although Jordan-Lake is correct that religious ideology is a major factor in the defense of slavery, I am far more interested in the workings of masculine sentimentality and arguments about responsibility and economics. Whereas Jordan-Lake pulls content out of a large variety of novels and analyzes it with an external framework, my method has been to remain within a smaller set of novels and to delve deeper into the internal argument of each novel. What, I have asked, does each author consider to be the “moral of the story?” My answer lies in two linked ideologies: masculine responsibility and the economy of sympathy.

This is, however, only one way that Anti-Tom novels project their agenda. There is a fruitful field here for more research to be done. One of the reasons critics have been hesitant to engage with Anti-Tom novels may be a reluctance to grant attention to texts which so obviously

trade in racism and prejudice. It is no surprise to find ugly racial caricatures, pseudo-scientific evidence for the inferiority of non-white peoples, and prejudicial stereotypes in these novels. It may, however, be surprising to notice how few black characters appear. There are several reasons for this scarcity. Anti-Tom novels, whether explicitly or implicitly, rely on a racial worldview that treats slaves as a mass of similar people; this means that stereotypes can be used to talk about them. Although character “types” are frequently used in sentimental novels for white characters as well, authors engage in long-winded description, frequent candid dialogue, and intimate details to define those characters. Black characters, on the other hand, are described as physically similar to each other, and they more easily fit into a small number of types: the “Uncle Tom,” a loyal, older male slave—though this type can vary from the devoted Daddy Cato in *The Lofty and the Lowly* to the drunken fool Uncle Bacchus (*Aunt Phillis’s Cabin*); his wife, the good mother with her brood of children, like Aunt Phillis, Aunt Chloe in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, or Auber in *The Lofty and the Lowly*; the Aunt Juno (*Uncle Robin*) or Aunt Peggy (*Aunt Phillis’s Cabin*), an ancient slave who remembers Africa; the proud young runaway, usually a mulatto, like Charles in *The Cabin and the Parlor* who can be seen as a variation on George Harris in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

These types only represent a small portion of the slaves who would have been present on plantations, with the result that the visible plot rests upon the shoulders of a huge mass of hidden people. This is apparent within the text when the planter class rarely thinks about the great majority of their slaves but instead focuses on their relationships with a select few. It is also in play between the reader and the text. As will be discussed later, the urge to limit the expenditure of sympathy results in an economy that prioritizes certain people. Although there are certainly examples of cross-racial sympathy in the text, they are carefully mediated. As opposed to Stowe,

who allows the reader to connect with a few focal black characters as she follows them through trials and tragedy, Anti-Tom novelists are careful to keep the emphasis and the investment of the reader relegated to white characters.

When black characters do appear, they are caricatures, without inner lives or independent thoughts. Often the voices of black characters are misappropriated to testify to the benefits of slavery or to thank their kind masters. In *Uncle Robin in His Cabin in Virginia, and Tom Without One in Boston*, the elderly slave Aunt Juno explains that she is fortunate to have been saved from the cannibalistic practices of her tribe in Africa. When Juno's mistress asks her if she would like to go back to Africa, Juno replies "No, missy, Juner no go back. . . Juner no frien' dar now; Juner 'tay wid massa 'til Juner die." Not only was Juno rescued from certain death (since she was marked for sacrifice by her tribe), but she has learned about heaven and Christianity. "Ole missy tell Juner heap 'bout hebbin, and Juner farder in hebbin, an' say, if Juner good, Juner go to hebbin when she die. She tell Juner 'bout one man die for Juner to car' Juner to hebbin; an' dat Juner mus' lobe dat man, an' Juner bin try lobe dat man; but might hard lobe when Juner no see um" (Page 26). Juno's improper and ungrammatical dialect humbles her and reveals her intellectual limitations: she has an incomplete grasp on the abstract meaning of Jesus's death and finds it difficult to love Him, even though she wishes to go to heaven. Obviously, Anti-Tom novels wear their racial prejudices near the surface, but because they are often attempting to speak positively about slaves as people, it can be difficult to assess their racism. The most important point to grasp for the purposes of this study is that Anti-Tom novelists do not give space to the actual voices of enslaved persons and feel comfortable exploiting the voices and actions of black characters to their own ends.

This explains how slaves are made complicit in enslaving themselves and their fellows. Uncle Robin, for example, dutifully informs his master that Tom and Dick, two restless slaves, are hatching plans to escape, thus ruining their chances at freedom. After their master Doctor Boswell decides that Tom and Dick must be sold, Robin carries a message to summon the slave trader, Boshier, and he does the work of justifying the necessity of his master's action to Tom's broken-hearted parents: "Well, I trust dis gwine be a good lessin to de young people 'pon dis plantation; dey got one of de very bes' masters dat niggers eber had; and for him to be force' wid tear runnin' down he face to sell 'em cause dey misbehave, is raly too bad" (46). Robin's sympathies lie with his master, who is remorseful about the whole event, rather than with the slaves. He supports the moral framework of slavery.<sup>2</sup> This is a clear example of an Anti-Tom novel using a black character's voice and actions to support slavery and do its dirty work.

To realize the ways in which Anti-Tom novels use black characters as tools for their argument is a helpful exercise in the method of analysis used throughout this study. The novelists are hardly subtle in advocating their own views, but their voices speak with varying degrees of disguise. My process has been more than simply "reading for" the political message. There is also a degree of uncovering to be done, which requires a balance between skepticism and credence. The baldest instances of essayistic rhetoric are in prefaces and afterwords which pointedly criticize Stowe and in staged debate scenes which allow characters to voice the opinions of the opposing sides of the slavery debate. I have begun with these scenes, as they are the clearest way to discern the political interests, biases, and goals of the novels. My aim in this

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<sup>2</sup> This passage could be fruitfully compared to the antics of Andy and Sam in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (see Stowe 36-43). While one might say that Stowe is also appropriating black voices, she allows Sam and Andy the agency and intuition to work alongside Mrs. Shelby to prevent the slave trader Haley from catching Eliza. They delight in subverting the system of slavery even though they act foolish and dumbly loyal. (For a discussion of these performative activities, see Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s*, 31-35.) This practice of acting the part of the loyal servant is sometimes called "tomming." In Anti-Tom novels, black characters are not considered capable of such sophisticated play.

first section is to analyze how Anti-Tom novels bring the national political debate into fiction and, conversely, use fiction to speak for the debate. Having control over the terms of debate allows Anti-Tom authors to divert the abolitionist mission. Next, I delve deeper into the sentimental processes of the novels by revealing how the relationships between the planter, his family, and his slaves are structured according to a hierarchy that relies on the ideology of masculine responsibility. Responsibility governs the actions of white men towards their own families, determines the duties of slaves, and is extrapolated through a paternalistic view of slavery into a larger cross-racial “family.” Masculine responsibility is not merely emotional, however; it also governs the structures of economic welfare and capital-labor relations. Those two elements are also united in a peculiar literary process I term the “economy of sympathy,” which regulates and directs sympathy in order to provide for the lower classes. This essential relationship between the master class and the laboring classes, whether in the south or north, is the grounds for the debate over slavery.

### *Fictionalizing the Debate*

Part of the work of sentimental Anti-Tom novels is to show Southern life as it is, removing all traces of abolitionist slander. This often consists in educating Northern characters by demonstrating how things really are, as plantation owner Doctor Boswell does with his new wife in *Uncle Robin in his Cabin in Virginia, and Uncle Tom without One in Boston*. Mrs. Boswell exclaims to her abolitionist mother: “It is nearly three months since I came here, with not a few prejudices against it, but those prejudices have been entirely removed by seeing for myself what slavery really is. I have never, anywhere, seen more satisfaction and happiness than appears to prevail among the slaves throughout this neighbourhood” (Page 101). The conversion

of misguided Northerners to enlightened truth happens both in the narrative sections of the novels and in structured debate scenes. The scenes, which usually take place in a gentleman's private home, are staged to transparently represent the political views of the author by disguising his or her voice in a favorably-portrayed character. This costuming goes the other direction as well: Northern characters who learn to overcome their prejudices are stand-ins for the readership of the novel.

Debate scenes interact in several ways with the rest of the novels in which they are found. First, they allow a chance for male characters to demonstrate their moral ascendancy. Part of the meaning of responsibility, a concept which will later be explicated in greater depth, is a man's willingness to stand up for his beliefs. Because the proslavery arguments ventured at the table focus on the welfare of the laborers under the jurisdiction of the debaters, these men are also defending the weak and championing morality. Also, debate scenes often feature anecdotes and short stories as proof for their points. This is a microcosmic picture of the task of Anti-Tom novels: using the power of narrative and emotional connection to prove a larger political point.

Fictional debate scenes also emerge from their novelistic homes to demonstrate a model for the national conversation: led by responsible, noble, affluent white men, conducted in the private homes of concerned citizens, informed by Christian morality, and focused on the welfare of the public. Perhaps Anti-Tom authors genuinely saw this kind of civil debate as a device to prevent impending sectional violence.

Although the ostensible task of staged debates is to allow both sides space to speak, Anti-Tom authors rig the results heavily in favor of the proslavery position. Often, abolitionists or Northern opponents of slavery are fairly easily convinced. They declare how they have seen the error of their ways, or simply become embarrassed. In *The Cabin and the Parlor*, the aptly

named Mr. Brawler, an Englishman who provokes the argument by speaking with the moral smugness of having abolished slavery in Britain long ago, sees that “he had made a false step,” makes a lame excuse for leaving, and the proslavery victory comes when “the discomfited Englishman slunk from the room” (Peterson 176). If abolitionists do stick to their guns, their points are never as strong as those of the proslavery actors. In a debate between the Southern planter, Moreland, and the abolitionist New Englander Hastings (whose daughter is the eponymous *Planter’s Northern Bride*), Moreland makes the relatively reasonable argument that “instead of being the friends, you are in reality the worst enemies of the bondman whose cause you espouse; that, by adopting a kinder, more rational course, you would find in us co-labourers and brethren, instead of antagonists.” Instead of a substantive rebuttal, Hastings throws back harsh words: “I never can be convinced, sir; it is utterly impossible. I know that I am right, and that you are wrong” (86). Author Caroline Hentz does not allow Hastings an adequate answer because she wishes to prove that his view is not particularly well-founded; rather, he is stubbornly ignorant of the truth. By villainizing abolitionist characters and ridiculing their arguments as hypocritical and cruel, Anti-Tom novels reveal that the debate is less pro-slavery than it is anti-abolitionist.

In order to frame the debate in a way that is antagonistic to abolitionists, Anti-Tom novels question the basic premises of abolitionist thought. Though the arguments and cultural negotiations of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* resonated with a complexity that ought not to be underrated, at the bottom line its message was simple: we are all human (God’s creatures), and we are all rightly free. That “we” was welded out of the volatile workings of sympathy—Stowe’s novel is always working to connect and to expand “feeling right.” This message, powerful in its self-evidence, needed to be subverted by Anti-Tom authors in order to frame the debate over slavery

in a way that would not demonize the South, but would instead set it up for logical pre-eminence and moral authority.

To do so, they call the value of freedom itself into question, often misappropriating the voices of black characters to disavow their own desire for freedom. For example, *The Lofty and the Lowly's* Daddy Cato—a freed man—rhapsodizes: “I tink dem crazy ‘bout free. Free bery good ting, but free ent all; when you sick, free won’t make you well, free won’t gib you clo’es, nor hom’ny, let ‘lone meat. Free bery good, but free ent ebery ting” (McIntosh, Vol. II, 175).

Although Daddy Cato is freed when his master, Col. Montrose, dies, he remains on the plantation to do his usual work for the Colonel’s widow, his children Isabel and Donald, and the widow of the Colonel’s brother and her daughter Alice. When Alice Montrose and her mother leave the plantation to move back North, Cato follows to work for them. Cato remains a part of this extended family rather than distancing himself—he does not take advantage of his freedom.

As is historically evidenced by the hardship faced by free black people in the North both before and after the Civil War, Cato is right in pointing out that nominal freedom guarantees neither economic opportunity nor racial tolerance. But compare his statement with that made by Tom in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. When St. Clare points out, “Tom, you couldn’t possibly have earned, by your work, such clothes and such living as I have given you,” Tom replies, “but, Mas’r, I’d rather have poor clothes, poor house, poor everything, and have ‘em *mine*, than have the best, and have ‘em any man’s else, —I had *so*, Mas’r; I think it’s natur Mas’r.” (Stowe 265). For Tom, the transcendent yearning for freedom is unshakable and deep—as is *natural* for any human. As she does blatantly elsewhere in the novel, Stowe is implicitly asking the reader to search his or her own feelings—wouldn’t we all rather call our small lot in life our own than have it arbitrarily taken away because we are not free? Stowe’s novel emphasizes closeness

between the sentiments of characters and readers. Anti-Tom novels, quite to the contrary, require a registered difference between lower class folks with limited ambitions and the middle-to-upper class white men who are having the discussion. Elevated and abstract desires are a commodity for those who need not labor for bread.

At best, this distinction between material needs and emotional aspirations promotes the insistence that, again in Daddy Cato's words, "free ent ebery ting" and that advocates for freedom must also work for social and economic equality. At worst, however, Anti-Tom novels distinguish between an enlightened, spiritual white race, and a limited black race which can hardly grasp the basic tenets of Christianity. The enduring image of the happily singing slaves (featured as an illustration plate in almost every Anti-Tom novel) is the logical conclusion of a long-running racist concept of a lower order of humans—a race which has no need for the elevated concept of "freedom," as long as their material needs are met.

The novels in my study usually tend towards a middle ground, where spiritual considerations are indeed important to slaves who have embraced Christianity. For Daddy Cato, freedom has a truer meaning beyond his legal status: the freedom from sin offered by salvation through Christ. This distinction comes with a bit of tricky manipulation on the part of the author. While working for the Montrose women in the North, Cato is targeted by two Northern abolitionists, Samson and Pierson, who mistakenly think he is enslaved. He hears their assessment of himself as "in 'the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity'" and recognizes the quote as scripture. Believing that "these good strangers were kindly anxious for his spiritual welfare," therefore, he answers their questions metaphorically. When they ask, "And so, my poor fellow, you have been in bondage all your life;--in bondage to a hard master?" he answers with the Christian language of sin and redemption: "we all in bondage to bery hard maussa, work we

day and night, neber stop tell we fall down and dead; he feed we wid husk and make we back sore wid he heaby burden. . . . He name? maussa?—he name da SIN” (McIntosh II, 97-99). Cato calls all white men “maussa” and all white women “missis” because for him, the term implies respect and protection. The real hard master is named “sin,” and Cato’s unconscious cleverness makes the point that *we all* are enslaved to sin—a point which the novel’s intrusive, insensitive, and irresponsible abolitionists would do well to remember. Even though Samson and Pierson realize what Cato really meant to say, they misappropriate his voice to argue their own political point by publishing a heavily edited version of his story in a pamphlet. Cato comes out on top in this discussion with the more elevated notion of freedom.

Of course, that Christian concept of freedom is granted to Cato by the education he has received from his masters—so his slavery has granted his freedom. This is yet another example of an Anti-Tom author using a black character to argue for his own enslavement, misappropriating his voice just as wrongly as the abolitionists do. In *Uncle Robin*, the plantation owner Doctor Boswell educates his Northern wife (and readers of the novel) by showing her the difference between the relatively pleasant cabins of the slaves and the filthy squalid shanties inhabited by a community of Irish road-workers. One of these men, Dennis, speaks up for the value of his freedom: “we go when we plase [sic], and stay at home when we please; and your honour knows there’s a world of difference between free people and slaves” (33-34). Yet in fact the speaker is an example of the dangers of *too much* freedom as he squanders his pay on liquor: “‘There’s none a bit of it behind, the jug’s tak’ it all,’ said Mrs. Flinn” (34). Doctor Boswell lays the blame for the family’s misfortune on the head of household: “‘Do you expect to keep your wife and children in this shanty all the winter? . . . Dennis, Dennis, that won’t do; you ought to think of your wife and children” (34), implying that Dennis is unfortunately free from the

discipline of patriarchal responsibility. Because Dennis cannot provide for his family, his children are too busy working to go to school, and because of his promiscuous Catholic beliefs he does not provide the same educational or religious services that enlightened slave-holders can. Boswell's response to Dennis emphasizes this questioning of "freedom": "If slaves have more learning than free people, more religion than free people, and have better houses to live in than free people, I think the difference is in favour of the slaves" (34). Slaveowners "free" their slaves from worry and material cares, and they also provide them with religious and moral education.

By redefining freedom, the debate is safely recentered upon the benefits—both material and spiritual—of the economic system of slavery. In *The Cabin and The Parlor*, author Charles Jacobs Peterson argues relentlessly that the slave system is the ideal economic organizational system. His premise is stated through the words of Walworth, the hero of the novel and a morally responsible slave-holder, and it falls as follows: under capitalism, there will always be a laboring class and an upper class that benefits from their labors. This upper class might accurately be called "owners" or "masters" in the North as well as the South, since they own the capital and virtually control the lives of their workers. The worker in the north is the "slave of the capitalist" (Peterson 187)—though not enslaved in name, he is just as dependent on his employer and similarly hindered in opportunity. This argument, that the relationship between "master" and worker is basically the same whether the labor force is legally enslaved or free, is used to cast doubt upon the abolitionist program: "Emancipation. . . is only altering the relations of capital and labor; improving them, at best, by but a single grade; and leaving the negro, in many practical respects, worse than before" (Peterson 257). Walworth's critique here implies that the near-complete power that the "master" exerts over his workers is inevitable and unchangeable, and that freedom would hardly change that. The real moral debate, then, is not about

emancipation, but about the responsibility of the owners, masters, and managers of society to ensure that the system is as humane as possible, given its constraints.

With individual freedom cast to the side, the criteria for a successful economic system are redrawn, and the North and South can be compared on grounds that proslavery thinkers consider more appropriate, beginning with the way that workers are treated, their material living conditions, and their prospects for moral education. Though this comparison is discussed during debate scenes, it makes its full impact when viewed through a narrative lens. Anti-Tom novels are perhaps best known for their idealistic pastoral scenes of plantation life—the happy slaves singing in the fields, quiet reflective life on the shady porch of the big house, a soft breeze blowing, perhaps a dance at night. Showing the South as a heavenly, peaceful land ignores the reality of violence, intimidation, humiliation, sexual exploitation and imprisonment that slaves faced. This disconnectedness from reality is perhaps one of the reasons study of Anti-Tom novels is so scarce—the presentation of the idyllic south can seem a fatuous defense of slavery based on the surface-level pleasantries of Southern life.

However, grasping the full impact of these idealistic depictions requires a look at the underlying social mechanics of a patriarchal society. This is especially clear when at the end of *The Lofty and the Lowly*, McIntosh reveals her ideal vision of society under the leadership of Robert Grahame. Robert is the true hero of the story. He travels extensively throughout the novel and comes into contact with the Montroses (he eventually marries Alice), but his occupation in life is as a factory owner. Robert not only provides for the material needs of his workers, but oversees their education. He is aided in his civilizing mission by his sister Mary, who disseminates domesticity:

the children of those who worked at the factory, and occasionally the younger hands employed there, received instruction in the essentials of education, and if a boy showed unusual talent, it was the wish of Robert Grahame that he should not be limited to these essentials; but there was one thing very important to girls which the good man could not teach—the use of those instruments so indispensable to the advance of civilization,—needle and scissors,—and to this task Mary's Thursday mornings were devoted.

(McIntosh II, 295).

The welfare that Robert and Mary provide is more than just material; it is also educational and moral.

Though Robert is a Northern man, his view of his responsibility sounds like the patriarchal view of slave-owning society: “There was one thing of which Robert Grahame never lost sight—the work which God had assigned to him. Those who seemed to have been thus committed to his charge were bound to him by no human ties; they were not his kindred—they were not his feudatories—they were not, in any absolute sense, his dependents. They might at any time leave his service for that of another. . . To bind *his* people to him was, then, his first desire, and for this he availed himself of every opportunity of evincing that kindly interest in them which might attract to him *their affection, the strongest of all bonds*” (McIntosh Vol. II, 311, emphasis mine). Robert clearly wishes to practice responsibility in a way that co-opts the language of slavery and bondage, but sanctifies it by redefining the relationship between employer and worker, or master and slave, as affection.

McIntosh is clever in that she allows this ideal society to stem from the North. In doing so, she has elevated the grounds of her defense of slavery from the necessity of dealing with the peculiar institution of the South to a depiction of the most moral arrangement possible between

capital and labor. She has also made Robert the focal point of the economy, and grounded the goodness of his work in his personal heroism. Robert's character binds the troubled Donald Montrose to him, for the greater good: after Donald incurs a catastrophic debt, Robert helps him redeem it, encourages him to be responsible, and becomes his brother by marrying Donald's cousin Alice. Since Donald admires Robert, he emulates his plan for a more enlightened social system in the South:

“It is an experiment I am making, which, if it succeed, will...take from slavery some of its worst features. On a place about four miles from this. . . I have built a few houses of a better class than those usually occupied by our slaves. In these I have placed some of my best and most trustworthy families, away from all surveillance of myself or my agents. I have given them seed for the first year, and told them to go to work as they think best, and at the end of the year they shall give me. . .rent. . . if any grow indolent, the punishment will be to bring them back to their old condition. But do you hear the bell? It rings every evening for their gathering in what they call their ‘Prayers House’” (McIntosh II, 319).

Although Donald's ‘experiment’ in share-cropping may be laudable in that it would allow families more time to be together, hands decision-making power to the laborers, and gives them freedom from immediate surveillance and punishment, it maintains their status as manual laborers. The improved living conditions are to be granted only to the “best and most trustworthy” slaves, and the passage ends with mention of the slaves’ Christian worship practices. That combination implies that the civilizing mission of the plantation owner will eventually reach its culmination in a good, Christian slave population—to emphasize that mission, he calls it a “colony”—but that the newly enlightened black people will be granted little change in their status. Their liberation from savagery will be reward enough. Donald makes it

clear that he could revert to the conditions of slavery, because he is not relinquishing his ownership. The power remains entirely in the hands of the upper class owner.

The Northern version of a colony is not much different: “about fifty small houses with a garden attached to each, built on the southern slope of the hill below which stood the factory, made a beautiful picture of smiling rural life. There stood the schoolmaster’s house...and there, crown of all the rest, standing just below the brow of the hill, was that building without which no village, no human life is complete—the church” (McIntosh II, 296). Again, the society is grounded in the Church, showing that lower classes, black or white, need guidance and care. The planned landscape, the fifty small houses, and the theocratic city-on-a-hill are all visual indications that this is a society that is consciously designed—and funded—by the owner. That aspect of deliberation behind the gears of a still-ticking society elevates the defensive picture of a “southern idyll” to an intellectual debate about societal design.

McIntosh, with her idealized visions of plantation life, North and South, was not alone in leaning towards the idea that slavery—or some modified form of indentured servitude—might actually be beneficial to white laborers as well as blacks. This ideology was called “slavery in the abstract.” Either all laborers would become slaves or there would be “what came to the same thing—assimilation of slavery to a pattern of social subordination in which chattel slavery served as the extreme form of dependent and unfree labor appropriate to time, place, and circumstance” (Fox-Genovese 3). Few Southern elites would actually advocate enslaving white people, for “their notions of racial and class stratification encouraged a belief that a milder form of personal servitude would suffice for whites” (4), but the desirable part of the concept was that laborers would be supervised and cared for by a benign patriarch. The motivations behind reforming the free-labor system in the image of slavery were these: “Southern slaves fared better than most

peasants and wage-workers in free societies; slavery was proving a more humane, stable, and morally responsible social system than its free-labor rival; and Christians had to accept responsibility to succor fellow human beings” (8). Under a system of personal servitude, every working-class person would have a responsible “master.”

The trouble with the North, then, is not only that the conditions of the working poor are horrific, but that there is no system in place for their welfare. Though many Anti-Tom novelists acknowledge occasional abuses of the system of slavery, they argue that at least in the South, some sort of system of social welfare exists. The North is pictured as disordered, violent, and hostile. Anti-Tom author Caroline Rush offers a stark picture of the Northern working poor in the preface to her novel *The North and South; or, Slavery and Its Contrasts*: “Let the thousands of slender fragile children, in each of our great cities, children covered with the coarsest garments; their little feet bare; their backs bowed over with the weight of the heavy burthens they have to carry; their features sharp and pinched; let these poor children answer for me. . . Let their utter wretchedness convince the wonder-working abolitionists, that justice, as well as charity, begins at home” (14). The heart-pricking depiction of the troubles of the poor in the North is accompanied by the accurate identification of the culprit: abolitionists who disavow responsibility for their own poor.

One of the symbols of this disorder is the disease and death of Horace Courtenay, the impoverished son of the deceased plantation owner in *The Cabin and the Parlor*. Horace has come North to work as an apprentice in order to take the financial burden of his welfare into his own hands. Though Horace is trying to be responsible and unselfish, his good intentions are defeated by the strains of Northern life—malnourished and overworked, he falls ill. The reasons for Horace’s death are clear: his employer refuses to pay a living wage, so Horace cannot afford

decent lodging or enough food. Horace is cold and lonely, and his dreams of rising through the ranks to prosperity are frustrated. The hero of the story, Walworth (a Southern plantation owner), offers help, but it comes too late. As Horace falls into a fevered state, he raves against Walworth, not recognizing him as his sponsor and would-be savior. He cries, “You are one of the bad men. You make slaves of white children—poor orphans—and work them to death. You promise falsely. . . [T]his idea seemed to possess him more forcibly, he cowered to the other side of the bed, adding ‘I’ve often seen you in my dreams. Go away’” (243). He mistakes the relative stranger Walworth, with his fine clothes and gentlemanly manner, for one of the unsympathetic Northern factory owners, or perhaps for his employer, Mr. Sharpe, who has refused to help him. Horace’s tragic death represents the dearth of responsibility and sympathy at the North, while Walworth’s attempts to help are simply not enough. Southern chivalry has been defeated by the disorder of the North, whose diseased mind is so far gone that it can’t even recognize a hero for what he is. Added to the awareness that across Anti-Tom novels, the North is hostile to almost every Southern character, black or white, who comes to live there, it is clear that the true threat to the prosperity and peace of the union is the encroachment of Northern disorder.

### *Masculine Responsibility*

The doctrine of responsibility is ubiquitous in the political theory of Anti-Tom novels, most clearly communicated in the staged debate scenes. But the proslavery agenda is hardly less conspicuous in the sentimental narratives of the novels. One way to realize this is to take a look around the table in all of the major debate scenes in the novels—the discussion is populated and controlled by white, usually affluent men. The fate of the cabin, in other words, is decided in the parlor. By placing the desire and power to design an ideal society squarely within the grasp of male characters, Anti-Tom novels propagate a worldview that is politically gendered just as

much as it is racialized. Part of the impulse to assert male authority in the question of slavery may be in response to abolitionists like Stowe who were seen as meddling female agitators. One particularly scathing Southern reviewer of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* justified his harsh treatment of Stowe by stating at the outset that “where a writer of the softer sex manifests, in her productions, a shameless disregard to truth and of those amenities which so peculiarly belong to her sphere of life, we hold that she has forfeited the claim to be considered a lady” (Thompson). Although Anti-Tom novels were written by women as well as men, they enforce a hierarchical structure of patriarchal power for men and domestic submission for women. Women who engage in improper political activity are condemned.

The central moral vehicle for maintaining this expansive hierarchy is the distribution of care. The apex male figure—planter, father, husband, master, employer—provides care that is essential for the welfare of his dependents. The need for this care is starkly exhibited when it is missing. The failures of white men ripple down the length of the hierarchy, affecting black laborers and white women alike. The effects of masculine shortcomings are so pervasive that most of the problems and struggles that Anti-Tom characters experience can actually be traced back to them. Two resounding instances of this hierarchical trouble can be found in *The Cabin and the Parlor* and *The Lofty and the Lowly*, with Isabel Courtenay and Alice Montrose, respectively.

When Isabel's mother demands that “we must have a turkey on Christmas, Isabel, and try, for once, to live a little like old times” (159), poor Isabel falls into despair for a moment. The focal Southern family of Charles Jacobs Peterson's *The Cabin and The Parlor* has fallen from the bacchanalian celebration of the first chapter to poverty—first enduring the death of Mr. Courtenay, Isabel's father, and then the ruination of their property and the loss of their land.

Though Isabel “is slaving [her] very life away” (Peterson 73) as a teacher at a little town schoolhouse, she has trouble making ends meet.<sup>3</sup> To save her mother the emotional trauma of realizing their dire financial situation (“Utter poverty, such as was now coming upon them, was a thing incomprehensible to her: she had never experienced it in person, she had never known any body that had” (153)), Isabel “endeavored to spare her mother the feeling of actual want, often denying herself that Mrs. Courtenay and Alfred might have sufficient. She kept also the real state of their finances concealed” (154). Alfred is Isabel’s youngest brother; her other younger brother Horace has gone away to work in the North. As the only worker, Isabel is the head of the family.

Aware of Isabel’s difficulty in securing any food more than the “plain fare” (154) that Mrs. Courtenay’s refined tastes demand, a kindly friend of the family takes pity on them and secretly begins leaving chickens on the windowsill overnight. The Christmas conundrum thus causes Isabel to wonder “if my unknown fairy will send us a turkey. If he don’t, I must buy one, cost what it may” (159). And sure enough, the morning before Christmas brings a “magnificent turkey-hen” out of nowhere to her kitchen. This generous benefactor who apparently has so much to spare is not the kind-hearted Dr. Worthington, who helps the Courtenays later in the story, nor is it any of the Randolphs, the rich plantation owners who were previously the Courtenays’s neighbors, nor the parents of one of Isabel’s students. No, help comes from Uncle Peter, formerly the Courtenays’s slave, now sold to another master. Uncle Peter cares for Isabel as a father would; he does chores for her (as does his wife, Aunt Vi’let), drives her home from

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<sup>3</sup> In the words of Mrs. Courtenay: “I never was willing you should undertake so drudging an affair, and the compensation is so pitiable that it scarcely affords us the most common necessaries. You are slaving your very life away for a mess of pottage” (72-73). It is significant that the paucity of remuneration is what defines slavery, and also that Isabel’s very life is endangered by work; this seems like a moment where Peterson doubts the actual goodness of slavery .

work in his wagon when she falls ill, and reassures her. His support, both material and emotional, puts him in close proximity to the family.

Another righteous black man, Daddy Cato, undertakes an even more dramatic sponsorship of a young female heroine in Maria McIntosh's *The Lofty and the Lowly*. In this case, young Alice Montrose and her brother Charles were raised by their father's brother, Col. Montrose, in the South after their own father's death. After his plantation's value is gambled away by his irresponsible son Donald and Col. Montrose dies, Alice and her mother are left on their own and move back to the North. Alice prompts her mother to send for Daddy Cato, the faithful slave of Col. Montrose who was set free by his master's will, but who stayed on the plantation to work for the remaining Montroses. . . . Alice claims that "we shall not be half so much afraid of fires and robbers, and all such horrible things, when we have a man about the house; and we shall never need to hire half a day's work of a gardener. Daddy Cato will hoe and plant, and do whatever I want" (McIntosh, II, 69). She identifies Cato's value as a protective male guardian and as a laborer. He even spares the delicate women the need to venture into inclement weather: "The winter. . .gave them cause often to be grateful that Cato had chosen to remain with them. He shovelled their coal, he cut their wood, he went to the market for them;" (McIntosh II, 72). Cato is never paid wages for his work, even though as a freedman in the North he is entitled to them. Labor, in this case, is a part of his expression of love and friendship—which perhaps implies that the slave-master relationship is intact here, and is in fact motivated by bonds of affection or familial structure rather than ownership.

Cato is so dismayed by the financial difficulties of his "missis" that he suggests to Alice that she "hire him out" as if he were still a slave. Alice replies: "Why then, Daddy Cato, I could not hire you at all. Do you not remember you are free? If you are hired, it must be by yourself,

and all you make will be your own to do as you please with.” Cato’s bewildered reply, “An’ me can hire myself, Missis?” (McIntosh II, 94-95), reinforces his uncertainty about his status in the north, and his reluctance to stray outside of comfortable servitude. Cato promptly finds a beneficent employer and intends to give his earnings to Alice, who replies: ““But, my dear daddy Cato, mamma and I have no right to your earnings, and indeed, indeed, I cannot take them.’ ‘Ouw, Miss Alice, you t’row way poor Cato? poor Cato no hab no missis now.’ Tears filled the old man’s eyes and his head sank, and his form drooped” (McIntosh II, 101). Cato is dismayed at the thought of not having a mistress and being excluded from the pseudo-family economy. Alice finally relents to take his money, and they each have an emotional moment: “with feelings as quick in their changes as those of a child, Cato went out with wet cheeks, laughing the low chuckling laugh which was his highest expression of delight, and long after he had left her a sob would rise to the throat of Alice, and tears moisten her eyes, at the memory of his faithfulness and love” (McIntosh II, 102). The love between the two characters allows for a cross-racial sympathetic connection even as its expression highlights the distance between them.

That kind of sympathetic affection is a central hinge to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Stowe uses the cross-racial connection between little Eva and Tom, for example, to argue for Tom’s high level of emotional competence, humanity, and religious purity. The appearance of a similar feeling-event in an Anti-Tom novel might be surprising for some readers because those novels were not written in service of the same ideals of racial equality; rather, they argue for a system of slavery which inherently depends on racial hierarchy and racial difference. Uncle Peter and Daddy Cato are not, however, portrayed as threatening or savage. They express themselves simplistically, but are not overly ignorant or petty. Though elsewhere the novels rely on racial caricatures to reduce the concerns of black folks to petty comical minstrelsy, in these situations

they nonetheless allow black men a considerable degree of moral authority and understanding. The result of Daddy Cato's and Uncle Peter's involvement in the family lives of their white mistresses is not a racist censure of black men who threaten families or inappropriately usurp the place of patriarchs, but applause for their devotion as the audience, along with Isabel and Alice, responds to them with love and gratitude. What place, then, do these surprising moments of connection have in the larger world of the novels?

The most obvious explanation for these relationships is the insistent emphasis that Anti-Tom authors place on the affectionate bonds between master and slave. This can be seen as a response to what they saw as false abolitionist accusations of cruelty on the part of slave-holders. In her novel, *The Planter's Northern Bride*, Caroline Hentz often breaks the fourth wall with emotional outbursts against Stowe and other abolitionists. She goes so far as to exclaim that "the clanking chains of which you speak are mere figures of speech. You hear instead merry voices singing in the fields of labour or filling up the pauses of toil" (51). This categorical denial of any actual violence on the part of slave-holders is so disconnected from reality that it seems disingenuous. Hentz is not alone, however, in wanting to maintain the moral upper hand in the North-South debate by disavowing cruelty and violence and emphasizing slave-master affection. If slaves and masters naturally care for each other because of the ordered relationship into which the slave system sorts them, Uncle Peter and Daddy Cato are merely acting in accordance with the feelings of loyalty, devotion, and idolization they ought to owe their "masters"—who are in this case young white women—according to this scheme. The authors might say that abolitionists would do well to remember what bonds they are in fact breaking when clamoring for emancipation! Although a defense of the status quo of master-slave affection is integral to the Anti-Tom agenda, these two parallel moments serve as an intersection of a much broader field of

cultural questions, starting with why Alice and Isabel need help. Where are their fathers, brothers, lovers, husbands? Why are black men taking on the patriarchal work of protection, emotional support, and love? Whose ‘Daddy’ and ‘Uncle’ are they anyway? What rules are in place that allow young single white women to be in close contact with older black men without risk?

These two episodes hint at a crisis in white masculinity that echoes across Anti-Tom novels. The actions of black men, far from being Uncle-Tom-esque demonstrations of humanity and strength, actually say more about the absence of white men and the disordered and fatherless white families. The novels simultaneously promote a hierarchical, white-male-dominant, ordered society and betray anxiety about failures in masculine responsibility that could jeopardize that order—and with it, the prosperity and peace of the slave-holding south. The tension between faith in responsible patriarchy and doubt of irresponsible patriarchs is one of the reasons that Anti-Tom novels are more than defensive responses to Stowe. The claims they make about master-slave affection, then, can be understood as more than a counter-argument to the abolitionist accusations of whips and chains. Affection and sympathy are tools that Anti-Tom novels wield to extrapolate family structure into a larger hierarchy of racial slavery. The feelings of responsible sympathy and affectionate control that operate in Southern white families are also in play across the entire plantation. Asserting the presence of those feelings, even between races, is thus a way of reinforcing the existence and the necessity of the hierarchy.

That slave-holding society was patriarchal and hierarchical will hardly surprise readers of this study. It is interesting, however, to attempt to describe what that structure looks like and how it operates. The sentimental Anti-Tom novels in this study encompass family sagas, with multiple inter-family (or intra-family) marriages; cousins, siblings, friends, and servants abound.

Most readers will in fact find it necessary to sketch a quick family tree to keep track—and it is the particular appearance of the sketch that I found myself making that interests me. Family relations are visualized as a geneological triangle: the white patriarch at the apex. Next to his name—but more often slightly below—is his wife, and further down the line are his children, nieces and nephews, maiden aunts, etc. Off to the side a separate triangle of *his* servants follows the same gendered pattern, usually with an “Uncle Tom” character at the top—a trusted male servant who mimics the slave-owners’ patriarchal concern and keeps the rest of the slaves in line. The black women and children fall in line under him, but all black families are ultimately subordinate to the white master. This is a function of the power the master holds over his property, but it is represented as the love and care he devotes to the dependent souls under his guidance—this process of extrapolation is the key to the sentimental work of the novel.

The power of love begins at the top of the hierarchy with the relationship between white patriarch figures and their wives, daughters, sisters, etc. The women of Anti-Tom novels are universally subordinate to their husbands. They are often portrayed as victims who need to be rescued, protected, nursed, sheltered, and most of all loved. The ideology of the subordination of women is partially supported by the opinion of men towards women. They think of women as their dependents and their inferiors, and they even exert the same moral authority over their wives as over their slaves. Doctor Boswell in *Uncle Robin*, for example, wishes to reform Ann into a Southern gentlewoman. He says, “I have the very best soil to operate upon; and if Ann does not resemble my dear mother in all things, it will be the fault of her instructor” (Page 63). The same language is used for ‘instructing’ the neighborhood tailor, an alcoholic, to begin temperate habits, and for ‘instructing’ slaves in their daily tasks and in Christianity.

But the legitimization of the patriarchy also stems from the actions, desires, and choices of female characters. Alice Montrose in *The Lofty and the Lowly* has no greater ambition than to be an obedient and loving daughter and wife:

“I used to think how great a happiness it would be to have some one person as good and wise as Mr. Dunbar, and as strong and brave as my dear old uncle, to protect, and cherish, and guide me. At first it was as my father that this dream personage presented himself to me. It was pleasant to me to think of yielding to the guidance, even of submitting to the authority of one so excellent. . . I might enjoy the feeling of a true surrender of myself to a stronger and wiser nature” (McIntosh II, 201). Alice goes on to explain why she chose not to accept Donald’s offer of marriage: he is not strong-willed or responsible enough. He stands in contrast to Robert Grahame, a man who “at the command of duty, had immolated his tastes, curbed his passions, assumed responsibilities which would have weighed down many a man, and fulfilled them as few men could” (McIntosh II, 202). By modeling her ideal man off the father figures in her life, Alice is placing her emotional experiences with all men squarely within the patriarchy, and by choosing the more responsible man, she provides a justification of the doctrine of masculine responsibility. This speech is as starkly self-abasing as some of the speeches made by black characters. Anti-Tom novelists are again appropriating the voices of characters to speak for their own political views.

*Aunt Phillis’s Cabin* features a choice for Alice Weston between her cousin Arthur and his friend Walter Lee, a degenerate gambler and drinker. Alice is warned to distance herself from Walter by her mother, who also encourages her to keep in mind her duties: “A planter’s wife has little occasion for romance,” said Mrs. Weston; ‘her duties are too many and too important. She must care for the health and comfort of her family, and of her servants. After all, a hundred

servants are like so many children to look after” (Eastman 257). Alice chooses Arthur as the legitimate and moral option, having first properly moderated her emotions for Walter: “I am not in love with him, or you either—if being in love is what it is described in novels. I never have palpitation of the heart, never faint away, and am not at all fond of poetry. I should make a sad heroine, I am such a matter-of-fact person.” When Arthur offers to travel with her far and wide once they are married, she declines: “I do not complain of my destiny. . . I shall be satisfied never to leave Exeter, and my migrations need not be more extended than. . . from the green room to the brown” (257). Alice sacrifices her passion for Walter to her moral obligations to her dependent slaves and her future children. It appears that she is looking both up and down the ranks of the hierarchy, however. Interestingly enough, the dearest cost of her transgression, according to her mother, would be the pain she causes to her uncle (who takes the place of her father in her affections) by disappointing him. . . No matter how much Alice cares for Walter, her heart belongs to Mr. Weston and she prioritizes his emotions. She is thereby accepting and fulfilling her place in the emotional hierarchy.

If white women follow the rules, submit to their husbands, honor their fathers, and exhibit domesticity, they receive plentiful attention and care both from the top of the hierarchy and those dependent on them. But the prioritized dependency of white women can have serious consequences for black participants in the hierarchy. When Daddy Cato chooses to give his wages to his “mistress” instead of sending them home to his wife Auber and son Jim, he sees it as a choice to serve the women in his life who are in greater need. He defends his choice in a conversation with Alice: “An’ wha’ Auber an’ Jim want wid money? Ent he got he house, and he meat, and he hom’ny, and he tatur, and he fowl, and he egg, and he clothes ebery winter and ebery summer, wha’ he want wid money?” (McIntosh II, 102). Of course, Cato is equating

welfare with material needs, as these novels consistently do in their economic analysis—no mention is made of Auber's emotional needs or even the couple's sadness at being apart.

This troubles Cato's supposed wisdom because it exposes his choice for what it really is: the conscious direction of his loyalty and affection according to his perceived duty. Kindly, Alice points out that his wages could serve a greater purpose: "But Cato, see here; these wages would give you almost enough in a year, to buy Auber, and make her free too," to which Cato replies: "Wha' sister Auber want wid free? I sho' I rudder lib to de Hall and work, dan lib yah and no work; but people yah work too; ent you hab for work Miss Alice? No, ef Cato no hab no missis, he da gwine home" (McIntosh II, 102). This is much more than a defense of slavery on grounds of superior material living conditions. By disavowing freedom for himself and Auber, Cato identifies his purpose and his labor with service *to a master*. If he doesn't have a mistress in the North, he will go "home" to continue working for his old master. He doesn't dream any farther than a life of servitude. Cato's primary duty of loyalty is to his mistress, not his wife. He does not fulfill the role of the responsible man, because he does not extend care down to those who are dependent on him, but rather up the ladder to those upon whom he is dependent. Though he provides care and love to Alice and her mother, he is limited by his race from ever really filling the role of father. The optimal role for Daddy Cato, according to his limited (and unrealistic) racial self-conception, is as a servant or slave; with care from a master and devotion to a mistress, who would want to be free?

Though their place in the hierarchy of emotional commitment is supposedly secure, black characters have more complicated choices and conflicts to make about directing their affections—choices which the authors make very simple for them. This is well demonstrated in the novel *Aunt Phillis's Cabin*, which features a strong relationship between the trusted slave

Aunt Phillis and her master, Mr. Weston. The two are often alone together, notably when Phillis dies at the end of the novel. The love between them is palpable. Mr. Weston thanks Phillis for her service: “You were a friend and nurse to my wife, and a mother to my only child. Was every servant or friend so faithful as you have been!” while Phillis praises God and thanks Mr. Weston for her Christian enlightenment, which has saved her from going about her work “with a heavy heart” since she learned that “I could not read my Bible without seeing there was nothing agin slavery there; and that God had told the master his duty, and the slave his duty” (Eastman 258). Their affection is clearly moderated by the boundaries of master and slave.

Yet their relationship constantly challenges that demarcation; shifting into the realm of intimate family relations. Phillis “had nursed Mrs. Weston in her last illness, and as her death occurred immediately after Arthur’s birth, she nourished him as her own child, and loved him quite as well” (112). When Alice falls ill during the novel, Phillis neglects her own family: “It was useless to try and persuade her to take her usual rest, to remind her of her children, and her cares; to offer her the choice morsel to tempt her appetite, the refreshing drink she so much required” (161). Phillis’s love for Alice is regarded as honorably self-sacrificing, but as her care is directed upward to the white family, little is said about the dearth of care afforded to her own children. Clearly she considers her white masters as her family.

Phillis is also an unimpeachable model of domesticity, as evidenced by her modest but well-kept house: “The quilt was of a domestic blue and white, her own manufacture, and the cases to the pillows were very white and smooth. . . Several chairs, in a disabled state, found places about the room, and Phillis’s clothes-horse stood with open arms, ready to receive the white and well-ironed linen that was destined to hang upon it. . . [N]ot a spot of grease dimmed the whiteness of the floors, and order reigned supreme, marvellous to relate! where a descendant

of Afric's daughters presided" (113). The centerpiece of her home is "a likeness of Mr. Weston," and mementoes of Alice and Arthur's childhood hang on the walls. In return for her fidelity and love, "Her comfort and wishes were always objects of the greatest consideration to the family, and this was proved whenever occasion allowed" (112). This indulgence is what allows Phillis to have her cabin, and the civilizing influence of her masters is what makes possible her apparently marvellous gentility. Though Phillis appears to substitute for the white children's mother, she is always conscious of her inferior station and of the gratitude and respect she owes her master.

On the other hand, Phillis treats her actual husband, Bacchus, with sass, scorn, and mocking contempt. She is described as "taming" or "reforming" him. Bacchus's antics, drunkenness, laziness, and ridiculous vanity serve to lessen his manhood and to place him in a position of mockery. Clearly, the only women with a need to "tame" their husbands are those with "good-for-nothin'" men around. The novel enforces domesticity and submission, but does not allow black men the dominant position in a marriage, therefore undermining black manhood (and thus black equality) and tracing all responsibility to the white man at the apex of the extended family.

In fact, white men can often be seen stepping in where black men prove inadequate. In Peterson's novel, the young mulatto couple Charles and Cora (obviously modeled after Stowe's George and Eliza Harris) run away to Ohio. There they find nothing but hardship, living in a black suburb where poverty and vice run rampant. In order to find work as a waiter, Charles must leave Cora and their baby and go into the city, where he stays overnight. It is because of this arrangement that Charles is absent when this subplot comes to a head in a terrifying race riot that rages throughout the neighborhood. The noble white man, Walworth, is disturbed by the spectacle, but his companions hold him back from interfering, concerned for his safety. He is

finally spurred to action when “a female form appeared at one of the windows. It was a young and lovely mulatto, evidently a mother, for she held an infant, and seemed, by her gestures, to be imploring mercy for it rather than for herself” (214). Poor helpless Cora had remained too long in the neighborhood, because “she continued to believe that Charles would come to her assistance. . . [W]hen the rioters actually began to sack the street, yet still Charles did not come, her terror rose. . . [S]he conjured her husband, as if he could hear her, to come to her relief before it was too late” (220-221). But Charles never appears—in fact, he has been wrongly imprisoned. Help comes from Walworth instead—he steps in as Cora’s hero, sweeping her out of the burning building just before it collapses to the ground. “A heart less brave, or a nature less generous would have fled at once, warned...of the peril he ran” (221). He then defends her from violent rioters on the strength of his spirit alone: “His ringing, excited voice, his flashing eyes, the swelling defiance of his whole figure, though backed by no weapon, produced more effect than a squad of armed soldiers would have done.” His protection is also bolstered by his race when the rioters “saw that Walworth was a white man himself” (221) and left him alone. Walworth thus uses his masculinity and his social status to protect the vulnerable Cora.

Walworth becomes Cora’s protector, reuniting her with her husband, whose release from jail he arranges, and later, with her beloved mistress Isabel. His marriage to Isabel eventually makes him Cora’s master, completing the assumption of responsibility that he begins here. But in the wake of his heroism he leaves little space for Charles to be a man—he is absent from the scene, cannot protect Cora, is imprisoned, and requires Walworth to save him as well as his family. Walworth thus assumes the master’s role because of the inadequacy of black manhood. Charles is absent because he cannot provide support his family financially. It is his fault that they are in the North to begin with, since he convinces Cora to run away. Later, Charles deserts Cora

completely when he sickens and dies. True, most of these calamities are not really Charles's fault, except that they are set off by his foolish escape from the plantation, but his character and masculinity is called into question. Meanwhile Walworth overcomes the more dramatic obstacles of chaotic violence and fire in order to do what Charles ought to have done in the first place.

Turning back to the visualized family trees of slave-holding society for a moment, it is now possible to see the problems with the hierarchy. Since the relationships between the responsible man and his dependents are represented dually as love and power, those two elements flow between all participants in the "family" economy, but they can be diverted and change direction from their sanctioned paths. Because Aunt Phillis respects and loves Mr. Weston without the intermediary of her husband, Uncle Bacchus is represented as less of a man. Charles is similarly deprived of his responsibility and agency when Walworth takes responsibility over Cora, and because he is at fault for the elopement, he loses his life. When Daddy Cato devotes his love to Alice Montrose, he neglects his wife and children, and Aunt Phillis routinely subordinates her own children's needs to the needs of "her" white children. These upward slanting arrows of devotion in the family tree are lauded in the novels as examples of loyalty and selflessness. The result is a consistent devaluing and neglect of black characters at the bottom of the hierarchy because the emotional needs of white characters are prioritized.

### *Economic Responsibility and the Nobility of Labor*

One of the ways in which the complex hierarchical society of Anti-Tom novels is delineated is by the difference between the laboring classes and the upper classes. The political debates of the novel are undertaken with this division in mind: how will the upper class provide for and rule over the laboring class? The basic split between workers and managers can even

trump racial divisions, especially when Anti-Tom novels put white and black laborers on equal level. Yet the novels also trouble the notion of a “leisure” class by doubting the morality of those who do not work. George Browne in *The Lofty and the Lowly* has never had to work, which allows him to feel entitled and squander his father’s money. Donald Montrose, though his intentions are good, has trouble even beginning to make up his debt because the idea of saving money is so foreign to him. Donald is a lieutenant in the army, and has a fair salary, but because of his opinions on how a gentleman ought to present himself, he spends too much of it. For example, he has two horses, and is bewildered when a friend gently suggests he sells one. Donald’s gentlemanliness therefore hinders his ability to receive the full products of his labor.

On the other hand, nobility can seem difficult to attain for men who do labor. Donald uses the figure of Chevalier Bayard, the ideal knight, to explain his views of Northerners: “they could not, I fear, exhibit the dignity and courtesy, and, as I have good reason to know, the heroism of a Chevalier Bayard, in the person of—may I say it?—a manufacturer and mechanic” (McIntosh I, 153). Robert’s sister Mary explains that Robert achieves nobility through his internal merits *despite* his labor. She also asserts that he distinguishes himself from the other laborers because “you will find him occupying a position of influence, a ruler and guide to many, and availing himself of this position only for good” (McIntosh I, 154). Robert’s reputation is upheld in this conversation, but it seems that labor is not inherently noble.

This brings up a delicate distinction to be made between “man” and “gentleman.” Although the responsible men of the novels all adhere to the codes of chivalry and gentlemanly politeness, they are also men of action. Gentlemanliness can at times imply a life of pleasure, which can lead down the path to degeneracy, but it also coded for values like chivalry and refinement which were central to the Southern planter’s identity. This tension created a recurring

problem in raising Southern sons. Although Southern families encouraged and required sons to pursue a career and to excel in that career, “teaching fiscal self-sufficiency and work discipline to this generation did not come easy” (Glover 158). Boys whose financial security was certain were not always motivated to self-reliance, and even once parents made it clear that those were the expectations, they still found it hard to discipline themselves. For example, “Ralph Wormeley had a similar experience with his erratic son Warner. He sent Warner to Europe for his education. . . Warner, however, pursued a life of luxury, confident that little exertion was necessary since he would inherit his father’s money, land, and slaves” (Glover 159). Anti-Tom novels dwell uncomfortably on this critique of complacency and stagnation. One of the most telling moments is at the opening of *The Cabin and the Parlor*, when the whole plantation is engaged in a celebration. Mr. Courtenay is among the heartiest of dancers: “Thus, with their famous old host heading them, the three score of dancers flew in and out, laughing, jesting, sometimes almost leaping, wild with the giddy excitement of the exercise” (Peterson 18). But this is too much for the aging patriarch, who suffers an attack of apoplexy and dies shortly after. He literally dies from too much pleasure, and this is his first act of irresponsibility. His death reveals the insolvency of the plantation and sets off a chain reaction of debt and redemption that requires judicious labor on the part of the next generation.

Labor can be a positive experience for building character. It is also necessary to an ordered society. At the end of *The Lofty and the Lowly*, Major Wharton claims: “that is the very thing in which the South is wanting—work for her children,” and Robert Grahame replies: “The South wanting in work! It seems to me that she has the greatest and the noblest work to perform ever committed to any land” (McIntosh II, 273). This redefines gentlemanly nobility as engaging in the *elevated* work of caring for, educating, and Christianizing slaves. The originally skeptical

Mrs. Boswell in *Uncle Robin* praises the civilizing mission of slaveholders when Aunt Juno dies: “My dear husband, what a beautiful thought it is that a poor African, once condemned to be eaten by cannibals, should be now on her death-bed, in a Christian country, surrounded by Christian friends, and rejoicing in the assurance of eternal salvation, procured by the death of her Saviour!” and her husband replies: “Yes, my dear, it might carry consolation to the bosom of a Wilberforce, mourning over the horrors of the African slave-trade” (136). By defining slaveholding as missionary *work*, Eastman again emphasizes the responsibility of masters. The heroic view of white men and the care they exhibit towards vulnerable people travels through the gauntlet of Christian redemptive labor to legitimize a larger narrative: the patriarchal view of slavery.

### *The Meaning of Debt*

In addition to valorizing and upholding this patriarchal view of slave-holding society, however, Anti-Tom novels also exhibit considerable anxiety about what happens when masculine responsibility fails. The clearest metaphorization of that failure, other than plain absence, is in debt. This is the failure that begins *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*: a problem of money. Mr. Shelby is the quintessential good master: “a fair average kind of man, good-natured and kindly, and disposed to easy indulgence of those around him, and there had never been a lack of anything which might contribute to the physical comfort of the Negroes on his estate.” He nonetheless finds himself in debt: “He had, however, speculated largely and quite loosely; had involved himself deeply, and his notes to a large amount” now rest in the hands of the slave trader Haley (Stowe 8), who promises to absolve Shelby’s debt in return for the sale of slaves. The sale of Tom and proposed sale of Eliza’s young son Harry then provide the impetus for

Tom's exile from his family (which results in his suffering and tragic death) and for George and Eliza's escape. Shelby's debt is important not only because it sets the plot in motion, but because it represents Stowe's quarrel with a pervasive system that treats human beings as objects to be bought and sold. She argues through the story's unfolding tragedy and redemption that this market mentality is at fault for the separation of families, and that readers ought to be repulsed by its blatant devaluation of human life.

Anti-Tom novels do not share this anti-slavery point of view, yet they often begin with debt or conspicuously involve debt as a central plot driver. In *The Lofty and the Lowly* it is young Donald Montrose (the son of a plantation owner) who gambles away his fortune. In *The Cabin and the Parlor*, the death of the patriarchal planter Mr. Courtenay results in the discovery that the plantation was in a worse financial state than had been suspected. The threatened ruin of both fictional plantations results in the potential sale of slaves, and in *The Cabin and the Parlor*, the slaves are actually sold. Though the authors do express concern over the possibility of slaves being sold into a less-favorable situation, they insist that no good master in his right mind would sell his slaves or split up black families if he had a choice. They do not question that the master ought to have power over the buying and selling of slaves in the first place. Stowe does quite the opposite, claiming that owners hold a disproportionate amount of power over all aspects of the lives of their slaves and are empowered by the laws of property to ignore the greater moral law of humane treatment. That is, whereas a proper law would protect all lives equally regardless of race, the dysfunctional system of slavery does not value black families, bodies, or spirits as anything more than property, to be disposed of at the owner's leisure.

Therefore, though Shelby is by most regards a good man, and though he seems concerned for the well-being of his slaves, in the end his economic interests run counter to his human

inclinations, and the former are allowed to overpower the latter. Mrs. Shelby argues that Tom deserves better: “Tom is a noble-hearted, faithful fellow, if he is black. I do believe, Mr. Shelby, that if he were put to it, he would lay down his life for you,” but Shelby argues back that the financial situation is dire enough that he cannot do otherwise: “in plain words, there is no choice between selling these two and selling everything. Either they must go, or *all* must.” Mrs. Shelby scorns his explanation: “This is God’s curse on slavery!—a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing!—a curse to the master and a curse to the slave!” (Stowe 29). The system of slavery, which degrades all its participants, black or white, has claimed another victim.

In Anti-Tom novels, economic considerations and moral considerations are not held in opposition; rather, they inform and strengthen each other through the concept of manly responsibility. Debt is shown to be a crisis moment in the system of ownership, but rather than prompting condemnation of the slave system as a whole, that crisis reinforces the importance of a certain type of master, whose moral priorities support and uphold his economic responsibilities.

In this intertwined semantic world of economics and morality, debt has a complicated meaning. Debt is first of all represented as a loss of power because the debtor is in a position of obligation to another person. This reading is encouraged by the classical conception of slavery that “the slave was the person who, defeated in battle. . . [F]orfeited his life and chose slavery over death. This is the so-called cowardly contract in which debt is attached to the slave. . . . That debt is, of course, a fiction for the racial slave, for whom there can be no contractual basis for debt and, indeed, to whom making a contract is notionally denied” (Armstrong 37). The notion that slaves were debtors to their owners in perpetuity lingered into nineteenth-century American slavery, at least in the common assertion that masters were “owed” service from slaves. In the binary of debt, the masters needed to maintain the superior position. To the planter class, whose

power and money are mutually dependent and whose social position is so essentially tied to both, it is understandable that the slightest inkling of a reversal in fortune—and thus a reversal in roles between master and slave—would be quite frightening. Abundance means that the planter had power over his fate, his fortune, and his family. Moreover, a planter's money is represented in terms of concrete possessions: the plantation house, land, crops, and slaves. The ownership of those material goods replaces the vulgarity of raw money, simultaneously identifying the planter as a certain type of monied person and granting him power over those "objects," most significantly the slaves. The identity of "owner" also gives the planter certain rights, privileges, and gentlemanly pleasures. So to be a Southern "gentleman" implies both possession of capital and the ways in which that capital is represented.

When a gentleman becomes a debtor, however, his money is suddenly represented in different ways: on paper (which smacks of Northern merchant-trading), and as an obligation to another person. Debt is a shock to the system because it jeopardizes the "true" visual and material manifestations (the house, the land, the slaves) of the gentleman's monied status. When a patriarch's power is troubled by debt, he is materially unable to provide for those who depend on him: his wife, his children, perhaps his extended family, and his slaves. He is also morally compromised, since he has incurred a debt due to his unwise and perhaps unscrupulous actions. Gambling and speculation, the two ways most men incur debt in these novels, are two sides of a coin in that they are risky and imply the conversion of concrete material wealth into uncertain hypothetical wealth. The latter cannot sustain a family, much less a plantation.

The most dramatic instance of debt in these novels dominates the plot of *The Lofty and the Lowly*. Naive Donald Montrose is convinced, against his better judgement, to engage in gambling by the wiles of his cousin George Browne and Richard Grahame, both Northern men.

They ensnare him by playing on his gentlemanly sensibilities, assuring him that gambling was not a sin of idleness because “Success in play, if the play were fair—and this was always supposed among gentlemen—could not be obtained without labour” (McIntosh I, 114). Donald plays to defend his manhood: “Donald could not run the risk of being thought *afraid* to do what he liked, or “*under petticoat government*,” and like many a youth before him, he sacrificed his own self-respect, and obtained only the contempt of companions” (McIntosh I, 115). Donald is not in control of himself: he is emotionally unstable because his offer of marriage has been rejected by his beloved, his cousin Alice. Seduced by drink and his unscrupulous companions, he is not even fully aware of (or “responsible for”) his actions: “It was two o’clock in the morning when, flushed with wine, and with a brain sadly confused in the vain effort to compute a sum in loss and gain, Donald Montrose issued from that room. The Rubicon was passed. He was on that declivity whose downward tendency it becomes ever more difficult to resist” (McIntosh I, 124). The description is not as overblown as it may seem, for Donald does indeed enter a downward spiral of accumulating debt. He is unable to remember how much he owes the scammers Richard Grahame and George Browne: “With an aching head, and a manner in which sudden flashes of reckless gaiety contended vainly with unusual gloom, he presented himself on the afternoon succeeding at the lodgings of Richard Grahame. . . ‘By the by, I am indebted to you both, I believe; but how much, I am ashamed to acknowledge I do not know’” (McIntosh I, 124). Donald’s apparent flaws continue to mount; he is too artless to discern their scheming, too refined to consider money as a scarcity that must be protected, and too trusting—he follows Browne’s instructions to issue a blank note, upon which Brown writes a sum far beyond what Donald had truly lost. Donald is deficient in responsibility because he is not quite a man—he is young and impulsive and overly emotional. Once he has realized the error of his ways, he

undergoes significant shame and despair, and struggles to redeem himself. He knows he has lost his moral authority and purity by incurring a debt.

The consequences of Donald's irresponsible actions are not merely internal. The debt grows like a tumor as it is passed between creditors and Donald is convinced to borrow in order to buy more time, and it is eventually equal to the worth of the plantation. This has ramifications for his entire family, his beloved Alice, the physical plantation, and the slaves, who now face the possibility of being sold and separated from their own families. The novel makes it clear that this is no trivial matter; slaves trust their masters to care for them, and no good master would arbitrarily sell his slaves. Though the truth of that assertion is doubtful, it points out that responsibility also means the ability to care for those who depend on you. A truly responsible patriarch must have plentiful wealth. He must also be wary of the demands upon him and act in a way that prioritizes the welfare of his dependents—while also keeping the power over them and the decisions about their welfare to himself. If he fails to do so, chances are he will compromise the resources at his disposal by incurring debt. He thus fails in the two pillars of responsibility: the internal feelings and the external providing of care.

### *Heroism and Internal Nobility*

Of course, not every young man in the *The Lofty and the Lowly* is a failure. Robert Grahame exemplifies heroism. He is kind, dashing, caring, strong-willed, and a moral inspiration to others. His character is immediately discernable from his appearance: “On the broad brow which the riding cap left wholly uncovered, there sat a kingly majesty, while the determination of the firmly-closed lips was softened by the milder expression of the earnest dark-grey eyes. There was power, wonderful power, in that face” (McIntosh I, 117). Even before Robert speaks,

Donald sees him from afar and is immediately attracted to the rider, “whose figure, though not above the middle height, exhibited in its proportions more of easy dignity, and even of command, than any on which he had ever looked,” (McIntosh I, 116). Donald is impressed with how Robert handles his spirited horse: “Even before he had caught the reins again, the horseman had resumed the mastery over the impatient animal, which now came gently though fleetly forward. . . ‘What a splended rider he is!’ cried Donald, ever attracted by excellence in all manly accomplishments; ‘his horse obeys his mere volition, as if he were a part of himself” (McIntosh I, 116-117). Robert’s control over his horse, while grounded in his physical prowess, is a metaphor for his self-control.

It also represents Robert’s power to influence others: “Who doubts that there resides in some a wonderful power of attraction, by which they win to themselves the sympathies of all hearts, and move the minds of men hither and thither at their will?...Somewhat of this power was possessed by Robert Grahame. It was the power of a nature simple and earnest, which dared always to seem what it really was. Little instructed in worldly forms, he might, and doubtless, often did, sin against conventional rules, but never against the ‘higher law’ of Christian courtesy” (McIntosh I, 121-122). McIntosh calls this power “animal magnetism” and it is grounded in his physical body—hence the correspondence between his ideally masculine form and his spirit—but it is transcendently moral.

Robert’s good moral character manifests itself in his responsible actions. One of the ways that Robert is an ideal man is that he repays his father’s debt. In doing so, he not only secures wealth for his younger siblings Mary and Richard, but he reinvigorates the family-owned factory, thus providing jobs for laborers. He even invests in the care, housing, and education of those workers. Robert’s personal responsibility, which comes at great cost to him, thus radiates

outward: to his immediate family first, but also to those who are economically dependent on him. The number of people depending on Robert place him at the acme of the family tree, but his internal characteristics allow him to fulfill his obligations.

Another aspect of the physical manifestation of Robert's character is his literally noble blood. Later in the novel, he travels to England, and there encounters his aristocratic forebears. In a rather ridiculous vignette, Robert's manliness and nobility are both proved when he again rides a difficult horse: "In an instant he was in the saddle, and the contest between brute force and o'ermastering mind began.... a young lady who had watched the scene from a window, lisped in her sweetest tones, that "Mithter Grahame theemed born to the world with noble horthmanthip." (McIntosh II, 49). To the Southern chivalrous worldview, this assertion of nobility is necessary because there seems to be doubt in the novel whether Northern men can actually be noble in the same way Southern men can be. McIntosh wants to foster tolerance between the North and South, and she uses the mirror image of responsible upper class men in the North and South to prove that Robert, despite his occupation and connection with labor, is just as much of a leader.

Though manly responsibility is defined in part by the upstanding heroes of the novel, it is also sharply defined by a *lack*. Southern gentlemen, despite their occasional lapses in responsibility, are nonetheless engaged in productive and wholesome economic enterprises: farming, land ownership, and the supervision of a labor community. On the other side of the spectrum are men who engage in parasitical economic behavior. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* disavows the trader Haley's social position on the very first page: "For convenience sake, we have said, hitherto, two *gentlemen*. One of the parties, however, when critically examined, did not seem, strictly speaking, to come under the species" (Stowe 3). Stowe's "convenience" is for a mere

single paragraph—apparently too much of a mistruth for her to countenance, for she then engages in a thoroughly uncomplimentary portrait: “He was a short, thick-set man, with coarse, commonplace features, and that swaggering air of pretension which marks a low man who is trying to elbow his way upward in the world. He was much over-dressed.... His hands, large and coarse, were plentifully bedecked with rings; and he wore a heavy gold watch-chain, with a bundle of seals of portentous size, and a great variety of colors, attached to it,—which, in the ardor of conversation, he was in the habit of flourishing and jingling with evident satisfaction” (Stowe 3). For Stowe, his unrefined ways, his greed, and his focus on the material are symptoms of the morally corrupt system of slavery, which degrades all who enter into it, black or white.

It is worthwhile noting the significance Stowe places upon appearances and the power of a viewer to extrapolate character from them. Anti-Tom novels seem to use the same valuation of appearances, once more showing that similar structures of sentimentalism can function in the service of opposite worldviews. Take for example, the slave trader character in *The Lofty and the Lowly*. He is described first by Alice, who seems keenly aware of his gaze: “He has such a hard, cruel face, and he looked at Rose and Flora’—two colored seamstresses, who were as usual at work in the parlor with the ladies—‘with such horrid eyes—oh Donald! I cannot stand it’” (McIntosh II, 33). He is then reviled by Donald: “there, before him, in the home of his fathers, stood one whose presence tainted the air he breathed, and soiled the earth on which he trod. Donald had never before seen one of this tribe, and yet he knew him even in the description of Alice—still more certainly at the first glance of his own eye upon him. He was a muscular, brawny man, and held in his hand a large whip” (McIntosh II, 33). The slave-trader is so different from the positive white characters that he is in his own “tribe,” and so distinguishable by his threatening appearance that Donald immediately knows his occupation. Another example

is Uriah Goldwire, the sinister usurer who mortgages the Montrose plantation for his own benefit: "It is before me now, that long, lank, lean figure, with the well brushed and well worn clothes hanging...the sallow face almost beardless, and the little which nature had given it, shaved very smoothly; the small gray eyes twinkling beneath a forehead rather high than wide, and the thin, sleek, brown hair lying closely around the skull." (McIntosh II, 31). Though Goldwire is not as physically threatening as the slave driver, his crafty, slinky, ratlike character (clearly meant to be stereotypically Jewish) is well conveyed. The two characters share some characteristics: a perversion of manliness (either overly muscular or beardless), an overt sexual interest in women, either the slave women whom the slave-trader eyes, or Isabelle Montrose, whom Goldwire relentlessly pursues and lusts after. They are also low class, rather than gentlemen, and they make their money not by productive labor or by owning material possessions like land and slaves. Rather, they are parasitical, and thus not a part of the economic scheme of responsibility.

The above examples provide a vital link between some of the terms that both Stowe and Anti-Tom novels are investigating. Manly responsibility clearly has to do with the way money is made, spent, and distributed among dependents. A dearth of responsibility leads to debt, which can be harmful not only for the man in question but for his dependents, whether white or black. By linking appearance with manly responsibility (or the lack thereof), moral worth is linked to the visible signs of identity, of which gender is the most prominent and whiteness the next. The potential, therefore, for a resurgence of manly responsibility in the south (and possibly the north) is *only* present in those who are of noble blood or whose appearance indicates that they are worthy to hold ownership of society's resources. While Stowe looks for a savior in the humility and sacrifice of Tom, Peterson and McIntosh turn hopefully towards knights in shining armor.

*The Economy of Sympathy*

Although the novels revel in the drama and nobility of hero figures, they also make a case for how masculine responsibility is to be sustained over time for the benefit of a large number of people. Moving back to the staged debate scenes, but with a nuanced understanding of masculine economic responsibility, an additional aspect to the need for societal design emerges. In *The Cabin and the Parlor*, an informal dinnertime debate takes place in the home of the wealthy merchant Mr. Sharpe. The main antagonists are Mr. Brawler, an Englishman who argues for the moral strength of abolitionist Britain, and the hero of the story, Walworth. As with most Anti-Tom debate scenes, the readers' sympathies are immediately secured for the proslavery side by means of the relative moral worth of the characters: "Walworth was a philanthropist without pretending to be one. For human suffering, in whatever guise it came, his sympathy was ever ready. If he scorned any thing, it was that merely conventional charity, which never looks beyond a creed, or clique" (Peterson 167). His sympathy, as we shall see, is one of his defining manly characteristics. Walworth engages Mr. Brawler on several points, including the elevation of slaves to higher civilization and the comparative welfare of slaves and industrial workers. One of the premises for debate is the overall cost to society of abolishing slavery. At first, Brawler hails this as a moral sacrifice: "Great Britain. . . has emancipated eight hundred thousand slaves, at a cost of twenty millions, and she throws down that fact as a gauntlet in the face of the world" (171). But Walworth points out that the cost to the planter of losing slaves is a cost to society: "By emancipating the West India slaves, England has ruined the white planter. Now I consider that a very questionable act of benevolence, which elevates one class by pulling down another" (172). Whenever one person (or group of people) receives a social or economic benefit, there is a

cost to another person. But from an abolitionist perspective, emancipation and the end of suffering for millions of enslaved persons is a moral *imperative*. The economic cost ought not to matter. This is why Shelby is lambasted in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for prioritizing his own financial benefit over the welfare of his slaves and their right to stay with their families. Yet we know that Walworth is not a selfish or unkind person. There must be some way, therefore, to reconcile his economic awareness with a sympathetic worldview.

The debate is interrupted by the intrusion of a lower-class Irish woman, who approaches the door and begs for help for none other than young Horace, the youngest member of the ruined Courtenay family, who had come to the North to find employment as an apprentice in order to accept the financial burden of his own welfare and has fallen ill. The kindly Irish woman who shares her tenement with Horace seeks help at the home of Horace's employer, Mr. Sharpe: "Shure, and it's of the lad, him that works for yer honor. The beautiful, brave boy. . . He's the fever, this blessed day. He's out of his head wid it intirely, and no docthor, and I not a penny in the house to pay for one. For the love of God, yer honor, send a docthor to the boy" (177-178). The woman appeals to Mr. Sharpe's Christian sympathy: anyone who hears her story ought to sympathize with poor Horace "for the love of God." She is also appealing to his personal responsibility, for, as Horace's employer, he should be especially motivated to provide for his welfare. He fails in both counts and turns her away.

Her pathetic story is audible to the gentlemen in the dining room, and the discussion turns to the subject of beggars. Sharpe sets the tone with his disdainful and callous apology: "You will excuse me,' he said, 'for this protracted absence, when I tell you that I was beset by an Irish creature, who had designs on my purse" (178). He focuses on his own inconvenience and on the annoyance shared by his class: "I don't envy a man who has the reputation of being rich,' he

added complacently, ‘in a great city like this; for the claims on him are innumerable.’ The discussion broadens to the topic of the mendicant poor as a social problem: “‘And the poor seem to think they have a right to assistance,’ replied one of his friends, ‘instead of taking an alms as a favor. For my part, I believe that half the money one gives only acts as a bounty on idleness.’” The advantage of the South, as Walworth proves, is that there are no beggars. “The master there is responsible for the maintenance of the slave. He has to support all the young, all those too aged to work, all the infirm, in short every description of those, who, in the North, go to make up real mendicity” (178-179). The structure of economic responsibility is lauded as the superior system, as it is elsewhere in Anti-Tom novels, because it provides a system of social welfare for the workers so that slaves receive better care than free laborers. It is intriguing that Walworth repeatedly describes it as a non-optional obligation placed upon the master, almost as if it were a contract. “We, at the South, buy our operative outright, giving him food and clothing, and providing for him in youth, sickness, and old age. In return, we appropriate his labor, during the years of his maturity” (187). This system means that the master’s costs of care are offset by the labor he is receiving—and the wages he is not paying.

What this means for the juncture of the socio-economic debate and the tidings of helpless Horace is that the root problem lies with the immediate act of sympathy. The South is lauded for its lack of beggars, but the same types of dependent people exist everywhere. The key difference is that in the slave-holding system of manly responsibility, those dependents need not *ask* for help, and the gentleman need not be confronted with the uncomfortable moment of choosing whether to provide help or not. Anti-Tom novels want to avoid that moment of unpredictable and uncontrolled sympathy for several reasons: first, because heartless men like Sharpe are bound to refuse help to those who ask, but also because the system of sympathy is troubled by mistrust:

will the recipients of charity spend it wisely, or will it produce idleness and drunkenness? In the worldview of the Anti-Tom novels, this moment is a symptom of the broken system of the North, where dependents are left vulnerable in the void of responsibility. It would simply never happen in the South. A skeptical reading, however, indicates that novelists may want to avoid showing equivalent moments with slaves in order to maintain the illusion of the simplistic, contended slave and to avoid staining the moral record of slave-owners who deny slaves' requests.

Since in this case the expression of sympathy is equated with the donation of money, both are viewed in a transactional sense. The slaveholder receives labor to offset his costs of material care and loyal affection in return for his expression of paternal concern. The northern "master" does not receive the same returns on his emotional investment and is thus reluctant to spend. The awareness that there is a cost to the giver whenever a person or group receives help is applied to justify the limitation of sympathy.

This transactional quality to charity and caretaking leads me to a term which I find crucial to assessing Anti-Tom novels: the "economy of sympathy." At the simplest level, this comes of the rhetorical representation of the expression of sympathy on the part of dominant white men towards dependent or vulnerable members of society as the giving of financial or material assistance—the linkage of emotional mechanisms with economics. The term's resonant metaphorical meaning, however, is that like material possessions, sympathy is finite. Giving sympathy and giving money are the same act, so as the responsible man's pockets are emptied of money, they are emptied of love at the same rate. This then necessitates a sense of economy in the act of sympathizing: a master's sympathies should only be extended towards those people who are dependent upon him financially. If he extends the reach of his concern very far beyond his family and his slaves, he will be unable to expend the correct amount of care towards those

who need him. This is, in fact, what the abolitionists do: they neglect their own and direct their sentiments far afield.

Of course, Walworth breaks all these rules. Walworth follows the Irish woman home to Horace and looks upon him with sympathy: “The face had a look of premature age, which told a tale of early privation, that made his heart bleed” (193). Walworth fetches a doctor, and expends considerable energy in watching over Horace as he wastes away, all the while “torn with grief and anguish” (243). In between the chapters he spends caring for Horace, he experiences the race riot where he rescues Cora. After Horace’s funeral, which he pays for, Walworth follows up on his commitment to Cora and frees her husband Charles from jail. Although Charles has not committed a crime, the Attorney General admits to Walworth that “he owes his liberation entirely to you. . . for we should have kept the poor devil to trial, if you had not interfered for him” (251). Walworth has thus used his superior societal position to advocate for a vulnerable black man even though Charles is not technically his dependent. It seems that his actions are motivated by sudden moments of sympathy rather than a conscious economy.

As the novel develops, however, the seemingly disparate individuals that Walworth rescues, assists, and advocates for are integrated into his future family. When he brings the news of Horace’s death to his Southern family, he supports and consoles both Isabel and her mother. His kindness for Isabel quickly turns to romantic admiration. Even before they are married, things fall into place. Walworth has his own plantation, so he is able to provide financially for Isabel, her mother, and her youngest brother, Alfred. He also goes North to redeem the debt originally incurred by Isabel’s father, and, with the help of the Courtenays’ friend, Doctor Worthington, recovers part of the money lost at Mr. Courtenay’s death and outbids the investors (“Messrs. Skin & Flint”) who wish to buy the Montrose estate. With the house and land back in

the family's hands, Walworth's network of responsibility can expand outward to the family's former slaves (including Uncle Peter), who are re-purchased from neighboring families. He transports Cora and her young child back to her loving mistress, and he even finds a replacement schoolteacher so that Isabel need no longer work ("Walworth, ashamed of the stipend formerly paid, added enough to it from his private purse to make it, not only remunerative, but really desirable" (Peterson 319). Walworth systematically brings all the people for whom he cares under his jurisdiction of responsibility, so the economy of sympathy is maintained.

The novels have a strong interest in ensuring that sympathy is "spent" properly: it must be accompanied by judicious expenditure of material resources, and it must be invested in the right people. Sympathy should not be wasted on the undeserving poor or disloyal slaves, nor should it be spent on people whose lives are not pitiful. Slaves are so well-off that they do not require sympathy, and in fact, sympathizing with slaves is problematic. This is the basis for criticism of Mrs. Stephens in *Uncle Robin in His Cabin in Virginia, and Tom Without One in Boston*. She is the mother of the newly married Ann Boswell, who brings her parents south with her to her husband's plantation. An avid abolitionist, Mrs. Stephens makes the slaves uncomfortable by repeatedly calling them "poor creatures." Her feelings of sympathy are so debilitating that she falls ill; she and her husband move to a separate house on Boswell's land and hire white servants—the dispossessed and indentured children of impoverished laborers in the area. Mrs. Stephens mistreats the servants, beating them and berating them with every breath. In Doctor Boswell's opinion, this is a manifestation of the economy of sympathy: "This excessive sympathy for slaves seems to me to close all avenues to the heart for kindly consideration for the indentured white servant" (Page 123). In other words, Mrs. Stephens spends too much of her sympathy on the slaves who have no need of it, so she runs out of sympathy

when she needs it most to care for the servants directly under her power. Moreover, Doctor Boswell's concern is grounded in the position he holds in the community: "I am under a promise to their parents to see them well treated; and, independent of that, my duty as an overseer of the poor requires that I should take care that they are not abused" (Page 123). Luckily for the young servants, they are not reliant on the disordered sympathy of Mrs. Stephens; they have a responsible male protector.

In the larger rhetorical argument of the novel, this is a symptom not only of Mrs. Stephens' troubled mind, but of abolitionism. When the white children are taken away from their debtor parents, Doctor Boswell describes how Mrs. Stephens sheds not a tear while her daughter is visibly affected: "I was very forcibly struck, too, with that genuine sympathy manifested by yourself for real suffering, in contrast with your mother's perfect indifference for that which is real, and her affectation of it, for that which is only imagined. . . That was, my dear, a veritable picture of abolitionism. . . [to] look over the desolations it had occasioned to the white man, and shedding tears of sympathy over the imagined sorrows of the negro" (Page 109). Accusing abolitionists of hypocrisy is standard fare, but in this case it is tied to the excessive expression of emotion, metaphorized as overflowing tears. Elsewhere in the novel, female characters like Mrs. Boswell are advised to maintain control of their feelings: "It will be necessary perhaps to harden that little heart of yours, as our kind friends the abolitionists may make frequent drafts upon your sympathy" (49). The exchange of sympathy is once again figured as financial; the possession of sympathy is like an abundant bank account upon which unscrupulous people may "make frequent drafts" for their own benefit. The implication is that the account will eventually be depleted, so it must be guarded.

The wasteful expenditure of feelings is constantly represented as a female problem, as Doctor Boswell so blatantly says: “this whole abolition feeling has originated in, and is kept up by, the diseased sickly sensibilities of females, and I am astonished that men of reflection, men in high standing, too, in the nation, should so far lend their aid to such sensibilities, as even to endanger the perpetuity of this Union” (104). Mrs. Stephens is so upset that she falls physically ill, providing a metaphor of a disease that might spread throughout the union which is common to anti-abolitionist thought. It is particularly intriguing to realize that this is a gendered disease. Men, with their superior “reflection,” should be immune to such “sensibilities.” This physicality of feeling places the workings of the economy of sympathy within the body and provides a clue as to how masculine responsibility and the economy of sympathy are linked. Responsibility, internalized as deeply as gender must be, is a regulating respiratory process which allows sympathy to be expressed and effluviated correctly, not as overflowing tears or an infectious sneeze but in judicious expression. The same guarding and economizing considerations from the financial metaphors are in play, but the emphasis is on the gendered body.

This anxiety about bodies, disease, and “catching” feelings is also applicable in relation to the racial restriction of sympathy practiced by Anti-Tom novels. Whereas Stowe stretches sympathy across racial lines by demonstrating common humanity, Anti-Tom novels are wary of expending too much sympathy on non-white characters. They constantly redirect sympathy towards white characters, usually white women, by identifying white characters as both needing and deserving more sympathy.

For an example of how this restriction occurs in *Aunt Phillis’s Cabin*, consider what happened to Ann. Although not part of the main plot, the incident that follows is retold as part of a debate on the slave question between young white men. Our young hero Arthur Weston,

currently away from his father's plantation to attend college, and his friend Abel Johnson visit a bakery where Ann works. Mrs. Brown introduces Ann before she enters the scene with a tirade: "Where on earth has she put that cake?" said she. 'I sent her in here with it an hour ago; just like her, lazy good-for-nothing Irish thing. They're nothing but white niggers, after all, these Irish" (73). This description is significant in several ways: it demonstrates Ann's social class and shows that she is considered of an inferior "race" by the bigoted Mrs. Brown. But it simultaneously defines the term "nigger" as equivalent to the descriptors "lazy" and "good-for-nothing" and "thing" and defines the term "white nigger" as oxymoronic: a white person who is unfairly characterized as having inferior (black) traits and who is treated as if she were black. Mrs. Brown's cruelty is amply demonstrated; she is mistaken about the cake but will not admit it, and when Ann talks back to her "she struck the poor girl in the face, and her big, hard hand was in an instant covered with blood, which spouted out from Ann's nose" (73). Abel and Arthur are instantly upset and scold Mrs. Brown. It is worth noting, however, that they do nothing to aid Ann.

What happens to Ann evokes sympathy because it seems unfair. But the feelings associated with this event are also dependent on her identity. She is a young, single, working-class woman, and thus vulnerable. Mrs. Brown admits that Ann was orphaned on her journey to America and was taken on by Mr. Brown at a young age, a fact which positions the Browns as her guardians and simultaneously heightens her vulnerability. Ann's identity as an Irishwoman is important because it makes her the victim of prejudice. But Mrs. Brown is not the only one to note Ann's ethnicity. Abel says that "Ann's pretty Irish face showed itself immediately" when Mrs. Brown calls, and that "Ann's Irish blood was up" before she talks back. Since Ann's particular ethnic identity and stereotypically Irish characteristics are considered notable, she is

characterized as an “other,” but a sympathetic one. The author keys into the important social issues surrounding an impoverished immigrant population in the north. “Irish,” then, actually means “Irish, poor, and thus vulnerable.”

Given the relationship that sympathy establishes between the victim and the observers, it is worth examining the identity of the observers more closely. Abel, who tells the story, makes no excuse for their motivation in going there: “Arthur and I having nothing else to do, got hungry, and as it was a fine evening, thought we would walk out in search of something to satisfy our appetites, and there being a pretty girl in Brown’s bakehouse, who waits on customers, we took that direction” (Eastman 72). The young men are wealthy students, with abundant free time. They amble in search of gratification of their pleasures, both gastronomic and visual, and they are interested in Ann primarily because she is beautiful. Arthur’s anger is expressed with this feature in mind: “when I saw Mrs. Brown run the risk of spoiling that pretty face for life, I wondered your laws did not protect ‘these bound gals,’ or ‘white niggers,’ as she calls them.” His objection reinforces his position as a man whose right to gaze upon Ann’s beauty might be jeopardized if her beauty is ruined by aggression, and thus his masculinity is implicated in the event just as much as Ann’s physicality and appearance.

What then, does this incident suggest about the role of sympathy in masculinity? Abel and Arthur obviously feel the proper amount of indignation over the mistreatment of a woman—perhaps prompted by gentlemanly chivalry. They also express it to Mrs. Brown in a way that is haughtily condescending but not aggressive: “‘I declare, Mrs. Brown,’ said Arthur, ‘this is, I thought, a free country. I did not know you could take the law into your own hands in that style’ .... ‘Well, Mrs. Brown, good evening,’ said Arthur. ‘I shall tell them at the South how you Northern people treat your white niggers’” (73-74). We might fruitfully imagine what other

heroes of Anti-Tom novels would do in his stead. Robert Grahame from *The Lofty and the Lowly* would undoubtedly sweep Ann off her feet and rescue her from danger. Moreland from *The Planter's Northern Bride* would very possibly donate a sum of money to help Ann on to a better circumstance. *The Cabin and the Parlor's* Walworth would at least find her a doctor. But Abel and Arthur do nothing. They are not men of action and they assume no responsibility for Ann.

Perhaps their inaction has to do with the role of the story as a parable rather than a major plot development. Ann never appears directly in the reader's eye, and is not mentioned again. The incident is narrated by Abel as a contribution (solicited by Arthur) to a larger debate over the slavery question between Arthur (pro-slavery), Hubbard (another student, anti-slavery), and Abel, who seems to play devil's advocate or to argue for both sides. What happened to Ann is a story about a larger social trend, and Ann is hardly a real person (even within the fiction of the novel). It is told in response to Hubbard's claim that Southern laws do not protect slaves from ill-treatment, but that "the poorest person in New England is as safe from unjust and oppression, as the highest in the land" (72). Arthur replies that this is nonsense, and supplies the reader with an example of an employer taking the law into her own hands. Of course, for the law to have had a chance at punishing Mrs. Brown or protecting Ann, witnesses like Abel and Arthur would have to take action, but this implication is conveniently ignored. The larger point is a counter to the abolitionist claim that the North has a more equitable legal system or more just social expectations.

Given the tenor of this debate, the fact of Ann's Irishness can be understood in an additional light. Not only does Eastman want to call attention to the plight of the Irish, but she gets in a serious jab at the abolitionists, who are overly concerned with black people in the distant world of the South, but who do little to improve the lives of 'their own' impoverished

population. Irish people are thus put on a level with black people, but this does not extend sympathy to all lower class people who are united in their hardship. Rather, it serves to call the abolitionists to properly prioritize the problems of the white lower class.<sup>4</sup> Arthur reinforces this point when he says, “Every country must have its poor people; you have yours at the North, for I see them—we have ours; yours are white, ours are black” (70). By using the possessive he charges the abolitionist Hubbard with responsibility for his own people.

The explicit portion of the pro-slavery argument here is relatively weak: slaves are not subject to *greater* injustice than the working class in the North but are “as well off as the working classes generally are” (77). This doesn’t mean that slaves are not mistreated; in fact, even Arthur admits that “I have been fortunate in my experience. I have never seen a slave woman struck in my life, though I’ve no doubt such things are done” (74). Beyond the somewhat despicable implication that Arthur is the true beneficiary of a lack of violence against black women because he is spared the unpleasant sight, this statement seems surprisingly tame. The remainder of the novel mirrors Arthur’s ambivalent statement by hesitating to unequivocally dismiss violence towards slaves as impossible or nonexistent, but also veering away from the depiction of any black people with whom the reader might sympathize. If seeing injustice prompts sympathy, which in turn demands responsibility, people are absolved of responsibility if they simply don’t see anything.

This recalls the uncomfortable moment in *The Cabin and the Parlor* where the Irish woman begs for sympathy. The avoidance of that moment of painful, excessive sympathy (the

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<sup>4</sup> Although this prioritization is framed as a petition to abolitionists not to ignore their own poor, it may also be a reflection of the belief that white people are more deserving of help. Caroline Rush’s preface explicitly admits her racial motivations: “I would never refuse to do a kind action for a person because that person happened to be black, but I would far rather relieve the suffering of my own colour, because I believe they stand far more in need of relief, and are far less apt to be relieved. I find too, in my own race, more honour, honesty, affection, virtue, every thing in fact, that tends to exalt the mind, and purify the character” ( 14).

same pain that bothers *Arthur* when *Ann's* face is struck) in the Southern system is accredited to the ability of masters to anticipate the needs of their slaves, but might it not be an indication of something more sinister? If the power of sight lies with the observer, perhaps Southern slaveholders are merely able to avoid seeing racially motivated violence at all—even if they are the ones perpetrating it. Because Mr. Sharpe prioritizes his own purse over Horace's suffering, and Arthur prioritizes pretty white Ann over his own slaves, the people who are ostensibly cared for by the economy of sympathy are, in fact, invisible.

Throughout Anti-Tom literature, the sympathy of white men is forcibly refocused onto white women. In *The Cabin and the Parlor* and *The Lofty and the Lowly*, the young white heroines, Isabel Courtenay and Alice Montrose, evoke the audience's sympathy. They are required to labor for their families, experience emotional turmoil and worry, and are at least temporarily left without male guardians. By emphasizing the vulnerability of these women, the texts manage to insist that their experiences are more traumatic or tragic than those of slaves, effectively steering the audience's attention away from black characters. The incident with Ann adds to this trend, demonstrating that in the eyes of a gentleman, the spoiling of a pretty (white) face is a crime. The audience's sympathy is provoked by the immediate violent event, but is augmented by the knowledge that Ann is white, pretty, and virginal (and thus vulnerable). Compare this to one of Stowe's strongest moments of sympathy in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Eva's death. Eva is an easy target for sympathy: young, innocent, beautiful, pious. Stowe builds upon the audience's sympathy for her premature death with admiration for her ability to accept it graciously and with joy inspired by her connection to Christ and her salvation. But Eva, in her last days and moments, is also engaged in sympathy—for slaves. The audience's love for Eva is thereby channeled into Eva's love for black people. Stowe thus uses sympathy in a vastly

expansive way, including a mounting number of souls in the scope of the feeling-event. By contrast, the episode in Eastman's bakery is a restrictive event. Arthur refuses to make an emotional connection between seeing her pain and seeing violence directed at any black woman. In the greater debate, it serves to deny the plight of black people and to redirect overzealous abolitionist sympathy to a prioritized working class group.

If white men prioritize their sympathy and love correctly, they will provide first for upper-class white women. The same hierarchy that mediates power and responsibility determines the flow of resources and sympathy, with the result that the people at the bottom of the "family tree" receive the least of both. Once again, black families lose out. This is not easy for Anti-Tom novelists to admit, but we catch a rare glimpse of its truth by noting the consequences of Uncle Peter's Christmas gift in *The Cabin and the Parlor*. "There was no turkey, that Christmas, at Uncle Peter's cabin, much to the surprise and sorrow of his little ones, who had never known such an omission. They were put off with a solitary fowl, of which they ate almost the whole, for it was the first one they had seen for many a long week, and the parents denied themselves in order that the children might have enough" (160). The point, for Peterson, is that Uncle Peter has nobly sacrificed from his own table because of his love for Isabel. But the moment indicates an endemic problem: as the text efficiently channels sympathy away from black characters, the reality of the economy of sympathy is exposed. Since the limited resources of love need to be guarded carefully, they are systematically denied to black people.

But the hidden truth that black families suffer under the economy of sympathy is the exact opposite of the interpretation offered by the novels. Although economizing on sympathy is a process of limitation, it does not handicap the morality of masters; rather, it is praised as the best possible way for an affluent man to conduct oneself at once morally and modestly, even

when the system is at times abused. To “win” the debate scene in his favor, Walworth rhapsodizes poetically through a defense of slavery, ending with a claim that is not surprising that “hasty observers. . . should think slavery so much worse than other modification of the laborer’s lot is not strange, for its evils lie on the surface. The occasional cruelty of masters, the hereditary taint of blood, and the separation of families thrust themselves forward to challenge sympathy. But the kind care of the master, the sacrifices made to keep mother and children together, and all that is really ameliorating and lovely in the institution lies deep in its heart, and shuns ostentatious display” (Peterson 188). Though Walworth makes surprising concessions to critics of slavery, his words are an apt summary of the task of Anti-Tom novels. Hasty observers who mistake the hypocrisy of abolitionists for real charity are the same ones who will be taken in by Stowe’s sensationalism and manipulation of emotion. The work of Anti-Tom arguments is to bypass what they consider superficial critiques of isolated incidents to lay out the underlying moral social system that works most of the time. The correct employment of the economy of sympathy means that the true “lovely” movements of sympathy and responsibility happen beneath the surface, in a way that allows modesty and long-term sustainability by economizing. The strength of the argument lies in the value that the proslavery worldview places on hierarchical order and the trust it places in the moral goodness of most masters.

*Conclusion: Problems and Solutions*

The standards of masculine responsibility allow Anti-Tom novels to discern societal problems both in the hostile free labor society of the North and within the south. These problems take the metaphorical form of failures of manhood, but they are also solved with recourse to manly responsibility—in essence, problems of patriarchy are solved by perpetuating the patriarchy. Debt, the classic symbol of irresponsibility and loss of power, can be redeemed—but

not always by the man who incurs it. Robert Grahame is a prime example. He goes north to recover Donald's debt, redeeming the value of the plantation and ensuring the security of the Montrose family. His actions, motivated by a sense of general responsibility, become congruent with the economy of sympathy when he marries into the family he is supporting, just as Walworth marries Isabel and cements his supportive role for her family.

But Robert is engaged in a larger narrative of debt and redemption. His father, an immigrant from England, built a factory but was unable to make sufficient profit to maintain it. Young Robert forgoes the college education for which he is headed and takes up the mantle of factory manager. Through his own ingenuity, he makes certain engineering innovations which make the factory productive and which provide him with a fortune. Robert then has a decision to make: "When he paid off the incumbrances on the Factory, his first thought had been to sell it off, and thus relieve himself at once of these responsibilities and of a business peculiarly distasteful to him; but this thought was soon overpowered by the interest and the sense of obligation which had been the growth of so many years" (McIntosh II, 295-296). He provides not only employment and wages, but housing, community, and education to his workers. Robert has thus transitioned from a dependent son to a patriarchal leader of society through the internal obligations of masculine responsibility and the vehicle of redeeming debt.

Another persistent societal problem is the vulnerability of dependents. This is one of the ways the South distinguishes itself from what Daddy Cato terms the "hard country" of the North—in the South, dependents are reliably cared for by the system of slavery. Throughout the novels, women, children, and black people are consistently placed in positions where they must be rescued. Again, the heroic Robert Grahame provides an excellent example when he saves Alice and her mother from a fire in their hotel. He appears to Alice as a revelation: "with the

moonbeams falling directly upon him, and making every feature visible, though seen as it were through a veil, was the very being whom she had greeted in her dream as her guardian angel.” Though he is a stranger, she trusts him completely: “he lifted her through the window in his powerful arms as easily as she could have raised an infant. For an instant she clung to him, throwing her arm around his neck in the unconsciousness of terror; and touched by her trust, he involuntarily clasped her, as he might have done a timid child, closer to him” (McIntosh I, 179). Alice is represented as a child, completely dependent on the man who rescues her, and it is Robert’s physical strength combined with his cool rationality that allows him to save her. By representing men as heroes and women as victims, the narrative reinforces the *need* for responsible men like Robert and his nobility in fulfilling that need.

This situation is remarkably similar to that of Cora and Walworth in *The Cabin and the Parlor*—a stranger, motivated by his concern for a beautiful and vulnerable woman, uses his physicality and manliness to rescue her. In both scenarios the woman has been betrayed into an unsafe position by multiple and connected instances of the absence or failure of men. Alice and her mother are travelling back north after the death of her father, the death of her surrogate father (her uncle), and the catastrophic debt which drives her away from her plantation home. Cora is left alone by her husband Charles, who is unable to provide for her financially without leaving her; they originally ran away because they worry that they will be sold as a result of the Courtenay family debt. Though the rescues of these two women are similar, we never lose sight of Cora’s race. This adds another layer to masculine responsibility: the response to fugitive slaves is to return them to the family fold. Rescuing runaways is an Anti-Tom fantasy that allows the blame for running away to rest with abolitionists rather than the slave-holders, who

rescue runaways out of care and concern for their well-being rather than reclaiming them as possessions.

Continuous anxiety about missing or deceased patriarchs resonates through Anti-Tom novels, but the fall of one patriarch only results in temporary uncertainty until the next patriarch rises. At times the successor is more enlightened or responsible, but more often he is eager to emulate his predecessor—authors are careful to preserve respect and adoration for patriarchs even when they fail. This process of replacement can happen either through the coming-of-age of the male heir, which often requires sons like Donald Montrose to learn better standards of masculine responsibility, or through the marriage of the female heir to a responsible and eligible man like Walworth.

Marriages are strategic in that they preserve financial power within the family, and this feature helps to explain the abundance of marriages between cousins. Romances and marriages also play a role in reinforcing the sentimental ideologies of the novels. By providing heirs to the family fortune, marriages continue the dominance of Southern families despite the threat of Northern agitators, and are thus important to the continuation of the slave-holding system. Money multiplies within marriages as the assets of two families are combined; in the worldview of Anti-Tom novels, more money means more potential for the distribution of care and sympathy, so a marriage at the top of the hierarchy is good not only for the bride and groom, but for all their dependents. Marriages encourage female submission and male domination and establish legitimacy, which is essential for the transmission of “noble blood” and morals. Marriage also moderates and legitimizes sexual desire by implying the consent of the woman and sanctifying the desires of the man.

Marriage is a popular solution to a whole linked set of problems in the case of the vulnerable dependents of *The Cabin and the Parlor*. When Walworth marries Isabel, he solves the problem of the missing patriarch, takes care of her mother, saves her from having to work, and ensures that she will be protected and loved. He also reverses the debt the family incurred by speculation and buys back the plantation. He restores the status quo, including reuniting the fugitive slave Cora with her beloved mistress. The problematic runaway Charles (Cora's husband) is dead, so the 'disorder' of too much freedom is removed. The romantic plot seems frivolous, but is essential to producing an ordered society.

Just as one good marriage can do a world of good, however, a bad marriage can do as much harm to society. *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* features a comparison between the legitimate hero, Arthur, who seems made in his father's image, and the duelist, drinker, and gambler Walter Lee. Walter's troubled actions have a root in his past: his father tired of his first wife and divorced her, then secretly married Walter's mother, impregnates her, and leaves her. This is a "stain on his birth" that cannot be erased, though it is no fault of his own. Walter is not vulnerable or orphaned; he is endowed with a fortune from his father. But he is emotionally crippled by his lineage and the questionable legitimacy of his birth: "Arthur was always perfectly honest and straight-forward, even as a little child; though quiet in his way of showing it, he is so affectionate in his disposition. Walter is passionate and fickle, condescending to those he loves, but treating with a proud indifference every one else" (36). Since he has no role model father, he does not learn manly responsibility. This points to yet another redemptive quality of marriage; it promotes family values, the transmission of which are as important as noble blood. In order to secure the true benefits for marriage for herself and her progeny, Alice Weston must make the right choice.

When societal problems are contained within the existing structures of Southern masculine power, they are solvable through the exertions of responsibility and sympathy. But as Anti-Tom novels remind us, the most dire problems threaten from the outside. In the Anti-Tom mindset, sectional conflict is imminent, and it will be caused by the agitation of abolitionists. Their arguments “exasperate North and South against each other to such a degree, that the two great sections of this nation, if this conduct is persisted in, will come in time to be more irreconcilably hostile than ever were Rome and Carthage. God knows, if this agitation is kept up, the end will be a scene of horror at which the world will recoil, a scene of fraternal strife, in which all the evils of a servile, will be added to those of a civil war” (Peterson 261). The fear of civil war is compounded with the fear that abolitionist agitators will provoke a “servile” war—an uprising of black laborers in the South. Anti-Tom novels want abolitionists to be wary of what they might be getting themselves into. At the close of *The Planter’s Northern Bride*: “should the burning lava of anarchy and servile war roll over the plains of the South, and bury, under its fiery waves, its social and domestic institutions, it will not suffer alone. The North and the South are branches of the same parent tree, and the lightning bolt that shivers the one, must scorch and wither the other” (Hentz 579). Hentz uses the last sentence of her novel to bring the stakes of the debate over slavery into sharp relief with a lightly veiled threat to the North.

More often, the impulse is to reunite North and South in tolerance and friendship. This is sometimes metaphorized through symbolic marriages between Northern and Southern characters<sup>5</sup> such as the Grahames and Montroses at the end of *The Lofty and the Lowly*: “And thus by the affinities of spirits devoted to the same noble ends—to the advancement of man’s happiness and of God’s glory—the North and the South, the Lofty and the Lowly, have been

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<sup>5</sup> For a fascinating novel-length allegory of the need for marriage and reconciliation between North and South, see Criswell, Robert. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin Contrasted with Buckingham Hall, the Planter’s Home: or, A Fair View of Both Sides of the Slavery Question*. 1852. New York: AMS Press, 1973.

drawn together, and the experience of life has taught to each and all of them, that there is good in all and that none is all-good” (McIntosh II, 323). Tolerance between the North and South is important to the resolution of *The Cabin and the Parlor*, as well: “Remember also that human hearts, philanthropic hearts, Christian hearts are as common on one side of the Potomac as the other... If ever you are tempted to speak harshly of social institutions other than your own, recall the words of Christ, “He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone” (Peterson 324). Although these authors preach tolerance and claim to present both sides of the slavery argument, they clearly present the Southern slave-holding worldview as superior. They see the reuniting of North and South as a culmination of a Christian morality which, in their view, supports slavery as a benign and holy institution.

Another solution to the impending problem of civil war is to recognize the root cause: abolitionism. Abolitionists wreak havoc throughout the novels. They seduce or “steal” slaves away from their owners: the latter diction is particularly interesting because the action is simultaneously a literal theft of the wealth of the owner, a symbolic troubling of his power, and a limitation on his exertion of responsibility. In *Uncle Robin*, as in many Anti-Tom novels, slave traders are portrayed as the most unfortunate part of slavery. Plantation owner Doctor Boswell asserts that he would never sell slaves unless they attempt to run away first, but that troublesome slaves are problematic for morale on the plantation. Even though slave traders are somewhat despicable people, there are worse culprits: “Our trade would be completely broken up, Doctor, if ‘twant for runaway negroes; and I think, sir, we have to thank the abolitionists for that; they entice them off, and we grabs them flying. I know a Yankee trader who gets whole lots in that way” (Page 45). Abolitionists are thus behind the most negative aspects of slavery, even as they disrupt the distribution of its beneficence.

Abolitionists are notoriously irresponsible. They take no burden of care for free blacks, even when they help them escape. Clearly, their motivations are not actually philanthropic but selfishly political. They ignore their own poor in the North, whether white or black, as the fugitive Charles discovers in *The Cabin and The Parlor*: “Thousands were ready to admit, as an abstract proposition, that he was “a man and a brother,” but nobody was willing to come forward and act towards him as such (Peterson 236). This is only one of a multitude of accusations of abolitionist hypocrisy, made particularly sharp in this case by the appropriation of the classic abolitionist slogan. Though Charles is free, he is virtually enslaved by poverty. Anti-Tom novels place higher value on material welfare than on abstract freedom, and as such Stowe’s admonition to “feel right” seems ridiculous. Mary H. Eastman responds directly to Stowe in her afterword to *Aunt Phillis’s Cabin*: “She asks the question, ‘What can any individual do?’ Strange that any one should be at a loss in this working world of ours. Christian men and women should find enough to occupy them in their families, and in an undoubted sphere of duty. Let the people of the North take care of their own poor. Let the people of the South take care of theirs” (Eastman 279-280). She wishes individuals to limit their own caretaking—noticeably an act of work, not of slogan-mongering—to places where their duty is undoubted. For ordinary men and women, this is the family. For the leaders in society, it is “their own poor,” North or South who merit care and sympathy. Perhaps the restriction of sympathy makes it more potent.

Eastman’s solution is echoed by Peterson’s advice: “Meantime, reader, whether you live in the North or the South, *be the good master*; for there lies the kernel of the whole matter. . . . Remember, that the laboring classes, be they called operatives or slaves, have no friend but God, if you, their employers or owners, are not that friend” (Peterson 324). This is a clear call for responsibility on the part of the powerful owners in society. What, however, is the task for those

who are not at the top of the pyramid? Perhaps it is to follow Alice Weston's example, accepting one's place in the hierarchy by regulating passion. Eastman suggests a proper application of Christian charity, and McIntosh suggests tolerance for North and South. Whatever the proper action or employment for one's particular situation in the hierarchy, it is certain that "feeling right" is certainly still part of the equation.

One of the most tender moments in these sentimental Anti-Tom novels occurs in a schoolhouse. Alice Montrose, still living in the South, has turned her energies to the project of educating the plantation slaves. Though she focuses on the children, she is approached by Daddy Cato, who wants to learn to read his Bible. The joy that learning which word says "Father" brings to Cato is genuinely touching, a sure assertion of his humanity and faith. The lengths that sympathy goes to cross racial boundaries is lauded: "they sat side by side; her face beaming with the tender pity of an angel—his, full of simplicity, the earnestness, the docility of a little child. The same book was held on one side by a hand which nature had marked with the color of a curse, and which toil had rendered coarse and hard; and on the other, by one of lily-like fairness and delicacy" (McIntosh I, 208). The moment is marred by racial awareness, for even in the closest and holiest moment of connection, there is an assertion of difference and inferiority. Cato is simple, child-like, and cursed by his race to servitude. Yet in her preface, McIntosh vows that she has the greatest respect for Cato, and that "'Daddy Cato' had a real existence in one who was both honoured and loved in her own family. To draw his picture has been a labour of love" (McIntosh I, 6). The labor of love that McIntosh undertakes is strikingly similar to Alice's. Both moments of cross-racial connection are mediated by books: a physical Bible that interrupts the contact of hands and sanctifies the possibly dangerous sympathy of cross-racial touching, and a novel that places master-slave affection into a proslavery ideological framework.

That master-slave affection and care is manifested in work. If a slave loves his master, he will toil obediently, and if a master loves his slaves, he will do the responsible work of caring for them. McIntosh uses the same language when she explains her motivation for writing her novel: “As the Work had its origin in love, so is it sent forth, with many a loving wish, mingled, alas! with many a regretful sigh that the fruit is so little worthy of the seed...May He who can lend efficiency to the feeblest instrument, make it productive of ‘peace and good-will to man’” (McIntosh I, 6). If a novelist loves her country, she will labor to promote goodwill between its opposing factions, defending it from the political agitation and from civil strife. It would be a shame to deny the racial hatred, greed, and dehumanizing vilification that underlie the defense of American slavery, but it seems that in the world of sentimental novels, the greater danger lies in love.

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