bility, at least under the prevailing social conditions, of any but the very low so utterly discounting public opinion as to enter into such a union. Child only risks a defense of this most subversive version of miscegenation once she has placed the sturdy barrier of class between herself and the women who enact it. By asserting that the female laborers who choose black mates are “merely guilty of differing from us in a matter of taste,” Child insists on the distinction between tastes and morals, and on the comparative insignificance of the former. But by using this moment to forge an identification with her readers based on a shared set of tastes she backs away from her argument, suggesting the power of social sanctions to delimit desires. Thus even here, in perhaps the most daring argument in her most daring text, Child refrains from denouncing society’s distaste for a form of miscegenation that would threaten and exclude the white man. Instead, as she names herself part of the social “us,” her persuasive strategy of identification collapses into a defensive one.

In light of Child’s caveats it is hardly surprising that, at least so far as I am aware, no antislavery fiction admits to the possibility of a white woman loving or wedding a black man. Yet I would like to suggest that this forbidden desire constitutes a repressed but never completely obliterated narrative within even the most conventional of these stories. Recalling Stowe’s and Green’s portraits of their black heroes, it is now evident that one of the tasks implicit in the amalgamating strategies that constructed these Herculeses is the creation of a black man who can be easily assimilated to the white woman’s sexual tastes. Once again it is the figure of the mulatta who permits this desire to be inscribed. The light skin of the mulatta names her white, yet her black ancestry keeps her union with the black hero from being labeled miscegenation. Through this figure the love of a white-skinned woman and a black-skinned man can be designated, and even endorsed, without being scandalous. The polysemous body of the fictional mulatta simultaneously expresses the white woman’s desires and protects her from them, by marking them safely alien.

Clearly not intended to articulate a feminist position, Frances Green’s “The Slave-Wife” tells the familiar abolitionist story of a slave woman’s sexual exploitation by her master, despite her—legally null—marriage. But because of her complexion this story encloses another narrative, the tale of a white woman’s preference for a black lover. Even hidden under the mask of the mulatta, this story of the inadmissible union of a white woman and a black man is so threatening that it must be dismantled at the very moment it is made, so that the story becomes a sequence of alternating disavowals and contradictions. Laco Ray’s description of his wife proffers a double reading of her race: “She was white. At least no one would suspect that she had any African blood in her veins.” The modifications that follow cannot erase the clarity of that first adamant assertion of her whiteness. Laco’s wife is named Clusy; it is a slave name, unfit for other roles, so that Clusy’s name and her body sustain the tension already noted between her African
blood and white flesh. Just as Clusy’s flesh, ancestry, and name offer conflicting signs to her identity, the story’s plot consists of a series of displacements in which Laco Ray and his master alternately claim the trophy that is Clusy. Their competition, like Clusy’s ambiguous race, serves to contain the white woman’s scandalous desire for the black man; for as master and husband each attempt to claim exclusive sexual rights, the question of the woman’s choice and desire is made moot. Laco Ray’s narration of this rivalry makes it clear that he sees the price of loss as the distinctly patriarchal threat of castration:

She was beautiful. She was in her master’s power. She was in the power of every white man that chose to possess her, she was no longer mine. She was not my wife.

The question of “The Slave-Wife” is whether or not a black man can possess a woman—particularly a white woman—and from its very title, which simultaneously makes Clusy a wife and yet fetters that role with the contradictory one of slave, the answer remains ambiguous. Despite Laco’s sense of dispossession, the white man’s power never quite manages to control Clusy. Finally, as Laco reports it, continuing to reject the master’s “wishes,” “She was bound to the stake; and while cruel and vulgar men mocked her agony, THERE our babe was born!” The torture that attempts to make Clusy the white man’s sexual property only succeeds in eliciting proof of her sexual intimacy with a black man. Yet once again the message is double, for the child who marks Laco’s potency in the face of the master’s power is stillborn. Weak from childbirth and beatings Clusy escapes with Laco Ray only to die before reaching Canada. The story ends here with a stalemate. The inconclusiveness of both Laco’s and his master’s attempts to claim Clusy reflects Green’s own incapacity to give the white woman to the black man, even as it attests to her desire to do so.

Laco’s final request that his auditor “publish it abroad” recasts the story not as one of male possession, whether white or black, but as one of female desires and female virtue:

For if any woman can hear [this story] without a wish, a determination to labor with all her might to abolish THE SLAVERY OF WOMAN, I impeach her virtue—she is not TRUE—she is NOT PURE

The passage asserts that sexual virtue consists not of a delicacy that eschews sexual topics but of a purity that opposes sexual exploitation. This definition of sexual virtue as resistance to the slavery of woman makes abolition a question of woman’s rights. Laco’s phrase “the slavery of woman” carries two meanings, and Clusy’s story illustrates the impossibility of separating them. What interests me about this merger of feminist and abolitionist arguments is that, unlike many of the instances discussed above, Green’s narrative appears to be oblivious to the connections it nonetheless makes. The rhetoric of “The Slave-Wife” stresses the contradictions inherent in Clusy’s double role as chattel and spouse, and it disregards

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the ways in which the two terms might be identical, and Green's title a tautology. Thus the story defines slavery as a woman's issue at the same time that it writes woman's desire out of woman's rights, denying and hiding the sexual body of the white woman. Yet by depicting Laco Ray and his master as rival claimants for the possession of Clusy, her positions as wife and slave are implicitly presented as analogous: in both cases she is male property; in neither case are her desires, including her subversive preference for her black husband, permitted autonomous expression. From a feminist perspective these implications discredit Laco Ray's desire to have Clusy as his own, and hence to own her, and therefore undermine his sympathetic position in Green's abolitionist argument. That the links between sexual and racial oppression strategically forged by feminist-abolitionists hold, even within narratives whose logic is jeopardized by this coupling, suggests that these links have become so normative as to be unavoidable. Thus the anti-slavery stories written by women who appear to have no intention of questioning marital or familial relations constantly employ rhetoric or depict scenarios that jar against their benign assumptions about woman's proper domestic place.

Antislavery fiction's focus on miscegenation evades the difficulties of representing blackness by casting the racial problematics of slavery into the terms of sexual oppression. In defining the question of ownership of one's body as a sexual question, the ideal of liberty and the commercial concept of ownership attain not only an intimately corporeal, but also an explicitly marital or domestic, dimension. This presentation of slavery as a sexual, marital, and domestic abuse thematizes the structure of the genre as a whole, since antislavery stories attempt to describe slave experience within the feminine forms of domestic fiction. As such antislavery stories are constructed on the foundation of a presumed alliance between abolitionist goals and domestic values, an alliance that, it should already be obvious, is fraught with asymmetries and contradictions. The domestic realm of women and children occupies, after all, a paradoxical place in both feminist and abolitionist arguments. For feminists, it constitutes not only the source of woman's power but also, antithetically, the "sphere" in which she finds herself incarcerated. For abolitionists, the domestic values that ostensibly offer a positive alternative to the mores of plantation society simultaneously serve to mask slavery's exploitations behind domesticity's gentle features.

Situated outside of the specifically abolitionist forums provided by antislavery societies, even further detached from the woman's rights movement, and aimed at the most sentimental figure of the domestic scene—the good child—the anti-slavery stories written for Sunday-school primers baldly exemplify the narrative disjunctions inherent in attempts to domesticate slavery. Julia Coleman and Matilda Thompson's collection of such stories, The Child's Anti-Slavery Book, first published by the evangelical American Tract Society in 1859 and then twice
reprinted in the "Books for Sunday School" series of a New York publisher, provides a characteristic and fairly popular sample of the genre. The collection constantly inscribes its own domesticity. The introduction, "A Few Words About American Slave Children," begins by describing the loving, happy homes of the American free children who constitute its readership. Such homes are then replicated within the stories themselves. Thus "Aunt Judy's Story" narrates the life of this elderly exslave through a frame in which Mrs. Ford tells her children the tale of their impoverished neighbor, with daughter Cornelia literally "leaning her little curly head against her mother's knee," while they discuss the likelihood of Judy's children having been torn away from her maternal knee. The virtue of the Ford home marks every exchange. If Cornelia is "getting a little impatient," the narrator turns to remind the child reader, who might mistakenly see this moment as condoning such behavior, that it was "only a little, for Cornelia was remarkable for her sweet and placid disposition." Bountiful meals are consumed in every chapter, and neither parent ever lets an opportunity for a moral lesson go to waste, nor does Mrs. Ford ever fail to revel in "every act of kindness to the poor and needy performed by her children." In these Sunday-school stories, lessons in patience or generosity—the everyday virtues of domestic life—inextricably mingle with the teaching of antislavery. The Fords treat Aunt Judy as a site for the moral education of their children, while the promised story of her life serves as a didactic and desirable form of entertainment: "Dear papa, tell us a story with a poor slave in it, won't you?" Cornelia implores.49

The subordination of the poor slave to the family who tells her story bespeaks the dominance inherent in the act of representation: the Ford children "profit" from Aunt Judy in a manner more moralistic than, but not sufficiently distinct from, the material profits reaped by the slave owners her story teaches them to condemn. On the other hand the family these children inhabit, and the lessons of patience and selflessness they are taught, reproduce under the benign guise of domesticity a hierarchy structurally quite similar to that of slavery itself.50 The sentimental and domestic values engaged in the critique of slavery are compromised by the connection, and implicated in the very patterns they are employed to expose. The values of the loving family embodied in the doting mother and the dutiful child look, despite all disclaimers and despite all differences, much like the values of the plantation. But because the domesticity of women and children is glorified in these stories, the fact of subjugation and the disavowal of freedom implicit in domestic values remains masked.

Thompson and Coleman's defensive insistence on the differences between slavery and family suggests that even the most emphatically domestic writers were aware of the danger that their stories might collapse the very distinctions they were designed to uphold. For example, when in "A Few Words About American Slave Children" they attempt to differentiate between the experiences of slave and free children, the similarities between the two haunt their arguments.
Though born beneath the same sun and on the same soil, with the same natural right to freedom as yourselves, they are nevertheless SLAVES. Alas for them! Their parents cannot train them as they will, for they too have MASTERS.

“They too have masters,” the passage explains, and whatever is learned about the powerlessness of slave parents, the notion that all children have masters is equally clear—for who, except the child, stands at the other side of that “too”? This conception of all children as unfree slips between the emphatic insistence (so emphatic because so precarious?) that “Children, you are free and happy. . . . You are free children!” Yet the very description of this freedom reveals it to be, at best, deferred.

When you become men and women you will have full liberty to earn your living, to go, to come, to seek pleasure or profit in any way that you may choose, so long as you do not meddle with the rights of other people.51

In short, the liberty described is one projected into the future, not one attainable for the child within familial structures. The male bias of even this deferred freedom is made obvious by a nearly identical passage from another antislavery book for children from the period. This one, The Child's Book on Slavery; or, Slavery Made Plain, was published as part of a series “for Sabbath Schools” in Cincinnati.

When the Child grows to be a man or woman he can go and do for himself, is his own ruler, and can act just as he pleases, if he only does right. He can go and come, he can buy and sell; if he has a wife and children, they cannot be taken away, and he is all his life free.52

The absurdity of the child grown to be a woman ever having a wife makes it clear that the passage’s slide into the singular masculine pronoun, and everything logically attributable to him, is not only idiomatically conventional but poignantly symptomatic. Indeed, the ability to have “a wife and children” like the ability to “go and come” or “buy and sell” serves to define freedom, so that the juxtaposition of these pairs categorizes women and children not as potential free persons but rather as the sign and condition of another's freedom. The freedom so defined in these antislavery books is available to neither child nor woman. The domestic ideology that informs the genre can no more accommodate an actual, corporeal, and present freedom than can the slave ideology itself.

The homological ideologies of the family and of slave society need not imply, antislavery writers insist, that both structures support the same meanings: thus the patriarchal pattern that would signal exploitation and power in the case of a plantation society could mean benevolent protection and love within a familial setting. “The relation between the child and the parent is first and chiefly for the child’s good, but the relation between the slave and his master is for the master's pleasure,” the anonymous author of The Child’s Book on Slavery explains. In both cases the less powerful “must obey” the more powerful, but, the author asserts, the good garnered by such obedience accrues differently.53 Leveled against pro-
Slavery assuages that bondage is beneficial to the weaker African race, this logic also defends against the specter of parental pleasure in the subservience of the child, and by extension, of patriarchal pleasure in the conventions of domestic hierarchy. The difference between slavery and domestic order is cast as a conflict between selfish hedonism and benevolence; in this Sunday-school primer the critique of pecuniary motives is displaced by a discussion of moral considerations.54 By situating antislavery discourse within an idealized domestic setting these stories purport to offer moral and emotional standards by which to measure, and through which to correct, the evils of slavery. The problem is that these standards are implicated in the values and structures of authority and profit they seek to criticize. The contradictions inherent in the alliance of abolitionist thought and domestic ideals can be identified, in part, as the conflict between a structural or material and an emotional or moral conception of social reality. Failing to discover tangible and stable grounds on which to distinguish idealized domestic values from the abhorred system of slavery, antislavery writers retreat to the realm of the intangible; once they do so their arguments for the difference between slavery and domesticity reconstruct this opposition in terms of the tension between physical and spiritual ontologies and epistemologies.

Feminist-abolitionist awareness of the need to recognize the links between one's identity and one's body, and of all the difficulties inherent in such a recognition, informs, as I have argued, the problems of representation that characterize antislavery fiction. The domestic and sentimental conventions of this fiction, however, simultaneously subscribe to a moral, emotional, and fundamentally spiritual code that devalues bodily constraints to focus on the soul. As employed in the service of patriarchal authority, the distinction between body and soul traditionally functioned to increase, not decrease, social control over the body. Historically this distinction had buttressed Christian apologies for slavery as it enabled the pious to simultaneously exploit bodies and save souls.55 Similarly, an emphasis on the special and discrete nature of the spiritual realm permitted women's souls a power that was denied to their bodies. It has been frequently demonstrated that in losing economic and political power with the rise of bourgeois society the American woman increased her value as the moral and spiritual guardian of the nation: her gain in moral status bolstered her exclusion from the political and commercial arenas.56 The writers of antislavery fiction seem well aware of the oppressive consequences of locating personhood in the soul. The hypocritical minister who defends slavery as a means of converting the heathens of Africa, and levies docility with the threat of hellfire for those who do not follow the biblical injunction "Servants obey your masters," serves as a stock villain of this fiction. Equally familiar is the ineffectual kind mistress who, like Stowe's Mrs. Shelby, is prevented by her husband from participating in economic decisions but is expected to provide enough piety and benevolence for the whole family.57 Despite these depictions of the ways in which evocations of a spiritual reality can
be used as a placebo for women's and slaves' lack of social power, antislavery fiction nevertheless endorses the belief in an alternate spiritual realm where power and efficacy are distributed differently. From this perspective the powerlessness of women and slaves would not matter, because whatever the condition of their bodies their souls could remain blessed and free.

The most famous instance of such recourse to the refuge provided by a separate spiritual reality is, of course, the victory of Tom's faith-filled spiritual power over Simon Legree's physical brutality.

"Did n't I pay down twelve hundred dollars, cash, for all there is inside yer old cussed black shell? An't yer mine, now, body and soul?" he said, giving Tom a violent kick with his heavy boot; "tell me!"

In the very depth of physical suffering, bowed by brutal oppression, this question shot a gleam of joy and triumph through Tom's soul. . . .

"No! no! no! my soul an't yours, Mas'r! You have n't bought it, —ye can't buy it! It's been bought and paid for, by one that is able to keep it."58

In this passage Stowe insists on the oppressive presence of physical reality; the constraints of Tom's position can be weighed and measured; the boot is heavy. The triumph of Tom's soul is thus emphatically presented as rebutting material conceptions of personhood. In response to Legree's threats and abuses Tom insists on the irrelevance of the condition of his body in identifying him not as a thing but as a man.59 The primacy granted Tom's soul in constituting his identity is the culmination of a process evident throughout the novel, for though Tom's body is explicitly and frequently described by Stowe in the same Herculean terms she would later use in her portrait of Dred, her emphasis on the childlike and feminine character of his soul serves to supplant these physical descriptions so that in most readers' minds, and in George Cruikshank's 1852 illustrations, Tom appears effeminate and physically weak. Thus her celebration of Tom's soul serves to erase his flesh. Equally telling is Stowe's failure to imagine an America in which blacks could be recognized as persons. Perhaps the most disturbing insight of her novel is that the utopian freedom she constructs is predicated upon the absence of black bodies: Tom's "victory" wins him the freedom of heaven; George, Eliza, and the rest find theirs only in Liberia.

The Christian and sentimental vision of noncorporeal freedom and personhood obfuscates the conception of the corporeality of the self with which I credit feminist-abolitionist discourse. Yet I would argue that antislavery fiction's recourse to the obliteration of black bodies as the only solution to the problem of slavery actually confirms the ways in which feminist-abolitionist projects of liberation forced a recognition of the bodiliness of personhood. Antislavery writers' tendency to do away with bodies stands as a testimony to their terrified sense that the body is inescapable. Thus, graphically extending the ways in which the freedom praised by domestic fiction excludes women and children, the freedom offered by antislavery fiction regularly depends upon killing off black bodies.
defining death as a glorious emancipation from plantation slavery. "A Thought upon Emancipation" in the Liberty Chimes offers this vision of immediate abolition:

Even, now, the slave himself need no longer be a slave. Has he the heroism to prefer death to slavery and the system is at an end.

Let the terrible determination go forth through all Slavedom, that the slave will not work—will not eat—will not rise up or lie down at the bidding of an owner and will be free or die, and it is done. Tomorrow's sun beholds a notion of freedom indeed.60

What is done, terminated, in this fantasy is not only slavery but all slaves. The apocalyptic tone of the piece does provide the radical reinterpretation of freedom it promises. Antislavery writing responds to slavery's annihilation of personhood with its own act of annihilation.

The obliteration of the body thus stands as the pain-filled consequence of recognizing the extent to which the body designates identity. Indeed this glorification of death is but a more extreme example of processes already evident in the domestic, amalgamating, and appropriative strategies that characterize feminist-abolitionist discourse's various attempts to transform the body from a site of oppression into the grounds of resisting that oppression. The discovery that these efforts to liberate the body result in its repression and annihilation attests to the difficulties and resistance inherent in acknowledging the corporeality of personhood. The bodies feminists and abolitionists wish reclaimed, and the bodies they exploit, deny, or obliterate in the attempted rescue, are the same.

Notes

A chapter of my doctoral dissertation, this paper owes much to the thoughtful readings and generous advice of Sharon Cameron and Larzer Ziff; and to Alexandra Halasz, Elizabeth Hanson, Joe Harrison, Marcie Frank, and of course Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, who challenged and encouraged me through more drafts than any of us want to remember.

1. Lydia Maria Child, Anti-Slavery Catechism (Newburyport, Mass., 1836), 17.
2. Ibid., 16.
3. That his confidence in her racial purity is expressed in terms of white lineage "since the flood" ridicules the most frequently deployed biblical defense of slavery, which dated the divine sanctioning of racial subjugation from the curse Noah pronounced on Ham's son Canaan (Gen. 9:25). Ham's fault, coincidentally, was the disrespect of looking upon the body of his drunken and naked father. For a discussion of the antebellum debate over the significance of this passage, see Ron Bartour, "Cursed be Canaan, a Servant of Servants shall he be unto his Brethren: American Views on 'Biblical Slavery,' 1835–1865, A Comparative Study," Slavery and Abolition 4, no. 1 (May 1983): 41–55.
4. On the simple level of events the intersections between antebellum feminism and abolition are legion: the Grimké sisters, antislavery lecturers of the 1830s, were the first women to give public lectures before "mixed" or "promiscuous" audiences, and Ange-
lina Grimké was the first American woman to speak before a legislative body. Cen-
sured for such unfeminine activity, they increasingly addressed the issue of woman's rights within their antislavery discourse. In the 1830s and 1840s, Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone worked as paid agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society, lecturing both on abolition and woman's rights. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott first met at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840, at which the female delegates were refused seats; legend has it that the idea of a woman's rights convention—not realized until 1848—was first discussed in the London hotel rooms of these excluded women. For varying accounts of the relation between the two movements see Ellen DuBois, "Women's Rights and Abolition: The Nature of the Connection," in Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, eds., Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists (Baton Rouge, La., 1979); and DuBois, Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848–1869 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978); Blanche Glassman Hersh, The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America (Urbana, Ill., 1978); and Gerda Lerner, The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Woman's Rights and Abolition (New York, 1971).


6. Included in Aileen S. Kraditor, Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism (Chicago, 1968), 190–91. This fantasy was published as an editorial in the Herald, thus fulfilling its own gleeful wishes.

7. The diagnosis is that of Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright in "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," De Bow's Review (1851), excerpted in James O. Breeden, ed., Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South (Westport, Conn., 1980), 173. Breeden identifies Cartwright as among the "leading scientific spokesmen" of the campaign to defend the South's sectional interests and to promote southern nationalism and thus a consciously biased interpreter of anatomy.

8. Lydia Maria Child included these quotations along with many similar items gleaned from the Southern press in The Patriarchal Institution as Described by Members of Its Own Family (New York, 1860), 13, 11. She added the italics as a form of commentary. The first quote mentioned here is cited by Child from an advertisement for the runaway slave of Anthony M. Minter [A.M.] in the Free Press (Alabama), 18 September 1846. She takes the second from an advertisement posted by John A. Rowland, jailer, to publicize his capture of a presumed runaway, in the Fayetteville, North Carolina, Observer, 20 June 1838.


10. For a more general analysis of how the idealization of freedom that characterizes Western thought relies upon the historical and factual presence of slavery, see Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).

11. See Hersh, Slavery of Sex, chaps. 1, 2, and 6 for a summary of the analogies drawn by feminist abolitionists. Examples of the first two follow; a more frivolous example of the analogy can be found in Amelia Bloomer's defense of the short skirts and pantaloons that carry her name: "I suppose in this respect we are more mannish, for we know that in dress as in all things else, we have been and are slaves, while man in dress and all things else is free."


14. See Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820–1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151–74; and Barbara J. Berg, "Towards the Woman-Belle Ideal," in *The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, The Woman and the City, 1800–1860* (New York, 1978), for compendiums of all the virtues a "True Woman" was expected to possess. It is worth noting that one of the charges consistently brought against the Grimké sisters' antislavery lectures was that of indecency. In their Pastoral Letter (Boston, 1837), directed at the Grimkés, the Massachusetts Congregationalist clergy "especially deplore the intimate acquaintance and promiscuous conversation of females with regard to things 'which ought not to be mentioned.'" The unmentionables, of course, were the rape and concubination of slave women, and the nullity of slave marriage. See Kraditor, *Up from the Pedestal*, 51–52; and Sarah Grimké's response to the pastoral letter in the third of her *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes*.

15. Margaret Fuller, "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" (1844), in *The Writings of Margaret Fuller*, ed. Mason Wade (New York, 1941), 123.

16. The most famous instance of this turn is Sojourner Truth's refrain "a'n't I a woman?" at the Akron Woman's Rights Convention on 29 May 1851.

"Dat man ober dar say dat womin needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted ober ditches, and to hab de best place everywhere. Nobody eber helps me into carriages, or ober mud-puddles, or gib me any best place!" And raising herself to her full height, and her voice to a pitch like rolling thunders, she asked, "And a'n't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! (and she bared her right arm to the shoulder, showing her tremendous muscular power.)"


17. *Liberator*, 7 January 1832, as quoted by Hersh, *Slavery of Sex*, 10–11.

18. Whether Garrison knew it or not, there is no etymological slippage at all, as *cattle* refers not only to the bovine but more generally to "moveable property or wealth," that is, to chattel: both forms derive from *capitale*. *Capitale* is accumulated currency, "stock in trade," and the classification of slaves as livestock recognizes that their status as things (however vital) implies exchangeability. The evolving connotations of these words encapsulate centuries of economic history, which my discussion collapses and necessarily simplifies. See the OED, s.v. "cattle."


20. Hersh, *Slavery of Sex*, 16; her figures are taken from the records of the Massachusetts society. Angelina Grimké asserted in 1836 that there were a total of sixty female antislavery societies in the Northern states, though I have found no other evidence to corroborate this figure; *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* (New York, 1856), 23.

21. Grimké, *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, 23. Her list of antislavery handiwork includes card racks and needle books as well as all those items listed in the text. This fairly conservative portrait of female antislavery societies, though accurate in its depiction of the majority of the women involved in antislavery work, does not neces-
arily characterize all of the authors whose stories I will be discussing here, just as it does not fit the Grimkès and other public lecturers and political organizers cited above. In particular, Lydia Maria Child and Carolyn Wells Healey Dall saw their fiction writing as a distinctly political, indeed revolutionary, form of action. Nevertheless, women lecturers urged this more conventional form of political activity on their female audiences, and less daring women constituted the major readership for all of these stories as well as the authors of many of them.

22. There has as yet been no systematic study of the history of antislavery stories. Carolyn Karcher postulates that Child's story "The St. Domingo Orphans," published in her Juvenile Miscellany for September of 1830, may well initiate the genre. Though antislavery stories appeared in the Liberator from 1831 and in many other antislavery papers, the major forum for their publication was provided by giftbooks and collections of literature for children, since these permitted more lengthy narrations than most newspapers could afford. The earliest antislavery giftbook of which I am aware—Oasis (1834)—was produced by Child; it contained mostly her own stories, accompanying them with two articles by her husband, David Child, and a handful of disparate pieces by abolitionist friends. Later antislavery giftbooks, and most notably the Liberty Bell (1839–58), follow this model of female production and control. Male contributors to such collections, even though they constituted a large percentage of the authors, supplied argumentative pieces and poetry but rarely stories. For example, while two-thirds of the over two hundred contributors to the Liberty Bell were men, only two (Edmund Quincy and a presumably male, anonymous "a Southron") wrote stories. Karcher suggests, and my own findings support this, that the antislavery stories written by men generally differ from those by women in thematic terms: men's tend to focus more on slave rebellions than on sexual exploitation, while in women's stories miscegenation, concubinage, rape, and—I would add—the break-up of families predominate, with slave rebellions occupying a more peripheral position. The themes of escape is shared by both sexes. There are, of course, individual instances that contradict these generalizations. See Carolyn Karcher, "Rape, Murder, and Revenge in 'Slavery's Pleasant Homes': Lydia Maria Child's Antislavery Fiction and the Limits of Genre," Women's Studies International Forum 9 (Fall 1986): 325–32.

23. Most obvious among these followers is Liberty Chimes, published in 1845 by the Ladies Anti-Slavery Society of Providence, Rhode Island. But also see the somewhat more successful giftbook Autographs of Freedom, edited by Julia Griffith for the Rochester New York, Ladies Auxiliary in 1853 and 1854; it is unique in containing a number of pieces by exslaves, including Frederick Douglass, and for the closing of each selection with a facsimile of the author's signature—hence the title. Antislavery giftbooks were also occasionally produced by men; for example, Richard Sutton Rost compiled Freedom's Gift (Hartford, Conn., 1840) predominantly as a showcase for William Lloyd Garrison; many of the poems and fictional pieces, however, were contributed by women.

24. Before 1846 they were known as the "Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair," then from 1847 until their replacement by "soirées" in 1858 they were more grandly entitled the "National Anti-Slavery Bazaar." In 1839, the first Liberty Bell was released on 29 October, but the fair and publication were subsequently moved to the more lucrative Christmas season, and later editions are all dated in early December. The only missed years were 1840, 1850, 1854, 1855, and 1857; so a total of fifteen volumes were published, all except the last (which reprinted some earlier selections) consisting entirely of new material. See Ralph Thompson, "The Liberty Bell and Other Anti-Slavery
25. The average of the fair's profits is taken from Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, "The Boston Bluestocking, Maria Weston Chapman," in Bound with Them in Chains: A Biographical History of the Anti-Slavery Movement (Westport, Conn., 1972), 45; and the information on the finances of the Liberty Bell from Thompson, "Liberty Bell and Other Gift-Books," 158–59. Thompson queries the committee's boast, arguing that many volumes were distributed free of cost and hence at a loss, but even if the committee's figures are inflated there is no reason to believe that the books were not economically successful, especially considering that the cost of each printing was donated.


27. The point, of course, is that the sentimentality required by the genre necessarily undermines any aspirations toward realism. For a far more sophisticated and interesting variation on this critique see Walter Benn Michaels, "Romance and Real Estate," in The American Renaissance Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1982–83, ed. Michaels and Donald Pease (Baltimore, 1985), in which he argues that Stowe's claims to realism mask an essentially romantic belief in inalienable property.

28. The examples are endless, but to choose three from the stories discussed in this paper: Frances Green's "The Slave-Wife," in Liberty Chimes (Providence, R.I., 1845), is presented as told by a friend who met Laco Ray, the slave husband, after his escape to Canada. Reprinting "Mary French and Susan Easton" anonymously in The Slave's Friend (New York, 1836), Lydia Maria Child added this italicized introduction: "Perhaps some of my little readers may remember seeing, about a year and a half ago, advertisements in the newspapers." "Mark and Hasty" by Matilda G. Thompson, in The Child's Anti-Slavery Book (New York, 1859) is prefaced with a note that the "facts" of this St. Louis story "were communicated to the author by a friend residing temporarily in that city." Fiction had, of course, long been viewed with suspicion in Puritan America, and the practice of defending tales with the claim that they were "founded on fact" had become, by the eighteenth century, a conventional attribute of all storytelling. Because, however, antislavery stories proposed to alter attitudes and behavior—to change the facts of American slavery—their claims to a factual basis served a double purpose, countering not only the general prejudice against frivolous or decadent fictionality but also the more specific charge that fiction had no bearing on political realities.

29. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin (New York, 1982), preface, 10; Stowe, A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, in The Writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe, 16 vols. (Boston, 1896), 2:255–56. My evocation of Stowe here, and throughout this paper, is admittedly opportunistic, as her position within the contemporary critical canon allows me to assume a familiarity with the problematics of her work obviously lacking for most of the other texts I cite. Thus her more accessible and discussed novels provide a way into the issues confronted in their more obscure precursors, and a means of situating these stories within contemporary critical discourse. An implicit assumption in my work, moreover, is that Stowe's achievement needs to be read and evaluated within a
genre of antislavery fiction initiated at least two decades before the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In adopting this approach I will deemphasize the importance of distinguishing between novel and story, at least for the issues of corporeality and the effort to redefine personhood with which I am here concerned; the anecdotal structure of Stowe's novels, with their focus on repeated and distinct tableaus, diminishes the violence of this critical strategy.


31. In "Cage aux folles: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White,*" *Representations* 14 (Spring 1986): 107–36. D. A. Miller argues that the nervous sensations that characterize the reading of sensation novels are associated, within the novels themselves, with femininity. This insight and the implications Miller elaborates from it prove equally suggestive for the similarly gendered weeping that characterizes the reading of sentimental fiction. The gendering of physical response in sentimental and sensation fiction bears, however, somewhat different meanings. For while the feminine nervousness instigated by thrillers produces the confinement and incarceration of femininity, the tears ushered by sentimental fiction flow outward as mechanisms of escape.

32. Analyzing the "power" of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Jane Tompkins finds that in sentimental fiction "not words, but the emotions of the heart bespeak a state of grace, and these are known by the sound of a voice, the touch of a hand, but chiefly in moments of greatest importance, by tears." Tompkins is most centrally interested in that "state of grace" expressed by emotions that are themselves spoken through bodily signs. So in her catalogue of scenes marked by weeping Tompkins defends these tears in terms of the message of "salvation, communion, reconciliation" that they suggest; in contrast, I am concerned here less with what the tears may say than with Stowe's recourse to bodily symptoms as the most efficacious means of saying it. Tompkins, "Sentimental Power: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Politics of Literary History," in *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860* (New York, 1985), 131–32.


34. *The Slave's Friend*, a penny monthly for children published in New York by the American Anti-Slavery Society from 1836 to 1838, makes its lessons in reading more explicit. The first article of the first number of the 1837 edition follows a picture of two girls—one black and one white—peering together at a large book with three pages of detailed analysis explaining how to interpret the scene. It concludes by pointing to the dog in the lower corner of the print and informing its young readers that "when you see a dog in a picture like this, it is an emblem, or sign of Fidelity" (3). The signs are sure; one need only learn the vocabulary.


38. The fantasy of colorlessness in fact amounts to the same thing, for though the pinkish yellowish-gray of "white" skin is indeed a color, white (as defined in the first entry of Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary) means "free from color."

39. Child's struggle with this problem can be traced through her revisions of the story as she prepared it for republication in the *Slave's Friend* of 1836. In this later version "the streak whiter than the rest of [Mary's] face" is replaced by a streak that is "lighter": a substitution that masks the problem but does not really avoid it.

40. One source of difficulty is that black and white have traditionally symbolized the
moral dichotomy between good and evil. For antislavery discourse such symbolism is profoundly troubling, frequently resulting in absurdly paradoxical rhetoric in which the positive valuation of the black man is depicted in terms of whiteness. For example, the vignette of the "Apple and the Chestnut," presents a "white man" taunting a "poor colored man" by comparing his own race to an apple and the black to a chestnut. The black man replies with a witicism that, by inverting the intended insult, ultimately deepens it: "O, Massa, what you say is true. The chestnut has dark skin just like poor black man, but its kernel is all white and sweet. The apple, though it looks so pretty, has many little black grains at the heart." Attempting to explain the moral of this exchange, the narrator only intensifies the contradictions: "Now little boys and girls can't be abolitionists until they get rid of all these black grains in their hearts." Such logic suggests that the ability to liberate the black people would depend upon first expunging blackness; Slave's Friend 1 (February 1836): 3.


42. The only notable exception to this trend is Jules Zanger, "The 'Tragic Octoroon' in Pre–Civil War Fiction," American Quarterly 18, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 63–70, which discusses some of the strategic uses this figure is put to in abolitionist writing. His most useful insight for my purposes is that the octoroon "represented not merely the product of the incidental sin of the individual sinner, but rather what might be called the result of cumulative institutional sin, since the octoroon was the product of four [sic] generations of illicit, enforced miscegenation made possible by the slavery system" (66).

43. Caroline Wells Healey Dall, "Amy," Liberty Bell 10 (1849): 6, 8, 11, and 12. In "The Inalienable Love," Liberty Bell 15 (1858), Dall makes this point explicit, asserting that if she were to write her story with the "nervous strength" of the slave's narration, "All the women in the land would tear the pages out of the fair volume" (87).

44. The opposite, and most conservative, pattern of racial and sexual pairings is demarcated by another frequently told story of miscegenation: one that romanticizes the relation between a white man and a darker woman. In its most prevalent form a beautiful, refined quadroon loves a white gentleman only to lose him either through death or marriage, and this loss entails, in addition to the broken heart shared by all ill-fated lovers, a fall from a life of luxury and endearments into one of slavery and sexual exploitation. I would argue, however, that even in these stories, where the power of the white man and the exclusion of the black man seem most absolute, miscegenation works to interrogate white male supremacy. For these are stories about the unequal positions of men and women within a love relation, where the inherent similarities between the nearly white quadroon and the white woman serve to emphasize the ways in which the quadroon's inability to control her fate is only an extreme example of the victimization of all women in a society that considers love a fair exchange for power.

45. The examples of this last passion are myriad; see especially Harry's incestuous worship of his half sister and mistress Nina Gordon in Stowe's Dred and Jan's rivalry with both the husband and the son of his beloved mistress Maria in Lydia Maria Child's "Jan and Zaida," Liberty Bell 14 (1856): 41–93.

46. See the discussion of the revolutionary force of Child's stand on miscegenation in both Karcher's article "Rape, Murder, and Revenge" and in her introduction to Lydia Maria Child, Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians (New Brunswick, N.J., 1986). In Hobomok, as in Catharine Sedgwick's Hope Leslie, the marriages of white women and Native American men are (somewhat equivocally) endorsed, suggesting once again the difference in antebellum racial attitudes toward the noble savage and the slave.
49. Matilda G. Thompson, "Aunt Judy's Story: A Story from Real Life," in *Child's Anti-Slavery Book*, 113, 115, 112, and 117. For a more extended example of this narrative strategy see Jane Elizabeth Jones, *The Young Abolitionists; or, Conversations on Slavery* (Boston, 1848); this juvenile novel begins with a series of conversations between a mother and her three children and then dramatizes these lessons in abolition as the family helps to hide a group of fugitive slaves.
50. I do not mean to deny that abolitionists found the domestication of slavery politically useful but only to suggest that despite its strategic efficacy the practice had costs for women, children, and slaves. For a brilliant analysis of how the strategy worked see Philip Fisher, "Making a Thing into a Man: The Sentimental Novel and Slavery," *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel* (New York, 1985). Fisher argues that the domestication of slavery in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and particularly the distillation of the horrors of slavery into the recurring image of the separation and destruction of slave families, performs the cultural work of "making a thing into a man" and so proves efficacious in restructuring popular attitudes toward the slave. The notion of the slave as thing, object, property is replaced in domestic antislavery fiction with the imaginative conception of the slave as person because this fiction makes the slave familiar by putting him or her within the ordinary and emotionally accessible realm of the family. Furthermore, Fisher points out that setting the destruction of the black slave family within the context of the white slave-owning family makes "the contradiction between the inevitable sentimental nature of the family and the corrosive institution of slavery . . . the central analytic point of Stowe's novel" (101). While agreeing with Fisher's analysis, I would add that the juxtaposition of the institutions of slavery and family also reveals the corrosive dimension of the family itself.

Gillian Brown's article "Getting in the Kitchen with Dinah: Domestic Politics in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *American Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 503–23, though prior to the publication of *Hard Facts* and positioned largely in response to Jane Tompkins's evaluation of Stowe's use of domestic values as the source of sentimental power and the ideal replacement for political and commercial power, can also serve as a critique of Fisher on this point, questioning his essentially positive reading of the family. Brown argues that the comparison between slavery and family in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* reveals the economic basis of existing familial relations and that therefore Stowe's utopian vision of a society governed by familial mores is predicated upon a prior restructuring of the family. Stowe, she asserts, "seeks to reform American society not by employing domestic values but by reforming them. . . . Stowe's domestic solution to slavery, then, represents not the strength of sentimental values but a utopian rehabilitation of them, necessitated by their fundamental complicity with the market to which they are ostensibly opposed" (507). The obvious difference between Stowe's work, as Brown interprets it, and that of Coleman and Thompson is that the latter do not self-consciously embrace the feminist project of rehabilitating domesticity, a fact that makes their unwitting display of the similarities between slavery and family all the more disturbing.

53. Ibid., 30, 28.
54. Such displacements into the moral realm are quite common in abolitionist discourse. For example see Rev. Charles Beecher’s very similar argument in the American Anti-Slavery Society tract The God of the Bible Against Slavery. Quoting from a decision by Judge Ruffin that distinguishes between the structures of authority associated with slavery and with the family by reference to the differing “ends” of the two systems (“the happiness of youth” versus “the profits of the master”), Beecher characterizes slavery as “intrinsically and unchangeably selfish” and the parent-child relation as “intrinsically benevolent.” Reprinted in Anti-Slavery Tracts, series 1, nos. 1–20, 1835–1856 (Westport, Conn., 1970), tract 17, pp. 5–7.
57. See for example the minister Laco Ray consults in “The Slave-Wife” or the whole collection of church apologists for slavery in Stowe’s Dred. Along with Mrs. Shelby from Uncle Tom’s Cabin, see The Child’s Anti-Slavery Book; Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Jennings, who cannot prevent the sale of Mark in “Mark and Hasty”; a less harsh reading of Edith’s delicacy might also cast her in this role.
58. Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 415.
59. Tom’s soul, however, is not completely disentangled from the commercial realm, for in responding to Legree’s taunts, Tom engrails the New Testament vocabulary of redemption based upon Christ’s sacrificial payment onto Legree’s assertion that the money he paid for Tom establishes his ownership. In claiming God as his purchaser, Tom excludes himself from the conflict and recasts it as a dispute between masters. See Walter Benn Michaels’s discussion of the ways in which Stowe found that both the body and, even, the soul “could not be guaranteed against capitalistic appropriation”; “Romance and Real Estate,” 176.
60. C., “A Thought upon Emancipation,” in Liberty Chimes, 80. I do not want to discredit the heroic potential of slave suicides. Surely the will to take one’s own life may be the last, and in some situations perhaps the only, means of expressing a will at all. What is suspect here is not the slave’s suicide but the abolitionist’s desire for and glorification of such deaths.