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Novel Chiaroscuro: Inspired Blackness in the Mid-Victorian Novel

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Novel Chiaroscuro: Inspired Blackness in the Mid-Victorian Novel

By

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B.A., Morehouse College, 2004
M.A., Emory University, 2008

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Abstract

Novel Chiaroscuro: Inspired Blackness in the Mid-Victorian Novel
By Marc Muneal

Harriet Beecher Stowe's expressions and juxtapositions of blackness, both literal and symbolic, form the crux of comparison in my project, which analyzes the rhetorical impact of high-contrast imagery. The novel's sentimental exposition of cruelty under slavery depends heavily upon a three distinct but related strategies she used to illustrate the subjugation of black by white. These strategies comprise a systematic framework I analogically call *chiaroscuro*, alluding to the holistic effect created by the distribution of light and dark in a painting, and picking up on Stowe's cue that her novel was one of "pictures." *Immediate juxtapositions* occur when the novel presents a tableau of a black character standing next to a white with a suggestion of equivalence, aesthetic or symbolic, that traps the white reader into identification and sympathy with the black figure. *Internal juxtapositions* play on the doubled nature of mulatto existence, re-creating the tableau by invoking parental or ancestral connections. O*nomastic juxtapositions* involve the doubling and triangulation of names, creating a metatextual community of contrast that extracts and scrutinizes oppositional characters. After elaborating on how the author executes each of these chiaroscuro strategies in *Uncle Tom*, "Novel Chiaroscuro" then turns to Stowe's literary relationships with three influential Victorian novelists who had taken notice of her work. Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, and George Eliot, each affected personally and emotionally by Stowe's celebrity, wrote novels that revive, respond to, and sometimes subvert her schemes of black-white contrast. Through my analyses of Dickens's *Hard Times*, Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*, and Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*—each of which, not coincidentally, boasts its own Toms—my project demonstrates not only those novels' thematic but also their technical debts to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe introduced the mid-Victorian authors to a new vocabulary and syntax of words and pictures, and by systematically analyzing these using the chiaroscuro framework, my project answers fundamental riddles about subordinated identity posed in the novels.

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Acknowledgments

The Paradox of Academic Contentment: while a student in coursework, I always hated writing teacher evaluations for classes I loved. Coming at the end of the semester, with my intellectual resources spent on readying for final exams and finishing papers, the evaluations required and deserved a degree of exertion that seemed superhuman. I could never corral the words and examples that would accurately illustrate my appreciation for the teacher and her methods, for the opportunity the class provided to grow as a person and as a scholar. At the close of the dissertation-writing process, I observe the Paradox of Academic Contentment in another incarnation. Tired, but happy, I prepare to acknowledge in a few short paragraphs the many people without whom the completed dissertation and my relatively intact sanity would have been matters of grave doubt. I know that my words will again be insufficient in expressing my gratitude. I hope that all those I name here understand that the feeling behind those words wishes them louder and more eloquent.

First thanks must go to my dissertation committee, without whose guidance I would not have been able to realize my project. Martine, your seminar was the first class meeting of my graduate career, and I knew then that the brilliant, witty, no-nonsense professor with a sharp tongue and sharper mind was someone with whom I wanted to work. I am grateful to you for the words of encouragement when this project thrived. I am equally grateful that you let me know in no uncertain terms when improvement was possible or necessary. Thank you, most of all, for giving me confidence by your approval and teaching me confidence by your example. Oh, and our long conversations about politics have been some of the most enjoyable I can remember; let's continue having those.

Laura, you have demonstrated to me that a person can live a full life of the mind even as your research has delved into the intricacies of how that mind works. The degree to which I admire and respect you is matched only by the degree to which I value your friendship and opinion (and *almost* matched by the degree to which that convoluted passive construction makes you wince). Thank you for showing me that scholarship matters, both for its own sake and in the real world. Thank you for showing me that the labels "Victorianist" and "English Professor" are not limiting ones but liberating ones that offer possibility and opportunity. I hope we continue to compare Oscar ballots and exchange movie recommendations for years to come, even as we lament the fates of horses in Victorian novels.

Sander, on meeting you the first time to set up our Oscar Wilde tutorial, I felt myself humbled and awed. Not because of your incredible reputation, nor because of the vast number of books sitting on the shelves in your office and claiming you as their author. I felt humbled because, in spite of these accomplishments, you were among the most congenial and down-to-earth people I'd ever met or ever hope to meet. Working with you has been a pleasure and an education; your critiques and comments spoke not only to the dissertation project, but also to the larger project of being a scholar, professional, and academic colleague.

Despite not being members of my dissertation committee, many other individuals offered invaluable guidance during my time as a graduate student. Linda, my undergraduate mentor and self-described "Jewish mother," continues to be one of the best

friends I have known. Michael Elliott, erstwhile English Department Director of Graduate Studies, has supported, mentored, and advised me far beyond the limits of his term as DGS; in trying to live up to his example, I will always endeavor to bring my *A-game*. Further thanks go to Barbara Ladd, who served on my Ph.D. exam committee; to Susan Tamasi, a valued friend and incredible teaching mentor; and to other faculty members whose classes I enjoyed and whose evaluations I might have written more eloquently. And certainly not least, thanks to the English Department administrative staff, particularly the incomparable Melanie Tipnis. Melanie, there's no other way to say it: I adore you.

In the process of completing this dissertation, I have received support from a number of institutions and organizations, to whom I would like to offer my gratitude. Sincere thanks to: the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens for their award of a W.M. Keck Foundation Fellowship in June 2009; the American Antiquarian Society for access to their archives and materials in May 2008; to the Mellon Foundation for their award of a Mellon Graduate Teaching Fellowship, 2009-10; to Consuella Bennett, Paul Wiebe, and the Morehouse College English Department for hosting me during the MGTF; to the Emory European Studies Project for their award of a European Studies Seminar Fellowship, 2007-08; and to Emory University for their awards of a Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Fellowship, 2004-2009, and of funding for professional development. Of course, thanks in a big way to the Emory English Department, which has been my intellectual home for the past six years.

As I finish the dissertation, and this list of acknowledgments, a sentiment from the final episode of the TV series *Daria* comes to mind (albeit with slight modification): there is no aspect, no facet, no moment of graduate student life that can't be improved with coffee. I cannot thank enough the friends who've sat across the table from me in coffee shops during this process, in person, virtually, and figuratively. Writing a dissertation has the potential to be an isolating and lonely process, but thanks to my friends, I never felt alone. These include, but certainly are not limited to, my immediate cohort (Liz, John, Sarah, Michelle, Shawn, Jenni, Kim, Emily, Levin: go Bäd English!); my amazing friends Jenn, Katy, Jeff, John, Nicole, Colin, Joe, Lauren, Momo, Roopsi, Nikki, Kelly, and Ian; the indomitable Pam Ramcheran and my Atlanta-Trinidadian family; and my immediate family, especially my parents. Thank you all for your friendship and support. Let's do coffee soon.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES AND TABLES

INTRODUCTION
Toms, Black and White

"For God's sake," replied Tom, suddenly, "don't talk about bankers!" And very white he looked, in contrast with the roses. Very white.

—Tom Grandgrind, Jr., in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*

"I have taken, I should tell you, an Italian name. It was better, I thought, to hide my African taint, forsooth, for awhile. So the wise New Yorkers have been feting, as Maria Cordifiamma, the white woman (for am I not fairer than many an Italian signora?), whom they would have looked upon as an inferior under the name of Marie Lavington...."

—Marie Lavington in Charles Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*

"I don't know what she won't get 'em to do," said Mrs. Tulliver, "for my children are so awk'ard wi' their aunts and uncles. Maggie's ten times naughtier when they come than she is other days, and Tom doesn't like 'em, bless him!–though it's more nat'ral in a boy than a gell. And there's Lucy Deane's such a good child,–you may set her on a stool, and there she'llsit for an hour together, and never offer to get off. I can't help loving the child as if she was my own; and I'm sure she's more like my child than sister Deane's, for she'd allays a very poor color for one of our family, sister Deane had."

—Bessie Tulliver in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*

"Eva was always disposed to be with servants; and I think that well enough with some children. Now I always played with father's little negroes—it never did me any harm. But Eva somehow always seems to put herself on an equality with every creature that comes near her. It's a stange thing with that child. I have never been able to break her of it."

—Marie St. Clare in H.B. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

My vocation is simply that of a painter, and my object will be to hold up in the most lifelike and graphic manner possible Slavery, its reverses, changes, and the negro character, which I have had ample opportunities for studying. There is no arguing with pictures, and everybody is impressed by them, whether they mean to be or not.

—H.B. Stowe, in a letter to editor Gamaliel Bailey

Novels of the mid-nineteenth century contain numerous scenes, characterizations, and settings that draw upon the symbolic power of blackness. In works of the era that highlight and question the artificiality of social constructions—race, class, gender,

religion—blackness frequently stood as a marker of oppression and degradation. The color's suggestive associations with soot, dirt, and grease account at least in part for the phenomenon. However, in the middle decades of the century, those years between Britain's abolition of slavery in its territories and the start of the American Civil War, the most aggressive symbol of oppressed blackness was a human one. A character's blackness or whiteness (a relationship to blackness by negation) proves a central consideration in her or his role in a novel and in the novel's larger project. The younger Tom Gradgrind of *Hard Times* sinks deeper and deeper into an abyss of deceit and shame, and his sickly pallor emphasizes the disconnection from the harm he causes to the grease-smudged Stephen Blackpool (135). The Quadroon Marie Lavington, by taking on the guise of a white woman with no "taint" of blackness," instigates a battle for precedence between the black and white components of her ancestry (*Two Years Ago* 121). Bessie Tulliver of *The Mill on the Floss*, never happy with her daughter's passionate nature and discomfited by the girl's creative mind, channels that discomfiture into irritation with Maggie's dark "mulatter" skin; the intellectual stasis and social stability of her niece Lucy's whiteness seems far more attractive by comparison (*Mill* 47). Blackness, for these authors, becomes the crux of comparison and contrast.

Each of these three novels, written between 1854 and 1860, takes as its primary theme a context of social oppression and class warfare that, the author implies, cripples society. Dickens focuses on industrialism and business; Kingsley explores the relationships between disease, ignorance, and spirituality; and George Eliot tackles prescribed gender roles. Despite the varying contexts, patterns of juxtaposition between the black and white characters emerge. The source of these patterns lies in Harriet

Beecher Stowe's influential novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the publication of which marked a turning point for authors experimenting with symbolic blackness in the 1850s and beyond. Notice how Marie St. Clare offers her daughter to the viewer for consideration, emphasizing both the little girl's whiteness and her equivalence with blackness, "put[ting] herself on an equality with every creature that comes near her" (*UTC* 149). The other quoted scenes all create similar tableaux that extract blackness and whiteness and—eventually—question the relationships of equality between them, manipulating dynamics of sympathy in the process. For these reasons, and because of Stowe's claim that she was creating pictures, I employ the term *chiaroscuro* in tracing the dimensions of black-white juxtaposition in the mid-Victorian novel. Stowe states, in the letter to Bailey, that there is "no arguing with pictures" (qtd. in Hedrick 208). The letter seems to suggest that there could be no equivocating, parsing, or wordplay when the truth confronts a reader or viewer. She was hardly that naïve: pictures were simply more sensational, more affecting. Nevertheless, Stowe maintains the myth of the infallible, objective truth of pictures, even as those pictures involve intricate stylization and strategy. The novel as a venue for those pictures, she believed, allowed her to direct imagination in the direction of sympathy. Thus, even while prose was her medium, she emphasized the graphic nature of the work and the power of stark pictures to shock, awe, and inspire. Chiaroscuro made for the most graphic pictures.

Uncle Tom contains a number of references to the shortcomings and limitations of words and language, implying the primacy of pictures of real life. In his recent annotated edition of the novel, Henry Louis Gates notes that "Stowe begins signaling almost immediately that one of her primary concerns in the novel is the *flexibility* of language,"

but such an assertion does not take into account the moments when language is inadequate (*AUTC* 5 n.2; emphasis added). Gates's confusion over Aunt Chloe's words and Stowe's purpose in a particular scene illustrates the problem. After the Shelby family learns of Uncle Tom's new location and owner, Aunt Chloe hatches a plan for raising the money to secure her husband and return him to Kentucky. She announces the plan to Mrs. Shelby:

> "Well, laws, I 's a thinkin, Missis, it's time Sally was put along to be doin' something. Sally 's been under my care, now, dis some time, and she does most as well as me, considerin; and if Missis would only let me go, I would help fetch up de money. I an't afraid to put my cake, nor pies nother, 'long side no *perfectioner's*."
>
> "Confectioner's, Chloe."
>
> "Law sakes, Missis! 'tan't no odds;—words is so curis, can't never get 'em right!" (*UTC* 222)

Gates thinks the humor here inappropriate, and he has "always wondered why Stowe chooses to poke fun at Chloe at this moment, when Chloe's scheme of working for four to five years, earning two hundred dollars per year, is already heartbreakingly ridiculous" (*AUTC* 268 n.18). The import of the scene, however, lies not in Mrs. Shelby's correcting Chloe's malapropism, but in Chloe's rebuke. The slave woman's defense of her incorrect choice demonstrates that getting lost in semantics and poetry distracts one from the more immediate purpose of freeing the enslaved.

Stowe's declaration of her picture-making project extended to the larger reading public with defenses of her novel's verisimilitude and, later, the publication of the *Key to*

Uncle Tom's Cabin. In privileging the documentary aspects of her work over the fictive ones, Stowe attempted to adduce a "message without a code," in the words of Roland Barthes (17). Speaking specifically about photographs—Stowe's use of the word "picture" implies a photographic image—Barthes notes:

> In order to move from the reality to its photograph it is in no way necessary to divide up this reality into units and to constitute these units as signs, substantially different from the object they communicate; there is no necessity to set up a relay, that is to say a code, between the object and its image. Certainly the image is not the reality but at least it is its perfect analogon and it is exactly this analogical perfection which, to common sense, defines the photograph. (17)

Enter the *Key*. The title-page declares that it contains "The Original Facts and Documents upon which the Story is Founded; Together with Corroborative Statements Verifying the Truth of the Work." The preface that follows offers a somewhat hazy distinction between Stowe's work of fiction and the present factual accounts:

> In fictitious writing, it is possible to find refuge from the hard and the terrible, by inventing scenes and characters of a more pleasing nature. No such resource is open in a work of fact; and the subject of this work is one on which the truth, if told at all, must needs be very dreadful. There is no bright side to slavery, as such. Those scenes which are made bright by the generosity and kindness of masters and mistresses, would be brighter still if the element of slavery were withdrawn. (iii)

The ambiguous pronoun antecedent of Stowe's "the subject of this work" reinforces her claim that *Uncle Tom* is a novel that presents indisputable truth: the "this" at once refers to the factual accounts presented in the *Key* but also to *Uncle Tom* given that the *Key* has been presented as the verification of "the Truth of the Work." Furthermore, as biographer Joan Hedrick and others have noted, Stowe largely compiled the *Key* after the publication of *Uncle Tom*, so connecting the composition of the novel to certain specific documents, events, and people was in itself a rhetorical and creative move to de-emphasize the rhetorical and creative nature of the earlier work.

The manner in which Stowe presented herself and her novel to the world proved integral to its success. While I am by no means implying that the mid-nineteenth-century reading public uncritically devoured the story of Uncle Tom, Little Eva, Topsy, Eliza, et al. as accounts of the real tribulations of real people, it took the claim of photographic truth seriously, either for its own sake or as a strong enough argument that needed to be refuted systematically. The novel itself, even before Stowe conceptualized or published the *Key*, inspired the strong feelings about slavery in its readers—for or against—that would drive the *Uncle Tom* industry for decades, as Sarah Meer has most recently and comprehensively recounted. My study focuses primarily on those most sympathetic to Stowe's anti-slavery message and the manner in which Stowe used her black-white juxtapositions to deliver that message. On a fundamental level, the white characters and worlds of her novel were the fictitious ones—those that both found and provided "refuge from the hard and the terrible." The black slaves offered photographic evidence indicting the evil institution. The interplay between the two, through Stowe's strategies of juxtaposition, allowed the reading public to move from the area of comfort as readers of a

story to the area of discomfort as actors in an unjust world, to apprehend the hard and the terrible; thus little Eva's two successors in *Uncle Tom*, the eponymous character as the second Christ and mischievous Topsy as the new evangel.

My project contends that *Uncle Tom*'s legacy in Britain includes not just the topics of discourse it validated, but also the pervasiveness of Stowe's literary craftsmanship. I interweave a formal analysis of her ubiquitous bestseller with a fresh reading of Stowe's complicated literary friendships and acquaintances. "Novel Chiaroscuro" offers new perspectives on the evolution of the author's distinctive literary strategies when adapted by her Victorian contemporaries.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's earliest publication, a textbook co-written with her sister Catherine, offers perspectives on intercultural understanding and uses the clear, imagistic language that appeals to younger minds. While distinguishing which words of the *Primary Geography for Children* (1833) are Harriet's and which are Catherine's would prove difficult, we know that Harriet contributed significantly to the book's plan and content. The textbook demonstrates, even at this formative stage in Stowe's career, meticulous attention to audience. We see her being the author of or party to politically subversive sentiments, particularly regarding questions of race and slavery. Knowing that their readership would include children of parents with diverse political leanings, the sisters couched their ideology in innocuous language. When discussing Africa and the countries of the East, they assert that none of these could ever know true liberty because they do not know Christianity or republican government. In a subsequent chapter, when moving through the various regions of the United States, the text innocently and without

judgment states facts about the South that young readers would find discordant with the ideals of liberty, republicanism, and hard work the book has extolled to that point:

> The white people scarcely work at all here, but buy negroes to do their work. Sometimes one man will own several hundred of them.
>
> The negroes do various things. The females and the little children are employed about the house; for as there is such a large family of them, they must of course have a great deal to do. The men take care of the plantation. (98)

And to prevent any possible accusations of insensitivity to Southern culture, the very next page pays a compliment to the non-working slaveholders: "The people at the south are said to be very warm-hearted and kind to strangers, so as to make you feel quite at your ease in visiting them" (99). Depending on whether these words and strategies of the *Primary Geography* are Catherine's or Harriet's, we see either an early influence on or early development of literary craftsmanship that privileges vividness of detail and awareness of audience. That craftsmanship achieves its zenith in the various machinations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Little Eva, the angelic centerpiece of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*'s New Orleans chapters, occupies one of the novel's Christ-roles; her death provides a glorious vision of Christ's passion that approximates its idealized representation. The sterilized solemnity and ceremony of Little Eva's death echoes church acknowledgment of Christ's death, resurrection, and Ascension. The raw, uncensored representations of medieval passion plays were nowhere to be found in services that glossed Christ's humanity in favor of emphasizing the powerful symbolism of his life. In her novel's first typological

movement, Stowe capitalized upon that symbolism and engaged her readers' emotions on those comfortable terms. Eva's selfless charity and genuine feeling for the slaves inspired sympathy and emulation, as per Jane Tompkins' famous assertion that Little Eva, in her death, embodies "the supreme form of heroism" (127). But the narrative abandons black crêpe after what seems a disgracefully short period of time in order to deal with St. Clare's own unceremonious death and the slave auction. The narrator defends these choices:

> Of course, in a novel, people's hearts break, and they die, and that is the end of it; and in a story this is very convenient. But in real life we do not die when all that makes life bright dies to us. There is a most busy and important round of eating, drinking, dressing, walking, visiting, buying, selling, talking, reading, and all that makes up what is commonly called *living*, yet to be gone through; and this yet remained to Augustine.
>
> (*UTC* 133)

Having provided a bounty of emotion and sentiment for her readers, Stowe refuses to let them savor the event, asserting that life must go on: there can be only so much time for fictional prettiness and delicious sadness when real lives are at stake and real people suffering. Little Eva provides only the first half of the Christian story, and her interactions with Uncle Tom initiate a doubled or shared identity that eases the reader into the second movement, a transition from the familiar celebration of Christ's affective power to the human sacrifice that lay beneath it.

When Uncle Tom becomes the novel's second Christ figure—a fulfillment of the opening chapters in which he surrenders himself to his fate as a sacrifice that will save

others on the estate—Stowe abandons religious ceremony in favor of the gore and viscera of a passion play. Uncle Tom's cruel treatment under Simon Legree and the death scene in which two fellow slaves learn to pray from his example and instruction loudly echo the crucifixion. The languid, philosophical nature of the New Orleans chapters centered around the white Christ figure finds a counterpoint in the heat, tumult, and physical pain of the Legree chapters centered around a black Christ. Stowe facilitates her readers' sympathy for the slaves' cause by validating Uncle Tom's equivalence with Little Eva, a process repeated throughout the novel on multiple planes of narration, always juxtaposing black and white.

My first chapter, "A Community of Contrast: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and Chiaroscuro," identifies and examines the three patterns of black-white juxtaposition that govern the novel. Immediate juxtaposition, in which a black character stands next to a white for the consideration of the reader/viewer, draws on an aesthetic or emotional argument of equivalence between the two. The mechanism behind the strategy—proceeding from suggested black-white equivalence, to the creation of a tableau that traps the reader/viewer, to engendered sympathy—also drives the two other forms of chiaroscuro. With internal juxtapositions, Stowe plays with the doubled nature of mulatto personhood: the presence of the mulatto automatically recalls a tableau of the black and white parents, suggesting unavoidable images of violence and non-consensual union. Juxtaposition of proper names, the third strategy, creates the titular "community of contrast": at least five white Toms throughout the novel portray the multi-dimensionality of black-white relationships when extracted for consideration by the reader/viewer and contrasted against the novel's black protagonist.

In recent years, Stowe's to audiences outside the United States has been the subject of much scholarly attention. The recent collection *Transatlantic Stowe* (2006) indicates the new scholarly prominence given to her influence in Britain and the continent. Book-length studies by two of the collection's contributors offer valuable perspectives on how various authors reply to Stowe's chiaroscuro strategies. Sarah Meer's study of Stowe's immense popularity upon her breakthrough, *Uncle-Tom Mania* (2006), provides valuable insight into Stowe's technique, specifically as the novelist drew on the conventions of blackface minstrelsy. Blackface, according to Meer, had "pioneered the ambivalent and contradictory racial politics that allowed the minstrel show—and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—to appeal to very wide audiences"; she further notes that this dependence on the tradition facilitated both sympathy with the novel's characters as well as tendencies to caricature and stereotyping (12-13). The possibilities opened along a sympathetic range allow for the very same viewer to experience both "solidarity with [and] his own superiority to the racialized figure" in question (44). At this juncture, Meer points her readers to a fascinating instance of *Uncle Tom*'s influence in a reader that I will here revisit in some more detail.

Frances Hodgson Burnett's memoir *The One I knew Best of All* includes a scene of the young Frances, referred to as the "Small Person," at play in her nursery when discovered by her mother. The game underway catches the unprepared Mamma by surprise as she notices her little girl involved in acts of violence on an unfortunate golliwog:

> "It really quite distressed me," her Mamma said, in discussing the matter afterward with a friend. "I don't think she is really a *cruel* child. I

> always thought her rather kind-hearted, but she was lashing that poor black doll and talking to herself like a little fury. She looked quite wicked. She said she was 'pretending' something. You know that is her way of playing. She does not play as Edith and Edwina do. She 'pretends' her doll is somebody out of a story and she is somebody else. She is very romantic. It made me rather nervous the other day when she dressed a baby-doll in white and put it into a box and buried it in the front garden. She was so absorbed in it, and she hasn't dug it up. She goes and strews flowers over the grave. I should like to know what she was 'pretending' when she was beating the black doll" (56-57).

Mamma's view of the scene shows Burnett's readers the degree to which the little girl threw herself into the performance: so caught up in her various roles was she that the scene had to be told through a voice other than the narrator's, even with the odd de-localized "Small Person" device available. Some time later, Mamma learns the full story behind the doll's flagellation and her daughter's violent transformation. Stowe's novel, we learn, lies at the heart of the play:

> Not until the Small Person had outgrown all dolls, and her mother reminded her of this incident, did that innocent lady know that the black doll's name was Topsy, but that on this occasion it had been transformed into poor Uncle Tom, and that the little fury with flying hair was the wicked Legree.

Fig. i.1. Illustration by Reginald Bathurst Birch, appearing in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The One I Knew Best of All* (1893), in the chapter entitled "Literature and the Doll."

> She had been reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. What an era was in her existence. The cheerful black doll was procured immediately and called Topsy; her "best doll," which unfortunately had brown hair in its wig, was Eva, and kept actively employed slowly fading away and dying, while she talked about the New Jerusalem, with a hectic flush on her cheeks. She converted Topsy, and totally changed her gutta-percha nature, though it was impossible to alter her gutta-percha grin. She conversed with Uncle Tom (then the Small Person was Uncle Tom); she cut off "her long golden-brown curls" (not literally; that was only "pretended": the wig had not ringlets enough on it), and presented them to the weeping slaves. (Then the Small Person was all the weeping slaves at once.) It is true that her blunt-nosed wax countenance remained perfectly unmoved throughout all this emotion, and it must be confessed that at times the small person felt a lack in her, but an ability to "pretend" ardently was her consolation and support. (57-58)

Meer notes that the odd passages reflect Stowe's own complex maneuvers to engender sympathy in her readers through many series of identifications, with both black and white characters. Burnett could, with mere moments separating the characterizations, assume the roles of both abuser and abused, nurturer and nurtured. As important and enlightening as the recounted scene, furthermore, is the very act of recounting. That Burnett chooses to stress the high-contrast details so vividly—followed by similar emphasis on the slippery boundaries between the black and white characters assumed by the Small Person and her bevy of dolls—speaks to both the recounted experience and the conscious act of constructing a narrative taking place. That construction, as Meer points out and as

executed in the accompanying illustration by artist and famed Burnett collaborator Reginald Birch, demonstrates Stowe's technical influence on Burnett not simply at the moment of childhood play, but also as the adult writer reenacts the dynamics of sympathy involved therein (see Fig. i.1).

In *American Slavery in Victorian England*, Audrey Fisch provided another recent study of Stowe's transatlantic appeal, paying particular attention to a peculiar example in the sea of works that tried to capitalize on the *Uncle Tom* craze. The short unauthorized "sequel," somewhat deceptively entitled *Uncle Tom in England* (1852), fell into relative obscurity after its initial popularity. Impressive sales and its obvious relation to the most popular work of the day won the novella critical attention, though raves were rare. A review in *The Athenaeum* summarily dismissed the work:

> The writer indulges himself in very grand phrases—his Negroes talk the dialect of Waping—and his ignorance of America and of the institution assailed is of a kind to startle an ordinary reader…. The writer boasts that the whole book was written by him in seven days and nights. If this be a merit, it takes the place of all others. We should rather he had taken more time—and done better. (1056)

While the novella went to a tenth edition and beyond, like all the "sequels," it failed to achieve the longevity of its successor. Douglas Lorimer's *Colour, Class and the Victorians* (1978) refers to the title in passing, but Fisch has largely been responsible for reintroducing *Uncle Tom in England* to scholarly audiences and providing the first literary analyses of its function and failures as an antislavery novel. *Uncle Tom in*

England offers an obvious venue to explore the translation of Stowe's novelistic techniques outside of her work.

In brief, the plot of *Uncle Tom in England* centers around a Tom revealed to be the father of Stowe's Emmeline. The short novel relates the events that take him from being a slave in Ohio to a freedom-fighting orator in England. The reader witnesses Tom's reunion with his lost wife Susan, who becomes his teacher and mentor; their adoption of Rosa and Marossi, African children captured and sold into slavery; the reintroduction of Emmeline and her own reunion with her parents, aided by a community of Quakers; the family's eventual escape to Canada and England, where they campaign in favor of the abolition of slavery and encounter a revivified Chartist movement; and the symbolic union of Rosa with the younger Thomas Hanaway, one of the Quakers. Also making a reappearance in the novel is Mr. Harris, George's owner in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, who this time purchases the new Uncle Tom at a slave auction and is the primary antagonist. Two divisions comprise the work, each of which consists of two contradictory movements that juxtapose color. In the American half, the first movement involves Tom's education at the hands of Harris and Harris's spiritual leader. Summed up by Harris's iconic act of beating Tom over the head with a Bible, the movement is in stark opposition to the second, wherein the mulatto Susan lovingly teaches her family in the slave hut after a day's toil. In the English half, Tom himself becomes the educator, traveling through the country and speaking to the British about the condition of his black countrymen; in the process, however, the teacher becomes student, learning about the Chartist cause and the condition of the laboring poor in England. Fisch argues that including the Chartism discussion allows British readers to tap into "a nostalgic pride

over the nation's superior handling of its domestic reform problems and a sense of its international superiority" (45). Such a reading coincides with her larger overview of the novella's project.

While most readers today would judge *The Athenaeum*'s lambasting of *Uncle Tom in England* just, Fisch adeptly subjects the poorly written hack-job to thorough scholarly examination because of its literary-historical value and what she describes as a powerful attempt at subversive redefinition:

> *Uncle Tom in England* is stocked with the conventions of writing about slavery: scenes of slave life, the thrill of escape, and all the standard discussions of the injustices of the slave system. Yet the tropes common to literature about slavery are displaced in this novel by an overwhelming emphasis on social position. In effect, the novel translates the issues of American slavery into the home-grown English discourse of class. (35)

The anonymous author's heavy-handedness in manipulating Stowe's techniques, furthermore, perhaps helps to illuminate Stowe's project by virtue of her or his lack of subtlety or finesse. The novella's attempts at onomastic juxtapositions occur on both the titular and textual levels as it taps into the community of contrast Stowe initiated in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Calling it *Uncle Tom in England* baldly allowed the author to tap into the currency of the name "Tom" to create interest and sell books. The plot includes two characters, father and son, named Thomas Hanover; in the artless fashion typical of the novella, they provide a stark recreation of Stowe's young-Tom motif when the younger son marries a black woman. Despite the quality of the effort, *Uncle Tom in England* demonstrates that as early as its publication year, *Uncle Tom* had inspired writers to

respond not only to its content—even offering in some instances, as both Fisch and Meer show, contradictions and appropriations—but also to its techniques and strategies.

After my first chapter establishes the chiaroscuro framework by examining these techniques, each subsequent chapter details Stowe's relationship with a Victorian novelist and shows how those authors subsequently reproduced, complicated, and subverted chiaroscuro strategies in their own novels. Their ultimate purpose in each case follows Stowe's in using color and contrast to illustrate the injustice of denied humanity.

"Identifying the Real Culprit: Chiaroscuro in *Hard Times*" shows how Charles Dickens's usage of chiaroscuro marks a new phase in his complicated relationship with race and blackness. An examination of the circumstances leading up to the composition of *Hard Times* (1854) reveals compelling evidence that public reaction to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* inspired—or incited—Dickens to craft a response in his next major novel. Humanitarian and social gadfly Lord Denman took Dickens to task for what he perceived as an anti-abolitionism caricature in *Bleak House*'s Mrs. Jellyby, which Denman saw as directly opposed to the worthy motives of *Uncle Tom*. Revisiting the Denman episode for context, I show how the development of Dickens's treatment of blackness evolves from his earlier works to the composition of *Hard Times*. His imitation and subversion of Stowe's black-white juxtapositions, working on textual and metatextual levels, facilitated this evolution. In the most striking instance, Dickens presents the hard Utilitarian stalwart Tom Gradgrind confronting his guilty son, Tom. Grown to unfeeling adulthood after being denied affection and imagination, young Tom appears in blackface disguise at the end of the novel to elude prosecution. The doubling of Toms complicated by the

introduction of blackness simultaneously executes the three chiaroscuro strategies, working on various planes of narrative and imagination. The juxtapositions precipitate recognition and remorse for the elder Tom, revealing to him and the reader the answer to his own question, the identity of the "real culprit."

Perhaps the best known critical appreciation of Dickens's *Hard Times*, and one of the first to signal connections between it and *Uncle Tom*, was F. R. Leavis's important appendix to *The Great Tradition* (1969). Before that essay identified the novel as an underrated masterpiece, twentieth-century scholarship largely dismissed what many saw as a lesser work in an author's varied and complex oeuvre. Leavis notes a departure from the "casual and incidental" social critique (an objective and not derogatory observation) frequently seen in the Dickens canon; instead, *Hard Times* involved significant effort in planning and interweaving motifs and schemes that highlighted "the inhumanities of Victorian Civilization... as fostered and sanctioned by a hard philosophy" (228).

Today, primarily because of its length, *Hard Times* is among the few Victorian novels that might be used in survey or lower-level literature courses. In these contexts, discussion largely focuses on what have become the traditional critical approaches in analyzing the novel: it is Dickens's great industrial novel, his tour-de-force critique of hard Utilitarianism, or his superlative effort to increase the readership of *Household Words*. The Denman episode, however, introduced a fourth dimension. To Dickens, Denman's misreading of *Bleak House* had undermined that novel's social commentary by clumsily and inappropriately introducing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a point of comparison. The subsequent publication of *Hard Times* in many ways constitutes a response to Denman and Stowe in the process of executing its more obvious critiques. As in *Bleak*

House, Dickens illustrates the evils of the neglected household and its microcosmic significance. But whereas Mrs. Jellyby's attentions to Africa had nothing to do with American slavery, the later novel directly broaches the issues of black oppression through a powerful literalized symbol and in its final movement looks toward America.

Economist David Levy, in his recent *How the Dismal Science Got Its Name* (2001), devotes an entire chapter to *Hard Times* and pays particular attention to the novel's "odd parallels" with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; his analysis notes that Dickens's novel culminates with an "escape to freedom in blackface" (180-94). In delineating how *Hard Times* constitutes a response to and utilizes Stowe's chiaroscuro strategies, I complicate Levy's reading in working to elucidate the Thomas-Tom riddle that defines the novel's critique. Dickens's nameplay in *Hard Times*, in fact, remains largely under-examined. A short note by Hilda Hollis, appearing in *Dickens Quarterly* in 2002, attempted to trace the origin of a lesser character's name; she argues that Jane, one of the Gradgrind children, has a namesake in a well known nineteenth-century economist and writer (in the manner of her siblings with more obvious namesakes, Adam Smith and Malthus). Although only the slightest of cues, the short note points toward potential for a much more holistic understanding of Dickens's onomastic project, which closely and cleverly mirrors Stowe's. The second movement of my chapter continues scrutinizing schemes of characterization in *Hard Times* by revisiting another influential piece of Dickens criticism, Mary Rose Sullivan's "Black and White Characters in *Hard Times*" (1970). While Sullivan proposes that blackness is equated with strength in the novel, she generally limits her analysis to binary distinctions. My reconsideration includes the

category of mulatto, suggested by both the Stowe influence and the imagery of *Hard Times*'s climactic scene, and considers liminal categories that transcend absolutes.

"Anatomy of an Afterthought: Charles Kingsley, the 'Accursed Slavery Question,' and the Quadroon's Function in *Two Years Ago*," my third chapter, uses the chiaroscuro rubric to parse another riddle, albeit one that arose unintentionally. While Kingsley prepared to write *Two Years Ago* (1857), his major novel on the topic of cholera and sanitary reform, Stowe and her husband Calvin were summering in Britain; Kingsley invited the Americans to a weekend at Eversley. Scholars have credited the visit with influencing Kingsley's addition of an escaped-slave subplot to his novel, indicated by reference to the secretly black Marie Lavington as embodying the *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Most readers and critics, however, subscribe to one biographer's pervasive assertion that the weaving together of plots was haphazard. Kingsley himself called the sub-plot an "afterthought" and lamented the novel's unfulfilled parallelism. Using the chiaroscuro framework, however, shows the full scope of Kingsley's attempt to achieve that parallelism and to situate the escaped quadroon properly within the plot. My chapter isolates and extrapolates the parallel strands of the storyline, placing Marie in a continuum with the novel's white heroines and thereby contextualizing her relationship with protagonist Tom Thurnall. Moreover, the novel simultaneously creates its own community of contrast among numerous Toms, positioning Thurnall's awakening humanity in opposition to the dehumanizing effects of the cholera—the first victim of which happens to be named Tom as well—and to his initial ambivalence about Marie's rescue.

Perhaps most deserving of the distinction "forgotten Victorian," Kingsley has largely fallen out of the canon and makes only very limited appearances in curricula. Notorious for being the unfortunate butt of Cardinal Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864), Kingsley receives hardly as much critical attention as the other authors included in this dissertation. While the author's children's story *The Water Babies* (1862) retains some popularity, more substantial works like *Yeast* (1849) and *Westward, Ho!* (1855) cannot claim the same; of the major novels, *Alton Locke* (1849) receives the most scholarly and pedagogical attention, but it, too, suffers from the general shortcomings of Kingsley's fiction. For if Kingsley is the forgotten Victorian, he is perhaps also the most *Victorian* Victorian novelist. His three-volume novels boast sesquipedalian prose of the most exuberant variety, an affectation or performance of novel-writing that did not plague his writing in other spheres: *The Water-Babies* or his clear, supremely readable sermons provide ready examples. Falling out of favor with the reading pubic—or never, as did many of his peers, falling back into favor—resulted in a relative dearth of Kingsley scholarship. The body of criticism on *Two Years Ago*, for instance, remains remarkably small; it earns passing mention in a few scholarly biographies but proves largely neglected in contemporary Victorian literary discourse. For both the author and *Two Years Ago* in particular, mainstream rediscovery is imminent. Increasing attention paid to place and environment in literary study, as well as to the scientific understanding of disease and the human body, positions *Two Years Ago* as a valuable text for exploring these issues in mid-Victorian England. Similarly, Kingsley's role at the forefront of sanitary reform—not only in his writing and preaching, but also as a colleague of the storied Edwin Chadwick and other notable reformers—will earn him a second look.

My fourth chapter, "Lucy Deane's Confession to the 'Mulatter' Queen of the Gypsies," focuses on George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and again seeks to answer a subtle question posed by the novel. The protagonist Maggie Tulliver, variously called "dark," "brown," and "mulatter" by members of her family, undergoes a long struggle between asserting her subjectivity and fading into stoic silence. After one of her sorest trials, in which she earns general opprobrium for nearly running off with her cousin Lucy's beau, she and Lucy share an emotional interview. Ironically, Lucy's words and actions position *her* as the supplicant begging for mercy when she speaks with "the solemnity of confession" in her voice (531). Exploring the contrasts between Maggie, her fair-skinned cousin Lucy, and her brother Tom (who, significantly, does not share her darkness), I analyze the nature of Lucy's "confession."

The Mill on the Floss presents obvious challenges in applying the chiaroscuro framework, but doing so yields a productive and important critical assessment of the novel. Unlike the instances of Dickens and Kingsley, Eliot's personal relationship with Stowe did not begin until long after, almost a decade, *Mill* first appeared on shelves. The lack of a direct connection, however, allows some other advantages, and the chiaroscuro framework provides a very serviceable scheme for organizing Eliot's racialized language and imagery. I do place *Mill*'s composition within the context of Eliot's early appreciation of Stowe in reviews and letters, as well as of her later warm friendship and correspondence directly with the American. But the novel also demonstrates the possibility of secondhand inheritance of Stowe's influence, the schemes of juxtaposition sometimes seeming closer to Dickens's or Kingsley's reinterpretations. Eliot's Tom, for instance, in his subjugation of his sister's person and (dark/black) desire, offers a close

variation on Kinglsey's famous line from *Two Years Ago*. Tom renders Kingsley's "Be good, sweet maid, and let who can be clever" into a more terse "Submit to those who can" (*Two Years Ago* II.132; *MILL* 361).

The society in which Maggie Tulliver grows up turns her into one of Susan Gilbert and Sandra Gubar's madwomen in the attic. Extrapolating the argument in those scholars' seminal work, however, allows an examination of the links between confinement in that attic—the limitations imposed on a bright girl who has no outlet for her intellect and creativity—and the condition of enslaved men and women across the ocean. Gilbert and Gubar's summary appraisal of Eliot's heroines applies to Maggie after she receives Tom's warning to submit:

> Yet, even in the act of submission, feminine playing or dissimulation breaks down the masculine style of knowing and possessing. At the same time, precisely because they do submit, women experience 'resignation to individual nothingness' more then men. Alterity—otherness—or absence structures the lives of Eliot's heroines, who thereby attain a privileged perspective purged from the deathly quest for origins or presence.
>
> (*Madwoman* 532)

Maggie's feminine non-existence in the face of her parents and society at large echoes the slave's lack of identity and purpose. Such comparisons between the female and negro conditions were common among British feminists and suffragettes of the period, of whom Mrs. Jellyby in Dickens's *Bleak House* is a scathing caricature. This chapter of the dissertation examines how Eliot uses Stowe's chiaroscuro motif to illuminate that trope and to make Maggie Tulliver's tragedy more profound.

Maggie's "mulatter" features explain to her mother why the girl repeatedly attempts to escape her assigned lot in life. In the attic, the allegedly mad Maggie cuts off her coarse, dark hair instead of sitting for it to be coiffed and primped like cousin Lucy's beautiful blonde locks. And she runs away to the gypsies in a scene that, as Mary Elizabeth Hayes notes, has warranted hardly any critical notice. Nevertheless, the scene is essential in establishing Maggie's alienation from her mother's clan, itself a subset of her brother's male world that refuses to educate girls. Maggie's identification is not necessarily or solely with the Romany people, but with their color and the otherness of their darkness, the closest approximation of black kin available to the little girl. By delineating Stowe's role, first-hand or not, in Eliot's apprehension of blackness and slavery, the chapter uses the chiaroscuro framework to show that Lucy, like Toms Gradgrind, Thurnall, and Tulliver, confesses her culpability in the dehumanization of a fellow being.

Through my analyses of Dickens's *Hard Times*, Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*, and Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*—each of which boasts its own Toms—the following chapters demonstrate not only these novels' thematic but also their technical debts to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe introduced the mid-Victorian authors to a new vocabulary and syntax of words and pictures, and by systematically analyzing these using the chiaroscuro framework, my project answers fundamental riddles about subordinated identity posed in the novels.

CHAPTER ONE
A Community of Contrast: Harriet Beecher Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Harriet Beecher Stowe's expressions and juxtapositions of blackness in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* initiated a structured and systematic rhetoric of high-contrast imagery. The novel's sentimental exposition of cruelty under slavery depends heavily upon three distinct but related strategies she used to illustrate the subjugation of black by white. These strategies comprise a framework I analogically call *chiaroscuro*, alluding to the holistic effect created by the distribution of light and dark in a painting, and picking up on Stowe's cue that her novel was one of "pictures." *Immediate juxtapositions* occur when the novel presents a tableau of a black character standing next to a white with a suggestion of equivalence, aesthetic or symbolic, that traps the white reader into identification and sympathy with the black figure. *Internal juxtapositions* play on the doubled nature of mulatto existence, re-creating the tableau by invoking parental or ancestral connections. O*nomastic juxtapositions* involve the doubling and triangulation of names, creating a metatextual community of contrast that extracts and scrutinizes oppositional characters. Together, these three chiaroscuro strategies worked to inspire the sympathy for and identification with blackness that made *Uncle Tom* politically effective and internationally popular in its own time.

Artist Louisa Corbaux made a set of full-color illustrations for an 1852 British edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the centerpiece of which was a hyper-sentimentalized rendering of "Eva's Farewell" (see Fig. 1.1). Corbaux's pictures lack the realism and dynamism of her contemporaries' (those of George Cruikshank and Hammat Billings in particular) or the stark power of twentieth-century offerings by Miguel Covarrubias. The illustrations' prettiness and stasis, however, demonstrate that Corbaux understood or

intuited the processes by which Stowe created sympathy in her characterizations and stagings. *Eva's Farewell* reveals Corbaux's conscious desire not only for a viewer to behold the picture, but also for the picture to hold the viewer.

The interplay of darkness and light, the artist's use of chiaroscuro, facilitates this double purpose. Six figures surround Eva in various stages of grief: moving counterclockwise, we have St. Clare, Miss Ophelia, Dinah, Rosa (or Jane—one representative of the mulatto house-servants), a genuflecting Uncle Tom receiving a lock of hair, and a sobbing Topsy as the sole occupant of the southeast quadrant. A careful reader will notice a departure from the text of the novel. Topsy, we learn, is the darkest complected of St. Clare's servants, the epitome of the African:

> She was one of the blackest of her race; and her round shining eyes, glittering as glass beads, moved with quick and restless glances over everything in the room. Her mouth, half open with astonishment at the wonders of the new Mas'r's parlor, displayed a white and brilliant set of teeth. Her woolly hair was braided in sundry little trails, which stuck out in every direction…. She was dressed in a single, filthy, ragged garment, made of bagging…. Altogether, there was something odd and goblin-like about her appearance…. (206-07)

Yet in Corbaux's picture, the Christ-like Eva's light shines upon Topsy and renders her skin several shades lighter than that of some of the other figures. No sign exists of an impish and precocious nature as Topsy bends over in pious grief. Topsy's internal change at this point has come about because of Eva's intervention; now, in the moments before death, the light emanating from Eva at the picture's center illuminates Topsy and changes

her in the viewer's eyes. Eva's visage in the illustration recalls numerous images of Christ and the Sacred Heart in the long history of holy iconography, ranging from Catholic to Protestant depictions and from high art to lithographs created and sold for mass consumption. Corbaux literalizes the novel's comparison of Eva and Christ through the serenity of the girl's expression, the tilt of her head, the openness of her posture even as she reclines on the deathbed, and the positioning of bows to echo an externalized heart.[1]

Like the novel, the picture establishes Eva as an ideal both in her own right as a sentimental character and by her association with Christ and practice of the true Christian life. Topsy, the epitome of a life improved by Christ's example, bathes in the light that shines down from Eva and out of the plane of the illustration—out to and encompassing the viewer. Like some scenes in the novel, the illustration triggers emotional sequences of sympathy, identification, and inclusion that distinguish Stowe's particular brand of sentimentalism. We return to the question of Topsy's lightened state. The less-than-blackest-black skin, a direct result of Eva's light, symbolizes Topsy's reformation and forces a closer identification between her and the white reader/viewer by the most obvious measure of difference: color. What Corbaux does on canvas with light and dark, black and white—her illustration's *chiaroscuro*—coincides with what Stowe accomplishes through strategies of position and juxtaposition. That group of strategies plays a significant role in the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, not only as an artistic work but also as a transformative political treatise. Because the effects produced also devolve on color and light, I borrow the term and refer to them as novel chiaroscuro.

Fig. 1.1. *Eva's Farewell* by Louisa Corbaux (1852).

IMMEDIATE JUXTAPOSITION: LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

Stowe's presentation of Little Eva's death demonstrates political acumen and an awareness that sentiment can sway opinion and shape action. Later, Uncle Tom's demise, after an interlude of cruel floggings and his poignant reunion with Mas'r George, rivals in pathos the ethereal and angelic little girl's passing. The two death scenes establish Eva and Uncle Tom as paired Christ figures and re-enact elements of the crucifixion and the resurrection with highly symbolic imagery and language. From a literary standpoint, neither death confounds expectations. Eva's draws on a tradition of the heroine fading away, the profane text unable to sustain a sacred being. Uncle Tom, a black slave, succumbs to the fate of so many in his position: scenes such as the merciless beating to death of Frederick Douglass's aunt had primed the reading public, who expected that aged flesh, particularly the black flesh of an oppressed bondsman, must expire.[2] But Stowe would also disarm that public by reanimating Dickens's Little Nell to a new symbolic significance, only to kill her again.[3] For the deathbed scene to be at its most effective and to bring about contrast and identification in the way that Corbaux does on a single frame, Stowe's introductions to the various characters ensure that readers understand the elements comprising her most important pictures.

Eva is similar to a number of Dickensian heroines and to Christ in that, at the most basic level, she is a grotesque. I employ here Geoffrey Harpham's two-part definition of the grotesque: first, it is "a structure, the structure of estrangement. Suddennness and surprise… are essential elements in this estrangement; the familiar and commonplace must be suddenly subverted or undermined by the uncanny or alien" (462); and second, the grotesque often poses a threat, "each age defin[ing] the grotesque in

terms of what threatens its sense of essential humanity" (463). As simultaneously adult and child, nurturer and nurtured, sacred and profane, Eva embodies a creature of contrasts whose power on the level of literary object comes across as both threatening and seductive. Despite being the ideal of "childish beauty," her figure that lacks "chubbiness and squareness of outline" conforms to ideals of feminine delicacy and womanly carriage.[4] An "undulating and aerial grace" and an unnatural sense of perpetual dynamism oppose her human-ness, her motions described not as walking and running but as gliding and flying (*UTC* 126). This not-quite-human presentation suggests that she embodies a challenge to social order. The grotesque exists to define, test, and supersede society's limits. Christ, an exemplum of grotesquerie in many of the same ways, upends traditional values and beliefs in biblical accounts by consorting with beggars and whores, and the sermons of inclusion he preaches transgress social boundaries. By killing Eva, Stowe plays into a literary convention that inspires a predictable emotional response. The ultimate expression of the character's grotesquerie, however, concerns the source of her power to change opinion and inspire action through identification: the chiaroscuro inherent in a tableau with Topsy, for instance. A disjunction emerges between her relative impotence within the text and the force of opinion and action inspired by the un-mourned and sentimentalized death. Eva transcends the passive character who surrenders to death when the weight pressing on her heart becomes unbearable; Stowe means her to be a revolutionary and martyr whose rebellion, as Tompkins implies, occurs through death (127).

Topsy, the mischievous imp purchased by St. Clare to be the locus of Miss Ophelia's education in race relations, stands opposed to Eva in Stowe's most visible use

of chiaroscuro, their interaction at the heart of the novel both figuratively and literally. Beginning with her initial responses to Miss Ophelia's questioning, Topsy's definition of self is effectively a lack of definition. For example, an extended scene how Topsy refuses Ophelia's every attempt to classify her:

> "How old are you, Topsy?"
>
> "Dun no, Missis," said the image, with a grin that showed all her teeth.
>
> "Don't know how old you are? Didn't anybody ever tell you? Who was your mother?"
>
> "Never had none!" said the child, with another grin.
>
> "Never had any mother? What do you mean? Where were you born?"
>
> "Never was born!" persisted Topsy, with another grin, that looked so goblin-like, that, if Miss Ophelia had been at all nervous, she might have fancied that she had got hold of some sooty gnome from the land of Diablerie….
>
> ...
>
> "How long have you lived with your master and mistress?"
>
> "Dun no, Missis."
>
> "Is it a year, or more, or less?"
>
> "Dun no, Missis."
>
> ...
>
> "Have you ever heard anything about God, Topsy?"

> The child looked bewildered, but grinned as usual.
>
> "Do you know who made you?"
>
> "Nobody, as I knows on," said the child, with a short laugh.[5]
>
> (209-210)

Through Topsy's introduction of herself and inability to provide biographical information, Stowe forces constant comparison with Eva, Miss Ophelia's other ward and one whose history is recorded and respected.

In the above scene, another voice acts as an intermediary or interpreter of Topsy's blackness. The portions of the interchange I excise above and include here provide the only information and understanding of Topsy Miss Ophelia gleans: "Laws, Missis, those low negroes,—they can't tell; they don't know anything about time," said Jane; "they don't know what a year is; they don't know their own ages (210). The mulatto maid Jane's inclusion as intercessor points the reader towards the comparison of Eva and Topsy that must follow. Eva possesses a solid pedigree and claims some of the first families of the country in her ancestry; Topsy can give no account of her parents and seems to think of herself as a spontaneous creation rather than a point along a genealogical continuum. A proud country and the proud South call Eva their daughter, her rights as a person ensured by the Jeffersonian charter that promised life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness; Topsy claims no sense of place or national identity and comes from nothingness. Eva's earthly life and time, in the sentimental tradition, is fiercely and cruelly limited; Topsy has no sense of time, is without beginning, and has her feet firmly on the slave's road to an end as unremarkable and unmarked as that beginning. And finally, Eva's evangelism (both in name and action) contrasts with Topsy's ignorance of God.

These contrasts in history, belief, and fate only heighten the visual spectacle of black against white when Stowe presents a striking tableau of the two girls to readers. After an interval of Topsy's usual drollery and high jinks, we get a chance to study her through Eva's eyes:

Fig. 1.2. The Mirror Tableau, illustrating "Eva stood looking at Topsy" from *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life Among the Lowly*, Grosset and Dunlap, 1900.

> Eva stood looking at Topsy.
>
> There stood the two children, representatives of the two extremes of society. The fair, high-bred child, with her golden head, her deep eyes, her spiritual, noble brow, and prince like movements; and her black, keen, subtle, cringing, yet acute neighbor. There stood the representatives of their races. The Saxon, born of ages of cultivation, command, education, physical and moral eminence; the Afric, born of ages of oppression, submission, ignorance, toil, and vice!
>
> Something, perhaps, of such thoughts struggled through Eva's mind. But a child's thoughts are rather dim, undefined instincts; and in Eva's noble nature many such were yearning and working, for which she had no power of utterance. (*UTC* 244-45)

Eva's act of observing Topsy both predicts and prescribes the way in which the white British and American readers' gazes cannot avoid the black otherness on the page. The focalization here supplies that audience Eva's view and allows them to complete the identification and become Eva as they behold Topsy.

The identification process is more complicated and deliberate, then, than simply shock on account of contrast, as Ellen Goldner reads it (73). An undeniable similarity between the two little girls accompanies the confrontation. Eva, in showing affection for her father's slaves and ignoring rules of propriety, has repeatedly avowed that Topsy is her equal: her joy in receiving Topsy's symbolic bouquet of one white and one red flower exemplifies this acceptance (248). More immediately, the parallel grammatical structures and rhythm of the passage emphasize that the pair, alike in age and size, are children and

innocents. Topsy as the negative image of Eva is simultaneously the mirror image. An unattributed illustration appearing in the Grosset and Dunlap edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life Among the Lowly* depicts this scene and stresses the symmetry Stowe creates here in the middle of the novel. In the picture (Fig. 1.2), the two little girls are of exactly the same height and same build; a bureau stands in the background them with its mirror between their heads. The reader's identification with Eva, filtered through this scene, tends toward an identification with Topsy. And because Topsy, Stowe tells us, is the representative of all the novel's black characters and the Negro race in general, the identification translates to outrage against an unjust system and empathy for its victims.

Various levels of focalization occur in the scene, both internal and external. First, and most obviously, Eva's gaze at Topsy forces the reader to confront the little girl's blackness and see her not as slave or imp, but through Eva's forgiving and unprejudiced eyes. As Mieke Bal notes, the physical and social position of the focalizor determines what the reader perceives:

> a small child sees things in a totally different way from an adult, if only as far as measurements are concerned. The degree to which one is familiar with what one sees also influences perception. When the Central American Indians first saw horsemen, they did not see the same things we do when we see people riding. They *saw* gigantic monsters, with human heads and four legs. These had to be gods. (Onega 116)

Looking at Topsy through Eva's eyes allows the white reader to perceive a black character as a theoretical equal. Then the novel allows the white reader *to be perceived as* the equal of the black character. The narrator enters in the second paragraph of the

passage, but instead of a shift from the internal focalizor (Eva) to the external (Stowe in her narrative capacity), both layers of focalization occur simultaneously. Eva never releases her gaze at Topsy even as she becomes the object of the narrator's gaze. The reader, aspiring to Eva's Christian goodness and looking at poor Topsy through those angelic eyes, becomes trapped in the tableau as the narrator re-enters and describes the scene before her. In this instance of **immediate juxtaposition** of black and white characters, the first and most obvious strategy of chiaroscuro she employs, Stowe maneuvers her reading audience towards introspection.

Two powerful symbols, both centered on mistaken assumptions about Topsy's mischief, appear before and after Eva's death and emphasize the centrality of color to and the reversals in this scene. Accused of having undertaken one of her accustomed impish exploits, Topsy reveals in Eva's sickroom that she has simply brought a present, the unconventional nosegay, for her little mistress. Stowe's choice of words is telling: "It was a rather singular [bouquet],—a brilliant scarlet geranium and one single white japonica, with its glossy leaves. It was tied up with an evident eye to the contrast of color, and the arrangement of every leaf had been carefully studied" (248). Marie St. Clare, in response to the flowers, becomes more animated than the reader has seen her or will see her again. The audacity of contrast actually stirs her from languor to *act*. She slaps Topsy soundly and dismisses the idea that Eva would have any time for such a ridiculous gift. But Eva's acceptance and validation of Topsy's gift allows a new interpretation of harmony that sees no discord in the clashing colors. Thus giving new definition to "bouquet," Eva effectively prescribes a similar etymological change for "man." Afterward, when the St.

Clare household is in mourning for Eva, the "imperious" Rosa becomes suspicious of Topsy's behavior as the little girl hides something in her bosom. On further inspection, the contents of the package are uncovered:

> There was a small book, which had been given to Topsy by Eva, containing a single verse of Scripture, arranged for every day in the year, and in a paper the curl of hair that she had given her on that memorable day when she had taken her last farewell. St. Clare was a good deal affected at the sight of it: the little book had been rolled in a long strip of black crape, torn from the funeral weeds. (267)

The cluster of symbolic artifacts here, a confused jumble and "curious mixture," points to the various categories, persons, and beings that will become confused and reversed as the novel progresses: Eva, Topsy, black, white, religion, text, man, God, time, and eternity.

Goldner argues that beyond the initial shock occasioned by contrast, the opposition of black and white becomes "overpowering" to the extent that white readers can no longer identify with Topsy. While a discrepancy may have existed between Stowe's goals and her accomplishments, her efforts to mitigate that discrepancy are noteworthy. Eva and Topsy's exchange of roles, begun during the mirror tableau, extends to the catalyzing moment of Eva's death and beyond, and the opposed dimensions of character reverse themselves. In terms of family and parenthood, Eva takes her leave of Marie, St. Clare, and Miss Ophelia. The latter two experience the tragic pain of a lost child that slavery inflicts upon black parents: the institution that weighs upon Eva's heart, of course, is the symbolic, if not literal, cause of her death. But where Eva loses, Topsy gains, finding a parent and mentor in Miss Ophelia. Ophelia's petitioning of St. Clare,

furthermore, facilitates Topsy's manumission and nascent personal identity. Topsy gains a sense of time through her education, and her life, filled with purpose and challenges and good works, becomes a finite thing. The end of Eva's earthly time coincides with her immortality and ubiquity, both in her Christlike nature and in the avenging and evangelizing power of her golden locks. Topsy accepts God and religion after her salvation from heathen ignorance, while God claims his child and embraces the pious Eva upon her death, as the note about her corpse affirms: "Nor was it!—not Eva, but only the frail seed of that bright, immortal form with which she shall yet come forth, in the day of the Lord Jesus" (260).

In death, Eva must leave behind country and national identity for the awaiting and expected afterlife; Topsy finds nationhood in her African missionary work and reconnects to her ancestral homeland. Stowe employs Africa here to give Topsy both history and future, the controversial move she also makes in shipping George Harris and family across the ocean at the novel's end. The endings assigned to Topsy and the Harrises perhaps suggest a repatriation agenda, but more immediately they continue the technique of juxtaposition on a national scale, with the boundaries between the Great White Hope of civilization and the dark continent becoming blurred.

Through Miss Ophelia's experiences and education, Stowe demonstrates within the text what readers experience without. The stern New Englander learns Eva's principal lesson in the aftermath of the girl's death—that charity is powerless without love, and that the laying-on of hands, in the Biblical sense, is a necessary condition of abolition and liberation. Consider first Eva's simple declaration to her black counterpart: "Oh Topsy, poor child, *I* love you…. I love you, because you haven't had any father, or mother, or

friends;—because you've been a poor, abused child!" (259). Topsy loses all when Eva dies, and the tragic abandon of her tears in the sickroom causes another sudden outburst, this time from Miss Ophelia, that echoes the first and lays out a manifesto:

> "Topsy, you poor child," she said, as she led her into her room, "don't give up! *I* can love you, though I am not like that dear little child. I hope I've learnt something of the love of Christ from her. I can love you; I do, and I'll try to help you grow up a good Christian girl."
>
> Miss Ophelia's voice was more than her words, and more than that were the honest tears that fell down her face. From that hour, she acquired an influence over the mind of the destitute child that she never lost.

Despite her disavowal that she is not "like the dear little child," a statement of Christian humility, her near-repetition of Eva's sudden declaration shows that, in this moment, Miss Ophelia more closely approaches the stated ideal. The difference is the addition of the auxiliary verb "can," which suggests possibility as well as process. The last sentence of the declaration restates and then modifies the verb in successive clauses, achieving the process when "do" supplants "can." The scene demonstrates that Ophelia, like the reader, has become ensnared in Eva's example, that the ultimate goal of aspiring to Eva's goodness must necessarily be acceptance of Topsy. Identification with Topsy occurs in this moment of imperfect Christianity doubled: the little slave has never known God and needs Ophelia's help, and Ophelia's own spiritual development depends upon her willingness to be Topsy's guide.

Eva, of course, has another double in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the iconic scene involving *that* pair has been more frequently treated as the novel's center than the one I

propose.[6] I maintain that the chiastic structure occasioned by immediate juxtaposition of Eva and Topsy provides the clearest instance of black-white inversion and mutual identification; revisiting Uncle Tom and Eva in the garden, however, allows further opportunity for explicating immediate juxtaposition as a variety of chiaroscuro. A laugh rings out from the garden, interrupting characteristically uncomfortable conversation between Miss Ophelia, Augustine, and Marie St. Clare. The unmixed sound of gaiety draws St. Clare and Ophelia to a window, from which they observe an odd pair:

> There sat Tom, on a little mossy seat in the court, every one of his button-holes stuck full of cape jessamines, and Eva, gayly laughing, was hanging a wreath of roses round his neck; and then she sat down on his knee, like a chip-sparrow, still laughing.
>
> "O, Tom, you look so funny!"
>
> Tom had a sober, benevolent smile, and seemed, in his quiet way, to be enjoying the fun as much as his little mistress. He lifted his eyes, when he saw his master, with a half-deprecating, apologetic air.
>
> "How can you let her?" said Miss Ophelia.
>
> "Why not?" said St. Clare.
>
> "Why, I don't know, it seems so dreadful!" (154)

Writing about this scene and the history of its illustrations, Jo-Ann Morgan concedes that "[t]he actual passage in the novel is short and not really focused on Tom and Eva so much as it provides an opportunity for the Louisiana slaveholder St. Clare to chastise his Yankee relative about northern prejudices" (9). But here, too, the scene begins to be focalized through Eva and then pulls away. Stowe's typical reader, while not as

scandalized as Miss Ophelia, nevertheless weighs the validity of this revulsion when confronted by the odd pair in the arbor. Furthermore, the established dynamics of identification with Eva force interaction and acceptance of Tom as equal, and immediate juxtaposition here sets the stage for yet another coming—and crucifixion—of Christ, which will conclude the novel. Tompkins notes that Stowe moves her public by allowing Tom to reenact the crucifixion, the familiar and cherished central story of Christianity (134-35). But the intermediary step cannot be ignored. By giving her readers the picture of Eva and Tom on equal footing, Stowe prepares them to accept the black Christ.[7] While most readers of today have hardly any issue with that typological assignation to Tom, Stowe was, of course, writing for a very different audience.

The Christ connection plays out when Cassy approaches Tom with her plan to kill Legree. The scene mirrors gospel accounts of the temptation of Christ—perhaps Tom is even a bit more steadfast in his resistance?—in the days before the crucifixion. Tom's decision not to revolt against the most cruel of masters, the foundation of "Uncle Tom" as an epithet and derogatory adjective in the twentieth century, does not fall into the category of a humble slave's unwavering obedience to his owner. The resignation to his destiny repeats Christ's acknowledgement that the crucifixion is imminent and necessary in order to save mankind from himself. Cassy plays the dual role of tempter (or tool of the tempter) and sinner who finds salvation in Tom, a moment marked by the new reverence with which she significantly addresses him: "*Father* Tom" (345).[8]

In moving from the established equality of Tom and Eva to the novel's suggestion that we compare their self-sacrificing deaths, I have begun to move away from simple immediate juxtapositions to the ways in which Stowe plays with contrast and color in

more abstract and meta-fictional ways: chiaroscuro and black-white juxtaposition occur via suggested as well as explicit images. The novel forces comparison and confrontation beyond scenes in which a black character stands next to a white, and the narrative insists that the reader create tableaux beyond those described in detail. Miscegenation and social debates about intermingling of the races provide an obvious and intriguing context for the discussion of chiaroscuro, and Stowe's manipulation of mulatto characters is yet another step in her novelistic picture-making.

INTERNAL JUXTAPOSITION: PARTS OF A NEW WHOLE

Throughout this chapter and subsequent ones, I will follow J udith Berzon's lead in applying the word "mulatto," usually a person with one black parent and one white, as primarily a category rather than a precise measurement. All characters with varying degrees of black and white parentage—actual mulattos like George Harris, quadroons like Eliza Harris, and whatever specific terms might be resurrected to describe the racial makeup of characters like Harry and Emmeline—fall under the umbrella of "mulatto" because "the key elements in distinguishing the mulatto from the full-blooded black are sociological and psychological rather than biological. The mulatto… is an individual who reaps certain advantages and disadvantages which are a direct result of his mixed racial heritage" (Berzon 8). The mulatto in writing, furthermore, allows the reader a unique opportunity for genealogical voyeurism. As opposed to entirely black or entirely white characters, mixed blood immediately forces acknowledgement of the black and white parents (or grandparents or great-grandparents) who were the character's forebears. Learning of Eva's lineage is no voyeuristic act because of her obvious and established pedigree; Topsy, as we have seen, has no parents and no history. But the scene of

Ophelia's first interview with Topsy involves Jane, the mulatto interlocutor and interpreter, who explains: "Laws, Missis, there's heaps of 'em. Speculators buys 'em up cheap, when they's little, and gets 'em raised for market." Jane's simultaneous deferral to Miss Ophelia and condescenscion to Topsy reflect both her liminal space in the plantation's social structure and her claim to an origin or family despite her partial blackness.

Although Stowe obviously does not include mulatto characters simply because they fit her larger design of playing with color, she certainly takes advantage of their symbolic possibilities. When Jane summarily dismisses the question of Topsy's parentage, there is an unspoken implication that Jane—seeing herself as the better, more valuable slave—does possess what Topsy lacks. The statement recalls to the fore, almost as witnesses, Jane's parents in a tableau for Miss Ophelia's and the reader's consideration. Again, black stands next to white to be scrutinized, and the observer confronts the full range of situations that might result in a child of mixed race, many of which Stowe runs through in the novel: the female slave raped by her brutish owner, the black mistress kept on the side and never fully acknowledged, the taboo love that society rejects, and so on.

Returning briefly to the history of *Uncle Tom* illustrations, one notes that the original Hammatt Billings drawings emphasize the racial duality of the Harris family. In "Eliza comes to tell Uncle Tom that he is sold and that she is running away to save her child," a barefoot, loose, baggy Eliza approaches the Cabin with Harry in her arms (see Fig. 1.3). Gates asserts that in this drawing "Eliza, a mulatto, and her child appear white,"

Fig. 1.3. “Eliza comes to tell Uncle Tom that he is sold and that she is running away to save her child” by Hammatt Billings.

Fig. 1.4. “The Fugitives are Safe in a Free Land,” by Hammatt Billings.

but such a statement is questionable (*AUTC* 44). Certainly, Billings later presents Eliza in the guise of a classic Victorian heroine in "The Fugitives are Safe in a Free Land," her complexion unmistakably white (see Fig. 1.4).[9] But the first pictorial representation of the character emphasizes the black elements of her history, not the white. While Eliza's back is in shadow, her front captures the light, as demonstrated by the whiteness of her garments and Harry's. Yet Billings shaded Eliza's face to look as dark as Uncle Tom's (even the solidly black Aunt Chloe's face captures light and appears lighter than Eliza's here). The drawing perfectly encapsulates one of the novel's main arguments and the paradox of mulatto selfhood: despite the young woman's partly white heritage, she is suffering the plight of the black mother.

Gates's identification of Eliza as white in the picture is, I submit, no less valid than my reading of her as black. The obvious ambiguity, rather than a specific reading, remains key. While Gates makes the statement as a passing observation in an annotation, the conclusion doubtless drew on a set of literary and aesthetic premises that informed his perception at a given time. My premises and arguments presumably follow a different line, and my conclusion opposes his. Stowe, Billings, and the mulatto paradox engineer this discrepancy. Eliza's whiteness and blackness at any given point are proportionately apparent in any picture, whether Billing's illustrations or Stowe's graphic narrative. The novel adeptly plays with the expectations and prejudices of its readers *and* its author. The composition of such a work proved conducive to introspection, and mixed blood precipitated mixed feelings in many of the most liberal readers. At a moment when Eliza appears aesthetically or situationally blacker than the reader expects, the absence of whiteness is conspicuous, and the void translates into a presence: here we have **internal**

juxtaposition, the second of Stowe's chiaroscuro strategies. In "The Fugitives are Safe in a Free Land," the absence of any trace of blackness about Eliza forces the reader to question the representation and undercuts the scene's tranquility. In the novel, the family has escaped slavery, comfort and opportunity have become available, and broken bonds have been restored. Yet their happiness remains incomplete because in America, they still exist as an enslaved-enslave grotesque.

Consider, then, the reader's introduction to Harry in the novel's opening pages, which provides another scene of grotesquerie in the performance of the Jim Crow dance.[10] The little boy, in fact, first signals the centrality of contrast and juxtaposition of opposites in the novel:

> "Hulloa, Jim Crow!" said Mr. Shelby, whistling, and snapping a bunch of raisins towards him, "pick that up, now!"
>
> The child scampered, with all his little strength, after the prize, while his master laughed.
>
> "Come here, Jim Crow," said he. The child came up, and the master patted the curly head, and chucked him under the chin.
>
> "Now, Jim, show this gentleman how you can dance and sing." The boy commenced one of those wild, grotesque songs common among the negroes, in a rich, clear voice, accompanying his singing with many comic evolutions of the hands, feet, and whole body, all in perfect time to the music.
>
> "Bravo!" said Haley, throwing him a quarter of an orange.

> "Now, Jim, walk like old Uncle Cudjoe, when he has the rheumatism," said his master.
>
> Instantly the flexible limbs of the child assumed the appearance of deformity and distortion, as, with his back humped up, and his master's stick in his hand, he hobbled about the room, his childish face drawn into a doleful pucker, and spitting from right to left, in imitation of an old man.

This interchange, which Eliza witnesses with as much horror as the reader, echoes yet again the key contradictions of mulatto existence and degradation under slavery. Harry's beauty and cleverness, contingent upon his whiteness for the two men, raise him above the level of the stock pickaninny; his blackness makes him the object of entertainment and humiliation; and the confluence of whiteness and blackness introduces a discourse not simply of business, but of increased profitability.[11]

Making sustenance and child's play into a transaction, as Mr. Shelby does with the raisins, highlights slavery's perversion of childhood, objectification of life, and ultimate destruction of the black and white races embodied in Harry. The image of the young mulatto child enacting the crooked old black man suggests, despite the white observers' laughs, the petrifying and decaying influence of the peculiar institution on even the brightest and most beautiful. Building on Richard Wright's assertion that the negro is "America's metaphor," Berzon notes that the mulatto more aptly occupies the trope (52). Stowe's presentation of Harry in the novel's opening scenes supports Berzon's amendment. America's future would always involve both races, and the men discussing Harry's profit potential and laughing at his pantomime effectively witness and contribute to the destruction of their nation under slavery.

The act of "passing," as George does when disguised as the Spaniard, is central to the mulatto narrative.[12] Passing in literature opens up new spheres of performance and audience outside of those to whom the ruse is being played: it allows for voyeurism on the part of the reader, who is let in on the secret at some point. Reading about a mulatto character passing, in every instance, marks the *failure* of passing on the meta-fictional level. George makes his entrance into the seedy bar in full view of Haley, and everyone believes that he is "Henry Butler" of Shelby Country. The description of the entrance, however, underscores and points to the failure of passing in narrative:

> From the proudest families in Kentucky he had inherited a set of fine European features, and a high, indomitable spirit. From his mother he had received only a slight mulatto tinge, amply compensated by its accompanying rich, dark eye. A slight change in the tint of skin and the color of his hair had metamorphosed him into the Spanish-looking fellow he then appeared; and as gracefulness of movement and gentlemanly manners had always been perfectly natural to him, he found no difficulty in playing the bold part he had adopted—that of a gentleman travelling with a domestic. (*UTC* 94)

Note that the emphatic visuality and fulsome details about appearance here serve two functions. First, they paint for the reader a picture of George as Henry Butler and establish the reason for the ruse's success. But more importantly, requirements of plot force exposure of the guise: while the character passing appears to be a single unknown person to those sharing the scene with him, he inspires the reader to create a tableau of black and white faces.[13] More plainly, Henry Butler is only Henry Butler to Haley and

the publicans; to the reader, he exists simultaneously as the white-enough-to-pass Henry, the black-enough-to-be-enslaved George, George's wronged black mother, and his callous white father. The artistic use of color and contrast here, as throughout the novel, emphasizes the hypocrisy of a society that judges personal worth on the basis of complexion and lineage. George and Henry share body and mind, yet only Henry can "s[i]t down on equal terms at any white man's table" (122).[14] Stowe's narrative insists on George's parents' presence in the scene, but she merely extends a redundant invitation to inevitable guests.[15]Gaining the knowledge that George is an enslaved mulatto, the reader must confront the reality that he is the product of a non-normative, non-traditional, and probably violent union of black and white.

In addition to passing for white, Eliza and Harry introduce gender and sexuality into the equation by appearing in drag during their flight, a self-obvious strategy of deception often used by slaves fleeing their masters. In her appeal to motherhood and true womanhood, Stowe plays to tradition, coupling the internal battle of the mulatto with instances of de-gendering and de-sexualizing. Undertones of chaos and disrupted social sexual order reflect mid-nineteenth-century conceptions of sexuality when Eliza shears her locks:

> "Now for it," said she, as she stood before the glass, and shook down her silky abundance of black curly hair. "I say, George, it's almost a pity, isn't it," she said, as she held up some of it, playfully,—"pity it's all got to come off?"
>
> [Excised: an exchange about the likelihood of a successful escape.]

> "I will believe you, Eliza," said George, rising suddenly up, "I will believe,—come let's be off. Well, indeed," said he, holding her off at arm's length, and looking admiringly at her, "you are a pretty little fellow. That crop of little, short curls is quite becoming. Put on your cap. So—a little to one side. I never saw you look quite so pretty." (*UTC* 333).

Gender and gendered norms of appearance become instrumental in the scene. In the midst of the harrowing escape plot, the novel (along with the reader) laments discarded beauty. Poor Eliza, the narrator implies, must surrender her crowning glory and the symbol of her womanhood. Some discomfort surrounds a progressive racial agenda thus couched in normative gendered discourse, particularly when considering the distance between narrator and author.

Stowe's life had not always aligned with her society's patriarchal structure. Her somewhat progressive father had ensured that she got a reasonably well-rounded education, not a given for all or most intelligent daughters of the time. Her increasingly insecure husband pouted as his wife surpassed him in assured fame, earned wealth, and perceived intellect—Hedrick's biography recounts many instances of marital tensions caused by Stowe's success. The third dimension of circumscribed female life, motherhood, was the one she occupied most publicly and most uncomfortably. Stowe's tone in *Uncle Tom* established her place as the epitome of compassion and motherhood, but the challenges of motherhood in the real world would by no means allow her to align with a storybook ideal. Ultimately, the novel is a political statement for women as much as it is a treatise against slavery: drawing on the apocryphal and reductive soundbyte, the little woman who started the great war accomplished no mean feat. How then to resolve

the seeming lament for Eliza's de-gendering? The answer lies in the precise nature of the novel's progressiveness, which is within the confines of existing social structure as Tompkins and those following her have pointed out. Stowe's novel seeks to bring power to the woman's sphere rather than to open new spheres for women.

Separating disordered gender and disordered sexuality in the initial drag scene is key. When Eliza takes the guise of a man, the discomfort comes from more than fear of discovery. Note that in this scene, she transcends the role of helpmeet and is assertive and confident while George flags. Further, George finds Eliza more beautiful than ever when she is the beautiful boy, and using the cap to complete the disguise, as his approving words attest, completes the fantasy. The enslaved black and free white in the mulatto embodiment of slavery coincide here with the disordered sexuality that threatens society. Stowe suggests that by divesting a man of the ability to protect and comfort his wife, to guard her purity, and to provide a living for his family, slavery has tried to emasculate George and thrust unwomanly care upon Eliza. The liminal interlude in which their safety is uncertain thus becomes a liminal sexual space, the threat of which extends from the present to the future. Young Harry, dressed as Harriet, makes his appearance to underscore this point:

> "What a pretty girl he makes," said Eliza, turning him round. "We call him Harriet, you see;—don't the name come nicely?"
>
> The child stood gravely regarding his mother in her new and strange attire, observing a profound silence, and occasionally drawing deep sighs, and peeping at her from under his dark curls.

> "Does Harry know mamma?" said Eliza, stretching her hands toward him."
>
> The child clung shyly to the woman.
>
> "Come Eliza, why do you try to coax him, when you know that he has got to be kept away from you." (*UTC* 333-34)

The novel presents yet another separation of mother and child, which this time proceeds from the racial/sexual disguise necessary for escape, which itself proceeds from the uneasy balance of races within the slave nation. Harry is ripe with symbolic meaning—child, future, black, white. If the mulatto is America's metaphor, then Harry is America's future. He serves here again as an ominous portent of fear and disorder.

The Harris family eventually achieves its goal of freedom and the end of the novel restores normative social and sexual order. But *two* mulatto "families" appear in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The plight and escape of George, Eliza, and Harry Harris, of course, are the focus of much of the novel, but the St. Clare half-blood house servants also play an important symbolic role. While each mulatto character on her or his own represents an internal balance of history and color, Stowe uses the two mulatto families to balance each other structurally.[16] Her technique here demonstrates why I have chosen to classify as literary strategy what is more directly biological fact. By assigning an uncertain future to the family of house-servants, Stowe counteracts the effect of what on its own is the overly romanticized conclusion of freedom and familial reunion for the Harrises. Gates believes that Stowe does not resolve Adolph, Jane, and Rosa's presence in the novel, noting that they inspire "interesting questions that Stowe does not get around to answering. 'What will happen to these three? Are they less deserving of our sympathy

than other characters in the novel?'" (*AUTC* 330 n.18). But the very fact that the novel leaves the reader asking these questions—the ambiguity and discomfort that remain—provides the symmetrical counterpoint to the Harrises' happily ever after.

The reader first meets Adolph when St. Clare, Miss Ophelia, and Eva return to the New Orleans estate. His master's major-domo and the governor, in a sense, of the house servants, Adolph initially appears as the most obvious caricature in the novel. He wears St. Clare's finest clothes and assumes self-important airs when speaking to his underlings. The most farcical moment occurs when Adolph stands observing Tom, the latest addition to the slaveholdings, at short distance through opera glasses (143). St. Clare's comment about his servant's attitudes and affections reveals the motive of the affectation: "As to Dolph, the case is this: that he has so long been engaged in imitating my graces and perfections, that he has, at last, really mistaken himself for his master" (152). Exaggerated and absurd, Adolph's actions bespeak a desire to suppress his blackness—except when coaxing more leniency from St. Clare via flattery and self-denigration—and to make himself appear as white as possible. But exaggerated whiteness here merely serves again to insist upon and amplify his blackness.

Adolph, Rosa, and Jane play at whiteness throughout their time under St. Clare's patronage, treating Mammy, Dinah, Topsy, and the old huckster Prue as inferiors because of their unmixed blackness.[17] Significantly, they shun and underrate "Prudence" in the midst of their pretensions:

> "I think such low creatures ought not be allowed to go round to genteel families," said Miss Jane. "What do you think, Mr. St. Clare?" she said, coquettishly tossing her head at Adolph.

> It must be observed that, among other appropriations from his master's stock, Adolph was in the habit of adopting his name and address; and that the style under which he moved, among the colored circles of New Orleans, was that of *Mr. St. Clare*.
>
> "I'm certainly of your opinion, Miss Benoir," said Adolph.
>
> Benoir was the name of Marie St. Clare's family, and Jane was one of her servants. (*UTC* 187)

In denying their blackness, the St. Clare servants make light of the suffering and degradation of one of their ancestral races. In his comment on their fate, Gates perhaps asks the wrong questions of these characters. Their ominous and unresolved ends—Adolph sold off to a cruel master, Rosa and Jane brought squarely under Marie St. Clare's tyranny, and no history given for any beyond the end of the book—are not necessarily a punishment for wrongs against those they mistreat, nor does the novel require any denial of sympathy for them. Adolph, in fact, seems particularly pathetic at the slave auction, and Miss Ophelia tries to intercede when she learns of Rosa's conscription to the calaboose. The possible cruelty that looms represents a fulfillment of the mulatto paradox: the novel requires them to allow their black halves the same prominence allowed their white. Devaluation of life and objectification of body that come with blackness are the extrapolation of caricatured, farcical whiteness.

In these scenes depicting the St. Clare house-servants, the characters' definitions of themselves by assumed names lend to the air of masquerade. They look down upon the poor old husker who, withered and scarred by the cruelty of her masters, has resigned herself to inevitable and degrading death. Stowe assigns her the name Prudence, for she

represents a sad and sobering wisdom that each of the mulatto house-servants will gain. They find and learn "Prudence" by possibly succumbing to her own fate—or, in a best-case scenario, coming to a better understanding of it. Almost approaching allegory, these examples form only a small part of Stowe's larger project of nameplay, the third variety of chiaroscuro I will examine.

ONOMASTIC JUXTAPOSITIONS: TOM, TOMS

Names, remembrance, comparison, death—these were recurring themes throughout Harriet Beecher Stowe's life, and they become essential tools in her composition process. In *The Annotated Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Gates points out that there are no fewer than six Toms throughout the novel and enumerates them for the reader as they appear. His explanation for the recurring name is that repetition causes its erasure: "The doubling of names in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is both unsettling and meaningful. Stowe asks her readers to recognize that external markers such as name, race, or dress do not define a man—only his inner characteristics matter" (11 n.17). Certainly Stowe wishes to demonstrate the artificiality of social conventions and hierarchy: for instance, comparing Uncle Tom and Tom Loker (at least as the latter first appears) undoubtedly inspires readers to revisit the Beatitudes and Biblical caveats about camels and needles' eyes. At the same time, the visibility of the name is undeniable because of the book's title. Further, the fact that Uncle Tom is the only black Tom in the novel is no coincidence. Instead of the concept of erasure, I believe that Stowe is building a community of contrast through her multi-Tom strategy, forcing the reader to confront and compare each subsequent white Tom to those that came before him and to the black Uncle Tom. As before, her strategies inspire a tableau of black and white, identification, comparison, and

contrast. In her allocation of names, Stowe engages in **onomastic juxtaposition**, the third variety of chiaroscuro and a process that intriguingly echoed her own life experiences.

For the Beechers and the Stowes, as in many families and traditions, passing on names was a favorite way to pay homage to the honored or deceased. Although "Harriet" could be traced back to the novelist's aunt, Roxana Beecher's free-spirited sister, the name had been passed on via a tragic intermediary. Stowe succeeded a little Beecher girl—the first Harriet—who had died soon after birth, and she inherited not only the name, but also the transposed affections of heartbroken parents. The honorific naming tradition notwithstanding, uncanny situations and coincidences concerning names would persist through Stowe's life. A sensitive and observant woman with a penchant for ordering everyday events into narratives could hardly have dismissed these sometimes freakish occurrences as simple coincidence.

Harriet Beecher had been friendly with Calvin and Eliza Tyler Stowe prior to the latter's premature death; after a suitable mourning period elapsed, friendship between Harriet and Calvin progressed to courtship and matrimony. But Calvin's second marriage was always, to some degree, haunted by the ghost of the first aborted romance and its halcyon days. Hedrick cites letters written during Harriet's confinement with the couple's first children (Calvin was in Europe at the time) that demonstrate Eliza's presence in Harriet's marriage:

> Calvin had written to Harriet on his journey out: "Take good care of yourself, and of the *little one* whom (as the Germans say) you are carrying *under your heart*. Remember, if female, the name is *Eliza E. Tyler* without hesitation, curtailment, or addition. This is indispensable." Children were

> easy. It was just a matter of cataloguing and naming them. After a return of two months, Calvin learned upon arrival in New York on January 20, 1837, that Harriet had given birth to twins. "Bravo! You noble creature," he wrote to her. She had named one Eliza Tyler, following his wishes, and the other Isabella. Calvin Stowe overrode her second choice. "Eliza and Harriet! *Eliza and Harriet!* ELIZA AND HARRIET!" Having had twin wives, it was only right that he had twin daughters to bear both their names. (112)

The eerie tone of Hedrick's last observation here is appropriate. Although we have no clear evidence of protest on Harriet's part,[18] she might hardly be blamed for not wanting her daughters to serve as living reminders that she must measure up to the sainted Eliza. Complicating the issue, a short two years before, Lyman Beecher's second wife and Roxana's successor had passed on. Harriet Porter, another young woman dead before her time, was buried in a grave next to Eliza Stowe's: Eliza and Harriet, ELIZA AND HARRIET! Calvin's refrain in the letter dismissing "Isabella" must have already been a tune already familiar to Harriet's ears.

Other examples of doubled names in the Beecher-Stowe clan exist. Calvin and Harriet chose to name their fifth child George in memory of George Beecher, the outwardly happy family man and brother who had killed himself shortly before that child's birth. Inconveniently, the baby turned out to be a girl, and "Georgiana May" had to suffice. Nameplay strategies in *Uncle Tom* would not exorcise the demons of eerie coincidence, either. Some years after the publication of the novel, Stowe was visiting her brother Henry's home. Her *son* Henry had been named after this famous uncle and was

just making his start in life as a Dartmouth student. The visit to Henry Ward Beecher's afforded yet another uncanny fluke: while sitting with the brother, Stowe received the news that the son had drowned during exercises with his classmates.

But perhaps the most keenly felt tragedy of Stowe's life occurred in 1849, an event that proved a major inspiration for the privileging of the maternal in *Uncle Tom*. Harriet and Calvin's healthiest and brightest child to date had lately been born, and Stowe felt renewed enthusiasm for motherhood and family. Upon his appearance in the family, his parents named winning little Charley for another Beecher uncle then residing in Cincinnati. However, they would not have much time with this favorite child, who was to perish in the cholera epidemic that would raze many parts of their city. Racial inequality, as Hedrick recounts, played an indirect role in Charley's death. Coming in from an adjacent shack town that had little access to proper sanitation and nutrition, black servants attended many family homes in Walnut Plains. The Stowe family depended on and was friendly with many of the poor people going to-and-fro. When cholera descended upon the shack town, the comings and goings of its residents that the vulnerable infant in Walnut Plains would inevitably succumb. Charley died on July 26 (Hedrick 189-90). When Harriet, still heartbroken, gave birth to another child the following year, another baby received the name of his dead sibling in a macabre echo of Harriet's own birth nearly forty years prior. Her onomastic maneuvering in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* may have been a means of coping with discomfort about the senseless tragedies that often interrupt life. On a more practical level, however, that maneuvering becomes a means of forcing her audience to confront the senseless tragedy of slavery, using names to inspire additional high-contrast tableaux and achieve the effects of chiaroscuro.

The onomastic juxtapositions occurring throughout *Uncle Tom's Cabin* thus have both precedent and catalyst in the life experiences of the author. As she draws upon life in her art, her multi-Tom strategy brings five white Toms together to provide a microcosm of white involvement in and responsibility for slavery. The scheme would progress beyond this novel, both for Stowe and for the many writers who would accept "Tom" more as type and category than as character.[19] Stowe lays the foundation for this trend in the business deal that begins the novel: Tom's sale is necessary to save the rest of black folk on the plantation from a similar fate, setting up not just the Christian allusion but an equation of Tom and the black universal. In very quick succession, the novel introduces the white Toms against whom to weigh the experiences, emotions, and actions of Uncle Tom. For ease of explanation, I separate them into three groups: the Young Toms, the Absent Tom, and the Evolving Tom.

The Young Toms: Tom Lincon, Mas'r Tom Harris, and Tom Bird

Very simply, these young men represent the future of the country. Their lives illustrate how the people around them shape conceptions of blackness, and their actions dictate how black man and white man will coexist in America's future. While none of the three actually meet Uncle Tom within the novel (Harris and Lincon will have had opportunities to do so outside of the narrative), his plight as the ultimate victim of slavery demands that these boys who share his name account for their involvement in the institution.

The reader first encounters Tom Harris, the cruel son of George's owner. George relates a scene in which the young boy's disrespect for life and feeling reveal the corrupting influence of his father's attitudes:

> "It was only yesterday," said George, "as I was busy loading stones into a cart, that young Mas'r Tom stood there, slashing his whip so near the horse that the creature was frightened. I asked him to stop, as pleasant as I could,—he just kept right on. I begged him again, and then he turned on me, and began striking me. I held his hand, and then he screamed and kicked and ran to his father, and told him that I was fighting him. He… tied me to a tree, and cut switches for young master, and told him that he might whip me till he was tired;—and he did do it…. Who made this man my master?"

In Tom Harris, the novel presents a vision of the future as a continuation of the present. His father has indoctrinated him in the myth of white superiority and enables his unjust treatment of George. In depicting Tom Harris's cruelty to the horse, Stowe achieves the double purpose of showing George's equivalence to an animal in the boy's eyes and establishing that the cruelty of slavery based on race can and does become hatred unbridled. Of the young white Toms, Harris represents the bleakest possible fate for America.

Second to appear in the novel is Tom Lincon, Mas'r George's best friend and rival in youthful one-upmanship. Lincon's appearance is brief, and he primarily serves as a cautionary tale to Mas'r George. In a moment of pride, Aunt Chloe scorns the less glamorous Lincons and valorizes her master and mistress—after all, not owning herself,

her pride can only manifest itself in those who do. Upon reflection, however, she repents of her superiority and instructs Mas'r George:

> "Pity, now, Tom couldn't," said Aunt Chloe, on whose benevolent heart the idea of Tom's benighted condition seemed to make a strong impression. "Ye oughter just ask him here to dinner, some o' these times, Mas'r George," she added; "it would look quite pretty of ye. Ye know, Mas'r George, ye oughtenter feel 'bove nobody, on 'count yer privileges, 'cause all our privileges is gi'n to us; we ought al'ays to 'member that," said Aunt Chloe, looking quite serious. (21)

Tom Lincon here becomes emblematic of the spirit of competition (which itself, we see, will lead to the deification of profit) that has driven a system that values money more than life. Aunt Chloe's pity for Tom Lincon—how ironic that the old slave feels sorry for a young white man with the world before him—makes George a more compassionate and thoughtful person. Magnanimity removes and friendship subsequently supplants Tom Lincon's need to prove himself. Community, charitable feelings, and disavowal of superiority break the cycle.

The third young Tom, Tom Bird, is one of Senator Bird's numerous children, and he, too, makes only a fleeting appearance. More important than what he says or doesn't say, however, is that the reader knows of his existence. Senator Bird's having a son named Tom again references Uncle Tom's plight and suggests that the senator's actions in the chapter will have an influence on his children's attitudes; Bird's role as a legislator conflates his biological children and his intellectual/moral children. His support of the Fugitive Slave Act (or a literary facsimile), which causes the diminutive Mrs. Bird so

much heartache, would have set a poor example for the young Tom. But his actions as the chapter progresses, instrumental in Eliza's flight, demonstrate the characteristics of ideal fatherhood. His skilful navigation of the rough waters to get Eliza to freedom echo a reverse Middle Passage, and he provides a much better figure for his son to emulate than Harris did for Mas'r Tom. Mr. Harris and Mas'r Tom represent the darkest side of slavery and a dystopian future for America. Senator Bird and his son represent the good man can bring out in himself and hopeful optimism about the country's progress.

The Absent Tom: Thomas Flint, Esq.

The very absence of Thomas Flint in novel is what makes the character significant. He is the faceless executor of a will that precipitates one of the novel's most heart-wrenching scenes, the separation of Hagar and Albert, an old woman and the last child left to her.[20] His name appears appended to the following advertisement as an executor:

> EXECUTOR'S SALE,—NEGROES!—Agreeably to order of court, will be sold, on Tuesday, February 20, before the Court-house door, in the town of Washington, Kentucky, the following negroes: Hagar, aged 60; John, aged 30; Ben, aged 21; Saul, aged 25; Albert, aged 14. Sold for the benefit of the creditors and heirs of the estate of Jesse Blutchford. (101)

This Tom is the white man of business who, even through an impersonal and indirect relationship to the institution, is complicit in the evils of slavery. Only collecting fees in his role as executor, Thomas Flint is nothing but a conduit, a passive player in the tragedy the chapter details. Yet his passivity, his non-presence as a witness to the scene, has set in

motion and fueled that tragedy. The character highlights the extent to which slavery has infiltrated American economics and forces even the readers who do not confront its evils every day to question their complicity.

The Evolving Tom: Tom Loker

Stowe offers more detail about Tom Loker than any of the other white Toms, and as Gates points out, his physical description matches Uncle Tom's (*AUTC* 72 n.2).[21] The two never meet, and Loker's bounty is Eliza, not Uncle Tom. Yet through their shared name, Stowe extracts them and offers the pair for comparison in an echo of the mirroring and contrast from the Eva-Topsy scenes. Before we meet Tom Loker, we learn some interesting facts about him from Haley: "[H]e was a clever fellow, Tom was, only the very devil with niggers,—on principle 't was, you see, for a better hearted feller never broke bread; 't was his *system* sir" (6). Haley considers Loker's system too cruel, but only because he views cruelty as unprofitable. His appraisal of Loker's character is accurate, however, in that he locates the cruelty in a *system*. Without making excuses for him, Stowe argues that Loker has become trapped in the system of transactions and hatred that define slaveholding society and acts only in the interest of profit margins. The character who seems on the most direct road to perdition, Loker finds redemption after a fall both literal and figurative. When invalidism forces the bounty hunter to live among the Friends and learn the goodness of their ways, the novel shows that even the most frightening figure of slavery can find new life with a change in attitudes. Despite the conversion she assigns him, Stowe refrains from an excess of romanticization in telling of his ultimate fate:

> Tom arose from his bed a somewhat sadder and wiser man; and, in place of slave-catching, betook himself to life in one of the new settlements, where his talents developed themselves more happily in trapping bears, wolves, and other inhabitants of the forest, in which he made himself quite a name in the land.
>
> (332)

He does not experience epiphany and join the cause of abolitionism; Stowe here plays to more conservative readers in demonstrating that the abolition of slavery, while a necessary premise for salvation, does not automatically involve the assumption of a Garrisonian liberalism.

"Tom" is the most prominent and ubiquitous example of Stowe's nameplay in *Uncle Tom*, but she also initiates another in its opening scene. As the transaction of selling Uncle Tom to Haley concludes, the inclusion of Harry Harris in the bargain makes him another representative of the black universal, this time of its future. Why would George Harris, whose own last name is a testament to another man's ownership of him, choose to call his son Harry?[22] Why, when he masquerades as the Spaniard, does he assume the name "Henry?" Stern wrestles with the latter question: "Henry is the formal name from which the diminutive Harry derives; Harry sounds distinctly like Harris. George as redignified his abject relation to Mr. Harris through the fiction of a more formal name, Henry" (112). Not only does he "redignify" the name, but he also engages in full-on appropriation, explaining the doubled "Harry Harris": in his son, the mulatto mixture of black and white, George forces Mr. Harris's intolerant whiteness to coexist

with the black of his ancestors, again suggesting that the fates of America's two colors are inextricably intertwined.[23]

Stowe's international popularity transcended the immediate problems of American life and liberty, and her influence on the greatest literary minds of the mid-Victorian period was inevitable. But while *Uncle Tom* was a critical darling in some cases,[24] other reviews could be scathing. *The Times* took the middle road, and while sometimes laudatory, it criticized what it viewed as Stowe's romanticized black characters: "An error… is committed by our authoress in the pains she takes to paint her negroes, mulattoes, and quadroons in the very whitest white, while she is equally careful to disfigure her whites with the very blackest blacks" (5). When content and technique battle for prominence in *Uncle Tom* scholarship, the latter usually prevails only in discussions of sentimentality and appeals to the maternal. The chiaroscuro framework offers an alternative means of delineating Stowe's literary legacy and does not undermine or undervalue her role as craftsman. Despite the numerous critiques of the novel that have condemned its excesses and romanticizations, Stowe's contribution to literature was that she found an effective means of making her readers, conservative and liberal, confront blackness. She was wrong in her letter to Gamaliel Bailey that there is no arguing with pictures. People argued, and continue to do so. But in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe made those pictures visible and vivid to many of her readers for the first time. Whether they believed what they saw was out of her hands.

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[1] In addition to countless depictions from Italian art, Corbaux might have been familiar with William Blake's illustrations of the Bible from the set of fifty commissioned by Thomas Butts. Some of these, which her Eva echoes in the manners noted, include *Christ Blessing the Little Children* (1799) and *Christ Appearing to the Apostles after the Resurrection* (c. 1795). Stowe, having presented Eva as the first of her

novel's Christ figures, would probably have approved of any similarity to the tradition of holy iconography that illustrators were able to demonstrate. There was certainly no shortage of prints and lithographs available to the public that would have made Jesus's countenance a familiar one. Examples include John Baker's diptych depicting the *Accusation Before Caiaphas* and the *Condemnation Before Pilate* (c. 1835, New York); Baker's *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (c. 1835, New York); James Bailie's *Christ Blessing Little Children* (c. 1845-47, New York); Francis Kearny's *Our Savior Healing the Sick in the Temple* (1826, Philadelphia); and Benjamin Tanner's *Christ Blessing Little Children* (1823, Philadelphia). Of course, Eva's similarity to Christ is simultaneously filtered through another literary source: the equally Christ-like Little Nell of Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

[2] The connection to the slave narrative tradition and Frederick Douglass, with whom Stowe corresponded frequently, originates with the author herself, who makes many references to Douglass's writings in her *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1854).

[3] Meer comments: "Certainly, although it was Walter Scott whom the young Stowe read most avidly, it was surely the children at the center of so many of Dickens's novels—Oliver, Little Nell, Paul Dombey, and so on—who paved the way for Stowe's Eva" (203).

[4] See Jo-Ann Morgan's discussion of the sexualized images of Little Eva in "Picturing Tom and Eva."

[6] Morgan's article traces the central role of illustrations of this scene in the history of the book's publication. Most recently, Gates notes: "[T[he picture of Uncle Tom's strong arms around Little Eva's little white waist is the central image of the entire middle section of the book" (*AUTC* xxi). Interestingly, when George Cruickshank illustrated the first British *Uncle Tom*, he did not reproduce the Jewett edition's frontispiece showing the object of the title; instead of depicting the homey cabin, Cruickshank chose to confront the British public with a sobbing, genuflecting Topsy being comforted by her little mistress (*AUTC* 256).

[7] Tompkins' claim that "[t]he figure of Christ is the common term which unites all of the novel's good characters, who are good precisely in proportion as they are imitations of him" is perhaps over-reaching (138). Tom and Eva, whom she notes "head the list," are certainly meant to be taken as Christ figures, but

the other characters in the novel are aspiring to Christianity (and thus aspiring to Tom and Eva); keeping this distinction is helpful.

[8] The novel plays out the re-enactment faithfully. Sambo and Quimbo, who scourge Tom at Legree's order, happily at first, come to repent of their actions and receive Tom's blessing, an echo of "Forgive them father, for they know not what they do" (*UTC* 359; *Luke* 23:34).

[9] Of this later drawing Gates notes: "They have 'passed' successfully" (*AUTC* 406). An illustration by Dalziel, this time of Eliza fainting in the Birds' kitchen, sounds similar notes of the tragic Victorian heroine. Gates suggests that "Eliza's features are so white that she could be mistaken for any of Dickens's wan heroines in distress" (90).

[10] See Meer, *Uncle Tom-Mania*, for more on minstrelsy and the Jim Crow Dance.

[11] Gates explains that at the time of the novel's publication, "Jim Crow" referred both to a highly racialized song-and-dance pantomime and to the segregation of passengers on the Northern Railroad (*AUTC* 8 n.8). Here Harry epitomizes both meanings.

[12] Elaine Ginsberg provides a helpful and concise definition of the act:

> The genealogy of the term *passing* in American history associates it with the discourse of racial difference and especially with the assumption of a fraudulent "white" identity by an individual culturally and legally defined as "Negro" or black by virtue of a percentage of African ancestry. As the term metaphorically implies, such an individual crossed or passed through a racial line or boundary—indeed *trespassed*—to assume a new identity, escaping the subordination and oppression accompanying one identity and accessing the privileges and status of the other. (3)

[13] While George shares the secret of his disguise with the trustworthy Mr. Wilson, this particular act of passing never fails *within* the text because George chooses the moment at which he drops his guise. Passing fails on the meta-fictional level because the act of reading invades George's privacy without his knowledge or consent, revealing the hidden details of lineage.

[14] I take the quotation out of context here by giving the word *any* another inflection. The line appears when George sits as an equal at the Hallidays' table in the Quaker settlement, his blackness for the first time not acting as a barrier to such accommodation.

[15] My reading here complements Julia Stern's discussion of the nature of George's passing: he chooses not to lighten his skin, but to darken it in the attempt to be taken for white, revealing "a paradoxical wish, George's desire to be both economically privileged and physically of color…. Spanish masquerade may be pure fabrication, but it is a fantasy that expresses the biological truth by rendering the reality of George's mixed racial heritage in both dark and universally visible tones" (110). In becoming white, George embraces blackness and mirrors in his dark-white complexion the tableau that the act of passing forces.

[16] I refrain from creating the category of "structural juxtaposition"—when large portions of the narrative stand in black-white contrastive relationships to each other—because such a process in this case is dependent upon the multi-racial possibility of mulatto selfhood. The other obvious instance of a structural juxtaposition, that between the paired Christ figures of Uncle Tom and Eva, has already been shown to be dependent upon the dynamics established in the immediate juxtaposition of Eva and Topsy.

[17] Berzon follows Eugene Genovese in noting that New Orleans households had a preference for lighter-skinned servants, resulting in a three-tiered hierarchy within the home (12).

[18] Perhaps Calvin's specific instructions and refusal to brook "hesitation, curtailment, or addition" suggests that there had been words about the matter before the overseas voyage. Obviously Harriet did, in the end, provide a very significant "addition." Still, little Hatty's name was the afterthought, and Harriet almost certainly appreciated the symbolism. "Eliza," of course, makes her way into *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—might Stowe have conscripted the superhuman fiction Calvin had built of the dear departed to literary service? If so, the literary counterpart also faced the cares of motherhood and marital insecurity that Stowe, not her predecessor, knew well.

[19] Consider Stowe's subsequent novel *Dred* and the appearance of another Tom, a callous and dissipated white man; much of the plot revolves around his and Nina Gordon's relationship with Harry, their unknown, illegitimate half-brother. A joker-trickster character named Tomtit also appears in this novel.

[20] Stowe emphasizes the poignancy of the scene and its inspiration in the *Key* (169).

[21] Gates also notes a very interesting moment between chapters XVII and XVIII, shortly after Loker's fall, in which the shift from talking about the bounty-hunter to Uncle Tom is particularly rapid and somewhat confusing, causing many readers to conflate the two temporarily (*AUTC* 213 n.2)

[22] "Small House of Uncle Thomas" is the mise-en-abyme version of the novel appearing in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and* I (1956). In this dramatization, Eliza's child is named George after her husband. This decision, of course, is only one of the many ways in which plot and character were amended. Eliza flees not Loker, but Simon Legree, and she is the sole protagonist of the story; though they appear, the roles of Uncle Tom, Topsy, and Eva are never explained.

[23] George Harris's *first* name, of course, links him to young Mas'r George Shelby, who becomes a fierce champion of abolitionism. Consider the ambiguity of the following:

> "Do you know," said Madame de Thoux to him, one day, "of any man, in your neighborhood, of the name of Harris?"
>
> "There is an old fellow, of that name, lives not far from my father's place," said George. "We never have had much intercourse with him, though."
>
> "He is a large slave-owner, I believe," said Madame de Thoux, with a manner which seemed to betray more interest than she was exactly willing to show.
>
> "He is," said George, looking rather surprised at her manner.
>
> "Did you ever know of his having—perhaps, you may have heard of his having a mulatto boy, named George?"
>
> "O, certainly,—George Harris,—I know him well; he married a servant of my mother's, but has escaped, now, to Canada."
>
> "He has?" said Madame de Thoux, quickly. "Thank God!"
>
> George looked a surprised inquiry, but said nothing. (369)

[24] The famous example, of course, is Lord Denman's six-part *Uncle Tom, Bleak House, Slavery and Slave Trade*, dealt with in more detail in Chapter 2. *The English Review* praised Stowe and her sentimental scenes above Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Dickens (83, 104). Dickens, in fact, becomes Stowe's literary whipping boy in a number of British publications.

CHAPTER TWO
Charles Dickens, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Tom: The Real Culprit's Name in *Hard Times*

For decades, the relationship between Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Dickens has been a source of scholarly fascination. In this chapter, I examine how proper names assigned to characters in the authors' novels shed light on that relationship and on the literary legacy of Stowe's most influential novel. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) uses the repetition and juxtaposition of proper names as a means of inspiring the processes of identification and sympathy that made it the quintessentially effective sentimental novel. Stowe's contemporaries across the Atlantic, with many of whom she built professional and personal relationships during the height of *Uncle Tom*-mania, proved to be close readers of this aspect of her work. Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854), tentatively called "Black and White" during the initial stages of composition, presents the famous scene of the elder Thomas Gradgrind confronting a blackened younger Tom and poses a fundamental riddle to its audience: who is the "real culprit" responsible for the crimes committed over the course of the novel? The answer "Tom Gradgrind," rather than itself pointing out the guilty party, draws upon Stowe's chiaroscuro strategies to offer an elaborate narrative identifying the real culprit.

Examining the Dickens-Stowe relationship using the chiaroscuro framework to analyze their novels provides a number of valuable insights. First, it sheds additional light on a complicated association that ranged from strained professional acquaintance to warm personal friendship to involuntary adversaries. Second, the intertextual conversation between the two novels marks an important development in transatlantic literary exchange, especially given the moral and commercial pervasiveness of *Uncle*

Tom and Dickens's imposing stature at the forefront of mid-Victorian literature. Most directly, this essay seeks to reconstruct the conceptual scheme Dickens followed in assigning names to the characters that people *Hard Times*. To these ends, I will begin by recounting the famous "Lord Denman incident" that very publicly placed another of Dickens's novels, *Bleak House* (1852), in conversation with *Uncle Tom*. Following this introduction, I will discuss how the characters' proper names relate fundamentally to their roles in *Hard Times*, culminating in an analysis of how the paired Thomas Gradgrinds comprise Dickens's subtle but unmistakable response to Stowe and the Denman incident in articulating the thesis of the novel.

DICKENS, DENMAN, AND STOWE

The review of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in *Household Words*, as a catalyst in the Lord Denman incident, provides an appropriate entry point for examining Charles Dickens's famously tenuous relationship with the novel and its author. Co-written with Henry Morley, "North American Slavery" mixes praise for *Uncle Tom* with parentheticals lamenting its flaws:

> Interest in the subject of slavery has during the present year been re-awakened by an admirable book, in which its main features—as they exist in North America—are painted in the freshest colors. UNCLE TOM'S CABIN with all its faults (and it is not free from the fault of overstrained conclusions and violent extremes) is a noble work…. ("North American Slavery" 1).

Yes, Dickens may have shared authorship of the article with Morley, with whom at least partial responsibility for the condescending tones might have lain.[1] Yes, sundry opinions

on slavery and all forms of social injustice appeared in the pages of *Household Words* throughout the 1850s. But the arrival of the periodical in London drawing rooms was, for the most part, Boz paying his weekly call. Scholars today know most of the contributors' identities and the particular items in which Dickens was directly involved, but no by-lines appeared in the original publications; instead, readers received the comfortable and familiar affirmation "Conducted by Charles Dickens" at the top of every page, every week. When *Household Words* gave its approval or disapproval of one thing or the other, London effectively received Boz's pronouncement.

More directly, though, the article's mixed tone coincided with Dickens's privately expressed opinions to friends and acquaintances.[2] One notes ambivalence to Stowe's novel in Dickens's earliest acknowledgements of the *Uncle Tom* craze. The man who had set the British reading public afire many years before with the immensely popular *Pickwick Papers* no doubt experienced a few pangs on the arrival of the Next Big Thing. The *Household Words* review, irrespective of authorship, reflects the nature of Dickens's feelings. Dickens the humanitarian saw the novel's purpose as admirable, its author as talented, and its effects as positive. Dickens the artist believed that novel and novelist were sometimes guilty of faulty, derivative, and sensationalistic characters and plots. In a letter to his friend Mrs. Watson, he again tempers the praise before turning to outwardly playful criticism:

> No doubt a much lower Art will serve for the handling of such a subject in Fiction, than for a launch on the sea of imagination without such a powerful Bark; but there are many points in the book, very admirably done. There is a certain St. Clair, a New Orleans gentleman, who seems to

> me to be conceived with great power and originality…. He has a sister too, a maiden lady from New England, in whose person the besetting weaknesses and prejudices of the abolitionists themselves, on the subject of the Blacks, are set forth in the liveliest and truest colors and with the greatest boldness. She (I mean Mrs. Stowe) is a leetle [sic.] unscrupulous in the appropriation way. I seem to see a writer with whom I am very intimate (and whom nobody can possibly admire more than myself) peeping very often through the thinness of the paper. (*Letters* 6, 807-08).

When, later in the same letter, Dickens notes that it is worthy of its reputation, an unspoken "despite" hangs waiting to qualify that assertion.

Critics then and now could hardly argue with these privately expressed charges of literary borrowing (unscrupulous appropriation may be a tad harsh). The images Dickens saw "through the thinness of the paper" no doubt include Eva's embodiment of Little Nell and her ilk, the sentimental children who had served Dickens's purposes so well and now answered to Stowe's. But the specter of *The Old Curiosity Shop* haunts *Uncle Tom* in even more intriguing ways. In the former, antagonist Daniel Quilp questions his solicitor's maltreated serving girl in an interview that would uncannily (or, according to Dickens, not so uncannily) be echoed in one of Stowe's pivotal scenes:

> 'Where do you come from?' he said after a long pause, stroking his chin.
>
> 'I don't know.'
>
> 'What's your name?'
>
> 'Nothing.'

'Nonsense!' retorted Quilp. 'What does your mistress call you when she wants you?'

'A little devil,' said the child. (373)

A loveless, origin-less, godless child is she. The girl that resident wag Dick Swiveller later calls the "Marchioness" appears to be the unattributed prototype of Topsy's similar first encounter with Miss Ophelia (see Chapter One above). In works of fiction and non-fiction, Dickens had not himself always practiced religious citation of his sources—sometimes consciously resorting to outright plagiarism.[3] Nevertheless, wary of becoming the faded stepmother of the literary world, Dickens noticed and perhaps found comfort in Stowe's flaws.

If he initially felt any little annoyance at Stowe's instant celebrity, however, he would soon progress to somewhat justifiable bitterness. Things became uncomfortable for him when Lord Denman, a well-known humanitarian and philanthropist formerly on friendly terms with the author, wrote a series of articles that appeared in the *Standard* during the fall of 1852.[4] Denman's six-part collection, *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Bleak House, Slavery and Slave Trade*, valorized *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its author while villanizing Dickens for his efforts in *Bleak House*. At the center of the criticism was the infamous character Mrs. Jellyby, who apparently caused as much heartache for her creator as for her offspring. In the novel, she was an enthusiastic philanthropist more concerned with the progress of Borioboola Gha, an African colony, than with her own family. The woman with the eyes that "could see nothing nearer than Africa" persevered in her charitable efforts while old relationships failed, new and grotesque ones formed, and her household fell into disarray around her (*Bleak House* 28). Lord Denman took issue with

Africa as the object of Mrs. Jellyby's energies. To him, the caricature suggested that Dickens, previously a fierce critic of American slavery and social injustice, was attacking abolitionism and humanitarianism; Dickens, implied Denman, had assumed a posture in direct opposition to the worthy motives of *Uncle Tom*.[5] Moreover, in the later articles, Denman extrapolates the criticism to span the Dickensian canon.[6]

A letter Dickens sent to Denman's daughter later that year, responding to news of her father's illness, shows the degree to which Dickens resented Denman's unfair characterization of him. He begins by going through all the socially prescribed motions, hoping for her father's return to health and disavowing any ill will on his part for the *Standard* articles. Subsequent comments quickly become pointed, and the thinnest of veneers conceals his injury. He refutes the *Bleak House* misinterpretations: "Mrs. Jellyby gives offence merely because the word 'Africa,' is unfortunately associated with her wild Hobby. No kind of reference to slavery is made or intended, in that connexion. It must be obvious to anyone who reads about her" (*Letters* VI. 825). Although he notes that his only contribution to the *Household Words* review was "the high and genuine praise of Mrs. Stowe's book"—not quite true—the letter goes on to identify the "overstrained conclusions" to which the review alluded (826-27). The missive ultimately arrives at an explicit defense of Dickens and *Bleak House* that, in passing, references the scene of the author's first triumph. He cites *Pickwick* to show that his indictment of Chancery in *Bleak House*, which Denman had attacked as after the fact of Chancery's death, was an argument begun in his first novel; this allusion, however, provided not just a means of rebutting an unjust criticism, but it reminded the addressee that Dickens himself had

experienced both the glitz of a sudden, immense hit *and* the glory of a successful career in its aftermath.

When Dickens and Stowe met a half-year later at the Lord Mayor's banquet, any unpleasantness seemed, publicly at least, a thing of the past. Speakers at the banquet neglected or ignored any cause for animosity between the two and instead assumed solidarity based on literary talent, social activism, and historical pride. Dickens's comments were gracious towards Stowe—she "would find a welcome in every English home"—but devoted largely to witticisms about Chancery in the spirit of *Bleak House* (Fielding 165). Stowe, as she would record in *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*, thought the Dickenses charming and "people that one could not know a little of without desiring to know more" (266). Stowe's pleasure at the meeting, given existing evidence, was more genuine than Dickens's.[7] Not only did Dickens express his contemptuous amusement at Stowe's slight "Moony Memories" after the fact, but he also delighted that his friend Forster would be "obliged to assault [it], dreadfully" in an *Examiner* review (*Letters* VII.387, 377n.6). In another letter to his American friend C.C. Felton, Dickens called Calvin Stowe a bore, and he again invoked Mrs. Jellyby in a wry playful moment:

> I am seized with a horrible desire to present you to Forster (who is going to dine here today, by a capital coincidence) as Professor Stowe!!! We have all been so bored by that amiable personage that I feel it is my "mission" to do this—and *not* my mission to be disappointed in my joke. (*Letters* VII.77)[8]

Dickens's affected graciousness at the banquet but private distaste for the Stowes is hardly surprising; lowering himself to any public expressions of dismay would be

beneath him. But had he really put the matter to rest? Beginning to answer that question requires a fuller appreciation of Dickens's relationship with blackness and the trajectory that would eventually include black formulations in *Bleak House* and *Hard Times*.

In the early 1840s, Dickens and his wife Catherine made his famous tour of the States that inspired the author anew with strong feelings on three subjects: the alarming tendency of Americans to spontaneous expectoration, the increasing need for international copyright legislation, and the undeniable inhumanity of slavery. Of these three, the first was a gut reaction, the second a longtime peeve, and the third a firing of Dickens's best humanistic instincts. He channeled the passions and impressions precipitated by the American tour into two literary outlets, the sites of his most involved engagement with the slavery issue prior to the 1850s.

In *American Notes for General Circulation*, the travelogue Dickens penned after returning from the tour, the penultimate chapter bears the simple title "Slavery." Although the author traveled only as far south as Virginia, he had enough experience of the Peculiar Institution to inspire the dread and disgust that issue from his pages. As an impartial observer not directly involved in American politics, Dickens could criticize with an objective eye and could emphasize the grotesquerie of slavery by virtue of his very distance from the issue, as Amanda Clayburgh points out: "What is valuable about Dickens's perspective… is its capacity to defamiliarize, a capacity that Dickens identifies as specifically British… [because] the British are much more 'competent to judge of its atrocity and horror than those who have been reared in its midst" (448-49). That distance, however, is a key differentiating factor between factual accounts and rational pleas such as appear in *American Notes* and the sentimental engagement of the audience that Stowe

perfects in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In brief, Dickens made strong, impassioned, and effective arguments, but arguments that would resonate only with those Americans who already shared his views or those Britons who had the luxury of action-less, distant sympathy.

Martin Chuzzlewit, generally known as the author's American novel, features a large segment in which the titular protagonist and his valet Mark Tapley leave England to seek their fortunes in the land of promise. Dickens incorporates a multi-faceted treatment of slavery in the novel, presenting characters that range from the institution's stoutest defenders, to the genuinely charitable and humanistic, to those hypocritical abolitionists whose prejudices differ infinitesimally from the first group's. But the richness of Dickens's approach notwithstanding, a reader cannot help noticing the novel's obvious discomfort in dealing directly with blackness. I refer here not to the manners in which white characters themselves confront a black one, but in the tentative characterization of that black character. Consider the scene in which Chuzzlewit and Tapley share the stage with Cicero, a black porter:

> "And may I ask," said Martin, glancing, but not with any displeasure, from Mark to the negro, "who this gentleman is? Another friend of yours?
>
> "Why, sir," returned Mark, taking him aside, and speaking confidentially in his ear, "he's a man of colour, sir!"
>
> "Do you take me for a blind man," asked Martin, somewhat impatiently, "that you think it necessary to tell me that, when his face is the blackest that was ever seen?"

> "No, no; when I say a man of colour," returned Mark, "I mean that he's been one of them as there's picters of in the shops. A man and a brother, you know, sir," said Mr. Tapley, favouring his master with a significant indication of the figure so often represented in tracts and cheap prints."
>
> "A slave!" cried Martin, in a whisper. (346-47).

"Glancing, but not with any displeasure" adequately summarizes the confrontation with blackness in *Chuzzlewit*. The novel resists humanizing Cicero, preferring to deal with him as a cause or an issue rather than as a person. Although the American chapters criticize those who have "such a passion for Liberty, that they can't help taking liberties with her," as Tapley poetically puts it, their method of argument is approximate to the stark appeals of *American Notes* (347). Cicero's harrowing lifetime of hardship and pathetic attempt to purchase his still enslaved daughter is dismissed in a side note, and even with the real article before them, Tapley resorts to a crude imitation of an abolitionist cliché, the Wedgwood icon. I do not set out to argue here that Dickens is anything less than self-aware in his treatment of the scene, but simply that he preferred to broach slavery as an evil concept and system rather than as a force that affected individual lives.[9]

Hard Times demonstrates a very different approach to blackness that, although hardly as confrontational and never as sentimental as Stowe's, represents a new moment in Dickens's literary engagement with the slavery debate. Its place in the Dickens canon has traditionally been delineated in one of three ways: it is his great industrial novel, his tour-de-force critique of hard Utilitarianism, or his superlative effort to increase the readership of *Household Words*. The Denman episode, however, introduced a fourth

dimension. To Dickens, Denman's misreading of *Bleak House* had undermined that novel's social commentary by clumsily and inappropriately introducing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a point of comparison. The subsequent publication of *Hard Times*, in many ways, constitutes a response to Denman and Stowe in the process of executing its more obvious critiques. As in *Bleak House*, Dickens illustrates the evils of the neglected household and its microcosmic significance. But whereas Mrs. Jellyby's attentions to Africa had nothing to do with American Slavery, the later novel directly broaches the issues of black oppression through a powerful literalized symbol and, in its final movement, looks toward America. Intertextual analysis of *Hard Times* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* centers on Dickens's reproduction of Stowe's strategies of juxtaposition, most notably as it centers around the repetition of the name "Tom."[10]

THE MISEDUCATION OF THOMAS GRADGRIND

Thomas Gradgrind, Sr. fathered five children, and the names of these Gradgrind boys and girls speak more loudly than the children themselves do in some instances. Like a contemporary audience would have, we modern readers immediately recognize the significance of the younger sons' names, Adam Smith and Malthus. Although the narrator mentions these boys only in passing, the references at the beginning of the book initiate Dickens's criticism of unfeeling Utilitarianism and laissez-faire economics. The younger daughter Jane's namesake proves a little more difficult to locate, but Hilda Hollis has recently suggested a likely candidate in political economy writer and "popularizer" Jane Marcet, who

> brought classical political economy to a more extreme and simpler position than that proposed by Smith…. Although Marcet is not a central

> target throughout *Hard Times*, the selection of the name, Jane, alongside Adam Smith and Malthus, suggests that Dickens had her work in mind when he targeted the ideas of the classical political economists.
>
> (90)

Jane has a more prominent role in the novel than her younger brothers, becoming a symbol of hope for the Gradgrind family under Sissy's influence. But moving from these lesser players, the names of the family's principal actors (or non-actors, depending on one's perspective) remain largely unexamined. First is Gradgrind's wife, for whom no name is given. Mrs. Gradgrind, the ultimate cipher, is grand dame of an elite circle.[11] Like other characters in the novel defined only by their roles as wives or mothers—Mrs. Pegler in her secret role as Bounderby's mother, the proud Mrs. Sparsit in her parasitism on Bounderby and her pride in lineage, and the fallen Mrs. Blackpool in her tormenting of Stephen—no other identity is allowed. Furthermore, Mrs. Sparsit only emphasizes Louisa's exclusion from the company in her inability to address the new bride as Mrs. Bounderby (142). Louisa's own name possibly alludes to the unfortunate French monarch notorious for a disconnection from his country's peasantry, his head later notable for a disconnection from its body. The appropriateness is undeniable for the girl who herself admits that she has known nothing of working class life in the interview at Stephen Blackpool's, and whose figurative headlessness and directionlessness define the latter part of the novel.[12]

The Thomases Gradgrind remain, and I propose that Dickens intends them as part of the community of contrast that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* begins in its onomastic juxtapositions. Following Stowe's maneuvers with the name in her novel, the repetition

of "Tom" become a loaded signifier for the authors and readers of the 1850s. For Dickens in particular, who had just been involved in the very public comparison to Stowe at Denman's hand, the appearance of multiple Toms in a novel that insists upon nominal significance can hardly be a coincidence. Insistence upon Thomas, *in fact*, distinguishes the second chapter's portrait of that distinguished gentleman:

> Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir—*peremptorily Thomas*—Thomas Gradgrind…. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all suppositious, non-existent persons), but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind—no sir![13] (5, emphasis added)

The dogged focus on numbers, equations, and statistics to the exclusion of the actual people defined by these parameters links Thomas not only to the Utilitarian stalwarts, but also to the various white Toms of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In all of these white Toms the fate of the black man, embodied by Uncle Tom, rests. Gradgrind bears echoes of both Thomas Flint, the disinterested but complicit businessman, and Tom Loker, the systematic destroyer. Also like Stowe, Dickens employs another Tom, a younger one, to extrapolate the present and point towards the very bleak future the blackface scene presents.

Examining Thomas Gradgrind's social and educational philosophies has proven an inescapable step in almost any substantial analysis of *Hard Times*. The juxtaposition

of father and son requires a renewal of this process because Tom is as much educational and social product of Thomas's philosophy as he is biological product of Thomas's union with Mrs. Gradgrind. The novel's opening scene occurs in the schoolroom, run by M'Choakumchild and presided over by Thomas, through which each of the five young Gradgrinds passes. Dickens's reading audiences then and now have little trouble discerning the resonances of slavery in the dehumanization of the students, who lose their names and receive numbers.[14] The values instilled in the students center around a transactional worldview and human interactions that mirror mathematical functions.

Two aspects of the school's principle of operation define Gradgrind and the Gradgrind way of thinking: first, the unfeeling-ness and sterility of the atmosphere, and second, an ironic tendency to the generalization of humanity while pursuing the most specific facts. The first half of the argument has generally been discussed as the absence of Fancy; important to Dickens's argument, however, is that the refusal to acknowledge or express emotion precipitates that absence. Dickens's best tool in illustrating the Gradgrind suppression of emotion rests in his manipulation of language as regards both narrator and characters. The novel's opening chapter, even more so than passages in which we learn the fine points of Thomas Gradgrind's pedagogy, develops a portrait of a dry and emotionless man almost entirely through grammar, syntax, tropes, and schemes:

> The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasised his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage

> in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders,—nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was,—all helped the emphasis. (5)

One may learn much about Gradgrind even without focusing on the words themselves in this paragraph; in fact, the passage actively works against the reader who tries to read carefully. Dickens employs rhetorical strategies that rhythmically emphasize repeated main clauses and de-emphasize (i.e. do not help the emphasis of) the substantial dependent clauses and phrases. In the second through fourth sentences, all cumulative, the anaphoral clause "The emphasis was helped" reduces the focus on what exactly helped the emphasis.[15] A machine-like tone results, later to be echoed by the novel's storied melancholy mad elephants.[16] The final sentence, periodic and so full of detail that it seems almost as stifling and congested as Gradgrind's tight neckcloth, hints at the crisis that will come as a result of a machine-like worldview. The previous three sentences utilize passive voice, a standard in scientific writing and writing that wishes to remove the human element from observation. The main clause of the final sentence reverses the scheme of repetition from anaphora to epanalepsis and switches from passive to active voice, jarring moves that break the rhythm and facilitate awakening and realization. In

this single paragraph of the opening chapter, paying attention not to words and ideas but to syntax, grammatical inflections, and repetition, the reader encounters Dickens' thesis of and structural plan for *Hard Times.*

In the novel's first book, when Gradgrindism reigns and order is prevailed upon to prevail, mathematical and formulaic rhetorical choices continue to substitute for emotion and sensation. A characteristic example, demonstrating Dickens's dry humor, occurs when Gradgrind is about to take Sissy Jupe into his household: "'Can Jupe be sent here, Mr. Bounderby?' asked Mr. Gradgrind. Certainly. So Jupe was sent there" (39). The syllogistic tone of the interchange effectively removes any heroism or chivalry from Gradgrind's charitable act and warns the girl, about to leave all she knows and loves, against any show of emotion. The same applies to the interview in which Thomas communicates his friend Bounderby's proposal to Louisa. In what should be a joyful moment for father and daughter, the narrator registers human interaction and affection as matter-of-fact transaction, supply following demand: "'Kiss me, my dear girl.' So, his daughter kissed him" (80). Such is the maximum allowance of feeling and emotion allotted to the best scholars of Gradgrindism.

Thomas's pedagogical philosophy also manifests itself in the novel as a de-factualization of fact and a readiness for generalization and ambiguity. In this respect, Gradgrind mirrors the unfeeling economists who would broach workers' deprivation and destitution only to the extent that they affect production and efficiency. Dickens points out how language deviously reflects and condones such hardness: referring to laborers as "Hands" was no innovation of the author's, but he realized that the synecdoche analogizes the dehumanization inherent in the Gradgrind process. He wryly notes, to

drive the point home, that the workers comprise "a race who would have found more favour with some people, if Providence had seen fit to make them only hands" (52). [17] Along these lines, the self-professed two closest adherents of Gradgrindism, Josiah Bounderby and star-pupil Bitzer, repeatedly choose to ignore specifics and can only celebrate fact in generalities. Bounderby insists that every Hand has a single ambition in life, the renowned aspiration to venison, turtle soup, and riding in carriages. Convincing himself that he is a latter-day Duncan, much more astute and always on the lookout for a scheming Macbeth, Bounderby can dismiss any concern or complaint of the Hands by gesturing to an imaginary soup tureen. Bitzer, likewise, not socially far removed from the Hands but elevated because of his education, extrapolates his own good fortune in application to others. The narrator, answering a rhetorical question Bitzer thus addresses to Mrs. Sparsit, observes:

> This, again, was among the fictions of Coketown. Any capitalist there, who had made sixty thousand pounds out of sixpence, always professed to wonder why the sixty thousand nearest Hands didn't each make sixty thousand pounds of out sixpence, and more or less reproached every one for not accomplishing the little feat. (91)

Both of these Gradgrindian men retain the mindset of the opening schoolroom scene throughout the novel; people become reducible to numbers that can be added, subtracted, multiplied, and factored depending on the needs and circumstances that arise.

TOM BY WAY OF THOMAS

Enter the second Tom Gradgrind, product of his father and his father's pedagogy. Dickens presents a violent image of Tom's imagination being "strangled in its cradle"; if this is the case, then the reader witnesses the last few breaths of that imagination in the novel's initial chapters, before Tom is irrevocably lost (102). At the beginning, Thomas discovers Tom and Louisa stationed at a peep-hole, observing the goings-on of Sleary's Horse-riding. After the father admonishes his two erring children for their fanciful act and un-factual desire, the narrative echoes Imagination's gasps: "Louisa languidly leaned upon the window looking out, without looking at anything, while young Thomas stood sniffing revengefully at the fire" (43). In their resentment about being thwarted and denied fancy, the children become playthings of the narrator in a rare line of musical prose that nearly slips into alliterative verse. Some time after, the influence of Sissy Jupe in the household temporarily resuscitates Tom's imagination and, for the last time, focuses his vitriol at the proper target. Following an un-factual wish to be an obstinate, kicking donkey, Tom states his love for Louisa in playful language: "'I don't know what this—jolly old—Jaundiced Jail,' Tom had paused to find a sufficiently complimentary and expressive name for the parental roof, and seemed to relieve his mind for a moment by the strong alliteration of this one, 'would be without you'" (43).[18] In subsequent passages, the language used by and surrounding Tom, however, becomes increasingly more like that applicable to his father. Imagination dies and Tom's hurt and resentment become unfocused, chaotic, and malignant. He moves away from whatever good influence Sissy could exert and into the company of Bounderby and Bitzer, the mentor his father wishes him to impress and the star pupil he should desire to emulate. By the

time Harthouse arrives in Coketown, Tom's imagination has breathed its last, and he can process language only in systematic, robotic terms:

> "My sister Loo?" said Tom. "She never cared for old Bounderby."
>
> "That's the past tense, Tom," returned Mr. James Harthouse, striking the ash from his cigar with his little finger. "We are in the present tense, now."
>
> "Verb neuter, not to care. Indicative mood, present tense. First person singular, I do not care; second person singular, thou dost not care; third person singular, she does not care," returned Tom. (103)

This recitation from the pages of a standard grammar—Bitzer himself could hardly have done better—removes any doubt that Gradgrindism has completed its work on Tom. The problem, however, lies in the fact that Tom's better nature, of which we have seen glimmers, has been overcome in the process. As in slavery or servanthood, there are those who will suffer their oppression quietly and even gladly, and there are those who will rebel. But for Dickens, misguided and unfocused rebellion—how could it be otherwise, in the majority of cases, when education has been inadequate and improper?—becomes simply hate and destruction.[19]

Turning to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the young Toms of that novel present three visions of the future determined by their social interactions and relationships during their formative years; they suggest the paths that would have been open to a young Tom Gradgrind. Their lives illustrate how the people around them shape conceptions of humanity, and actions dictate how black man and white man will coexist in America's future. Tom Harris and Tom Bird, according to the examples of their fathers, group up

understanding humanity and harmony in very different ways. On which end of the spectrum does Tom Gradgrind fall?

Unfortunately, Tom Gradgrind's father fails to set the example or provide the nurturing that will save his son from a horrible fate. Instead, having been reared a proper Gradgrind, young Tom compels his sister to enter into a loveless marriage, sinks to near dissipation in gambling pursuits, becomes a lowly thief, and deflects the blame for his actions onto an innocent party; Dickens's jottings for the character's development punningly note that his "calculations all go to No 1" (Stone 1987, 255). His Gradgrindian view of the world allows him thus to use Stephen Blackpool as a means to an end because that man to him is only a statistic that might easily be factored out. Thomas has only begun to perceive his system's absolute failure when Louisa informs him that she believes in Stephen Blackpool's innocence. At this juncture, Thomas asks the question central to the novel's purpose:

> "Louisa, my dear, I have never, that I know of, seen [Stephen]. Do you believe him to be implicated?
>
> "I think I have believed it, father, though with great difficulty. I do not believe it now."
>
> "That is to say, you once persuaded yourself to believe it, from knowing him to be suspected. His appearance and manner; are they so honest?"
>
> "Very honest."

> "And her confidence not to be shaken!" said Mr. Gradgrind, musing, "*does the real culprit know of these accusations*? *Where is he? Who is he*?"
>
> (189-90; emphasis added).

Who is he, indeed? The simple answer to the question—perhaps one might even call it the factual answer—is that a man named Thomas Gradgrind stole the hundred-and-fifty-odd pounds from Bounderby's bank and pinned the crime on one Stephen Blackpool. That father and son share a name, however, forces the reader to acknowledge not simply the fact of the crime, but the human circumstances surrounding it, the society and system that shaped the man named Thomas Gradgrind. Thomas, of course, finds the answer to his questions when confronted with the specter of his son in blackface.

Understanding Thomas's pedagogy provides the necessary backdrop for analyzing Tom's development as product and copy of his father; that copy, through the prism of the novel's most striking scene, further develops into mirror image, mistaken double, negative image, and palimpsest. On a number of occasions in *Hard Times*, the lisping ringmaster Sleary evinces the best understanding of human nature and becomes the means of articulating the novel's social message. He takes in Tom Gradgrind (son of Thomas) who has lied and cheated his way through the novel and ends up seeking refuge among circus folk. Sissy Jupe, herself formerly a denizen of the show business, arrives with Louisa Gradgrind at Sleary's in the novel's closing pages. Ready to aid in Tom's escape, Sissy introduces Miss Gradgrind to her friend of old and is then pulled aside for a quiet parley:

> As soon as they were gone, he [Sleary] continued in a low tone. "Now, Thethilia, I don't athk to know any thecreth, but I thuppothe thith to be Mith Thquire."
>
> "This is his sister. Yes."
>
> "And t'other on'th daughter. That'h what I mean. Hope I thee you well, mith. And I hope the Thquire'th well?"(210)

Sissy's mistake in supposing the "Thquire" to be Tom may be forgiven; she hardly would have remembered Sleary addressing the father by that title during their single previous meeting. The more curious question lies in why Dickens includes this apparently pointless interchange in the first place. Inadvertently confusing the Toms, Sissy highlights a recurring motif that Dickens has borrowed from Stowe. Sleary, in accepting them as the one and the other, validates the confusion and lays foundation for the ultimate scene of juxtaposition that occurs directly after when Tom appears in blackface.[20]

In *Hard Times*, a young Tom again points towards the future, and Dickens uses Tom Gradgrind, Jr. to illustrate how Thomas's version of a Utilitarian philosophy will play out. That result, of course, becomes apparent in the novel's most graphically striking scene. Taking place in Sleary's Horse-riding, with Tom about to make off for Liverpool and seek refuge in America, the novel's iconic tableau leaves little doubt as to why Dickens considered "Black and White" as a possible title:

> In a preposterous coat, like a beadle's, with cuffs and flaps exaggerated to an unspeakable extent; in an immense waistcoat, knee-britches, buckled shoes, and a mad cocked hat; with nothing fitting him, and everything of coarse material, moth-eaten and full of holes; with seams in his black face,

> where fear and heat had started through the greasy composition daubed all over it; anything so grimly, detestably, ridiculously shameful as this whelp in his comic livery, Mr. Gradgrind never could by any other means have believed in, weighable and measurable fact though it was. And one of his model children had come to this! (211)

Dickens masterfully merges what I consider Stowe's three major strategies of black-white juxtaposition in this single scene. The onomastic juxtaposition of both Thomas Gradgrinds coincides with the immediate juxtaposition of the black and the white—like Eva standing next to Topsy, the one a negative mirror image of the other, Thomas looks into the mirror and sees Tom. His own self, his own name, his own humanity has been reduced to blackness, the symbol of enslaved mind and body. Tom on his own, furthermore, represents a modified embodiment of the internal juxtaposition of the mulatto that, in this instance, becomes painfully and visibly externalized on his face. The seams in the blackface makeup, revealing the white skin imprisoned beneath, speak volumes. Not only does the image communicate that Gradgrindism has resulted in Tom's stunted, deprived state, but it also inherently challenges poisonous traditional ideas about how blackness should be treated, illustrating instead that those ideas comprise a façade that shrouds humanity and excuses cruelty.

Dickens carries the argument further in Sleary's explanation of the escape scheme's progress. David Levy, one of the more recent scholars to point out the similarities between *Uncle Tom* and *Hard Times*, makes the argument that those "odd parallels" demonstrate an equivalence between the markets and slavery: "everything is just a question of the kindness of the masters" (180). Levy identifies a primary odd

parallel as *Hard Times*'s culmination in an escape "to freedom in blackface," mirroring George Harris's assumption of a darkened Spanish guise to aid his flight. I submit, however, that Tom Gradgrind's escape is more complex than a journey in blackface. When the elder Thomas Gradgrind expresses very real concern that his son will find few friends and little assistance traveling as a black man, Sleary proposes a magical and almost instantaneous transfiguration that is effectively a scene of passing:

> "I don't mean that he thould go in the comic livery," said Sleary. Thay the word, and I'll make a Jothkin of him, out of the wardrobe, in five minutes."
>
> "I don't understand," said Mr. Gradgrind.
>
> "A Jothkin—a Carter. Make up your mind quick, Thquire. There'll be beer to feth. I've never met with nothing but beer ath'll ever clean a comic blackamoor." (212)

Instead of simply turning Tom into an icon of blackness, Dickens emphasizes the slipperiness of color and the fact that Tom moves between white, black, and white with black smudges: he retains his identification with his father (transforming from comic blackamoor to white peasant) while simultaneously bearing the mark of a race publicly perceived as inferior or incompletely human in America—the very place to which he must escape. The shared name of the Thomases Grandgrind, complicated in this late scene by the compromised mulatto condition of the son, throws into vivid relief the father's role in mentally and emotionally enslaving his child. As with the end of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* when Uncle Tom suffers and dies, the viewer cannot escape seeing in him the white Tom(s) who have created and nurtured that suffering and pain. Dickens

translates the literal enslavement of Uncle Tom into the enslaved consciousness of Tom Gradgrind and retains blackness as the crux of comparison and contrast. Thomas Gradgrind makes what is essentially an act of expiation when, after Tom flees to America, he publishes the broadsides that declaim the guilt of one Thomas Gradgrind in the wrongful accusation of Stephen Blackpool. The strict adherents of fact in Coketown might have interpreted the broadsides as advertising the young Tom's culpability. Old Thomas Gradgrind, however, and those whom the failure of Gradgrindism has left sadder and wiser, know the identity of the real culprit.

BLACK AND WHITE REVISITED

Mary Rose Sullivan's 1970 article "Black and White Characters in *Hard Times*," nearly forty years later, remains the most comprehensive treatment of color symbolism in Dickens's novel, as well as one of the most compelling examinations of why Dickens considered the title "Black and White." Her thesis about the attributes that define a character's blackness or whiteness, and thus the way she or he acts or is acted upon, breaks down as follows:

Black	**White**
Affirmative	Destructive
Natural	Anti-natural
Alive	Dead
Positive	Negative
Vital	Pallid
Growing	Stagnant
Dynamic/Possessing Energy	Bloodless

Table 2.1. Mary Rose Sullivan's "Black and White Characters in *Hard Times*"

In assigning the novel's key players to one or other category, Sullivan makes several compelling points. Her appraisal of Louisa Gradgrind, for instance, suggests that she is by nature a black character who has been forced into a white role, thus effecting her symbolic death as the plot progresses. Sissy, a most obvious black character for Sullivan, reaches out to help Louisa, but "Louisa's rejection of Sissy's friendship… [means that she] rejects her natural potential for creative life and surrenders herself into the deadening forces of Gradgrindism" (7).

Despite these useful perspectives and frameworks, the question of characters' whiteness and blackness bears revisiting because Sullivan's approach lacks adequate socio-historical context. Consider her discussion of the blackface scene:

> Here Dickens realizes dramatically, and with trenchant irony, his thesis that uncontrolled self-interest is a form of life-denial which can only result in the grotesque distortion of human personality. The "white" Tom sullenly takes on the protective black coloration of the vital circus people he despises, in order to escape the consequence of his own criminal behavior, but the telltale signs of fear and guilt break through the absurd disguise to reveal the whiteness within. And fittingly Gradgrind himself, that determinedly unimaginative preacher of hard fact, has to come face to face with the fantastic evidence of his ruined hopes. (9)

By its avoidance or neglect of blackness in a physical, literal context, Sullivan's article actually argues for a strategy of black-*or*-white instead of black-*and*-white, and thus it cannot help but ignore several key dimensions of Dickens's argument. I take issue with her premise that Dickens "limits [his color imagery] to the extremes" in characterization,

thus framing "a life-and-death struggle of good and evil in which there is no middle ground and no possibility of compromise" (5). Black or white simply as a color or category cannot transcend the single layer of literary symbolism that Sullivan assigns to them: the framework suggests that Louisa and Tom, therefore, are always one to the exclusion of the other. The racial inflection that Dickens intends in the aftermath of Stowe and Denman allows for a multi-layered and dynamic use of color that approximates the class warfare against which he rails. Alluding to African-American blackness proved a timely means of illustrating the inequities and hypocrisies of British society when the author took advantage of renewed transnational interest in American social structure. Relations and interactions determine whether a character assumes a white or black role in a given situation. *Hard Times* thus functions as a novel featuring many mulatto characters who are both black *and* white, who may sometimes pass as one or the other, whom society sometimes forces to be one or the other, and who can never escape being both. Such an existence in liminal space, not the extremes that create it, forms Dickens's primary concern. Tom in blackface at the novel's end, then, illustrates not distortion but reality. The grotesquerie had, in fact, occurred when artificial systems imposed a forced whiteness on Tom.

Reframing the discussion of black and white characters in *Hard Times* requires amendment to Sullivan's binaries and attention to the ambiguity introduced by the novel. In my estimation, the members of the working class are the ones Dickens portrays as consistently black, those subject to the soot and grease and dirt of Coketown like Stephen Blackpool and the Sleary crew. I assert that Dickens intends only one absolutely white character in the novel: the appropriately named Harthouse, a shell or container made for

housing a heart but lacking that useful item, represents an idle, landed aristocracy that assumes superiority but practices parasitism. Harthouse's poor fit in Coketown and unceremonious ejection from the plot illustrates that "white" is a category holding little immediate interest for Dickens; the black-and-white bourgeois middle class, after all, largely comprised his audience, and their relations to the "black" working class comprise the novel's theme. The real comparisons made in the novel occur between the black characters (both the consistently black and the mulattos who pass for black) and the mulatto characters who pass for white. The chiaroscuro effected by passing becomes, in Dickens's hand, a strategy for illustrating the destructive coupling of middle-class ambition and Utilitarian hardness. Gradgrind and Bounderby, then, may not simply be lumped into a category of pure whiteness because the novel graphically emphasizes their unmasking, the failure of passing.

In combining the analogous social constructs of race and class, Dickens allows human interaction to determine the membership of each character in one or another group. By avoiding a too reductive philosophy of black and white characters and embracing the ambiguity of biological blackness, Dickens effectively illustrates the detrimental potential of categorization in the first place.[21] His presentation of Coketown society (with the exception of the interloper Harthouse) thus focuses on the catch-all mulatto condition; categories arise only when certain characters choose to create categories and segregate themselves:

Black, Mulatto/Black	Mulatto/White
Real	Assumed
Artless	Artificial
Interrogative	Declarative
Giving	Taking
Inclusive	Exclusive
Near-sighted	Far-sighted

Table 2.2. Categories created within *Hard Times*

The intended irony of this table, of course, is that the text rebels against tabulation. Categorization occurs because the second column wishes to distinguish itself from the first; members of the first column resist being "set forth in a tabular form" (71). Some similarities to Sullivan's binaries immediately stand out, particularly as regards her designations of black as natural and white as anti-natural. While the terms I use, "real" and "assumed," might seem to carry the same connotations, a distinction remains in that the mulatto/white category creates its own state and is not inherently anti-natural; artlessness and artificiality prove likewise distinguishable. Each term describing the mulatto characters trying to pass as white illustrates a key aspect of the pretence they undertake. A declarative stance shuts down the human tendency to question and thus defines the world on its own deficient terms. Increased acquisition and reduced outlay creates a camouflage of possessions, status, and wealth. Inclusiveness allows for variety and coexistence, while exclusivity tends to follow from insecurity and overcompensation. The final distinction I make between the near-sighted and far-sighted characters has to do with an ability to see members of a community as individual human beings rather than as a blur in the distance.

Undoubtedly the most obvious black character, even in name, Stephen Blackpool was in Leavis's estimation one of Dickens's weaker creations in the dramatis personae of *Hard Times*. The critic noted that Blackpool comes across as "too good," a martyr, and an Uncle Tom in both the literary and modern colloquial senses (245). Sullivan, even as she includes him in her black category, notes that his tendency to be "overwhelmed by forces he can neither cope with nor command" (7). More recently, Anne Humphreys has argued that Stephen exists as a plot device whose death the novel demands in fulfillment of its unfulfilled marriage theme (187). Stephen does indeed recapture the humility and acceptance of adversity characteristic of Uncle Tom, and his tragic life provides a similar lesson and cautionary tale. Like Uncle Tom, he shows no fear in questioning unjust systems or taking on the "superiors" who uphold them. Like Uncle Tom, he accepts the pain and suffering that follow and even takes on a portion of the hardship allotted to others. The minute dynamics of Stephen's confrontations with other characters, however, speak loudly and eloquently even as the plot consumes him.

The scene of his trying to quell the trade unionists after Slackbridge's agitating foreshadows Stephen's demise. Slackbridge, despite cultivating petty celebrity status as a champion of the working man, proves actually to be a champion of systems (trade unions, in this case, which Dickens despised) and not far removed from Gradgrindism. Dickens directly hints at such an allegiance by portraying Slackbridge as machine-like even in his smallest actions, noting that he wiped "his hot forehead always from left to right, and never in the reverse way" (108). When Stephen takes the podium, however, his language avoids any system of standard grammar and he speaks to the workers instead of at them:[22]

> "Haply," he said, turning his furrowed face slowly about, that he might as it were individually address the whole audience, those both near and distant; "haply, when this question has been tak'n up and discoosed, there'll be a threat to turn out if I'm let to work among yo. I hope I shall die ere ever such a time cooms, and I shall work solitary among yo unless it cooms—truly, I mun do 't, my friends; not to brave yo, but to live. I ha nobbut work to live by; and wheerever can I go, I who ha worked sin I were no heighth at aw, in Coketown heer? I mak' no complaints o' bein turned to the wa', o' bein outcasten and overlooken fro this time forrard, but hope I shall be let to work. If there is any right for me at aw, my friends, I think 'tis that." (110)

Notice Stephen's insistent near-sightedness here as he makes a personal connection with each of the listeners in the large crowd, forcing humanistic focus. In making the appeal that they not eject him from the town for refusing to join their ranks, Stephen uses an individual case to illustrate that unionization, as Dickens sees it, inevitably and ironically precedes division.[23] He echoes Sissy's invocation of the Golden Rule and cautions that fighting injustice of the masters with rebellion of the Hands lacks moral foundation: isolationism and inequality provide the foundations of both.

While Stephen represents unadulterated blackness in the novel, he provides only the first layer of Dickens's color-class argument; the second uses the mulatto condition and the internal juxtaposition it affords to explicate class mobility. From the very beginning we meet Sissy and Bitzer who, with education and opportunity falling in their way, undergo a whitening process meant to remove them from their former state of

blackness. Whereas Tom and Louisa are the children of a supremely "enlightened" father and their education coincides with the perceived assumption of birthright, fortune has smiled on the star pupil and class dunce of the Gradgrind classroom. Thomas benevolently lets Sissy into his own home and thus elevates her, as he believes, from the common stock of circus folk who form her world. Bitzer's elderly mother's unfortunate dependence on him and his usually deferential tone allow us to infer that he comes from a background of want not untinged with Coketown blackness. A road to advancement opens when he finds favor with his teachers.

For literary purposes, both have become mulattos, but the manners in which the Bitzer and Sissy mediate between black and white vary to a startling degree. The opening schoolroom scene uses sunlight almost as x-ray, illuminating the discrepancy between how the two characters manifest color:

> The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely white-washed room, irradiated Sissy. For, the boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of the room on the sunny side, came in for the beginning of the sunbeam, of which Bitzer, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. But whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun when it shone upon her, the

> boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little color he ever possessed. (7)

In the full brightness of the sunlight, Sissy's dark features appear more pronounced: enlightenment, as brought about by education and social elevation, does not divest Sissy of her blackness but makes her more radiant for the contrast. Bitzer, subject to the same advantages, will become (or project as) whiter than his natural state. Sissy, while she fails miserably in the classroom and in absorbing Gradgrindism, learns the far more valuable lesson of being able to reconcile the black and white parts of her selfhood. Bitzer, in trying to pass for white, abandons his blackness or, more directly, shuts it up in the workhouse with an allowance of so much tea per quarter.

A stark instance of the difference between the two students surrounds the questions of sexuality, love, and issue: as with the threatened flight of the Harris Family in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the action of *Hard Times* occurs in a liminal sexual space. Most of the relationships in the novel inhibit rather than encourage sexuality. Louisa and Bounderby's marriage remains fruitless and affectionless after many months. Louisa and Harthouse never consummate their dalliance. Stephen and Mrs. Blackpool are estranged. Stephen and Rachel find social custom in the way of any union. And Tom's closest alliances are his vampyric dependences on Louisa and Harthouse.[24] Sissy Jupe, however, exhibits maternal instincts from our earliest acquaintances with her, taking care of a put-upon father and eventually becoming a mother to the younger children while Mrs. Gradgrind languishes on her drawn-out deathbed. To Little Jane (and, we infer, to young Adam Smith and Malthus), Sissy becomes an oppositional parental force to Thomas's Gradgrindism. Thomas, in fact, undertakes preventive action when Sissy enters his

household, attempting to stamp out her blackness with the peremptory edict "From this time you begin your history" (40). Sissy's pervasive influence, however, begins to take effect on the household, and even Thomas finds her undeniable when he notes grudging affection for the unfathomable creature who resists the imposed whiteness of categorization, facts, and figures. Despite her failures in mathematical and scientific realms, Sissy's resistance to Gradgrindism equips her to succeed as parent where Thomas had failed. Her description of Signor Jupe's role in the Horse-riding, while not the distorted and generalized answer that Thomas seeks, retains focus on her working-class roots and refuses to gloss over the soot and grime from which she comes. Her preferences for horsey wallpaper and flowery carpet, despite the factual impossibility of two-dimensional flora and fauna, demonstrate indomitable imagination, the foundation of sympathy and empathy.[25] Thus armed, Sissy can nurture the younger Gradgrinds and compensate for the deficiencies so tragically noticeable in the education of Tom and Louisa. As Gallagher reminds us, Dickens made the very conscious choice not to give Sissy a love interest in the novel, making a point of highlighting that decision in his notes (*Body Economic* 71). The prolonged denial of romantic love to Sissy, despite her status as the novel's lone successful parent, only places greater emphasis on her capacity to love.

Bitzer, Sissy's counterpoint, fills his loveless niche admirably and even seems to revel in his sterility. In consultation with Mrs. Sparsit on the moral and social deficiencies of Coketown, Bitzer enumerates the many ways in which he has risen above the common stock. In addition to having no taste for recreation, brotherhood and solidarity, and anything of the venison and turtle-soup flavor, Bitzer boasts of his ability to find satisfaction only in—and, perhaps the mischievous Dickens suggests, with—himself:

> "I am sure we are constantly hearing, ma'am, till it becomes quite nauseous, concerning their wives and families," said Bitzer. "Why, look at me, ma'am! I don't want a wife and family. Why should they?"
>
> "Because they are improvident," said Mrs. Sparsit.
>
> "Yes, ma'am," returned Bitzer. That's where it is. If they were more provident and less perverse, ma'am, what would they do? They would say, "While my hat covers my family," or "while my bonnet covers my family"—as the case might be, ma'am—"I have only one to feed, and that's the person I most like to feed." (91-92)

The selfish philosophy that precludes any possibility of issue inevitably supplies its own critique: Bitzer's hardness translates into a lack of productive sexual desire, and the lack of genetic continuation mirrors the bleak or non-existent future that awaits proponents of his philosophy. Five years before Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, Dickens used Bitzer to render a natural selection judgment in social, moral, and intellectual terms. The main action of the novel serves as a proving ground for the characters and their systems (or lack of systems). Bitzer believes that he makes a smart, practical choice in denying himself a family, but on a meta-fictional level the narrative has denied him the right to futurity because of his flawed philosophy. In what amounts to the epilogue, however, we find Sissy mother and wife in a happy, bustling family—a positive picture of a thriving future.

The proposed framework for differentiating between the mulatto characters who embrace their blackness and those who wish to pass as white would seem to precipitate a very troubling anomaly: where does Josiah Bounderby fit? Having already established

him as a fierce proponent of Gradgrindism philosophy-wise, we must reconcile those tenets with Bounderby's insistence upon his exceedingly humble roots. In painful detail he describes his former shabby apparel and humble haunts: "I hadn't a shoe to my foot. As to a stocking, I didn't know such a thing by name. I passed the day in a ditch, and the night in a pigsty. That's the way I spent my tenth birthday. Not that a ditch was new to me, for I was born in a ditch" (15). And we learn of abandonment, and of cruel and dissipated elders:

> "My mother let me to my grandmother," said Bounderby; "and according to the best of my remembrance, my grandmother was the wickedest and the worst old woman that ever lived. If I got a little pair of shoes, by chance, she would take 'em off and sell 'em for drink. Why, I have known that grandmother of mine lie in her bed and drink her fourteen glasses of liquor before breakfast!" (16)

Pitiable lad! But enterprising, ingenious, and talented man to have risen from a background of such squalor and degradation to become the Coketown stalwart and champion of Fact he did. Bounderby exudes rags-to-riches bombast and pride in his past, until the novel uncovers the truth behind his sensational yarns. Initially, his actions seem a celebration of those rags, or at very least a refusal to disavow them. Is the fact that neither feels shame in poverty a tie that binds Bounderby and Sissy, then?

Delineating the differences between the two on a score of characteristics proves no difficult task, for a pair more unlike in temperament and sympathy might scarcely be found. But the mulatto framework seems to break down if one essential particular—identification with the black lower classes—demands positioning Josiah Bounderby as

akin to Sissy Jupe. However, even before the reader learns of his affectation, Bounderby's disingenuousness undermines the stock from which he claims to proceed. Bounderby claims to be originally black, as put-upon and perhaps more so than Stephen Blackpool himself. Despite words to the contrary during our acquaintance with Bounderby, his actions and situation project whiteness (and an unmistakable aroma of the turtle soup he decries). What process has effected this marvelous transformation, a veritable sublimation between two non-concurrent states? Bitzer provides, in increments, a manual for his own gradual whitening that details the steps necessary for him to pass and advance in society. Bounderby's change, however, is drastic enough to prevent any identification with the embodiment of blackness: Stephen, summoned to an audience with the Bounderbys, must light upon Louisa's face to find his "natural refuge" (114). Nowhere does the Coketown impresario explain his precipitous rise beyond emphasizing its enormity.

The reader eventually learns that no explanation has appeared because the improbable transformation never actually took place; meanwhile, the unexplained gap between Bounderby's affected origin and real affluence in the present day sets him up as the novel's most pernicious case of assumed whiteness. Beneath the pretence, Bounderby is simply Bitzer writ large, a mulatto-passing-for-white extraordinaire and a character who insists upon categorization and separation from those beneath him. But he ingeniously disguises the process and pre-empts criticism by appropriating blackness. Could Dickens be using Bounderby here to challenge that most central of American myths, the Franklinian ideal that any American regardless of background or adversity could rise to become anything he desires? Indeed, Ben Franklin's famous embellishments

in his *Autobiography* are of the Bounderby variety, and vice versa. Along the same lines, what Dickens considered the idealism of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the face of American racial realities might have inspired a character who demonstrates the destructiveness of myth. Just as the American rags-to-riches myth has been used historically (and still) to defend and disguise anti-humanistic practice, Bounderby protects artificial boundaries from questioning and censure by performing a farce to disguise their existence.[26]

Ultimately, Dickens rejected "Black and White" as the title for his novel; unfortunately, none of the surviving correspondence between the author and his confidantes or advisers provides insight on why he considered and rejected that title. As Edgar Johnson outlined in his authoritative biography, settling upon a title usually constituted a pre-condition of Dickens's composition process for any novel—he could not begin work in earnest unless guided by an appropriate project heading. "Black and White," we may surmise, possibly presented some conceptual obstacle that could not be overcome. That obstacle, did it exist, lay in the inability of the conjunction to fulfill its duty and mediate between the extremes that border it. In his assessment of the Stowe-Denman incident and Denman's misreading of *Bleak House*, Brahma Chaudhuri, following George H. Ford, notes that Dickens's championing of the working class was nation-specific:

> It is commonly believed that Dickens reacted very strongly against injustice to the common man; he was always concerned for the afflictions and sufferings of the poor people. But… it should be remembered that Dickens 'was not so much the friend of the common man as the friend of

> the common Englishman.' It would be difficult indeed to imagine a black Jo in *Bleak House*…. (9)

Dickens, however, did not hesitate to employ the rich symbolism of biological blackness as literary technique both in his championing of that common Englishman and in the endeavor to rehabilitate his reputation. By claiming—and refusing to disclaim—blackness, Dickens took advantage of the slavery debate in illustrating the hard times that affect human lives.

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[1] Harry Stone credits Dickens with the authorship of the opening paragraph and "the subsequent sections referring to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" on pp. 437, 438, and 439 (*Uncollected Writings* II.433).

[2] To Stowe herself, Dickens wrote a warm letter in July 1852; he tempered his praise, however, by opining that there is "no warrant for making out the African race to be a great race, or for supposing the future destinies of the world to lie in that direction" (*Letters* 715). To the Duke of Devonshire he called it "an uncommonly fine book, and full of highest power," but still noted that he didn't "know whether Uncle Tom is a little too celestial" (787). In the famous letter to Mrs. Richard Watson, he notes many fine points of characterization in the novel and says that it is "worthy of its reputation" but again hints of flaws, not the least of which is imitation (807-08).

[3] Joel Brattin's valuable study of the *American Notes for General Circulation* manuscript highlights one of the most notorious instances. In his chapter on American slavery, Dickens borrows abundantly from an anti-slavery pamphlet by one Theodore D. Weld without proper (or any) attribution. The apology Brattin attempts for Dickens tends to dilute Dickens's charge of unscrupulousness on Stowe's part: "Dickens wanted to make the strongest case against slavery he could. Perhaps he feared that admitting he was reprinting advertisements Weld had collected, or presenting arguments Weld had offered, would diminish their power and effectiveness in changing the minds of his readers" (Brattin 157-58).

[4] For the most detailed accounts of the Lord Denman episode, see Stone's "Charles Dickens and Harriet Beecher Stowe" and Chaudhuri's "Dickens and the Question of Slavery."

[5] The first of the six *Standard* articles, appearing less than a week before the *Household Words* review, makes the direct attack: "The disgusting picture of a woman who pretends zeal for the happiness of Africa, and is constantly employed in securing a life of misery to her own children, is a laboured work of art in his present exhibition" (5). In the articles that followed, Denman would make barbed references to "North American Slavery," the banner under which the review of *Uncle Tom* had been published in *Household Words*.

[6] Consider the following excerpt:

> Mrs. Stowe might have learned a more judicious mode of treating a subject from the pictures of Mrs. Dombey and Carker, of Lady Dedlock and Joe, of the Smallweeds—above all, of Mrs. and Miss Jellaby [sic.]. Uncle Tom ought not to have come to his death by flogging. A railway collision, such as disposed conveniently of Mr. Carker, would have been more artistic.... Did Mrs. Stowe never hear of Mr. Ralph Nickleby being called to repentance by a black cloud, and Mr. Scrooge's heart—hardened by a long life of avarice—being softened by a Christmas dinner; and Mr. Anthony Chuzzlewit renewing his youthful spirit and vigour, of his own mere motion, simply because his renovation was required for the catastrophe? Such gentle gradations of incident and character, so finely pencilled, nicely shaded, and delicately coloured, would have clothed her work with a harmonious air of probability that is quite destroyed by her own violent extremes and exaggeration. (Denman 18-19)

[7] Stowe had written to Denman in early 1853 to acknowledge his kind comments about her in the *Standard* articles, private correspondence, or both; the letter makes no direct reference to Dickens or to Denman's comparisons, but there was hardly a graceful way to broach those subjects. Instead, she simply thanks Denman "more for the noble and hearty interest which you feel in this sacred and suffering cause, than for the very kind opinion which you have been kind enough to express of me" (MS Huntington Library HM24162).

[8] The editors of Dickens's letters note that the multiple references to a "mission" are "[n]o doubt an echo of Mrs. Jellyby—and the comparisons still being made between *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Bleak House*" (77n.6).

[9] Sean Purchase references the discmofort of the scene's aborted confrontation: "[I]n spite of their typically hushed, uncomfortable tones and Tapley's admonishment not to 'look' at Cicero's body, he and Chuzzlewit ogle at and 'speak' for it throughout the scene" (10).

[10] "Thomas" and "Tom" apply to both father and son throughout *Hard Times*. For the sake of clarity in my own analysis, "Thomas" will generally refer to Thomas Gradgrind, Sr., and "Tom" to Thomas Gradgrind, Jr. The reader should note, however, that the novel hinges on the confusion and ambiguity surrounding the names.

[11] Jean Ferguson Carr develops the subjugation of Mrs. Gradgrind in further detail in "Writing as a Woman: Dickens, *Hard Times*, and Feminine Discourses." Gesa Stedman proposes that "Dickens firmly endorses the typical view that women are the educators of the heart, if one lets them assume that role," but that Mrs. Gradgrind was an instance of Dickens challenging or testing the boundaries of this rubric (148). Dickens's working notes for *Hard Times* show that he debated whether Mr. Gradgrind should have a wife or a sister: "Mrs Gradgrind—or Miss? Wife or sister? Wife. [last word double-underlined]" (253). The "Mrs.," obviously, became an important element of the characterization.

[12] The names "Louis" and "Louisa" also carry the traditional meanings of war and conflict; in the Dickensian canon, is there a more conflicted character than Louisa Gradgrind?

[13] In the suppositious beings here mentioned, perhaps there are other echoes of *Uncle Tom*: George Shelby and George Harris might precede a George Gradgrind, Augustine St. Clare might approximate Augustus Gradgrind, and John Bird might find a fancying counterpart in John Gradgrind. The only mention of a Joseph in *Uncle Tom*, however, is of the Biblical personage.

[14] Barnes's descriptor for the schoolchildren—"decontextualized"—is especially apt considering the ways in which so many students of the school, Louisa and Tom primary among them, experience symbolic deaths and seen to fall out of the text, leaving only Sissy (and perhaps young Jane) standing at the novel's end with any real life left (236). Collins points out the futility of contemporary criticisms that the Gradgrind schoolroom was a sensationalized or inaccurate picture of existing pedagogical practices; he notes that "Dickens was, of course, using these opening school chapters to express not only his criticism of some educational practices but also the larger themes of the book" (150).

[15] Coketown, of which Thomas Gradgrind is the emblem, receives much the same treatment in its initial description; although the clauses are in the active voice, the anastrophic and anaphoral syntax achieves a similar effect of reducing the agency of the subjects: "Then came the Teetotal Society…. Then came the chemist and druggist…. Then came Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby…" (22). In his most famous use of anaphora, the opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens avoids the machine-like whirring in a number of ways: first, while each clause begins with "It was," the verb "to be" is weak, and the repetitive stress falls on the subject complements instead of the verb. He thus limits the repetition to pairs in a point-counterpoint style and, in possibly the most poetic opening of any English novel, resists the onset of any modicum of monotony.

[16] Ketabigan provides a useful and entertaining explication of this trope in "'Melancholy Mad Elephants': Affect and the Animal Machine in *Hard Times*." The elephant, she argues, was "celebrate[d]… for its 'sagacity, obedience, and docility.' Renowned for its loyalty and geniality, the pachyderm displayed 'a regularity of disposition which seems almost mechanical'" (658). The large animal, as a metaphor for the machines of Coketown, provides a complementary backdrop for the robotic and machine-like residents of the town.

[17] As Adrian discusses, the reduction of human life to constituent parts, the sites of oppression, had been particularly galling to Dickens since his first American visit: "Dickens found particularly horrifying the publicity given the blemishes whereby the fugitives could be identified: the frequent references to cropped ears, missing teeth, broken arms and legs, and brands of red-hot irons—all revolted him" (318)

[18] A.E. Dyson, in discussing the lack of Dickensian flair in *Hard Times*, suggests that "all imaginative writing and creation, all fancies strange or consoling, and all mediators of such wares, Dickens included, are exiled from the Grandgrind and Bounderby world" (187). Such starkness only throws the moments of rhetorical and musical brilliance, into greater relief and, intentionally, inspires deeper regret when those moments are absent.

[19] This was a popular theme during the period, most notably in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, in which a workers' union's enthusiasm progresses to zealotry and pushes a man to suicide. In *Hard Times*, Dickens emphasizes the point in what he presents as the misguided trade unionism of the Hands that results in Stephen's being sent to Coventry.

[20] Friedman, without discussing the Stowe influence, notes the power of repeated motifs, ideas, and effects in Dickens's fiction: "Repetition, the most basic means of gaining emphasis, commands our attention, since we instructively compare the later version with the first, watching for deviations and wondering why material is being duplicated" (2).

[21] Note that Dickens's positions on race are inconsistent on both synchronic and diachronic levels. In examining the racial components of color symbolism in *Hard Times*, I do not intend to create a definitive statement on Dickens and blackness because such a statement is impossible. The author's attitudes fluctuated greatly throughout his life, and the approval he elsewhere expressed for colonization projects such as Liberia would seem to be at odds with *Hard Times*'s philosophy opposing socio-racial categorization. It is. This essay builds off the Stowe-Denman context and focuses on a single moment in history and a single text, making no larger claims.

[22] Non-standard dialects, of course, exist as valid linguistic systems, possessing grammatical and ungrammatical elements of their own. In the era before modern sociolinguistic thought, however, Dickens chose to emphasize Stephen's lack of linguistic sophistication and his words' deviation from (rather than subscription to) a norm.

[23] Roughly two months before the serialization of *Hard Times* began, Dickens wrote the article "On Strike" for Household Words; that article presented what was essentially the prospectus for the Stephen Blackpool elements of *Hard Times*:

> In any aspect in which it can be viewed, this strike and lock-out is a deplorable calamity. In its waste of time, in its waste of a great people's energy, in its waste of wages, in its waste of wealth that seeks to be employed, in its encroachment on the means of many thousands who are laboring from day to day, in the gulf of separation it hourly deepens between those whose interests must be understood to be identical or must be destroyed, it is a great national affliction. (*HW* VIII.203, 558)

[24] Catherine Gallagher succinctly notes, "Wherever marriage plots might have begun (in the story of Sissy Jupe, for example, or that of Stephen Blackpool and Rachel [sic.], they are suppressed" (*Body Economic* 71). Harry Stone points out the non-normative and non-productive sexual tension between Tom and Louisa Gradgrind:

> [S]exual passion is, by definition, not a consideration, for brother-sister love is free of any sexual taint. This immaculate purity breaks down occasionally, most notably in a bedroom scene in *Hard Times* between Tom and Louisa Gradgrind, but Tom's exploitive love and Louisa's self-wounding love are both products of a perverted starvation of their emotions. (*Night Side* 398)

[25] Sissy demonstrates an ability for abstract thought or, to put it another way, can think outside herself:

> Sissy knows that the question of floral carpet is not the question of flowers: the flowers she would walk on are not the vegetation she sees in the meadows outside Coketown. In contrast, it is as abstract pictures of what is pleasant and pretty, rather than as representations of the things themselves, that carpets allow Sissy to fancy herself into the equation and rise to their defense. (Lupton 156)

[26] My analysis contradicts Patrick Brantlinger's assertion that Bounderby is a weak or moderate destructive force, more notable for bumbling than for vindictive action (279). Considered as a racially inflected symbol, Bounderby represents the very root of the class warfare that Dickens criticizes.

CHAPTER THREE
Anatomy of an Afterthought: Charles Kingsley, the "Accursed Slavery Question," and the Quadroon's Function in *Two Years Ago*

In her 1974 biography of Charles Kingsley, Susan Chitty observed that the novelist, in spite of tireless efforts to alleviate the suffering of his parishioners and of the underprivileged in general, found the stark evidence of that suffering easier to combat than to countenance:

> [H]e was absurdly easily upset; as a grown man he was never able to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* because it was "so terribly sad." For this tender-heartedness he was teased unmercifully. His nickname, according to his great-niece Gabriella Vallings, was Cave, on account, she told me, of his large mouth, which seemed all the larger as it gaped in search of an elusive word. (Chitty 44)

Chitty's citation of Kingsley's reaction to *Uncle Tom* deserves some examination. In a letter to Elizabeth Gaskell on the subject of her *Ruth*, Kingsley noted that he had a fair idea of the story's gist, but he had "read only a little... of the book; for the same reason I cannot read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or *Othello* or *The Bride of Lammermoor*" (*Letters and Memories* I.370). Put on the spot for an opinion about a fellow author's work, Kingsley adopts a tone of affected graciousness, suggesting overpowered emotions upon confronting the novels' depictions of hardship. His clever half-apology for not reading *Ruth* puts it in the company of the most popular novel then on the market, a Shakespearean masterpiece, and a Walter Scott classic. This rhetorical flourish in 1853 and other similar avowals do not, however, offer compelling enough evidence that

Kingsley hadn't read *Uncle Tom* by the time he wrote his 1857 novel *Two Years Ago*, a work heavily indebted to Stowe's chiaroscuro strategies.

The publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* marked something of an existential crisis for Kingsley. The novel's instant popularity and wide acclaim to a degree that few had ever experienced inspired something of an inferiority complex in the Rector of Eversley. Kingsley had not enjoyed the dazzling success that met Dickens's *Pickwick* or would meet Eliot's *Adam Bede*, and even those two impressive debuts paled in comparison to *Uncle Tom*-mania.[1] Kingsley wasn't a person to envy fame for its own sake. But in the cases of his famous contemporaries, that fame became a conduit to the social reform Kingsley wanted to effect. At best, Kingsley's writing was competent with flashes of artistry; more often, however, stilted and didactic prose detracted from the finer points of his work.[2] By mid-1852, Kingsley found himself announcing (with a little of a schoolboy's impetuous passion) a new primary outlet for his literary exertions:

> I could not write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and I can write poetry.... there is no denying it. I do feel a different being when I get into metre—I feel like an otter in the water, instead of an otter ashore. He can run fast enough ashore, and keep the hounds at a tearing gallop, as my legs found this spring in Snowdonia, but when he takes water, then he becomes beautiful, full of divine grace, and exuberance of power. (*Letters and Memories* I.338)

Two things immediately become apparent in this letter written to his friend J.M. Ludlow. First, Kingsley likely read more of *Uncle Tom* than he suggested to Mrs. Gaskell the following year. True, the almost universal kudos for Stowe contributed in large part to

rendering Kingsley the novelist a land-locked otter. But would he have really attributed a personal crisis to the novel—more directly, to Stowe's writing—without reading it first? And second, Kingsley possessed a very high opinion of Stowe herself, seeing her novel as fulfilling literature's potential for social change and achieving a goal that defined his own literary career. In this light particularly, the likelihood that Kingsley read (or re-read) *Uncle Tom* by the summer of 1856 is even greater.

In many respects that summer proved a busy and enjoyable one for the Kingsleys at Eversley. In addition to Kingsley's planned Snowden excursion with his friends Tom Hughes and Tom Taylor (so many Toms!), a number of guests would descend on the Rectory over the months. Most prominent among the visitors would be Stowe herself, along with her husband Calvin. Though few records of the visit survive, the fleeting references to it suggest that all parties enjoyed a happy time—a story very different to the strained niceties between the Dickenses and the Stowes three years earlier.[3] By this time, not only was Stowe renowned for *Uncle Tom*, but she had also achieved much success with *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dred*. Entertaining a literary celebrity of such stature and not having read her most famous work would have been an incredible breach of manners for any host, and doubly so for one who was a novelist in his own right.[4]

The evidence at hand, furthermore, shows that not only is it very likely that Kingsley read the novel, but that he considered its themes and strategies at length while composing *Two Years Ago*. Ultimately Kingsley drew heavily upon Stowe in presenting his own story of societal injustice, appending the story of escaped quadroon-cum-actress La Signora Maria Cordifiamma (née Marie Lavington) to the main plot. Additionally, at various points throughout *Two Years Ago*, Kingsley's characters make explicit reference

to *Uncle Tom* and its own cast, at one point invoking the figure of a "political Topsy" to refer to Britain's rocky road to democracy and equality. *Punch* had previously brought up the "political Topsy" in reference to Benjamin Disraeli specifically, but the character Stangrave extrapolates the metaphor (see Fig. 1). Even beyond invocations of the text, Kingsley's use of black-white juxtapositions suggests a technical milestone for the writer who, like Dickens, had a complicated and mutable relationship with race and blackness throughout his life.

As many critics have observed, diverse and sometimes contradictory sympathies drove Kingsley's life as a social reformer and commentator. Brenda Colloms provides an apt description of a nuanced political philosophy that teetered between conservative Tory politics and socialism:

> By temperament and experience he was an old-fashioned Radical Tory. He criticised the Whig Party in its long years of office for protecting the capitalists who, as he saw them, cared only to increase their profits. On the other hand, a properly educated and responsible Tory aristocracy, he argued, would take its rightful place in a just scheme of society. He mistrusted democracy as a system of government, and thought that the failure of the Working Men's Associations, which he and other Christian Socialists promoted, was due to the lack of education among working men, a lack which Kingsley reckoned would take two generations to overcome. (Colloms 19)

Fig. 3.1. Caricature of Benjamin Disraeli as “The Political Topsy,” published in *Punch*.

Kingsley worked tirelessly to win concessions for the underrepresented and uneducated. He did not, however, believe in an egalitarian society in which those people (at least in their current states) would have the same access to political and legislative power as an already established aristocracy.[5] Like many of his contemporaries, his brand of socialism (or the means of achieving it) harkened back to a basic feudalism in which the aristocratic few bore a tangible social burden in the welfare of the common many; his writing, preaching, and activism were personal fulfillments of that ideal. An already precarious balance—advocacy that stops short of equality—becomes even more complicated when one introduces blackness to the equation. Indeed, the slavery question played as large a role in determining Kingsley's own position in society as it did in shaping his ideas of social justice thereafter.

WHAT THE AUTHOR SAW IN THE SLAVERY QUESTION

Kingsley's maternal grandfather, scion of a West Indian plantation-owning clan, returned to Britain in his later years and raised a family. Mary Lucas, the author's mother, would have had her interests settled in a Barbadian sugarcane plantation after marriage. History intervened. With the abolition of slavery in the 1830s, much of what Charles and his siblings might have counted upon as their inheritance and birthright evaporated.[6] The specter of "that hussy, Dame Might-Have-Been," as *Two Years Ago* protagonist Tom Thurnall would say, never quite left Kingsley alone. In a letter to his fast friend Tom Hughes, with whom he would famously break, Kingsley writes with marked impatience and annoyance about the National Freedman's Aid Union: "What do they ask our money

for, over and above? I am personally shy of giving mine. The negro has had all I ever possessed, for emancipation ruined me"; he tempers the statement, not without some acidity, by noting he "would be ruined a second time, if emancipation had to be done over again.... But I have paid my share of the great bill... and don't see myself called on to pay other men's!" (*Letters and Memories* II.258). The tone of the letter suggests Kingsley's belief that he had, perhaps, paid *more* than his share. Other events, too, demonstrated Kingsley's distaste for black and brown peoples. The split with Hughes and a number of his other liberal friends came about during the Governor Eyre controversy, when Kingsley aligned himself staunchly with Carlyle and other supporters of Eyre, whom he described as "a brave and good man, doing his best under terrible difficulties" (*Letters and Memories* II.235). Some years earlier, he had aggravated another crony, J.M. Ludlow, by his too ready defense of the Rajah Brooke, then under scrutiny for cruel and inhumane acts in Borneo; Colloms observes that Kingsley "often behaved in this manner, yielding to a weakness which dismayed his friends" (122).

While Kingsley's deep-seated prejudices frequently colored his shaky social liberalism, his relationship with blackness by no means remained consistent throughout his life. Queen Emma of the Sandwich Islands presented an intriguing paradox of royalty without Caucasian packaging; during the Queen's visit to England, Charles and Fanny found her enchanting and were delighted by the acquaintance. Robert Bernard Martin's biography suggests that Kingsley's reverence for royalty in general accounted in large part for such feelings, as was likely the case, but the contradiction the Queen embodied in the author's mind could not but have made him consider questions of race more closely. Nearer the end of his life, Kingsley made a famous trip to the West Indies, and in

addition to a physical confrontation with the region that held such great symbolic significance for him, he would also confront the very foundations of his prejudice. The journey, recounted in the aptly titled *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies*, climaxed in a visit to Kingsley's friend Arthur Hamilton Gordon. Then Governor of Trinidad, Gordon "held liberal and progressive views on colonial administration, disapproving of the notion that native races existed in order to be exploited by whites.... Kingsley's ideas on colonial administration were unquestionably modified as a result of contact with Gordon" (Colloms 315). Furthermore, the experience perhaps allowed Kingsley, years after the infamous war of words with Cardinal Newman and the *Apologia Pro Sua Vita*, to come to terms with another of his *bêtes noires*, Catholicism. Noting that Catholicism provided the primary civilizing (by which he would have meant Europeanizing) influence on the colony, he does not fail to give "Romanism" the credit and suggests that the religion played a similar civilizing role in Europe during the Middle Ages. This late in his life, then, Kingsley adopts his most liberal perspective on questions of race and blackness: the non-whites of the colony were still inferior in his mind to the white citizens of Europe, but he had approached an opinion that nurture and not nature accounted for the difference.

The process proves all the more difficult for today's reader since even Kingsley's friends and contemporaries had a hard time pinning down his conceptions of blackness. In addition to the fallings-out over Brooke, Eyre, and the like, a classic example of the confusion that arose over his opinions occurred at the onset of the American Civil War, in which many assumed the writer of *Two Years Ago* would be a staunch supporter of the North. Instead, his sympathies lay firmly with the South. What becomes clear is that

sometimes Kingsley's prejudices were counterbalanced by people, events, and experiences that inclined him more favorably to non-whites; at other times, other influences took his opinions in the opposite direction. As with Dickens, Kingsley's racial attitudes did not remain consistent throughout life. Unlike Dickens, who became increasingly conservative as he grew older, Kingsley adjusted his opinions and attitudes frequently and dramatically; for better or worse, his earnestness and conviction in the moment made him blind to any want of consistency. The most consistent statement one might make about Kingsley on race is that he displaced his regrets about lost inheritance to satisfy his conscience—a progressive social reformer couldn't very well lament the dissolution of slavery, so feelings of resentment shifted, and blackness sometimes became a scapegoat. But as we observe in the Queen Emma instance, exceptions existed.

The Stowes' visit to Eversley in the summer of 1856 offered one occasion on which Kingsley's philosophical opposition to slavery reached its zenith. Despite his long-harbored prejudices, the slavery issue was one that at its basic level represented what Kingsley saw as humanity's worst excesses. Stowe, whom he revered as a remarkable author and an eloquent voice against the institution, engaged Kingsley's instincts to champion the downtrodden and destitute. Indeed, Kingsley the social reformer thrived that summer while working on *Two Years Ago*. Its plot focused heavily on the theme of sanitary reform and sanitary education, particularly as it related to rural areas. The novel required intricate weaving of many themes: class warfare, *noblesse oblige*, scientific facts (such as existed) surrounding cholera, and the role of the artist (as much a meta-textual as a textual question). We know Kingsley discussed the work in progress with friends, and many allusions to it appear in his correspondence; with Stowe at Eversley, how could the

two authors not talk about forthcoming projects? As it turned out, Stowe could add quite a lot to a discussion about class and cholera.

During the 1849 cholera epidemic in America, the Stowes were living in Cincinnati and the family had just welcomed a beautiful baby boy, Charlie. Born at a time when Harriet enjoyed particularly good health, Charlie's own health and temperament contrasted favorably with the more difficult periods of infancy his older siblings had experienced. The darling of the house, however, would spend only a short time with his family. As cholera continued its western course, Cincinnati could not escape. More upscale areas like that in which the Stowes lived enjoyed the luxuries of ample space and cleanliness, and the disease initially limited itself to the city's more squalid recesses. As such, the first victims turned out to be the free blacks who occupied the shack towns of Cincinnati: poverty, social segregation, and poor sanitation went hand in hand. But cholera, as disease so often does, played the role of equalizer. Stowe's biographer Hedrick recounts that the comings and goings of black servants eventually delivered the horrors of the disease to more affluent neighborhoods (190). Little Charlie Stowe fell victim. The disease had a mortality rate of around fifty percent during the great epidemics of the nineteenth century, and the devastated parents could do little but look on as it progressed to the horrific stage of collapse and eventually claimed their child's life. The event, and the social issues that underlay it, accounted in part for Stowe's passion in writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as she might readily have shared with her colleague famous for his exploits in sanitary reform.

After the Stowes' stay at Eversley, Kingsley turned again to *Two Years Ago* and began to work the La Cordifiamma subplot into the already knotty novel. Apart from a

short preliminary section set in the present day, the action of *Two Years Ago* actually begins in the mid-to-late 1830s.[7] We first meet protagonist Tom Thurnall in his role as one of his father's two apprentices. A rugged, hearty country boy, he works happily in the medical practice while enjoying life in the country. John Briggs, the second apprentice, finds such an existence unbearable and harbors dreams of writing poetry and moving in high society. Both young men leave their hometown shortly after, Tom setting out in search of fortune and adventure, and Briggs absconding in disgrace. Years elapse, and we return to the titular two years ago. Through hard work and perseverance, Tom has accumulated a small fortune of fifteen hundred pounds, and he is returning home to care for his now ailing father when a powerful storm wrecks the ship. A courageous young woman, Grace Harvey, leads the effort to pull Tom from the sea, the ship's lone survivor. In the process, however, his money belt disappears. He decides to remain in the fishing town of Aberalva so that the money might be recovered; while there, he tries in vain to prepare the townspeople for what he realizes will be an inevitable visitation by the cholera and then remains to treat the afflicted.[8] A motley supporting cast peoples the Aberalva chapters, including the serene and mysterious Grace, whom Tom suspects of robbing him in the rescue despite her ethereal beauty and goodness; Lord Scoutbush, the aristocratic landlord, and his cousins Valencia and Lucia; the troubled clergyman Frank Headley, who must learn how to communicate with the common folk of his parish; Major Campbell, who pines for the married Lucia; and Lucia's poet husband Elsley Vavasour, whose acquaintance we have previously made under his original name John Briggs. Succeeding the cholera interlude, most of the novel's men go "Eastward ho!" to the

Crimea to serve in the war; Elsley loses a personal war with jealousy, pettiness, and dissipation (in every sense), and dies in his hometown.

The general plot of the novel, in short, includes a shipwreck, the outbreak of disease, the exploration of at least five romances (many of which are complicated by triangulation), the battle between the Anglican Church and dissenting sects, religious conversion experiences, and the advent of war in the Crimea.[9] Kingsley did not possess George Eliot's grace in managing hydra-like plots and enormous casts, but the story hangs together tolerably well despite sometimes clunky transitions. A considerable amount of work went into cobbling those diverse parts together, so his eleventh-hour addition of the Maria Cordifiamma sub-plot unsurprisingly rendered the finished product somewhat disjointed. We learn that Tom Thurnall, during his largely un-narrated adventures, had made a deathbed promise to an American friend that he would gain a beautiful quadroon slave, Marie Lavington, her freedom. Tom achieves the goal, and the freed Marie eventually goes on the stage as the dark Italian actress Maria Cordifiamma, breaking hearts on two continents. Lord Scoutbush vies for her hand, but her heart belongs to the apathetic American Stangrave, who eventually learns the evils of slavery through his love for Marie.

Kingsley himself admitted that the addition of the mulatto Cordifiamma did not achieve its full potential because of a shortcoming in his craftsmanship. Writing to George Brimley, Esq. in an undated letter, Kingsley responds either to a criticism tactfully leveled or to praise effusively offered:

> But you are right about Marie and Stangrave up to a certain point. They and their story were altogether an afterthought, and don't fit well. To have

> fitted perfectly, Marie ought to have been brought under Grace's influence (so, too, ought Lucia), as all of the characters are under that of Tom Thurnall—that the parallelism of the book would have been complete. (*Letters and Memories* II.40)

Kingsley does somewhat tie the plots together at the end, with Stangrave and Marie's marriage paralleling other successful unions—Tom and Grace, Frank and Valencia—but for the most part, only the slimmest threads connect the plots. Pamela Gilbert ignores Kingsley's judgment that "[t]he abolition storyline [is] completely eccentric to the main plotlines of the book," making an intriguing argument that the theme of slavery actually pervades the entire novel and "is the frame of the entire work" (161). Her grounds for considering slavery analogous to other systems of depravity in the novel allow her to extend and observe the soundness of the metaphors; she succeeds in unifying the plot more than Kingsley himself realized in its execution.[10] My own analysis, however, takes a step back to the "afterthought" explanation to consider the implications of Kingsley's unfulfilled parallelism. Parallelism and strategies of equivalence, I suggest, demonstrate how Kingsley adopted some Stowe techniques. The letter to Brimley outlines the author's primary means of working in the quadroon subplot: he would work to inspire the reader to consider the elements of the plot side by side, as they relate to Marie and her suggested equivalents. In hindsight, he decided that a Grace-Marie connection would have supplied, no pun intended, a coup-de-grace to the project. What remains for us to consider, however, is the work Kingsley put into creating the parallelism he references, especially since the structural concerns of appending the quadroon subplot approximate and amplify strategies of immediate, internal, and onomastic chiaroscuro that occur in *Two Years Ago*.

WHAT THE QUADROON SAW IN THE MIRROR

Kingsley scholars have frequently noted the author's tentativeness when writing about race and blackness. John Waller's important article about Kingsley's position on the American Civil War points out that the character Marie Lavington, while formally enslaved, by no means presents a black visage to the reader: "[T]he book had faced actual slavery hardly at all. Its only Negro was the ravishing quadroon who was really not Negro, as any of the wealthy or titled men who fell at her feet could have testified. The black slaves, men and brothers, remained a comfortably remote abstraction" (567).[11] Despite his accuracy about Kingsley's hesitancy to tackle blackness head-on, Waller neglects the nuance of the characterization. Yes, the chapter title in which the narrator properly introduces Marie alludes to that most familiar of images in the slavery debates, the Wedgwood icon—Dickens's initial experiments with incorporating slavery into his fiction had made a similar gesture. But Kingsley's own aversion to blackness proved formative in his novel's composition. In the case of Kingsley's reaction to Queen Emma, her blackness was colored favorably (so to speak) by her royal title. In a similar fashion Marie allowed author, reader, and character an entrée into questions of black-white equality; her fair visage trapped the white observer (on all levels) into compassion for her black reality. Marie's mixed heritage allows for scenes of internal juxtaposition, a given with any mulatto character but particularly highlighted by Kingsley's vivid, almost Gothic, treatment.

In the chapter "Am I not a Woman and a Sister," Kingsley begins with a dialogue between Marie and Stangrave focusing on medieval themes. Speaking first in the abstract about Arthurian legend and the achieving of the Sangreal, the two eventually begin to put a more modern spin on the idea of a noble and grueling quest. Marie hints at her

conception of the Sangreal, but Stangrave initially refuses to see a desirable, nearly unattainable goal beyond the hand of his beloved. Marie cannot love a man who does not devote himself to the abolitionist project, and she equates herself and her willingness to love with the acceptance of the cause. For Stangrave, then, though he does not as yet fully understand the quest, he must effectively liberate Marie so that she might marry him: winning her hand requires (at least working toward) an end to (her) slavery. Stangrave's questioning upon noticing that Marie is writing a letter to Tom Thurnall—more on this name later—proves more significant than simply a lover's jealousy:

> The letter was addressed to "Thomas Thurnall, Esq., Aberalva."
>
> "Is this, then, your Sir Galahad?" asked he, after a pause, during which he had choked down his rising jealousy, while she looked first at herself in the glass, and then at him, and then at herself again, with a determined and triumphant air.
>
> "And what if it be?"
>
> "So he, then, has achieved the Quest of the Sangreal?"
>
> Stangrave spoke bitterly, and with an emphasis upon the "he"; and--
>
> "What if he have? Do you know him?" answered she, while her face lighted up with eager interest, which she did not care to conceal, perhaps chose, in her woman's love of tormenting, to parade. (I.166)

For Stangrave at this juncture, the Sangreal still holds the single meaning of Marie's love, and he infers that Tom's achievement has a sinister and unwelcome nature. He misinterprets her valorization of Tom's abolitionist sympathies as love; extrapolating the motif of conquest, he believes that Marie may have surrendered to Tom sexually.[12] Such

a scenario has not actually taken place, of course, but the initial jealousy helps to position Tom as Stangrave's rival and, eventually, brings him under Tom's influence per Kingsley's design. Marie eventually reveals to him the true identity of the Sangreal and its quest, but for the moment she neglects to detail how Tom symbolically enacted the quest by delivering her from bondage. Instead of allowing Marie to narrate her history fully, Kingsley injects an element of graphic fantasy into the scene to emphasize the juxtaposition of white appearance and black reality.

Marie's act of embodying the fight against slavery in herself proves the means by which she maneuvers Stangrave into his version of an abolitionist cause. Tom and the American had had a falling-out many years prior to the scene of the letter, the cause of their altercation being none other than the "accursed slavery question" (I.168). Tom's primary point of contention centered on how Stangrave's overweening pride in his country had obscured America's flaws. Marie consequently fears telling her suitor about her part-black ancestry because she worries that the perceived flaw would curtail his love. The interview scene between the two sets up an imperative with chiastic dimensions: only by examining and repudiating his country's great sin can Stangrave recognize Marie's blackness without regarding it as a flaw, can he truly love and be loved by her. At a tense juncture in the conversation, Marie stands at her dressing table, and what follows makes the challenge visible by hypostatizing Marie's internal struggle in a fantastical-real transfiguration:

> Another half minute, and that face also had melted out of the mirror, at least for Marie's eyes; and in its place an ancient negress, white-haired, withered as the wrinkled ape, but with eyes closed—in death. Marie knew

> that face well; a face which haunted many a dream of hers; once seen, but never forgotten since; for to that old dame's coffin had her mother, the gay quadroon woman, flaunting in finery which was the price of shame, led Marie when she was but a three years' child; and Marie had seen her bend over the corpse, and call it her dear old granny, and weep bitter tears. (I.170)

The immediate juxtaposition--between the apparently white Marie with her dark and delicate features and her overworked, white-haired black grandmother—proves immediately striking. The mirrored scene of negative images, so like Eva looking at Topsy, traps the audience into sympathizing and empathizing with the dead black woman through the customary series of identifications: The love that Stangrave, Scoutbush, and two nations of men profess for Marie mark her at least outwardly as an acceptable object of affection, and Kingsley's painstaking identification, discussed below, of the actress as a tragic and sympathetic Victorian heroine emphasizes that fact. Having submitted Marie as a viable agent in the world of whiteness, the narrative further traps the reader/viewer into an identification with the black grandmother of the mirror, forcing an understanding of common humanity.

More intriguing, however, is Kingsley's hyper-graphic rendering of the internal juxtapositions Marie enacts in this scene. Encountering any mulatto character extends a novel's dramatis personae on the metatextual level: we as readers/viewers appreciating the plot within its historical context wish to know the origins and biological composition of the mulatto. That mixture, as it does in Marie's case, usually implies violence, disgrace, or, at the very least, iconoclasm. Stowe sometimes revealed that story in explicit

detail, as with Eliza's slowly divulged background, coincident with Cassy's trials, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In other cases, the process occurs entirely in the reader's mind, as with the mulatto servants of the St. Clare household or George Harris. Kingsley here opts for a middle ground that tells a very small part of the story—simple descriptions of Marie's mother and grandmother, presented as imagined pictures that complement the imaginative process in which the readers/viewers engage. He tellingly leaves the white elements of the vision out, forcing his audience to visualize the transaction that had demanded "the price of shame." The intersection of identification and complicity established by the immediate and internal juxtapositions resuscitates the interest Britons had felt in the slavery question years before when *Uncle Tom's Cabin* presented a foreign problem as an issue of the most pressing urgency.

In addition to the fantastical symbolism in the mirror scene, Kingsley explicitly refers to Marie's black-and-white identity, externally *and* internally. When Marie unburdens herself to benefactress Sabina Mellot, Kingsley describes the character of her emotions and passions as representing opposite poles:

> And so poor Marie sobbed out her confused confession of that strange double
>
> nature which so many Quadroons seem to owe to their mixed blood; a strong side of deep feeling, ambition, energy, an intellect rather Greek in its rapidity than English in sturdiness; and withal a weak side, of instability, inconsistency, hasty passion, love of present enjoyment, sometimes, too, a tendency to untruth, which is the mark, not perhaps of the African specially, but of every enslaved race.

(I.179)

Despite what appears to be blatant racial reductionism in the passage, the narrator makes the interesting admission that the elements of the double-*nature* come about because of *nurture*. The acknowledgement complements the mirror's scene separation of Marie's composite parts while allowing for their eventual reconciliation—and ultimately for Marie and Stangrave's union—when love triumphs over prejudice. The novel doesn't succeed in Kingsley's stated goal of bringing Marie under Grace's influence, but his gestures in that general direction work in a similar manner: obvious differences in the women's backgrounds are balanced by repeated demonstrations and representations of congruence between the white heroine and the quadroon.

A major theme in *Two Years Ago* is the nature of art: what can the artist convey, what can the beholder perceive, what discrepancy exists between the two, and what discrepancy exists between object and representation? In an early interview with both Scoutbush and Stangrave, Marie declares that she will never pose for a painting "by [any]one who cannot represent my very self," a refusal to be immortalized as one hiding or passing (I.137). The artist Claude Mellot, speaking in the hypothetical, inadvertently supports Marie's position: "If Flake [another artist] paints Marie as Lady Macbeth, he will give us neither her nor Lady Macbeth, but only the single point at which their two characters can coincide"; he continues in explanation, "[T]here was more, far more in her than in any character which she assumes; and I do not want a painter to copy only one aspect, and let a part go down to posterity as representation of the whole" (I.138). A painting of Marie as La Cordifiamma, the argument goes, would not achieve what Kingsley represents in the scene of the mirror, namely the chiaroscuro manifested in

white and black side by side; the painting would show only the point at which the real Marie and her role (for she must be an actress in life as well as on the stage) coincide. Additionally, the discussion about art establishes an early thread of connection between Marie and Grace. Claude, upon the suggestion that his unique artistic insight makes him a fine candidate to paint Marie's likeness, demurs: "I paint no face which I have not studied for a year" (I.138). The statement presents a challenge to the reader, who sees the possibility of its contradiction later in the novel.

Shortly after the above conversation, Stangrave and Claude return to the topic of representing Marie in a painting, and Claude again inadvertently proves the wisdom of Marie's declaration. Not yet knowing the full history of the masquerading quadroon, he mulls over some aspects of Marie's peculiar beauty:

> "[S]uch a face as Cordifiamma's. When it is at rest, in deep thought, there are lines in it which utterly puzzle one—touches which are Eastern, Kabyle, almost Quadroon."
>
> Stangrave started. Claude went on unconscious:—
>
> "But who sees them in the light of that beauty? They are defects, no doubt, but defects which no one would observe without deep study of her face. They express her character no more than a scar would; and therefore when I paint her, as I must and will, I shall utterly ignore them. If, on the other hand, I met the same lines in a face which I knew to have Quadroon blood in it, I should religiously copy them; because then they would be integral elements of the face." (I.175)

Ignoring the absurdity that exotic(ized) non-white features cannot represent beauty out of context, we note that by his own tacit admission, any attempt by Claude to paint Marie's portrait at this point would fail. As it happens, Claude never begins work on a portrait of Marie during the novel, but his work in studying her face does not go to waste.

Visiting Aberalva with Scoutbush some time later, Claude has temporarily abandoned his paintbrush and easel for the more modern medium of daguerreotype photography to study landscapes. He maintains, however, that photography will always be inferior in the act of representing the human figure because "it tries to represent as still what never yet was still for the thousandth part of a second" (I.174).[13] During his time in the village, Grace captures his artistic imagination and reawakens his desire to work on human representation; in one comedic scene, he turns a guest instructorship at the local school into an opportunity to study the schoolmistress (II.41). A request from the rough Aberalva fishermen, however, gives him further opportunity to work on the project. The leader of the uncouth set, Gentleman Jan, commissions the artist to produce a picture of Grace—a painting and not a photograph, because daguerreotypes come out looking "too much blackamoor wise, you see, and over thick about the nozzes" (II.47). Jan objects to a technological shortcoming bestowing the appearance of African features on Grace's face; the portrait he desires must represent her beauty as it appears naturally, without the "taint" of the exotic. In response to this second request that he paint a beautiful woman's portrait, Claude's answer is notably different. Rather than claiming he needs a year to study Grace, he produces a watercolor painting of her face that he had, in fact, already completed in the short time since first meeting her.

Having undertaken Grace's portrait so hastily, Claude initially confuses the reader who takes into account his previous declarations about the need for the artist to understand fully the nature of his subject. The appearance of the portrait, however, marks a quiet triumph for Kingsley in his attempt to tie Grace and Marie together. We find the clue in a statement by Scoutbush, who observes an unexpected resemblance during his first conversation with Grace, after which he informs Claude, "I could think of nothing but those wonderful eyes of hers, and how like they were to Signora's" (44). Even in his ecstasy of love and heartsickness for Marie, Scoutbush (who has eyes for no other woman) cannot escape Grace's beauty, precisely because it is so like Marie's. Claude, in undertaking the picture of Grace, has no need for his usual extensive period of study because he *has* studied his subject—his close appreciation over the months of Marie's features, sans "blackamoor" aspects (which, as he tells Stangrave, he has ignored), has equipped him to paint Grace immediately. The painting of Grace affirms Marie's inclusion in the white world as the mirror scene affirmed her inclusion in the black, and her inclusion in both engenders the sympathy Kingsley strove to create as he implemented chiaroscuro strategies in *Two Years Ago*.

WHAT THE DOCTOR SAW IN—AND THROUGH—THE WOMEN

In addition to the aesthetic ties that bind Marie and Grace, Kingsley introduces name-play throughout his novel that allows for communion between characters who infrequently or never meet. In the process, he enlarges the community of white Toms established in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and introduces religion and disease into the literary-intellectual discussions about social equality inspired by that novel. The topic of names and their significance had long been a matter not only of literary but also of theological

importance to the author. In his published *Sermons for the Times*, adapted from actual addresses he gave to his congregation, he devoted an entire chapter to the subject, arguing that name is essentially tied to character and destiny, "not given at random, without cause or meaning" (50). For Kingsley, the boundaries between Christian duty and literary function in his writing frequently became obscured. That blurring emerged not necessarily as a result of religious zealotry, as often happens, but almost the opposite, as Kingsley tried to balance his zest for life with the more serious responsibilities of his clerical profession. His statements about the responsibilities of possessing a Christian name, therefore, prove easily transposable to a novel in which onomastic significance plays no trivial role:

> Therefore, when in the Catechism you solemnly ask the child its name, you ask it no light question.... And then you ask the child who gave him his name, and make him declare that his name was give him in baptism, wherein he was made a member of Christ and a child of God.... You make the child confess that his duty as a person is not towards himself to do what *he* likes, and follow his own carnal lusts: but toward God and toward his neighbours, who are in God's kingdom of heaven as well as he.
>
> (59-60).

Kingsley took names seriously. Invested in each was a socio-moral imperative, a responsibility to the collective that somewhat ironically transcended the individuality conferred by that name. In *Two Years Ago*, he taps into just that philosophy when assigning names to characters, and the choice of "Tom" for no fewer than five characters

in the novel (including two father-son pairs, furthermore) pays homage to the same nexus between individual gain and social responsibility that *Uncle Tom* considered.

Before I proceed with an examination of the novel's Toms, however, the women in Tom Thurnall's life deserve further scrutiny. Kingsley used names to continue his project of tying Grace and Marie together, but since the demands of the plot did not allow the two to meet, he negotiated the process by introducing a third woman who acts as an intermediary figure. The three come from diverse backgrounds, but all factor significantly in the development of Tom's character. Grace is the woman he loves, his eventual wife and spiritual guide. Marie, the woman he rescues from slavery, offers him an opportunity to affirm his love of country—as the fight with Stangrave made clear, stances on the "accursed slavery question" remained a point of considerable national pride and embarrassment in the British and American contexts. The third woman, in addition to bridging the other two, allows Tom to realize fully the interrelated dimensions of romantic and patriotic love. Readers leave the novel with the final picture of a battered and worn Tom Thurnall turning to God and renouncing his atheism, allowing his future wife Grace to play Beatrice on his spiritual journey. That development would have been impossible, however, without the challenge presented by Mary Armsworth. The quiet triumph in this instance proves the single most pivotal experience in Tom's life, more so than his conversion in the Turkish prisons because the former set the stage for the latter. The prison may finally thaw his "hardened" heart, but a number of other events lead him to the brink (284).[14]

Mary Armsworth, the daughter of Thurnall family friend and wealthy landowner Mark Armsworth, makes an inconspicuous debut in the novel. As a sickly child, she first

appears as a playmate for the older Tom, who would raise the little girl's spirits with his games and attentions. At this stage, shortly before Tom begins his adventurous, fortune-seeking life, Mary brings out a tenderness in him not observable in even his most heroic and charitable acts. On Tom's first return home, hers proves an important voice in encouraging him to undertake one such mission of mercy. After describing how his friend, "a poor Yankee surgeon," begged him to find the enslaved Marie in New Orleans and buy her freedom, Tom expresses characteristic ambivalence about the project:

> "I was a fool for promising. It was no concern of mine; but the poor fellow wouldn't die in peace else. So what must be, must."
>
> "Oh, go, go!" said Mary. "You will let him go, Doctor Thurnall, and set the poor girl free? Think how dreadful it must be to be a slave."
>
> "I will, my little Miss Mary; and for more reasons than you think of. Little do you know how dreadful it is to be a slave." (I.43-44)

Mary's appeal to Tom's father and the father's subsequent response both rebuke Tom's attitude as it applies to human life. Marie's rescue, for him, was getting stuck with a somewhat raw bargain in a transaction that gained peace of mind for the dying man. Rendered thus in the language of a business deal, both of those noble achievements lose any hint of humanity. Tom has no hesitation about undertaking the task, so the young girl's urging addresses not an inability to do the right thing, but an inability to do the right thing for the right reason. Before Marie even makes her first appearance in the novel, then, Mary acts as her interlocutor to readers, her imperative challenging them as well as Tom to "[t]hink how dreadful it must be to be a slave." In the same scene, Mary's father Mark offers financial security for Tom's rescue endeavor. As I will show, Mary later

becomes—problematically, but unavoidably—identifiable with her father's money, establishing a further link between the roles and fates of the two women.

Mary and Grace, likewise, become intertwined and interchangeable although no two people could be more outwardly different; Tom even wonders, "[b]y the by, what was it in the two women which made them so like? Certainly neither face nor fortune" (II.230-31). Both women recall otherworldly novel heroines, Little Eva not the least of them, whose goodness proves inspirational and who seem (to readers, at least—for Tom commits the grave fault of suspecting Grace) incapable of sin. Both become nurses to Doctor Thurnall, taking care of him in Tom's absence and earning his love as daughters. But most importantly, Mary and Grace are the two women Tom seriously considers marrying, and the choice he makes at *that* juncture, long before the Turkish imprisonment during the Crimean War, ultimately determines his salvation. Before setting off for the war with a full heart—his time in Aberalva had resulted in a burning passion for Grace, in spite of himself—Tom learns of the second prospect from Mark Armsworth. He begins his inward battle:

> It was a terrible temptation, and that to no man more than to Thomas Thurnall. He was no boy, to hanker after mere animal beauty; he had no delicate visions or lofty aspirations; and he knew (no man better) the plain English of fifty thousand pounds, and Mark Armsworth's daughter—a good house, a good consulting practice... a good station in the country, a good clarence with a good pair of horses, good plate, a good dinner with good company thereat; and, over and above all, his father to live with him;

> and with Mary, whom he loved as a daughter, in luxury and peace to his life's end. (II.243)

The repetitious enumeration of all advantages of marrying Mary emphasizes Tom's conundrum. One who has cultivated in himself a nature based on businesslike transactions undergoes a momentous struggle in deciding, when all shakes down, whether he can in good conscience define Mary in such terms by taking her for his wife, or whether he must follow his heart. He wins the battle, of course, and must turn down the prospect of Mary's hand. Mary's reproof of Tom's lack of human feeling earlier finds its fulfillment in this decision and ironically/appropriately delivers Tom's heart to Grace.

The names of the three women in Thurnall's life, taken together, evoke echoes of the Catholic prayer *Ave Maria* and its English translation: Hail Mary, full of grace.[15] That Kingsley, perhaps best known to modern audiences as Cardinal Newman's whipping boy in the *Apologia Pro Sua Vita*, would pay homage to the Virgin Mary in his novel's three heroines might seem contradictory and be dismissed as sheer coincidence; as Laura Fasick points out in discussing the author's conception of Christian manliness in *Yeast*, a prime "danger of Roman Catholicism... is the undue (to Kingsley's eyes) emphasis on the power of the ultimate mother: the Virgin Mary" (2). However, the triangle established by the juxtaposition of the three women's names performs the simultaneous tasks of drawing Grace and Marie closer together still and of delineating the Virgin Mary's theological function in Kingsley's opinion.[16] Mary Armsworth's primary role has been limited to mothering and nurturing (without any sexual dimension) even as she comes to be accepted as sister and daughter by Tom and his father. Sex for the fiercely passionate Kingsley marked the highest form of love two people could express—Fasick explains

that the author's major problems with Catholicism included the priestly vow of celibacy. Such a vow denied the cleric knowledge of his congregation in an essential area of life. Marie and Grace, in their respective unions with Stangrave and Tom, receive the author's affirmation as viable wives, mothers, and agents in society. The ever-virginal Mary, on the other hand, despite her essential role in man's salvation and her undeniable goodness, makes a graceful exit when her usefulness has expired; her character escapes fetishization and inappropriate devotion when Tom declines Mark's tempting offer of his daughter's hand in matrimony. In this central and intermediary figure of his novel's female trinity, then, Kingsley rewrites the Biblical Mary as he thought she ought to have been: a means, and not an end in herself.

Marie Lavington's name makes two further allusions, one to Kingsley's own oeuvre and another to the novel that inspired her inclusion in *Two Years Ago*. Although she mentions in passing that her British ancestors were of the noblest stock, Marie knows no specific details about her forebears, the Lavingtons. Kingsley's devoted readers, however, would have recognized the name from the 1848 novel *Yeast*, in which Claude and Sabina Mellot also appeared. Gilbert summarizes the continuity between the two novels, showing how possible ancestral connections between Marie and Stangrave factor into the abolition plot:

> Lavington, the ancestral squire of Whitbury, the quintessentially English town in Berkshire where the framing narrative begins, has died without issue and been replaced in the people's affections by the more democratic Carlylean hero, Mark Armsworth, the town banker and sanitary housing reformer. Later, we discover that Marie, the octoroon slave girl whom

> Mark helps to free and who claims she has the blood of a good English family in her veins, is also named Lavington. The Lavingtons come from the same area in Berkshire where the Stangraves come from; the American millionaire Stangrave discovers that in marrying Marie and taking up the cause of abolition, he is avenging the wrongs as well as atoning for the sins of his family's neighbors and perhaps, relatives. (171)

Even more directly than the un-narrated links between the two families, the genealogical and literary connections between Marie and the Lavingtons of *Yeast* establish a base of sympathy in a white readership for the quadroon, onomastic juxtaposition here enhancing the potency of a mulatto character's internal juxtapositions. In the second instance of intertextual allusion, Marie's name makes reference to a namesake also from New Orleans, the cruel and heartless Marie St. Clare, defined by her ineptitude as mother, wife, and mistress. In this pairing, Kingsley offers a female counterpart to the community of contrast that he examines in more detail, that dealing with the evocative name "Tom."

Kingsley's act of continuing the tradition of multiple Toms that Stowe initiated places *Two Years Ago* in the company of *Hard Times* and Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*; all three, through the onomastic juxtaposition strategy, not only highlight differences between the various Toms within their own pages, but also evoke the slavery debate as an important context for any examination of social inequality. In the case of *Two Years Ago*, that examination focuses largely on questions of sanitary reform, the project for which Kingsley had long been a tireless crusader and which highlighted a number of ancillary instances of social inequality, most notably education and religion. Predictably, then, the five Toms in the novel—Thomas (Tom) Thurnall, Jr.; Doctor Thomas Thurnall, Sr.; Tom

Beer, Jr.; Tom Beer Sr.; and Tom Naylor, one of Elsley Vavasour's appropriately designated *betes noires*—present multiple opportunities for juxtaposition and contradiction: religiosity and atheism, avoidance and confrontation, compassion and austerity, modernity and ruralism. Of the relationship between Tom Thurnall and his father, no more need be said beyond reiterating that the son initially lacks his father's human and religious feeling but that, thanks to heavenly Grace (capitalization optional), he eventually atones for his mistakes. Kingsley repeats the theme throughout, beginning with the younger's lack of the older's patience with the effete John Briggs/Elsley Vavasour and continuing, as we noted, to the father joining Mary's reproof of Tom's ambivalence.[17] Thus far unexamined in Kingsley scholarship, however, are the novel's remaining father-son Toms who, although they play minor roles in the plot, perform significant symbolic functions.

The two Tom Beers, both fishermen in Aberalva, add to and complicate the gradient of human feeling that separates Tom Thurnall from his father. The younger Tom Beer appears in the novel on the day the shipwreck delivers Thurnall to Aberalva. He is a ringleader in the group of rough men—the only one named besides Gentleman Jan, whose role extends beyond the scene—who tease Frank Headley, the young curate so far unsuccessful in bringing God's message to his country flock (62). The scene heralds the beginning of Thurnall's tenure in the port and the starting point of the personal journey he undertakes in the novel. Tom Beer's attitude, here representative of the ignorance and provincialism of the townsfolk and redolent of Thurnall's atheism, places Aberalva's growth in scientific and modern thought in a macrocosmic relationship with Thurnall's

spiritual growth. The struggles for both prove momentous, as underscored by the appearance—or disappearance—of the elder Tom Beer.

Particulars about cholera's actual descent on Aberalva take up relatively little space in the novel, especially as compared to the pages devoted to its anticipation. After detailing Tom's tireless preparations and his warnings to the townspeople, Kingsley moves on without giving the kind of gruesome details that would likely have alienated a good deal of his readership. Instead, he restricts his focus to the disease's emotional impact on its survivors rather than its harrowing ravages on its victims. The author even provides a control case. The neighboring Pentremochyn estate, which Tom prepares adequately after appealing to Lord Minchampstead and receiving the means to do so, highlights the avoidablity of devastation in Aberalva: Pentremochyn experiences not a single casualty. Shortly after the arrival of the cholera in Aberalva, a weary Thurnall greets Headley with grave news of its initial ravages:

> "[M]y dear Headley" (and Tom lowered his voice to a whisper), "wherever poor Tom Beer deserved to go to, he has gone to it already. He has been dead this twenty minutes."
>
> "Tom Beer dead? One of the finest fellows in town! And I never sent for?"
>
> "Don't speak so loud, or they will hear you. I had no time to send for you.... [He h]ad had warnings for a week, and neglected them.... You must summon up all your good sense, and play the man for a fortnight; for it's coming on the poor souls like hell!" said Tom between his teeth, and stamped his foot upon the ground. Frank had never seen him show so

> much feeling; he fancied he could see tears glistening in his eyes. (II.59-60)

The warning not heeded and the death that comes too early both carry meaning beyond the demise of Tom Beer. They encompass larger struggles that face the Tom left behind; the Tom whose capacity for human emotion first shows itself in this scene; the Tom whose declamation, that the cholera is "coming on the poor souls like hell," is more than an idle figure of speech, though he does not yet know it.

WHEN TOM FACED THE CHOLERA

While Kingsley noted the need for Marie to be brought under Grace's influence, his desire for a coherent plot more directly constituted a desire for unity of Tom's character: every resolution and denouement in the novel ultimately contributes to Tom's development as a fully realized hero, no longer an "ungodly" man.[18] Tom Thurnall, in short, is Tom upon whom all must turn. Worldliness and the currency of money, position, and power determine Tom's actions and supplant God's role in the roguish adventurer's mind. Marie's rescue at the beginning of the novel—met by the reproaches from Mary and his father—established the ambivalence of Tom's heroism. Putting his love for Grace ahead of Mary's inheritance marks Tom's abandonment of his false idols; the decision primes him for the torturous experience of forced introspection in the Turkish prison and for religious guidance from Grace. The ungodly Tom who rescues Marie and the unworldly Tom who chooses Grace are two very different persons, and the intervening time between exposition and test brings about the metamorphosis. In his later essay on "Heroism," Kingsley seems to allude directly to Tom's development when he details the hero's responsibility:

> The hero was at least expected to be more reverent than other men to those divine beings of whose nature he partook, whose society he might enjoy even here on earth. He might be unfaithful to his own high lineage; he might misuse his gifts by selfishness and self-will.... He might rebel against the very gods, and all laws of right and wrong, till he perished.... But he ought to have, he must have, to be true to his name of Hero, justice, self-restraint, and... that highest form of modesty, for which we have, alas! no name in the English tongue; that perfect respect for the feelings of others which springs out of perfect self-respect. (205-06)

Tom's ability to become the true hero of *Two Years Ago*, then, relies on his ability to act towards his fellow men in a manner that respects their worth as thinking, feeling humans rather than as objects. The man who performed Marie's rescue, despite being on the right side of the "accursed slavery question," has no such appreciation of humanity, and the novel must subject him to experiences that cultivate his ability to feel. By this means, then, Kingsley proposes that sanitary reform requires not only understanding and scientific education of the masses, but also understanding and spiritual education of the learned and aristocratic. That symbiosis, in turn, allows for true Christian brotherhood and the most profound indictment of slavery, in both its literal and figurative permutations.[19]

The religious debate about cholera in both Britain and America had taken on many ugly dimensions in the quarter-century preceding the publication of *Two Years Ago*. A disease not properly understood until near the end of the nineteenth century, cholera was a universal source of terror to populations who had only shaky theories about

its sources and spread and knew even less about effective treatment.[20] While medical communities argued among and within themselves about these finer scientific points, religious communities (which, of course, also pervaded the medical profession and government) argued in similarly dramatic and contentious fashion.[21] We readily identify two familiar factions in the religious debates: those who took a Calvinistic approach, viewing the disease in terms of scourging, damnation, and punishment; and those who view God in a paternal light, offering instruction and protection to supplicants in times of gravest need. Kingsley established himself as a pillar of the latter faction, decrying the motives of those who preached damnation and lamenting their methods, which detracted from a practical response to the disease. He coyly—even ironically—used the rhetoric of the opposing side to make his case for science and emphasize how God's will might rightly be read in the epidemic: "We have just been praying to God to remove from us the cholera, which we call a judgment of God, a chastisement.... But we can hardly expect God to withdraw His chastisement unless we correct the sins for which He chastised us" ("First Sermon on the Cholera" 174). He shows that the true nature of sin is not some abstract evil of which man will always be guilty, but real, tangible actions that can be rectified. Addressed to the learned and moneyed classes was one indictment:

> When they [Britons during the previous epidemic] saw human beings dying by the thousands of the pestilence, they all got frightened, and proclaimed a Fast, and confessed their sins and promised repentance in a general way. But did they repent of and confess those sins which had caused the cholera? Did they repent of and confess the covetousness, the tyranny, the carelessness which in most great towns, and in too many

> villages also, forces the poor to lodge in undrained stifling hovels...?
>
> (175-76)

And addressed to the poorer and rural classes was another: "God's handwriting on the wall against us for our sins of filth and laziness, foul air, foul food, foul drains, foul bedrooms. Where they are, there is cholera" (183). The mock-Calvinistic tone engages the discourse of punishment, but while Kingsley invokes God's name, he essentially proclaims that man is punishing himself. A few years after delivering and publishing his sermons on the cholera, Kingsley would rewrite them in the story of Tom's battle against cholera in Aberalva; that battle primes Tom for a spiritual awakening that proves to be similarly human-centered. Tom will find God by discovering the godliness in himself, and he does that only through learning to feel for others.

On our introduction to Aberalva, its spiritual leadership appears to be sorely lacking. The well-meaning Frank Headley, an Oxford-educated scholar with High Church tendencies, finds himself unable to minister to his congregation; he preoccupies himself with theological questions about their eternal souls and pays little attention to the realities of their everyday life. Increasing numbers of the townspeople, furthermore, join an insidious dissenting sect that peddles doctrines of damnation in a spectacularly sensational fashion (Grace is nominally but not functionally a member of this sect, firmly renouncing it near the novel's end). The cholera heightens and emphasizes the shortcomings of both. Frank, the sympathetic religious character, feels supremely helpless when his inability to communicate initially prevents him from being of more use to his parishioners. The coming of disease throws Frank and Tom together, and interactions with the curate emphasize Tom's great potential as a hero—he "had gained

in one month more real insight into the characters of [Frank's] parishioners than [Frank] had done in twelve." And those interactions emphasize Tom's major shortcoming in that he does not care for the townspeople as Frank does but thinks only of what "may be of use to poor Tom" (I. 202, II.19).

In a conversation between the two about Frank's motives as pastor, Tom readily recognizes the limitations of Frank's ministerial abilities—again without seeing their congruence with his own shortcomings. In pointing out Frank's flaws, Tom outlines a hypothetical scenario and begins, inadvertently and unconsciously, to discover his inner "godliness" in the declamation. Frank poses a question in the interview, to which Tom replies by imagining himself in Frank's position:

> "Then would you have a clergyman never warn his people of their sins?"
>
> "If I were he, I'd much sooner take the sins for granted, and say to them, 'Now, my friends, I know you are all, ninety-nine out of the hundred of you, not such bad fellows at bottom, and would all like to be good, if only you knew how; so I'll tell you as far as I know, though I don't know much about the matter. For the truth is, you must have a hundred troubles every day which I never felt in my life; and it must be a very grand thing to keep body and soul together, and to get a little pleasure on this side of the grave without making blackguards of yourselves. Therefore I don't pretend to set myself up as a better or a wiser man than you at all: but I do know a thing or two which I fancy may be useful to you.... So come up, if you like, any of you, and talk matters over with me

> as between gentleman and gentleman. I shall keep your secret, of course; and if you find I can't cure your complaint, why, you can but go away and try elsewhere." (I.205)

In the attempt to help Frank communicate, Tom verbalizes for himself how one might know religion, live a godly life, and still approach the world in a rational and scientific way—indeed, a dialectic that Kingsley, as a cleric, had enacted in his own life. In a statement directly following, Tom's summary point about Frank's flawed ministration borrows its rhetoric directly from Kingsley's "First Sermon on the Cholera": "[T]he fault of your cloth seems to me to be that they apply their medicines without deigning, most of them, to take the least diagnosis of the case. How could I cure a man without first examining what was the matter with him?" (I.206). The injunction here to Frank clarifies Tom's own challenge. As the doctor must recognize symptoms before prescribing, as the Aberalvans must recognize (and repent of/remove) their filth before being free of the cholera terror, as the cleric must understand the needs of his parishioners before ministering to them, so must Tom identify and rectify his own faults before he can become the novel's fully realized hero. The incident in which he allows emotion to overwhelm him, the important conversation with Frank about Tom Beer's passing, signals the awakening of that self-realization.

In closing, I return to Kingsley's "afterthought" argument to consider the yardstick it adduces: "Marie ought to have been brought under Grace's influence... *as all of the characters are under that of Tom Thurnall*" (emphasis added). In delineating Marie's role in *Two Years Ago* and examining how Kingsley worked toward the stated goal of bringing her under Grace's influence, the last step must involve a recapitulation

of Stangrave's evolution. The character who holds firmly to his anti-abolition beliefs and sacrifices his love for Marie in the process comes under Tom's influence only at the very end, after Tom has passed through a similar trial. Tom learns to throw off his materialism—the tendency to think of people in transactional terms without regard for their humanity—and recognize his love for Grace. His fumblings towards understanding genuine human feeling allowed him to minister to Headley, who eventually throws off *his* asceticism and recognizes his love for Valencia St. Just. And finally, in the novel's closing pages, the post-Aberalva Tom can similarly minister to Stangrave. At the end of their second confrontation, Stangrave declares his conversion:

> "He knew me too well of old, and had too much reason to despise me! But he shall have reason no longer. He will come back, and find me worthy of you; and all will be forgotten. Again, I say it, I accept your quest, for life and death. So help me God above, I will not fail or falter, till I have won justice for you and for our race!" (II.283)[22]

The interconnectedness of plots and instances of paraellelism, which Kingsley feared unfulfilled, nevertheless become obvious at this point. Tom's emotional ambivalence in his rescue of Marie is a direct correlate of his emotional ambivalence during the initial stages of his Aberalva tenure.

Inspired in large part by Harriet Beecher Stowe's writing and crafted using Stowe's strategies of juxtaposition, the quadroon subplot offers repeated affirmation of Kingsley's ideal, a Christian brotherhood of man, outlined in the "Third Sermon on the Cholera":

> The law of man's life, the constitution and order on which, and no other, God has made man, is *this*—to depend upon his fellow-men, to be their brothers, in flesh and spirit; for we are brothers to each other. We are all sprung from one forefather Adam. God made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth. The same food will feed us all alike. The same cholera will kill us all alike. (203)

The coming of the cholera began a gradual change in Tom's character that, essentially, culminates in his acceptance of Grace and rejection of Mary—both of whom play off Marie, and vice versa. The metamorphosed Tom, finally, brings about a metamorphosis in Stangrave, who symbolically becomes one with Marie by accepting her blackness and assuming her battle. Afterthought she may have been, but the quadroon Marie Lavington figured prominently in each movement of Tom Thurnall's character development.

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[1] Despite his modest sales, Kingsley found his reviewers and critics a tough audience in the early years. Klaver points out that Kingsley's god friend J. M. Ludlow, *Alton Locke*'s (1849) first reader, offered a decidedly mixed review, praising parts but lamenting the whole's lack of consistency; reviews from the *Times*, *Blackwood's*, and *Fraser's* were either lukewarm or unfavorable (210, 213-14). Reviews of *Yeast* (1849) were more generally favorable, but critics still itemized their reservations (263). *Hypatia* (1853) found a vehement critic in George Henry Lewes during its serialization for its reimagining of history (329).

[2] The lucidity and crispness of many of Kingsley's sermons, on the other hand, sometimes verge on the remarkable. Writing for an audience who needed to absorb his message on the fly, the Rector rose to the occasion in terms of both prose and structure. An affliction that plagued Kingsley for much of his life—his stammering—sheds some light on the paradox. Writing to James Hunt for advice on the condition, Kingsley noted that he "never hardly [stammers] in speaking to the poor" but stammers most in "beginning a conversation, so as to have an extreme dread (though I move much in society) of introducing 2 persons to each other, or of asking a servant whether his master is at home" (ALS Huntington Library, HM 32204-

32261). Ease of communication for Kingsley, whether written or oral, largely depended on context. For additional perspectives on Kingsley's stammering and its relationship to his social work, see Louise Lee's "Voicing, De-Voicing and Self-Silencing" (2008).

[3] One humorous anecdote does survive. Stowe apparently didn't endear herself to some of the Kingsley children when she made disparaging remarks about hunting and hunters; the faux pas, however, seems to have readily been forgiven by Charles and Fanny (Klaver 431). Hedrick affirms the pleasantness of the trip: "Harriet enjoyed this quiet trip to England more than her first one; with greater control of her itinerary and energies, she spent much of her time with artists and writers.... She went out of her way to arrange a visit with Charles Kingsley..." (264).

[4] Kingsley had also written to Stowe praising her novel shortly after its publication in 1852, yet another reason he could not afford to lose face during her visit to Eversley (letter qtd. in Hedrick 234).

[5] Derbyshire pinpoints the character of Kingsley's philanthropy: "He evinces no desire... to cast down the mighty from their thrones and lift up the lowly. He was happy that the lowly should remain lowly, but he wanted them cleaner, better housed, better instructed, and better treated" (63).

[6] No doubt the difficulties Charles had in winning permission to marry his beloved wife Fanny, whose family long thought a piddling country cleric not worthy of her hand, made the pill bitterer still.

[7] Though not explicitly discussed, the timing is multifariously significant: the decade marks the abolition of slavery in the British colonies, the subsequent end of the mandatory apprenticeship period for freed slaves, the passage of the First Reform Act, the rise of Chartism, and Victoria's ascension to the throne. Also, the first cholera epidemic in both Britain and America occurred during 1832-33.

[8] The fictional town of Aberalva approximates a Devonshire town; according to the 1842 *Local Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England*, many residents in the County of Devon lived in near squalor and resisted attempts to amend their habits or surroundings (1-15). These local reports accompanied Chadwick's famous *General Report* of the same year. We do well to remember Hamlin's important caveat that Chadwick's report "is a political document. The problems it addressed were only incidentally problems of health or even of decent living conditions.... At risk were the survival of the state in the face of revolution, and the grand question of whether the class relations of liberal industrial society could work" (157). While Kingsley was a frequent collaborator of Chadwick's in sanitary efforts, *Two*

Years Ago simultaneously buys into the goal of upholding social order while resisting the urge to "dehumanize the poor" (discussed below), which Hamlin argues is an unstated goal of the *Sanitary Report* (157).

[9] Una Pope-Hennessey famously described the novel as "shapeless and higgledy-piggledy in conception as it is in execution" (152). Larry Uffelman agreed with the characterization, calling the subplot "intrusive" (62).

[10] Gilbert argues:

> Slavery, and its analogues in the novel—hysteria, addiction, disease—emasculates, barbarizes, and derationalizes, undermining the project of national progress through social improvement—sanitary reform, education, colonization—that Kingsley identifies as the central project of both Britain and her "child," the United States. Slavery, like addiction or disease, implies the vulnerability of self to the abject, whether as dependence on a drug, economic dependence on the degrading practice of slavery, or invasion by the unnatural "disorder" of disease. The novel invokes sanitary and abolition rhetoric in the name of national development and couches the story of national development in terms of individual masculinity and spiritual/physical regeneration. (161)

[11] The claim that Marie is "the only Negro" is incorrect. In addition to Sabina Mellot's black servant, Marie remembers—and becomes—her elderly, enslaved black grandmother in one of the novel's most important scenes.

[12] Stangrave's suspicion does not lack foundation; Tom Thurnall is a man of the world, and in addition to Tom's near-assault on Grace, the novel makes many allusions to his un-narrated sexual exploits. Kingsley actively cultivated this flaw in his hero for effect, as he explained to John Bullar in a letter of 3/19/1857:

> Many thanks for your favourable opinion of the book ('Two Years Ago'); But I fear you take Tom Thurnall for a better man than he was, and must beg you not to pare my man to suit your own favourable conception; but consider that *that* is the sort of man I want to draw, and you must take him as you find him. My experience is, that men of his character (like all strong men till God's grace takes full possession of them) are weak upon one point [i.e. women and sex]—every thing can they stand but that; and the more they

> restrain themselves from prudential motives, the more sudden and violent is the temptation when it comes. I have indicated as delicately as I could the world-wide fact, which all know and all ignore; had I not done so, Thurnall would have been a mere chimera fit only for a young lady's novel. (*Letters and Memories* II.19-20).

[13] Martin fails to note the return to painting in his appraisal of Claude's artistic progress: "Claude, the painter, is frankly a useless member of society... except when he paints realistic and didactic scenes which elevate the morality of the viewer. Significantly, by the end of the book, he has deserted painting for photography, which Kingsley indicates can do everything which paint can achieve—and better" (204). Kingsley does not, by any means, suggest supplanting one medium with the other, and speaking through Claude, he greatly limits theories of superiority vis-a-vis both.

[14] The lines that close Chapter XXVIII were an unfortunate addition on Kingsley's part: "He [Tom] has escaped once more: but his heart is hardened still. What will his fall be like" (II.284). Many critics and reviews of the novel lamented the suddenness of Tom's conversion as poor craft. The two poorly worded sentences are most directly responsible for inspiring an essentially unfair critique: they undermine what Kingsley carefully builds as a gradual and incremental change in Tom's attitudes, discussed below.

[15] While the prayer has been canonized in its familiar form as part of the Catholic liturgical tradition, it derives from a number of verses appearing in the Gospel of Luke (see especially 1:28 and 1:42).

[16] I should point out here that both of these names bear other resonances that, while outside the scope of the present analysis, certainly would not have escaped readers' attention. Grace Harvey's pulling Tom Thurnall from the sea is doubtless reminiscent of Grace Darling, who performed a heroic feat of sea rescue by rowing out with her father to save drowning sailors during an 1838 storm. The act received national attention, and accolades poured in from all corners, not the least of which was a subscription to their reward fund by Queen Victoria (Reynolds vii-viii). Grace Darling was later immortalized in art and poetry, including a play by Edward Stirling and poems by Wordsworth and Swinburne. Kingsley himself cited Grace Darling as a true example of a heroine in his essay "Heroism." Marie's name alludes to another Marie from New Orleans with whom readers would have been familiar, discussed below.

[17] Fasick elaborates:

> In *Two Years Ago*, the elder Thurnall is a man as gentle, nurturing, and as physically vulnerable as a stereotypical Victorian lady. Compassionate toward the lower-class John Briggs, tender toward his own son, stricken by blindness and thenceforth dependent on others, the senior Thurnall is adored by his son and namesake even though the latter's tough robustness is the antithesis of the father's gentleness. (5)

[18] Kingsley specifically uses this adjective to define Tom's character (49). Hartley teases out the word: "Though as moral as the 'average man,' he is frankly 'ungodly' because he has no faith in a Being who can help him.... His adventures have made him hard, calculating, and self-sufficient. He studies men shrewdly and weighs their weaknesses for his own ends..." (138-39).

[19] McClean concisely summarizes cholera's role in reshaping society: "Cholera was not the nineteenth century's greatest killer... but cholera, like nothing else, focused the Victorian consciousness on the health of the masses and on the hopelessly inadequate city infrastructure which so fouled the air, rivers, and streets..." (3-4).

[20] Morris gives estimated mortality figures for the cholera epidemics in Britain as 21,882 (1831-32); 1,908 (1848); 53,293 (1849); 4,419 (1853); and 20,097 (1854). He notes that most of these figures are underestimated because of lack of reporting and inability in many cases to recognize and diagnose the disease (Morris 13). He provides an excellent discussion of the various theories of spread that occupied medical attention, including various contagionist theories and miasmatic theories (170-207).

[21] Numerous tracts, pamphlets, and published sermons were circulated on both sides of the Atlantic participating in the religious debates; some examples include John W. Scott's "The Cholera, God's Scourge for the Chastisement of Nations: A Discourse" (Oxford [Ohio], 1833), which discusses American slavery as a reason that God is punishing the country with the cholera; and "The Cholera, No Judgment!" (London, 1849), which responded to the "Special Form of Prayer" drawn up by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Written pseudonymously by "Sensus Communus," the tract made arguments similar to *Two Years Ago*, that a presentation of cholera as God's judgment detracted from practical efforts to improve sanitary conditions.

[22] Stangrave (chronologically) later claims his preference for a gradual end to slavery that would bring the least upheaval, in line with Kingsley's own views (I.10-11).

CHAPTER FOUR
Lucy Deane's Confession to the *Mulatter* Queen of the Gypsies

Uncle Tom's Cabin's immense popularity assured Harriet Beecher Stowe certain commercial success on at least one subsequent offering, and her *Dred* lived up to expectations in this respect. Critical appraisals in the British press of the later novel, however, by no means approached the general approval that had greeted *Uncle Tom*. Consequently, when George Eliot evaluated *Dred*'s merits for the *Westminster Review*, she felt compelled to point out the disparity between popular and critical reception:

> Such a book is an uncontrollable power, and critics who follow it with their objections and reservations-who complain that Mrs. Stowe's plot is defective, that she has repeated herself, that her book is too long and too full of hymns and religious dialogue, and that it creates an unfair bias—are something like men pursuing a prairie fire with desultory watering-cans.
>
> In the meantime, *Dred* will be devoured by the million, who carry no critical talisman against the enchantments of genius. We confess ourselves to be among the million, and quite unfit to rank with the sage minority of Fadladeens. We have been too much moved by *Dred* to determine with precision how far it is inferior to *Uncle Tom*; too much impressed by what Mrs. Stowe *has* done to be quite sure that we can tell her what she ought to have done. (571)

In the review, Eliot made the first of her many recorded statements and gestures admiring not only the noble intentions behind Stowe's fiction, but also the technical merits of *Uncle Tom* and *Dred*. Unlike Charles Dickens and Charles Kingsley, Eliot had possessed

neither the connections nor the reputation to receive a presentation copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* a few years earlier. However, comparative statements in the review make it obvious that she had pored over *Dred*'s predecessor sufficiently to form an estimate of Stowe's composition philosophy.

The astute George Eliot, whose understanding of the human psyche was masterful in the literary context, focused on the deeper messages embedded in Stowe's fiction. While Eliot's personal views did not accord with defenses of slavery, she assumes a more neutral tone in writing the *Westminster* appraisal.[1] The review quietly and respectfully dismisses Stowe's political motives, imploring readers instead to focus on the artistic merits that those motives precipitate. Eliot succinctly states what the present dissertation and scholars for a century and a half have argued about the effectiveness of Stowe's sentimental appeals: "she never makes you feel that she is coldly calculating an effect" (572). The sentence, of course, implies that calculations have indeed been made, at whatever temperature. Eliot's systematic mind no doubt saw evidence that *Dred* continued the strategies of appeal that Stowe had begun in *Uncle Tom*. Not least among these, *Dred* extends the community of contrast created by the onomastic juxtaposition of black and white Toms. We meet Tom Gordon, another white Tom whose cruelty and insensitivity call to mind Tom Loker and Simon Legree in their oppositions to blackness. And we meet the mischievous Tomtit, a mulatto youngster whose compounded, diminutive name suggests the compounded onomastic and internal juxtapositions Stowe intends in portraying this young Tom.[2] Eliot would have recognized a degree of virtuosity in the author's extension of message and technique, noting that Stowe was "assure[d of] a

place in that highest rank of novelists who can give us a national life in all its phases—popular and aristocratic, humorous and tragic, political and religious" (572).

A warm relationship between the two authors would develop almost two decades later when "Mrs. Lewes" and "Mrs. Stowe" corresponded on a semi-regular basis. Some of Eliot's most poignant prose, in fact, appears not in her writing meant for public consumption, but in the private letters sent to her American friend: in a letter written after George Henry Lewes's death, for example, she notes that "Joy and Sorrow are both my perpetual companions; the joy is called Past and the sorrow Present (*Letters* VII.132). Eliot's fascination with the *Uncle Tom* author, however, had begun during the hey-day of that popular novel, leaving little doubt to the sincerity of the effusive declarations she would later send across the Atlantic. Writing to Cara Bray in 1853, she describes how reading a letter Stowe had written to another friend "makes one love [Stowe]"—how appropriate that piled-on levels of authorship and readership facilitate the closeness Eliot would thereafter feel to Stowe (II.92). The letter-within-the-letter reads:

> "I am a little bit of a woman, rather more than forty, as withered as and dry as a pinch of snuff—never well worth looking at in my best days, and now a decidedly used up article." [Eliot continues to Bray]: At 25 she married a man "rich in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, but alas! Rich in nothing else." The proceeds of her first writings she devoted to buying her first feather bed! The whole letter is most fascinating.... (II.92)

Clearly Eliot felt the affection in sympathy that one homely creature feels for another, and the impression that this stolen glimpse at the woman-behind-the-novels created left her more receptive to and appreciative of Stowe's craft.

In a letter Eliot writes to Stowe in the summer of 1869, the former makes an insightful comment about the relationship between literature, criticism, and influence:

> I dare say you have long seen, as I am beginning to see with new clearness, that if a book which has any sort of exquisiteness happens to be a popular widely circulated book, its power over the social mind, for any good, is after all due to its reception by a few appreciative natures, and is the slow result of radiation from that narrow circle. (V.30)

Though speaking very generally in the letter, Eliot aptly summarizes the phenomenon this dissertation traces through the 1850s. Beginning with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* early in the decade and moving through *Hard Times* and *Two Years Ago*, the strategies of black-white juxtaposition that Stowe popularized invested the name "Tom" with special significance. Eliot's "very appreciative nature" descried the dynamics of Stowe's technique, and with the publication of *The Mill on the Floss* at the turn of the decade, she would employ many of the same strategies in examining questions of humanity and equality. Eliot never directly acknowledges that *Floss* bears any artistic debt to *Uncle Tom* or *Dred*, but doubtless the novels played a formative role in her apprehension of blackness as a concept; that blackness becomes a central symbol of her most autobiographical novel.[3]

The Mill on the Floss, like most of Eliot's oeuvre, is a character-centered novel driven by the growth and development of its main players. Thus as an example of the *Bildungsroman*, it fits the category somewhat uncomfortably: social order remains slippery throughout the novel, and character development occurs in symbiotic and parasitic more often than mutualistic circumstances. Trying to plot Maggie Tulliver's growth from precocious child to inadvertent *femme fatale*, then, involves more than

examining how Maggie's education and interactions with others shape her changing worldview. She never becomes a complete character (as distinct from ideas of roundness/flatness), and dissecting her as such proves difficult. The novel returns repeatedly to the theme of separated parts of a whole, culminating in a restated thesis at its end: "The tomb bore the names of Tom and Maggie Tulliver, and below the names it was written—"In their death they were not divided" (544). The dynamics and politics of division on a number of interrelated planes—gender, age, class, and certainly color—occupy Eliot's focus in *The Mill on the Floss* as she explores the forces that divide and how they might be surmounted. Strategies strongly resonant with Stowe's chiaroscuro assist this process, and reading Eliot's novel using the chiaroscuro framework helps to illuminate one of its most enigmatic scenes. A disgraced Maggie Tulliver, turned out of her brother's house, receives a call from her wronged cousin Lucy. But the exchange that follows seems to relocate culpability:

> "Lucy," said Maggie, with another great effort, "I pray to God continually that I may never be the cause of sorrow to you any more."
>
> She pressed the little had that she held between hers, and looked up into the face that was bent over hers. Lucy never forgot that look.
>
> "Maggie," she said, in a low voice, *that had the solemnity of confession in it*, "you are better than I am. I can't—"
>
> She broke off there, and said no more. But they clasped each other again in a last embrace. (531; emphasis added)

What thought finishes Lucy's sentence? And is the idea of "confession" more than an empty metaphor, Eliot implying real regret and expiation in Lucy's tone? Referencing

Stowe's chiaroscuro in examining the various relational juxtapositions that define the novel—Dodson-Tulliver, Maggie-Tom, and ultimately Maggie-Lucy—I will suggest answers to these questions that show the centrality of color and blackness to Eliot's thesis. Finally, my argument concludes with a discussion of the one character, an unlikely figure, who achieves the wholeness that eludes the rest of the novel's *dramatis personae*.

DODSONS AND TULLIVERS: FEATURES, COMPLEXION, SALT, AND BEANS

In the initial books of the novel, the Dodson and Tulliver families dominate the landscape and set the stage for the many contrasts and juxtapositions that follow. Brought together by the union of Miss Elizabeth Dodson and Mr. Jeremy Tulliver, the two clans coexist uncomfortably and frequently find themselves at loggerheads. At the root of the problem, ironically, lies the fact that the differences between the two complement each other: psychologically, emotionally, and intellectually, each family possesses what the other lacks. With this toxic atmosphere of division as a backdrop, the younger generation of the family grows up in a changing world that may or may not be able to sustain them, depending upon how well they adapt to it.

As Dickens did in *Hard Times* (albeit on a much grander scale), Eliot depicts a confrontation between reason and imagination, using the Tullivers' marital union as her canvas. Mr. Tulliver clearly considers himself far the smarter of the two, but both of the Tullivers have serious shortcomings in their thought processes, causing them to approach the world in sometimes rash and unfortunate manners. Using the Piagetian constructs for intellectual development as a guide, we notice that both Tullivers fall short in the final stage of intellectual development, which Piaget categorizes as the stage of formal operations.[4] Most individuals progress from the concrete operational stage to formal

operations in early adolescence to become fully functional thinkers. The two main features of the last stage of intellectual development concern the ability to understand abstractions and engage in abstract thought (relatable to the imagination and imaginative ability); and formal logic, the relationships between premises and conclusions becoming accessible (relatable to reason and practicality). Despite the obvious fact that she does not work from a Piagetian framework, Eliot suggests serious shortcomings in cognitive development on the parts of Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver. They exist almost as allegorical figures not only of Reason and Imagination, but also in the negative as Lack-of-reason and Lack-of-imagination.

Elizabeth Tulliver, her husband tells us, may not be the sharpest of women, or even the sharpest of the Dodson women. She distinguishes herself by a literal-mindedness that Eliot uses for comedic effect. In the first marital confab to which we are privy, Mr. Tulliver uses figurative language in playfully scolding his wife for her pessimism: "You'd want me not to hire a good waggoner, 'cause he'd got a mole on his face" (13). There follows Mrs. Tulliver's defense that she holds no prejudice against blemished unfortunates. Later on, when a sobbing Mrs. Pullet arrives at her door, Mrs. Tulliver immediately associates the tears with an experience that had precipitated them on an earlier occasion; the narrator explicitly notes at this juncture that Mrs. Tulliver "was not an imaginative woman" (61). Her blinkered thinking leaves her repeatedly vulnerable to those who would circumvent her. Mr. Tulliver usually occupies this role, but the scene in which Bessy makes her pathetic appeal to Wakem provides the ultimate example: she takes it on faith that a heartfelt appeal for compassion can only result in goodwill from the lawyer and cannot see her words as an avenue to Mr. Tulliver's

demise. But Bessy Tulliver never shirks her duty or defers a chore. Her mission to Wakem's marks firm and decisive (if misguided) action at a time when her husband's disappointment renders him unbelieving and stagnant; her concerns about Tom's education, despite earning reproof from Mr. Tulliver, center on practical matters that would ensure Tom's comfort.

Despite his assumed superiority, Jeremy Tulliver might have learned something from his wife. While Tulliver can manipulate the intricacies of metaphor, for instance, figurative language itself becomes endemic of the overreaching passion and haste that accompany his actions. The fact that precipitates the novel's first crisis, Tulliver's litigation over land and irrigation rights, illustrates the tendency in full feather:

> "Dorlcote Mill's been in our family a hundred year and better, and nobody ever heard of Pivart meddling with the river, till this fellow came and bought Bincome's farm out of hand, before anybody else could so much as say 'snap.' But I'll *Pivart* him!" added Mr. Tulliver, lifting his glass with a sense that he had defined his resolution in an unmistakable manner. (163)

In his heated declaration, which the narrator notes depends for its meaning on emotion rather than denotation, Tulliver piles in multiple tropes that engage the imagination but distance practical reality. The instance of anthimeria divests Pivart of his status as proper noun and human with motives and retaliatory potential. *Pivart* becomes a verb that conveniently bends itself to Tulliver's passions and desires. Moreover, Tulliver's emphasis on the name plays on its onomatopoeic and homophonic qualities, recalling the word *pivot* and compounding the sense of turning with one of grinding or violence. And

finally, Tulliver adds a layer of irony. He views Pivart's irrigation scheme as a threat to the water-power that drives or turns Dorlcote Mill. By appropriating the name *Pivart* and piling on the tropes—this word, too, has etymological ties to the idea of turning—Tulliver intends to turn the situation against Pivart. But Tulliver's revenge remains purely symbolic and confined to the poetic level; the suit against Pivart and the battle with Wakem proves the turning point in Tuillver's own fortunes, the irony he had sought to master eventually mastering him.[5]

A significant change comes over Jeremy Tulliver after he experiences his great disappointment, throwing into relief the precise nature of his shortcomings prior to the crisis. While in a daze, he can recognize only Maggie, the child who shares his rich imagination and the only one who utterly sympathizes with him after the fall. Emergence from such a state, however, results in an absolute metamorphosis from a creature of imagination to a harbinger of Eliot's Silas Marner.[6] What had previously been a life driven by well-intentioned passion, whim, and impulse becomes a greedy conservatism that reduces all—even human existence—to the transactional. One might hear echoes of the melancholy mad elephants in the descriptions of Jeremy Tulliver's new life, a phenomenon the narrator identifies as being the result of mental "narrowness":

> When uncultured minds, confined to a narrow range of personal experience, are under the pressure of continued misfortune, their inward life is apt to become a perpetually repeated round of sad and bitter thoughts; the same words, the same scenes, are revolved over and over again, the same mood accompanies them; the end of the years finds them

> as much as they were at the beginning as if they were machines set to a recurrent series of movements. (291-92)

The imagination that has been cowed into submission never emerges again, leaving in its place only system and routine; Tulliver defines the rest of his life in purely numerical terms. Tom's request for capital on which to speculate and perhaps multiply their little savings meets with a chilling equation from his father: "Ay, my lad… but you might lose it,—you might lose a year of my life,—and I haven't got many" (324). Not only does Tulliver define his own life in pounds sterling, but his new worldview becomes a cancerous, appropriating one that attempts to do the same thing to Tom's. The small amount of money that Tom requests is not greater that what he himself, through his labor, has contributed to the family kitty. Tom's exertions and by extension his life also become equivalent to a year's earnings and the distance they go in fulfilling Mr. Tulliver's monomaniacal desire. The moment proves a formative one in Tom's character and will receive further examination below, but the other adults who people the world in which he and Maggie grow up deserve analysis first.

The Dodson sisters represent a fading petty aristocracy in St. Ogg's, a provincial nobility whose time of prominence draws to a close with the rise of the middle class. Mrs. Glegg, Mrs. Pullet, Bessy Tulliver, and Mrs. Deane, although each lost the Dodson tag in marriage, retain pride in their maiden name despite its inevitable obsolescence in the town.[7] The family mindset that nurtured Bessy's limited intellect concerns itself primarily with measures and quantities, whether relating to possessions, legacies, respectability, or emotion. Mrs. Glegg believes herself the bastion of Dodson-ness, and she repeatedly scolds any of the others for transgressions against the great ideal (these reprimands may

be fleeting or, in Bessy's case, take the form of longstanding disapproval for the precipitous and ill-advised action of marrying Tulliver). On the morning Mrs. Pullet arrives noticeably aggrieved at a family meeting, Mrs. Glegg immediately seeks to ascertain whether emotion has been appropriately apportioned.[8] The sickness of a wealthy family friend, a Mrs. Sutton, proves the source of Sophy Pullet's grief, but Mrs. Glegg will have none of it: "'Well, she's no kin o' yours, nor much acquaintance as I've ever heard of,' said Mrs. Glegg, who always cried just as much as was proper when anything happened to her own 'kin,' but not on other occasions" (62). Mrs. Glegg counts on Mrs. Pullet to follow the rules, and the latter doesn't disappoint on a subsequent occasion: Mrs. Pullet shows good Dodson sense when contemplating a family member's demise, noting that "Cousin Abbott may go, and we can't think o'wearing crape less nor half a year for him" (97).

In her sister's case, Mrs. Glegg measures emotion according to the unspoken but predetermined scale of family relation that Sophy later references. Affection, however, also has a monetary value in the Dodson code. Mrs. Glegg and Mrs. Pullet hoard their incomes, intending to bequeath sizable legacies to family members upon their deaths. But the process proves symbolically destructive to their humanity; Dodson mourning has associations not only with caste and name, but in this instance it also becomes a financial transaction. Mrs. Glegg views her marriage in a similar light when planning her deportment after Mr. Glegg's (not impending but inevitable) demise:

> Mr. Glegg, like all men of his stamp, was extremely reticent about his will; and Mrs. Glegg, in her gloomier moments, had forebodings that, like other husbands of whom she had heard, he might cherish the mean project

> of heightening her grief at his death by leaving her poorly off, in which case she was firmly resolved that she would have scarcely any weeper on her bonnet, and would cry no more than if he had been a second husband. But if he had really shown her any testamentary tenderness, it would be affecting to think of him, poor man, when he was gone; and even his foolish fuss about the flowers and garden-stuff, and his insistence on the subject of snails, would be touching when it was once fairly at an end. (135)

With such elders and custom to guide her, Bessy's response to her husband failing seems hardly a surprise. Grief and foreboding are entities too abstract when applied to injured feelings and must be translated into tangible terms (the plate to be lost, the embroidered linens that will be sold up, the furniture under the auctioneer's gavel) rather than unbridled passion. But while Bessy acts like a true Dodson in lamenting her possessions, the sisters' response must be equally mercenary and pay no heed to any sentiment she attaches to the items in question.

Not so with the last of the aunts, the unfortunate Mrs. Moss who has nothing but commiseration to offer in a time of want, who had been and continues to be a strain on the Tullivers' finances. Although the portrait of Mrs. Moss is perhaps the most sympathetic Eliot draws of the older generation, Maggie's favorite aunt supplies as gloomy a role model as any of the Dodsons. Love and passion precipitated Mrs. Moss's marriage to her husband, and her marital name represents the fate that awaits her: stagnation, proliferation, and parasitism. The romantic notion of love conquering all goes out the window when one observes the results of the ill-advised union to a husband with

little business sense and limited initiative. Temperamentally and emotionally, Maggie closely identifies with her Aunt Moss; Gritty's limitedness in her role as wife and mother, however, points to the sad fate that awaits Maggie should she follow the prescribed path of old. The pattern of Tulliver progeneration, furthermore, emphasizes the separation between male and female paths: Gritty Moss explains about her daughters that there are "as many as there's boys. They've got a brother apiece" (87). Gritty and Jeremy Tulliver make another pair, and Tom and Maggie another. The equilibrium of numbers, however, appears even more ironic in the disproportionality of opportunity available to the female Tullivers. On the other hand, Dodsonness asserts itself as a forceful matriarchy but one that is backward-looking instead of forward-looking: the Dodson women use their female power to uphold a way of life fast becoming obsolete. Among their primary transgressions is a failure to allow Maggie proper access to the feminine circle—or, more accurately, to allow the definition of the feminine circle to be expanded such that it will include Maggie.[9] At the center of their criticisms of the young girl lies a distaste for her darkness; that coloring results in Maggie's juxtaposition against her brother and her cousin. Here we observe strategies that approximate chiaroscuro and build towards Eliot's thesis of un-division.

TOM AND MAGGIE: "TEARING THINGS TO PIECES TO SEW 'EM TOGETHER AGAIN"

Our first encounter with Maggie Tulliver acquaints us with her streak of rebelliousness and her dissatisfaction with a country girl's lot. Armed with a needle and a sharp retort, she fights against Bessy's demands that little girls should submit quietly to customary domestic pastimes:

> "Oh dear, oh, dear, Maggie, what are you think' of, to throw your bonnet down there? Take it upstairs, there's a good gell, an' let your hair be brushed, an' put your other pinafore on, an' change your shoes—do, for shame; an' come an' go on with your patchwork, like a little lady."
>
> "O mother," said Maggie, in a vehemently cross tone, "I don't *want* to do my patchwork."
>
> "What! not your pretty patchwork, to make a counterpane for your Aunt Glegg?"
>
> "It's foolish work," said Maggie, with a toss of her mane,—"tearing things to pieces to sew 'em together again."(16)

The "foolish work" that Maggie resents provides a powerful analogy to her subjugation in a largely unsympathetic society. Patchwork suggests artificiality and forced conformity in an unnatural state, a gesture towards the many ways in which humanity can be torn and reconstructed artificially: prescribed gender roles, racial and color typing, and the separation of the classes. Throughout the rest of the novel, Maggie and her brother Tom themselves prove to be torn fragments sewn together again in an artificial arrangement—commonly called society—and Maggie's initial frustration directs the reader to understanding the pointlessness of the original division.[10]

Annette Federico's "Being Torn: *The Mill on the Floss*" recounts the multiple ways in which the imagery of tearing has dominated discourse on the novel over the decades. The idea of division, she notes, has been applied to the structure of the novel, the psyche of the author, and the language of the narrator and characters: "The novel appears to produce ambivalence, to be constructed in ambivalence, to originate in

ambivalence" (359). Her own take on being torn proposes that such a state is endemic to the modern condition:

> [W]hat if we read Maggie's "being torn" not as being entrapped by narrow choices, or being embattled by desires, or being victimized by her creator, but as instead simply *being* in the modern world, a representative of an anguished, exhilarating age? As Bodenheimer and Adam, in particular, have pointed out, several episodes from Maggie's childhood are studies in choice. But instead of reading them as frustrating situations that illustrate false or treacherous choices, I think we can read them as stages in Maggie's ethical development as a liberal subject for whom choosing is self-becoming. (368)

Federico extrapolates her thesis to a reading of the novel's final line, that Tom and Maggie are undivided in death, as an affirmation of life and an affirmation of choice. However, I find such an interpretation problematic. The "liberal situation—being torn and becoming who you are" apply neither to Maggie nor to Tom: their decisions drive them further away from not only happiness, but also fulfillment of potential and roundness of character (375). Tom and Maggie, I believe, can offer no affirmation of modernity, democracy, and freedom in their everyday lives, and not simply because a tragic ending disallows that reading. "Boy and Girl," the title of the novel's first book, placespressure on that troublesome conjunction: opportunities that should be for boy *and* girl apply, in various instances, to a boy *or* to a girl. When the two drown together in the flood, the reunion is a whole remade and not a pair reunited.

Fig. 4.1. "Ducking a Witch." Illustration by G.M. Brighty, published in an 1819 edition of Daniel Defoe's *The History of the Devil.*

Eliot first draws the connection between Maggie's imaginative prowess and blackness in the child's vivid interpretation of an illustration. "Ducking a Witch," a steel engraving of which appears in an 1819 edition of Defoe's *The History of the Devil*, captures Maggie's fascination (see Fig. 4.1). She explains to her father's friend Mr. Riley:

> It's a dreadful picture, isn't it? But I can't help looking at it. That old woman in the water's a witch—they've put her in to find out whether she's a witch or no; and if she swims she's a witch, and if she's drowned—and killed, you know—she's innocent, and not a witch, but only a poor silly old woman…. And this dreadful blacksmith with his arms akimbo, laughing—oh, isn't he ugly?—I'll tell you what he is. He's the devil *really*… and not a right blacksmith; for the devil takes the shape of wicked men, and walks about and sets people doing wicked things, and he's oftener in the shape of a bad man than any other, because, you know, if people saw he was the devil, and he roared at 'em, they'd run away, and he couldn't make 'em do what he pleased. (20-21)

The individual components of Maggie's interpretation require attention. First, the accused witch represents a wronged woman who, having not conformed to societal expectations in one way or another, faces an inevitable end (which includes both literal and figurative death). The water and drowning, among the most powerful of Eliot's own symbols in the novel and certainly the most discussed, represent the woman's sink-or-swim catch-22.

Most relevant to the present discussion, however, is the identity that Maggie assigns to the "bad man": he is a blacksmith. His attire, rough workman's garments and a large apron that might or might not be leathern, could certainly suggest a blacksmith, but a number of other country professions might as easily account for such trappings.[11] Thus Maggie's imagination provides this specificity of detail that ties in to her own characterization as the dark lady. Etymologically, the *black* in the word *blacksmith* refers to the iron, a black metal as opposed to a white metal like tin, worked by the smith

(*OED*). We arrive at a deeper level of symbolism attributable to the personae of the illustration. The similarity of Maggie's own fate to the witch's becomes increasingly and multifariously apparent as the novel progresses, from her intellectual near-deaths to her corporeal end.[12] The primary instigator and punisher in the illustration works in black, bending, breaking, and forging. Taking Maggie's interpretation as an outline for Eliot's own project, then, leads the reader to Maggie's darkness—blackness—as an integral component of her victimization and demise.

An interesting decision Eliot makes in her characterization of Maggie concerns the racialization of the little girl's character from the outset. After Mr. Tulliver laments his daughter's "'cuteness," Bessy dismisses him by noting Maggie's unconventional looks and the un-Dodsonness of her complexion: "That niver run i' my family, thank God! no more nor a brown skin as makes her look like a mulatter" (15).[13] Comments from the various Dodson aunts and opinions focalized through the narrator in the chapters that follow reinforce the unsavoriness of Maggie's dark skin.[14] The internal chiaroscuro occasioned by mulatto personhood here represents another instance of forcible division and re-integration: Maggie exists internally as two separate persons stitched together into one very conflicted whole, as exemplified by her actions and by a number of characters noting that she is given to extremes. Linguistically and metaphorically by invoking the *mulatter* figure, Bessy emphasizes the contradictions in Maggie rather than appreciating the gestalt that can be both black and white, both Dodson and Tulliver, both imaginative and practical. Some evidence exists in the second book of the novel that the frequently dreamy Maggie has a practical side to her that, with the proper cultivation, would allow her reason to develop as much as her imagination.

Even before factoring in the larger discussion about the education and abilities allowed to boys and not girls, we see that Maggie can think both syllogistically *and* abstractly in the process of working out etymologies. When Tom corrects her, drawing upon the fruits of his rote-learning to point out that *bonus* means "good," she defends her inference by analogy: "It may mean several things; almost every word does. There's 'lawn,'—it means the grass-plot, as well as the stuff pocket-handkerchiefs are made of" (153). Additionally, in a highly stylized passage, the narrator presents Maggie in a moment when her darkness is heightened by contrast but also complemented by the routine whirr of the everyday and mundane:

> Maggie loved to linger in the great spaces of the mill, and often came with her black hair powdered to a soft whiteness that made her dark eyes flash out with new fire. The resolute din, the unresting motion of the great stones, giving her a dim, delicious awe as at the presence of an uncontrollable force; the meal forever pouring, pouring… all helped to make Maggie feel that the mill was a little world apart from her outside every-day life. (32)

That Maggie converts a workspace and the very monotony of machinery into an imaginative wonderland speaks to the early potential in the little girl for reconciling both the Dodson and Tulliver in her.[15] The powder of the mill, by making Maggie's darkness even more apparent by contrast, emphasizes the happy ideal of imagination and reason coexisting and the little girl's humanistic potential, should she be given opportunity and encouragement. Unlike a Tom Gradgrind or her own brother Tom, Maggie retains some degree of her multi-faceted personality throughout and, at some junctures at least, resists

the categorization and reduction that society attempts to impose. But her imaginative side receives an undue degree of development to the disadvantage of her practical side: she is not the son and not the one who stands to receive access to the knowledge she desires. Though she makes repeated attempts at correction, such as when she attempts to teach herself from Tom's old books and finds it "a thirsty, trackless, uncertain journey," the imbalance persists and allows her to be the black counterpart to others' white (299).[16]

Tom Tulliver, on the other hand, follows a trajectory not dissimilar to that of Tom Gradgrind, although the narrative allows him a brief and utter redemption at the very end. In the early stages, Eliot establishes that Tom has a strong will and single-track mind in most human interactions: his readiness to punish the flaws in others at every juncture, for instance, demonstrates the type of if-then syllogistic thinking that would later come to define his personality even more.[17] By offering protracted insight into Tom's education and schoolmaster Stelling's less than stellar methods, the novel illuminates the type of nurturing that Tom's mind does *not* receive. Systematic learning devoid of abstractions and illustrations, we learn, is not the style of pedagogy most effective in accessing and widening the boy's intellect, even despite his predisposition for blinkered thinking. Education under Stelling focused on "the practice of reading, writing, spelling, carried on by an elaborate appliance of unintelligible ideas, and by much failure in the effort to learn by rote"; the narrator throws the fact that Tom still acquires some learning into ironic relief by invoking the characteristics his education lacked:

> Nevertheless, there was a visible improvement in Tom under this training; perhaps because he was not a boy in the abstract, existing solely to

> illustrate the evils of a mistaken education, but a boy made of flesh and blood, with dispositions not entirely at the mercy of circumstances. (179)[18]

Even at school, however, Tom's weak imagination receives stimulation from a couple of sources, the boy becoming uncharacteristically animated—even passionate—and showing that he, too, has the potential to be multidimensional. In the first instance, Philip Wakem (whose name surely points to his catalyzing nature when interacting with both Maggie and Tom) engages his classmate with stories of war and martial bravery. In the second instance, a more singular occurrence, the concurrence of blackness, passion, and imagination reappears.

Tom envisions himself a soldier after making a deal for the loan of Poulter's sword, and he assumes a particular getup to thrill and terrify his little sister. In a scene reminiscent of Stowe's novel-pictures for their suspended-animation tableaux and black-white juxtapositions, Eliot presents Tom at the zenith of his imaginative prowess:

> Dissatisfied with the pacific aspect of a face which had no more than the faintest hint of flaxen eyebrow, together with a pair of amiable blue-gray eyes and round pink cheeks that refused to look formidable, let him frown as he would before the looking-glass (Philip had once told him of a man who had a horseshoe frown, and Tom had tried with all his frowning might to make a horseshoe on his forehead), he had had recourse to that unfailing source of the terrible, burnt cork, and had made himself a pair of black eyebrows that met in a satisfactory manner over his nose, and were matched by a less carefully adjusted blackness about the chin. He had wound a red handkerchief round his cloth cap to give it the air of a turban,

> and his red comforter across his breast as a scarf,–an amount of red which, with the tremendous frown on his brow, and the decision with which he grasped the sword, as he held it with its point resting on the ground, would suffice to convey an approximate idea of his fierce and bloodthirsty disposition. (188-89)

At Tom's furthest point away from the staid, unidimensional creature we come to know, he finds his whiteness inadequate in expressing emotion and creativity. His refuge is burnt cork, favored by blackface minstrels to engineer their own darkness, and with this blackface scene occurring near the beginning of Tom Tulliver's trajectory, we observe the reverse of Tom Gradgrind's blackface scene at the end of *his* story. The burnt cork sparsely applied to eyebrows and chin to give Tom's appearance a hint of menace and approximates his imaginative ability trying to break through the whiteness that confines it.[19] The scene plays out in a chilling way, however, when the blackness retreats and Tom changes persona in mid-game. He unsheaths Poulter's sword and begins advancing on Maggie, forcing her to cower and beg for mercy; not only does he enact a hypermasculinity that threatens any symbiosis of genders, as Nancy Henry points out, but he also assumes an unquestionably white guise of authority: "I'm the Duke of Wellington! March!" (Henry 29; Eliot 189). Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington, is the figure to whom Tom refers.[20] Wellesley provides a significant confluence of symbolism as a representative both of Britain's political-intellectual establishment and of rugged military prowess: he would become a Tory Prime Minister later in the decade and later a leading opponent of the 1832 Reform Act, and he had been an abundantly decorated soldier during a distinguished career in the army. Only this latter

persona with its erect sword, not the former of the partially blackened face, threatens Maggie.[21] But the narrative still in its early stages protects her and aborts Tom's game, turning his sword against him and rendering him temporarily lame.

Tom's short foray into blackness, along with the few moments during which Maggie enjoys his playacting, represents one of the few times when the novel finds black, white, and their correlates in equilibrium. The coloring Tom imposes on himself echoes the internal juxtapositions that Bessy's *mulatter* pronouncement had imposed upon Maggie, and he becomes a Tulliver (rather than a Dodson) in action and thought rather than just in name. And complicating the black color associations of the Dodson and Tulliver names, of course, is Tom Tulliver's likely inclusion in the onomastic community of contrast initiated by Stowe. Continuing the tradition of white Toms who, in the context of the racial politics of 1850s novels, unavoidably approximate Stowe's onomastic juxtapositions, Tom Tulliver acts as the white counterpart to Maggie's darkness, and he single-handedly enacts all the possibilities exemplified by the white Toms of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, from the young Toms guided by their father's examples (for better and for worse) to the establishment Tom who quietly supports an oppressive system (in this case racial inequality being translated to gender inequality) to the hard, systematic, unfeeling Tom who eventually finds redemption.[22]

Returning to the scene of Jeremy Tulliver denying Tom capitol for his business ventures, we witness the moment at which Tom's imagination goes dormant to the point of near extinction. When Jeremy couples his refusal to supply the funds with an equation for converting life into pounds, Tom receives the most profound and deep-setting lesson of his troubled education. Shortly before that formative moment, the narrator notes that,

for the boy, "[o]ne day was like another, and Tom's interest in life, driven back and crushed on every other side, was concentrating itself into the one channel of ambitious resistance to misfortune" (288). The hardness of life after Jeremy's failure has narrowed Tom's already narrow milieu. Then the pathetic refusal causes Tom to redouble his efforts in hopes that the debts might be paid, and he appeals to relatives for support, becoming as single-purposed as his father in clearing the family name. The investment that would usually require equal parts faith and hope to accompany practicality loses those abstract, imaginative dimensions for Tom. Jeremy, in effect, curses his son as well as himself by the time-money equation. The father's own death occurs because he had named his remaining years as necessary to pay off the debt, and its fulfillment brings the end of that allotted time. Tom, who had been factored into the equation and had his life's meaning correspondingly reduced, brings his own end much closer when the speculation yields the sum in less time than expected; Jeremy's deathbed request that Tom also earn enough to return the Mill to the family gives Tom additional but similarly delimited time.[23] Continuing to work with purpose but without passion, Tom eventually reclaims the mill but loses any zest for living. We find him near the end of the book and his life, poised in a fashion reminiscent of Louisa Gradgrind's quiet desperation: "An' it worrets me as Mr. Tom'll sit by himself so glumpish, a-knittin' his brown an' a-lookin' at the fire of a night" (406).

Tom and Maggie's inability to succeed as multi-faceted characters finds its root in the phenomenon Maggie notes at the book's beginning: social progress resists systems in which a whole might be separated and artificially reconnected. Modernity encroaching on St. Ogg's and the world of the novel proves incompatible with a society that had

previously allowed narrow, disapproving Dodsons and overpassionate Tullivers to be nothing but allegorical absolutes (at the time when the novel was establishing its prominence as the ultimate form of literary-artistic expression, *The Mill on the Floss* offers a treatise on how the genre offers the best reflection of modern life).[24] Tom and Maggie's reunion at the end of the novel, Eliot noting that they were undivided in death, refers not only to the fact that they put aside their differences and reconcile, but that their last acts finally grant them the fullness of character that had previously eluded them. For her part, Maggie is no longer dreamy and directionless, allowing herself to be borne along by the tide, but she fights against it in her heroic endeavor to save Tom's life. Tom, on seeing his sister and, in a moment, reviving all the love and emotion he ever felt for her, finally masters the art of making words say more than they denote: his simple exclamation, the childhood diminutive "Magsie!" speaks volumes and functions as allusion and metaphor in re-establishing kinship.

Following that moment of reunion, Maggie and Tom's thoughts turn to their cousin Lucy's safety: "We will go to Lucy, Tom: we'll go and see if she is safe, and then we can help the rest" (541). The moment seems a somewhat random one in the narrative since the final episode is two weeks removed from Lucy's last appearance, and we have no direct reason to fear for her safety. If the brother and sister were concerned about the welfare of their family members, mightn't thoughts have turned to their widowed mother first? Rather than just setting the atmosphere, then, the choice to have the siblings' final thoughts center on their cousin emphasizes Lucy Deane's significance in Eliot's larger project. Her emergence at Tom and Maggie's termination hints that answering the

riddle—what does she confess?—might tie together what frequently seem like divergent threads in the narrative.

MAGGIE AND LUCY: TWICE AS DARK AS USUAL BY HER SIDE

Bessy acknowledges her daughter, genetically completely white, to be mulatto-like in appearance, and she opens the possibility for Maggie to move between black and white. Maggie and Tom's divided personalities, furthermore, restrict their dimensionalities, allowing them to be categorized readily (if uncomfortably) as the white child and the dark child. Eliot uses this separation to build her simultaneous if not completely parallel arguments about gender inequality, expansive thinking, and the realist novel as the thoroughly modern art form. Her approach approximates many of Stowe's techniques and, perhaps even more, recalls how Dickens and Kingsley had played with the chiaroscuro strategies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Yet considering juxtapositions between Tom and Maggie alone would neglect a key component of Stowe's chiaroscuro: the color play between the two does not by itself trap the reader into sympathy for Maggie's plight. By establishing Maggie as effectively black, however, that sibling relationship allows another—that between Maggie and Lucy—to become the means by which Maggie's plight becomes a more directly personal story rather than a fictional tragedy.

Lucy's first appearance in the novel coincides with a familiar moment of pain for Bessy, who wished that her niece did not so far surpass her daughter in beauty and complexion. A long account blazoning Lucy's virtues creates a tableau in which Maggie, already established as dark in comparison to Tom, is even further blackened by comparison:

> Mrs. Tulliver had to look on with a silent pang while Lucy's blonde curls were adjusted. It was quite unaccountable that Mrs. Deane… should have had this child who might have been taken for Mrs. Tulliver's any day. And Maggie always looked twice as dark as usual when she was by the side of Lucy. (65-66)

While Maggie and Lucy may not physically be the mirrored images/negative images that for instance Eva and Topsy are, many factors establish a similar negatory equilibrium between the pair. Not only does Bessy wish that Lucy were her daughter, but she becomes mother to the girl upon the death of Mrs. Deane. Also later in the novel, Maggie displaces Lucy in Stephen Guest's affections; after Maggie's death, Lucy returns to the foremost place in Stephen's estimation. Even in childhood, however, we notice a blurring of the characters while retaining the contrast. This process occurs both in Maggie's imaginative world and in her attempt to align the practical world with that vision. On that first instance of Lucy's appearance in the novel, the narrator notes that

> Maggie always looked at Lucy with delight. She was fond of fancying a world where the people never got any larger than children of their own age, and she made the queen of it just like Lucy with a little crown on her head and a little sceptre in her hand… only the queen was Maggie herself in Lucy's form. (66)

Maggie's fantasy here, at very least, proves equivocal: what would a queen Maggie in Lucy's form entail? What degree of aesthetic Maggie-ness does such a figure retain, if any? Maggie certainly believes that Lucy is more beautiful than she, so assuming that more pleasing "form" makes sense. But at this early stage, has Maggie as yet conceived

her desire to see the dark lady triumph? And, if so, does the queen retain and celebrate Maggie's dark coloring? Maggie's heady confrontation with the whiteness Lucy represents and her attempt to actualize the queenly fantasy offer some clarification.

On a leisurely day when all the family gathers at the Pullet home, Maggie distinguishes herself by being thoroughly (though inadvertently) disagreeable, culminating in the heinous crime of spilling cowslip wine on Tom. Sent to Coventry for this transgression, Maggie tags along unhappily while Tom ignores her to make much of his pretty little cousin. Having had enough of being unfavorably measured against Lucy's standard, Maggie makes two attempts to demonstrate their equality. Her frustration at a frenzied height, "the utmost Maggie could do, with a fierce thrust of *her small brown arm*, was to push poor little *pink-and-white* Lucy into the cow-trodden mud" (108; emphasis added). The result is the modified vision of Lucy the family confronts before the narrator recounts its achievement:

> The startling object which thus made an epoch for uncle Pullet was no other than little Lucy, with one side of her person, from her small foot to her bonnet-crown, wet and discolored with mud, holding out two tiny blackened hands and making a very piteous face. (105)

Maggie's dunking of her cousin to create the half-white, half-black spectacle that results does not receive the universal approbation that the blacksmith earns in dunking the suspected witch and snuffing out her difference. On the literal level, the family's horror at the result of Maggie's naughty act is understandable. On the symbolic level, however, their distaste for an event so serious that it would cause Uncle Pullet to swallow his lozenge underscores the fact that they read black-and-white as simply contradictory and

never complementary. The transformed Lucy provides an actualization of the pain Maggie feels in her difference and marks an unsuccessful attempt to make the family understand and accept the little *mulatter* outcast.

Maggie's attempt to run away to the gypsies and her desire to become their queen follows from the debut of black-and-white Lucy. We note that this chapter marks the second instance in the novel that Maggie expresses royal ambitions, and her proposed assumption of the Gypsy throne must be read as a continuation of the Queen-Maggie-in-Lucy's-form fantasy. In that dream, Maggie envisions herself as ruler over a society of *children*, presumably because her acceptance and reverence in such a society free of adult prejudices and customs (and free of the desire to tear and forcibly realign) would be assured. On arrival at the gypsy camp, relieved that she had avoided a chance encounter with the blacksmith, Maggie begins to lay the foundation for her intended foray into Romany politics:

> "O what a nice little lady—and rich, I'm sure," said the old woman. "Didn't you live in a beautiful house at home?"
>
> "Yes, my home is pretty, and I'm very fond of the river where we go fishing—but I'm often very unhappy. I should have liked to bring my books with me, but I came away in a hurry, you know. But I can tell you almost everything there is in my books. I've read them so many times—and that will amuse you. And I can tell you something about Geography too—that's about the world we live in—very useful and interesting." (116-17).

Maggie had confirmed the resemblance and coloring she shares with the gypsies, allowing that the Dodsons' frequent comparisons were justified. Feeling confident that she has found her people, she immediately takes on a condescending, tentatively queenly tone. The primitive and unenlightened state of the tinkers, as Maggie understands it, provides as welcoming a ground for the young queen's experiment as a society of children would.[25] Her previously noted intention that the queen should take Lucy's form, however, moves from a healthy coexistence of the white and black in the two girls' natures to the whiteness in Maggie asserting itself forcefully. Her first lesson to the gypsies focuses on the triumphs of Columbus and introduces a discourse of colonialism.[26] What began, then, as a vision of valorizing all that was different about the outcast community turns very quickly into a mission of assimilation. Maggie, strangely and unsettlingly, becomes an intensely white figure in the scene, comparable to Tom's assumption of Wellington's guise while at school. How has this come about?

In the scene in which Maggie pushes Lucy into the mud, Eliot utilizes an immediate juxtaposition to bring about a (temporary) chiastic changing of roles for the two little girls. Having usurped Maggie's position as Tom's sister and favorite, Lucy occupies one of the many roles of equivalence she and Maggie share throughout the novel; at the moment of the dunking, the narrative focuses minutely on the contrast between the two girls' complexions; when the focus widens again, we find Lucy in Maggie's black-and-white guise and Maggie attempting to colonize a dark race. What lessons do the little girls learn when their symbolic roles have been switched? Maggie, for her part, receives a nasty shock. Her premise that the gypsies are a naïve and childlike people proves faulty when she learns about their mundane concerns with money and

possessions. What her young mind cannot process at this point, however, is that the marginalization of the Romany peoples and society's rejection of their peregrine lifestyle have created the conditions in which acquisition and transaction must frequently be of the shady variety.[27] The experiment unsuccessful, Maggie abandons the enterprise altogether—"it was impossible she should ever be queen of these people"—and returns to her imaginative world of stories in her hope for deliverance: "If her father would but come by in the gig and take her up! Or even Jack the Giantkiller or Mr. Greatheart or St George who slew the dragon on the half-pennies" (118, 119). Although the novel rarely alludes to the gypsy episode thereafter, echoes of it haunt the chapters that follow, each time underlining the mirroring of and contrast between Maggie and Lucy. When Maggie, in her period of subjugation and self denial, submits herself to Bessy's petting and becomes more like the daughter Bessy always wanted (Lucy), the narrator notes that the girl "showed a *queen*ly head above her old frocks—steadily refusing to look at herself in the glass" (306; emphasis added). The refusal to confront the mirror, while ostensibly a repudiation of vanity, also allows Maggie to avoid confronting another vision of Queen Maggie in Lucy's form. Later, during the Guests' ball at which Maggie usurps Lucy's place as belle, Lucy is initially "the acknowledged queen of the occasion" (457).

The equivalence between Maggie and Lucy lies at the root of Lucy's "confession" during the pair's last meeting. The unspoken confession—and, indeed, the appeal to Maggie for forgiveness—concerns Lucy's inability to act and bridge the gap between blackness and whiteness. The nature of any such action or change is irrelevant and requires no consideration, because Eliot wishes to emphasize simply the fact of its absence. Socially and symbolically, the novel positions Lucy to be its primary actor and

agent of change because she can have the greatest impact on the status quo as the embodiment of its perfection. Circumstances even clear the way for her in that she faces few, if any, of the obstacles that bar Maggie: as we learn, her mother Mrs. Deane is "the thinnest and sallowest of all the Miss Dodsons"—effectively the weakest of the clan and unlikely to mount a fearful social opposition of the variety that an Aunt Glegg, an Aunt Pullet, or a Bessy Tulliver might.[28] The novel eventually disposes of Mrs. Deane, stressing that Lucy's cipher of a mother provided no real threat to any essay her daughter might make. Furthermore, her father Mr. Deane quickly rises to become a champion of business in St. Ogg's and has embraced the modernity that increasingly snuffs out Dodson-Tulliver provinciality. And finally, as a lone female child and heiress (rather than a girl paired off with a boy or part of a conservative Amazonian commune), Lucy can resist the division of self forced upon Maggie. Such missed opportunities number among Lucy's unspoken regrets in her scene of confession with Maggie.

Lucy's taste of being Maggie after falling in the mud, unfortunately, didn't prompt her to throw off the prim, conventional mantle that would eventually evolve into empty-headed coquetry and submissive wifehood. To her credit, Lucy shows some appreciation for the difference in Maggie's nature by scolding Bessy for her obtuseness:

> "Maggie's arms *are* a pretty shape," said Mrs. Tulliver. "They're like mine used to be; only mine was never brown: I wish she'd had our family skin."
>
> "Nonsense, aunty!" said Lucy, patting her aunt Tulliver's shoulder, "you don't understand those things. A painter would think Maggie's complexion beautiful."

> "May be, my dear…. You know better than I do. Only when I was young a brown skin wasn't thought well on among the respectable folks." (399)

But the lighthearted appraisal of her cousin's darkness proves too little, too late, and Mrs. Tulliver receives no help in understanding and interpreting all the correlative meanings of the brown skin and all the wrongs done to her daughter through lack of understanding. The Lucy who visits her cousins' tomb after their death, identified only as "a sweet face beside" Stephen Guest, doubtless was cognizant of her failure and relived the confession scene at each visit. Her appearance in these final pages serves as a reminder to readers as white as she (whether on the literal or figurative level, or both): beware division.

BOB JAKIN: "ALL ALIVE INSIDE LIKE AN OLD CHEESE"

The confession scene between Maggie and Lucy significantly takes place not at Dorlcote Mill, the Deane household, or any other location associated with the Dodson-Tulliver divide. Although signaling Lucy's regret at her inability to be a viable female actor in a changing society, the interview's location coincides with the novel's lone vision of a productive and cheerful future. Ostracized by her brother and much of St. Ogg's after the near-dalliance with Stephen Guest, Maggie finds a rare loyal friend in Bob Jakin. The childhood playmate and avenue to Tom's eventual success, Bob initially appears in a less than flattering portrait as something of a scallywag and schemer. But as the characterization develops, Bob progresses from comic relief to noble savage (of sorts) to astute businessperson to viable modern man. Often overshadowed by his sloppy grammar and sloppier clothes, Bob's quick intellect and ready humor allow him to fulfill the fact-fancy dialectic in a way that Maggie couldn't as she navigated between the

Dodson and Tulliver waters. The Jakin household, moreover, offers Maggie a last chance at a future, if only a symbolic one.

"Naughty Bob Jakin" who Maggie "felt sure... was wicked" first appears to the reader in these unfavorable terms (xx). In the novel, his initial interactions with the brother and sister serve to highlight their respective allegiances to the Dodson and Tulliver manners of thought. Maggie, for instance, bears a strong dislike for the young Bob for reasons conjured by her imagination, the tendency to fantasy preventing a readier appreciation of the person who would become her greatest ally. She thought him wicked,

> without very distinctly knowing why; unless it was because Bob's mother was a dreadfully large fat woman, who lived at a queer round house round the river; and once, when Maggie and Tom had wandered thither, there rushed out a brindled dog that wouldn't stop barking; and when Bob's mother came out after it, and screamed above the barking to tell them not to be frightened, Maggie thought she was scolding them fiercely, and her heart beat with terror. Maggie thought it very likely that the round house had snakes on the floor, and bats in the bedroom; for she had seen Bob take off his cap to show Tom a little snake that was inside it, and another time he had a handful of young bats: altogether, he was an irregular character, perhaps even slightly diabolical, judging from his intimacy with snakes and bats.... (51-52)[29]

The meandering, digressive trains of thought that form Maggie's inaccurate appraisal of Bob's character align with her repeated habit of living in a fanciful world of her own creation, frequently to her or others' disadvantage. The novel returns her, in the final

scene with Lucy, to the same little round house, now confirmed as bereft of the snakes below or bats above, and to Bob's mercies and friendship.

Maggie's overstatement of his "wickedness" notwithstanding, Bob's boyish naughtiness is undeniable and proves a huge draw in his friendship with Tom Tulliver. As would happen under the influence of Philip Wakem at school, Tom's weak imagination receives stimulation during his interactions with Bob, once even venturing to consider the possibility of surviving a great flood or perishing. Their friendship, however, exists only within the hard parameters of Tom's Dodson worldview, Bob remaining to his more affluent friend "an inferior... in spite of [Bob's] superior knowingness" (52). The matter comes to a climax when, in a game of heads or tails, Tom's need always to demand his version of absolute fairness causes a falling out. Bob, either deciding that the coin won't fall in his favor or regretting the risk, snatches up his money and claims a victory. Tom will have none of it:

> "Tails," said Tom, instantly fired with the desire to win.
>
> "It's yeads," said Bob, hastily, snatching up the halfpenny as it fell.
>
> "It wasn't," said Tom, loudly and peremptorily. "You give me the halfpenny; I've won it fair."
>
> "I shan't," said Bob, holding it tight in his pocket.
>
> "Then I'll make you; see if I don't," said Tom.
>
> "You can't make me do nothing, you can't," said Bob.
>
> "Yes, I can."
>
> "No, you can't."
>
> "I'm master." (55)

Within a few passages of using Bob to emphasize Maggie's primary flaw, Eliot uses him to highlight Tom's. As noticeable again and again in the novel, Tom's version of fairness—typical of "a Rhadamanthine personage"—always finds its basis on shaky premises (57). On a basic level, despite being ready to claim the prize, Tom has not anted up his own portion of the bet. More directly, however, his fairness remains limited to the situation at hand. Not taking into account that poor Bob has less pocket money and fewer treats, Tom's Malthusian approach to a fair outcome supersedes any considerations of friendship or community. Not until he makes Bob submit and surrender his farthing does Tom satisfy himself.

Thus initially cast as receiving the brunt of both Maggie's overactive imagination and Tom's taxing hardness, Bob goes on to become the novel's only character who achieves balance between the two extremes. Bob's attitude after the Tulliver family's downfall—volunteering to help in whatever way possible, offering his services to Tom and Maggie should they be required—demonstrates the very opposite of Tom's inclinations to superiority. Rather than remembering the negative tenor of their last encounter, Bob chooses to remember Tom as the kind boy who had given him a cherished knife; to the family that has lost its worldly fortune and social standing, Bob offers his small windfall of nine pounds with no ulterior motive or even an explicit expectation of repayment. His unpretentious nature, his drive to get on in life despite beginnings of the humblest sort, and his ability to form human connections even with people who begin by looking down upon him underlie Bob's ultimate success as a fully realized character and actor. His encounter with the formidable Aunt Glegg, in addition

to providing a hilarious interlude, demonstrates how Bob achieves the synthesis between fact and fancy, between Dodson and Tulliver.

Arriving at the Glegg household to help secure Tom a small loan from his wealthy relatives, Bob nevertheless cannot resist the opportunity to ply his trade (and his blarney), taking on a worthy opponent. No longer simply a plot device to illustrate Tom and Maggie's extremes, the Bob of "Aunt Gleg Learns the Breadth of Bob's Thumb" enacts the completion that neither Tom or Maggie can achieve. Before meeting the grand dame, he chats with Mr. Glegg and reveals, through his language use, his full imaginative potential. Responding to Mr. Glegg's admiration for his knowledge and savvy, Bob's vivid tropes prove some of the novel's most evocative:

> "I think my head's all alive inside like an old cheese, for I'm so full o' plans, one knocks another over. If I hadn't Mumps to talk to, I should get top-heavy an' tumble in a fit. I suppose it's because I niver went to school much. That's what I jaw my old mother for. I says, 'You should ha' sent me to school a bit more,' I says, 'an' then I could ha' read i' the books like fun, an' kep' my head cool an' empty.' (326)

Shortly after, Mr. Glegg becomes suspicious of Bob's motives and inquires after Bob's own interest in establishing Tom; always with a ready answer, an affronted Bob notes that he "didn't offer to get a apple for Mr. Tom, o' purpose to hev a bite out of it" himself (327). Instead of subverting and inverting meaning as Jeremy Tulliver's metaphors do, Bob's work productively and emphasize (rather than undermine) a sharp intellect and attention to business details. Continuing in this florid manner, and executing the metaphor provided by the chapter's title, Bob convinces the parsimonious Aunt Glegg to

lay out for quite a few choice items in his pack. In the process of selling to Mrs. Glegg and flattering her judgment at every turn, Bob earns the hard woman's confidence without her realizing it. By the time the matter of Tom's nest-egg comes up for discussion, Aunt Glegg's questions tend not to whether the shabby Bob could be trusted to know a sound business deal, but to the ensuing profits. In this chapter, Bob demonstrates both the ability to think abstractly and imaginatively *and* a practical nature that prevents him from working against his own purposes.

When, near the novel's end, Bob gives the chastened and rebuked Maggie a home and passes no judgment, he reaffirms his role as the lone success in a sea of failure. Unlike the other characters of his generation destined to obsolescence—Maggie, Tom, Lucy, Stephen, Philip—Bob is assured a legacy beyond the end of the novel. Significantly, though, that legacy exists not in a son who will carry on the Jakin name, but a little girl:

> "You see, we've got a little un, Miss, and I want'd you to look at it, and take it in your arms, if you'd be so good. For we made free to name it after you, and it 'ud be better for your takin' a bit o' notice on it."
>
> Maggie could not speak, but she put out her arms to receive the tiny baby.... Maggie's heart had swelled at this action and speech of Bob's; she knew well enough that it was a way he had chosen to show his sympathy and respect.
>
> (507)

With the complete, fully realized Bob to guide her, and with no extreme Dodson hardness or Tulliver fancifulness to hinder her, a little Maggie gets a second chance.

[1] A year earlier, she writes to Mrs. Peter Alfred Taylor in a letter that demonstrates a growing interest in the slavery question:

> The article on Slavery, in the last number of the 'Westminster'—which I think the best article of them all—is by W.E. Forster, a Yorkshire manufacturer, who married Dr. Arnold's daughter. He is a very earnest, independent thinker, and worth a gross of literary hacks who have the 'trick' of writing. I hope you are interested in the Slavery question, and in America generally—that cradle of the future. I used resolutely to turn away from American politics, and declare that the United States was the last region of the world I should care to visit. Even now I almost loathe the *common* American type of character. But I am converted to a profound interest in the history, the laws, the social and religious phases of North America, and long for some knowledge of them. Is it not cheering to think of the youthfulness of this little planet, and the immensely greater youthfulness of our race upon it?—to think that the higher moral tendencies of human nature are only in their germ? I feel this more thoroughly when I think of that great Western Continent, with its infant cities, its huge uncleared forests, and its unamalgamated races. (*GE Letters* I.85)

Haight notes the tenor of her editorship of the *Westminster Review*: "There is always at least one article that may be classified under the heading Reform…. Politics are usually represented… all from the Radical point of view" (96-97).

[2] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a *Tom-tit* as "a) a common name for the blue titmouse"; and "b) applied to a little man or boy." A *tit*, furthermore, could mean "a name for a horse small of kind, or not full grown; in later use often applied in depreciation or meiosis to any horse." Stowe presents the first mixed-race Tom in her fiction as one of her young Toms—i.e. another gesture towards the future, always with the possibility of dystopia hanging in the balance—and applies the diminutive affix to suggest a new dimension to the power dynamics of the representation.

[3] Gilbert and Gubar in *Madwoman in the Attic* speculate about other ways in which Stowe influenced Eliot's fiction, most notably in the seminal character Cassy: "Just as Eliot works beyond rage and beyond her early appropriation of male roles in *Middlemarch*, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Stowe depicts a uniquely

female model of liberation" (533). Another person with notable influence on Eliot's slavery and abolitionism opinions was feminist Barbara Bodichon (née Leigh Smith, grand-daughter of abolitionist William Smith), one of the author's closest personal friends. When considering Eliot's treatment of race (though outside the scope of the present argument), a scene in her short story "Brother Jacob" that alludes to the Wedgwood icon deserves notice; for a fuller discussion, see Rodstein's "Sweetness and Dark: George Eliot's 'Brother Jacob.'" Mueller points out that Eliot "liberally borrowed plotlines dealing with racial alterity from Stowe's work for *Daniel Deronda*," but she neglects to see the more subtle and symbolic resonances in *The Mill on the Floss* (47).

[4] Jean Piaget (1896-1980) remains one of the most influential theorists in the fields of developmental and cognitive psychology. For more on Piaget's stages of cognitive development, see his *The Psychology of the Child* and *The Child's Conception of the World*.

[5] Through free-indirect speech, the narrator gestures towards Wakem's profit by Tulliver's over-reaching imagination: "Wakem, to his certain knowledge, was (metaphorically speaking) at the bottom of Pivart's irrigation" (166). The parenthetical nod to metaphor underlines the abstract and unmethodical form that Tulliver's resentment takes as he approaches litigation.

[6] Kathleen Blake's "Between Economies in *The Mill on the Floss*" offers another useful critique of Mr. Tulliver's mindset and approach to business before his fall: she argues that a failure to distinguish between loans and gifts predicates his failure: "Mr. Tulliver confuses the two. He does so in a manner that reveals a distinction that Mr. Tulliver himself only dimly apprehends and disregards to his peril and that of his family. This is a distinction between economies: between capitalism and a precapitalist economy of gift exchange" (219).

[7] We learn of other Dodson nephews who will carry on the name, but they are outside of the scope of the novel and the reach of their vanguard aunts—in St. Ogg's and the microcosmic world of the novel, the Dodson name is set to be extinguished.

[8] The reviewer for *The Times* misses this key point in stating that "[t]he Dodson family are stingy, selfish wretches, who give no sympathy and require none, who would let a neighbour starve, and let a brother be bankrupt when a very little assistance would save him from disgrace" (131).

[9] Auerbach too hastily assigns Dodson-ness to Maggie while noting correctly that the similarity to Aunt Gritty is overstated: "Maggie's love is sufficiently nongenerative to align her with the Dodson sisters rather than with the wearily prolific Aunt Gritty, whom we can never envision defacing a doll rather than nourishing it" (159).

[10] This frustration also becomes apparent in the iconic scene of Maggie shedding her locks: while Adamson reads the act as one inspired by shame, the shearing comprises a counter-argument to the status quo rather than submission (319-20); Hayes similarly misreads the scene as an attempt to gain approval (123).

[11] A number of figures toiling at various tasks in Ford Madox Brown's "Work" (1852-65), for instance, are similarly attired. A clue that perhaps leads Maggie's imagination to blacksmithing, however, is the bad man's tremendous forearms.

[12] Gillian Beer's essay on *The Mill on the Floss* in *George Eliot* notes that "[l]ike the witch, Maggie is dead. Only the narrator can 'make it up to her.' The last chapter, indeed, is entitled 'The Final Rescue,' and that rescue is undertaken by the writer" (89).

[13] Without a framework by which one traces such an allusion to strategies of symbolism in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a too literal reading of the *mulatter* figure results, such as that provided by Morse and Danahay: "While Dodsons and Tullivers weach see themselves as very different from their opposite number, they would by no means qualify in the nineteenth century's racialist terms as widely separated types whose crossing would issue in degenerate offspring" (138).

[14] While an entranced Maggie listens to music at her Aunt Pullet's house, the narrator notes that "her face… comforted her mother with the sense that Maggie could look pretty now and then, in spite of her brown skin" (100); Aunt Pullet believes that boarding school will do Maggie good although the experience "would not prevent her being so brown, but might tend to subdue some other vices in her" (137); and during Maggie's submissive interlude, the narrator implies a hint of overcoming unpleasantness while noting that Bessy "was getting fond of her tall, brown girl" (306).

[15] Referencing Maggie's stay at Stelling's, Alley makes a similar observation: "Without the ready imagination which Maggie exemplifies, no real education in Eliot's system can occur; it would simply be a Stelling- or Casaubon-like embalmment of knowledge" (191).

[16] Ashton's observation, that "the proper education of women would benefit men (who fear it) as well as women, since it would make women fitter companions for men," offers a complementary interpretation to the division-equality argument (94). Her argument, however, that "[t]heir education, like everything else relating to them, is the wrong way round" is only half true; rather, each receives only half the education she or he requires (99).

[17] The reviewer for *Spectator* singled out Eliot's treatment of Tom and the character's lack of dimension as indicative exemplary restraint and craftsmanship in characterization. Interestingly (and incorrectly, in my opinion), the review goes on to dismiss Tom as supporting player using that justification: There is not much depth of character or variety in the brother's character, but the truth with which it is done indicates the artist's power who, in her second-rate characters, follows the firm outline her cunning hand has traced as consciously as in fulfilling the more gracious task of working out the leading figures of the great design" (114).

[18] Alley notes that "Tom's education… is anything but natural, since under the pressures of various choices and circumstances, his nature hardens into a practical detachment" (187).

[19] As with Maggie and her darkness, Tom's whiteness earns repeated mentions from the family throughout, his mother and her family frequently noting that his complexion matches theirs (48, 322).

[20] According to the novel's timeline, Tom and Maggie's childhood occurs during the 1820s; Wellesley would assume he Prime Ministership at the end of the decade under a Tory Government. The Reform Act of 1832, which provides an underlying context for *The Mill on the Floss*, is situated between the time of the novel's authorship and its setting at this point.

[21] Henry misreads the scene somewhat; while Bluebeard is "an image threatening specifically to women," Maggie understands the moment as imaginative and enjoys the disguise; only after the transformation does she feel threatened (29).

[22] Tom's whitest moment, of course, comes when he and Maggie are furthest separated: her return from the river escape with Stephen. The narrator notes: "He paused, trembling and white with disgust and indignation" (503).

[23] Nestor suggests that Tom "guards against indefiniteness by rendering all things quanitfiable—debts are repaid and grievances addressed" (65).

[24] Many reviewers balked at the stark realism of the novel in its portrayal of misery; not surprisingly, none of these recognized that Eliot's subtle exploration of genre rendered such criticisms moot. *Dublin University Magazine* chided, "When she shall have learned the difference between painting and photography, between the poetic and the prosaic sides of human life… when her eyes shall have been opened to the truths of that highest realism which reflects the 'soul of goodness in things evil'… then… will she find herself on the road to a higher and more lasting success" (150-51). The *Guardian* lamented that "there are temptations which it is of itself a temptation to scrutinise too closely" (128). Eliot always maintained, however, the difference between realism and dogmatic instruction; Levine recounts that she famously "refused Frederic Harrison, a well-known Positivist, when he requested that she write a Positivist novel: a novelist, she insisted, must not 'lapse from the picture to the diagram'" (110).

[25] "Like the 'Oriental' or the colonized, racially marked subject, the Gypsy was associated with a rhetoric of primitive desires, lawlessness, mystery, cunning, sexual excess, godlessness, and savagery—with freedom from the repressions, both constraining and culture building, of Western civilization. Gypsies were the victims of oppression, harassment, and discrimination and of persistent efforts to outlaw and destroy their way of life" (Nord 3).

[26] Carroll's *Dark Smiles* points out that upon the failure of her design, Maggie quickly falls into the role of victim, suggesting "the many, many Victorian representations of the colonial encounter as the rape of white women" (49).

[27] Hayes points out that "[t]o Victorians, it was inconceivable, and perhaps a bit offensive, that the Gypsies would rather live in abject poverty than join the British mainstream. This fringe element could not have collectively chosen such a backward existence for their culture; they must be avoiding the exigencies of membership in the British work force" (119). One wryly notes here the similarities in tone between such views and those expressed about black men and women in Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question."

[28] The *Saturday Review* commentator makes an intriguing mistake: the piece notes that there are *three* Dodson sisters. Mrs. Deane's insignificance makes her the likely candidate for accidental omission.

[29] The narrator later offers that "[f]or a person suspected of preternatural wickedness, Bob was really not so very villainous-looking; there was even something agreeable in his snub-nosed face, with its close-curled border of red hair" (52).

CONCLUSION

Confronting blackness was an inescapable fact of Victorian England. In the nineteenth century, the issues of slavery and oppression arise in a number of contexts, literal and figurative. The 1830s brought passage of the first Reform Act, the abolition of slavery in British territories, and the rise of Chartism. The 1840s saw enactment of the Poor Law Amendment Act and the Corn Laws, major efforts to address sanitary reform by Chadwick and his compeers, and the publication of Thomas Carlyle's inflammatory (and initially satirical) "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question." In the 1860s, Britain turned its attention to America as tensions between northern and southern states escalated and progressed to civil war. In 1865, Britain dealt with the Governor Eyre scandal, following which factions contentiously debated whether or not the Jamaican governor had exceeded his authority in trying to quell rebellion.

In examining the 1850s, one encounters the literary event that, more than any other, brought debates of blackness and oppression to the fore. With *Uncle Tom*'s immense popularity upon publication and years after came attention to the plight of oppressed black American slaves. Beyond that literal context, however, the British saw in the novel arguments against human oppression in general. The mechanisms by which Stowe so successfully created sympathy for her characters reappeared in many of those social-cause novels that would become part of the nineteenth-century literary canon. In "A Community of Contrast," my three-part breakddown of Stowe's chiaroscuro strategies provides a critical framework for understanding the interplay between literal and figurative blackness in those novels. Each subsequent chapter, dealing with Dickens, Kingsley, and Eliot respectively, applies that framework to a novel that significantly

incorporates the symbolism of blackness. In each case, the insights provided by chiaroscuro analysis illuminate both the author's argument and the structure of the novel. Each novel I examine is, to a significant extent, a product of its time and a product of interactions between influential authors, strong personalities, and infectious ideas.

Harriet Beecher Stowe perceived her picture-making process as one with both documentary and creative aspects; the reprisal of her former narrative voice in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a work of non-fiction, further blurs the distinction between person and persona. As *Uncle Tom* took off in popularity and Stowe gained tangible celebrity, she (sometimes jealously) cultivated the image of standard-bearer in women's and mothers' fight against slavery. In delineating the chiaroscuro strategies of immediate, internal, and onomastic juxtaposition, "A Community of Contrast," places the composition of *Uncle Tom* within biographical contexts. Such a strategy comes with its risks, of course. While I have the text of Stowe's novels before me as finished wholes, the text of her life requires piecing together from various sources: Joan Hedrick's authoritative biography, collected and uncollected correspondence, manuscripts, and articles and reviews. Some degree of speculation remains necessary to fill the biographical holes that remain. For how much of the *Primary Geography* was Stowe responsible? To what extent did the specter of Calvin Stowe's first wife Eliza affect his relationship with Harriet? In each case, I present the available evidence and suggest possible, probable answers to the questions that arise. Nevertheless, opportunities remain to more completely fill in those holes. Collections in possession of the Schlessinger Library and the Library Company of Philadelphia contain potentially useful unpublished letters and manuscripts by Harriet Beecher and Calvin Stowe. An appreciation of the

Stowes' physical spaces would also add texture to the discussions, primarily in terms of their situation during the outbreak of cholera in Cincinnati.

Stowe's contemporaries recognized that she, like so many others, borrowed freely from other authors and drew upon established and emerging traditions, Dickens's private barb about her lack of scruples notwithstanding. The manner in which Stowe systematized what had been done before her, however, contributed to *Uncle Tom*'s explosive popularity and sociopolitical influence. This project's focus on Stowe's literary influence in the 1850s thus provides a number of valuable insights but also, because of the limitations of time and scope, leaves open many avenues for further research and analysis. For the purposes of the dissertation, I have limited my examination of Stowe's works primarily to *Uncle Tom*, the *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*, and *Dred: A Tale of a Dismal Swamp*. A larger project could also take into account the full complexity of Stowe's relationship with European literature, to which the collection *Transatlantic Stowe* makes many gestures. Dickens immediately noticed his own influence on Stowe in the characterization of Little Eva, and her access to Walter Scott's popular novels and the Romantic tradition proved as formative to her literary career as they would to other writers of her generation. Beyond the 1850s, Stowe would turn to Britain and Europe even more directly in her writing. The novel *Agnes of Sorrento* and her ill-advised biography of Lady Byron, in particular, demand consideration of Stowe's sense of a European audience following her publication of *Uncle Tom*, her visits to Britain, and her acceptance into British literary society.

The Dickens-Stowe relationship has been fodder for critical discussion and speculation for decades. Lord Denman's role in creating tension between the writers was

famously the topic of Harry Stone's important article "Charles Dickens and Harriet Beecher Stowe," but the many years since its publication have seen additional information about the incident surfacing. The letter Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote to Denman, hitherto unpublished except for a very brief excerpt in Hedrick's biography, provides a valuable counterpoint to the frequently republished Dickens letter to Denman's daughter. The former expresses Stowe's great gratitude for Denman's glowing praise, while the latter revealed Dickens's displeasure at being characterized as a closed-minded bigot. The passionate tone of both, however, confirms the truth of Stowe's assertion: "The expression of your [Denman's] opinion is of great weight" (HM24162). The Stowe-Denman letter points to the potential for further archival research, specifically focusing on the Denman and Cropper families, to illuminate added dimensions of the *Uncle Tom* author's shaky relationship with Dickens.

My second chapter provides the first comprehensive examination of *Hard Times* as having been affected by that sometimes friendship, sometimes rivalry. Dickens's shortest major novel has, for too long, been placed comfortably into the box of being his industrial novel. While the indictment against stark Utilitarianism no doubt forms the crux of the author's argument, that primary reading of the novel has precipitated resistance to secondary or ancillary readings. Thus, while F.R. Leavis famously identified parallels between the texts in *The Great Tradition*, few have taken the cue to explore the intertextuality to which he gestures. Elaborating on the Stowe-Dickens relationship and identifying scenes and strategies in *Hard Times* that so closely approximate Stowe's chiaroscuro, I believe I make a convincing case that Dickens had not put aside the Denman issue as he wrote his next novel for serialization in *Household Words*.

Comparing his treatment of blackness in *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* to the more sophisticated, and more intrepid, maneuvering in *Hard Times* clarifies the influence of Stowe on Dickens, whether or not he would have admitted it. While Dickens may have limited his overt manipulation of chiaroscuro to *Hard Times*, logic suggests that a development in his style would have extended to later works. The novels he would write over the remaining fifteen years of his life—*Little Dorrit*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *Great Expectations* were still yet to come—all employ the symbolism of blackness. To what extent, if any, they draw on the chiaroscuro strategies so vivid in *Hard Times* remains a question I will explore in the fullness of the project.

While the chapter on Dickens uses the chiaroscuro framework to answer a textual riddle—or, more accurately, to underline the structural soundness of Dickens's answer to that riddle—the Kingsley chapter goes further to correct an pervasive biographical misunderstanding. Because so little work has been done on Kingsley in general and *Two Years Ago* in particular, the flawed perception that he never read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has been allowed to stand for a number of decades. Close textual analysis of *Two Years Ago* reveals conclusively that not only did Kingsley read *Uncle Tom*, but it formed a key influence in his composition process. Unifying the divergent plots, which most Kingsley scholars (save Pamela Gilbert) have failed to do, becomes markedly easier by considering Marie Lavington's role as part of a continuum with Mary Armsworth and Grace Harvey, distinguished by chiaroscuro.

The potential for future work on Kingsley remains enormous, but one particular avenue remains key to further examining his use of chiaroscuro. Like Stowe and Dickens, Kingsley carefully cultivated a distinctive narrative persona. Unlike Stowe and Dickens,

that narrative persona remained a mask distinguishable from Charles Kingsley the man. Dickens, for instance, remains Boz in his correspondence. His idiosyncratic humor shines through even when delivering lectures on the most serious of subjects. He remains consistent despite changing contexts. With Kingsley, one would have a hard time identifying one of his sermons, one of his letters, and one of his novels as all proceeding from the same pen. That fact in itself is hardly profound, and surely less extraordinary than Dickens's example. It proves significant, however, because Kingsley's narrative voice is responsible for his failure to appease modern literary tastes. Comparing the language of his sermons to the language of his novels highlights patterns of affectation in the latter. Plotting the dimensions of Kingsley's Victorian-ness in language will prove key to the most comprehensive understanding of his use of chiaroscuro strategies. As the Kingsley chapter (and the dissertation as a whole) demonstrates, chiaroscuro hinges on careful manipulation of language and the power, in some instances, of single words.

The George Eliot chapter that closes my argument, I believe, best illustrates the afterlife of this project and gestures toward the full potential of chiaroscuro as a useful concept in literary analysis. In the preceding chapters, I show how Dickens's and Kingsley's personal relationships to Stowe factored into their novels that respond to *Uncle Tom*. Eliot, however, did not become personally acquainted with Stowe until many years after she wrote *The Mill on the Floss*. While *Uncle Tom* had nevertheless informed Eliot's views on the slavery issue, nearing the end of the decade, a personal relationship to its author no longer counted for much when measuring the novel's influence. So widely published and with so many responses in various media—novels, artwork, theatre, merchandise—*Uncle Tom* defined the cultural understanding of blackness. While its

direct influence steadily declined in the years following its publication, its indirect influence charted an exponential curve in the other direction. Stowe's chiaroscuro—in itself the way a single author tapped into a long tradition of characterizations and symbolism—evolved in similar fashion and became a normalized part of literary culture. While the "mulatter" Maggie Tulliver may have no direct ancestor in Eliza Harris, say, systematic chiaroscuro analysis still proves productive in understanding her role as Eliot's first dark lady.

The chiaroscuro framework provides a means of analyzing other instances of literal or figurative blackness in mid-Victorian novels. Obvious examples include the suggestive *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) and Kingsley's *The Water-Babies* (1862) with its little blackened chimney sweeper—Tom. For scholars working exclusively in the American context, chiaroscuro analysis is useful in interpreting texts written as late as the end of the century: Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1893), set in antebellum Missouri, presents repeated instances of black-white juxtaposition and yet another instance when an escape from blackness hinges on the name "Tom," with clear echoes of Stowe's novel. The questions addressed in the novels by Dickens, Kingsley, and Eliot prove central to each author's design, and the analytical method I outline allows a more unified reading of plot in each case. Beyond the specific texts and issues examined, however, "Novel Chiaroscuro" provides a sense of the decade as a pivotal time in transatlantic conversations about blackness. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* effectively codified a lexicon for discussions of blackness and offered a syntax that gives structure and meaning to words and images.

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