The political-domestics: Sectional issues in American women's fiction, 1852-1867

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THE POLITICAL-DOMESTICS:
SECTIONAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN WOMEN'S FICTION, 1852 - 1867

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A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the American Studies Program
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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by
Beverly Carol Peterson
1994
APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Beverly Carol Peterson

Approved, September 1994

Susan V. Donaldson, Director

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Robert Scholnick

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

Emory University
DEDICATION

To my mother, Jane Mahoney Peterson,

and in memory of my father, Allan F. Peterson

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This is a study of five novels written by American women during the middle of the nineteenth century. The novels are Aunt Phillis’s Cabin (1852) by Mary Henderson Eastman, Northwood (1827 and 1852) by Sarah Josepha Hale, The Planter’s Northern Bride (1854) by Carolyn Lee Hentz, Macaria (1864) by Augusta Evans, and Cameron Hall (1867) by Mary Anne Cruse. In advancing their authors’ opinions on sectional issues like slavery and secession, these novels make overt political statements of a kind not usually associated with writers of domestic fiction.

All of the novels in this study conform in some ways to the conventions of the domestic fiction genre, but the authors have bent the framework of that genre to accommodate their political purposes. In some cases genric practices and polemics are mutually disruptive; in some they reinforce each other; and in some the authors choose between politics and domesticity. The degree to which domestic fiction is incompatible with a traditional world view shows that genres are not ideologically neutral. In examining the adaptations made by five novelists, this dissertation demonstrates that "genre" is not a static category. Instead, genres respond to cultural and historical forces.

To read mid-nineteenth-century novels written by women only from a gynocritical perspective—that is, for what they say about women’s psychological or social realities—is to miss the way fiction reflects and helps to shape broader political concerns. More nuanced readings of domestic fiction show how a genre associated with women writers and readers became inflected to advance the authors’ political opinions. Reading these novels as political—domestic fiction contributes to an ongoing discussion of how American women have always participated in politics.
THE POLITICAL-DOMESTICS:

SECTIONAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN WOMEN'S FICTION, 1852 - 1867
Introduction

"Let me write the fictions for a people, and I care not who makes the speeches."

Lucien B. Chase

*English Serfdom and American Slavery*

New York: 1854

In 1853 when Harriet Beecher Stowe went on her triumphant tour of Great Britain, thousands of fans of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* turned out to cheer for her. At many public gatherings people listened to antislavery speeches, seven hours' worth in Glasgow one night alone. Stowe was one of the listeners—not a speaker. In Glasgow her husband read her speech, but in most places Calvin or her brother Charles read their own speeches. Both at home and abroad, Stowe abided by the gender convention of her day that discouraged women from addressing "promiscuous" audiences, that is, audiences comprised of men and women.¹

 Exceptions occurred, of course. In nineteenth-century America many women were members of private literary clubs where they read their works aloud to male and female club members, as Stowe and Caroline Lee Hentz did. American

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women addressed both sexes on political matters in writing, too. Louisa McCord published as "L. S. M." in the Southern Quarterly Review, for instance, and Augusta Evans penned anonymous diatribes against the North for the Mobile Daily Advertiser. Whig women in Virginia in the 1840s wrote speeches (and even delivered some), wrote letters to editors, and raised money to pay for a statue of Henry Clay to be erected in Capitol Square in Richmond.²

Nineteenth-century women's political activities further included exercising their right to petition the government. Catharine Beecher did so during the Jackson administration to protest the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia, and Angelina Grimké did in 1837 to urge the abolition of slavery. The most famous political statement women issued in the nineteenth century is the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments (1848). But for most American women at mid-century, access to political platforms, like access to pulpits, was limited.³


Another way women could disseminate their political opinions was through novels, as did the subjects of this dissertation. Readers and writers of their day increasingly associated the genre of domestic novels with female writers, female readers, female characters, emotional appeal, and spiritual—not overtly political—themes. But like Stowe, the novelists in this study saw and used the political possibilities of domestic fiction. They probably did so as consciously as Stowe did, who wrote to her brother that

4 Subgenres of novels continue to be gender associated. Moving forward to consider one of the popular novel forms that supplanted domestic fiction, Jane Tompkins explores westerns in West of Everything. She contends that the western "answers the domestic novel" by changing all the gendered conventions. The authors of westerns are men; the main characters are adult men; the conflicts are not interior struggles that lead to submission to God, as in domestic fiction, but exterior man-against-man gun-fights; the settings are not parlors but the great outdoors, saloons, and public streets; death scenes are not long, drawn out, natural events but sudden, violent ones; and the significant emotional bonding that the western chronicles is not female bonding but male bonding. Jane Tompkins, "West of Everything," in Derek Longhurst, ed., Gender, Genre and Narrative Pleasure (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) 23-24.

5 For examples of other women writers who exploited the political possibilities of literature, see Ellen Moers, Harriet Beecher Stowe and American Literature (Hartford, CT: Stowe-Day Foundation, 1978) 21-22. Moers points out that women writers before Stowe often dealt with social injustice. She cites Charlotte Bronte's novel about Luddite uprisings, Mrs. Gaskell's novel about Chartists, and George Sand's novel about the ancien regime. Moers points out that women writers had dealt with slavery, too. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote a poem called "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point," Frances Trollope wrote a fugitive slave novel, and Sweden's Frederika Bremer and England's Harriet Martineau wrote antislavery drama and fiction.
she could follow her vocation to preach "on paper" if not "viva voce."  

The five women novelists in this study responded to Stowe by taking the other side on sectional issues. Mary Henderson Eastman (1818 - 1887) in *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* (1852) objected to what she viewed as Stowe's slanderous depictions of inhumane slaveholders and squalid living conditions for slaves. Sarah Josepha Hale (1788 - 1879), who deplored slavery, used a revision of her 1827 *Northwood* (1852) to take issue with Stowe's willingness to see slaves but not slaveholders as her brothers, a perspective Hale feared would lead to the destruction of the Union. In *The Planter's Northern Bride* (1854), Carolyn Lee Hentz (1800 - 1856) countered Stowe's portrayal of the gentle, self-sacrificing Tom with her own of Nat the Giant and Vulcan the Blacksmith, violent slave insurrectionists. In *Macaria, or Altars of Sacrifice* (1864), Augusta Evans (1835 - 1909) celebrated an entirely different social order from one based on egalitarianism and personal freedom; she exalted personal sacrifice and subordination to rightful authorities. Mary Anne Cruse (1825 - 1911) shows the retreat from public, political controversies, focusing her novel *Cameron Hall* (1867) more—though not exclusively—on the spiritual and

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6 Harriet Beecher Stowe to George Beecher, February 20, [1830?]. Qtd. in Hedrick, 238. Stowe's fictional mask, however, did not always protect her from charges that she was unwomanly in her views and in her manner of reprimanding men, the clergy, and the government.
emotional lives of her heroines, the traditional concerns of the domestic genre. These five novelists disagreed with different aspects of Stowe's polemical message, but they all, in varying degrees, followed her practice of blending two different discourses, the domestic and the political.

In her introduction to *The Lamplighter*, Nina Baym describes one feature of the discourse of domestic novels, audience. Women wrote to other women. Real men read women's novels, of course, but women authors "had to limit their explicit aims to the improvement of their own sex and children." Flawed male characters, like Willie in *The Lamplighter* who travels to India and is almost seduced into a frivolous life, give the author the chance to show women how best to influence or reform men. But domestic fiction taught women readers to exert their influence on individual men, not the nation as a whole, and to improve themselves so they could reform men's hearts and souls, not the laws of the land. Stowe's phenomenal success changed all that.

In a letter to a Lord Denman written before she went to England to receive accolades and money from her many fans, Stowe explains why "I wrote what I did":

because as a woman, as a mother I was oppressed & broken-hearted, with the sorrows & injustice I saw, because as a Christian I felt the dishonor to

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Christianity—because as a lover of my country I trembled at the coming day of wrath.—8

Her self-identification also shows her audience. Near the end of the novel when she is pleading with her readers to end slavery, she identifies them using direct address.9 She calls on "mothers of America—you who have learned, by the cradles of your own children, to love and feel for all mankind." She calls on "Christian men and women of the North!" And even more explicitly addressing men on political matters, she calls on Americans to change laws regulating slavery:

generous, noble-minded men and women, of the South, . . . Farmers of Massachusetts, of New Hampshire, of Vermont, of Connecticut, . . . strong-hearted, generous sailors and ship-owners of Maine, . . . [b]rave and generous men of New York, farmers of rich and joyous Ohio, and ye of the wide prairie states. . . .10

8 Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lord Denman, Jan. 20, 1853. Qtd. in Hedrick, 237.

9 In explicating these and similar passages in works by Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot, Robyn Warhol categorizes them as "earnest interventions." The "engaging narrator" "addresses a 'you' that is intended to evoke recognition and identification in the person who holds the book and reads, even if the 'you' in the text resembles that person only slightly or not at all." Robyn R. Warhol, "Toward a Theory of the Engaging Narrator: Earnest Interventions in Gaskell, Stowe, and Eliot," PMLA 101:5 (Oct. 1986) 811.

In audience and subject matter, Stowe was able to bend the conventions of domestic fiction so that it could accommodate the urgent political message she wished to deliver to the nation. No longer would the association of the domestic genre with concerns deemed appropriate to the female gender be so certain.

The concept of genre in literature has a long history, but critics still debate the ways in which genres affect writers and readers and the degree to which genres are prescriptive. Michael McKeon succinctly embraces two sides of the critical discussion of genre when he defines "genric form" as "the dense network of conventionality that is both elastic and profoundly regulative." Stowe demonstrates the elasticity of the domestic genre by changing its audience and subject matter; as I show in Chapter One, some of her outraged critics' responses demonstrate the power of its regulative aspects.

Reader-response critics also examine the idea of genre. In his essay "Literary Competence," Jonathan Culler says authors must possess an awareness of genre in order to write, even though they may write against a genre or attempt to subvert it. Culler defines "literary competence" as "a

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set of conventions for reading literary texts."\(^{12}\) These conventions reside in readers, of course, who must possess an understanding of the way to read types of literature in order to make meaning. But they also reside in authors. The authors in my study read and wrote in the age of the domestic novel, the decade Fred Lewis Pattee called "The Feminine Fifties."\(^{13}\) The genre they wrote against or subverted was domestic fiction.

Stanley Fish makes a point similar to Cullers when he defines the "informed reader" as someone who possesses, in addition to linguistic and semantic competence, "literary competence."\(^{14}\) Literary competence includes mastery of genres, and in Fish's approach to literature, "questions of genre, conventions, intellectual background, etc.—become redefined in terms of potential and probable response."\(^{15}\) In some cases I have been able to discuss the real responses of real readers, mostly readers who wrote book reviews of these novels. In other cases I am speculating, relying on


\(^{15}\) Fish 87.
their "potential and probable" responses as readers who had been shaped by the conventions of their day.

More often I follow a contemporary practice in genre criticism by focusing not so much on genre as fixed but on generic change. Ralph Cohen describes that practice as one that includes analyzing "the ideological implications that result from different genres that combine, contrast, challenge, and oppose one another" and "plot[ting] the changes resulting from adding, subtracting, or renaming constituents or ends."16 I show examples of how conventions of the domestic genre changed as women novelists in the middle of the nineteenth century in America promulgated political opinions through their fiction.

Those conventions are discernable in the quintessential domestic novels of Uncle Tom's decade, Susan Warner's The Wide, Wide World (1850) and Maria Susanna Cummins' The Lamplighter (1854), novels that were among the top three best-sellers of the 1850s.17 Each tells the story of a

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17 Establishing sales of nineteenth-century American novels is not simple. Advertisements claiming how many copies of a work had sold are not reliable, and not all publishers' records are available. Nina Baym claims Uncle Tom's Cabin outsold The Lamplighter which outsold The Wide, Wide World. Stephen Railton claims that in the U.S. in the nineteenth century, Uncle Tom's Cabin did not sell quite as well as the earlier two novels. Baym, Introduction to The Lamplighter, xvi. Stephen Railton, "Mothers, Husbands, and Uncle Tom," The Georgia Review 38 (Spring 1984) 129.
young woman's growth to maturity and spirituality and includes a love story or two. The heroine's trials begin with the deaths of people on whom she depends. In the end, marriage to a man whose spiritual flaws she has helped to correct rewards her perseverance and piety. In these as in most domestic novels, the implied audience is female; the thematic focus is on interpersonal relations, female solidarity and spiritual strength; and the reform message is that women should change the world one man at a time.

Such association of women with novels--excepting historical romances like those by Sir Walter Scott and William Gilmore Simms and tales of outdoor adventure like those of James Fenimore Cooper and Herman Melville--was nothing new in the 1850s. Sentimental fiction in America was a precursor to domestic novels, and novels like Charlotte Temple (1791 in England, 1794 in America) and The Coquette (1797) have much in common with domestic fiction. All deal with female experiences and call for readers to identify with and sympathize with the heroine. All make an emotional appeal, and all instruct the reader to follow virtue and shun vice. Their political content is general, not specific, and is represented by social messages and comments on class issues.

Going back further into the history of the novel, the genre itself can be seen to have contributed to the differentiation between public and private space, political and
psychological realities, and men's and women's proper concerns. That is the view of the development of the novel Nancy Armstrong advances in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. Armstrong's definition of domestic fiction includes early English novels of courtship, marriage, and feminine virtue, novels like Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1747-48). Her reading of the novel's role in cultural history is that it helped to make the separation of men's and women's power seem natural, not culturally constructed. In the world portrayed and justified by novels, women gained "authority over the household, leisure time, courtship procedures, and kinship relations." Domestic fiction "helped to produce a subject who understood herself in the psychological terms that had shaped fiction" and "helped to formulate the ordered space we now recognize as the household." Novels helped to bring about as well as make sense of the cultural changes that would "disentangle the language of sexual relations from the language of politics."\(^{18}\)

That long tradition of difference between domestic fiction and political discourse helps to explain the vehement attacks on Stowe's womanliness after publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Many reviewers thought Stowe's publishing under her own name and chastising men on political and

clerical matters was unfeminine. In public and private correspondence from Joel Parker—a northern, proslavery Presbyterian minister singled out for censure in the serialized version of the novel—and in the letters by Parker's supporters in the New York Observer, one theme is the temerity of a woman publicly to attack a man, especially a man of the cloth.19 And when William Gilmore Simms reviewed the Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, he wrote, "Mrs. Stowe betrays a malignity so remarkable that the petticoat lifts of itself, and we see the hoof of the beast under the table."20 In Simms's metaphor, Stowe ceases to be a woman, ceases even to be human, and becomes the devil.

What Stowe did in Uncle Tom's Cabin besides write an effective anti-slavery novel was to bend the framework of the domestic novel genre so that it could accommodate radical political messages. In challenging the prevailing practice of leaving political discourse to men, she capitalized on the subversive possibilities of popular literature. It was one thing to read moderate political ideas in historical romances by Scott or Simms. It was quite another to find in a novel the call for men and women to disobey the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and to abolish a long-standing

19 Hedrick 226.

20 Qtd. in Hedrick 232. Chapter 1 of this dissertation includes many more examples of reviews that attacked Stowe's femininity.
institution with broad national support.\(^2\) The five novelists in this study were not radical in the same way Stowe was. Some defended the status quo, some called for political reform, and one advocated rebellion. Though they disagreed with different aspects of Stowe's politics, they followed her precedent in blending politics and domesticity.

I call these authors "political-domestics." In doing so I am echoing Mary Kelley's term "literary domestics" and retaining the oxymoronic element of her term. Kelley's term emphasizes the contradiction that existed for women who—ideologically, if not in reality—dwelt in the domestic sphere but celebrated it or challenged it in a public, literary arena. My term suggests the contradictions that exist when an author joins two subgenres of novels to create an unconventional mix of logic with emotion, public address with intimate address, and politics with domesticity.

Other terms exist for novels with political messages. They can be called romans à these, ideological novels, reform novels, or advocacy novels. Some, especially those novels with which a reader disagrees, can be called propa-

\(^2\) Larry Tise demonstrates the degree of support slavery had in the entire United States, North as well as South, from 1701 - 1840. He demonstrates, primarily by examining the sectional origins and training of the proslavery theologians, that "proslavery ideology was a mode of thinking, a concatenation of ideas, and a system of symbols that expressed the social, cultural, and moral values of a large portion of the population of America in the first half of the nineteenth century." Larry E. Tise, Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840 (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1987) xv.
ganda. But the novels in this study do not fit comfortably into any of those genres. Nor does calling them "political novels" properly recognize the unusual mix of themes and styles in these works. Morris Edmund Speare defines the political novel as

a work of prose fiction which leans rather to "ideas" than to "emotions"; which deals rather with the machinery of law-making or with a theory about public conduct than with the merits of any piece of legislation; and where the main purpose of the writer is party propaganda, public reform, or exposition of the lives of the personages who maintain government, or of the forces which constitute government. In this exposition the drawing-room is frequently used as a medium for presenting the inside life of politics.22

By Speare's definition, the works in this study are not political novels. Instead, they evoke emotional responses as much as intellectual ones. They show little concern with the machinery of law-making and much more concern with the morality and justice of certain laws or practices. They introduce real leaders like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, or Robert E. Lee only to underscore the morality or immorality of a particular political position. When they

use the drawing-room or parlor or library or cabin as a setting, it is not as a gathering place for politicos, but rather as a domestic setting for a family discussion or activity that illustrates the author's political sentiments. When family and home are the focus of a novel that raises political issues, "political novel" is an inadequate description.

Furthermore, Speare's discussion of the origin of the "political novel" shows the importance of the novelist being privy to "the language of Downing Street, the jargon of Committee meetings, the interviews with the Crown, the scenes at great political dinner, the life of the great political clubs."23 The women who wrote the novels in my study had no such ready access to the machinery and language of political power. The genre of political novels is implicitly, if not explicitly, male.

Other readers of novels such as the five in this study have indicated that these works do not fit comfortably in any one genre. In her introduction to Augusta Jane Evans' Macaria, Drew Gilpin Faust notes that the novel joins "the characteristic form of woman's fiction with that of the male war story" and thus "transgressed the bounds of both genres."24 Faust's observation indicates that no convenient

23 Speare 14.

label exists for a novel that partly conforms to what Nina Baym calls "woman's fiction" and partly enters the world of public conflict that typically has been considered masculine. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese notes a similar blend of purposes in Evans's novel Beulah. In her introduction to the novel, Fox-Genovese notes that its power "largely derives from Evans' ability to ground demanding intellectual debates in the psyche of a young woman" and that "the novel may be read as an allegory of the crisis of southern society in the 1850s."25 Such an observation could not be made of purely domestic novels. Using a new approach to analyze these novels increases the likelihood that critics and other readers will not be blind to the ways novels can participate simultaneously in the discourse of both politics and domesticity.

Elizabeth Moss also discusses politics and domesticity in mid-nineteenth century fiction. In Domestic Novelists in the Old South she argues that the "implicit and explicit political content of northern domestic fiction has received careful attention."26 Certainly dozens of books, dissertations, and theses begin with a roll call of critics who read these novels' implicit political message as conservative and


26 Elizabeth Moss, Domestic Novelists in the Old South: Defenders of Southern Culture (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State UP, 1992) 18.
those who read it as radical.27 Far fewer look beyond Uncle Tom's Cabin to analyze the explicit political messages of northern domestic fiction, though Barbara Bardes and Suzanne Gossett do so in their valuable analysis of women and political power in nineteenth-century American fiction, 

Declarations of Independence. Their study concerns the way fiction by men and women explored the implications of some women's demand for the right to speak in public, to control their property after marriage, to work for wages, to become

professionals, and finally to take "direct political action." 28

While few critics have paid sufficient attention to the explicit political content of northern domestic fiction, still fewer have analyzed southern women novelists' political messages, though Moss, Fox-Genovese, Faust, William R. Taylor and Anne Goodwyn Jones have shown how profitably that line of analysis reveals southern concerns. What can explain literary critics' relative silence about the traditionalist pronouncements in some nineteenth-century women's fiction concerning national issues like slavery? Perhaps the feminist criticism that has rediscovered women's novels has inadvertently imposed a preferred reading strategy on these novels: reading them for what they say about gender roles, especially women's roles. Or perhaps the radical origins of feminist literary criticism have led critics to seek out radical foremothers who embraced what Raymond Williams calls emergent ideologies, not ones who held to dominant or even residual ones. Ironically, to read the novels in this study primarily as commentary on gender replicates the kind of silencing of women's political voices that feminists have rightly deplored.

The five novelists in this study advance political positions on such issues as taxes for schools, national

expansion, slavery, secession, and the Civil War. They express political views that have long passed out of mainstream American thought: some support slavery, and they all oppose the immediate abolition of slavery; they oppose women's suffrage and women's direct participation in political institutions; all except Hale oppose the notion that "all men are created equal," holding instead the opinion that nature and society are hierarchical; and they oppose individualism, asserting that the good of the community takes precedence over the desires and rights of the individual. Accepting the connection between a literary work and its cultural milieu makes these texts accessible. My goal has been not to judge these writers' political beliefs but to understand and describe their literary productions.

That term "political," like the term "politics," can have many meanings. In its most restrictive use, "politics" can refer to the professional conduct of the affairs of government. Such a definition would preclude discussing women's political behavior in America in the mid-nineteenth century. Lori Ginzberg adopts a "broadened definition" of politics to discuss American women's political activism in the nineteenth century. She uses Max Weber's sense of the word, "the leadership, or the influencing of leadership, of a political association, hence today, of a state." The women in this study would not have used the term "politics"
to describe their field of activism because in the mid-1800s that term connoted "a sphere of activity associated in the public mind with rudeness, corruption, drunkenness, and violence."  

For my purposes, Paula Baker provides a more useful definition of the term "politics": "any action, formal or informal, taken to affect the course or behavior of government or the community." Baker traces the evolution of American women's involvement in politics, noting that the separate spheres ideology of the nineteenth century provided a rationale for women's increased public activity. Even before winning the vote, Baker writes, women employed informal methods of influencing politics, methods Baker takes to include being republican mothers and doing social work, and to which I would add writing novels with political content.

Another critic who pays attention to the political ramifications of domestic novels—what she calls the "cultural work of American fiction" in her book Sensational Designs—is Jane Tompkins. She reads the typical sentimental novel "as a political enterprise, halfway between sermon and social theory, that both codifies and attempts to mold

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the values of its time."\textsuperscript{32} My study differs from hers partly in time frame and scope. Her study spans the years 1790 - 1860; mine looks at only five novels published between 1852 and 1867 and gives them the kind of close reading Anne Goodwyn Jones gives the novels in her study, \textit{Tomorrow is Another Day}.\textsuperscript{33} A more important difference between my work and Tompkins' is that I am using the term "political" in a more restrictive sense than Tompkins is. While I am interested in the kind of society imaginatively portrayed in these novels, I am even more interested in comments on issues that were being debated in Congress.

Even recent studies of mid-nineteenth century domestic novels continue to focus on what these novels say or imply about women's place in society or female sexuality. For example, G. M. Goshgarian's recent book explores hidden themes of incest, intercourse, and masturbation in domestic fiction. Goshgarian explores the "kinship" between gender and genre.\textsuperscript{34} As Gary Scharnhorst points out, Goshgarian is


\textsuperscript{34} G. M. Goshgarian, \textit{To Kiss the Chastening Rod: Domestic Fiction and Sexual Ideology in the American Renaissance} (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992) 4.
one of many critics indebted to Nina Baym's gendered perspective in *Woman's Fiction*.35

Similarly, Susan K. Harris builds on Nina Baym's idea of the "overplot"—that is, roughly, the story of the orphan who struggles to achieve independence and whose reward is to marry a man who becomes spiritually worthy of her. Harris uses this construct not as Baym does, to analyze plot and character, but to see how the conventional ending masks subversive possibilities for women. In Harris's terms, the "overplot" is a "cover story" that allows the author to explore radical possibilities under cover of conventionality. Harris focuses on the middles of what she calls exploratory texts. Her literary method of seeking out contradictions in the novels parallels my own. When she focuses on the content of the novels, however, she examines one of the great questions of the nineteenth century, the "woman question."36 I examine sectional issues like slavery and secession that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* exacerbated.

Chapter One introduces the dissertation by presenting the public reaction to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the ensuing proslavery fictional response to Stowe's novel. It then offers a reading of one of the earliest and best-selling of such responses, *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* (1852), written by a

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Virginian, Mary Henderson Eastman (1818 - 1887). I suggest that just as the proslavery message ends up disrupting the conventions of domestic fiction in *Aunt Phillis's Cabin*, so the form and ideology of domestic fiction end up disrupting Eastman's polemical stance and echoing the logic of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* after all.

Chapter Two discusses *Northwood* by the New Englander Sarah Josepha Hale (1788 - 1879). This novel was first published in 1827, but in 1852, responding to the Uncle Tom phenomenon, Hale revised and republished it. Both versions contain explicitly political messages as well as several love stories, but—predictably—changes to the 1852 version focus on slavery and national unity. Hale's political positions are anti-abolition and pro-Union; this daughter of a Revolutionary War soldier put national unity ahead of every other consideration. Nonetheless southerners tended to see her as friendly to their position, partly because the popular magazine she edited, Godey's *Lady's Book*, did not directly take sides in the sectional debate. My analysis of two years of Hale's book reviews and her encyclopedia of women shows, however, that Hale was willing to speak favor-

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37 Throughout this dissertation I am using Larry Tise's helpful definitions. An anti-abolitionist was any person after 1831 who opposed both slavery and abolition. In contrast, an anti-slavery proponent after the rise of Garrisonian abolitionism was an abolitionist. A "proslavery thinker was anyone who urged the indefinite perpetuation of slavery for any reason whatsoever." Tise (xv).
ably of southern opinions and unfavorably of Stowe. The muted political statements in the Lady's Book contrast with the robust political activism expressed in Hale's novels.

Chapter Three examines The Planter's Northern Bride (1854) by Caroline Lee Hentz (1800 - 1856). Hentz, a northerner who lived most of her adult life in the South, advanced elements of the proslavery argument as articulated by John C. Calhoun, Thomas R. Dew, Edmund Ruffin, George Fitzhugh, James Henry Hammond, Josiah Nott, and Samuel Cartwright. Because it presents a fictionalized version of the scientific proslavery argument, The Planter's Northern Bride expresses the most racist ideas of all the novels in my study. It also presents the most typical romantic heroine. Even so, the heroine's role is circumscribed to allow the focus to be on a nearly perfect plantation master. Hentz frequently interrupts her novel with proslavery propaganda and inserts nonfiction footnotes and letters into her text. She tacks on polemical introductory and concluding essays that bend the framework of the domestic novel genre. Furthermore, she disrupts the polemics in her novel by introducing the terrifying specter of a defiant ex-wife. This character, a gothic element in the novel, shows how the dictates of the domestic genre threatened Hentz's political agenda. Her novel does develop, however, a nearly allegorical representation of national unity—family unity.
Chapter Four moves this study beyond the time when slavery and secession were being debated and into the period of the Civil War. The Alabaman Augusta Jane Evans (1835 – 1909) published Macaria (1864) during the Civil War and used the novel to express her ardent pro-Confederacy beliefs. Unlike Evans' previous best seller Beulah or her subsequent best seller St. Elmo, Macaria never allows a consummation of the love stories that form a major component of the novels' plots. One reason for that difference is that the novel reflects the spirit of sacrifice that prevailed among white southern women during the conflict. Another reason is that in this novel Evans celebrates patriotism, not individual happiness. She solves the problem of what to do with two heroines who are denied love and marriage by a surprising plot twist at the end. Her novel includes recognizable elements of domestic fiction—orphans, blind women, death scenes, and crises of conscience—but her long polemical passages alter assumptions about audience and appropriate themes for domestic novels. Similarly, Evans' domestic genre intrudes and disrupts her polemical purposes; her strong heroine demonstrates her superiority over her father and every other male character and earns the nickname "Queen." Female rule is a decidedly unsouthern prescription for a good hierarchical arrangement of families and society.

Chapter Five examines Cameron Hall (1867), a novel by another Alabama writer, Mary Anne Cruse (1825 – 1911). Like
Macaria, Cameron Hall was written during the Civil War and partakes of the same spirit of sacrifice. It too presents paired heroines and thwarted love affairs, but Cruse is far less skillful than Evans in handling the problem of merging pro-Confederate polemics with domesticity. Cruse’s novel retreats from battlefields and political arenas to kitchens, libraries, and churches, the more traditional settings for domestic fiction. By beginning to suppress overt political statements, Cameron Hall signals one direction the genre took: it became once again more purely domestic, focusing, as did Little Women (1868-69), on young women in families.

My study of political-domestic novels shows that genres are not strict, static classifications. In exploring some ways the domestic genre changed in response to sectional issues like slavery and secession, I show that genres are responsive to cultural and historical forces. By showing how political content disrupts some of these novels, I demonstrate that genres are not politically neutral. Finally, by highlighting political content, I suggest that more nuanced readings of women’s novels will reveal concerns rarely associated with readers and writers of domestic fiction.
CHAPTER I

Aunt Phillis's Cabin: Refuting Uncle Tom

A kind of literary civil war began in 1852. In that year the opening salvo was fired by the publication in book form of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. At least ten books presenting fictionalized responses were rushed into print in the same year.¹ Some of their authors were

¹ The ten novels published in 1852 to respond to Stowe are:
Criswell, Robert. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" contrasted with *Buckingham Hall, a Planter's Home; or, a Fair View of Both Sides of the Slavery Question.* New York: D. Fanshaw.
Eastman, Mary H. *Aunt Phillis's Cabin; or, Southern Life as It Is.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co.
Smith, William L. G. *Life at the South; or, "Uncle Tom's Cabin As It Is. Being Narratives, Scenes, and Incidents in the Real "Life of the Lowly."* Buffalo: Geo. H. Derby & Co.

Lists of fictional responses that include those written between 1852 and 1861 are found in Jean W. Ashton, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: 28*
ardently proslavery, and some wanted to quiet the bellicose clamoring of sectionalism in order to hold the Union together. All ten had northern publishers because the North led the South in the business side of literature and publishers recognized a popular and lucrative subject when they saw it: The first edition of Uncle Tom's Cabin (5,000 copies) sold out in two days, 50,000 copies sold within six weeks, and over 300,000 copies sold before the end of 1852.² Five years after publication, Americans had purchased half a million copies of the novel, and readers in England had purchased approximately three times that number.³

But sales figures only hint at the public's reaction to this cultural phenomenon. Attempting to capitalize on the popularity of the novel, a manufacturer released a parlor game called "Uncle Tom and Little Eva." The promoters billed the game as one that mirrored the "continual separation and reunion of families" found in the novel.⁴ In

other innovative ways the mid-nineteenth century heralded the arrival of a novel everyone was talking about, and almost everyone was reading. In 1852, there were twenty songs out about Uncle Tom. At least two publishers brought out card games with pictures of Tom, Little Eva, Topsy, and the rest of the novel's characters. A publisher in London created an Uncle Tom puzzle. "Tom Shows" were performed in towns throughout the North, usually so hastily thrown together and with such bad acting that, according to Frank Luther Mott a typical review was worded, "Uncle Tom's Cabin played here last night. The bloodhounds were good." Performances that were presumably more polished played in six London theaters— at the same time. Twenty rival editions of the novel were published in England and Scotland, and the book was quickly translated into many languages, including French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Flemish, Polish, and Magyar.

Prompted by this novel, women in America and in England debated slavery in essays published in popular periodicals. The North British Review of November 1852 carried an anti-slavery article on Uncle Tom's Cabin with the heading: "The affectionate and Christian address of many thousands of the

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7 Mott 118.
women of England to their sisters, the women of the United States of America." DeBow's Review followed four months later with a proslavery article called "an affectionate response to the ladies of England, etc., from the ladies of the Southern United States; together with some remarks for the North British Review."--By a Southern Lady." Julia Gardiner Tyler, the former first lady, entered the fray on the side of the slaveowners in an article in the Southern Literary Messenger of February 1853. Her testimony carried some weight, not only because of her status but also because she was a northerner who converted to proslavery beliefs after living in the South.

The erudite Louisa McCord, a political economist, wrote a scholarly refutation of the novel's plot and characters, pointing out with cold logic the fallacies and contradictions in Mrs. Stowe's sentimental text and in the Westminster Review's favorable account of Uncle Tom's Cabin. McCord's long essay in the Southern Quarterly Review includes examples of Stowe's substitution of New England dialect for southern dialect and her misrepresentation of the slaves' speech as evidence that Stowe did not know what she was talking about. More importantly, McCord points out that Stowe presented potential abuses of the slave system, not the system as it was under law and in practice. Southern laws protect even animals from abuse, McCord argues, and certainly they do not authorize mistreating slaves. In
list that is telling in its linking of beings that deserve protection from white men, McCord asserts that an individual may be indicted for "unjust oppression . . . of beast, of child, or of slave."\(^8\) As for the difference between hypothetical cruelty and usual practice, McCord writes, "It is not enough that a master \textit{might} do this, and \textit{might} do that. The question is, what \textit{does} he, in the majority of cases, do?"\(^9\)

Of course, not all of her detractors concentrated on Harriet Beecher Stowe’s ideas, facts, and literary ability. \textit{Ad hominem}, or rather, \textit{ad feminem}, attacks abounded. An anonymous writer in the \textit{Southern Literary Messenger} called her "Mrs. Harriet Breeches Stowe,"\(^10\) and in another issue of that same periodical, someone published a short verse with this pun on "Stowe":

\begin{quote}
When Latin I studied, my Ainsworth in hand
I answered my teacher that \textit{Sto} meant \textit{to stand};
But if asked, I should now give another reply,
For \textit{Stowe} means, beyond any cavil, \textit{to lie}.\(^11\)
\end{quote}

The \textit{Messenger}'s editor, John R. Thompson, wrote a letter to George Frederick Holmes asking him to write a review of

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Southern Quarterly Review} 7 (Jan. 1853): 87.
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McCord, Review 89.
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\begin{flushright}
\textit{Southern Literary Messenger} 19 (March 1853): 186.
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\begin{flushright}
\textit{Southern Literary Messenger} 19 (January 1853): 61.
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Uncle Tom’s Cabin that would be "as hot as hell fire, blasting and searing the reputation of the vile wretch in petticoats who could write such a volume."\(^\text{12}\) Holmes complied. His review begins disingenuously with the claim that he was only reluctantly dealing with Uncle Tom’s Cabin for it was written by a woman, and women’s "natural position entitles them to all forbearance and courtesy."\(^\text{13}\) But he proceeded to attack the book after warning:

> the rule that every one bearing the name and appearance of a lady, should receive the delicate gallantry and considerate tenderness which are due to a lady, is not absolutely without exception. If she deliberately steps beyond the hallowed precincts—the enchanted circle—which encompass her as with the halo of divinity, she has wantonly forfeited her privilege of immunity as she has irretrievable [sic] lost our regard, and the harshness which she may provoke is invited by her own folly and impropriety. We cannot accord to the termagant virago or the foul-mouthed hag the same deference that is rightfully due to the maiden purity of untainted innocence.\(^\text{14}\)


\(^{13}\) George Frederick Holmes, Review of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, *Southern Literary Messenger* 18 (December 1852): 721.

\(^{14}\) Holmes 722.
The warning was as unmistakable as the state of Virginia's motto, "Thus always to tyrants"; thus always to termagants who would threaten social order based on hierarchies that subordinated slaves to masters, women to men.\textsuperscript{15}

Capturing the amazement of the day over the stir created by a novel, an article in an 1853 issue of \textit{Putnam's} called "Uncle Tomitudes" begins,

Here is a miracle! or something, at least, that has not happened before, and consequently, for which the world was not prepared. . . . Never since books were first printed has the success of Uncle Tom been equalled; the history of literature contains nothing parallel to it. . . . And it is worth remembering that this first success in a

\textsuperscript{15} These attacks on the person, the womanliness, of Harriet Beecher Stowe—as well as on her ideas—were not limited to essays in magazines. The same angry responses can be found in the proslavery novels that followed hot on the heels of Uncle Tom's Cabin. In Aunt Phillis's Cabin, a young female character describes a woman she met at a party as:

\begin{quote}
\textit{a she Abolitionist}. . . . She writes for the Aboliton papers. She considers Southerners heathens; looks pityingly at the waiters as they hand her ice cream. She wants Frederick Douglas to be the next President, and advocates amalgamation. I am quite out of breath; but I must tell you that I looked at her and thought Uncle Bacchus would just suit her, with his airs and graces; but I do not think she is stylish enough for him. (229)
\end{quote}

Obviously, this cruel portrait of a woman who dared to step out of women's sphere and to speak publicly on a subject that was painful to southern women is reminiscent of the attacks on Stowe. Part of the intended humor of the passage is the idea that this "she Abolitionist" would be attracted to the slave Bacchus, a comic figure in Eastman's novel, but that he would find her too plain for his taste.
field which all the mighty men of the earth have labored in, was accomplished by an American woman.\textsuperscript{16}

The article goes on to say that many technological innovations and one inescapable demographic fact had helped to bring about this publishing miracle: "steam-presses, steam-ships, steam-carriages, iron roads, electric telegraphs, and universal peace among the reading nations of the earth. But beyond all, it required the readers to consume the books, and these have never before been so numerous."\textsuperscript{17} Acknowledging that certain countries like India and Mexico and South America "have yet to be Uncle Tomitized," the reviewer speculates that it would be only a matter of time before people in these regions too would be reading the novel, because the "Uncle Tomific" was spreading throughout the world like cholera. The article humorously predicts that even "future generations of Terra-del-Fuegians and Esquimaux, will be making Christmas presents at this season of the year, of Uncle Tom's Cabin in holiday bindings."\textsuperscript{18}

The anonymous reviewer, probably Charles Briggs,\textsuperscript{19} alleged that the authors of "anti-Tom" novels were also


\textsuperscript{17} "Uncle Tomitudes" 98.

\textsuperscript{18} "Uncle Tomitudes" 99-100.

\textsuperscript{19} Mott 114.
eager to profit from the country's renewed interest in the slavery issue. Exaggerating the number of published fictional responses, he wrote:

Some dozens of these anti-Uncle Tom romances have been published and many more of them remain in obscure manuscript. We have had the pleasure of looking over a score or two, which were seeking a publisher, and nearly all of them were written by women, upon the principle of *similia similibus*. The writer of one of these unpublished anti-Tom novels had made a calculation, the innocent ingenuity of which tickled our very midriff. She had ascertained that one hundred and fifty thousand copies of Uncle Tom's Cabin had been sold, and she calculated that every reader of that romance would be anxious to hear the other side of the story of domestic slavery, and her romance being the silver lining of the Southern institution, she came to a publisher with a modest proposal based upon a certain sale of one hundred and fifty thousand copies of her work.\(^{20}\)

Despite the reviewer's assertion that "nearly all" of the replies that he saw in manuscript were written by women, more than half of such works that were actually published in 1852 were written by men. He did look beyond the profit

\(^{20}\) "Uncle Tomitudes" 100.
motive to acknowledge that it was "something entirely new in literature" for so many to try to "neutralize" the influence of Stowe's book by "issuing other romances to prove that Uncle Tom is a fiction . . . and his author an ignoramus."²¹

Such an outpouring of fiction to respond directly to reform fiction remains unique in American literature. It is hard to imagine an author celebrating the colorful side of migrant worker life to counteract The Grapes of Wrath, or a novel about the joys of the stockyard to capitalize on a subject brought to the American consciousness by The Jungle. Predictably, public reaction to the "anti-Tom" books was less than spectacular. None of the proslavery novels came close to matching the sales record of Uncle Tom's Cabin; none resulted in popular culture spin-offs like songs, "Tom shows," or Uncle Tom parlor games and card games; and none has enjoyed the lasting international reputation of Stowe's book or the renewed attention it has received from American scholars. Still, it is worthwhile to analyze one of these responses, first to see the logic of a deeply conservative ideology whose legacy persists, second to see how Eastman adapted the domestic genre to advance her proslavery polemics, and third to see what problems Eastman had in joining the discourse of proslavery politics with that of domesticity.

²¹ "Uncle Tomitudes" 100.
One of the best-selling of the fictional responses, Aunt Phillis's Cabin, was written by the Virginian, Mary Henderson Eastman (1818 - 1887). Her benign depiction of slavery sold 18,000 copies in a few weeks. Eastman's publishers decided to capitalize on her enhanced popularity by collecting a number of her periodical articles on Indians and issuing them in 1853 as a book entitled The Romance of Indian Life. Eastman's respect for the people she referred to as "the original owners of the country" and her indignation over the wrongs done by the white man to the Indian show that she is no mere apologist for everything done by her own race. Of course, one's attitude towards Indians might well be different from one's attitude towards African slaves (Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia is one case in point), but Eastman presented in Aunt Phillis's Cabin a rather enlightened view for her time, acknowledging the influence of social conditions on slaves' abilities:

As regards the standard of talent among negroes, I fancy it has been exaggerated; though no one can, at present, form a just conclusion. Slavery has,

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for ages, pressed like a band of iron round the intellect of the colored man. Time must do its work to show what he is, without a like hindrance.25

Such acknowledgement makes her attempt to present a fictionalized proslavery argument all the more interesting.

**Aunt Phillis's Cabin** is set mostly in Virginia on Exeter plantation, owned by the widower Mr. Weston. Weston is the kindly patriarch of an extended white family that includes the Bible-quoting Cousin Janet, an orphan girl named Ellen, and Weston's widowed sister-in-law and her daughter, Alice. Weston's benevolent rule extends to his black family—the "servants"—including the saintly mulatto Aunt Phillis, her comic husband Bacchus, their twelve children, and the superstitious old African woman called Aunt Peggy.

Eastman's plot is disjointed, or, to describe it more sympathetically, episodic. It shifts abruptly from one set of characters to another, showing Bacchus's battles against the temptations of drink, Alice's infatuation with a Byronic suitor, and Phillis's ministrations to the heartbroken and languishing Alice. When Alice's struggle over her feelings for Walter and her promise to marry her cousin take her to the brink of death, we meet Ellen, an orphan girl who reads

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25 Mary Henderson Eastman, *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1852): 271-272. All further references to this novel are cited parenthetically in this chapter.
romance novels and yearns for her own romantic hero. Ellen's brother makes a brief appearance designed to heighten the reader's sympathy for his sister and to show the folly of disobeying one's elders: he brashly attempts to return home to his sister during a storm, defying the neighbors' advice and plunging with his horse into a swollen river where he drowns. We learn of Aunt Peggy's illness and her account of having watched an elephant drink a river dry back in Africa. Then we see Phillis trying to reform her husband by exploiting his fear of Peggy's ghost. We read of Master Weston's deathbed watch over Phillis, and we find out what happens when Weston's son, the cousin Alice had promised to marry, returns to Exeter from his studies at Yale. These subplots do not blend harmoniously into a unified narrative structure, and no one character emerges as the focus for a reader's sympathy. Phillis does not enter the novel until page 102, a late appearance for a character the title indicates would be Tom's counterpart.

Instead of a plot or character to hold the novel together, Aunt Phillis's Cabin attempts to have unity of purpose. It is no subtle refutation of its popular predecessor, as the obvious similarity of the title indicates. Eastman frequently mentions Stowe by name as she answers Stowe's book directly in essays tacked on as introductory and concluding remarks, in debates carried on between pro-
and antislavery characters, and also in setting, characters, and plot.

A logical place to begin the contrast between *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Aunt Phillis’s Cabin* is to see how the two authors depict slaves’ living conditions. Eastman describes Phillis’s home that, after just once being called a *cabin*, is forever after called a *cottage*. A wooden fence surrounds Phillis’s yard. The front yard is full of roses, lilacs, box-woods, sunflowers, and a willow tree. There is no weed to be found anywhere. The back yard is home not only for Phillis’s pigs and chickens, but also for her two showy pet peacocks. How Phillis manages to raise her twelve children, keep her foolish husband out of trouble, cook for her family, iron her linens, serve as the most respected nurse to the Weston family—and care for those flowers and peacocks—is a mystery the novel never broaches.

Inside the whitewashed cabin—or rather, the cottage—are a few more surprises. The large main room is furnished with a feather bed with its own little trundle bed, many chairs, several chests of drawers and dressers, and a wardrobe. A large fireplace dominates the room, but the author hastens to point out that the room stays immaculate because all the cooking is done outside in a separate building. An adjoining room is Phillis’s pride and joy. It is her parlor, that room that epitomizes antebellum women’s domain. Phillis keeps the door locked to her parlor, but
she sometimes honors her visitors by allowing them to sit in there. When they leave, she gets out her broom and duster to make sure they have left no footprints on the floor. Phillis upholds standards of cleanliness and order that white women readers of the middle and upper classes, North and South, would have understood.

Eastman's attention to detail in her description of Phillis's parlor serves four purposes. First, it adds credence to Eastman's claim to be speaking of slavery as she really knew it. Second, it counteracts Harriet Beecher Stowe's depiction of slaves' squalid living conditions. Third, it allows Eastman to describe objects that resonate with symbolic significance and contribute to her proslavery argument. And fourth, it satisfies the expectations of readers of domestic novels that interiors will be described. But a fifth effect of this attention to detail is one Eastman could not have wanted. By making Phillis's concerns for her home seem not so different from those of white women, Eastman invites her white women readers to identify with a slave woman. Granted, her invitation is much more muted than Stowe's call for mothers of America to identify with Eliza, a light-skinned slave woman.\textsuperscript{26} Still, because

\textsuperscript{26} But Stowe's appeals for sympathy for Eliza are not always as direct as they are in the famous scene where Eliza runs from the slavemasters and Stowe asks, "If it were your Harry, mother, ... how fast could you walk?" Stowe 43-44. Towards the end of Uncle Tom's Cabin, for instance, Stowe describes a room in George and Eliza's home in Canada: "A cheerful fire blazes on the hearth; a tea-table, covered with a snowy cloth, stands prepared
Eastman is not ridiculing Phillis's concerns for her neat, clean, and attractive home, she flattens the distinctions between the races and undermines the racial justification for slavery. Conforming to the dictates of domestic fiction that called for detailed descriptions of worthy women's homes thus disrupts Eastman's polemical purpose.

Eastman does try to return to that polemical purpose when she invents the furnishings and decorations of Phillis's parlor and invests them with symbolic significance. Phillis's parlor has three windows decorated with white cotton curtains, a high post bed covered with a quilt Phillis made from scraps of garments worn by members of the Weston family dating back to the Revolutionary War, a mahogany bureau with an oval looking glass, an easy chair and six other chairs, shiny andirons in the fireplace, and a neat rag rug on the floor. Over the mantel are pictures of her master, Mr. Weston, and of the shepherds from Pilgrim's Progress. On other walls are the first sampler of the young girl who will someday be the mistress of the plantation and the toy sword of the young boy who will be the plantation master.

These details suggest comfort, even luxury. In addition to the gender roles suggested by the sampler and the sword, the decorations on the wall say much about slavery as

for the evening meal. In one corner of the room was a table covered with a green cloth, where was an open writing-desk, pens, paper, and over it a shelf of well-selected books." Stowe 371.
an ideal. The childhood mementoes of the two who would become master and mistress are a reminder that one of the supposed advantages of slavery over wage labor was that slavery entailed face-to-face, affectionate bonds of several generations of owners and slaves. As for the Pilgrim's Progress prints, they remind slaves and whites to bear earthly burdens gladly in anticipation of heavenly reward. Presumably, Master Weston's comportment earned him such respect and affection that Phillis would place his picture in the center of her "sanctum sanctorum" along with the religious picture.

Eastman's portrayal of slave-master relations rebuts Stowe's allegations that purely mercenary motives actuated some slaveowners. And while Stowe focuses on the fragility of the slave family, Eastman calls attention to its sanctity. The parlor contains

a small table, covered with white, which supported the weight of Phillis's family Bible, where were registered in Arthur's and Alice's handwriting, the births of all her twelve descendants, as well as the ceremony which united her to their illustrious father. (115)

Since "their illustrious father," Bacchus, is a comic figure in the novel, Eastman intends part of the irony of the last sentence. Nothing in the novel points to the fact that slaves' unions were not protected by law, so any further
irony in her description of the imitation of white folks' records of their sacred and binding marriage vow is probably not intended.

Perhaps in alluding to binding slave marriages Eastman is ignoring a reality that undermines her purpose, or perhaps in her experience slave unions were lasting and honored. Perhaps she was aware of reform impulses in the South that sought to undermine the abolitionists' emotional appeals by establishing legal protection for slave unions. The respectful tone of the passage precludes reading it as a parody. Nevertheless, Eastman reveals more than she should have when she says that the entries were made in Arthur's and Alice's handwriting. She calls attention to the institutionalized inequality that would necessitate literate children keeping family records for the human property they would inherit. Such reminders could serve abolitionists' purposes as easily as Eastman's.

Other details of the interior of Phillis's parlor also carry symbolic significance. As if to chide northern abolitionists for stirring up sectional conflict, Eastman includes two references to patriotism in her description of the quilt that covers Phillis's bed. The first is the reference to the Revolutionary War in tracing the history of

27 Proslavery thinkers like George Frederick Holmes, Henry Hughes, and George Fitzhugh wrote in favor of passing laws to recognize slave unions, but these reforms were never tried. See Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Vintage Books, 1976) 52-53.
the cloth in the quilt. Readers are reminded that slaveholders like Mr. Weston are descendants of those who fought for independence and created a unified nation out of individual colonies. Moreover, Eastman says that in the very center of the quilt is an eagle, America's national emblem.

Eastman does not strain credulity further by claiming that most of the cabins in plantation slave quarters looked like Phillis's cottage. She concedes in one of her many narrative interpolations:

I have not given Phillis's cottage as a specimen of the cabins of the negroes of the South. It is described from the house of a favorite servant. Yet are their cabins generally, healthy and airy. Interest, as well as a wish for the comfort and happiness of the slave, dictates an attention to his wants and feelings. . . . Who . . . could read without an indignant thought, the following description from the pen of Mrs. Stowe: "They (their cabins) were rude shells, destitute of any pieces of furniture, except a heap of straw, foul with dirt, spread confusedly over the floor." (117-118)

Here, Eastman explicitly engages Stowe in the battle of the cabins. Eastman singles out the cabin Tom shares with other slaves at Simon Legree's. By doing so she suggests that Stowe is an extremist who exaggerates slaves' physical
discomfort in order to gain support for her abolitionist sympathies. Eastman's choice indicates that she felt her own argument would be better served by going on the offensive and attacking Stowe rather than describing Tom's other homes to prove that, by Stowe's own admission, slaves' living conditions were not always squalid. Eastman chooses not to mention Tom's previous domicile at St. Clare's, a cubicle above the stables, "a decent room, containing a bed, a chair, and a small, rough stand, where lay Tom's Bible and hymnbook" (234). Nor does she say that Stowe conceded that Tom's first home, his cabin at Shelby's, was even nicer.

There are similarities, however, in Stowe's and Eastman's depiction of the two cabins and their uses of certain details. Though Tom's cabin was only one room, it too had a section considered Aunt Chloe's (Tom's wife's) parlor. It too had a bed for show and a bed with a trundle bed for use. It too had a fireplace (though Chloe cooked at this fireplace) and prints over the mantel. Aunt Chloe's prints of George Washington suggest the unlikely possibility that slaves were imbued with patriotism. The way Stowe and Eastman decorated the imaginary spaces inhabited by their characters shows that, for all their political differences, they were equally guilty of projecting their own values as a substitute for understanding slaves.

This debate over the living conditions of slaves, though carried on in fiction, was not trivial. It touched
deep sectional divisions over the morality of slavery. Since ideologically the home—in both the North and the South—was the sphere from which women could set the moral tone for the nation by exerting Christian influence over husbands and children, the condition of slaves' homes served as an easily deciphered code. Understanding that code explains the significance of an imputation made in the British Army Dispatch that Harriet Beecher Stowe's parlor was slovenly and her tablecloth was dirty. It means, "How can Stowe be a true moral force if she is not even a true woman in her domestic sphere?"

28 The British Army Dispatch ran an article to explain why it was refusing to review Uncle Tom's Cabin. The Southern Literary Messenger quoted this British ally at length. The author of the Dispatch article acknowledges that Uncle Tom's Cabin possesses "a certain melodramatic power" but that it is devoid of truth, principle and reality, and that its tendencies are highly mischievous and detrimental to the interests of mankind. In saying this, we entirely acquit its authoress, Mrs. Stowe, of any evil desire, any wicked feeling, or intended falsehood. That lady, for all we know, may be a most excellent, as she is undoubtedly a very talented person. We fully give her credit for good motives; we doubt not that she believes herself entrusted with a mission, as much as ever did any "eminent female". . . . We can imagine her to be endowed with an awful sense of womanhood, and to make—if ever she condescended to such task, since the second edition of her book was sold—about the worst dumplings that were ever placed upon a dirty table-cloth in a slovenly parlor. We can imagine that she writes a big, scrawling hand, with the letters all backwards, avoiding neatness with pains-taking precision—her voice is probably harsh, her attitude imposing, and she will, or does, wear her own grey hair in the mother-of-a-nation style. Still we think it a great pity that she did not do anything rather than what she has done, with all the busy enthusiasm of a woman in breeches. "Editor's Table," Southern Literary Messenger 19 (January 1853): 60.
further explains why Stowe describes Tom's three homes and shows them increasing in decrepitude as Tom's masters became less and less moral, less and less influenced by good women. Even the good intentions of young George Shelby are illustrated by his description of the home he will build someday for Tom. Saddened by Tom's sale, he promises that when he grows up he will buy Tom back and build him a home with room for a carpeted parlor. Later, in a letter to Tom, George mentions Tom's old cabin and says it is shut up now, but then he "expatiated brilliantly on ornaments and additions to be made to it when Tom came back." Domestic novelists North and South could count on their readers to understand what descriptions of homes could tell about characters.

Interpreting Aunt Phillis's living conditions reveals Phillis's moral discipline and the cleanliness of her soul, attributes she tries to pass on to her children and her husband. The master's beneficence is also manifest in physical description. The hand-me-down furniture from the planter's home, like the hand-me-down clothing that Master Weston gives to Phillis's husband, attests to the paternal concern a good master would show to his dependents. The irreconcilable differences of belief about whether slavery was benign or cruel, about whether it was God-ordained or

29 Stowe 257.
immoral, are captured in the selective contrast between Phillis's cottage and Tom's cabin.30

In another place in Aunt Phillis's Cabin, description of the interior of a house carries symbolic significance and shows Eastman's belief that the past was superior to the present. Mr. Weston finishes his habitual evening Bible reading in his parlor and then walks down the hall of his plantation home, Exeter. The author calls attention to the portraits of Weston's ancestors that line the hall. The "presence" of these ancestors confers the blessings of history upon the social and economic organization of Mr. Weston's life. Eastman mentions that another wall ornament, the antlers of a stag, recalls the days when the hunt was as popular in Virginia as in England, home of Mr. Weston's ancestors. Such things as the hunt "have passed away from thee, my native State," Eastman apostrophizes, continuing:

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30 Eastman was not the only proslavery novelist to refute Stowe's depiction of slaves' quarters. J. P. Kennedy reissued his 1832 Swallow Barn in 1852. In Chapter XLVI he "enlarged and revised his treatment of the slave quarters," (Brown, The Sentimental Novel in America 1789 - 1860, 247n21). Robert Criswell, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Contrasted with Buckingham Hall, the Planter's Home, included as one of his characters a visitor from the North who was surprised to find that slaves did not live in vermin-infested hovels. He described "the neatness of the out-buildings and the rural appearance of the white-washed cabins. . . . They were surrounded by flowers and creeping plants, and in a little garden attached to each were vegetables and herbs" (Brown, 247). For a description of more typical slave quarters and gardens, see Eugene Genovese Roll, Jordan, Roll, 524 - 549; Mark L. Walston's "'Uncle Tom's Cabin' Revisited: Origins and Interpretations of Slave Housing in the American South," Southern Studies Winter 1985: 357 - 373; John Michael Vlach Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1993).
Forever have they gone, and the times when over waxed floors thy sons and daughters gracefully performed the minuet. . . . The day when there was a tie between master and slave,—is that departing, and why? (47)

The answer to that question, according to Eastman, lies in the meddling of abolitionists whose ranks were growing in response to the sympathy aroused for their cause by a novel. Even the death scene requisite for a domestic novel calls to mind the indiscretion of the abolitionists' efforts. The death scene is Phillis's, a logical choice to contrast with the famous, sensational death scene of Uncle Tom. The reference to abolitionists comes in Phillis's response to a question from her master. Weston knows that he will be judged in heaven by how well he has discharged his duties towards his servants, so he encourages Phillis to evaluate his stewardship frankly by telling her:

The distinction between you and me as master and slave, I consider no longer existing. You are near being redeemed from my power, and the power of death alone divides you from your Saviour's presence. . . . I am much older than you, and I live in momentary expectation of my summons. We shall soon meet, I hope, in that happy place, where the distinctions of this world will be forgotten. (259)
Weston asks Phillis if he should manumit her children. She shows her faith in the Bible and her love of the Westons by replying that her children should remain in the condition into which they were born so that, by serving their master and God, they may be assured of joining her in heaven.

Phillis blesses Mr. Weston and relieves him of all the anxiety he has had concerning his adequacy as a master. The only "restlessness" she has experienced stemmed from abolitionists' intrusions:

Master . . . I have never had a want, I nor the children. There was a time, sir, when I was restless about being a slave. When I went with you and Miss Anna away from home, and heard the people saying colored people ought to be free, it made me feel bad. I thought then that God did not mean one of his creatures to be a slave; when I came home and considered about it, I would often be put out and discontented. . . . I struggled hard though, with these feelings, sir, and God gave me grace to get the better of them, for I could not read my Bible without seeing there was nothin agin slavery there; and that God had told the master his duty, and the slave his duty. You’ve done your duty by me and mine, sir; and I hope where I have come short you will forgive me,
for I couldn't die without I thought you and I was all right together. (257-258)

Phillis and Weston both appear noble in this scene, but the author's focus is primarily on Weston. It is Weston she shows struggling to accept Phillis's death and the personal loss he feels because of his impending separation from her. Mary Eastman, unlike Harriet Beecher Stowe, did not present the institution of slavery as a significant cause of the separation of families. Death was. Eastman teaches through Phillis's death scene that both slaves and masters would have a better chance of being united with loved ones in heaven if each first accepted God's will in assigning them an earthly station and then carried out the duties appertaining to that station.

In a different episode Eastman is as effective as Stowe in using characterization to make her polemical point. Eastman created an opportunistic abolitionist to embody all that was wrong with those misinformed meddlers. One of Eastman's abolitionists, Mr. Kent, goes to Washington, D. C. where he meets the beautiful, rich, and not too wise daughter of a slaveholder. Mr. Kent sets aside his principles in order to marry this young woman, and he becomes a neighbor of Mr. Weston. Mr. Kent's father-in-law discerns what manner of man has won his daughter, so he wisely draws up his will to stipulate that his daughter alone is to inherit the slaves. Mr. Kent treats the servants terribly, and
finally his wife sees him "brutally striking that faithful old man of her father's, Robert" (241). From that time on there is "a constant coolness existing between her and her husband" (242), and when Mrs. Kent contracts scarlet fever, she draws up a remarkable will. Her husband inherits a set amount of money. The plantation is to be sold, and the profits from its sale are to be used to set up her former slaves in Liberia. Those slaves who are too old to go to Africa or who have family nearby and choose not to go are left to Alice's mother, who is to be provided with an allowance to take care of "the people" (242).

When Mrs. Kent dies and all of this comes to pass, Mr. Kent goes back to the North, and Bacchus's comment accurately reflects the sentiments of proslavery advocates towards abolitionists: "I'm glad he's gwine, like Judas, to his own place" (243). Including a misguided male abolitionist allows Mary Eastman to use a standard feature of domestic fiction, a male for the heroine to reform. Given her polemical purpose, it would have been unthinkable for Eastman to present Master Weston as anything other than a wise and benevolent patriarch of his plantation family. The only other white males who need reforming are those who are cut off from paternal guidance because they have lost their fathers. As for black males, Aunt Phillis's Bacchus needs his wife's firm discipline. But this inversion of white families' hierarchies does not challenge the proslavery
tenet about family and social order resting on white male rule. In fact, the author presents the relationship between Bacchus and Phillis as a parody of the relationship between husband and wife in a well-ordered, southern, white family.

Another subplot of *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* points to abolitionists' folly; it exposes the sad lot of some servants who, falling prey to abolitionists' lies, leave the good life of slavery for degraded lives as free blacks. For instance, one young slave woman, taken North by her invalid mistress to help take care of the mistress's sick child, runs away when abolitionists frighten her with tales of how she might someday be treated. She became what the author calls a wage slave, chopping codfish and onions for four dollars a month and damaging her eyes. Having come to despise abolitionists who paid white women domestics more than blacks, she longs for the good old days of slavery when master and mistress had provided for her.

Mary Eastman successfully invented settings and some characters to illustrate her reasons for supporting slavery. She was less successful when it came to creating a plot to support her thesis. In fact, one way to appreciate Harriet Beecher Stowe's accomplishment is to contrast it with its imitators. Stowe contrasts Tom's increasingly degraded circumstances with the increasingly propitious stages of George and Eliza's movements toward earthly redemption in Canada and ultimately in Liberia. What happens to each set
of characters is suspenseful, exciting, and moving. Eastman’s plot, on the other hand, is disjointed. Reviewers of the day expected novels to have unified plots, as Nina Baym concludes in Novels, Readers, and Reviewers. Baym sums up the prevalent mid-nineteenth century reviewers’ attitude towards plot by saying, "If a work signaled itself as a novel and then produced a bad plot, the reviewer was bound to fault it."31

What can account for the disjointed plot of Aunt Phillis’s Cabin? Perhaps Eastman was a less skilled fiction writer than Stowe. Perhaps she was writing hastily to get


John Pendleton Kennedy makes the same point about unity in his introduction to the 1856 edition of Swallow Barn. In "A Word in Advance, from the Author to the Reader," Kennedy cautions that the work is "not a novel." Instead, he says, it consists of "detached sketches linked together by . . . a traveller’s notes." He goes on to further differentiate his work from a novel before consigning it to the "'censure' of my new reader":

It is, therefore, utterly unartistic in plot and structure, and may be described as variously and interchangeably partaking of the complexion of a book of travels, a diary, a collection of letters, a drama, and a history. . . .

Kennedy calls his readers’ attention to genres and distinguishes Swallow Barn from a novel on the basis of its lack of unity, presenting instead "detached sketches." A novel would be artistic in plot and structure, and Kennedy offers his disclaimer even though, he says, "I may lose by it." What might he have lost? Readers. Novels were the best-selling books in America in the 1850s. Kennedy’s potential audience had certain expectations of books that claimed to be novels, and his care in defining his work as partaking more of the genres of travel writing, diaries, letters, drama, and history serves to warn readers not to impose the same reading strategies on Swallow Barn that they would, for instance, on a novel by popular writers such as James Fenimore Cooper, Susan Warner, Richard Henry Dana, or Maria Cummins.

her novel out as fast as possible, either from the high motive of wanting to defend her region by offering a Biblical justification for slavery, or from the baser motive of wanting to make money by imitating a success. But inferior talent, haste, and the desire to imitate are not the only possible explanations for the lack of unity in the plot of Aunt Phillis’s Cabin. It is also possible that the disjunctions in Eastman’s plot are a result of trying to wed elements of the domestic genre to polemical content antithetical to the spirit of such fiction. Such an explanation accounts for why Eastman would introduce an interesting complication in a love story only to resolve it in an unconventional way that serves only her polemical purpose.

The reading public Mary Eastman tried to capture had been shaped by novels other than Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Most recently they had read Susan Warner’s The Wide, Wide World (1850) and Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre (1848). Domestic novelists, for all their moral posturing about self-sacrifice, situated the individual heroine’s concerns at the center of the novel’s imaginary world. But if a proslavery novelist were to be philosophically consistent, she could not make a young girl’s search for love and independence the focus of a proslavery novel. In the hierarchical world Eastman’s polemic celebrates, a young girl must learn to subordinate her interests to her family’s and community’s; a novelist celebrating social order based on hierarchies could
not emphasize the excitement of her heroine's life before marriage. That Eastman tries to include enough domestic elements in her novel to appeal to her audience shows her awareness of popular literature of her day. That she fails to achieve unity of plot shows a degree of incompatibility between her genre and the proslavery argument she wanted to disseminate.

But propaganda sweetened with sentiment had proved to be effective in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, so Eastman interrupts her characters' debates over slavery and her saccharine depiction of slave life to present three stories involving young marriageable white girls. Significantly, the most important belongs to Alice, who has a wise mother to guide her, and not to her companion Ellen, who, like the typical heroine of domestic fiction, is an orphan. Nineteenth-century fictional orphans often err because, lacking the guidance of a wise and experienced mother, they follow their hearts into ruin. Eastman's polemical purpose necessitates a different family situation, so she provides Alice with a mother who can warn her of the dangers of seeking personal happiness.

The necessity for the mother's warning comes about like this. Alice faces a typical domestic heroine's dilemma as she is torn between a romantic love and duty; she has promised her uncle to marry his son, Arthur. When Arthur goes off to Yale (where he is depicted as spending more time debating slavery with his ignorant northern classmates than
he does studying), Alice does not see him for three years. Arthur remains true to Alice, partly because he recognizes that a man needs the moral influence of a good woman. He echoes his region's notions about the spiritually uplifting role women play, boasting that the South is superior to the North for producing pious women. But oddly, pious Alice's constancy is tried during Arthur's absence.

Alice renews her acquaintance with one of her childhood friends, Walter. In fact, she confesses to her mother that she has fallen in love with Walter and wants to break her engagement. Her mother listens but counsels Alice that she has a duty to her uncle. After all, this uncle had taken them into his home and provided for them both when his brother died. Alice is being asked to return obedience in exchange for the protection and direction she has enjoyed. In other words, she is being reminded of her obligations under a system of reciprocity Eugene Genovese calls paternalism. 32

Alice acknowledges her duty but wonders how she can deny her heart. To help her understand the gravity of the situation, Alice's mother recounts the story of her own marriage and its dire consequences. Because her father disapproved of the man she loved, she eloped. The shock of her disobedience and disrespect killed her father. Moreover, her husband turned out to be a drunkard, vindicating

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32 Genovese, Roll 3-7.
her father's negative judgment. The crux of the argument is that it is good to be ruled by those who are older and wiser and that children (or nieces, or slaves) are obliged to obey their parents (or uncles, or masters). When Eastman dramatizes the consequences of romantic individualism by having Alice's mother relate the story of her own disastrous love and elopement, she tells us that a daughter's disobedience led to a father's death; her story represents in fiction the belief that romanticism will kill the patriarchy.

Alice succeeds in subduing her heart and taking her mother's advice partly because she is guided by the Bible, not by the domestic novels the orphan Ellen reads. The competing, conflictual discourses that undermine *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* are represented in the text itself by domestic fiction and the Bible, Ellen's and Alice's respective reading choices. Eastman presents a discussion of domestic fiction within the text of her novel; she discusses the Bible in her non-fiction introduction.

The novel depicts Ellen's reading habits as an oddity at Exeter plantation. Good women in *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* read the Bible and sometimes *The Spectator* but not domestic fiction. The narrative mocks female fiction writers (as opposed to women who wrote nonfiction books, as Eastman herself preferred to do) by describing one of them as "a lady writer, with a faded pink scarf, and some old artificial flowers in her hair" (229). Eastman's characters
deride women's novels, as the following exchange shows.

When Alice's betrothed returns, he asks Alice if she is still in love with Walter. She replies,

No, indeed, . . . I am not in love with him, or you either—if being in love is what it is described in novels. I never have palpitation of the heart, never faint away, and am not at all fond of poetry. I should make a sad heroine, I am such a matter-of-fact person. (256)

Arthur responds, "So as you make a good wife, . . . no matter about being a heroine." And Mrs. Weston adds,

A planter's wife has little occasion for romance. . . . Her duties are too many and too important. She must care for the health and comfort of her family, and of her servants. After all, a hundred servants are like so many children to look after. (256)

Another instance of a reaction to the conventions of fiction in the novel itself is contained in Alice's description of her young companion at Exeter plantation:

Ellen would make an elegant heroine. . . . She was left an orphan when very young; had an exacting uncle and aunt; was the belle of the metropolis; had gay and gallant lovers; is an heiress—and has fallen in love with a man she never saw. To crown all, he is not rich, so Ellen can give
him her large fortune to show her devotion, and they can go all over the world together, and revel in romance and novelty. (256)

In antebellum southern culture, Ellen, who is bored by plantation life and escapes it through her reading, would be recognized as a belle; Alice would be seen as a nascent lady and plantation mistress, a morally superior station.

When Mary Eastman discusses the Bible, she does so not in the novel itself but in the first ten pages of her fourteen-page introduction. The passage she selects is one proslavery theologians used to justify African slavery. When Ham failed to show the proper respect to his father, Noah, Ham's son Canaan was cursed into slavery. The Old Testament story (Genesis IX, 22 - 24) says that the condition of slavery is God's punishment for the descendants of those who did not obey the divine injunction to "honor thy father." Eastman, on the authority of Bishop Newton, claims that Africa is peopled by the descendants of Ham (14-15). Ham needed to learn the same lesson Alice had to learn: subjugation. The message Eastman extracts from this passage finds fictional representation in Aunt Phillis's Cabin. The efforts of Mr. Weston to provide for and guide his family and his slaves, and the efforts of the women of

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33 For a modern day discussion of this Biblical passage, see William McKee Evans, "From the Land of Canaan to the Land of Guinea: The Strange Odyssey of the "Sons of Ham" in American Historical Review 85 (Feb. 1980): 15 - 43.
Exeter plantation to instruct the girls and the slaves in their duty to Mr. Weston, fit neatly into a coherent worldview shaped by a strict interpretation of the Bible. Alice epitomizes a virtuous woman, one who suppresses her individualistic impulses and finds satisfaction in fulfilling her socially and biblically ordained duties. Alice’s willing acceptance of a subordinate place in society and the happiness that thereby accrues to her serve to reassure those who were concerned about slaves’ subordination.

Eastman’s failure to fulfill nineteenth-century reviewers’ expectations about genre and novelistic unity is explainable. She uses some of the conventions of the domestic novel—namely, the focus on a young girl’s growth to maturity and struggles with romance—to disparage the world view celebrated in that form. She twists domestic plot elements and alters domestic characters to express her support for an alternative social and economic order, parts of which, including less emphasis on an individual’s happiness and more emphasis on the good of the community, prevailed in the antebellum South.

Of course, Eastman’s acknowledged debate is not with domestic novelists but with Harriet Beecher Stowe. Southern reviewers were not at first convinced that Stowe should be debated in fiction. For example, in his December 1852 review of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, George Frederick Holmes states:
It may be doubted, indeed, whether an assault on a solemn interest, moral or social, conveyed under the garb of fiction, can ever be satisfactorily answered under a similar form. . . . If it be sufficiently important to demand a thorough reply, it is degrading to the serious character of the subject, it is trifling with the earnest and grave import of the question to dress it up in the gewgaws and tawdry finery of a mere counter-irritant.\footnote{\textbf{34} [George Frederick Holmes], Review of \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin}, \textit{Southern Literary Messenger} 18 (Dec. 1852) 727.}

In the only mention the \textit{Messenger} would ever give of \textit{Aunt Phillis’s Cabin}, Holmes points to the inadequacy of defending slavery by presenting its benign side:

This explains the insufficiency of such counter representations as Aunt Phillis’s Cabin, and similar apologies; and also that sense of insufficiency which they have not failed to produce. It is no valid refutation of the offensive fiction that slavery may be shown to present at times—no matter how frequently—a very different phase. This point was already guarded:—nay, it was already conceded in \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin}; and such a mode of replication consequently mistakes the subject of debate, and is entirely without force
because directed against a post already surrendered. (727)

The real way to strike back in fiction, "if . . . the reply must be couched in the same form as the attack," is to show the miseries, afflictions and crimes associated with northern cities and "incident to the condition of those societies where the much lauded white labor prevails" (727). In other words, proslavery domestic fiction should go on the offensive and focus on the sufferings of free laborers rather than try to defend the peculiar institution.

Four years later, the October 1856 Messenger demonstrated a new respect for the power of fiction to shape public opinion. The continual editions of Uncle Tom's Cabin and all of the spin-offs from the book, which appeared not only in America's burgeoning popular culture but also throughout the world, testified to the power of fiction to keep a political question before the public. Now this magazine reversed its previous stance by saying:

As literature has been the most powerful weapon which the enemies of African slavery have used in their attacks, so, also, to literature must we look for the maintenance of our position, and our justification before the world. Let Southern authors, men who see and know slavery as it is, make it their duty to deluge all the realms of literature with a flood of light upon the
That light was not going to shine from Phillis's cottage door, however, for Eastman's novel did not stir much critical interest. *DeBow's Review* of January 1853 mentions *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* as one that is "perhaps, the very best answer to that gross libel upon the South, denominated "Uncle Tom's Cabin." It grants that Eastman's book is more popular than most anti-Tom fiction but then asks, "can we expect the remedy to extend as far as the poison has so quickly gone?" In other words, could the remedy of "truth" from proslavery advocates ever match the phenomenal popularity of Stowe's sensational "lies"? It would seem not, since even this slight notice misrepresents the content of Eastman's novel, claiming that it "has furnished many admirable and truthful pictures, contrasting the slave of the South with the free laborer of other countries." Of all the plots and characters contained in the novel, the reviewer could not have mentioned an element Eastman emphasized less than the contrast of southern slave labor to foreign free labor.

Another southern review of *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* came out in the *Southern Quarterly Review* of April 1853. This

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one offers an opinion as to why Aunt Phillis's Cabin would never become as well-known as its predecessor:

It is truthful, which cannot be said of Uncle Tom, which lies like a dragoon; but the attraction of the work, as a story, though considerable, cannot compare with those of the abolition books. Truth never yet could hold a candle to falsehood where the medium of both was invention. And this is as it should be. But Aunt Phillis deserves to be read, and Mrs. Eastman to be praised for her performance.  

Whoever wrote the notice pays a backhanded compliment to Stowe and to the power of "invention," that is, the creative imagination, but circumscribes the field of proper aims for fiction; fiction writers should avoid political purposes, for lies make a better, more persuasive story than does truth.

A reviewer with the opposite view of slavery set forth a different appraisal of the merits and failings of the two books. An article entitled "Literature of Slavery," published in the November 1852 New Englander, discusses Uncle Tom's Cabin, Aunt Phillis's Cabin, and four other books on

slavery. Defending *Uncle Tom's Cabin* from those who had attacked the book's portrayal of slavery, the reviewer asserts that literary critics have political motivations. Next, the reviewer praises the way Stowe tapped into the feelings of the people on a subject their political and religious leaders had said was settled:

The people are satisfied—are they? They have made up their minds—have they?—that slavery in the United States is well enough, and that nobody need trouble himself about it. What then is the meaning of this phenomenon? A book is published . . . and behold the pent up feelings of the public mind, bursts forth like the letting out of waters. . . . The tears which it has drawn from millions of eyes, the sense of a "higher law," which it has wakened in millions of minds, and the deep and ineffaceable conviction of the wickedness of slavery, which it has stamped upon millions of hearts . . . are an achievement beyond the highest aspiring of genius. An entire people

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38 The other four are Hildreth, *The White Slave; or Memoirs of a Fugitive*, previously published under the title of *Archy Moore*; W. L. G. Smith, *Life at the South; or "Uncle Tom's Cabin" as it is*; Robert Criswell, *"Uncle Tom's Cabin." contrasted with Buckingham Hall, the Planter's Home; or a fair view of both sides of the Slavery Question*; John Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery, in easy lessons*. The last book is nonfiction, and the reviewer derides it as useful only to public men who "give their influence to aid the propagandism of slavery. Perhaps these 'easy lessons' may help them to keep their consciences 'easy'" (613).
has been moved to feel, to think, to discuss the question of slavery, against its own resolute determination to the contrary. . . .39

With that impressive analysis, the reviewer has pointed out the logical flaws in proslavery reviewers' attacks on Harriet Beecher Stowe. Either Stowe is a literary genius, capable of stirring up tremendous emotional responses and moral outrage among her readers, or else these readers were not satisfied in the first place with the compromises (like the Missouri Compromise of 1820-21 and the Compromise of 1850 with its stringent fugitive slave law) made by their elected leaders.

After citing evidence to support the essential truthfulness of the novel's depiction of slavery, the reviewer next considers proslavery books that appeared "with astounding rapidity of succession" and that were "ostensibly designed to give a correct and unbiased representation of slavery as it is."40 Considering the barbs it thrusts at The White Slave and the ridicule to which it subjects Studies on Slavery, the review treats Aunt Phillis's Cabin gently. The reviewer acknowledges the claim Mary Eastman makes in Aunt Phillis's Cabin for her own impeccable character. She identifies herself as "a daughter of the Old

40 "Literature of Slavery," 607
Dominion," (misquoted in the New Englander as "a daughter of the Old Dominick"). She continues, "Am I not . . . a member of one of the F. F. V's? Did not my grandfather ride races with General Washington? Did not my father wear crape on his hat at his funeral?" The reviewer never questions Eastman's truthfulness in the picture of slavery she offers, assuming that with a pedigree like hers she had seen slavery only "in the best aspect which it can put on."41

Besides, the reviewer continues, a merit of Eastman's book lacking in the other proslavery novels is its sincerity. 

"[W]ith her woman's heart, she does not pretend—as heartless men sometimes pretend—that slavery is a good thing for the slaves, better than freedom could be in its stead."42 The reviewer singles out as evidence of this sincerity Eastman's description of the sorrow of a slave mother whose seven children were sold in one day. Such fairness in acknowledging abuses of the system and in imaginatively exploring the feelings of slaves adds credence to the novel as it creates the emotional appeal that is a convention of domestic fiction, but it weakens Eastman's proslavery position.43 Positing that slaves mothers have

41 "Literature of Slavery," 611.

42 "Literature of Slavery," 611.

43 Another example of Eastman's sympathy for a slave woman's suffering can be seen in her recounting of Aunt Peggy's journey to America after being kidnapped in Africa. Peggy was chained to another woman in the crowded hold of a ship, and when the other woman died, Peggy remained chained to a corpse, a situation the
feelings for their children similar to those of her readers undermines the notion that racial and cultural differences mitigate African mothers' experiences in slavery. Eastman's slave mother, like Stowe's Eliza, is better suited for the antislavery message of Uncle Tom's Cabin than for the proslavery message of Aunt Phillis's Cabin.

Eastman's essentialist depiction of mothers in Aunt Phillis's Cabin and her empathic identification with a slave mother is reminiscent of a passage in her 1849 book about Sioux Indians, Dahcotah:

I had been told that Indian women gossiped and stole; that they were filthy and troublesome. Yet I could not despise them; they were wives and mothers--God had implanted the same feelings in their hearts as in mine. (emphasis added)."

One Sioux woman stays with Mary Eastman and her ill daughter, and when it becomes clear that the child will live, Eastman falls asleep, leaving her Indian friend to keep watch over the sleeping child. Eastman asks how she could trust this woman,

who wore, as long as she could endure it, a necklace made of the hands and feet of Chippeway children? . . . I was far away from the home of my author deplores.

"Mary Henderson Eastman, Dahcotah (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1849) vii-ix."
childhood, and a Sioux woman, with her knife in her belt, was assisting me in the care of my only daughter.  

The answer seems to be that women can trust each other's maternal feelings. In this passage, as in the episode about the slave woman who lost her children, Eastman moves towards an essentialist position that links women as mothers, in spite of differences of race, class, and culture.

Eastman projects her own notions of motherhood onto Native American and slave women in just the way George Frederick Holmes accused Harriet Beecher Stowe of doing. His 1852 review of Uncle Tom's Cabin says:

"... the whole tenor of this pathetic tale derives most of its significance and colouring from a distorted representation or a false conception of the sentiments and feelings of the slave. It presupposes an identity of sensibilities between the races of the free and the negroes. ... It takes advantage of this presumption, so unsuspectingly credited where slavery is unknown, to arouse sympathies for what might be grievous misery to the white man, but is none to the differently tempered black. ... Thus what would be insupportable to one race, or one order of society, constitutes no portion of the wretchedness of..."

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45 Eastman, Dahcotah x.
another. The joys and the sorrows of the slave are in harmony with his position, and are entirely dissimilar from what would make the happiness, or misery, of another class.46

Holmes, like all proslavery theorists, could not logically condone holding slaves as property and then imagine that slaves had feelings like those of the master class.

But Eastman was not writing a proslavery treatise. She was writing a proslavery novel; the conventions of domestic fiction required her to examine motives and develop characters. If the comments about the Sioux women honestly depict Eastman's identification with women across racial and cultural lines, then Aunt Phillis’s Cabin is true to Eastman's feelings, if not to proslavery logic. Significantly, this empathy occurs on an individual level and does not translate into abstract social theory. Eastman's ability to imagine slave characters' feelings and the requirements of her medium that she do so contribute to her failure to unite proslavery polemics with domestic fiction. The incompatibility between Eastman's medium and message reveals that forms of discourse are never politically neutral.

The conventions and ideology of domestic fiction end up disrupting Eastman's polemical stance and echoing the logic of Uncle Tom's Cabin after all. Frederick Porcher, writing

46 [George Frederick Holmes] 728-729.
in 1857, commented on the problem of not having a southern literary tradition to reflect the region's beliefs and institutions. In expressing his regret over how deeply the conventions of domestic fiction had penetrated the South, Porcher explains for modern readers why Mary Eastman chose to try to adapt that genre to defend slavery. Porcher writes:

The existence of slavery at the South, and its connection with the Union, has placed us in a peculiar position. Our whole fabric of society is based upon slave institutions, and yet our conventional language is drawn from scenes totally at variance with those which lie about us. Our books come from England and the North, and they appear *prima facie* to be our teachers.

Porcher then calls for an end to southerners' "complacently adopt[ing] the cant . . . of a free society." He offers disunion as the only alternative to the South's holding forever a provincial place requiring "our peculiarities ... be defended, excused, ridiculed, pardoned."^{47}

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^{47} Porcher's observation about the inability of free societies' books and language to express southern reality was prompted by his chagrin over a publishing inequity. He explains that while "[t]here are few persons in the South who have not read Uncle Tom's Cabin," a New York publisher had recently "found himself compelled by the force of public sentiment there to violate the contract which he had made to publish the Hireling and the Slave," a proslavery poem. Frederick Porcher, "Southern and Northern Civilization Contrasted," *Russell's Magazine* 1 (May 1857) 101, 106.
Not all of the novelists in this study had the same problems in merging politics and domesticity that Mary Eastman did. For example, Sarah Hale uses novelistic conventions that are more compatible with her political message, and Caroline Lee Hentz uses the emotional power of domestic fiction to create proslavery feelings. However, the problems in Aunt Phillis's Cabin show that it is not always easy to adapt the conventions of a genre to changing political and historical situations. As Frederick Porcher noticed, the South needed its own literature, not variations of English and northern novels. Genric conventions are elastic, but Mary Eastman was unable to stretch them enough to accommodate her conservative political message comfortably within the frame of a domestic novel.
CHAPTER II
Politics and Domesticity in *Northwood*

At the end of her 1827 novel *Northwood, a Tale of New England*, Sarah Josepha Hale writes:

And now, generous reader--I call you generous if you have lent me your attention to the end--we must part, and most probably forever. I cannot flatter myself with the hope of obtaining the wreath of fame; but of this I am confident, that were the circumstances under which this book was written, known, and the motives which have induced its publication, revealed, it would receive from the most, toleration, and from the benevolent, patronage.¹

Hale's self-effacing appeal to her audience for toleration is similar to several such passages in this work, Hale's first novel. In suggesting that she is worthy of patronage, she hints at some pitiable circumstances surrounding the writing of the novel. She reveals what those circumstances

had been when she writes in the introduction to a new edition of *Northwood* in 1852:

Twenty-five years ago the book you are about to read was written; and thus commenced my literary life. To those who know me, it is also known that this was not entered upon to win fame, but a support for my little children. *Northwood* was written literally with my baby in my arms—the "youth of the flock," whose eyes did not open on the world till his father's were closed in death! . . . [T]he success of my literary life has enabled me to educate my children liberally, as their father would have done. . . .²

Though Hale again disavows that fame had been her motive for publishing, preferring instead frankly to acknowledge that she wrote for money, fame was an undeniable consequence of her enterprise. *Northwood* seems to have sold well³ and was

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² Sarah Josepha Hale, *Northwood, or Life North and South: Showing the True Character of Both* (New York: H. Long and Brother, 1852) iii. All further parenthetical references to *Northwood* will be to the 1852 edition since it is the focus of this chapter.

³ Information about the sales of *Northwood* is contradictory. In "Sarah Hale, Political Writer," Nina Baym writes that *Northwood* was "only modestly successful" (171). In *Declarations of Independence*, Barbara Bardes and Suzanne Gossett quote the *Boston Spectator and Ladies Album* for April 28, 1827, as saying "Northwood is selling faster than any similar work, which has been for some years published in this city" (192n2). Nicole Tonkovich Hoffman in "Legacy Profile: Sarah Josepha Hale" writes, "By all accounts, *Northwood* (1827) was an immediate success. It was reprinted several times, and was published in England soon after it appeared in America. Its popularity, biographers agree,
reprinted in England, a feat Hale called "at that time a very remarkable compliment to an American book" (iii). Her "literary life" took a fortuitous turn when, at the request of an Episcopal priest who had read Northwood, she moved to Boston to edit one of the first American women's magazines. The Ladies' Magazine found a responsive audience, and in 1837 Louis Godey purchased it, partly to obtain the services of the talented lady editor. Sarah J. Hale remained the editor of Godey's Lady's Book through 1877; she had a public voice for an astonishing fifty years, from age forty to age ninety.4

Scholars have had trouble classifying Hale. Was she conservative or liberal?5 Did she advance the status

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4 When Hale became editor of the Philadelphia-based magazine, its name was Lady's Book and American Ladies' Magazine. The name changed several times during Hale's association with the magazine. In "Onward Christian Women: Sarah J. Hale's History of the World," Nina Baym credits Patricia Okker's unpublished research for revealing that in letters, Hale referred to the magazine as the Lady's Book, not Godey's (249n1).

5 In "Onward Christian Women," Nina Baym notes Hale's opposition to women's suffrage and focus on individuals rather than reform movements to effect social change. "Still, Hale's focus on individuals cannot be called 'merely' conservative, since the supposedly radical transcendentalists also located all reformative and transformational powers in individuals. Attempts to attach today's rhetorical labels of liberal, conservative, radical, or reactionary to Hale only call attention to the differences between the ways in which various intellectual positions converged and intersected then and the ways they do now" (261-62n13).
of women or participate in keeping women's sphere circumscribed? 6 Was she political or apolitical? 7 If ever a writer demonstrates the need for a more nuanced approach to mid-nineteenth century American women novelists, Sarah Josepha Hale is that writer. Standard feminist approaches to writing about domestic novelists preclude discussing the overt political messages that dominate some of their novels, novels like Hale's Northwood in both of its versions. Ironically, such a limited perspective silences aspects of these women's political voice as effectively as censorship would. Feminist critics have tended to emphasize what women writers say about women and gender relations, topics Hale does indeed discuss. But she also advances pragmatic solutions to problems like funding for public schools; she calls for national expansion; and, of particular relevance to this study, she offers advice on how to end slavery.

This chapter focuses on Northwood, showing how boldly Hale participates in political discourse through fiction. It compares the political statements Sarah Josepha Hale makes in Liberia and implies in the Lady's Book with those in Northwood. It also contrasts her evasive style in her non-

6 Those who judge her to have advocated for an enlarged women's sphere include Glenda Gates Riley, Laura McCall, Lawrence Martin, and Ruth E. Finley. In contrast, Susan Phinney Conrad and Ann Douglas believe she stood for keeping women subordinate.

7 Nina Baym, Barbara Bardes and Suzanne Gossett, and Nicole Tonkovich Hoffman see her as political. Those who see her as apolitical include Frank Luther Mott and Ann Douglas.
fiction with her direct political statements in the novel. Of all the novels in this study, *Northwood* is the least domestic in themes, implied audience, characterization, and plot, yet it contains recognizable elements of the genre, as the following overview shows.

*Northwood* tells the story of young Sidney Romilly, the bright, industrious son of a model New England family. His aunt and her plantation-owning husband have not been able to have children, so they offer to take Sidney to their southern home and make him their heir. Sidney's parents accept the offer because it will give their son a better education and more opportunities for economic advancement than they could afford. As a young man in his adopted region, Sidney falls in love with a southern woman, only to find out later that she is secretly married. Her husband, a tutor from New England, befriends Sidney and plays an important role in helping him overcome the pernicious influences of his life in the South, a life Hale depicts as encouraging indolence and intellectual mediocrity. On a return trip to his home in the New England town of Northwood, Sidney falls in love again, this time with a New Englander. After a number of complications including stolen letters, illnesses, and the near forfeiture of all the wealth his uncle bequeathed to him, Sidney marries his true love. He and his bride go to his southern home where, especially in the 1852 revised
version, they grapple with slavery as a practical problem with moral overtones.

The conventional love story, complications and resolution indicate the degree to which Hale conforms to popular taste in her attempt to make money to support herself and her children. In addition to her desire to make money, Hale had another reason for wanting to write the original version of Northwood. In 1827, two years after the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the American Revolution and one year after the deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, Hale was celebrating the successes of the experiment in republican government and prescribing steps to improve the nation—steps that were as often political as personal, as often public as domestic, and frequently political, personal, public, and domestic all at the same time.

Right from the title page of the 1827 Northwood, Hale signals that her novel has a leg in both camps—politics and domesticity. Her first epigraph concerns the nation: "He who loves not his country, can love nothing." Her second concerns the home:

"Home is the resort,
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and supported, polished friends

8 Sarah Hale's father, Captain Gordon Buell, fought in the American Revolution under General Horatio Gates. One of her brothers was named Horatio after the General. Hale named one of her sons Horatio.
And dear relations mingle into bliss."

However, the title page of the 1852 edition drops the epigraph about home, granting increased importance to the one about love of country. Her focus on country reflects the urgent political purpose of the 1852 revised edition—that is, to counteract the effect of Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

For the most part, both versions of Northwood move easily back and forth between political and domestic realms. Once, a love story within a love story is introduced with this charming invitation: "Every lady and every lady’s man will surely peruse [the three succeeding chapters], and without skipping, when assured they are all about love" (192). And once, an authorial aside apologizes for a long discussion ranging over such timely political issues as the consequences of not having a state religion, the logic behind property rights that did not prohibit hunting on another man’s property, the existence of slavery in a country that claimed to value freedom and equality, the necessity of a free press to insure democratic elections, the mechanisms for raising tax dollars to support public schools so that poor as well as rich children could receive an education, and even the best way to resolve a local dispute over the funding of roads. At the end of that discussion, a parenthetical comment pronounces judgment on the progress of the novel and seeks to bridge the distance between its two different kinds of discourse, domestic and
political. Hale's comment, which begins "During this long (and rather dull, is it not?) conversation" (133), also serves as a transitional device that temporarily turns the novel's focus inward, away from the discussion of politics and on to the mood of the hero.9

Most of the political discussions in the 1827 Northwood serve to congratulate the young nation for its successes. But the praise heaped on America for the virtues of democratic, republican government does not come only from dialogue between characters. Oratory is part of Hale's repertoire. Hale gives herself the opportunity in fiction to speak with the voice and authority of a minister. An English visitor to Northwood, the hometown of the novel's protagonist, listens to a Thanksgiving Day sermon tracing the colonies' success from settlement to Bunker Hill and on to the subsequent progress of America. He grows restless and inwardly vows never to sit through such a lecture again, but he is won over when the remainder of the sermon, written after the minister had learned that the English guest would be attending, praises England and offers the hope of future benefits to be derived from an American-British alliance. Hale presents the first part of the sermon, the predictable

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9 The parenthetical aside in the 1827 version of Northwood appeals to a male critic for understanding. There the comment reads: "(and rather dull, is it not, Mr. Critic?)" (I:166). Twenty-five years of successfully writing, editing, and reviewing literature herself must have given Hale the confidence to speak directly to her readers rather than try to appease a male critic.
part, through narrative summary. But when she reaches the part that deals with reconciliation with England and the hoped for future, she writes as if quoting the sermon. In effect, a woman writes and "delivers" a sermon by placing her own words in a male character's mouth.

Nina Baym, who has also noticed this phenomenon, sees that women are "implicated in American politics in Northwood." In other words, while the main plot focuses on home, family, and romance and while characters attend to domestic or public matters according to predictable gender roles, this woman's novel advances the author's political positions. Baym continues in "Sarah Hale, Political Writer":

The narrator of this book is clearly identified as a woman; Hale published the book under her own name. Her constant narrative interpolations alternate with the pronouncements of Squire Romilly and other men in the book, who are in any case her constructions and can speak only the words that she writes for them. Hale is thus writing men, and writing men's political discourse, staking out writing--and reading--as ways by which women could appropriate politics for themselves.  

Baym's observations contribute to an ongoing exploration of the ways women have been active agents in political culture,

\[10\] Nina Baym, "Sarah Hale, Political Writer,"
not passive participants or victims. Under even the thinnest veil of fiction, mid-nineteenth-century American women delivered sermons and political orations.

In speaking through the fictional persona of a minister, Hale's political discussion disguised as a sermon urges reconciliation and begins with domestic images. Great Britain "once called herself our mother," the minister says, and then continues:

[W]e do not deny her maternity; but there is a period when nations, as well as individuals, quit their minority, and if the parent country would continue the parallel of relationship which subsists in families, she will not consider her independent offspring as her natural enemy. (84)

The analogy between family and nations continues, and significantly the family relations specified are mother-daughter ones. Even if the terms of the analogy were suggested by the convention of referring to England as "the mother country," the analogy takes on a logic of its own as Hale's minister predicts the future relationship between the two countries.

Suppose a mother had a daughter who was, on some occasions, self-willed, and finally married against her consent, would she, breathing a malediction against her child, endeavor to accomplish her ruin? Would she not, rather, secretly rejoice
in her prosperity, and, taking the first decent opportunity for a reconciliation, renew those offices of kindness and generosity which those of the same blood should ever be ready to reciprocate? And do we not see instances where a mother finds, not only a useful friend in the child she once discarded, but even a supporter in the imbecility of age, and one who will afford an asylum when no other protector is to be found? (84 - 85)

England, the sermon suggests, should emulate the example of a forgiving mother. The benefits that will accrue to the mother country include finding a home for her children when they need it. Through this entire passage, the language and images are domestic, but the message is political.

For Hale, the domestic was political. Other kinds of evidence in Northwood that show her conflation of the two include her celebration of native trees rather than exotic Lombardy poplars for landscaping as a way to foster respect for things American, her description of the American eagle plaque hanging above the mantel-piece in the keeping room of the Romilly home, her pride in the American calico dresses worn by the Romilly sisters, and her assertion that domestic habits had helped the colonists win and keep their independence. The domestic habits cited for special commendation concern beverages. The English visitor engages Squire Romilly in a short debate about the relative virtues of
domestic currant wine and imported Madeira or champagne. The American proudly claims that patriotic desire for self-sufficiency leads him to prefer his homemade wine, and their discussion turns to the political significance of domestic habits. The Englishman asks if Romilly imagines that "currant wine or ginger-beer are at all connected with the preservation of your liberties." The Squire replies that forty years ago tea had influenced independence greatly. He continues, "Small causes often produce great effects; and the fate of nations, as well as individuals, is decided or materially altered by such trifles." (94)

Squire Romilly’s words show one way women of the Revolutionary era contributed to the great effects of their day—by changing their small, domestic habits. Their daughters, including Sarah Hale, embraced the hope that domestic "trifles" could change national destinies. America needed to be self-reliant, so American mothers needed to create families that appreciated currant wine, homespun clothing, and native trees. Linda K. Kerber points out in *Women of the Republic* that politicizing consumption was one of the ways everyday life took on political significance during the Revolution. She further explains that Revolu-

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11 In her role as editor of the *Lady’s Book*, Hale encouraged American self-sufficiency in literature also. She initiated a policy of rewarding American authors by publishing their works and paying for them. Standard practice of the day was to republish English works since there was no effective international copyright. One of the authors aided by Hale’s practice was Harriet Beecher Stowe.
tionary-era women participated in their culture's "deep skepticism" toward conventional political behavior (men running for office) with its taint of ambition for political fame. Hale, writing one generation later about the intersection of domesticity and politics, shares that still prevalent notion about "dirty politics." Nevertheless, she extols women's ability to influence public life through their domestic conduct.

For instance, mothers needed to be educated in order to raise children who would be good citizens. Advocating women's education was a political step for Hale, one that she introduced in Northwood and pursued tirelessly in her magazines. One way Northwood shows the importance of educating women is by supplying a negative example. Squire Romilly's sister, a beautiful and spoiled only daughter, has been denied an education. She prefers idleness to reading, and is "one of the very few among the Yankee girls who never fell in love with the hero of a novel; for, truth to tell, Lydia Romilly never read a work of fiction" (23). She has grown up lacking in judgment and self-control, so she jilts a worthy New England beau to marry a flashy, rich, southern plantation owner. Her letters home from the South show her ignorance of history as well as her inability to adopt another's point of view. They also show that she is barely

literate. Hale invests these letters with such realism that she claims "the veracity of a historian" requires her to explain how she had corrected Mrs. Brainard's writing before publishing the letters in *Northwood*:

The orthography needed many corrections, and the punctuation had to be entirely supplied. The capital letters, also, were distributed with the utmost impartiality throughout the whole, as often ending a word, as beginning a sentence. Indeed, no one who saw the crooked, blotted, mis-spelt scrawls, would have imagined a delicate hand had penned, and bright eyes overlooked them. These facts are not recorded for a libel against Mrs. Brainard, but merely as a warning to beautiful young ladies, lest, like her, they should depend on the graces of their persons, and neglect the cultivation of their minds. (22-23)

For Hale, Mrs. Brainard's shameful ignorance has political as well as personal consequences. Because of her lack of education, Mrs. Brainard does not become a good mother to Sidney Romilly, the nephew she and her husband adopt, and she does not equip him to be the kind of man, husband, or citizen that the hero of a didactic novel should be.

In contrast to Mrs. Brainard's lack of education, one of Squire Romilly's little girls is going to school and earning prizes for being at the head of her class, and the
youngest, too young for school, is being taught to read by her mother. She reads intensively, rather than extensively, and boasts of having read one story book twenty times. Education for women, including reading some fiction, is depicted in *Northwood* as a virtuous, even patriotic enterprise. Hale's insistence on including that political message in a novel is one example of why she cannot be considered an apolitical writer.

Sounding like de Tocqueville four years before the Frenchman arrived in America, one of Hale's positively portrayed characters, a physician, boasts in another political commentary that American women's labor "is entirely domestic" and that throughout the United States one would find "scarcely a single female engaged in the labors of the field, or any kind of out-door work" (149). By this implicit definition, slave women in southern cotton fields were not female. Noting that exclusion makes the rest of this character's remarks less unbelievable, although still an exaggeration:

> [T]he manner in which women are treated is allowed to be a good criterion by which to judge of the character and civilization of a people. Wherever they are oppressed, confined, or made to perform the drudgery, we may be sure the men are barbarians. But I do not believe there is now or ever was a nation which treated their women with such
kindness and consideration, tenderness and respect, as we Americans do ours. Here they are educated to command esteem, and considered as they deserve to be, the guardians of domestic honor and happiness, friends and companions of man. 'And to study household good,' and rear and educate their children, is all the labor we wish them to perform. (149 - 150)

This commentary shows another aspect of the interrelationship between domestic and political life: women's domesticity is proof of an advanced civilization.

What does it mean, though, when a woman writing a novel concerned with politics says that women's role is to "study household good" and "rear and educate their children"? How can the contradiction between that overt message in the story and the fact of the political novel be resolved? Hale professed tirelessly in the Lady's Book that women had special abilities and responsibilities as teachers and as moral guides. Her didactic novel is an acceptable way for her to discharge her womanly duties. In Northwood she includes many examples of the kinds of domestic instructions that are a staple of nineteenth-century women's fiction; she teaches how to decorate a room, how to manage the conflicting obligations of going to church and preparing Thanksgiving dinner on the same day, how to give children access to all the rooms in the house instead of confining them to a
nursery, and how to instruct children in order to develop their spirituality as well as their intellect. This attention to childrearing and homemaking—which, as Ruth Finley points out, Hale preferred to ennoble by calling domestic science—is clearly compatible with women's duties. But it also has public consequences. The private celebration of an important national event aims to increase family member's patriotism. Raising independent children prepares a future generation of citizens who will not bow to nobility and who will know how to govern themselves and their community. Hale exhibits no discomfort in going public with her domestic agenda; neither is she defensive about asserting the political effects of good Yankee motherhood.

Both the political novel itself and the "domestic science" within the novel can be called political if one accepts a broader definition of "politics" than was commonly held in America in the mid-nineteenth century. Then, "politics" belonged to a rough and sometimes violent public world. In an article called "The Domestication of Politics: Women and the American Political Society, 1780 - 1920," Paula Baker offers a definition of the word "politics" that expands the meaning beyond merely voting and holding office. She uses "politics" to include "any action, formal or informal, taken to affect the course or behavior of govern-

By that definition, Northwood is indeed political.

Other political subjects in Northwood besides the call for women's education and women's patriotic participation in developing good republicans are hinted at by the subtitle of the 1827 edition: A New England Tale. Hale defines New England by contrasting it with England and the South. She is unafraid to generalize about character weaknesses she associates with each area's economic system. She chides the English for being too aristocratic, New Englanders for being too materialistic, and southerners for being indolent. She depicts Yankees who give in to greed, and, like her Deacon Jones, cloak their avarice in false piety and prudery. Deacon Jones "bought" his position in the church by adding a large room to his house and putting it at the disposal of the congregation for meetings and weddings. Later, when he and other Yankees have learned a few lessons about honesty, he converts the room into a store, a transformation the author clearly applauds.

Southerners come under censure also. Hale rebukes southerners for their anti-republican, aristocratic tendencies. She claims that the availability of slave labor made southerners indolent, a trait incompatible with Christianity and her bourgeois view of American-ness. As a warning about

the results of such a life, Hale portrays her hero as a man too lazy to study his Latin and his uncle as a man saddled with gambling debts. These debts nearly cost him his fortune and jeopardize his slaves by putting them within the reach of a cruel creditor.

The foil to both the aristocratic Englishman who visits Northwood and these less-than-ideal regional types is a Yankee, Squire Romilly. He is a hard-working yeoman farmer, devoted husband and father, pious (without being sanctimonious) Christian, and respected member of the community. His neighbors have several times elected him to their legislature, and they have conferred upon him the honorific "Squire." Squire Romilly dies in the novel, but when Hale revised Northwood in 1852 to respond to Uncle Tom's Cabin and to amplify her earlier pronouncements concerning slavery, she grants him a voice from beyond the grave by having his son discover his journal. For wisdom, Hale turns figuratively to the forefathers; her characters consult the writings of the hero's deceased father.  

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15 It is typical of Hale to resort to history, the Bible, and literature to justify her position on controversial topics. For instance, in Women's Record, she uses the biographical entries on women like Eve and the second century B.C. Roman matron Cornelia to discuss women's religious and political roles. In the new ending of Northwood she favorably contrasts John Bunyan's Christiana to Christian, noting that the man could hardly make his own way to the Celestial City, but the woman not only reached her destination more easily, but also "took the children with her" (402).
Hale herself turned to what was written in the Bible and in the Constitution to settle her mind about slavery. Although she has been faulted by such critics as Ann Douglas and Frank Luther Mott for not taking political stands on sectional issues before and during the Civil War in the Lady’s Book, Hale does, in Liberia (1853) and in both editions of Northwood, deal explicitly with the problem of unfree labor in the American South. Liberia and the 1852 Northwood extend the theoretical discussions of slavery found in the 1827 Northwood by including a specific plan of action and a rationale for peacefully putting an end to American chattel slavery.

Liberia, or Mr. Peyton’s Experiments is not suitable for extended treatment in this study because, although it combines historical documents and propaganda tracts in a fictional framework, that fictional framework has few elements of domestic fiction. Nevertheless, it does show that the concern with slavery evident in Northwood was not a single aberration in Hale’s oeuvre.16

16 In Liberia Hale presents a planter who has decided to free his slaves. Mr. Peyton’s decision is prompted by his gratitude to his slaves for their assistance during his illness and for having protected his property and family during a local slave uprising. The novel describes three ways the idealistic Virginian tries to manumit his slaves without damaging them or the larger society. First, he sets up a collective farm, but that experiment fails because the former slaves had never learned the lessons of industry and frugality in their youth. Then he tries to send some slaves to Canada, but they are not welcomed by white Canadians and do not receive the religious instruction they need there. Finally, he sends his slaves to Liberia as part of the African colonization movement, and that experiment succeeds.
Despite its political agenda and its advocacy of colonization, Liberia received a moderately warm reception in the "Critical Notices" section of the Southern Quarterly Review:

Mrs. Hale has always shown herself friendly to the South. She is for colonization, however, and not abolition, and makes as good a case, in behalf of Liberia, as it is possible to make. But we protest against Liberia and colonization as we do against abolition; both going upon the erroneous assumption that slavery, in the Southern States, is a wrong and evil to the African, from which it is our duty to relieve them by some process. Enough that we protest against this assumption. It has already been sufficiently argued in our pages. For the rest, in respect to this book, we have only to add that it is interesting—it contains pictures of negro life in the slave states and the free, the comparison of which we need not be ashamed of.17 (25:542, Apr. 1854)

The reviewer's mild endorsement of Hale's book probably stemmed from its respectful portrayal of Mr. Peyton and his treatment of slaves, a welcome contrast to Augustine St.

In Liberia, former slaves manifest Yankee industriousness.

Clair and Simon Legree. Furthermore, the reviewer could see that Liberia would not capture the public's imagination the way Uncle Tom's Cabin had done. Liberia lacks an imaginative plot, exciting scenes, and interesting characters. In fact, perhaps because the book includes documents such as the Liberian Declaration of Independence, Article I of the Liberian Constitution, and samples of letters from happy colonists in Liberia, the reviewer says the book was "edited by Mrs. Sarah J. Hale" (emphasis added), not written by her. The book is so lacking in elements of fiction that it is easy to think of Hale's role in its creation as her more famous one, editor, rather than author.

Hale included a review of Liberia in the March 1854 "Literary Notices" section of Godey's Lady's Book. This notice, too, says the book was "edited by Mrs. Sarah J. Hale." Whether or not Hale wrote the review, this notice is interesting because at the very least it is the one Hale decided to publish. The review calls attention to the way the book "addresses itself to the good sense and the good feelings of all persons who are sincerely interested in Christian practical efforts to ameliorate and to elevate the condition of the African race" (274). That assessment is consistent with Hale's values, especially with her lifelong commitment to efforts that she viewed as simultaneously practical and Christian. The review says Liberia proves

18 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (Mar. 1854) 274.
that the best way to resolve the problem of slavery in America is to follow the agenda of the American Colonization Society. Furthermore, the review identifies two audiences for the book:

This work . . . commends itself not only to the attention of those who are anxious to benefit an unhappy race, but also to the serious consideration of such of that race as have sufficient intelligence to comprehend their true interests, and sufficient energy to follow their dictates.

(274)

Liberia, in Hale’s estimation, should be read by white reformers and by blacks interested in self-improvement. She intends for this book to effect political change, a motive for publishing Northwood as well.

Squire Romilly’s "journal entries" and Charles Stuart’s letters in the revised 1852 Northwood propose the same solution to the problem of American slavery that Liberia does. In the long Chapter XXXIV added as the new ending of the novel in 1852 and in a new Chapter XIV, Hale extends the discussion of slavery found in the 1827 edition.19 Squire Romilly’s journal merits close analysis both for what it

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19 These remarks about slavery are the most important changes. Some incidental additions are scattered throughout the entire book, including comments on changes in transportation, communication, and decoration. A good summary of the differences between the 1827 and 1852 editions of Northwood can be found in William R. Taylor’s Cavalier and Yankee (357n65).
says and for how Hale justifies the plan of action she has him recommend. The eight "journal entries" Hale adds are entitled, "Of Faith," "Of Reform," "Of Slavery and its Reformers," "What the Bible says of Slavery" (the longest section), "Is American Slaveholding sinful?," "How the Slave is to be made Free," "Of the Bible and the American Constitution," and "Of instruction for the slave." The gist of these entries is that, although the Bible proves that slavery is not sinful and the Constitution permits and regulates slavery, both the spirit of the Gospel and American principles of brotherhood and liberty indicate that slavery must come to an end. In Hale’s interpretation of God’s plan, slavery came to the United States so that Africans could be educated and Christianized before being returned to their homeland to liberate it. She makes her anti-abolition, procolonization case as explicitly in Northwood as she does in Liberia.

Besides serving as ancestral justification for progressive ideas, Squire Romilly’s journal also contains a typical example of Hale’s propensity for mixing domestic tropes and political ideas, even in her discussion of slavery:

*Slavery in America seems monstrous because the true freedom is here. Letting in the light shows the dust—when the sunbeams are excluded, as in Russia, for instance, where all are slaves, no one heeds the filth. But the first and indispensable*
step in purifying an apartment or a people is to let in the light. (400)

Cleaning a room and cleaning up a political problem are analogous activities for Hale. As in the example of the minister's sermon on the relations between England and America, Hale’s trope suggests a relationship that is real as well as figurative. Women might be best suited for dusting, but they are also best suited for preparing slaves for their Christian mission in Africa:

In this soul education pious women are the most efficient instructors, because they, more often than men, enforce their lessons by examples of goodness and disinterestedness. They have, too, that sympathy with the young, and patience with the ignorant, which the other sex often lack. And then they love the Saviour more trustingly, and the angels are with them to help their humble efforts, when men are proudly relying on their own strength. (402)

When Hale claims here that women are superior to men for dispensing "soul education," she is articulating a position she repeated in her magazines and in her Woman's Record, an encyclopedic history of women from Eve on down to Sarah J. Hale and her contemporaries.
A common thread runs through the 1,650 biographical entries in Woman's Record. As she states in her general preface to the second edition (1855),

I shall make it apparent, that WOMAN is God’s appointed agent of morality, the teacher and inspirer of those feelings and sentiments which are termed the virtues of humanity; and that the progress of these virtues and the permanent improvement of our race, depend on the manner in which her mission is treated by man.21

The flawed male hero of Northwood is well aware of his own limitations in being able to teach his slaves the spiritual lessons they need to learn. He writes to his new wife to ask her help in this solemn duty thrust upon him when he inherits 149 "servants," citing his father again as the authority for the request he is about to make. In the conversation Sidney recounts, Squire Romilly is contrasting men’s and women’s roles:

[I]n . . . heart-worship women are more pure—more sincere than men. We arrange forms— they mold

20 Notable American Women states that Hale’s encyclopedia of famous women contains 2,500 entries. The error stems from a misreading of Hale’s comment that her Record includes 2,500 names. Nina Baym writes, "[I]t does, more or less; but not all these names are accompanied by biographical entries" ("Onward Christian Women," 251n4).

21 Sarah Josepha Hale, Woman’s Record, of Sketches of All Distinguished Women from the Beginning Until A.D. 1850 (New York: np, 1853) xxxv.
affections; we give rules—they set examples; we command in the household—and they govern; for the influence of love is mightier than the power of law. . . . The woman who takes the Bible for her guide, will be a true light in the house of her husband—leading him and her family on gently but surely to happiness and heaven. (392)

Sidney has married the kind of good Christian woman his father had described. While Sidney will feed and clothe the slaves and learn to run the plantation without slave labor, she will be the slaves' teacher. Her mission epitomizes Hale's vision of an extension of women's domestic duties into the public realm to bring about social change.

This division of labor along the gender line corresponds to that shared by Sarah Hale and Louis Godey as they worked together on Godey's *Lady's Book*. As Nina Baym points out,

[A] close look at the editorial pages of *Godey's Lady's Book* and correspondence surrounding the journal reveals conclusively that editorial policy and content were Hale's domain, while Godey attended to sales, format, and publicity. . . . From the vantage point of the reading I give here, the division of responsibilities would correspond with Hale's idea of sexual difference: she was the
mind and spirit, Godey the physical implementer, of the journal.\textsuperscript{22}

Not surprisingly, Hale maintained her ideas about the responsibilities entailed by sexual difference when it came time to portray imaginatively the steps required to bring an end to slavery. Men have their role--that of physical implementer--in helping to prepare slaves to be free and the South to survive without slave labor. And women have their role--that of moral teachers.

It would have strained credulity for Hale to have placed all her practical advice on ending slavery in the journal of a long-deceased northerner. She resorted to an epistolary device in the new ending to complement her Squire's rationale and suggestions. Of the characters from the 1827 version qualified to give advice on such matters, the best was Charles Stuart--New England born and educated, moral, and industrious. He had been a long-time counsellor to Sidney Romilly and had become a slaveholder in spite of himself (he had married a woman who had inherited slaves). In the 1852 Northwood, Charles Stuart writes to Sidney to describe the system of rewards and punishments he has devised to teach slaves to be good capitalists and good citizens. He asks each slave to determine his or her own monetary value. After adjusting that amount--downwards in

most cases--Stuart assigns tasks and pays the slaves for their overtime and for good behavior. He lets the slaves hold their earnings, and then he takes the money back and puts it into an account. Slaves who have earned enough can then purchase freedom for themselves or others. Stuart is teaching slaves to think of their labor in terms of its monetary value, a concept they must have if they are to succeed economically in freedom. Through him, Sarah Hale is teaching slaveowning men their responsibilities as a northern woman saw them.

Sidney Romilly also fulfills the duties of men’s sphere by attending to the mundane, practical aspects of preparing for conversion from slave labor. Romilly uses some of his time on a visit back to New England to learn all he can about how to operate his plantation after freeing his slaves. He travels around studying Yankee ingenuity, buying labor-saving equipment for agricultural and household work, and hiring "a living labor-saving instrument, an ingenious Yankee machinist and practical farmer" who would live on the plantation, make it more efficient, and see how to convert to white labor (404). Hale’s faith in America as the training ground for Africans is equalled only by her faith in New England as the training ground for efficiency, industry, and an enlightened American citizenry.

In the 1852 Northwood, Hale plays down the novel’s focus on New England by changing the subtitle from A New
England Tale to Life North and South: Showing the True Character of Both. Her more inclusive title is evidence that she wished to respond to the sectional conflict inflamed by such writers as Harriet Beecher Stowe. Another indication that Northwood was republished to respond to Uncle Tom's Cabin and to participate in the discussion of slavery is the frontispiece added to the 1852 edition. The caption reads, "SYDNEY AND HIS PLANTATION FRIENDS," and the engraving shows Sidney (whose name has been misspelled in the caption) sitting on the lap of a slave who is teaching him to fish. The slave, barefooted, is wearing torn trousers and a large hat. Reclining beside them is another slave, intent on watching the fishing line, who holds his hat in his hand to reveal white hair. Sidney is ridiculously overdressed to be outdoors fishing. He is wearing striped trousers, a vest, a dressy jacket with wide lapels, and a hat that clearly costs much more than those of his "plantation friends."

The illustration calls attention to contradictory aspects of the relationship between slaves and their future master. On the one hand, they are close: Sidney is literally sitting in the lap of his eventual property. On the other hand, they live in the entirely different socio-economic worlds depicted by their clothing, though they share the same physical space when they are out in nature fishing. Sidney is conspicuously out of place in nature.
His pointed shoes are between him and the earth, the slave keeps his clothes from being soiled by the ground, and he shows a boyish awkwardness in his two-handed clutching of the fishing pole. Both slaves are literally more in touch with nature. The reclining slave, only the top half of whom appears in the illustration, seems to be growing out of the earth like the plants that form the other borders of the drawing. The artist is commenting on the correlation between race (or at least condition of servitude) and degree of civilization, where "civilization" is taken to mean elevation over nature.

Still more remarkable than what the illustration reveals is the dishonesty of the publisher in making it the frontispiece of *Northwood*. Admittedly, slavery is an important issue in the revised *Northwood*, but very little of the novel takes place in the South, and even less of it takes place on a plantation. Usually the opening illustration of a novel depicts an important scene. Here, the artist is illustrating one sentence of the novel:

[H]e permitted his nephew to frolic and ramble about his estate in company with two or three favorite servants, who soon initiated him in the arts of hunting and fishing, and all those games and pastimes in which unlettered leisure is sure to find amusement." (177)
Commercial reasons, not thematic reasons, might have led to the decision to place this illustration at the front of the book. Doing so signals Northwood as a contribution to the fictionalized discussion of slavery begun by Uncle Tom's Cabin. Perhaps similar motives led Hale to change the name of a slave from Cato to Tom. It identifies Northwood as contributing to the phenomenon Sarah Josepha Hale referred to when she wrote in the Lady's Book, "the book market will soon be overstocked with fictions and romances on the subject of slavery."

Hale briefly addresses the Uncle Tom phenomenon in the Summary section of the Second Supplement to her Woman's Record (1855):

But the book of the three years is, as all the world knows, "Uncle Tom's Log Cabin" (sic). Mrs. Stowe . . . achieved a reputation at once by this work of fiction, which was unparalleled in its success. We have no room here for an analysis of the story of the history of its triumphs; these matters will be more suitably discussed ten years hence. But we may say that another work by Mrs.

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23 Although the slave mentioned in volume I, p. 26 of the 1827 edition is called Cato, he is Tom on page 24 of the 1852 edition. In both places he frightens the silly New England girl who marries a southern planter, even though he is "one of the best creatures living." In later chapters of the 1852 edition there is a slave named Cato.

24 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (Feb. 1853) 179.
Stowe, just published, will do more to lower the standard of her genius and destroy the prestige which her assumed philanthropy had given to "Uncle Tom's Cabin," than all that carping critics or party writers, who have announced her first work as "anti-ministerial and anti-christian" could have done.25

Hale was unwilling to participate in a non-fiction debate over Uncle Tom's Cabin at that point in time. For all her strong ideas on the issue that provoked so much fiction and the particular work of fiction that provoked the world, Hale was remarkably circumspect in dealing with Harriet Beecher Stowe. She would not appear to be one of those carping critics or party writers who attacked Stowe, yet even in denouncing them it is their views—that Stowe was anti-ministerial and anti-christian—that Hale quotes, not Stowe's or Stowe's supporters'. She neglected even to review the highly controversial novel the Lady's Book, although she did review many proslavery novels. Nevertheless, she wanted to discredit Stowe, as her reference to Stowe's inferior, unnamed new work (A Key to "Uncle Tom's Cabin") indicates. This is the same Stowe who, until her assault on slavery, Hale had extolled in a biographical entry in the first edition of Woman's Record by praising for her fiction's

"sprightly vivacity and artistic finish combined with moral sentiments of the loftiest stamp." Hale went on to write words she must well have lamented after the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "[T]he only regret is, that she does not write more."26

By the third edition of *Woman's Record* (1876), published when Hale was eighty-eight years old, Stowe merits a more generous mention. Here Hale says that Stowe has published stories and three novels since *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the best of which Hale judged to be *Pearl of Orr's Island*. "All are marked by Mrs. Stowe's well-known vigor and originality,"27 Hale wrote, benevolent once again now that the Union had prevailed in the Civil War. Still, the defining work of Stowe's career, the publishing event of the nation's as well as of Stowe's life, remains unanalyzed, well after the passage of time that Hale claimed would be required before the book could be discussed suitably.

Stowe is not mentioned by name in *Northwood*, but the introduction makes it clear that a purpose of the novel was to counteract the pernicious effects of abolitionists. She says it was written "when what is now known as 'Abolitionism' first began seriously to disturb the harmony between the South and the North." She continues:

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26 Hale, *Record* 837.

27 Hale, *Record* 902.
... The great error of those who would sever the Union rather than see a slave within its borders, is, that they forget the master is their brother, as well as the servant; and that the spirit which seeks to do good to all and evil to none is the only true Christian philanthropy. Hoping that Northwood might, in some degree, aid in diffusing this true spirit, I have consented to its republication at this time. The few additions made to the original work are only to show more plainly how the principles advocated may be effectively carried out. Fiction derives its chief worth from the truths it teaches. I have aimed to set forth some important truths— their worth I leave to be estimated by the Reader. (iv)

These introductory words show that because Hale believed fiction should contribute to the didactic transmission of truths, she attempted to disseminate Christian philanthropy by republishing Northwood. Her mention of "true Christian philanthropy" calls attention to what she considered that other kind of philanthropy rampant in 1852, abolitionism. It also highlights the long tradition in American political debates of taking the high moral ground to argue an opinion; abolitionists, colonizationists, and proslavery advocates would all claim that the Bible was on their side. Hale participated in perpetuating this identification of the
spiritual and the political. Her didactic, political motive for republishing deserves to be considered as seriously as her earlier desire to earn enough to support and educate her children, especially because by 1852 her children were grown. Moreover, she had long had a steady income for her own support. By republishing Northwood, Hale actively prescribed a course of public action so that her ideas of Christian philanthropy could be "effectively carried out." In short, she had a political agenda.

Part of the agenda she proposes in her new concluding chapter is that slaveholders, or, preferably, their wives, educate slaves, an undertaking that was illegal by 1852 in southern states. Yet Hale does not indiscriminately suggest flouting man-made law. She shows her respect for laws that conform to the teachings of history and the Bible by citing the Constitution of the United States in her introductory remarks. The laws of the Union must be obeyed, she submits, if not the laws of individual southern states.

Another part of the agenda she proposes is that the clergy do their part to "promote brotherly love and Christian progress":

They can teach the way of peaceful emancipation, and help to provide the means. One mode might be this. There are in the United States about forty thousand churches: on the Annual Thanksgiving Day, let a collection, for the purpose of educat-
ing and colonizing free people of color and emancipated slaves, be taken up in every church in our land. If the sum averages but five dollars per congregation, the aggregate would be two hundred thousand dollars! (408)

Her confidence in speaking about raising money and using it for political purposes is reminiscent of her previous successes in large philanthropic projects like organizing and presiding over the Seaman's Aid Society and raising money for the Bunker Hill Monument and Mount Vernon. Her mention of the annual Thanksgiving keeps before the American public her insistence on the importance of that holiday as a celebration of both family and patriotism.28

Sarah Josepha Hale had another means besides writing political domestic novels like Northwood for addressing the political issues of her day. She used her position as literary editor for Godey's Lady's Book to comment obliquely on the slavery question and the furor aroused by Uncle Tom's Cabin. The views that can be inferred from what she published in the magazine's book reviews are congruent with those in Northwood. Between June 1852 and May 1854, she published at least fifteen notices of fiction and non-fiction works that presented either anti-abolition or

28 Earlier in Northwood Hale had described the perfect Thanksgiving. Also, annually in the Lady's Book (until President Lincoln made Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863) Hale urged the federal government to set aside one day for a national Thanksgiving celebration.
proslavery arguments; she published none showing the opposing argument.

Her deliberate attempt to avoid publicizing Uncle Tom's Cabin led her to some interesting circumlocutions in reviews of books obviously written to reply to Harriet Beecher Stowe. For example, her favorable review of Caroline Lee Hentz's Marcus Warland in June 1852 includes a tribute to Hentz for her charity and willingness to withhold judgment on people constrained by circumstances. The contrast she cites is a veiled reference to Stowe:

It is greatly to be regretted that writers generally do not partake more liberally of her kind sentiments in this regard, even if they do not possess her genius, and thus, where they cannot praise the condition of things, at least do justice to the circumstances of individuals.29

Readers today might not know that Marcus Warland was promoted as a book that answered Uncle Tom's Cabin, so they would not know that "the condition of things" that "writers generally" cannot praise is slavery. Hentz's Planter's Northern Bride also gets a brief but favorable notice in the May 1854 "Literary Notices."30

Of course, given that Hale and Godey agreed to keep the Lady's Book above politics and sectional strife, either

29 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (June 1852) 407.
30 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (May 1854) 466.
for idealistic reasons or to keep their large southern readership, Hale had to be more circumspect in the magazine than she was in her fiction when it came to discussing slavery. One of the most ingenious reviews of a proslavery book shows how Hale manages to avoid using the word "slavery" altogether, except in giving the title, *Studies on Slavery, in Easy Lessons*, and how she avoids overtly addressing the divisive issue. The November 1852 review is long for an entry in the "Literary Notices" section of the Lady's Book, but its extra length can be accounted for by its diplomacy, its evasions. It reads, in part:

> It is fully known to the readers of the "Lady's Book" how carefully we have always avoided all participation in the discussions which have taken place on the exciting subject to which this work particularly refers. Nevertheless, we feel free to present our views of a work, the object of which is, by arguments drawn from Scripture, and from other standard sources of authority, to defend an institution which has been admitted and tolerated within the constitutional law of the land. It must be recollected, however, that we speak only of the ingenious merits of the defence set up by the author, and not of the merits of the institution he has undertaken to defend; and therefore, without the least intention to flatter
the author of the "Studies," and without committing ourselves either in favor or against his conclusions in regard to the question under consideration, we have no hesitation in saying that he has produced a learned and able work, and one which, if generally read, would at least throw oil upon the turbulent waves of sectional and sectarian controversy, and induce calm and sober reflection in the minds of all who are heartily interested in the cause of humanity, and in the permanent advancement and security of freedom.31

Her insistence that this review pronounces judgment on a book, not the institution it defends, is a clever way to call attention to one side of the sectional argument without owning responsibility for those opinions. Her circumlocutions betray her supposedly apolitical stance. Further, the fact that she would review the proslavery Studies in Slavery but not Uncle Tom's Cabin is even more telling. This review barely disguises her disapproval of an unnamed novel (clearly Stowe's) that minimized references to Scripture or "other standard sources of authority" and that induced anything but "calm and sober reflection" in its readers.

Hale favored another proslavery novel, J. Thornton Randolph's The Cabin and the Parlor, or Slaves and Masters, with multiple notices in the Lady's Book. In December 1852,

31 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (November 1852) 485.
Hale responded to the pre-publication puffs this novel had received by praising its author for producing a "thrilling narrative, which will at once deeply interest the feelings, and forcibly appeal to the good sense and judgment of his readers." She expressed mild annoyance at having received the book "too late to give the work more than a cursory examination, even had the leaves been cut or separated, as should always be the case when a patient investigation and a 'good notice' are expected." By January 1853 she was prepared to announce that closer examination made her more willing to endorse the writer and the book. She says the book is distinguished by demonstrating "benevolence and patriotism," showing that for Hale, a good story is even better if it has a moral and political purpose. Its flaws she forgives because she understands that Randolph wrote in haste. She did not need to specify for contemporary readers what novel compelled such a hasty reply, nor would she transgress the magazine's editorial policies by overtly taking a political stand against *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But her understanding of Randolph's haste may help explain her own haste the previous month, when she had rushed out a favorable notice based on an admittedly cursory examination of the book. Hale mentions the third edition of *The Cabin and the Parlor* in March 1853, calling it "among the best and

32 "Literary Notices," *Lady's Book* (December 1852) 579.
33 "Literary Notices," *Lady's Book* (January 1853) 83.
most feeling of the several productions that have appeared in relation to the delicate questions of which it treats.\textsuperscript{34} The lady editor was still reluctant to write the word "slavery."

Hale's reticence about using the magazine to discuss political issues overtly shows up again in her notice of her own Northwood in December 1852. In addition to promoting her book and proclaiming her moral virtues, she states her editorial policy about participating in discussions of politically divisive issues:

This work has not been got up for the occasion, and to minister to the prevailing excitement on a delicate question of State and National policy. It was first published in Boston, twenty-five years ago, and was the first introduction of the authoress to the American public, and at once established her reputation as a writer of fiction, chastened and elevated by the purest moral and religious sentiments. We have never yet, and we have no idea now of mingling in any of the political controversies that agitate the public mind; but it is only an act of justice rendered to the authoress to say, that there is no thought or sentiment expressed in the pages of "Northwood" that will not bear the strictest test of literary

\textsuperscript{34} "Literary Notices," \textit{Lady's Book} (March 1853) 277.
and moral criticism, as well as of the purest love of country. It is conservative throughout, calm and considerate in its tone and reflections, and altogether such a work as might be expected to emanate from the pen of a Christian woman.35

This review is somewhat duplicitous, for of course Northwood was republished to respond to Uncle Tom’s Cabin, "got up for the occasion" by the addition of comments on how to end slavery in America. Even Hale’s own introduction to the 1852 edition calls attention to the fact that there were additions made to clarify the author’s position on slavery. If Hale understood Thornton Randolph’s rush to publish The Cabin and the Parlor, it was probably because she herself was in a rush to respond to the abolitionists’ agitation with her revised Northwood.

But what of her claim that Northwood avoids "the political controversies that agitate the public mind"? Hale is not saying that her novel is apolitical. Rather, she is claiming that her participation in the discussion over slavery is not meant to stir up conflict. She believes Northwood shows her "love of country," a patriotic sentiment, not a sectional stance. She boasts that her novel is "calm and considerate in tone and reflections," and she invites literary and moral criticism. For Hale, it is as if "political" means controversial. By writing like "a Chris-

35 "Literary Notices," Lady’s Book (December 1852) 579.
tian woman," Hale means to take the high moral ground, above controversy, even while she addresses controversial, political issues like slavery.

In February 1853, two months after her review of Northwood, Hale endorsed Frank Freeman's Barber Shop for its advocacy of colonization, her own solution to the slavery problem. She writes that the author, the Rev. Baynard R. Hall, "laments" but does not "condemn" slavery, and he "pays a just tribute to the humane and generous character of the people on which it has been entailed." Hale claims that, in focusing his work on settling Africa with former slaves, Hall has managed to find his own corner of the market on books on slavery:

There is some reason to apprehend that the book market will soon be overstocked with fictions and romances on the subject of slavery. The work before us, however, gives no evidence that the materials at the disposal of ingenious writers are by any means "used up."

Perhaps Hale was already at work on her own book advocating colonization, Liberia, which she published in 1853 and reviewed the following year.

The April 1853 Lady's Book provides yet another example of the "Literary Notices" serving as a forum for Hale to comment obliquely on slavery. Hale favorably reviewed The

36 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (February 1853) 180, 179.
Lofty and the Lowly: or, Good in All, and None All Good, by M. J. McIntosh. In spite of the fact that she acknowledges the book was written to "remove some of the prejudices, not of foreign aristocrats, but such as, unhappily, are fostered much nearer home," Hale uses this review to chastise the British. The British are guilty, she claims, of exaggerating the negative side of slavery in America in order to appease their own laboring classes:

All the interest they can have in the extravagantly wrought pictures of American life may be traced to the horrid condition of their own "lower classes," whom they first deprive of labor, and then pull down their miserable cabins, and end the summary proceedings by turning the wretched families out upon the highways to perish by starvation. They wish, if possible, to show to the Anglo-Saxon victims of Anglo-Saxon oppression that negro life in America is much more horrible than the life of white slaves in the English mines and coal-pits. But there has been no work published yet in America, however imaginative, and however bold in its caricatures of American institutions, that can compare in the least with the inhuman and disgusting realities of the British white-slave system. . . .

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37 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (April 1853) 372.
Little mystery can surround the identity of the imaginative, bold, American work that remains nameless in Hale's remarks, especially when she refers to British lower-class homes as "cabins."

The very next review is of a work that blasts English people and English institutions. Why was Hale so suddenly and so opportunistically critical of the English? A look at the previous month's Lady's Book indicates why. There she published "The Candid and Christian Reply of the Women of America to 'The Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of the Women of England.'" The Duchess of Sutherland and approximately half a million women in England had responded to their reading of Uncle Tom's Cabin and the controversy over slavery in the United States by asking American women to behave like Christians and work to bring an end to slavery. Hale's reply politely acknowledges the English women's "zeal in the office of counsellors assumed towards your American sisters" but corrects their omissions; the English women had not expressed remorse over England's role in introducing and perpetuating slavery in the United States. Hale then contrasts the progress of the former American slaves now thriving in Liberia to the lack of progress among England's former slaves in the West Indies. Liberia has succeeded, she argues, because its inhabitants
were trained for freedom and Christianity by American slaveholders.38

Then Hale attacks England for doing a poor job of educating its own lower classes. Many of these poor, uneducated British subjects end up emigrating to America, she says, leaving the younger nation with the double burden of educating not only the African slaves imposed on it by the English but also the "millions of fugitives from British rule."39 On the lack of universal education in England, Hale urged the English women to "aid your countrymen in wiping such a foul blot from the British escutcheon,"40 resorting to the theme of her campaign to have women educate the future citizenry. This daughter of a Revolutionary War soldier would not openly participate in sectional debates that threatened to undermine the Union, but she would respond fervently to English women who dared to tell American women their patriotic and Christian duty. Perhaps she even hoped that locating a common enemy outside the borders of the United States might help unite the increasingly hostile sections of her own country.


40 Hale, "Reply," 275.
It must have delighted Hale to return to the subject of British inadequacies in December of 1853 when she reviewed Warren Isham's *The Mud Cabin; or, the Character and Tendency of British Institutions, as Illustrated in their Effects upon Human Character and Destiny*. Her review reads in part:

This is a sad picture of the condition of the working classes of England, and we are sorry to say that it appears to be too well authenticated. Most willingly would we have believed the whole book was a vile slander upon the institutions of a country that claims to be superior to the rest of the world in civilization and enlightenment; but we were reluctantly compelled to relinquish all doubts of the author's integrity, when we came to consider the weighty evidence produced from parliamentary documents, and from British writers on the condition of the working classes of their country. This volume is written in a spirited and indignant style, and warmly appeals to American sympathies in behalf of an ignorant, oppressed, and starving people. It is astonishing, indeed, in view of all the facts relating to British institutions, and their effects upon the mass of the population, how the press of that country can
venture to allude to the cruelty or the tyranny of any other government in existence.41

A "spirited and indignant style" is not out of place, Hale suggests, as long as the institutions it attacks are foreign, not American.

Hale's desire to placate wounded southern sensibilities led her to call attention to the southern origins of certain writers, even if their work was not specifically designed to advance an anti-abolition position. In September of 1853 she reviewed William Gilmore Simms's The Sword and the Distaff; or, Fair, Fat, and Forty, calling the author "a true and liberal gentleman of the South."42 The same issue praises Simms's The Wigwam and the Cabin; or, Tales of the South, saying readers are justified in placing "the utmost confidence in the correctness and impartiality of all his characteristic delineations of his countrymen." These countrymen include "the planter, the squatter, the Indian, and the negro, the bold and hardy pioneer, and the vigorous yeoman."43 She also gives a brief notice of Uncle Robin in his Cabin in Virginia, and Tom without one in Boston," saying it was designed to "defend the South against the exaggerated accounts of cruelty promulgated in the North. The book is as free from the errors of prejudice as any that

42 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (Sept. 1853) 277.
43 "Literary Notices," Lady's Book (Sept. 1853) 275.
have preceded it, pro or con." Hale further urges Americans to read—"in that spirit of political justice, and with all the candor and charitable forbearance which should distinguish Americans in all their sectional controversies"—The Pro-Slavery Argument, a collection of essays by such southern theorists as William Harper, James Henry Hammond, William Gilmore Simms, and Thomas R. Dew.

Such an abundance of evidence must dispel the persistent charge that Sarah Josepha Hale was apolitical. She spoke with the voice of gradualism and conciliation when it came to addressing her own countrymen and countrywomen on divisive issues, anchoring her arguments in the Constitution and the Bible. But when she defended her country from charges leveled at it by Englishwomen, her politeness and tact barely disguised her outrage. Here was a woman ready to wage a verbal Revolutionary War, if not a verbal Civil War.

Two critics who understand the political motives behind much of Hale’s writing are Barbara Bardes and Suzanne Gossett. They identify the beliefs that underlie the 1827 Northwood in their study of women’s political power in nineteenth-century fiction. "Like other commentators of the time," they write, "Hale believes that republics are threatened by heterogeneity, luxury, loss of virtue, and failure

44 "Literary Notices," Lady’s Book (Sept. 1853) 277.
of equality."\(^{45}\) Even in Hale’s early version, the last three of those threats were most ominous in the slaveholding South, so it is consistent for her to be on the side of ending slavery. As for the threat of heterogeneity, that would only be compounded by freeing the slaves and allowing them to remain in the United States. Hale’s comments in the *Lady’s Book* on the difficulties the young republic faced in educating immigrants only begin to suggest her concerns about a large, free, minority population.\(^{46}\) Her 1852 version of *Northwood* contains a narrative interpolation that defines "the good work of freedom":

> It is not, as some would counsel, the tearing up of the whole system of slavery, as it were, by the roots, that will make the bondman free. The life-blood of the Union might flow in such a struggle, but the black man would still be, in our land, a servant.

> Never will the negro stand among men as a man, till he has earned for himself that title in his


\(^{46}\) For example, see the *Lady’s Book* for October 1854, page 342, and for June 1846, page 288. For a fascinating discussion of the way Louis Godey and Sarah Hale wrote about "servant gals," see Nicole Tonkovich Hoffman, "Scribbling, Writing, Author(iz)ing: Nineteenth Century Women Writers," Diss. U of Utah, 1990.
own country—magnificent Africa—which God has
given him as a rich inheritance. (393)

Here she boldly justifies colonization. Her analysis is
even more candid when she speaks through the fictional
device of Charles Stuart's letters:

Two races, who do not intermarry, can never live
together as equals. Frame laws as you will, the
white race, being naturally superior to the col­
ored, in all that constitutes moral power, the
Anglo-American will be master over the Negro, if
the latter is near him. So I am intending to help
colonize Liberia. (405)

Just as Hale's political statements in fiction are more
direct than those in her magazine, so are the political
statements spoken by a fictional character more candid than
those spoken in narrative interpolations.

The end of slavery in the South would do much to
improve southern whites also, she argues, again through
Charles Stuart's letters. One perceptible indicator of the
dangers of whites' association with slaves and reliance on
slave labor is language and literacy in the South:

[Slavery] lowers the tone of morals; checks learn­
ing; increases the ignorance and helplessness of
women and the idleness and dissipation of men; in
short, it injures the white race more than it
benefits the colored. . . . Let me illustrate by
the single example of language. The negro is imitative and capable of speaking the English language correctly; as a slave, he will never be taught to do so--but allowed to go on in his own idiomatic jargon. This he communicates to the children of his master, and thus our noble tongue is vulgarized and rendered disgusting to the scholar and people of refined taste. I have met southern ladies, elegant looking women, whose manner of speech and intonation were so "niggerish," that it required a knowledge of this peculiar dialect fully to understand them. (406)

Perhaps the reason Hale focuses on what she perceives to be the erosion of language is that she dare not discuss the ways slavery lowers whites' morals. Her passionate denunciation of slaves' influence on white women's language hints at her deep distrust of two races living in such close proximity to each other. Conformity to a New England dialect carries all the significance of racial purity and industriousness. New Englanders are willing to expend the energy and effort required to learn to use correct English; southerners made lazy by slavery are not.

Women's speech is not the only sign of corruption. Southern men return home from college "to smoke cigars in a veranda, or lie in the shade reading cheap novels!" (407). Furthermore, slavery is incompatible with free public
education, she says through Stuart, without going into why that is so. The result is "forty-one thousand white adults who cannot read!" in Georgia, contrasted with "only forty-one persons in the whole State [of New Hampshire] who cannot read and write—and these are foreigners" (407). Hale makes no secret of her sectional bias.

There is no denying that the new ending of Northwood reads like exactly what it is: a political message tacked on to an earlier work of fiction. Near the ending of the 1852 version, Hale speaks of the different political roles men and women must play. After saying, "And now, kind reader, we part in friendship, I hope," Hale claims that hers "is no partizan book" (407). She hopes readers North and South will be edified by reading her novel. And as for the course of action men and women should take:

"Constitutions" and "compromises" are the appropriate work of men; women are conservators of moral power, which, eventually, as it is directed, preserves or destroys the work of the warrior, the statesman, and the patriot.

Let us trust that the pen and not the sword will decide the controversy now going on in our land; and that any part women may take in the former mode will be promotive of peace, and not suggestive of discord. (407)
Women with pens can decide the fate of the nation, but if those pens create works like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* rather than works like *Northwood*, women will have forfeited their claim to spiritual superiority. Moral influence will have sunk to partisan politics.

Hale's most figurative portrayal in *Northwood* of women's peacekeeping role is in the 1852 edition's new Chapter XIV. The Englishman and the Squire debate whether the black man is elevated or degraded by slavery and whether the South benefits or suffers economically as a result of slavery. A confused Harvey Romilly, young brother of the hero, listens to their exchange. He is torn between his veneration for the Declaration's guarantees of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and his respect for his older brother, now a slaveholder. The Englishman puts Harvey on the spot, asking if he will ever own slaves. Hale writes:

Harvey was quite abashed, for he had heard Deacon Jones speak contemptuously of Sidney— as a "southern slaveholder"— and the little boy, looking on his eldest brother, would not believe it was so very wicked— yet it seemed that Mr. Frankford thought it was bad too. He was puzzled. Before he had settled his doubts, his mother changed the subject. (168)
The good mother prevented a brother-against-brother conflict by changing the subject and leading all the participants off to Sunday night worship. That scene epitomizes Sarah Josepha Hale’s strategy in the *Lady’s Book*. The woman who chose to be known as the Lady Editor tried to change the subject of the national debate over slavery and lead sectional factions to a peaceful resolution. Northwood shows, however, that in her fiction she was quite willing to speak candidly on even the most inflammatory issue of her day, slavery. Constraints imposed by generic conventions made it difficult for Mary Eastman to combine domestic fiction with a proslavery message, but a novel with only a few domestic elements proved congenial to Hale’s antiabolitionist message.
CHAPTER III

The Planter's Northern Bride: Domestic Fiction Accommodates Proslavery Ideology

In the Introduction to her 1854 novel, The Planter's Northern Bride, Caroline Lee Hentz (1800 - 1856) identifies herself as one who, although born in the North, has lived long enough in the South to object to the "dark and horrible pictures drawn of slavery and exhibited to a gazing world." She claims that she hopes her novel will redeem "national honour" that is "tarnished, when a portion of our country is held up to public disgrace and foreign insult." 1 It was Harriet Beecher Stowe's national and international success in promulgating her anti-slavery message through fiction that prompted Hentz to defend the South and slavery. Her combination of politics and fiction is similar to Mary Eastman's in Aunt Phillis's Cabin and Sarah J. Hale's in the 1852 version of Northwood. Yet Hentz is more successful in her attempt to raze Tom's cabin than were Eastman or Hale, whose works lack emotional appeal, largely because Hentz goes on the offensive, attacking the North and northerners'

1 Carolyn Lee Hentz, The Planter's Northern Bride ed. Rhoda Coleman Ellison (1854; Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1970) 4. All further references to this novel will be noted parenthetically in this chapter.
treatment of free laborers with the same weapon Stowe had used for opposite ends, sentiment. This chapter shows, however, that for all her skill in adapting conventions of the domestic genre to serve her political purposes, Hentz unwittingly joined those political-domestics who diluted the persuasive power of domestic fiction.

Hentz's novel conforms to the suggestions of some reviewers who criticized "anti-Tom" novels for their ineffectual attempts to counteract the pernicious effects of Uncle Tom's Cabin.2 Hentz does not adopt the strategy of merely showing that some slaveholders were kind and some slaves were happy, a point Harriet Beecher Stowe herself had conceded. Rather, Hentz dramatizes the misery of free labor in the North and alludes to the misery of the laboring classes throughout the world. Like Stowe, she arouses sympathy for the underdogs, but Hentz’s underdogs are free laborers and those whose talents lie dormant because they live in the North without benefit of slaves. Yet her novel

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2 See, for instance, George Frederick Holmes's review of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Holmes says that Aunt Phillis's Cabin and "similar apologies" fail because they merely show that slavery is sometimes inoffensive. "This point . . . was already conceded in Uncle Tom's Cabin. . . ." He expresses doubts that any fiction could respond adequately to Stowe's dangerous and erroneous thesis—that any social system or social institution susceptible to abuses caused by individual's cruelty should be abolished. He suggests that if replies must be made in fiction, novelists should focus on the "graver miseries, worse afflictions, and, more horrible crimes familiar to the denizens of our Northern Cities, and incident to the condition of those societies where the much lauded white labor prevails." George Frederick Holmes, rev. of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Southern Literary Messenger 18 (Dec. 1852) 727.
did not receive critical acclaim, even from reviewers who shared her political perspective. As a critical notice in the 1854 Southern Quarterly Review puts it, The Planter's Northern Bride is a pleasantly written story, picturesque, and with much dramatic force, designed as a foil to the work of Mrs. Stowe. It has not the passionate power of Uncle Tom; in other words, Mrs. Hentz has not the power of Mrs. Stowe; but she is more truthful, more pure, and imbued with a more becoming Christian spirit. . . . She has veneration, one of the most precious of moral virtues, in which the feminine Uncle Tommys are marvellously deficient. 

Truthfulness, purity, Christian spirit, and veneration (presumably showing respect for and deference to southern institutions) may have characterized Hentz and her novel, at least for those like the reviewer who were blind to its racist pronouncements. Such appreciative readers included a group of citizens in Columbus, Georgia who presented Hentz with $200 and a piece of jewelry to thank her for defending their region. Yet even the reviewer is forced to concede

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that The Planter's Northern Bride lacks the "passionate power" of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel. A close look at the plot, characters, settings, language, and polemical passages in The Planter's Northern Bride will show its characteristics as a political-domestic novel and as a response to Uncle Tom's Cabin.

The plot of The Planter's Northern Bride is simple. Russell Moreland, a Georgia plantation owner who harbors a secret, Byronic sorrow, travels to New England with his servant Albert. There, he meets and falls in love with Eulalia Hastings, daughter of the editor of an abolitionist newspaper called The Emancipator. The stage is set both for long discussions between Moreland and Mr. Hastings over the morality of slavery and for more dramatic representations of that issue in the contrast between Albert and free laborers of the North. Hastings, who wrote in one of his abolitionist essays that he would rather see his daughter dead and buried than living in the South as a slaveholder's wife, changes his mind when he becomes persuaded that Eulalia stands a better chance of escaping consumption in the South than in the North. Besides, he rationalizes, she could be a Christian missionary to those in bondage in an immoral land. "I send my daughter forth as a missionary, just as much as if she were bound for Burmah or Hindostan," he explains (152).
Hastings gives his daughter away, and the newlyweds travel first to Moreland's town home and later to his plantation. Subplots about kindly masters and mistresses, degraded free laborers, loyal and disloyal slaves, dying consumptives, dangerous Africans, and the perils of freedom for former slaves round out the novel. Hentz manages to marshall every proslavery argument at her disposal to answer, point by point, the incendiary novel by her acquaintance from the Semicolon literary club in Cincinnati, "Hattie" Beecher. She even creates a stirring scene of a deluded slave named Crissy, lured by abolitionists to desert her kind mistress, crossing the Ohio on a raft. Unlike Eliza's thrilling leaps to freedom, Crissy's escape is a passive undertaking, something done to her by abolitionists who row her across the river. Crissy's guilt at deserting her mistress and leaving her own husband and children causes her to imagine their voices reprimanding her and her master's eyes looking at her with sadness and reproach. Whereas Eliza reaches the earthly paradises of Ohio, Canada, and Liberia--places without slaves--Crissy eventually makes it back to the earthly paradise proslavery theorists imagined for slaves--her master's plantation.

5 In her Introduction to the 1970 reprint of The Planter's Northern Bride, Rhoda Coleman Ellison notes that Hentz and Stowe both went to Cincinnati in 1832 and joined the same literary society (viii). In her 1994 biography of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Joan D. Hedrick also mentions the Hentz-Stowe connection (83), but no one has commented on whether the two were friends.
The characters in *The Planter's Northern Bride* also have their counterparts from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The counterparts to Stowe's Simeon and Rachel Halliday are Hentz's Mr. and Mrs. Softly, the Quaker abolitionists who seduce Crissy into leaving her mistress, just when that loving mistress's husband is dying. Stowe's child in need of correction, the slave girl Topsy, becomes Effie, Master Moreland's daughter by a previous marriage. The counterpart to the villain Simon Legree is the imposter Brainard, who almost incites a slave insurrection. But perhaps the most important characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for Hentz to discredit are Stowe's versions of slaveowners because part of the effectiveness of Stowe's novel lies in its successful attack on the myth of the aristocratic master. Stowe created masters who sell faithful servants away from home and family to unscrupulous slave traders, masters who have good intentions of freeing servants but never quite get around to it, and masters whose brutality and drunkenness consign them to the lowest orders of men. Masters Shelby, St. Clare, and Legree were an affront to the southern ideal.

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6 Moreland has custody of his daughter. In reality, an 1845 Georgia law abolished the practice of automatically awarding custody to the father in the case of divorce. James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: an Interpretation of the Old South* (New York: Knopf, 1990). Hentz skirts the issue of whether or not she is reverting to the older, patriarchal notion of a father's automatic ownership of his children by creating a clearly unfit mother.
of noble, benevolent aristocrats who ruled in the best possible social system.

An ideal master, aided in his benevolent rule over his slaves by his ideal wife, was part of the cherished myth of the antebellum South. Even Louisa McCord seems to subscribe to this myth. In her review essay denouncing *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, McCord holds up for ridicule Stowe’s suggestion that Mr. Shelby would have condescended to talk to a slave trader in his parlor. McCord demonstrates her belief in aristocratic masters and her chagrin over Stowe’s presentation of them when she writes:

Into what society can Mrs. Stowe have been admitted, to see slave-traders so much at their ease in gentlemen’s houses? We have lived at the South, in the very heart of slave country, for thirty years out of forty of our lives, and have never seen a slave-trader set foot in a gentleman’s house.7

And it is not merely such matters of decorum that offend McCord. Mr. Shelby, as Stowe sketches him, does not speak properly enough for a southern gentleman (he says things like Tom "got religion"), and he is not resourceful enough to solve his financial problems except by resorting to selling one old man and one little boy.

7 Louisa S. McCord, rev. of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Southern Quarterly Review 23 (Jan. 1853) 90.
Mrs. Shelby, who delivers an unlady-like tirade against slavery when she finds Tom is to be sold, fails to measure up to McCord's ideal of a planter's wife as well. Stowe's portrait of Mrs. Shelby does not conform to what McCord suggests is the norm, an "inspiring . . . sample of femininity," so Mrs. Shelby substantiates McCord's claim that Stowe did not know what she was writing about when she tried to depict southern aristocrats.

Peter Kolchin's discussion of the importance of the aristocratic myth in unfree societies clarifies the reason southerners like McCord took exception to all of the slaveowners depicted in Uncle Tom's Cabin. Kolchin explains, "It was not the reality so much as the ideal of a particular life-style that constituted the essence of the masters' aristocratic pretensions." The aristocratic self-image or slaveholders was a myth "based on a small parcel of reality interwoven with large doses of pure fantasy." What made the myth powerful was not its relationship to actual conditions but its contribution to slaveholders' reality. That is because "people are characterized by their values and self-image as well as by the more tangible attributes of their existence; attitudes and beliefs are as "real" as material goods."

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8 McCord, Review, 95.

Stowe's novel debunks the myth of the aristocratic slaveholder, jeopardizing one facet of southern identification and regional pride. Stowe gives the example of Master Shelby going back on his promise to free Tom. It is bad enough that he sells Tom, even if from economic necessity, but it seems cowardly, not aristocratic, that Shelby absents himself from the plantation to avoid the discomfort of watching Tom's sad departure. Master St. Clare is likewise no true aristocrat; he has a drinking problem, he avoids going to church, and he is lazy. Fictional attacks on the slave system with its myth of aristocratic slaveholders were as "real" as political threats, as the public hue and cry over Stowe's novel indicates. Recognizing the importance of the unblemished master to southerners' belief in slavery, Hentz created a paragon in the character of Russell Moreland.

Hentz allows that this southern planter is not quite God; he cannot restore the dead to life, for instance, though he tries. In the North, he comforts the poor women who are too old or ill to work any more and who are therefore left alone to die. He carries their burdens and gives them money, heart sore at the cruel social system that could discard its used up laborers so callously.¹⁰ In the little

¹⁰ John C. Calhoun made the same point in his "Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions" given before the U. S. Senate on February 6, 1837. He called on antislavery advocates to look at "the sick, and the old and infirm slave, on one hand, in the midst of his family and friends, under the kind superin-
cabin where a consumptive daughter attempts to care for her aged mother, Moreland ruminates on the injustice of an economic system that rewarded labor only with wages, denying affection or a sense of responsibility to the worker whose health and strength are sapped. In contrast, when he visits one of his dying slaves, Dilsy, she turns from her own children and grandchildren to her beloved master and declares, "[M]y Hebenly Massa has bought me wid his own precious blood, and he say I must leave you. You ben good, kind massa. I'll tell the Lord when I git home to glory, all you've done for de soul and body of poor nigger" (350). Dilsy sees herself passing from her earthly master to her heavenly one, from the one who cared for her spiritual and physical needs on earth to the one whose purchase price was sacred. As in Aunt Phillis's Cabin, death is what frees individuals from their earthly duties, not abolitionists. In death, Dilsy is, in the words of the author, "enfranchised" (352).

To convince even the most skeptical readers that all masters were not Simon Legrees, Hentz's Moreland asks the slaves gathered around for Dilsy's funeral, "Have I been kind and just to all? Or do you look on me as a tyrant, tending care of his master and mistress, and compare it with the forlorn and wretched condition of the pauper in the poor house." John C. Calhoun, "Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions," U.S. Senate, February 6, 1837, in Eric L. McKitrick, ed. Slavery Defended: the Views of the Old South (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963) 14.
from whose dominion you long to be free?" Their "denial was. . . earnest and emphatic. Tears were streaming down the cheeks of those around the grave, and sobs were heard in the back-ground" (355). Hentz is on top of her game as a sentimental novelist in these illness, death, and burial scenes where feeling displaces logic in order to teach moral lessons. The exalted sentiment is love--love of the slaves for their master, love of the master for his slaves. Here, Hentz is fully exploiting the emotional appeal appropriate to her genre.

In addition to contributing to the plantation myth by creating a benevolent lord and master like Moreland, Hentz was careful to follow in the footsteps of authors like J. P. Kennedy in depicting a plantation setting that seems, in William Taylor's words, anything but "a setting for human and economic exploitation."\footnote{William R. Taylor, \textit{Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1979) 147.} A reader could easily forget the primary function of slaves--labor. Even at Dilsy's grave, slaves are leaning on their shovels, not shoveling. When Eulalia makes her first visit to Moreland's plantation, the master blows his bugle to call all the slaves together to meet their new mistress. Work stops. The baskets of cotton the slaves carry on their heads are evidence that slaves have worked, but the political purpose of this novel is best served by having the slaves stop working so that
they can welcome their master and demonstrate their love for him. When Eulalia tours the plantation, she sees the sites of production, including the saw-mill, grist-mill, blacksmith’s shop, carpenter’s shop, and weaving and spinning rooms. Yet the author’s use of verbs in the passive voice serves to obfuscate which subjects produced objects in those places: "all the furniture necessary for the negroes was made"; "cotton and woollen webs were manufactured for negro clothing"; and "everything was done with a neatness, order, and despatch that surprised the young mistress" (341).

Similarly, in Moreland’s town residence, black and white members of the household are most often depicted relaxing on the piazza or conversing indoors. The one passage that describes the work of the slaves in town is a celebration of the division of labor into easy portions. Eulalia is astonished that a small family has so many servants:

There was the cook, who had an under vassal to pick up chips, tote water from the spring, &c.; the washwomen, who had nothing to do but wash and iron and scrub floors; Aunt Kizzie, the nurse and plain seamstress—that is, she cut and made the other negroes’ clothes, hemmed tea-towels, sheets, &c.; Netty, the chambermaid and fine seamstress, the maker of her master’s shirts and Effie’s wardrobe; Albert, the valet de chambre and gentle-
man at large; the coachman, who was also the gardener; and Jim, who did a little of everything and not much of anything, pottering about the grounds, mending a broken paling, sawing off a dried branch, making the kitchen fires, and airing Crissy's clothes. Then, there was Kizzie's mother, an infirm old woman, who had a nice little cabin of her own, where she sat . . . knitting or patching, or holding the baby, if there happened to be one in the establishment. (231-232)

While much may be hidden in that "nothing to do but" and those "&c's," the point of the passage is to show that in the South, a superfluity of laborers makes the labor manageable.

In contrast to Uncle Tom's Cabin, in The Planter's Northern Bride it is the North that is the place of exploitation, and, significantly, given the predominance of females among novel readers and the mid-nineteenth century ideal of exalting womanhood, it is the women of the North who most suffer from the absence of slaves. Moreland observes with pity the toil of his innkeeper's wife, Mrs. Grimby. She has never been at meals, for she is kept too busy for the pleasures of the table. He sees her one evening sitting at the hot fireplace stirring coffee, worn out from her day's labors. Because Moreland's "chivalrous regard for the woman was quite pained at seeing her thus
unpleasantly and laboriously occupied" (74), he insists that she order his servant Albert to help her. After complaining that it is next to impossible to hire help because "all the girls are for going to the factories, where they have higher wages and lighter work" (76), she accepts Moreland's offer of Albert’s labor.

By the end of the next day, Albert is ready to leave New England. Mrs. Grimby has worked him harder than he has ever worked in his life, and worst of all, he is so dirty that he is ashamed to look his master in the eye. Albert acknowledges that the landlady has worked right alongside him, but that fact degrades Mrs. Grimby in Albert’s eyes rather than elevates his labor. Albert says, "I’m willing to do anything for you, Mars. Russell, but I have no opinion of making myself a dog, for folks that ain’t no quality after all" (90). Moreland responds sympathetically to Albert’s "wounded aristocracy" and then philosophically adds, "It is well to have a taste of what the Northern bondwomen have to endure, so that you may be more contented with your own lot" (91). By identifying the innkeeper’s wife as a "bondwoman" and dramatizing her difficult labors, Hentz calls into question the issue of freedom and slavery. What does it mean to be free if one must work to the exclusion of enjoying the finer things in life?

Mrs. Grimby represents one class of hard-working women in the North. If she suffers by being born into a society
without slaves, so too does Eulalia Hastings, a natural aristocrat whose innate qualities rather than her family’s wealth entitle her to that distinction. Nevertheless, her father is "one of the most conspicuous characters in the village" (39), and although he lacks a specific profession, he wields influence by preparing young men for college, publishing essays, editing an anti-slavery newspaper, and delivering lectures. Hastings, however, is not wealthy enough to hire sufficient help to spare Eulalia from household chores.

At dinner with the Hastings, Moreland learns that Eulalia herself has stamped the butter and made the plum cake. He quickly checks to see if her hands are marked by evidence of labor and is as quickly reassured that they are fair and symmetrical. The author explains that "Eulalia knew nothing of the drudgery of housekeeping, and but little of its cares," but the list of her chores belies that explanation. Eulalia sews shirts and dresses for the whole family; she sweeps and decorates her room daily; and she occasionally assists the "woman of all work in the kitchen, whose labour would have shamed the toil of three of Moreland’s stoutest slaves." Why then are Eulalia’s hands unmarred by labor?

[H]er mother, who was very proud of Eulalia’s beauty, and very careful to keep it in high preservation, had habituated her to sew in gloves,
with truncated fingers, ingeniously adapted for such a purpose. . . . [Eulalia] had been taught, as a regular duty, to draw on a pair of thick woollen mittens before she wielded the broom and exercised the duster. Had it not been for her mother's watchfulness, Eulalia's hands might not have justified the admiration of the fastidiously observing Moreland. (65)

Evidence of hard work, in the eyes of the aristocratic Moreland, is degrading; fortunately for Eulalia's future happiness in the South, her mother has taken pains to prevent any such evidence from debasing Eulalia. Hentz shows the importance of keeping labor hidden and offers some practical advise for those of her female readers who performed household chores.

When Eulalia becomes the lady of Moreland's town home and the mistress of his plantation, the material changes in her life allow her higher qualities to find their fullest expression. Hentz shows many ways that slavery benefits the aristocracy, not the least of which is allowing generous expressions of noblesse oblige. At home in New England, Eulalia had had opportunities to practice charity among the poor, but her financial means were so limited that she was unable share much wealth. As Moreland's wife, she is able to pass along substantial sums to alleviate the poverty of her New England acquaintances. Significantly, she does not
see desperately poor people in the South. When Eulalia and Moreland travel to his plantation, they are obliged to pass one night in a cabin with some "piny-woods people," or "Georgia crackers," as Aunt Kizzy interchangeably calls them, but even these poor whites benefit from slavery, according to the proslavery view Hentz assigns to Moreland.

Moreland says the head of the backwoods family is "energetic and intelligent" and has bought a few "negroes." The man works alongside his slaves in the field and is owner, laborer, and overseer all at the same time. Moreland predicts the man's children will be rich and associate "with the magnates of the land." He goes on to explain the South's social system to Eulalia:

Our social system is like the tree now bending over you, Eulalia,—its roots, without grace or beauty, are hidden in the earth, from which they derive strength and support; its hardy trunk rises, without ornament, brown and substantial;

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Hentz's observations on the greater poverty of the North are reminiscent of George Fitzhugh's pointed remarks in Sociology for the South: "Wealth is more equally distributed than at the North, where a few millionaires own most of the property of the country. (These millionaires are men of cold hearts and weak minds; they know how to make money, but not how to use it, either for the benefit of themselves or of others.) High intellectual and moral attainments, refinement of head and heart, give standing to a man in the South, however poor he may be. Money is, with few exceptions, the only thing that ennobles at the North." George Fitzhugh, Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society (Richmond, VA: A. Morris, 1854) 254. Fitzhugh goes on to say that in the South, the poor are as hospitable as the wealthy, a point Moreland tries to impress upon Eulalia at their rest stop with the poor white family.
then the branches extend, green with foliage, and the birds of the air make their nests among the leaflets. Hark! there is a mocking-bird singing now. (327 - 28)

Hentz’s language sounds like that used by southern politicians to defend their peculiar institution. Her simile precedes James Henry Hammond’s 1858 "mud-sill" speech before the U. S. Senate in which he explained to the nation that

[in all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, and fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sill of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build the one or the other, except on this mud-sill.]

But Hentz’s metaphor describes three social classes, not two, as Hammond’s does. The tree of Hentz’s social system is supported by roots, hidden and "without grace or beauty"; these are the slaves. The trunk, hardy, without ornament,

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13 James Henry Hammond, "Speech on the Admission of Kansas," U. S. Senate, March 4, 1858, in McKitrick, 122.
"brown and substantial," is the class of poor whites. The branches, representing the planter class, support the arts, represented by birds singing. Eulalia, because of her beautiful singing voice, is often associated with song birds in The Planter's Northern Bride, and she is clearly meant to be one of the aristocrats represented by the mockingbird in the branches. In New England, Eulalia and her family sang without accompaniment, for they could not afford musical instruments. In Georgia, she takes piano and guitar lessons, confessing, "I have always sighed for such advantages, but I never expressed the wish. I knew my father toiled to supply us with the comforts of life. How could I be selfish enough to beg for its luxuries?" (306). In Hentz's formulation, then, slavery is what permits life to be lived without toil so worthy individuals can enjoy life's luxuries.

Slavery did benefit the planter class, even in a purely economic sense, because slaves on average produced twice as much as their maintenance required. And perhaps Caroline Hentz believed what she wrote about social mobility in the South versus that in the North. She claims that the possibility for improving one's station in life under a system of free labor had been greatly exaggerated and that "vice and intemperance" are not the only impediments to "the golden portals of success and honour." For evidence she cites:

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14 James Oakes, Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South 96.
the thousand toiling operatives of the Northern manufactories . . . ; the poor, starving seamstresses, whose pallid faces mingle their chill, wintry gleams with the summer glow and splendour of the Northern cities . . . ; [and] the free negroes, congregated in the suburbs of some of our modern Babylons, lured from their homes by hopes based on sand, without forethought, experience, or employment, without sympathy, influence, or caste. . . . (27-28)

In that narrative interpolation, Hentz attempts to discredit the claim that free laborers had the opportunity to advance economically. By holding up pitiful examples of laboring classes, Hentz assumes that she is proving that individuals within those classes rarely improve their lot. But the essentially racist premise of her argument is obvious when one realizes that for Hentz, the laboring class in the South that could advance comprises whites only.

Hentz never mentions, even to justify, slaves' inability to improve their station in society. Robert Fogel offers as part of a modern, moral indictment of slavery the fact that the system Hentz extols did not reward labor. He points out that even though economic incentive systems from masters and differing skill levels among slaves resulted in some economic differentiation, slaves could neither change masters nor move in hopes of economic advancement. Even if
a master did become wealthier by moving West, his slaves did not materially profit.\textsuperscript{15} In short, slaves did not benefit from the value of their own labor.

And neither did poor whites benefit materially from living in a slave society. Contrary to the positive effect of slavery on Hentz’s fictive backwoods family, slavery really consolidated the prestige and wealth of the region in the hands of the planter class. As Peter Kolchin indicates, "the wealth of the ‘average’ slaveowner in the cotton South in 1860—$24,748—was 13.9 times that of the ‘average’ non-slaveholder."\textsuperscript{16} Given these economic realities, Hentz may have been wrong in suggesting why poor whites tolerated slavery. To whatever extent the class represented by the "piny-woods people" accepted slavery, which cheapened the value of their labor, it was probably not because they hoped to buy slaves, but because increasingly in the 1840s and 1850s they embraced the racial superiority argument. They could celebrate their whiteness as long as race was seen as the primary division in society.\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{16} Kolchin 165-166.

\textsuperscript{17} Even if, as Oakes suggests in \textit{Ruling Race}, some whites moved in and out of slaveholding, race is what justified some southerners owning others. Historians debate the degree to which non-slaveholding whites in the old South supported slavery. For an interesting overview of the arguments, see Steven Hahn, "Capitalists All," \textit{Reviews in American History} 1983: 219 - 25, and the exchange between James Oakes and Randolph B. Campbell in \textit{Journal of Southern History} 51:1 (1985) 15 - 30. Oakes returns
Moreland comments politely to the head of the backwoods family that he does "sometimes envy the labouring man his keen appetite and sound sleep" (325), but the author’s bias shows in her female characters’ reactions to this class of people. Aunt Kizzy claims that they are "no quality folks" who have "mighty curious [sic] ways of doing things" (312). Little Effie haughtily insults the daughters of the household who approach her. "'Get away!' she cried, drawing up her right shoulder and pushing them with her feet; 'you too ugly--you shan’t touch me!'" (323). And Eulalia marvels that the girls have bothered to cover their hands with "woollen mitts, with long points reaching over the backs of their hands" since their hands are already "of the hue of mahogany" (322). It required Master Moreland to explain the idealized southern aristocrats’ view of these poor whites.

In that view, which John C. Calhoun articulated as early as 1820, slavery guaranteed equality among whites because "it produced an unvarying level among them."18 Thomas R. R. Cobb made the same point in 1858 in his Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America when he wrote that lower-class whites in the South

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18 Conversation, John C. Calhoun to John Quincy Adams. In Charles Francis Adams, ed. Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848. Qtd. in William Sumner Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1960) 190.
felt they belonged to "an elevated class. . . . It matters not that he is no slaveholder; he is not of the inferior race; he is a freeborn citizen. . . ."19 George Fredrickson labels the organization of society along such principles of equality for one race and exclusion from citizenry (or even exclusion from humanity) for the other a Herrenvolk democracy. Hentz’s Moreland patiently teaches that view and adds to it the ideal of the self-made man whose energies and intelligence will raise his children’s status.

Much is made of whiteness and blackness in The Planter’s Northern Bride, as it was in the southern society Hentz is attempting to defend. In Unfree Labor, Peter Kolchin points to one of the consequences of race consciousness on the proslavery argument. Despite the fact that some proslavery advocates (like George Fitzhugh) in the 1840s and 1850s de-emphasized the racial justification for slavery and argued in economic and social terms, their non-racial justifications for slavery never gained wide support "because of the political realities of appealing to a broad segment of nonslaveholding whites."20 Kolchin’s explana-


20 Kolchin 173.
tion helps to explain why Caroline Hentz mentions skin color so frequently. Eulalia is pale, "fair . . . so fair" (36) in Moreland's estimation. In contrast, the evil Claudia, Moreland's disgraced ex-wife, has black hair and black eyes that are the home of Italian "pride, disdain, and vindictiveness" (323). Nat the Giant (whose name recalls another Nat) and Vulcan, the blacksmith who leads the slave contingent in a failed insurrection, are depicted in racist ways, their blackness along with other African features exaggerated to the point of caricature. In contrast, Albert, Moreland's personal servant, is a mulatto; he is characterized as a "handsome, golden-skinned youth" who is intelligent and speaks standard English (14).

Lacking the racial status compensation Hentz celebrates in her fiction, poor northerners (and especially poor women) suffer egregiously in *The Planter's Northern Bride*. In Hentz's North, those girls who go off to the factories rather than work in domestic service "stand all day long behind the wheels and looms, with the cotton fuzz choking the lungs and stopping up the nostrils," according to Mrs. Grimby (76). And the ones who do engage in domestic service face a terrible fate if illness or old age should incapacitate them.

Nancy Brown is one such woman. Nancy trades her labor for wages, not paternalistic care. She had worked for the Grimby family as long as her health allowed, and Mr. Grimby had
paid her the going wage. That wage was barely enough to support her elderly mother and herself, so now that she is too ill to work, Nancy has no savings to draw upon. Hentz makes sentimental capital out of Nancy’s pathetic circumstances and her fatal illness. When Moreland sees Nancy’s squalid living conditions, he mentally contrasts Nancy’s lot with that of the slaves, and his ruminations lead him to consider the conditions of laborers throughout the world, including

the groaning serfs of Russia; the starving sons of Ireland; the squalid operatives of England, its dark, subterranean workshops, sunless abodes of want, misery, and sin, its toiling millions, doomed to drain their hearts’ best blood to add to the splendidors and luxuries of royalty and rank; of the free hirelings of the North, who, as a class, travail in discontent and repining, anxious to throw off the yoke of servitude, sighing for an equality which exists only in name; and then he turned his thoughts homeward, to the enslaved children of Africa, and, taking them as a class, as a distinct race of beings, he came to the irresistible conclusion, that they were the happiest subservient race that were found on the face of the globe. . . . [H]e believed that the slaves of the South were blest beyond the pallid slaves
Thus satisfied about the justness of slavery, Moreland sleeps peacefully, armed with more ammunition for the requisite debates with abolitionists that fiction demands he meet in the North.

Hentz was probably right about the material well-being of laboring classes. Scholars who place American slavery in a comparative context generally agree with Hentz’s assertion that, in a material sense, slaves were at least as well off as the laboring classes of the North and Europe. For instance, in his 1989 work Without Consent or Contract, Robert Fogel says that early nineteenth-century workers in Britain were less well nourished than slaves in the New World, and American slaves also had a slight advantage in nourishment over their urban, free labor counterparts.²¹

So Russian serfs, Irish farmers’ sons, English factory workers, and Northern "hirelings" may have had a lower standard of living than did American slaves in fact as well as in fiction. And elsewhere in The Planter’s Northern Bride Hentz expounds on the nature of freedom, claiming that no one—not even the President—is free (338 - 39). Here she blurs the distinction between social responsibility and enslavement in her attempt to weaken the argument that materi-

²¹ Fogel 395.
al comfort is insufficient compensation for the loss of freedom.

Hentz's logic rests on her grammatical identification of class and race ("as a class, as a distinct race," emphasis original). Never does Hentz challenge the assumption that makes her grammatical identification of race with class possible, an assumption most southerners of her day shared. Never does she offer Biblical justifications for enslaving one race, as Mary Eastman had done in Aunt Phillis's Cabin. In fact, in her 1852 novel Marcus Warland, Hentz denounces the origins of African slavery by saying that she would not defend the "peculiar institution" back to the time "when our forefathers forfeited their claim to humanity, and purchased human blood." Since she declines to employ a literal interpretation of the Bible as the justification for enslaving one race and not another, what warrants Hentz's identification of slaves "as a class, as a distinct race"? History, scientific racism, Christian missionary efforts, and paternalism.

Hentz looks to history for signs that perhaps Africa had once sustained "civilized" societies. But history offers no such evidence, she argues. Hentz unfavorably con-

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22 Eugene Genovese called to my attention the problematical nature of Caroline Lee Hentz's and Louisa McCord's identification of class with race.

trasts Africans with Europeans and even with American
Indians in terms of the civilizations they had built, and
she expatiates on the evils that accompanied emancipation in
the British West Indies. Hentz then tells what she thinks
would happen if slaves were freed by holding up the example
of St. Domingo, which had had more than sixty years without
white rule:

Too indolent to labour, too reckless to provide
for future want, with scarcely energy enough to
pluck the delicious productions of their rich
tropic clime, the lords of this beautiful isle
live like the brutes that perish; indulging in
vices as exuberant as the storms of the equinox.

(295)

These examples drawn from history reduce the complexities of
social organization to the simplicity of racial determinism.

Science, as understood by the author (whose marriage to
a professor with notable scientific expertise might have
predisposed her to seek a scientific rationale), also
bolsters Hentz’s support for slavery. Hentz glorifies white
physiognomy and denounces all African physical traits in
pronouncements she assigns to Moreland, to the freed slave
Judy, and to Dilsy. Moreland says of "the negro":

"I have studied him physiologically as well as
mentally and morally, and I find some remarkable
characteristics. . . . In the first place, his
skull has a hardness and thickness far greater than our own, which defy the arrowy sunbeams of the South. Then his skin, upon minute examination, is very different from ours, in other respects as well as colour. It secretes a far greater quantity of moisture, which, like dew, throws back the heat absorbed by us. . . . I can never look upon the negro as my equal in the scale of being. He has a heart as kind and affectionate as my own, a soul as immortal, and so far I claim him as my brother; but he is not my equal physically or mentally, and I do not degrade him or exalt myself by this admission. . . . God has not made all men equal, though men wiser than God would have it so. Inequality is one of Nature’s laws. The mountains and the valleys proclaim it. It is written on the firmament of heaven. It is felt in the social system, and always will be felt, in spite of the dreams of the enthusiast or the efforts of the reformer." (303 - 305)

"Scientific" observation thus helps to justify the enslavement of Africans. Further, Moreland’s scientific argument squarely attacks the notion that all men are created equal. All souls may have equal worth before God, but he asserts that that kind of equality is irrelevant to social condition.
Continuing her racial justification for slavery and voicing what was a widespread misconception among nineteenth-century slaveowners, Hentz writes that blacks themselves felt racially inferior. In one instance, the runaway slave Judy unfavorably compares herself to whites when she talks to Crissy:

"Talk 'bout us being on a 'quality with white folks, no such ting. De Lord never made us look like dem. We mustn't be angry wid de Lord, for all dat; He knows best, I 'spose. Look a' me, black as de chimney back,—dey, white as snow; what great, big, thick, ugly lips I got, --dere's look jist like roses. Den dis black sheep head, what de Lord make dat for? Dey got putey, soft, long hair, jist like de silk ribbons. Now look at dat big, long heel, will you?" added Judy, putting out her bare foot in the moonshine, giggling and shaking; "who ever saw de white lady with sich a heel as dat? I do wonder what the Lord made us nigger for? I 'spect de white dust gin out, and he had to take de black." (268)

To add credibility to her fiction, Hentz here adds a footnote: "The very description a negress gave of herself, in our own family, in comparing the negro race with the white" (268). Elizabeth Fox-Genovese suggests that Hentz's use of Judy's and Dilsy's racial self-deprecations may express a
racism Hentz would not put in so crude a form in the mouth of a white character, or "it may also be a skillful ploy on her part, an attempt to suggest that the blacks can only understand slavery in racial terms, whereas the whites understand its class dimension. . . ."\textsuperscript{24}

A second example of a slave's condemnation of her own color can be found in the dying slave Dilsy's words to Moreland:

"Oh! massa! 'spose you don't know poor Dilsy when you git to heben, 'cause she'll be beautiful, white angel den; but you jist look hard at de hebenly throng, and de one dat lub you best of all, wid her new eyes--dat will be me." (350)

Dilsy's view of the glory that awaits her in heaven includes her transformation into a white angel with new eyes.\textsuperscript{25}

For Hentz to subscribe to these racial justifications of slavery places her in the category of such scientific racists as Josiah Nott. In fact, Hentz's ideas owe much to Nott's \textit{Two Lectures on the Natural History of the Caucasian and Negro Races}, published in 1844.\textsuperscript{26} Using ethnological

\textsuperscript{24} Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, personal correspondence, 4 April 1994.

\textsuperscript{25} In \textit{Marcus Warland} (1852), Hentz depicts a similar scene. An old slave tells Marcus that he knows they will meet someday in heaven, "where we both will be one colour, one people, white as snow, inside and out." \textit{Marcus Warland} 119.

\textsuperscript{26} Elizabeth Moss, \textit{Domestic Novelists in the Old South} (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 1992) 10.
data Dr. Nott argued that Negroes and Caucasians belonged to the same genus, man, but to different species. Not surprisingly, in his view these separate species were not equal. Hentz's reliance on the racial defense of slavery differs from the political and economic justification for slavery Ruffin advanced in DeBow's (1856) and Fitzhugh advanced both in Sociology for the South (1854) and Cannibals All (1857). Hentz ignores questions of socialism as an answer to the problems of free laborers, choosing instead to emphasize slaves' supposed racial suitability for bondage. A comment in Hentz's 1836 Alabama diary expresses the same racist attitude towards blacks that is found in her novel: "Oh! that we [were] far removed from the red men of the wilderness, as well as the children of Africa."20

The third argument Hentz uses to justify the enslavement of one race is based on missionary inclinations. Even though Hentz eschews a Biblical justification for the original enslavement of Africans, she does not ignore religion in seeking to justify its continuance. Some

27 Ruffin wrote that "in the institution of domestic slavery, and in that only, are most completely realized the dreams and sanguine hopes of the socialist school of philanthropists." Edmund Ruffin, "The Counter Current," DeBow's XXI (1856): 91. Fitzhugh stated the same case with his usual bluntness: "A Southern farm is a sort of joint stock concern, or social phalas­tery, in which the master furnishes the capital and skill, and the slaves the labor, and divide the profits, not according to each one's in-put, but according to each one's wants and necessities." Fitzhugh, Sociology 48.

critics of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* had pointed to the saintly Tom as evidence of the justness of taking "heathens" from Africa to a place where they would be converted to Christianity. Though Tom suffered a martyr’s death, they argued, at least he was assured of heaven, an eternal reward that would have been denied to him if he had stayed in Africa. Hentz’s Dilsy, from her deathbed, reminds her "brudders and sisters" of the same point. Were it not for slavery, she says, they would all have been heathens in Africa, and she admonishes them to "Tink of dat, if Satin eber tempt you to leave good massa and missus" (351).

Moreland uses Dilsy’s funeral as an opportunity to make a new covenant with his slaves, reminding them of the benefits of Christianization. After praying over Dilsy’s grave, he addresses them:

"You heard the words of the dying Dilsy. You heard what she said to you and to me. She told you to be grateful that you were brought away from a land of darkness and the shadow of death, to regions where the light of the gospel shines upon your souls. . . . Did you believe her words? . . . Then you would not think freedom without a Saviour, without hope of a hereafter, without the promises of eternal life, a blessing?" (354)

The slaves’ emotional endorsement of all Dilsy had said provides dramatic representation of the proslavery argument
that claimed converting Africans to Christianity justified enslaving them.

Next Moreland asks his slaves a loaded question, namely, would they desire freedom if he would "give up all care and guardianship of you and your children, suffer you to go where you please, leaving you to provide for the necessities of the morrow and all future wants" (355). They vociferously answer no. Their "no" is an affirmation of Hentz’s fourth argument for enslaving Africans, paternalism—protection and support in exchange for obedience. In Hentz’s view, slaves need protection and support, and meeting his duty elevates Moreland. Moreland himself explicitly proclaims that slaveowners "know the full length and breadth of our responsibilities, [and] have less time than any other men for self-indulgence" (25).

Dilsy’s dying admonition to her fellow slaves dramatizes the way paternalism undermines the ability of the oppressed to see how self-interest could unite them with each other rather than with their oppressor. Just as Mary Eastman’s Phillis saw the responsibilities of freedom as an impossibility for her children, so Hentz’s fictional slaves prefer to exchange "fidelity and obedience" for their "best interests for time and eternity" (356). Fidelity and obedience were far more noble constructs to invoke at the gravesite than "labor" and "profits" would have been. Hentz caps off Dilsy’s death scene by adding a footnote about a
real former slave who, after losing his house in a storm, begged many gentlemen to buy him. He preferred slavery to freedom, and Hentz intends this supposedly factual account to reassure her readers about the justness of slavery.

In plot, characters, settings, language, and polemical digressions, then, Hentz responds to Harriet Beecher Stowe and advances a proslavery argument. But as her title and the domestic overtones of her novel indicate, *The Planter's Northern Bride* must tell the story of Eulalia Hastings Moreland. What becomes of the heroine of a domestic novel when the novel endorses a political position that subordinates women (along with slaves) to white males? More broadly put, what becomes of the discourse of domesticity, with its emphasis on independent heroines who reform the men they love, when it unites with proslavery discourse, with its emphasis on noble masters and submissive wives?

One obvious alteration of the domestic formula is the timing of the heroine's marriage. Eulalia Hastings marries Russell Moreland on page 175 of a 579-page novel. So much for marriage as the heroine's reward at the end of a domestic novel. The effect of such an alteration is that readers do not focus on one main character's emotional development, as they do in works like *The Wide, Wide World* and *The Lamplighter*. Unlike Ellen Montgomery in *The Wide, Wide World* or Gerty Flint in *The Lamplighter*, the heroine in this novel cannot progress towards spiritual autonomy rewarded on
earth by marriage. In the earlier proslavery novel *Aunt Phillis's Cabin*, Alice learns to obey her uncle and deny her individualistic, romantic impulses. In *Northwood*, the protagonist is a young man, not a young woman. In Hentz’s novel, Eulalia will grow to feel increasing veneration for her saintly husband. Her adoration of her husband parallels his slaves' attitude towards him, an attitude Hentz tries to authenticate by comparing it to the adoration Thomas Jefferson's slaves displayed for their master on his return from five years in Paris. When such an important part of proslavery ideology was veneration of the master, a proslavery novel had to dramatize the master’s worthiness and his dependents’ love.

Such a focus usurped Hentz's sentimental powers to depict the development of a female heroine. Gone are the scenes of the domestic heroine wrestling with her conscience in her bedroom or setting things right in the world of her parlor. In its place is a character whose chief function—for many more pages than is usual in domestic fiction—is to adore her husband and whose chief mission is to train her stepdaughter to be obedient. In sharp contrast to the heroines of domestic novels whose didactic purpose was moral, not political, Eulalia starts her fictional life as a perfect creature. Her only changes in this novel are first, to reject intellectually her father's abolitionist philosophy, a philosophy from which she had instinctively recoiled
without understanding why; and second, to overcome her antipathy towards blacks, a repulsion Moreland attributes to her having only seen blacks in their worst condition—freedom.

Indeed, repulsion towards Africans finds pronounced and ugly representations in *The Planter’s Northern Bride* and serves to justify slavery as being essential for the safety of whites and the elevation of blacks. In one instance of such repugnant representations, Eulalia’s father invites "a gigantic Negro" who was a runaway to stay in their home; Mr. Hastings seats him at the dinner table between his daughter and his wife. Eulalia becomes sick. Her confinement to her room while Nat the Giant is in their home prevents her from having to face him again. But as fate and fiction would have it, on a steamboat transporting her to her new home, she again encounters the dreadful Nat. He has fallen or jumped overboard, and Moreland tries unsuccessfully to save his life. The sight of Nat again makes Eulalia sick and faint, and Moreland worries about his northern bride’s comfort in the South, where she will be in close daily contact with Negroes. He tells Eulalia that he fears her "repugnance to the African race," adding that she will overcome it because "it is of unnatural birth—born of prejudice and circumstance." She has seen only "the most repulsive kind" of Negroes, free ones, who are "generally far more degraded, more low in the scale of being, than the slave."
The air of freedom, which gives luxuriant growth to his vices, does not foster his peculiar virtues. His social character degenerates" (201-202). Here Hentz's Moreland unblushingly speaks of racial determinism. He sounds like William and Mary's Professor Thomas Dew who wrote of Gold Coast Africans, "Nothing but slavery can civilize such beings, give them habits of industry, and make them cling to life for its enjoyments."^{29}

Later Moreland identifies the main reason Eulalia had recoiled from Nat. It is sexual fear. It is abhorrence at the thought of "amalgamation:

"My dear Eulalia, God never intended that you and I should live on equal terms with the African. He has created a barrier between his race and ours, which no one can pass over without incurring the ban of society. The white woman who marries a negro, makes herself an outcast, a scorn, and a byword. The white man who marries a negress forfeits his position as a gentleman, and is excluded from the social privileges of his brethren. This is the result of an inherent principle of the human breast, entwined, like conscience, with our vitality, and inseparable from it. The

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most ultra Northern philanthropist dare not contradict this truth. He may advocate amalgamation with his lips, but in his heart, he recoils from it with horror. He would sooner see a son or daughter perish beneath the stroke of the assassin than wedded to the African, whom he professes to look upon as his equal and his friend" (202 - 203).

For all his antipathy towards amalgamation, one wonders, prompted by Mary Chestnut's famous comment about slave children, where all those mulattoes came from on Moreland's plantation. The author makes the point repeatedly that Moreland never buys or sells slaves. So who is the father of Moreland's personal servant, the mulatto Albert? Who is the father of Netty, the "yellow girl"? The author neither poses nor answers such questions. Her evasions speak volumes about what it was unacceptable to notice in the antebellum South.

Just as the changes that Eulalia must make in the course of this novel are changes in attitudes towards blacks and slavery rather than changes in her internal, moral character--the typical changes of the typical domestic heroine--so too the conflicts in this novel come from external forces, not character flaws in either husband or wife. Two external forces challenge Russell Moreland's authority. The first is the abolitionist movement, repre-
sented here by Eulalia’s father, by various "philanthropists" and Quakers, and by a smarmy confidence man who poses as a preacher just so he can incite a slave insurrection. The second challenge to Moreland’s authority is Claudia, his former wife. In a literary analysis of domestic novels with a political purpose, Claudia represents the more important force.

Claudia is a mysterious presence throughout the novel, the cause of Moreland’s sorrow when he is traveling in New England and an object of great curiosity for Eulalia and readers. Upon being questioned as to his marital state by Eulalia’s father, Moreland explains that

she who was my wife still lives; but she no longer bears my name. I am free from the marriage bond, but not by death. . . . It is very painful to me to allude to these circumstances. Being a stranger, I cannot explain them. I therefore prefer to remain silent. (97)

His silence piques readers’ interest in this mysterious figure whose existence troubles all of the virtuous characters in the novel. The mere sight of Claudia passing by in a carriage is enough to make Eulalia nearly faint. Claudia darkens her ex-husband’s memories and exposes him to the social censure concomitant with divorce, especially since the basis of the divorce was her false claim to have been unfaithful, a claim she made to embarrass and disgrace
Moreland. But Claudia’s ongoing threat is to disrupt Eulalia’s domestic bliss.

Once she bursts into the parlor where Eulalia has been practicing music and relates her version of the divorce. She claims that she thought she was marrying her lover when she married Moreland, but he turned into "my master, my tyrant!" He expected her to "cringe to his will, like the slaves in the kitchen." Instead, she boasts, "I spurned his authority!--I defied his power! He expected me to obey him,--me, who never obeyed my own mother!" In contrast, Claudia declares that Eulalia is "the daughter of a Northern clime, without impulse or passion, cold as your wintry snows," one who "may wear the yoke without feeling it, and yield the will without knowing it" (366). In this novel the woman who, like the Grimke sisters, identifies the subordination of a wife with the position of slaves, is a terrifying presence.30

Most disturbingly, Effie’s physical and behavioral resemblance to her mother makes it difficult for Moreland to love his daughter. Ultimately, however, Eulalia’s love succeeds in making the girl want to please her new, sweet mother, just as this new mother wants to please her

30 Fitzhugh unashingly likens slavery to marriage in Sociology for the South: "Marriage is too much like slavery not to be involved in its fate; and the obedience of wives which the Bible inculcates, furnishes a new theme for infidelity in petticoats or in Bloomers to harp on. Slavery, marriage, religion, are the pillars of the social fabric" (205 -206).
exemplary husband. After the saintly Eulalia has taught Effie to obey—obedience being one part of the paternalist contract—Moreland can begin to feel as a father ought to feel for his child. For Effie and Eulalia, obedience springs from love, not fear of authority or an absence of will, as Claudia argues. For Moreland, being obeyed causes him to feel love. Hentz’s representation of the relationship between obedience and love would have appealed to those who viewed slavery as a paternalistic rather than a patriarchal institution. Further, the importance of women as mothers in society is evident in the way Eulalia teaches obedience, an achievement Claudia’s mother had failed to attain. Eulalia makes Effie love her simply by being beautiful and by singing to her when Effie’s temper flares up.31

Another way Claudia threatens Eulalia’s domestic bliss is by attempting to abduct Effie. Her first attempt fails, even though—in keeping with that formulation of southern ideology that claimed a woman’s weakness is her strength—Eulalia is physically weaker than Claudia. One expression of that belief is found in the 1835 Southern Literary Messenger where Thomas Dew wrote, "Woman we behold dependent and weak, yet out of that very weakness and dependence

31 In this way Eulalia is like the beautiful Mrs. Bellamy who inspires a motherless boy in Hentz’s earlier proslavery novel, Marcus Warland.
springs an irresistible power." Fitzhugh too celebrated women's weakness, saying "Women would do well to disguise strength of mind or body, if they possess it, if they would retain their empire." But that same ideology of white women's weakness celebrated a black mammy's strength.

Therefore, Aunt Kizzy succeeds in doing what Eulalia has failed to do, protect the master's child. As she overpowers her former mistress, Kizzy insulst and mocks her, causing Claudia to try to strike her. Kizzy dodges, and Claudia hits the door frame instead. Her fingers bleed and she seems to realize "for the first time the impotence of her passion" (371). Significantly, Hentz did not write "the futility of her passion" or "the consequences of her passion," but the impotence of her passion. A woman who refuses to subordinate her will to her husband's is impotent, has no power, lives on the outskirts of society. But a woman who promises to obey her husband "presides" over her household (209), earns the title of "mistress." These are the compensations due women who participate in constructing a domestic hierarchy that elevates white men over white women and all blacks. Claudia dies in isolation and disgrace, mocked by the slaves she had mistreated and spurned by her former husband, her daughter, and southern society.


33 Fitzhugh, Sociology 215-216.
Claudia's impotent rebellion is fictional proof of what Anne Firor Scott notes in "Women's Perspectives on the Patriarchy in the 1850s,"--it was easier for antebellum southern women to feel discontented than to be able to do anything about it or even imagine alternatives.34

Claudia epitomizes an extreme version of the heroine of most domestic fiction--extreme because her growth to maturity and independence moves her beyond her husband's control. She even flaunts her sexuality. Her presence in The Planter's Northern Bride shows how Hentz's domestic medium threatens to undermine her polemical purpose. It is as though Claudia has wandered into the "wrong" book from a domestic novel about a heroine's growth to maturity and moral independence. Because women's independence is antithetical to Hentz's polemical purpose, Claudia requires exaggeration, suppression, and finally elimination. She dies a miserable death.

Proper domestic relations, not those between Moreland and Claudia, suggest proper social relations. Wives and slaves obey; husbands and masters protect. Everyone is actuated by love, and love is earned by being virtuous. Eulalia grows to believe that domestic stability and happiness are more easily maintained in slave societies than in free, partly because the lessons of mutual obligations are

learned more easily in the South, and partly because aristocratic families flourish in an unfree society. Eulalia sees that her northern family cannot thrive the way a southern family does and that the North cannot prosper as the South does. In fact, her brother must move from the North to find work. In contrast to what Harriet Beecher Stowe said about the way slavery divided families, Hentz shows domestic dislocations that result from living in a free society.

Persuading Eulalia that a slave society is superior to a free society, however, is not fictional challenge enough for Carolyn Lee Hentz. She must also persuade Mr. Hastings and every potential reader. Eulalia's domestic happiness is dampened by her father's disapproval of her slaveowning husband. She regrets that her father's prejudices against slaveholders impose a barrier between her new family and her old. Hentz uses Eulalia's desire for family unity to stand for national unity. Of course, Eulalia's mother, her sister, their female domestic helper, and even her young brother see the superiority of Moreland's social institutions. But Mr. Hastings suffers from intellectual pride.

35 She had used the same metaphor in Lovell's Folly (1833), a novel in which the northern and southern characters who become reconciled are women (Mrs. Elmwood and Mrs. Sutherland) and which ends with a marriage between a southern woman and a northern man who agrees to move to Virginia. As Anne Norton discusses in Alternative Americas: A Reading of Antebellum Political Culture (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), "It had been a commonplace, prior to secession, to liken the Union to a marriage" (167).
He is set in his abstract convictions, impervious at first to sentimental persuasion or learning by experience.

Then Mr. Hastings sees his grandson for the first time. He realizes that "the blood of the North and the South is blended in its veins" (549). He recognizes at last the cost of sectionalism in dividing him from his family; the "little child, with its soft, downy touch, had done more to make Mount Atlas shake, than the giant efforts of reason, or the strong though invisible pressure of conscience" (550). This is the power of domestic novelists--to depict a scene so touching that reason will be inclined to follow feeling. The scales fall from Mr. Hastings' eyes when an eloquent abolitionist is revealed to be the same confidence man who almost incited a slave insurrection on Moreland's plantation. A trip to the South completes Hastings' conversion, and he vows to tell the truth from then on about slavery and the South. Strange that the climactic sentimental conversion in this novel happens to a minor male character, not to the planter's northern bride or her husband.

Eulalia is never the novel's sentimental focus; no one character in The Planter's Northern Bride is. Hentz calls on us to sympathize with Russell Moreland when abolitionists malign him; with free laborers and women in the North who suffer from overwork; with runaway and freed slaves who face life's hardships without protection for the first time; and with Eulalia Moreland, whose domestic happiness is
threatened by Claudia and abolitionists, representatives of two forces that refuse to acknowledge the social necessity of women and slaves submitting to white male rule. This absence of a sentimental focus comparable to the character Uncle Tom is a major difference between The Planter's Northern Bride and Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Hentz vitiates the emotional power of the domestic genre when she imposes upon it too many logical arguments, shifting her focus away from the internal conflicts of a sentimental heroine and onto political conflicts resolved by reason, not feeling. In contrast, Stowe's anti-slavery message overtly privileges love and sympathy, even if such feelings contradict reason and demand flouting the fugitive slave law. In scenes such as the one where Senator Bird must choose between his abstract principles and a real runaway slave, Harriet Beecher Stowe gives politics a personal face. But Caroline Lee Hentz usually makes domesticity look and feel political. In adapting the conventions of the domestic novel to make her fiction a vehicle for political rhetoric, Hentz undermines the power of fiction to engage a reader's sympathy. Only in arousing sympathy for divided northern families and mistreated free laborers does Hentz fully exploit her medium for her intended purpose. Only in her use of family unity to suggest national unity does she find an image suitable to both her genre and her politics. The Planter's Northern Bride is, therefore, a
problematical response to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; it shows both effective and ineffective adaptations of domestic conventions for conservative political purposes.
CHAPTER IV

Domestic Fiction Contends With Confederate Polemics in Macaria

Augusta Evans (1835 – 1909) was motivated by grander political purposes than were Mary Eastman and Carolyn Lee Hentz. She aspired to do more than defend her region’s system of labor from the attacks leveled at it by a novel. Her political purpose exceeded even that of Sarah J. Hale, who urged conciliation between sections by sweeping aside sectional differences in the name of the sanctity of the Union. For by 1864 when Macaria was published in Richmond, Virginia, such purposes were obsolete. Evans conceived of Macaria as the first novel of the new nation that a Confederate victory would bring into being. She dedicated the book to the "Army of the Southern Confederacy, who have delivered the South from despotism, and who have won for generations yet unborn the precious guerdon of constitutional republican liberty. . . ."¹ That dedication, together with the subtitle Altars of Sacrifice, indicates that part of Evans’ purpose was to recognize and glorify the sacrifices of her countrymen on the battlefield.

¹ Augusta Evans, Macaria, or, Altars of Sacrifice 1864 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1992) 4. All further references to this novel are noted parenthetically in the text.
But Evans knew that southern women, too, had sacrificed much for the Confederacy, and her novel extols their contributions to the cause. Unlike Eastman, Hentz, and Hale, Evans was not writing from a defensive or conciliatory position. Her novel is filled with the fervor of one who lives in revolutionary times and expounds upon the best social and political arrangements for the new republic. Her characters embark on a quest toward "the divinely-appointed goal--Womanly Usefulness" (380). Macaria is, in part, an answer to the question of how women could be useful citizens, both during the war and after the hoped-for victory. That question took on a new urgency because the war itself was unsettling gender relations.

An editorial in DeBow's Review in 1864 indicates the scope of those changes in gender relations. After praising the heroes and martyrs of the battlefield, the editorial goes on to say:

Our women, too. How nobly have they stood up to the requisitions of the times! Three-fourths of the estates and property of the country are managed by them, and managed with admirable results; and still they have time to fabricate cloth and clothes for soldiers, to wait upon hospitals, to visit the camps and the neighborhood of battlefields, and to keep up all the evidences of comfort and civilization. Sometimes they are found
plough or hoe in hand. Even those reared to wealth and luxury earn a bare living pittance at the hands of quartermasters, contractors, or in the public offices of government; and yet how cheerful and how happy withal! The greatest heroism and martyrdom of the times are not to be found upon the battle-field.²

Here, Confederate women are praised not only for exerting their civilizing influence on the world, what Augusta Evans' heroine Irene would call the "embroidery on the coarse gray serge of stern, practical every-day life" (184), but also for capably assuming responsibilities that had previously been men's: managing plantations, working in the fields, or conducting business related to the army and government.³ "Womanly usefulness" is a political issue in a general sense, but Evans offers even more pointedly political commentary in her political-domestic novel.

The most politically explicit part of Macaria is the last ten chapters of the thirty-six chapter novel, the section that opens with the election of Lincoln and closes with the paired heroines, Irene and Electra, home from hospital work in Richmond, discussing how they will serve


³ Accounts of some of the ways the war changed gendered responsibilities can be found in Drew Faust, Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War (Columbia, MO: U of Missouri P, 1992), and George Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 1989).
the Confederacy when victory is secured. In the earlier chapters of the novel, Evans has presented characters and plots that conform more closely to the pattern of nineteenth-century domestic fiction, but even there her political agenda, never far beneath the surface, threatens to disrupt the conventions of her medium. In particular, the opening chapters focus as much on a male protagonist’s public conflicts that turn into political battles resolved at the polls as they do on a female protagonist’s internal struggles. Reviewers and readers were often disappointed by such a mixture of politics and domesticity. One review signed D. K. W. notes that "love forms the great staple of the work, yet it is introduced with the special design of making it subservient to what are regarded as the higher dictates of patriotism." Similarly, Drew Gilpin Faust quotes a reader, Belle Edmondson, who expected a more conventional ending, perhaps a wedding or a funeral. Edmondson wrote in her diary on June 17 and 20, 1864, that while she had been "delighted" with the beginning of the book, she was "not entirely satisfied with the fate of some of the characters."5

In choosing to present her political messages through fiction, Evans selected a medium that could reach the widest

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5 Belle Edmondson, qtd. in Drew Gilpin Faust, introduction, Macaria xxiv n12.
possible audience—northerners as well as southerners, women as well as men, and mass market readers as well as elites who would read literary magazines. She presents her support for the hierarchical southern social system through fiction that employs some of the elements popularized by domestic novelists: love stories, moving death scenes, and the growth to maturity of paired heroines, both of whom had lost their mothers.

Evans' goal of reaching a wide audience was only partially realized. Wartime difficulties in publishing and distributing Macaria make it surprising that as many as 20,000 copies were in circulation in the South by 1865.6 In comparison, 22,000 copies of her previous book, Beulah, were printed in the first nine months of its publication,7 but her subsequent best-selling novel, St. Elmo, was supposedly read by one million people within its first four months of circulation.8 An article in a 1910 issue of Bookman claims "Macaria was a great favourite about the Southern campfires and in the Southern hospitals."9 Macaria evidently circulated enough to provoke one Union general stationed

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6 Drew Gilpin Faust, introduction, Macaria, xvii.


in Tennessee to confiscate and burn all the copies he could find among his troops. He did not want such Confederate propaganda to demoralize his men. Confederate soldiers evidently found the book encouraging in the depressing closing years of the war, and the unlikely legend persists that one Rebel's life was saved when a Yankee bullet lodged in the thick book carried in the pocket over his heart.

Those reports of men reading Macaria make it one of the few women's novels that assuredly reached a male audience. Evans no doubt had a mixed audience in mind, not the female audience implied by the genre of domestic fiction, for, as she wrote in a letter to her friend Janie Tyler, she hoped her fiction would be a spiritual aid to her "countrymen and countrywomen" (emphasis added). Even within the text of the novel she praises her hero, Russell, for borrowing books to read (though we see him reading manly Horace, not womanly novels) and calls attention to a moral lesson she wants her novel to impart to young men:

Have I a reader whose fond father lavishes on him princely advantages, whose shelves are filled with valuable, but unread volumes, whose pockets are supplied with more than necessary money, and who

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10 Maurice 36.


yet saunters through the precious season of youth failing utterly to appreciate his privileges? Let him look into that little room where Russell sits, pale, wearied, but unbending, pondering his dark future, planning to protect his mother from want, and racking his brain for some feasible method of procuring such books as he absolutely needs; books which his eager, hungry eyes linger on as he passes the bookstore every morning going to his work. Oh, young reader! if such I have, look at him struggling with adversity . . . and . . . shake off the inertia that clings to you. . . , and go to work earnestly and bravely, thanking God for the aids he has given you. (13)

Rich young men should read, Evans advises here, as she specifically addresses a young male reader. And so should poor young men. Evans dramatizes this point with an episode in her plot. When Irene goes down to the poor houses of the factory workers to care for the sick, she sees Philip, a fourteen-year-old who has been hurt in an industrial accident. She asks him how he likes the book she has lent him, Simms's Life of Nathaniel Green.13 Philip replies, "I could bear to be a cripple always, if I had plenty like it to read" (256). Later Irene insists that Philip borrow her

13 It is interesting that at this time of disunion Evans mentions a book by a southern author on the life of a northern Revolutionary War general.
Plutarch and read it, too. As these examples demonstrate, Evans insists upon the usefulness of books within the pages of a novel freighted with political, social, and moral messages, a novel she hoped would reach a wide audience of male as well as female readers.

Evans also wanted northern readers for Macaria, so she gave a copy of her novel to a blockade runner who smuggled it North. Given her arch-loyalty to the Confederacy, it is interesting that she would want a northern edition. She probably had mixed motives. Ideationally, she must have hoped that her impassioned denunciation of all that was "northern"—abolitionism, demagogism, Lincolnism, materialism, individualism, feminism—would rebuke readers in the North. Pragmatically, she must have been aware that sales in the North would far outstrip those in the South. At the time the literacy rate in New England was approximately five times that in the South, and, in 1852, G. P. Putnam said that sales of books in Ohio alone outnumbered sales in all the southern states combined.\(^\text{14}\)

Augusta Evans would have been concerned about sales; she published, in part, because she needed money. Although the paternalistic ideology that dominated the South celebrated woman's weakness and dependency, a look at Evans' biography shows that she provided for her father from early

on, not the other way around. Her father, Matt Evans, son of a plantation owner, became a storekeeper and plantation owner himself. He married Sarah Howard, who reputedly had a dowry of $30,000, and they built an elaborate home in Columbus, Georgia, so expensive that locals dubbed it "Matt's Folly." Future events proved the appropriateness of the name: in 1843, a fall in cotton prices and a bust in the boom town of Columbus left Matt Evans bankrupt.\(^\text{15}\)

Thus, poverty was a major impetus for Evans to publish, as it was for Sarah Hale, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Carolyn Lee Hentz. When she did have her first financial success, she purchased the home her family was renting and registered the deed in her father's name,\(^\text{16}\) a reversal of the usual father-daughter role with regard to who pays the bills.

Perhaps the conflict between her reality and the ideal of father-daughter relationships influenced the way Evans depicted fathers in *Macaria*. Or perhaps she portrayed problematic fathers in order to justify the strong heroines her genre required while still upholding the ideal of a paternalistic society. By exaggerating the flaws of individual fathers, Evans calls for individual reform, not a social revolution overthrowing male authority figures. In this novel, rather than fulfilling their half of the pater-

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\(^{15}\) Fidler, *Biography* 11-20.

nalist bargain by providing protection and sustenance in exchange for dutiful obedience, fathers present problems, even in their absence.\textsuperscript{17}

Take the case of Russell Aubrey, the male love interest in \textit{Macaria}. Russell studies from dawn until past midnight, despite the concern of his mother and his adoring cousin Electra, an orphan who lives with the Aubreys. He works so hard because he is determined to redeem his family name from the scandal associated with his dead father. Mr. Aubrey had suffered financial losses, and when a wealthy, influential creditor insulted him for being late to pay his debts, Aubrey killed him. Unfortunately, Mr. Aubrey did not choose to duel, which would have been acceptable in some southern circles, although Evans makes it clear in \textit{St. Elmo} that she herself did not condone dueling as a way to settle matters of honor. Instead, Aubrey disposed of his enemy in a common fight. A jury found him guilty of murder, and an outraged community demanded that he be hanged. Rather than face such an ignoble end, Mr. Aubrey committed suicide.

\textsuperscript{17} In offering a critique of the excesses possible in a paternalistic society, Evans demonstrates what Elizabeth Fox-Genovese notes about southern white women’s defense and critique of their region before the Civil War. Their proslavery response to abolitionists "never betokened an uncritical acceptance of everything in slaveholding society. . . . The staunchest female defenders of southern slaveholding society were frequently the first to recognize the ways in which it failed to live up to its own professed ideals." Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "To Be Worthy of God's Favor: Southern Women's Defense and Critique of Slavery," 32d Annual Robert Fortenbaugh Lecture (Gettysburg College, 1993) 11.
Russell works by day to earn money to support his mother and cousin and studies law by night, hoping to become a leader in his community and thereby redeem the Aubrey name. During one period of extreme financial need, Russell pawns his father's gold watch to secure an advance on his salary from his employer. The employer's son sees where the watch is stored and steals it, but the blame unjustly falls on Russell, who is fired and publicly disgraced. Luckily his cousin Electra, an aspiring artist, goes to a jeweler to sell a gold locket she had inherited from her mother. She plans to use the money to buy paints, paper, and pencils, this sale of her most valuable object being only the first of many sacrifices Electra will make for her art. While at the jeweler's, she spies Russell's watch, and after the jeweller tracks down the person who sold it to him, Russell's name is cleared. The juxtaposition of a daughter profiting from what she has inherited from her mother with a son suffering from what he has inherited from his father sharpens the novel's focus on the problematical nature of fathers. Such fathers justify the novel's strong children, even strong daughters, without challenging the ideal of a paternalist order that Evans' political views endorsed. Russell goes on to become a lawyer and to be elected to political office by the community that had previously scorned him.
Russell is not the only one who has trouble from his father and trouble with authority figures. His beautiful, intelligent, and pious neighbor, Irene Huntingdon, lives in a palatial home nearby. Her tyrannical father’s insensitivity shows in a scene in which he thrusts back his chair and carelessly crushes the paw of Irene’s dog, Paragon (168). Mr. Huntingdon tries to crush Irene’s independent spirit also. For example, Irene asks her father for money to assist the Aubreys, but he—who can never forget that years earlier Mrs. Aubrey had rejected his proposal of marriage—adamantly refuses and even prohibits Irene from ever seeing the Aubreys again. Irene asks for a reason for his unreasonable command. He responds, "Reason! My will, my command, is sufficient reason. . . . Implicit obedience is your duty" (25). Given that part of Evans’ agenda in Macaria is to defend a social order based on hierarchy and deference, the independent domestic heroine is a threat to the novel’s polemical message. It is only by emphasizing Mr. Huntingdon’s irrationality and spitefulness that Evans can flaunt an independent heroine like Irene. This is why fathers in Macaria all present problems for their sons and daughters.

Irene struggles to assert her individuality in the face of the expectations her father and the town have for her. Specifically, they all expect her to marry. Readers of domestic novels also expected their heroines to marry, so
Irene’s insistence on remaining single can be read as Evans’ insistence on telling her story her way, not strictly according to domestic convention. Evans demonstrates that Confederate women can fulfill some elements of the role of good Republican mothers even if they do not marry. Irene’s father and Evans’ readers have different men in mind for the role of happy husband. Mr. Huntingdon wants his daughter to marry her cousin Hugh. Readers want Irene to marry Russell Aubrey.

Hugh and Russell could hardly be more unalike. Hugh is rich and dissipated. He drinks, smokes cigars, curses, gambles, and flirts. Irene views her father’s insistence that she marry her cousin as an example of her father’s mistaken values, specifically his materialism. She tells Hugh that their loveless marriage would be "a mere moneyed partnership; a sort of legal contract; the only true union being of bank stock, railroad shares, and broad plantations" (195). Russell, in contrast, is an honorable, self-disciplined young man who serves his family, his community, and eventually the Confederacy. He wants to marry Irene, and he undergoes the spiritual conversion so often required before the hero can win the heroine in domestic fiction. Russell echoes Irene’s view of her father’s order in complaining that Irene is "bound, hand and foot, and her father will immolate her on the altar of money" (215). Irene will eventually proclaim herself ready to be a new Macaria and
immolate herself on the altar of sacrifice for her country, but not for marriage or for money.\textsuperscript{18} Both Hugh and Russell eventually get what they deserve, even while Irene keeps her pledge to remain single. The war itself is the deus ex machina that permits Russell and Irene to realize such contradictory goals.

Of course, the war alone could not keep Irene single. She has to be stubborn enough and unconventional enough to resist enormous social and familial pressure. She is. Irene is introduced in a scene in which she is being reprimanded by her aunt (her mother is dead) for carrying her own dinner to school instead of allowing her servant to do so. Aunt Margaret’s concern is that some of the influential neighbors might see her and "hardly believe you belonged to a wealthy, aristocratic family like the Huntingdons. Child, I never carried my own dinner to school in my life" (17). The exchange that follows between Irene (who speaks first) and her aunt tells much about Irene’s character and a major theme of the novel:

"And I expect that is exactly the reason why you are forever complaining, and scarcely see one well day in the three hundred and sixty-five. As to what people think, I don’t care a cent; as to whether my ancestors did or did not carry their

\textsuperscript{18} Macaria was the heroine of Athens who sacrificed her life to save her homeland from invaders.
lunch in their own aristocratic hands is a matter of no consequence whatever. I despise all this ridiculous nonsense about aristocracy of family, and I mean to do as I please. . . .

"I do not see where you get such plebeian ideas; you positively make me ashamed of you sometimes, when fashionable, genteel persons come to the house. . . . You are anything but a Huntingdon."

"I am what God made me, Aunt Margaret. If the Huntingdons stand high, it is because they won distinction by their own efforts; I don't want the stepping-stones of my dead ancestry; people must judge me for myself, not from what my grandmother was." (14 - 15)

In addition to establishing Irene's stubborn unconventionality and her unwillingness to defer to her elders, this passage shows that materialism is not the only enemy. So are social pretense, false pride of family, and genteel avoidance of work.

Augusta Evans often made opportunities in Macaria to deliver similar homilies. So at odds is her picture of southern aristocracy with Caroline Lee Hentz's and George Fitzhugh's that it is remarkable that they were all on the same side of the sectional dispute. Hentz and Fitzhugh celebrate the refinements made possible for the upper class
in a society based on unfree labor; Evans deplores the false values of the aristocrats in such a society and calls for individual reform to effect social reform.

Irene, besides being self-reliant and opposed to any aristocratic pretensions and disparagement of work, is also stubborn enough and clever enough to find a way to disobey her father’s injunction against the charitable deed she wished to perform for the Aubreys. Irene ignores her father’s unreasonable command that she not visit her friends, borrows money from a doctor, and pays for her neighbor’s surgery. When her father discovers that she has disobeyed him, he sends Irene to a loathsome boarding school in New York for punishment. (It is fitting that in this Confederate story, New York should be a place for banishment.) Evans dramatizes the acute pain Irene feels on her forced separation from her home, her friends, her servants, her dog, and her horse not only to heighten readers’ sympathy for the wronged heroine, but also to emphasize how irrational and spiteful Irene’s father can be.

Electra ends up in New York also, of her own volition, but her time there is no happier than Irene’s. She makes progress in her study of painting, but her days and nights are spent in a gloomy interior with a dying artist, his dying mother, and his melancholy pet owl, which perches Raven-like near a clock. Her desire to be independent, to develop her artistic talent, and to fulfill an almost filial
obligation to her art teacher are what give Electra the courage to stay in New York. Her sense of duty to the artist even outlasts his life: she stays on to care for his mother after he dies.

Electra resembles Irene not only in her sense of duty but also in her proud independence. Because her grandfather had disowned her headstrong father, Electra refuses her newly-discovered aunt's offer of financial assistance. In repudiating an inheritance that is rightfully hers, Electra demonstrates once again that fathers, even absent fathers, present problems. And once again, principle overrides material concerns. Electra wants to make it on her own as an artist, and she does. Evans justifies her heroines' independence by giving both of them unreasonable fathers. Domestic fiction prescribed such heroines; southern ideology did not.

Troublesome fathers and independent personality traits are not all that Irene and Electra share: they both love Russell Aubrey. Russell clearly thinks of his cousin only in a brotherly way, but he loves Irene, who keeps her reciprocal feelings hidden out of deference to her father's feelings. Here we see one of Irene's original interpretations of a daughter's duty. She openly defies her father when doing so will benefit someone else (Mrs. Aubrey and Electra), and again when he tries to coerce her into marrying her cousin by telling her that her rightful inheritance
will be bestowed upon that dissolute young cavalier. But she acts in consideration of his pride in refusing to encourage the attentions of Russell Aubrey, a man he despises, a man, in fact, who has defeated her father in an election after devastating him in a public debate. The message is that behavior should be governed by a rightful sense of duty and mutual obligation, not authoritarian command. This ethic is reminiscent of the author's description of her relationship with her publisher,19 and it fits

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19 Evans wrote to J. C. Derby, publisher, late in her career to tell him about receiving more money from his successor, G. W. Carleton, for a reissue of Macaria than she had contracted for: . . . I should like the world to know how noble and generous he [Carleton] has always been to me. When purchasing the stereotype plates of my earlier books, he told me that he was obliged to pay so much for the plates of 'Macaria' that he could only allow me a moderate percentage on the future sales. We agreed upon the terms and signed the contract . . . Subsequently, when 'St. Elmo' and 'Vashti' had been published, I one day received a letter from Mr. Carleton, saying that the sales of the volumes justified him in increasing the percentage on 'Macaria.' From that period until now, in making his annual settlement of copyright, he has paid me a larger percentage on 'Macaria' than my original contract specified, and this increase was his own voluntary generous impulse, for I had never solicited any change of terms. Verily, a Prince of Publishers! Qtd. in Derby Biography 397.

It must have pleased this southern woman to tell of the elements of her relationship with her publishers that went beyond contractual, business affairs and touched on human bonds of loyalty and fairness. Susan Coultrap-McQuin suggests in Doing Literary Business (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1990) that mid-nineteenth century publishers played a genteel, paternalistic role in their relationships with their authors, a role that allowed Evans to think of Derby and Carleton as friends, not just business partners.
in with southern ideals about paternalistic master-slave relationships.20

Irene is at least partly vindicated on earth for her decisions about Hugh and Russell. Her cousin dies after galloping away from Irene when she refuses his drunken, lascivious overtures. Eventually her father forgives her for having refused Hugh for so many years, and shortly before leaving for the war Mr. Huntingdon rewrites his will, leaving his fortune to his daughter. Irene wins out in the end, as heroines of domestic novels must, but Irene’s victory over her father undermines Evans’ polemical stance and shows that Macaria has a social reform agenda. The social order Evans advocates is a hierarchy with noble white males at the top, not inverted hierarchies that allow uppity daughters to prevail. Even exaggerating Mr. Huntingdon’s irrationality cannot disguise the problem created when Evans tried to advance a polemical message that was at odds with her domestic medium.

The question of how the novel will resolve another problem--the problem of two friends loving the same man--

20 George Fitzhugh explains the connection he sees between dependence and affection in *Sociology for the South* (1854): "A state of dependence is the only condition in which reciprocal affection can exist among human beings--the only situation in which the war of competition ceases, and peace, amity and good will arise. . . . [S]laves are always dependent, never the rivals of their master. . . . [T]hough men are often found at variance with wife or children, we never saw one who did not like his slaves, and rarely a slave who was not devoted to his master" (246-247).
contributes to the plot by providing some necessary suspense. That literary advantage of paired heroines is complemented by both political and psychological advantages for the author. Politically, Evans needed to write a novel featuring Irene, a worthy representative of the southern ruling elite, to demonstrate the advantages of an aristocracy made possible by slavery. As a paragon of southern womanly virtue, Irene does not develop as a character; she is as good as a child as she is as a woman. But most domestic novels feature poor orphan girls who develop virtue, as did Evans' own Beulah and St. Elmo. Enter Electra, Irene's friend, a poor orphan girl who has spiritual weaknesses to overcome; she plays the role necessitated by Evans' fictional form. Doubling her heroines allows Evans to showcase southern womanhood (as her political agenda demanded) and to depict a heroine's spiritual growth (as her genre demanded).

21 Stowe, in contrast, did not ask readers to identify with any mature, virtuous southern white women in Uncle Tom's Cabin. Her polemical purpose was better served by showing virtue in children, slaves, and abolitionist women.

22 Perhaps another reason--this one psychological--that Evans doubled her main female characters was as a way to try on alternative identities: scholar, and artist. Irene is pale, her skin is cold to the touch, and Hugh accuses her of being like a marble statue on a pedestal. She studies relentlessly and adheres to a strict Protestant religious code. Her spiritual reading is based on suggestions from a minister she loves like a brother. Electra is dark, passionate, and imaginative. She displays antinomian tendencies and reads spiritually subversive books. Electra has a somewhat morbid sensibility, as her fascination with the illustration for Poe's "The City in the Sea" reveals. Both females have heroic qualities, but Irene has the
In the novel, the Civil War provides the solution to the Irene-Electra-Russell triangle. When it begins, all the characters in the book do their patriotic duty. Electra comes home from Europe where she has been studying art. She even smuggles some important documents into the Confederacy after bravely consigning her life (as the author had done the manuscript of *Macaria*) into the hands of a blockade runner. His name is Wright; his boat is named *Dixie*; and in case the Dickensian significance of these names is not emphatic enough, Electra’s last name is Grey. Wright, a Marylander, deplores his state’s error in taking the wrong side. He has some choice comments to make as a Union ship opens fire on the *Dixie* and aims particularly at Electra. Here is proof that the Yankees are barbarians who would destroy one of the foundations of social order—southern womanhood. That episode is one of many where Evans makes clear the polemical purpose of her novel.23

23 This scene, and even the language used to describe Electra’s behavior and the Yankees firing on a woman, recalls a letter Evans wrote on June 26, 1861, to her friend Rachel Lyons. Evans and her mother had ventured to Norfolk to visit two of Evans’ brothers who were serving in the southern Army. She writes:
After her safe return, Electra joins Irene in making bandages and nursing the wounded in hospitals. Irene is the better nurse, and the novel shows her comforting a dying young soldier who, in his delirium, thinks that she is his mother. These are further examples of women proving their usefulness during war, even when their traditional role of mother is denied them except in a soldier's delirium. The roles of daughter and wife are also denied the paired heroines. Electra's father is dead at the beginning of the novel. Irene's father is killed in the war, and, in a resolution that opens the way for a surprising, unconventional ending, so is Russell Aubrey. He dies in Irene's

During my stay [we] went to an exposed point to take a look at Fortress Munroe, immediately opposite to us. While I stood looking at its savage portholes the immense Rifle Cannon at the Rip-Raps thundered angrily, and to our amazement, a heavy shell exploded a few yards from us. I turned my glass at once on the Rip-Raps, and distinctly saw the muzzle of the villainous gun pointed at our party; saw the gunmen at work reloading, and while I watched a second flash sent its missile of death right at us. When a third ball whizzed over our heads and exploded in a field just beyond us, the officers insisted we should get out of sight, as they were very evidently firing at us, and our lives were in danger. Oh! I longed for a secession flag to shake defiantly in their teeth at every fire; and my fingers fairly itched to touch off a red hot ball in answer to their chivalric civilities. Ten shells fell on land, but nobody was hurt, thank God. (Qtd. in Fidler, Biography 97).

Evans' wish to have a flag is answered in Macaria, where Electra takes off her red shawl and shakes it defiantly at the Yankee gunners. Captain Wright looks through his glass and says that her "red flag stings their Yankee pride a little... They see you. Should not be surprised if they aimed specially at you. That is the style of New England chivalry." Evans, Macaria 359.
arms after they have assured each other of their mutual love and after each has voiced the assurance that they will meet in heaven.

This celestial reunion will be possible because Irene—in keeping with her domestic prototypes—planted the seeds of Russell’s conversion before he left for the battlefield by giving him a Bible and urging him, for her sake, to read it and pray. Electra has been delirious with fever, so conveniently she is unable to be at Russell’s deathbed. When she finds out that he asked Irene to kiss her goodbye for him she weeps, but true to the power of sentimental persuasion, she announces that she hopes to become a Christian too so that she might meet Russell beyond the grave.

Readers of domestic fiction had a right to expect a heroine’s marriage to provide a happy ending to a novel, as it would for Evans’ next novel, the enormously popular St. Elmo (1866). So conventional was the marriage ending that in Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Harriet Jacobs feels compelled to explain, "Reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage." Evans’ readers must have expected Russell Aubrey to survive the war and claim Irene. But Russell—and readers—have to settle

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24 Heroines of domestic fiction often reform rakes by leading exemplary lives and by refusing to marry the hero until he mends his ways. Evans returns to this theme in her next novel, St. Elmo.

for knowing that Irene loved him and would enjoy eternity with him. Even Russell's death is not the end of the novel, though it is the climax. He dies on page 404, Electra finds out and is comforted by Irene on pages 406 - 407, and still there are eight pages left. The final scene accommodates the domestic novel form to social realities facing Confederate women and advances Evans' political purpose of showing women how to be of use in a radically changed society.

With money from the sale of her diamonds added to what she has inherited and solicited from two male benefactors, Irene plans to open a School of Design for Women, and she wants Electra to preside over it. These women will not be rivals for a man's affection and protection; rather, they will be business partners, Irene contributing the capital and Electra supplying the talent to teach "drawing classes, wood-engraving, and the various branches of Design" (459). The school will also house a county library, so readers like the poor cripple boy Irene had helped will be able to check out books like the ones Evans wrote. Electra's allegorical painting called A Modern Macaria--which shows the bloody sacrifice of Confederate soldiers while bereaved mothers, wives, children and even a dog look mournfully on--will hang in the school. Electra is pleased with the prospect, but she fears being alone and not having anyone but Irene with whom to share her successes. Macaria ends with a scene of Electra and Irene leaning against each other and gazing at
the sun setting over the "tall, marble shaft which the citizens of W____ had erected over the last resting-place of Russell Aubrey" (464). Irene says,

"Electra, it is very true that single women have trials for which a thoughtless, happy world has little sympathy. But lonely lives are not necessarily joyless; they should be, of all others most useful. The head of a household, a wife and mother, is occupied with family cares and affections--can find little time for considering the comfort, or contributing to the enjoyment of any beyond the home-circle. Doubtless she is happier, far happier, than the unmarried women; but to the last belongs the privilege of carrying light and blessings to many firesides--of being the friend and helper of hundreds; and because she belongs exclusively to no one, her heart expands to all her suffering fellow-creatures." (462)

Such female bonding and the sacrifice of domestic bliss in the service of a wider community are certainly good examples of how to conduct one's life in the aftermath of a Civil War that reduced the number of marriageable men and left a society in need of rebuilding. Here, Evans transforms the conventions of domestic fiction to offer an instructive example to southern women in their changed political and social circumstances.
In addition to writing this political-domestic novel, Evans also wrote letters on political issues. For instance in January of 1861 Evans wrote to a woman who had asked her to denounce secession publicly:

You will, I trust, pardon me when candor compels the avowal that with such a memorial I have no sympathy whatever. . . . You have warmly espoused the "Union" cause, while I am an earnest and uncompromising Secessionist. . . . Prompt and separate state action I believe to be the only door of escape from the worse than Egyptian bondage of Black Republicanism. For fifteen years, we of the South have endured insult and aggression; have ironed down our just indignation, and suffered numberless encroachments, because of our devotion to the "Union"; because we shuddered and shrank from laying hands on the magnificent Temple which our forefathers reared in proud triumph. . . . Presuming upon their devotion, Northern fanaticism has grown on Southern endurance, and not all the diplomacy, the consummate statesmanship of patriotic men of both sections has weighed one iota against the waves of Abolitionism, which have rolled rapidly on till they threaten to pollute the sacred precincts of the White House. The "Union" has become a misnomer, and rather than witness the desecration of our glorious Fane, we
of the South will Samson-like lay hold upon its pillars, and if need be, perish in its ruins.\textsuperscript{26} Such determined opposition to the Northern cause led Evans to refuse to espouse the call for Union or marry a northern suitor. The willingness to sacrifice her life this letter announces anticipates the theme of sacrifice that runs through \textit{Macaria}.

Evans' pre-war political activity was not limited to letters to women. She wrote to J. L. M. Curry, the congressman from Alabama before 1861 and a political and military leader in the Confederacy, advising him on political matters such as the Exemption Bill. The secret debate on the Bill, which would allow wealthy southerners to escape conscription, had been a dreadful procedure, she wrote, and passage of the Bill had led to widespread desertions among the troops stationed in Alabama.\textsuperscript{27} A reader of \textit{Macaria} is reminded of Irene's and Electra's refusal to draw on the claims of their families' wealth and their insistence upon doing their duty. Evans did her war duty by directing a group of women in sewing sandbags to protect Fort Morgan and by nursing wounded soldiers. In appreciation, General P. G. T. Beauregard presented her with his personal writing pen. In a letter dated August 4, 1862, she thanks him and then

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\textsuperscript{26} Evans, Qtd. in Fidler \textit{Biography} 86.

\textsuperscript{27} Fidler, \textit{Biography} 93.
complains of the small role allotted to women in the Confederate cause, continuing:

I have consoled myself with the reflection that, after all, woman's sphere of influence might be like Pascal's "one of which the centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere"; and though debarred from the "tented field," the cause of our beloved, struggling Confederacy may yet be advanced through the agency of its daughters.\textsuperscript{28}

Evans wanted to widen her own "sphere of influence" through \textit{Macaria}, which went in her stead to tented fields as well as to parlors.

General Beauregard also corresponded with Augusta Evans on March 24, 1863. She had requested his account of the Confederate victories at the Battles of Bull Run and Manassas, and he complied, knowing that she intended to include battle scenes in \textit{Macaria}. Chapter XXX of the novel places Irene's father and Russell Aubrey at the Battle of Bull Run, where Major Huntingdon and the object of his lifelong hatred meet, united in patriotism. The author has conferred rank by merit, so it is Colonel Aubrey who eases the dying pains of his former political and social enemy.

Both soldiers have their loyal slaves at their sides throughout the battle, and Huntingdon's William precedes his master in death, "faithful to the last," the master eulogiz-

\textsuperscript{28} Evans, Qtd. in Fidler 95.
es, his eyes filling with tears (381). Here, as everywhere in Macaria, the depiction of slavery is given in an understated, matter-of-fact tone. Slaves, usually referred to as faithful servants, are present but incidental to the action concerning the white men and women of the novel. It is difficult for a modern reader to know which minor characters are white and which are black, since clues like dialect are absent. One hint, however, is that slaves are called by first name only, without any honorifics like "Mr." or "Miss." Their happiness and loyalty are taken for granted. For example, Irene's invalid uncle, traveling in Europe with his slave, notes that the personal bond connecting them is so strong that he does not at all fear the slave will run away. Her uncle's trust is warranted; the slave proves faithful.

In contrast, slaves do worry Irene's father when he sets off for war. Major Huntingdon cannot at first accept leaving his daughter at home with only the slaves around.29 Since Major Huntingdon, who is almost always wrong, is the character who believes the slaves might prove ungovernable,

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29 Drew Faust points out that three-fourths of white southern men of military age during the war years were away from their homes. In consequence, "White women's actions as slave mistresses were critical to Confederate destinies, for the viability of the southern agricultural economy, the stability of the social order, as well as the continuing loyalty of the civilian population all depended upon successful slave control." Drew Gilpin Faust, "'Trying to Do a Man's Business: Gender, Violence, and Slave Management in Civil War Texas," Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1992) 174-176.
it is safe to assume that Evans is not endorsing his opinion. Irene assures her father of her perfect confidence and trust in the slaves' devotion to her. A later scene justifies Irene's faith. As Irene worries over her premonition of her father's death, "Nellie" arrives to dispense comfort and wisdom, saying, "Please drink your tea, just to please me, Queen. I can't bear to look at you. . . . Child, it will be time enough to fret when you know Mas' Leonard is hurt. Don't run to meet trouble; it will face you soon enough" (389). Shortly after this exchange, another slave, Andrew, weeps as he brings the news that her father is dead. In her grief, "the orphan turned her eyes upon Nellie and Andrew—the devoted two who had petted her from childhood" (390).

Still, as the war waxes on, Irene finds it necessary to leave town and go with her uncle to the plantation, where she wants to consult with the overseer about making changes concerning the slaves. Though the novel in no way elaborates upon these changes, it is a fair guess that Irene would have been interested in adding security measures to prevent the slaves' desertion. In fact, by 1865, the Evans family's slaves had all fled.30 The personal bonds of loyalty between real slaves and masters were not as strong

30 Fidler, Biography 119.
in reality as novelists and proslavery theorists had proclaimed.\(^{31}\)

Macaria, with its pro-Confederate polemical agenda, was not the forum for Evans to admit to any reservations she held about slavery. But her defense of slavery is muted compared with the defense set forth in works like Aunt Phillis's Cabin and The Planter’s Northern Bride. Like Sarah J. Hale, Evans seems more eager to attack abolitionists than to defend slavery. Even in that enterprise Evans’ prose is uncharacteristically restrained, much more restrained in tone than in either her letter to the woman who asked her to denounce secession or in her fictional diatribes against northern "chivalry." An example of her muted attack on abolitionists is in a passage where a reader would expect a simile to end with a reference to a slave. Evans instead takes a jab at two of the strongholds of abolitionism. "Are n’t you afraid that I will work you more unmercifully than a Yankee factory-child, or a Cornwall miner?" (379) she has a character ask, emphasizing the injustices that occurred under the free labor system abolitionists advocated.

Why would Macaria present such a quiet defense of slavery when it is so strident in its denunciation of

\(^{31}\) Approximately 80% of slaves remained on their master’s plantations during the war, but as Eugene Genovese points out, "More would have gone if they had had the chance or the courage. Many others wisely waited for the end of the war to go their own way." Genovese, Roll 111.
Abolitionism and other Northern -isms? Remembering Irene's insistence that she carry her own lunch pail to school and putting that example together with another letter Evans wrote to J. L. M. Curry suggest one answer. Curry had asked her to criticize the subject of a speech he planned to give in Richmond in 1863: "Is the character of Southern women prejudicially affected by slavery?" Evans' answer is a surprising yes. Fidler's summary of this letter, interspersed with phrases quoted from Evans' letter, says much about why slavery is so quietly portrayed in *Macaria*:

Just "entre nous," she writes, "it appears that the physical and mental status of Southern women" are adversely affected by the institution. Are not the women in the households of slave-owners, as a class, "enervated, lethargic, incapable of enduring fatigue. . . afflicted with chronic lassitude? Why? Simply because they never systematically exercise."

The average Southern housewife who enjoys the advantages of slave ownership is a useless "incubus to her husband and utterly incapable of educating and attending to her children." The leisure which she has is not properly used, and her freedom from work has contributed to her bad health. Southern women are often pleasant and graceful, she admits, but their "information is painfully scanty, their judgment defective, their reasoning faculties dwarfed, their aspirations weak and
frivolous." The history of nations in other southern climates where slavery has flourished gives the same account of its women.\textsuperscript{32}

As Evans sees it, southern women do resemble Harriet Beecher Stowe's lazy and ineffectual creation, Marie St. Claire. But Stowe was one author no pro-Confederate polemicist could dare to agree with. Evans goes on to caution Curry that the time is not right to address such a subject. She suggests instead that he speak on "Political and Social Quicksands of the Future." These quicksands include a utilitarian attitude and a broadening of suffrage, which Evans saw as a prelude to anarchy. Curry took her advice, and his speech was warmly received in Richmond. Her infrequent references to slavery in \textit{Macaria} indicate that Evans followed her own advice as well.

When Evans does show female slaves and white women together in \textit{Macaria}, she proves disappointing to historians who might look for evidence of a female bond that transcended race, uniting slave women and the white women of slaveholding families.\textsuperscript{33} One curious scene suggests a different interpretation of such relationships. Hugh has

\textsuperscript{32} Fidler, \textit{Biography} 116.

returned from Paris, hopeful that Irene will finally conform her will to her father's and marry him. After spurning him once again, Irene goes to her own room, closes the door, and is surprised to find her nurse, Nellie, waiting for her. Nellie offers comfort, saying that she has known all along that Mr. Huntingdon wanted Irene to marry Hugh but that Irene's mother had bitterly opposed such a union. Here would be an ideal time for the author to show an alliance of feeling between Irene, her dead mother, and Nellie, all of whom share various degrees of powerlessness in relationship to Mr. Huntington, their father, husband, or master.

But instead of allowing Nellie to speak ill of her father, even about a matter that pained her so deeply, Irene coolly says, "Nellie, you must remember that, in all my father does, he intends and desires to promote my welfare, and to make me happy" (167). Nellie tries one more time to gain Irene's confidence by mentioning another grievance Irene should hold against her father—her banishment to boarding school in New York for four years. Irene says nothing to encourage Nellie to question Mr. Huntingdon's authority. Instead, she quickly begins to think of her mother's brother, a white family member who offers Irene emotional support without knowing about her difficulties with her father. Irene, true to the implications of her nickname, Queen, refuses to conspire with an underling to challenge the right to rule of the person at the top of her
family's hierarchical structure. She may refuse to obey her father when a loveless marriage and an opportunity to act charitably are at stake, even though he avers that "implicit obedience is your duty" (25), but she discourages a slave's subversive challenge to his authority. Class transcends gender in this instance and obstructs the possibility of a biracial sisterhood.

Macaria does take up the subjects Evans suggests to Curry in lieu of slavery, in particular the utilitarian attitude that she felt was threatening civilized social living and the broadening of suffrage that she feared would lead to anarchy.34 Concerning utilitarianism, Electra

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34 On suffrage, Russell Aubrey utters what are clearly Evans' opinions, bolstered by a passage from Edmund Burke, the conservative British political philosopher:

[I]t matters little whether we have one or one hundred million tyrants, if our rights are trampled; it is a mere question of taste whether you call the despot Czar, Dictator, or Ballot-box. The masses are electrical, and valuable principles of government should be kept beyond the reach of explosion. . . . I would . . . extend our naturalization laws so as to restrict the foreign vote, [and] limit the right of suffrage by affixing a property qualification. . . . In examining the statistics of the Northern and Western states recently, and noting the dangerous results of the crude foreign vote, I was forcibly reminded of a passage in Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution:" "Those who attempt to level, never equalize. In all societies, consisting of various descriptions of citizens, some description must be uppermost. The levellers, therefore, only change and pervert the natural order of things; they load the edifice of society by setting up in the air what the solidity of the structure requires to be on the ground." The day is not far distant, I fear, when European paupers, utterly ignorant of our institutions, will determine who shall sit in the presidential chair, and how far the constitution shall be observed. . . . Evans, Macaria 219-220.
suggests to Captain Wright that it is parents' duty (not just mothers' duty) to teach children to "appreciate the beautiful things in this world." She goes on to deny that there exists any real distinction between what is aesthetic and what is utilitarian:

The useful, the practical, and the beautiful are not opposed— are even united— if people would only open their eyes to the truth. I am no morbid sentimentalist or dreaming enthusiast; if nature intended me for such, a cold, matter-of-fact world has cheated me out of my birth-right. I live, sustain myself by my art. . . ; it feeds and clothes my body as well as my mind. But I can't bear to walk through a grand metropolitan cathedral of wonderful and varied loveliness, and see the endless caravan of men and women tramping along its glorious aisles, looking neither to right nor left, oblivious of surrounding splendors, gazing stolidly down at the bag of coins in their hands, or the bales of cotton, or hogsheads of sugar or tobacco, they are rolling before them.

(357)

If this denunciation of universal suffrage seems extreme, it pales in comparison to an editorial in DeBow's Review for July and August, 1864, which says, "let it be a part of our religious creed in the future, that the only citizens of the Confederate States are to be those who are born upon its soil, or who shared its fortunes in the dark hours of its history!" (103).
Electra denounces rural as well as urban materialism as sources of an aesthetically numbing utilitarian attitude. In fact, the School of Design and county library that Electra and Irene will open can be seen as an aesthetic effort with a utilitarian purpose, as can *Macaria* itself, a novel with a political purpose. When Irene tells Electra that she hopes "Southern Art" will eschew "feeble, sickly sentimentality" (369), it is almost as though the author is tipping her hand to show why her novel is so different from novels like *The Lamplighter* (1854), *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), and *Jane Eyre* (1847). For *Macaria*, unlike typical domestic fiction, uses emotions as a vehicle to propel female characters into public, political action. These characters serve as exemplars for Evans' readers. At the end of the novel, Irene and Electra stand dreaming of their work for an institution designed to serve the public. In contrast, the primary female characters of *The Lamplighter* make their final appearances in their new homes with deserving husbands. Similarly, the heroine of *The Wide, Wide World* ends up with a husband and a lovely sitting room of her own. *Jane Eyre* ends up with Rochester. Evans uses her novel to blur the boundaries between private and public, emotional and political. Although her intended political agenda was the opposite of Harriet Beecher Stowe's, Augusta Evans uses her art in *Macaria* as Stowe had in *Uncle Tom's*
Cabin—to arouse emotions, galvanize public opinion, and propel the masses into public action.

Even within the novel, Electra asserts the political power of art, quoting Fletcher of Saltoun, "If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation" (356). Evans was not alone in her recognition of the political power of art. Nina Baym, in *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers*, cites a number of reviews of novels that acknowledge their wide reception and multifarious uses. Typical in content is a review in *Putnam's* in 1854:

> Novels are one of the features of our age. We know not what we would do without them. . . . Do you wish to instruct, to convince, to please? Write a novel! Have you a system of religion or politics or manners or social life to inculcate? Write a novel! Would you have the "world" split its sides with laughter, or set all the damsels in the land a-breaking their hearts? Write a novel! . . . And lastly, not least, but loftiest. . . would you make money? Then in Pluto's and Mammon's name! Write a novel!35

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35 Qtd. in Baym, *Novels*, 31 - 32.
Evans seems to have had all of the motives listed in that review.\footnote{Laughter is the least important of Evans' aims, but the irascible old curmudgeon Dr. Arnold provides some comic relief.}

In Evans' lifetime there were people who recognized the dangerous, radical possibilities of her novels. In 1881, the American Library Association Cooperation named Evans as one of the novelists who had been popular and possibly immoral.\footnote{Dee Garrison, "Immoral Fiction in the Late Victorian Library," American Quarterly 28 (1976) 72.} The novel of hers that most upset some readers was the popular \textit{St. Elmo}, but three of the reasons it troubled people--its heroine's desire to dominate, her strength, and her unconventionality--are traits shared by the heroines of \textit{Macaria}. The war novel, however, conveniently places men out of the way, justifying what Barbara Welter calls the change from "true woman" to "new woman."\footnote{Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820 - 1860," American Quarterly 18 (1966): 174.} Irene and Electra are compelled by the logic of the novel to concern themselves with political realities and public service, not emotional and spiritual lessons that guide domestic relationships.

The School for Design for women and the county library show the author's ideas of how to begin to reconstitute a humane social system. By this novel's conclusion, Augusta Evans has shattered the domestic mold in the service of
disseminating a polemical message and laying out a blueprint for the new country's political and social arrangements. Here is a novel with no virile men in it by the conclusion. Furthermore, it celebrates female logic and community service while showing men to be emotional creatures, quick to take offense, slow to forget a grudge, and willing to kill each other over affronts to their honor.

For all her polemical purposes, Evans still wanted to profit from her novels. In one of her letters to J. L. M. Curry, Evans urged him to work towards the passage of a copyright act in the Confederate Congress. He did so, and she thanked him in a letter dated July 15, 1863. Other evidence suggests Evans' interest in selling. On October 7, 1865, Evans wrote Curry to thank him for his offer to send her "valuable Congressional documents" to help in her effort to write the history of the Confederacy. "My history I intend to make the great end of all my labors in the realm of letters," she stated. And yet, she never wrote such a history. Why?

Drew Gilpin Faust accepts the reason Augusta Evans gave General Beauregard, that she was deferring to Alexander Stephens, who himself proposed to write a Confederate history. But perhaps another part of the answer can be found in her family's situation. Her father was now an invalid. Her brother Howard had an arm injury from the war.

39 Fidler Biography 118, 120.
that severely handicapped him. Her brother Vivian found it difficult to find a job in the town now under the control of the Federal army of occupation. The family was destitute, and only the funds from the Northern edition of Macaria kept them going. Augusta Evans could write best-selling fiction, as Beulah had proven. She began, early in 1866, to write St. Elmo and to promote a literary magazine published in New Orleans. The magazine failed; St. Elmo did not. It sold phenomenally well and earned a fortune and a national reputation for Evans. St. Elmo was not weighted down with the political messages that had distorted the domestic framework of Macaria. In the post-war work Evans was free to concentrate on telling the familiar domestic story of a poor orphan girl whose trials are ultimately rewarded by marriage to a man she has reformed. Thus, in the absence of an urgent polemical purpose, Evans could once again write a domestic novel whose ending conforms to the expectations of an enthusiastic audience.

One way to see Augusta Evans' willingness to write a polemical novel like Macaria, even if she had been able to predict that it would not be as popular as more formulaic domestic fiction, is to see her effort as her sacrifice to the Confederate cause. Even her title indicates the idea of sacrifice. Its original subtitle, "Altars of Sacrifice," was left off in subsequent printings, as was its dedication to the brave soldiers of the Confederacy. But the name
"Macaria" itself suggests sacrifice. Irene tells Russell that she would gladly die for the Confederacy, but that her fate, like that of thousands of southern women, is "infinitely more bitter than the fate of Macaria" (329). Irene and Electra, like Evans in both her life and this novel, will sacrifice romance for political purposes.

In *Macaria*, Augusta Evans makes radical changes in the accepted formula for domestic fiction. She preaches the gospel of womanly usefulness and celebrates the Confederacy in a fictional form usually reserved for imparting more inward lessons about spirituality and emotions. She explicitly addresses male as well as female readers. Likewise, her genre subverts her polemical purpose. Evans depicts strong, independent women and authoritarian males in a novel whose political message ought to celebrate obedient wives and noble masters. The discourse of domesticity and the discourse of Confederate ideology battle it out in *Macaria*, and there is no clear winner. Evans' Civil War novel ends up being a work divided against itself, neither fully domestic nor fully consistent with its own ideological agenda.
CHAPTER V

Cameron Hall: A Retreat from Politics to Domesticity

Another novel that, like Macaria, was written and set during the Civil War serves as a fitting subject for the concluding chapter in this study of political-domestic novels. Cameron Hall is the only novel for adults Mary Anne Cruse (1825 - 1911) ever wrote. Like Carolyn Lee Hentz, Cruse uses the metaphor of family unity to stand for national unity, and like Augusta Evans she refuses to bring her love story to its conventional conclusion. But more than any other novelist in this study, Cruse begins to turn away from politics. She places relatively few overt political speeches in the mouths of her characters, choosing instead to imitate the sermon form when she delivers a didactic message. Her themes are more spiritual and moral than political, that is, more concerned with the behavior of individuals than communities and nations. Cruse signals the return of the domestic genre to its conventional moorings in plot, character, setting, and theme. In doing so Cameron Hall anticipates Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women (1868-1869) in its focus on young women and its retreat from battlefields and politics to the home.

Cameron Hall is a little known novel about a fictional
family living in a place the author names, with some irony, Hopedale, Virginia. The plot focuses on the family’s trials during the Civil War. Sisters Julia and Eva Cameron worry about the safety of their brother Walter and of the men they will marry, Charles and Willie, who are all off fighting for the Confederacy. Mr. Cameron worries about protecting his home, Cameron Hall, and his daughters, especially when Hopedale is occupied by Yankee soldiers. The Cameron’s close friends, including the Reverend Mr. Derby, Uncle John, a schoolteacher named Grace and her blind daughter, Agnes, all share their lives and sufferings with the Camerons. Over the course of the novel, hidden identities are revealed that place Grace and Agnes in a special relationship with the Camerons and Uncle John in a special relationship with Grace, but all of these relationships are marred by sadness, guilt, and shame. A few scenes are set at sea and in Europe as Uncle John takes Agnes to Paris in hopes of restoring her sight, but the effort proves futile and hopes are dashed.

In fact, the tone of the novel is almost unremittingly depressing. There are some peaceful moments, as when Agnes plays her organ or hears magnificent organ music in Switzerland. There is some humor, as when Walter fails at baking biscuits in camp and takes a thorough ribbing from his fellow soldiers. There is even some political humor, as when a frustrated slave trying to get a carriage out of the mud declares that his predicament is the fault of the
foolish white man who named the mules Yank and Confed and expected them pull together. But peace and humor are the exceptions in Cameron Hall. By the end of the novel, two of the four Cameron children are dead, Mr. and Mrs. Cameron are dead, Eva's husband is dead, Agnes is dead, almost all the slaves have deserted or been impressed into Union service, and the stately old home, Cameron Hall, has been defiled by Yankees. It is tempting to correlate the tone of the novel with the southern author's mood as the Civil War progressed and Federal troops occupied her hometown, Huntsville, Alabama.

Although the resigned tone of Cameron Hall is strikingly different from the defiant tone of Macaria, Mary Anne Cruse's novel has much in common with Augusta Evans' Macaria. Cruse was not the accomplished author her fellow Alabaman Evans was, but Cameron Hall can be read as a retelling of Macaria with greater emphasis on spiritual, not political, themes. One of Evans' chief purposes is to tell a domestic tale that teaches "Womanly Usefulness" in the new country to be brought into creation by the Civil War. Such a purpose requires Evans to pay attention to public settings and social institutions. In contrast, one of Cruse's chief purposes is to teach young women the spiritual attitudes that will help them cope with the losses brought about by war. Cruse, therefore, pays more attention to interior settings and emotional, spiritual struggles. Cruse's focus
is on domestic representations of the national conflict; in her novel the Civil War is writ small.

One consequence of Cruse's shift in focus is that she did not need to write to General Beauregard for information about the Battles of Bull Run and Manassas, as Augusta Evans did. Instead, she employs two strategies to discuss the Civil War. First, she depicts essentially domestic scenes at the front—a soldier trying to make biscuits, for instance, or a group of soldiers in a tent enjoying food sent by a loving sister. Second, she discusses the effects of the war on those left at home, children, old men, slaves, and especially women. Cruse contrasts women's heroism to heroism of the "blood-stained battle-field reveal[ed] to the gaze of an astonished world, . . . [and] engrave[d] upon the historic page for the admiration of future generations."

Instead of earning public acclaim, women earn eternal recognition:

[T]he recording angel finds nothing worthier of a place on his tablet than the uncomplaining submission of some patient wife or mother, who has given her all to her country, who would not recall the gift, and who sits in the quiet of her own home for weeks and months and years, with torturing fear, and agonizing dread, and racking suspense for her companions!¹

¹ Mary Ann Cruse, Cameron Hall: A Story of the Civil War (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1867) 476. All further references to the novel will be noted parenthetically in this chapter.
Cruse seems to have set herself the task of being that recording angel. Most of her novel chronicles the inner struggles of Eva and Julia Cameron in the quiet of their own home, though the war eventually propels them out into the world and invades the sanctity of Cameron Hall, their stately plantation home.

Cameron Hall serves as both a physical setting and the center for the characters' moral and spiritual growth. The narrator points with pride to the fact that the home had not been subjected to "so-called modern improvements" (7), aligning herself with those who do not see modernization as an improvement. Given the conservative messages that permeate her narrative, it is clear that Cruse did not find progressive ideas like individual freedom any more of an improvement than modernization of homes would have been. Instead, she prized an individual's moving beyond considerations of self to an acceptance of responsibilities to family, community, and nation, responsibilities those who stray from home are likely to shirk.

The novel suggests that men who wander away from home are in danger of losing their moral way. Even Uncle John, paragon of masculine virtue, admits to having been sorely tempted in Europe and South America. And Grace's father confesses his dissolute life abroad:

... if I did not exactly forget that I was a father, I at least lived and acted as if I had no
child who had a right to expect and demand of me a father's protection and love, and for whose happiness and well-being I was responsible. . . . (242)

Home is the place that teaches men their responsibility to others. At Cameron Hall, a wounded Confederate soldier, "while almost a boy in years, began now to feel the responsibilities of manhood, and to realize that he must act for another as well as for himself" (426). Of course the reason men learn so much at home is that there they are under the influence of women.

Within the home, the locus of the southern heroines' identity is not the kitchen, where slave women cook, but the library. The library means different things to Julia and Eva. For Julia "the library was, as it were, the home of her home" (541). It is where she reads the Bible and spiritual literature. For her sister Eva it is a place to read romantic novels. The library is also where both girls learn about the arrival of the war, news that is accompanied by an article in the newspaper informing them that their brother George is fighting for the Yankees. Such news is so discomfiting to both sisters that Julia feels she must renounce her romantic interest in a patriotic southern man and Eva can no longer concentrate on her novels. Describing a battle scene seems to be beyond the author's skill or interest, but by staging these inner conflicts in a domestic
setting she gives a domestic correlative of the agony of combat.

Other scenes in the library show the war penetrating a domestic setting. There Eva nurses a wounded Confederate soldier back to health, giving the author the opportunity to show the brave suffering of soldiers without venturing onto the battlefield. When Yankee soldiers break into Cameron Hall, Eva and Julia retreat to the library. And when the family must leave Cameron Hall for safety behind Confederate lines, Yankees occupy the home and desecrate it, especially the library, where signs of their uncultivated behavior include their destruction of Mr. Cameron’s writing desk and the minister’s copy of the spiritually uplifting play, *The Fathers*. Even the resolution of the war is accomplished in the library. When Julia returns home after having left it to move further south to safety, she finds Cameron Hall ransacked, but in the library she is reunited with her brother, home safely from combat, and her faithful black nanny.

As this overview of the novel indicates, Mary Anne Cruse is telling many stories at once in *Cameron Hall* and pursuing several agendas. Her novel, like the library which is such an important setting in *Cameron Hall*, is the repository for many competing narratives. That library—a site for reading the Bible, newspapers and novels—emblematizes the novel itself as repository for various
discourses: spiritual advice and sermons, politics, and domestic fiction.

It is not unusual to find spiritual advice in domestic fiction, as Jane Tompkins points out in Sensational Designs. Tompkins states that domestic fiction expresses the beliefs guiding the antebellum revival movement. "Like their counterparts among the evangelical clergy," she writes, "the sentimental novelists wrote to educate their readers in Christian perfection and to move the nation as a whole closer to the city of God." Tompkins' comment indicates that sentimental novelists often concerned themselves not only with their readers' individual salvation, but also with the spiritual state of the nation.

Given that Cruse's other publications were didactic religious texts for children and given her active involvement in the Church of the Nativity, where she taught Sunday School and played the organ, it is no surprise to see the message of salvation in Cameron Hall. Even the title page, which gives the author's initials but not her full name, indicates that the chief way she wanted to be recognized was as the author of The Little Episcopalian and

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2 Tompkins Designs 149.

3 Cruse's other publications are: The Little Episcopalian (1855), Bessie Melville (1858), Auntie's Christmas-trees (1875), and The Children's Kettledrum (1882). Laurie Arnston claims that Cruse is the author of Little Grandpa (original publication date unknown), but neither the National Union Catalog of Publications nor OCLC lists that among Cruse's works.
Bessie Melville, both didactic religious texts that had been published by the General Protestant Press. Cruse speaks of the "grave responsibility [that] rests upon novel-writers" (63 - 64) and seems determined to accept that grave responsibility herself as she devotes much of her novel to spiritual lessons. The three most important female characters in the novel all preach sermons of one kind or another, and all deny that they are doing so. Their denial is similar to Cruse's ostensible conformity to a gender code that withheld from women the right to preach but granted them the right to write novels.4

Little blind Agnes preaches one of the novel's early sermons. Uncle John tells Agnes how grateful he is to his child-angel who years ago had saved him from despair. Agnes reminds him that he must be grateful not only to the little girl but also to God for sending her to him. When Uncle John thanks her for "that good little sermon," she responds, "Oh, Uncle John, don't call it a sermon. It would be very impertinent for me to preach a sermon to you" (112). In a hierarchical society, Agnes's age as well as her gender would make it impertinent for her to preach to Uncle John, but she has done so, and the novelist calls attention to the

4 Stowe proclaims her intention to conform to that gender code in one of her own early stories, "Frankness." Near the story's opening she offers the disclaimer that she is not writing in either of two public styles associated with men: "Now, if you suppose that this is the beginning of a sermon or of a fourth of July oration, you are very much mistaken. . . ." Qtd. in Hedrick 141-142.
fact by using the word "sermon."

In another instance of "preaching," Eva accuses her sister of preaching sermons to her and their brother Walter. Julia admits that the death of their mother has forced upon her the obligation "to administer a reproof or to give some advice, which is always received with a laugh, and placed in the category of 'sister's sermons.'" Julia is not overly sensitive to the accusation, but she shows that she does not think of herself as having appropriated the masculine right to preach. She says, "You shall laugh at my 'sermon' just as much as you please, if you will promise to remember it." Those quotation marks around "sermon" show the author making her character conform to societal expectations governing who has the right to preach a real sermon. Cruse displays her knowledge of the art of sermon writing in this passage, using technical terms when she mentions what "the old-fashioned preachers used to call 'the practical application and improvement of the subject'" (263).

A later conversation about sermons uses even more of these technical terms. Julia overhears Eva giving advice to Willie, the wounded soldier Eva is falling in love with. As Julia teases Eva for uncharacteristically preaching a sermon, the minister Mr. Derby arrives and quizzes Eva to see how closely her message adhered to the principles of sermon writing he learned in seminary. He finds out that the listener, Willie, had been changed by Eva's plain,
direct message, even though Willie was disinclined to accept the message at the outset. Given Eva’s success, Mr. Derby feigns surprise that she has not conformed to classic sermon style by using logical arguments and carefully dividing her subject. In fact, the only resemblance between Eva’s extemporaneous preaching and the seminary formula is that both offer the hope of a reward for changed behavior.

Eva jokingly suggests to Mr. Derby that she will help him write sermons if he ever needs her, saying "Any time that you are indisposed to write, or that your ingenuity fails, just send to me and I will prepare for you a sermon, so unconscious of divisions and logic, that it will amaze if it does not edify your congregation" (298). For Cruse, it is safe to have a fictional woman offer to write a sermon for a fictional minister, especially when that female character is known for being high-spirited and a tease. It would have been unthinkable for the author, Sunday School teacher though she was, to have delivered her sermon on individual and national salvation through any medium other than fiction.⁵

⁵ If sermons showed up in nineteenth-century fiction, so too did fiction show up in nineteenth-century sermons. In his essay "From Doctrine to Narrative: The Rise of Pulpit Storytelling in America," David S. Reynolds traces the shift from sermons with a doctrinal focus and an emphasis on logical argumentation to sermons that offered religious entertainment. Reynolds contrasts selected sermons written between 1760 and 1800 with some written between 1870 and 1900. He finds: The eighteenth-century sermons are logically arranged according to the conventional Ramist scheme of text, exposition, and proof; there are many numerical divisions
Through her sermons in fictional disguise, Mary Anne Cruse offers numerous examples, negative as well as positive, to show what is required for salvation in her worldview. Most are positive examples of characters behaving virtuously, with three notable exceptions: George, another man who cheats Uncle John out of marrying the girl he loves, and most of the Yankee soldiers. These negative examples are promised a bad end. George hangs; the man who alienated the affections of Uncle John's intended dies alone, without connection to family, community, or nation; and the Reverend Mr. Derby promises that God's terrible judgment—delayed though it may be—will fall heavily on the immoral North.

and subdivisions, and constant references to the Bible. The later sermons, in contrast, are free-flowing; they often start with a Biblical text, but they rarely expound upon this text in numerically inductive fashion. The eighteenth-century preachers occasionally use pertinent similitudes, but they avoid excessive secular illustration and personal example. The later preachers commonly employ not only mundane illustrations but also narrative and humor. (481)

Cameron Hall's Mr. Derby speaks of an eighteenth-century formula, while Eva, in her naivety, steps boldly into the new world of edifying story telling. Reynolds notes that the shift from doctrine to narrative occurred more rapidly in the South than it did in the North, and he cites essays and books on homiletic theory published in the 1840s and 50s that justify relaxing the structure of Puritan dogmatic preaching. Cameron Hall reveals the author's familiarity with the ideas expressed in those publications, and the conversation between Eva and Mr. Derby sounds like an excerpt from lectures later delivered by Cruse's fellow Episcopalian Phillips Brooks: "The statement of the subject, the division into heads, the recapitulation at the end, all the scaffolding and anatomy of a sermon is out of favor, and there are many very good jokes about it" (Reynolds, 493). Eva and Mr. Derby share one of those jokes about outmoded preaching, while their author appropriates to herself the authority to deliver a sermon.
The North has dared to pronounce a moral judgment on the South and has even appropriated God’s right to punish the region, but Mr. Derby asserts that the North’s judgment and actions are wrong.

Besides sermons, a second discourse that enters *Cameron Hall* is politics—represented in the text by newspapers that enter the library. One political issue Mary Anne Cruse considers is slavery. She never places the slavery question in the foreground, but she makes her proslavery views known. Her views were not motivated by her family’s immediate economic interests; her father was, by 1860, the Railroad Treasurer in Huntsville, Alabama, a town whose pre-Civil War economy was growing increasingly dependent on transportation. The Cruses lived in town and did not own slaves, but, as Laurie Arnston points out, "their income, local political participation, and their affiliation with the local Episcopal Church placed the family in the center of Huntsville society." Cruse spoke for the elites of her society, not for her family’s narrowly defined self-interest, when she portrayed the advantages of slavery for both slave and owner in *Cameron Hall*.

Cruse’s discussion of slavery never assumes the shape of the long digressions in the novels by Hale, Hentz, and Eastman that quote letters, personal anecdotes, history or

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6 Laurie Arnston, "Civil War Fictional Propaganda: Mary Anne Cruse’s *Cameron Hall,*" *Southern Historian* 10 (1989) 67.
the Bible. Instead she makes her proslavery views known in much the same way that her fellow Alabaman Augusta Evans does in *Macaria* and *Beulah*. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese writes in "The Fettered Mind" that Evans's *Beulah* "did not dwell on--indeed barely mentioned--slavery as a social system."

She continues,

> Yet a commitment to proslavery as an ideology and world view informed and fueled her fierce condemnation of individualism. An exemplary *bildungsroman*, *Beulah* concludes with Beulah’s rejection of the arrogance of Emersonian individualism, her reacceptance of her faith, and her marriage. Evans left her readers no doubt that the evils of individualism threatened the very fabric of southern society and required the utmost vigilance. Modernity must be embraced only insofar as it did not threaten social and divine order.7

*Cameron Hall* presents the same message and almost as indirectly. Cruse and Evans seem to have been singing from the same hymnal.

The major proslavery element in *Cameron Hall* is a celebration of the love that supposedly existed between slaves and masters. One particularly poignant example is the love

7 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Fettered Mind: Time, Place, and The Literary Imagination of the Old South," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 76 (1990) 637 - 638.
shared by the Reverend Mr. Derby and his slave Charles. The narrator explains that when Mr. Derby left his father's home, the only member of the "family" who went with him was Charles; they have expected to be together all their lives. The narrator says that for Charles and Mr. Derby, "their interests were identified, and Charles always spoke, as his master did, of 'our children,' 'our house,' "our garden," as if he were joint proprietor, and so he felt himself to be, and indeed was, in all save expense and responsibility" (508).

When the Union soldiers come to impress Charles into the military, Charles begs his master to save him. Mr. Derby tries to explain his helplessness, but Charles refuses to believe that his master is not omnipotent, even in the face of armed Yankees. Charles then tries to "argufy the pint" about freedom with the Union soldiers:

"What made Mr. Lincoln take such a pertikelar fancy to our color? No white man never done that before."

"Because there are not many people in the world as good as Mr. Lincoln. He thinks that it is high time for you all to be free, and sees no reason that you should be slaves just because your skin is dark. All good people are tired of seeing you oppressed and trampled upon by your cruel secesh masters, who think no more of separating husbands
and wives and parents and children than if you were a parcel of dogs." (508)

Addressing the soldier by the title he is accustomed to using when addressing white men, Charles asks, "Master, what is you gwine to do wid me now?" When the soldiers answer that they will take him away to camp where he can begin to fight for freedom, Charles asks if his wife and children will accompany him. On being told they will not, he replies, "Then, master, . . . Mr. Lincoln will be the fуст one to separate me from my wife and children. It ain’t never been done before by my secesh master" (508). He sums up his ingenious plea to remain with Mr. Derby by saying that it was good of Lincoln to offer freedom, but that a person does not have to accept everything that is offered. "Now let them what wants freedom go to freedom; but master, if you please, I’d rather stay whar I is" (509).

Despite his clever argument, Charles is led away, his wife and children crying and Mr. Derby struggling with unchristian anger and indignation. But Mr. Derby "restrained it all, and like his Master, the minister ‘answered nothing’" (510). By referring to Christ as the "Master," Cruse emphasizes that everyone is subordinate to some higher authority. Mr. Derby may be the master to Charles, but both of them answer to a heavenly Master. Cruse is reminding her readers that hierarchies are not just social arrangements; they are ordained by heaven. Further,
the pain of separation reminds Mr. Derby that the Bible
instructs Philemon to treat Onesimus not just as a servant,
but as "a brother beloved" (509). Thus, Cruse slyly slips
in a reference to Biblical authority for slavery in a way
that does not disrupt her narrative. She shows, too, that
Charles's supposed liberators are unlikely to develop the
kind of personal relationship with him that Mr. Derby has
established and that proslavery arguments celebrated. They
call him Sambo; Mr. Derby calls him Charles.

Another example of the mutual love that Cruse portrays
as existing between slaves and owners is the relationship of
Mammy Nancy to Julia, Eva, and Walter. Julia's final words
to Mammy Nancy as the carriage takes Julia to safety behind
Confederate lines are, "Don't go to the Yankees" (495).
Loyal Nancy does not desert. The reunion scenes at the end
of the novel that conventionally would include Julia and her
husband Charles instead present Mammy Nancy, Julia, and
brother Walter, home from the war. Nancy's embracing Julia
and Walter and her words, "God bless my children! God bless
my children!" (542) show that her creator fully embraced the
southern version of happy slaves, happy families.

Indeed, Mammy Nancy seems to care more for "her" white
children than she does for her own daughter, Lucy, who is
gone by novel's end. As for Julia, who rarely allows
herself any emotional release, she finally feels safe and
secure enough to cry when Mammy Nancy is there:
It was the first thing that Julia had seen that looked like home, the first sound she had heard welcome her; and the tears which before had seemed frozen upon her heart, now melted at once, and leaning her head upon the bosom of the faithful old nurse, she sobbed and cried as if her heart would break. (542)

Here are the tears requisite for the ending of a domestic novel, but what they mark is not the consummation of a difficult courtship. Instead, these tears celebrate home and the almost miraculous preservation of an affectionate bond between mistress and slave. Staging that reunion scene in a room turned upside down by Yankees seems designed to heighten pathos and elicit a mood of nostalgia for a lost social order.

Mammy Nancy remains loyal to the Camerons, but her daughter Lucy does not. Through those characters, Cruse portrays an interesting generational difference in slaves' reactions to the Yankee promise of freedom. When Julia must leave Cameron Hall, she tells her old nurse, "You know, Mammy, that when the Yankees come, they say that they are going to set you all free, and then you need not go anywhere with your master or mistress unless you want to. . . ." Mammy responds, "And as to them Yankees, Miss Julia, . . . don't tell me nothin' at all about them and their freedom. I don't believe nothin' they say. . . ." Mammy goes on to
advise Julia about how to deal with Lucy, who is to accompany Julia from Cameron Hall:

"Let me tell you one thing, child. When Lucy comes up here, don't you ax her if she's willin' to go 'long with you. Jest tell her to wash and iron her clothes and put 'em in her trunk, for she's got to go away with you in the mornin'. Don't be puttin' no new-fangled notions in Lucy's head. She's a nigger now, she's got to be a nigger all her life, and all the Yankees under heaven can't make her nothin' else, and 'tain't no use to make her believe that she's white and free!" (493 - 494)

This scene, like the separation of Charles from his wife, children, and Mr. Derby, serves to answer northern accusations about the cruel separation of families that occurred under slavery. The Yankees are responsible for the necessity of separating not only Lucy from Mammy Nancy, but also Julia from her father, who plans to stay and defend Cameron Hall. Furthermore, Mammy Nancy insists that her daughter go. She is as different from Harriet Beecher Stowe's Eliza on hearing of her impending separation from her child as Mary Anne Cruse's purpose is different from Stowe's.

Yankees have separated slave families by persuading the more gullible slaves to exchange the old master for a new
one, who might or might not be a Union Army officer. Those slaves who willingly leave their masters for the enemy are not entirely to blame, Cruse says. A clause remarkable for placing two stereotypes in close proximity explains why: "negro simplicity, credulity, and ignorance cannot contend successfully against Yankee cunning, craftiness, and duplicity" (503).

As that comment indicates, Cruse’s novel is not free from the racial inferiority argument that her region employed to justify African slavery. Mr. Derby calls Charles "boy" and clearly thinks of him as a helpless, if somewhat precocious, child. Mammy Nancy is incapable of restraining her emotions, even when blurting out news like the death of Willie will cause Eva a terrible shock. Lucy is incapable of carrying candles without allowing the flame to be extinguished. And Uncle Billy, even while being helpful in the face of danger, is portrayed as a comic figure who jokes because he probably does not understand the seriousness of the situation he is in. Cruse sets forth these traits to demonstrate a proslavery tenet that held Africans incapable of handling freedom. She is advancing the argument that the white master is necessarily the protector of the African slaves. In contrast, the Yankees will force the slaves into military service, even hiding behind them and making them "literally a breastworks," as Mr. Cameron comments, noting the number of former slaves
killed in battle when sent in ahead of their Yankee "liberators" (513).

Mary Anne Cruse does not invoke elements of the proslavery argument that justified the existence of slavery in the South as a necessary evil or as a necessary step in the progress of Africans towards Christianity and salvation. By the time she was finishing Cameron Hall, it was obvious that the institution of slavery was crumbling. Her depiction of the love between slaves and masters already carries the nostalgic tone of "lost cause" memorials and testimonies to the antebellum South. But the novel partakes of proslavery ideology as much in what it says about hierarchies being good and self-sufficiency or individualism being bad as in what it says directly about slaves and slavery. The heroine and the man she marries epitomize the willingness to serve family and community and the ability to guide and protect those who serve them.

A third discourse that enters Cameron Hall—this one represented by the novels that Eva reads in the library—concerns family relations and young heroines' growth to maturity. These conventional elements of domestic fiction take on political overtones and, in some cases, read like allegorical interpretations of the Civil War. A close reading of a scene at the beginning of Cameron Hall demonstrates one way politics inflects the domestic genre. The novel opens with an episode that takes place years
before the war begins and that tells in miniature the story of the impending brother-against-brother conflict. The eldest Cameron child, George, is tormenting his siblings whom he has discovered making dandelion wreaths and curls to adorn three-year-old Eva. The first object of George’s scorn is his brother Walter:

"Turning girl, Walter, are you? I always thought that it was a pity you had not been born a girl, you love to stay with them so much, and try so hard to be like them."

He well knew how this taunt would exasperate the child, who, with true boyish nature, would rather be called anything in the world than a girl. . . .

"I would rather be a girl—yes, I would rather be two girls—than to be such a cross boy as you are. If ever I grow up to be like you, I’d be sorry sure enough that God didn’t make me a girl!" (12 - 13)

When George begins striking Walter with a willow switch, Julia, the second-born child, intervenes and chastises George for behaving like a coward. In a rage at being called a coward, George deliberately strikes Julia across the face with the switch.

Julia tells her father what the tyrannical George has done, adding a comment that sounds much like one made later
in the novel by some southern men complaining about meddling Yankees. "We were not troubling him, papa," Julia says. "We were attending to our business, and if he had gone along and attended to his, all this would never have happened" (14). Cruse defines the conflicts that have led to the Civil War as having stemmed from northerners' interference in southerners' business. An additional parallel to the sectional conflict as seen through southern eyes is that the "business" the young children were attending to was ornamental, contrasting with the view of Yankee pragmatism expressed elsewhere in the novel.⁸

Further developments in the children's quarrel also have their counterparts in the national struggle. Mrs. Cameron decides to talk to George herself. The conversation between mother and son takes place behind closed doors, but the calamitous results are that George abruptly leaves home and Mrs. Cameron declines and dies. Little wonder that years later when the Civil War breaks out, George becomes a spy for the Yankees; his kind of masculinity does not fit in Mary Anne Cruse's vision of the South. His lack of respect for his mother, his sisters, and women in general is unsuitable for a region whose stories about itself include chivalrous men who revere and protect pure, white women.

⁸ In Macaria, Augusta Evans calls this the conflict between an "aesthetic" and a "utilitarian" attitude. Both writers explicitly claim these traits prevail in the South and North respectively, but their plots and characters implicitly show that the even South must guard against an encroaching spirit of materialism.
These stories carry great regional significance. As Anne Goodyn Jones points out in Tomorrow Is Another Day, what sets the ideal of Confederate womanhood apart from the ideal of the British Victorian lady or the American true woman is that the southern ideal is at the "core of a region's self-identification." In becoming a spy, George turns on and injures his motherland in the same way he had turned on and injured his mother.

The comparison of the South to George's mother is made explicit later in the novel by an angelic blind child named Agnes. Coincidentally, Agnes is George's daughter, although she remains ignorant of her father's identity. She is taken to George's Confederate prison cell, where he awaits execution as a traitor, to bring some comfort to the condemned man. In her blindness and innocence, she does not know that George is a despised Yankee or that she is visiting in a jail. After Agnes makes some unflattering comments about Yankees, George teases her that somebody has thoroughly indoctrinated her. "Who is it,—your mother?" he asks.

"God," she answered, reverently. "He had me born in the South, and I can no more help loving my country, and getting angry when I see it ruined and desolated, than I could help loving my mother, and getting angry if I saw her tormented and

9 Jones 4.
abused." (401)

One's country, like one's mother, must be respected and protected. Agnes, who is close to the angels throughout the novel, knows this. George learns it too late.

Although George has earlier been scornful of efforts by a minister and by Agnes's protector to lead him to repent of his sins, Agnes's words affect George. After she leaves, "the wretched man sank upon the floor and sobbed like a child" (404). His tears are a sign of his sentimental conversion. Agnes, like Stowe's Little Eva, is a potent agent of salvation. Here, as in Uncle Tom's Cabin, those who have the least power and authority in political, economic, social, and familial hierarchies—children, especially little girls—have the most spiritual power. That perspective is a trademark of domestic fiction, but Cameron Hall links the spiritual message to a political one. The scene of traitor George's remorse shows how conventions of the domestic genre change to accommodate a political agenda.

In addition to presenting scenes that convey political ideas, Cameron Hall presents political statements much more directly through the dialogue of male characters. Early in the novel before the outbreak of war, Uncle John and Mr. Cameron discuss the conflicts that have led up to the question of secession and probable war. Cruse assigns gender to regions through the pronouns she selects to refer
to the South and North:

You yourself have seen how restless the South has long been growing under Northern aggression, and, considering her reputation for hot blood, I think she has borne with wonderful forbearance the narrowing and paring down of her rights. . . . If the North would agree to take care of its own institutions, and leave us to take care of ours, there would be at once an end to strife. . . . Now it dares openly and defiantly to lay its hand upon the Constitution, and either to wrest its meaning, or, bolder still, to declare that it is defective, because it does not square with that 'higher law' which it professes to have found." (77 - 78)

In that tangle of pronouns and antecedents, the South is "she" and the North is "it." Here Cruse is modifying a convention of speech of her day that Anne Norton has observed, "[T]hroughout America, throughout the antebellum period, the North was identified as masculine and the South as feminine, in an elaborate constellation of metaphors."¹⁰ Cruse's modification neuters the North. In this polemical novel written when southern men were fighting and dying, it would have been unthinkable for Cruse to link manhood with only the North. Instead she associates the North with

mistaken notions of manhood by presenting contrasting images of men in both regions. Southern men, not northern men, are for Cruse the exemplars of what she refers to as "true manhood."

One trait of true manhood is the ability to be sympathetic, to suffer with others. Julia tells a wounded Confederate soldier named Willie about true manhood after he confesses his fear that he lacks the "stern stuff" that would make him "fit for the camp and the battlefield." Julia replies that he must not cease being a man just because he must be a soldier. She cautions him not to become indifferent to human suffering, but rather to "foster and keep alive all that is gentle and tender and human in your nature." The soldier she selects for Willie to emulate is Robert E. Lee:

"Now, if you should ever know General Lee as I do, you will find out for yourself that no woman ever had a kinder, gentler heart, one more overflowing with those softer feelings, which, instead of being a blemish upon manhood, are rather its glory and its crown. Don’t covet, Willie, that ‘sterner stuff’ which, in the ears of boys and youths, sounds so manly; to be a true man, and therefore a true soldier, needs the development of human characteristics instead of those that belong to the brutes." (262-263)
Robert E. Lee, Confederate hero, sounds like the embodiment of traits associated with true womanhood, but Julia insists that these traits characterize true manhood as well. She warns Willie not to develop artificially traits he considers manly, such as an indifference to others' suffering and a careless attitude towards inflicting suffering on the battlefield, for those stern qualities, she argues, are more bestial than human. Willie appreciates Julia's counsel, though he confides, "We boys are always prone to be ashamed of anything that looks womanly" (263).

Julia's call for men to be more like women and therefore more human is Mary Anne Cruse's call for the nation, especially the North, to become less aggressive and acquisitive, more Christian and self-sacrificing. Her slant on Robert E. Lee further shows that she would like to feminize the public world, even going so far as to suggest that a battlefield, a masculine preserve if there ever was one, is still a place for "feminine" compassion.

True men have a role on the battlefields, but they must also play their nurturing, providing, and protecting role in families and communities. Cameron Hall depicts many positive southern examples of masculine behavior to counter

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11 The brutish behavior of Yankees who later despoil Cameron Hall and its environs shows that they could have benefitted from Julia's disquisition on true manhood. And of course George, Julia's brother turned traitor, is the novel's main example of despicable Yankee manhood. Even as a child George did not fit in with his family or southern community.
that of George Cameron. George's contemptible treatment of his wife and daughter—he left them to go to California for gold—is countered by Mr. Cameron's love for and protection of his wife and children. George's greed is countered by the generosity of a newcomer to Hopedale named Uncle John, an elderly bachelor who buys blind Agnes an expensive organ for no reason other than that he wants her to be able to enjoy the music she loves. As a further sign of his selflessness, Uncle John takes Agnes to Europe in hopes of paying for the services of an eminent eye surgeon, but, in keeping with the novel's tone, the surgeon pronounces her condition a hopeless case.12

Other southern models of true manhood are the community minister, Mr. Derby, who embodies true man's Christian piety, and the love interest of the heroine of the novel, Dr. Charles Beaufort, who sacrifices his hopes for glory and rank on the battlefield to serve as a mere surgeon for the Confederacy. Charles's willingness to sacrifice his own ambition for the good of others is an attribute of true manhood that has its counterpart in true women's self-sacrifice. His reward will be to marry the "truest" woman in the novel, Julia Cameron.

12 Uncle John explains that he was not always so admirable. In his youth when he could not marry the woman he loved, he traveled throughout Europe, coming close to a life of dissolution. But on a sea voyage he met a little girl who taught him the error of his ways. He refers to her as his child-angel, and she joins the ranks of that fictional nineteenth-century heavenly host who liberate men from their baser natures.
If the novel presented a more simplistic political allegory, either the North would have been depicted consistently as the site of rampant masculinity, or, if the novelist wanted to complicate the equation slightly, Julia would have been contrasted with a northern woman who embodied the North’s other excess, too much sentimentality. But in Cameron Hall, Cruse says one thing through plot and another in dialogue. The plot, especially in showing the destructiveness of the northern soldiers occupying Cameron Hall, suggests that the North suffers from an excess of the wrong kind of masculinity. The dialogue counters that the North’s errors really spring from diametrically opposed impulses, one associated with the wrong kind of manhood and another associated with the wrong kind of womanhood. On the one hand Cruse’s characters say that with its fanaticism, the North is arrogant and destructive, intolerant of difference, overly doctrinal, and unwilling to leave judgment and punishment to God.\textsuperscript{13} On the other hand her characters say that the North is equally guilty of a "sickly sentimentalism" and a dangerous propensity to adhere to a

\textsuperscript{13} These excesses are often associated with masculinity in domestic fiction. Stowe’s The Minister’s Wooing, for example, contrasts a minister’s abstract, doctrinal religion with women’s expressions of Christian love and forgiveness. Harriet Beecher Stowe, The Minister’s Wooing, (1859; Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1968). The excesses apply to George as well as the North, so George serves effectively in the novel’s plot as well as in the novelist’s comments on sectional conflict, spirituality, and growth to true manhood.
"higher law" when it comes to considering slaves. In this novel where the dialogue denounces all things northern, characterization and plot associate an excess of femininity not with a northern woman but with Julia's lovable if immature sister, Eva.

Concerning the North's dual flaws, the character who is allowed to utter the most unbridled denunciation of all things northern and--to his mind, Puritan--is Mr. Cameron. As part of a long conversation with Mr. Derby towards the end of the novel, Mr. Cameron reviles the quintessential Puritan as one who embodies

"the self-sufficiency which acknowledges no equal; the sourness which allows to none other the liberty of thought that it arrogates to itself; and the fanaticism which dares to sit in judgment upon all decrees, both human and divine, which do not square with the 'higher law' of its own

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14 Domestic writers and their critics associate an excess of sentimentality with femininity, and proslavery critics faulted Uncle Tom's Cabin and its author for sentimentality and appeals to "higher law."

15 According to her diary entry for June 27, 1862, Cruse herself sometimes felt enraged by the Yankees during their occupation of Huntsville. Laurie Arnston quotes Cruse as having written that "2 or 3 times since Yankees have been here, I have been in such a state of furious excitement, that if the ebullion of passion had been caught and perpetuated by written words" she would have enjoyed reading them in her old age and laughed at "the picture of the hopeless impotence of Confederate Feminine Rage" (75). As befitted the gender codes of her day, Cruse's rage finds expression through words uttered by a fictional male character, Mr. Cameron, and not through his daughter's words.
Anne Norton explains this inaccurate but typically southern representation of Puritans before the war:

While traits characteristically attributed to the Puritans remained roughly constant throughout America, the Puritans were praised in the North, derided in the South. They served, in antebellum political culture, not as the symbol of a common cultural origin, but as a shibboleth for regional disparity.¹⁶

The saintly Mr. Derby shares Mr. Cameron's assessment of Puritan—that is, northern—failings. But the lesson he wants to extract from the war and the negative example provided by the Puritans is that no nation should believe itself above dependence on God and superior to all other nations on earth. He explains that a certain amount of national pride is a duty, but the danger is

"of allowing it to run into the extreme of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. But I refer to that sort of national pride (or vanity, rather, for that is the more correct term) which has made the United States a by-word among other nations; that vanity which found nothing anywhere upon earth, whether of natural scenery, or the useful arts and sciences, or luxury and elegance, of

¹⁶ Norton 5.
literature or the fine arts, superior or even comparable to what it had at home. Nor did this feeling stop here; otherwise it would have been a harmless vanity which would only have made its possessor ridiculous, and awakened a mingled feeling of pity and contempt. But it swelled into a self-reliance, self-importance, and self-satisfaction which often made us insolent and overbearing in our intercourse with other nations, and worse still, sometimes tempted us to aggression and unjust acquisition of territory, because we felt secure in our power to sustain ourselves in any course of action." (519)

The strongly negative connotations of "by-word" in the mid-nineteenth century have been lost, but in writing that the United States had become a "by-word among other nations," Cruse is denouncing the country in the strongest possible polite language. She is singling out national vanity that leads to imperialistic behavior, and she attributes both the attitude and the behavior to the North.17

17 One could re-read the passage as a southern woman's indictment of exaggerated notions of masculinity. In Cameron Hall men who are too self-reliant, self-important and self-satisfied become insolent and overbearing. George Cameron is the prime example. He deserts his wife and daughter to go West for gold. He feels "secure in [his] power to sustain [himself] in any course of action." George is no true man. He bears no resemblance to Robert E. Lee or to the virtuous, community-minded southern male characters, Uncle John, Mr. Derby, and Mr. Cameron. George's despicable behavior in the opening scene, the scene in which he taunts his brother Walter for turning girl, strikes his sister
As for that opposite but equally dangerous northern flaw—"sickly sentimentalism," Cruse has this to say through Mr. Cameron's words to Mr. Derby:

"[H]ow much sickly sentimentalism has been wasted upon the oppression of the poor slave, and especially upon the merciless separation of families! but you and I, slaveholders as we are, and have been all our lives, have seen more of it during the reign and rule of their Yankee friends than we ever saw before. Oh, Philanthropy! Oh, Religion! . . . how much wrong, and robbery, and injustice are often perpetrated under your sacred names!" (513)

Through such dialogue given to her male characters, Mary Anne Cruse comments on public, national issues like political conflict, religion, morality, patriotism, and imperialism. She delineates the national problem as stemming from the North's lack of balance between, on the one hand, what she calls "Puritan self-sufficiency" and doctrinal rigidity and, on the other hand, sickly

across the face, and abruptly leaves after talking to his mother—shows an unchecked "masculinity" that parallels the North's unchecked nationalism. The novel suggests that George might have repented before he was hanged as a traitor, but he would have had a better chance for salvation if he had come under the influence of a child angel like Agnes sooner. In other words, the North, like George and other men, could benefit from lessons in humility, sensitivity, piety, and responsibility to the community, lessons Cruse's South would gladly impart.
sentimentalism. Through her fictional creations she is able to say that sentiment, the stuff of conventional domestic fiction, is not trustworthy. Sentiment may be used, for example, to excuse illegal and immoral behavior like stealing slaves away from slaveholders if one imagines that doing so will alleviate human suffering. Cruse's problem as a polemicist is that she attempts to denounce sentimentality in a work filled with that very quality; her medium and her message are at odds with each other.

Characterization in *Cameron Hall* addresses the issue of balance between masculine and feminine traits on the personal level, the more customary domain of domestic fiction. Eva represents an excess of sentimentality. She is the reader of novels and the girl who responds impulsively to every situation with unchecked passion. Eva's excesses—bordering on sickly sentimentalism—are presented in contrast to her sister Julia's restraint.18

Julia Cameron is the heroine of *Cameron Hall*. In addition to possessing the traits Barbara Welter associates with true womanhood—piety, purity, submissiveness, and

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18 An interesting psychological aspect to these paired heroines is that when one sister dies, the other takes on some of her attributes. After Eva's death, Julia responds to her father's request that she leave Cameron Hall to seek safety behind Confederate lines with a "Never" and "an impulsiveness that painfully recalled Eva" (488). Later Mammy Nancy finds Julia weeping so unrestrainedly that she thinks at first it is Eva (491).
domesticity—Julia is courageous and resourceful. She is the member of the family who is enterprising enough to hide the horses when the Federals arrive. Julia is the person who is strong enough to assist when a young Confederate soldier almost bleeds to death—she faints only after she has performed her duty. She is the person who, on short notice, labors day and night to prepare food for her brother and his comrades in their Confederate camp.

Julia speaks for and represents part of the author's purpose, the didactic, moral part. To fulfill her representational purpose, Julia is depicted as being rational and restrained, distrustful of her inner feelings and too reserved to feel even passionate Christian love. As the narrative explains, "She had so often seen the lamentable effects of a religion purely emotional that she had fallen into the opposite but less fatal error of ignoring emotion altogether and exalting principle" (55-56). Over the course of the bildungsroman Julia learns to feel. She is able to love and to cry when it is appropriate. Julia epitomizes what the North lacks: a balance between emotion and principle, sentimentality and doctrine. Julia is able to achieve this balance because her community has taught her deference and obligation. She is not handicapped by living in the North where a focus on individual

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fulfillment would make it hard to learn to subordinate impulse to reason. Unfortunately Julia "lives" in a text that has enough domestic elements to create expectations that the heroine will find individual fulfillment.

Eva enables the novelist to include romance and to dramatize the danger of an excess of sentimentality. Eva is a good girl who does not live long enough to develop into a "true" woman. Eva is pure enough and probably pious enough to qualify, but she is too impulsive to be considered submissive and too much of a tomboy to be considered domestic. Eva spends much of her time either outdoors playing with her dog or reading romance novels. When she uncharacteristically helps with the dishes, one character comments on what it means that Eva has set aside her novel to do a domestic chore. "Oh, what a fall was there! . . . From love, and romance, and sentiment, down to washing tea things!" (86).

Julia’s and Eva’s reactions to romance novels illustrate part of the contrast between the sisters. On vacation at White Sulphur Springs, the sisters join a group of young women who are discussing a novel they have all read. Everyone speaks highly of the novel except Julia. When pressed for her opinion she says,

"It is a fascinating book, and therein consists its danger. It is well planned and well written, and in our sympathy for the sufferings of the
heroine, we are tempted to forget that they are in
many instances nothing but the fruit of her own
doings." (64)

Eva scolds Julia for using inappropriate criteria to
evaluate the book, saying Julia "even measures a novel by
the square and compass of practical principles" (69).
Later, Eva chastises Julia by pointing out that a novel
about heroes and heroines who lived up to Julia’s standards
would be impossible to write:

"Just think what would become of a novel if the
hero scorned everything except a plain, straight
course, and the heroine disdained all
concealments,—a single page would wind up the
whole! I am astonished at you, sister, to have so
little poetry in your composition." (100)

Of course Eva has too much poetry in her composition.

Eva’s tragedy is that although she learns that she must
control her feelings and strive to accept the burdens of
womanhood, she learns too late. Her progress to maturity is
motivated by her romantic love for Willie, the young
Confederate soldier who is brought to Cameron Hall to be
nursed back to health. His need for quiet teaches her to
control her impulses to romp with her dog. His return to
the war after recuperating begins to teach her to bear
life’s trials. Eva signals her maturity when she tells her
betrothed that they must "postpone the thought of ourselves,
and our own individual happiness, until our country shall no longer need you" (424). Here she demonstrates her maturity by showing her willingness to exchange romantic individualism for patriotism. When Willie leaves, "Julia looked with mingled surprise and admiration at the sister, so lately an impulsive, unrestrained child, now a self-controlled, submissive woman" (457).

Submissiveness, one of the traits of a true woman, is ultimately submissiveness to God’s will. It may be manifest by submissiveness to one’s parents or one’s husband, but the importance of the quality is that it allows one to bear life’s trials. Because women have more practice in being submissive, the author posits that women are stronger than men. Cruse intends no irony near the end of Cameron Hall when she writes, "Woman, born to endure, can long drag the burden of a wounded heart; but once the strong, self-reliant man is broken in spirit, he sinks at once beneath the load" (537). The novel’s argument is that had Eva’s development proceeded uninterrupted by the war and her personal loss, she would have been one of those who endured.20

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20 Eva’s development is that her growth to true womanhood is marked by the differences between the letters she sends her brother Walter, the playmate of her youth, and those she sends Willie, the companion of her blossoming maturity. To Walter she sends letters that jump from one topic to another and focus on outdoor scenes. The emotional tone of these letters moves erratically from the joys of home to the despair of worry over Walter’s safety. In contrast, before Willie leaves he tells Eva that he wants to receive "home-like letters," in other words, letters that omit the outdoor scenes she sends her brother out of preference for ones that focus on the "inner life of the Hall" (295). Love therefore brings Eva closer
Unfortunately, before Eva has fully developed the strength to suffer as a true woman must, Willie dies in battle. On hearing the news, Eva tears out her hair, goes mad, waits outdoors for Willie every day, gets sick, and dies. Mr. Cameron recognizes that the war has been responsible for placing on Eva "the burdens and anxieties of life . . . before she was old enough to bear them" (468).

Julia, who plays sense to Eva's sensibility, survives the war and separation from the man she marries, Dr. Charles Beaufort. In an exercise in narrative restraint that parallels her heroine's restraint in all things emotional, Mary Anne Cruse portrays the dramatic last scenes of the novel as two reunions that take place at Cameron Hall, the first between Julia, her brother Walter, and their old nurse, Mammy Nancy; and the second between old Uncle John and the widow Grace, mother of the now-deceased Agnes, whose presence is evoked by the organ she had lived to play. These scenes are moving, but what is missing is the romantic reunion of the novel's surviving young man and young woman, Charles and Julia, already husband and wife.

The absence of Charles from the novel's conclusion reflects historical reality for many southern women at the end of the war, but it also reflects the author's political purpose overriding the conventions of her domestic genre. The conventional plot of domestic fiction demands that to another of the tenets of true womanhood—domesticity.
Charles be at Cameron Hall or that he be dead, leaving Julia to her grief. Characterization demands that these two self-sacrificing individuals be rewarded to the last in a domestic novel by being permitted to begin their married life together. But Charles is simply absent. He has not been killed in the war, and there is no message that he will soon join Julia or send for her. Mary Anne Cruse seems determined to the last that her novel will eschew romance and conform to what Eva has derisively called "the square and compass of practical principles" (69). These practical principles require a subordination of sentiment to reason and individual fulfillment to community responsibilities. Cruse will not risk arousing her readers' "ardent, passion-ate" natures by scenes similar to those Augusta Evans portrays between Edna Earl and St. Elmo and between Beulah and Guy Hartwell. Julia marries Charles, but the novelist insists on keeping them apart. Married bliss was not an appropriate topic for celebration, even in fiction, when so many women were widowed by the war and when the author's polemical purpose demanded a renunciation of romance and individualism.

The contradiction between the ending a domestic novel warrants and the ending Cruse's political novel warrants is the same kind of contradiction that exists in a roman à these: how much should be roman and how much should be these? Mary Anne Cruse resolves some situations in ways
that suit her political thesis and others in ways that suit a domestic novel.

As a domestic novel, Cameron Hall focuses on home and family, but that focus serves to illustrate the path to national as well as personal salvation. Even the political conflict that escalates to war during the course of the novel is an allegory of the struggle of the good to prevail through trials and to achieve salvation. By the end of the novel--written in Alabama during the Federal occupation--there are dark hints that evil might temporarily triumph. But the unifying idea behind Cameron Hall is that what passes for power and strength in this world is nothing compared to the power of righteousness, a familiar theme in domestic fiction. Despite the novel's many digressions, its overall design shows through. What does it matter if the Yankees physically occupy Julia Cameron's home as long as she keeps alive the family loyalty and devotion to sacred duty that she learned there? What does it matter if Agnes is a blind child as long as she is righteous enough to lead others to salvation? God is on the side of those with the least physical power, women and--importantly for Cruse's polemics--the South.

21 In her introductory remarks "to the reader," Mary Anne Cruse says that the novel was "completed several months before the termination of the war." It was not published until 1867. Cruse says she resisted the urge to revise the novel by changing some of the more optimistic expressions about the expected brevity of the war and its outcome. Laurie Arnston gives 1864 as the year Cameron Hall was written (72).
Of the five novelists in this study, Cruse is the least explicitly political. Only briefly does she link emotional suffering to political activity, as Eastman and Hentz do. She does not offer practical, political solutions to political problems, as Hale and Evans do. She avoids giving passionate praise to the Union or the Confederacy, as Hale and Evans do. Her settings become once again domestic interiors, not battlefields, political rallies, or public institutions. Her heroines' trials are usually the more conventional interior struggles of domestic heroines to overcome inner weaknesses, not struggles with external forces like abolitionists or slave insurrectionists. She rarely shows men's interior struggles over political questions, as Eastman, Hale, and Hentz do. Cruse's implied audience is again female, and her reform messages tend to focus again on an individual's spiritual reform, not changes in laws or governments.

Analyzing the five novels in this study as political-domestic fiction shows that around the time of the Civil War American women writers responded to cultural and historical forces associated with sectionalism and produced novels that altered conventional elements of domestic fiction. In the future domestic fiction would become inflected by different impulses. Camelon Hall signals one direction domestic fiction would take--a near allegorical focus on young girls'
development in families, as in Little Women (1868-69). Another direction would be to focus on women's solidarity and communities, as in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Oldtown Folks (1869) and Sarah Orne Jewett's The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896).

Any reading strategy imposes limits on what is noticed, and any critical strategy imposes limits on what is analyzed. This study shows that reading domestic fiction to discover what women novelists say about gender or women's psychology is only one of many approaches. Reading these five novels as political-domestic fiction does not begin to exhaust the meanings in and of the texts any more than reading them as domestic fiction does. However, it opens up a discussion of elements in women's novels critics have largely ignored, it shows one way a genre changes, and it contributes to an ongoing discussion of ways American women have always participated in politics.

22 In Little Women Alcott frequently mentions Pilgrim’s Progress; her plot and characters, like Bunyan’s, teach the way to overcome adversity and temptation to reach earthly as well as celestial rewards. Louisa May Alcott, Little Women: or Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy (1868-69; New York: Modern Library, 1983).


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