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Social movements theory : a Burkean approach to the rhetoric of abolition

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORY: A BURKEAN APPROACH TO THE RHETORIC
OF ABOLITION

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH

by

Elena Maytee Cruz

2003

To: Dean Arthur W. Herriott
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Elena Maytee Cruz, and entitled Social Movements Theory: A Burkean Approach to the Rhetoric of Abolition, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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Date of Defense: April 4, 2003

The thesis of Elena Maytee Cruz is approved.

Dean Arthur W. Herriott
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University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2003

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DEDICATION

To the Lord God who strengthens me, to Mom who has always uplifted me,
and to those who believed in me ...

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORY: A BURKEAN APPROACH TO THE RHETORIC
OF ABOLITION

by

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Florida International University, 2003

Miami, Florida

Professor Bruce Harvey, Major Professor

Inspired by Kenneth Burke's dramatism, this thesis examined the viability of social movements rhetorical theory in its application to literature by focusing on the 19th century abolitionist movement in the United States and moving from the analysis of public speeches to fictional works.

Chapter one applied the rhetorical analysis of social movements to noteworthy speeches by William Lloyd Garrison and Francis Maria W. Stewart. Chapter two examined social movements rhetoric in *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Chapter three considered *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and determined whether social movements rhetorical theory could illuminate this persuasive work of fiction.

Dramatistically speaking, each of these works attempted to persuade the reader or auditor to join the abolitionist cause through symbolic action in their rhetoric. This thesis concluded that the social movements approach derived from Burkean dramatism is indeed powerful in its application to literature as it unpacks the rhetoric of abolition.

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INTRODUCTION

Is there any correlation between the major abolitionist novel of the 19th century, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the rhetoric of abolition found in significant orations of the era? Defined rhetorically, a social movement utilizes persuasive discourse to call attention to its cause, incite action, change commonly held assumptions, and disturb the status quo. The purpose of this study is to determine the viability of social movements rhetorical theory, as informed by Kenneth Burke's dramatism, in its application to literature. This thesis will examine the abolitionist social movement represented in three divergent genres – (non-fiction) speeches, (non-fiction) slave narratives, and (fictional narrative) novels – to determine whether works in these genres share the same rhetorical strategies. This introduction will discuss the structure of the core chapters, review previous studies, define important Burkean concepts and provide a theoretical framework for analysis.

Chapter one will encompass a Burkean rhetorical analysis of social movements discourse in the noteworthy abolitionist speeches of Francis Maria W. Stewart and William Lloyd Garrison. In the 19th century, characterized by public oratory, compelling speeches given to live audiences were an effective means of spreading the message of social change. While the antislavery movement in the United States dates back to the 18th century and the era of the American Revolutionary War, the rhetoric generated between the 1830's and the 1860's is so distinctive that it merits being examined as a discrete rhetorical movement (Bormann 1-2).

Chapter two will represent a departure from the oratorical tradition as an object of study with the examination of *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)

from this approach. Slave narratives tread the thin line between fact and fiction, combining the elements of the spiritual autobiography, the picaresque and sentimental novels (Davis and Gates vi). On the one hand, their power lies in the credence given to the truth of their testimony of life in slavery. On the other hand, the writings were propagandist in nature, designed to convert the undecided to the antislavery cause. Considered antislavery tracts as much as autobiographies, slave narratives serve as an excellent testing ground to extend the scope of social movements rhetorical theory as inspired by the dramatistic approach of Kenneth Burke.

Fiction is described as “any literary narrative, whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of the events that in fact happened” (Abrams 64). While *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is clearly a work of fiction, Harriet Beecher Stowe tried to defend the authenticity of the image of slavery that she created in her work and even produced *A Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1853) to pacify her detractors and satisfy the curiosity and public outcry that arose from her anti-slavery novel. Stowe cites several slave narratives in her sources and thus purported to borrow elements from the factual into the fictional. She also used acerbic asides to criticize the institution of slavery, as powerful as any orator of her day. Chapter three will stray further away from the traditional subjects of rhetorical analysis and examine *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) to determine whether Burkean movement theory can illuminate this persuasive work of fiction.

The topic of movement rhetoric principally began to appear in the 1960’s and flourished in the 1970’s and ‘80’s, in tandem with the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power. It also arose as a response to the Aristotelian hegemony along with other

alternative methods of rhetorical analysis in the 20th century.¹ Kenneth Burke's influence over this field has been extremely significant, and his dramatistic model is among the most popular of the various competing theories of social movement rhetoric.² While Burke used literature to illuminate many of his dramatistic theories, Burkean rhetorical theory, from the angle of social movements, has not been fully explored as an approach to literature. This is perhaps because literature is typically seen as less germane and influential to historical movements and societal change than more explicitly political works such as broadsides, propagandist pamphlets, and the public speeches of movement leaders.

Edwin Black's *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (1965) is often cited for its legitimization of alternative forms of rhetorical analysis (Simons 1, Cathcart 82, Gustainis 251). Leland Griffin also extends Burkean thought to social movements theory in "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Social Movements" (1966) and "When Dreams Collide: Rhetorical Trajectories in the Assassination of President Kennedy"

¹ By the "Aristotelian hegemony," I am acknowledging the overwhelming dominance of the theories of Aristotle on the field of rhetorical analysis for over a millennium. Bernard Brock has warned that the recent pre-eminence of Burkean thought could make him the "next Aristotle" of rhetorical theory. See his article titled "The Limits of Burkeian System."

² Principally, there are three general categories under which social movements theory can be grouped. The *dramatistic approach*, exemplified in this thesis, is the most widely used (Cathcart, Solomon, Reed, Griffin), and employs the theories of Kenneth Burke to analyze the path of one particular social movement or make generalizations on social movements based on dramatistic parallels. The *historico-sociological approach* (early Griffin, Simons, Walsh) uses the research techniques of sociology (Gustainis 253) to analyze a large sample with a particular social movement and the rhetoric of individual leaders and their dyadic interactions. The most recent addition is the area of *cultural rhetorical studies*, where cultural rhetoricians attempt to combine fields of rhetoric and cultural criticism, as best exemplified by the theories of Steven Mailloux. I chose the dramatistic approach because of its focus and ideal suitability to the rhetorical analysis of literature. The historico-sociological approaches use of large sampling is unwieldy for literary criticism. The cultural rhetorical approach casts a very wide net in which social movements literature falls right through.

(1984).³ Herbert W. Simons⁴ and Robert S. Cathcart⁵ were significant contributors to social movement rhetorical analysis in the 1970's. Another notable contribution to social movement theory is the work of David Zarefsky, editor of *Rhetorical Movement: Essays in Honor of Leland M. Griffin* (1993). Of particular interest to the study of the abolitionist movement is the essay included in Zarefsky's collection "Lincoln and Douglas Respond to the Antislavery Movement." Here, Zarefsky and Ann E. Burnette interpret the discourse of Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln concerning the issue of slavery between 1854 and 1858 through their opposing rhetorical trajectories.

Radical theorists wish to establish that literature can, in fact, be more revolutionary than the discourse of movement leaders. Combining social movements, dramaturgy, and literary theory, T.V. Reed's *Fifteen Jugglers, Five Believers* (1992) finds Ellison's *Invisible Man* more subversive than the rhetoric of the Black Power movement.⁶ Overall, previous movement studies are mostly limited to works traditionally studied by rhetoricians. The most notable of these theoretical predecessors, Leland Griffin and Robert S. Cathcart, contribute to a methodology derived from Burke

³This is a brilliant application of Burkean analysis to social movement theory. Griffin uses an encyclopedic synthesis of Burkean thought (over 100 citations in less than two dozen pages) to argue that the rise and fall of a movement is parallel to the stages of crisis, mortification, purification, victimization, and consummation, as principally defined in Kenneth Burke's *A Grammar of Motives* and *A Rhetoric of Motives*.

⁴In the year 1970, Herbert W. Simons wrote the seminal article entitled "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion of Social Movements." There, he delineates a theoretical framework for social movements, subdividing them into moderate, intermediate, and militant (7). The author provides a leader-focused perspective (2).

⁵Robert S. Cathcart's "New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically" uses Griffin's adaptation of Burke's dramaturgic approach as the basis for his own definition of the rhetoric of social movements (87). In a subsequent article of 1978, Cathcart further expands upon the dramaturgic paradigm to define the concept of confrontation as the key rhetorical ritual that movements must perform to define themselves vis-à-vis the establishment (Brock 362).

⁶A notable precursor to this work is found in Ian Watson's *Song and Democratic Culture*, which attempts to apply cultural theory, literary criticism, and movement theory to song lyrics.

that can illuminate the speeches, narratives, and literature of one of the most successful social movements in American history – the abolitionist movement.

Kenneth Duva Burke is considered to be one of the most influential theoreticians of the 20th century and his work is still being hotly debated in the 21st. Burke is at once situated in the context of a war-torn century yet part of the conversation of contemporary literary theory as an important predecessor and force to be reckoned with.⁷ Burke was born in 1897 in Pennsylvania. He was briefly educated at Ohio State University and Columbia University but soon became part of a group of Greenwich Village writers that would also become influential in the early to mid-20th century, such as Hart Crane and Malcolm Cowley. He wrote for the *Dial* from 1921 until 1929. His eclecticism can be shown in many of the odd jobs that he held – as a Rockefeller researcher for drug addiction, as an editor for the Bureau of Social Hygiene, and as a music critic for *The Nation* (Gusfield 2-3).

Burke's first major publication, *Counter-Statement*, was produced in 1931 and was followed by *Permanence and Change* in 1935. From the late 1930's until the 60's, he taught at various institutions of higher education as a visiting professor while holding a position of professor of literary criticism at Bennington College. During that time, he also authored a series of influential works, such as *Attitudes Toward History* (1937), *The Philosophy of Literary Forms* (1941), *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), *A Rhetoric of*

⁷ Because of Burke's totalizing pentad, he could be compared to structuralism as exemplified by Levi-Strauss (Gusfield 17) or because he stressed a disassociation between the word and the thing it represents, he could be a predecessor to post-structuralists with his logologic (Warnock 85). He has also been compared to the deconstructionists in his obsession with the negative (85). However, it is mistake to write off Burke as a mere precursor whose work was superseded and obscured by later theorists. His thought is original and distinctive in its own right.

Motives (1950), *The Rhetoric of Religion* (1961), and *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966) (Gusfield 3). He continued to expand his theory of dramatism in *Dramatism and Development* (1972) and “Dramatism and Logology” (1985) (Warnock 76). He was considered a “literary critic, philosopher, linguist, sociologist, social critic” (Gusfield 1) “fiction writer, poet, editor, and translator” as well as a rhetorician of undeniable importance who revised Aristotle (Warnock 75). Burke was inter-disciplinary well before that became a favorable characteristic for academia. His writing career spanned over seven decades and included a notable shift from epistemology to ontology reflected in his writings from 1968 onward (Brock 193). He died in 1993 at the age of 97 with numerous honorary degrees and recognitions for his remarkable contributions to letters (Warnock 77). For my purposes, I will limit myself to his emphasis on rhetoric, his theory of dramatism, and its application to social movements discourse.

How do we define “rhetoric”? The Aristotelian definition of antiquity describes rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (*The Rhetoric and The Poetics*). From a Burkean perspective, however, rhetoric “refers to human behavior and communication seen as embodying strategies for affecting situations” (Gusfield 6). In *The Rhetoric of Religion*, Burke explains that rhetoric is “*an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols*” (reprinted in *On Symbols and Society* Burke 188). The former and older definition emphasizes the *passive* observation of the methods of persuasion. The latter describes the *active* utilization of communication and symbols to affect dramatic situations and induce cooperation of

human beings, the symbol-users and mis-users.⁸ It betrays a strong sociological orientation. Dramatism then can be seen as “a technique of analysis of *language* and thought as basically *modes of action* rather than as means of conveying information” (Gusfield 10) (emphasis mine).

Burke further describes dramatism as a “method of analysis and a corresponding critique of terminology designed to show that the most direct route to the study of human relations and *human motives* is via a methodical inquiry into *cycles or clusters of terms* and their functions” (Burke *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 445) (my italics).⁹ Dramatism is most famously associated with the Burkean pentad, a theoretical tool that describes motives in the cluster of terms centering around the act, agency, scene, agent, and purpose. The “act” or *action* becomes the key term in which all other terms emanate in the dramatisitic conception of rhetoric (Burke 135).

In *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke summarizes pertinent arguments found in his previous works and relevant to social movements:

In my *Rhetoric of Motives*, I tried to trace the relation between social hierarchy and mystery, or guilt. And I carried such speculations further in my *Rhetoric of Religion*. Here we encounter secular analogues of ‘original sin’. For, despite any cult of good manners and humility, to the extent that a social structure becomes differentiated, with privileges to some that are denied to others, there are the conditions for a kind of ‘built in’ pride. King and peasant are ‘mysteries’ to each

⁸ Kenneth Burke’s “Definition of Man” in terms of his symbolic action is as follows:

Man is
the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal
inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)
separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making
goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order)
and rotten with perfection. (Burke “Definition of Man” 507)

He later revised his definition to describe humans as “bodies that learn language” (Warnock 80).

⁹ Gusfield includes this definition in his introduction to Burkean thought and is vehemently against conflating dramatism with dramaturgy (as popularized by Erving Goffman) (13, 22). The terms are related and often times used interchangeably.

other. Those “Up” are guilty of not being “Down,” those “Down” are certainly guilty of not being “Up”. (reprinted in *On Symbols and Society* 69)

In his coining of “logology” (words about words) modified from theology (words about God), Burke derived rhetorical patterns from religion and speculated about their secular rhetorical counterparts in society. The cluster terms of hierarchy, mystery, and guilt arise from these comparisons. These terms set up the conditions for drama and the use of language as symbolic action to negotiate the hierarchy, uncover the mystery, and recognize guilt.

The scapegoat analogue from religion shows us that victimage leads to a purgation of guilt by heaping sins upon a sacrificial lamb. It is also relevant to a secular version that is endemic to a dramatistic society.¹⁰ He describes his logology in detail:

If action is to be our key term, then drama; for drama is the culminative form of action (this is a variant of the ‘perfection’ principle discussed in [chapter two of *Language as Symbolic Action*]). But if drama, then conflict. And if conflict, then victimage. Dramatism is always on the edge of this vexing problem, that comes to a culmination in tragedy, the song of the scapegoat. (from *Language as Symbolic Action*, excerpted in *On Symbols and Society* 125)

Cooperation with a hierarchy that distinguishes between “Up” and “Down,” and the corresponding guilt that comes from accepting these distinctions, eventually leads to its resolution in purgation and redemption through the scapegoat principle as enacted by the rise and fall of a social movement. Another way to put it would be to quote Burke’s “Iron Law of History”:

¹⁰ I have adopted the term “a dramatistic society” from Bernard Brock’s interpretation of Burkean dramatism. He observes that “Burke describes human society as a dramatistic process that includes the elements of hierarchy; acceptance and rejection; and guilt, purification, and redemption” (Brock *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism* 184-5). Acceptance and rejection are equivalent to keeping the mystery and the resounding “No!”, respectively. He furthermore notes that the process of bureaucratization “makes hierarchy the structural principle of a dramatistic society” (185). Since society is inherently hierarchical, and humans are propelled by the desire to create hierarchies, there simply is no such thing as a “non-dramatistic society.”

Here are the steps
In the Iron Law of History
That welds Order and Sacrifice:

Order leads to Guilt
(for who can keep commandments!)
Guilt needs Redemption
(for who would not be cleansed!)
Redemption needs a Redeemer
(Which is to say, A Victim!)

Order
Through Guilt
To Victimage
(hence: Cult of the Kill) ...

In this poem describing the idea of order from *The Rhetoric of Religion* (4-5), Burke traces the rhetorical motives that can be found to govern human conduct in a dramatic society. This dramatic pattern or cycle – beginning in order, leading to guilt, culminating in scapegoat and victimage, and ending in redemption – has its direct functions in the rhetoric of social movements.

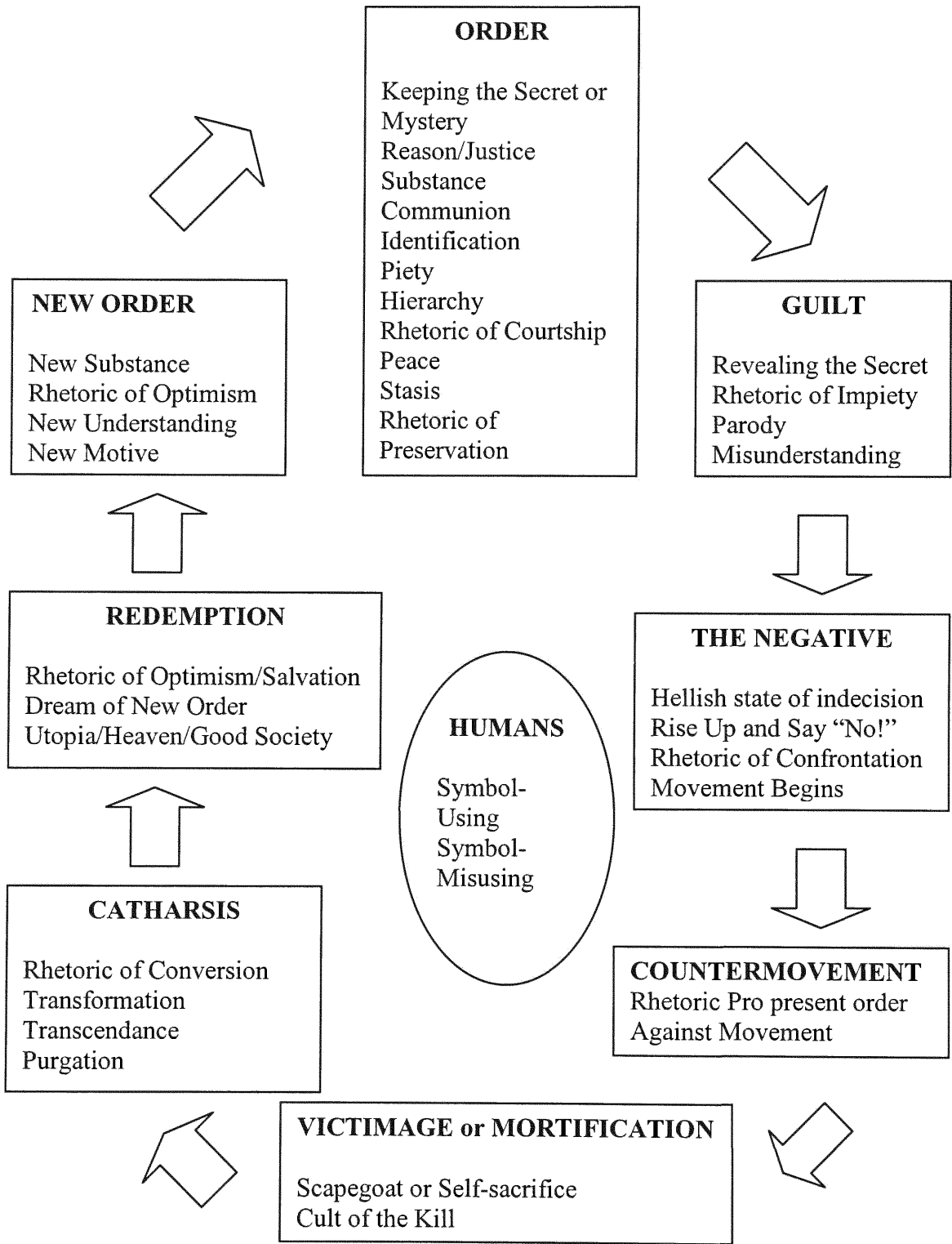
Social movements begin when members of a society express their guilt and dissent from the present order and hierarchy and confront the system with a resounding “No!” The present order then instigates in many cases a countermovement that either maintains the hierarchy or empowers the movement members to rhetorically “kill” the dominant power in the confrontation and move towards catharsis, redemption, and the establishment of a brave, new world. But, as Burkean scholar Leland Griffin warns us, the new soon becomes established, which creates dissent, and the cycle begins anew. Griffin describes it as a forever turning wheel with humans at the center propelling the movement (472). While Burke provides the philosophical system that underlies a

dramatistic society, and Griffin applies it social movements, Robert S. Cathcart inserts the preeminence of the rhetoric of confrontation to reveal a movement's existence.

Chart 1 delineates an extension of these rhetorical strategies to the various stages of a social movement.

In abolitionism, the dramatistic cycle of social movements manifests itself in two principal groups of rhetors: *agitators* and *evangelists*. Ernest Bormann makes a compelling argument for these classifications in his *Forerunners of Black Power: The Rhetoric of Abolition* (1971). William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips are named as the most well known agitators of abolition; Theodore Dwight Weld and Henry Stanton are cited as the best of the evangelists for abolition. In combining Bormann's insights with a dramatistic perspective, I contend that these rhetors or "agents" shared the same vision of the new order: an end to the institution of slavery in the United States. They differed in their targets of the rhetoric of impiety (agitators – against the church for supporting slavery; evangelists – against the sinful slave system), in their methods of confrontation (agitators – anti-union; evangelists – pro-union), and in their ideal timeline of the consummation of the movement cycle (agitators – now; evangelists – gradually), as well as other factors (1-38). However, orators could combine elements of both rhetorical strategies to advance the abolitionist cause, as evidenced in the following chapter on the orations of Frances Maria W. Stewart and William Lloyd Garrison.

Chart I: Dramatistic Cycle of Social Movements Rhetoric*



* - Adapted principally from Griffin's Burkean concepts as well as Cathcart's theories.

CHAPTER I - Holy Indignation to Agitate the Land: A Social Movements Approach to the Rhetoric of Maria Stewart and William Lloyd Garrison

Frances Maria W. Stewart and William Lloyd Garrison represent pioneering voices within the 19th century abolitionist movement. Maria Stewart is considered to be the first Black woman political writer as well as the first woman, Black or white, to give a public address on political themes in front of a “promiscuous” or mixed-sex audience. Her first recorded public speaking engagement took place in September of 1832 and was a rally against the colonization movement. She is also possibly the first Black woman to speak in public for the cause of woman’s rights (Richardson 1). Well before Sojourner Truth proclaimed “Am’t I a Woman?”, Maria Stewart had boldly blazed trails amongst the abolitionist movement in Boston. Mostly considered an evangelist for abolition, her speeches also demonstrated agitator elements. It cannot be overemphasized that her role as a speaker in a racist and sexist society was absolutely radical. Her assertiveness in awakening complacent Blacks to her cause was controversial and her diasporist perspective of African historical restoration was way ahead of its time.¹¹

The New England abolitionists led by William Lloyd Garrison would launch the careers of Maria Stewart, Frederick Douglass and many others. While including strong religious elements within his speeches, Garrison is the prototypical agitator of abolition and is thought to have antagonized as many as he converted to the cause with his

¹¹ While the term “African diaspora” was not coined until the 20th century and made popular until the 1960’s, the concept of restoring Africa’s place in history dates back well before the 20th century. Shepperson affirms in his piece “African Diaspora: Concept and Context” that among the concerns of the African diaspora is the need “to see Africans, at home and abroad, past and present, treated as human beings” where there is work to be done in the “redressing of the balance of world history” (47).

radicalism and his acerbic, sarcastic criticisms of slave-holding America (Bormann 21). Even before *The Liberator* was created, Garrison served as editor of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* in 1829 (Bormann 29) and tirelessly worked to bring the abolitionist movement to the forefront of national debate for decades until the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War in 1865. Mayer describes his editorial leadership of *The Liberator* as “a sterling and unrivaled example of personal journalism in the service of civic idealism” (i). I have chosen the orations of Frances Maria W. Stewart and William Lloyd Garrison for the following reasons: 1) they exemplify the best of the agitator and evangelical modes of rhetoric which reappear in Douglass and Stowe, 2) they represent a diverse and multifaceted abolitionist movement reaching out to various sectors of society to enact change, and 3) they developed significant arguments that would be echoed in later participants in the movement.

The announcement for the “Address Delivered at the African Masonic Hall” proclaims that it was speech on “African rights and liberty” (Richardson 56), a phrase that would be reiterated in its first and last sentence. This speech was delivered on February 27, 1833 in Boston, Massachusetts and was subsequently published in *The Liberator* on March 2, 1833 (Richardson 56). Partaking from both the evangelical strand of abolition and the agitator mode, to use Bormann’s helpful distinctions, Maria Stewart’s perspective as a Black female from differed many of the white abolitionist males who were at the forefront of the movement in the 1830’s. While she was speaking to a “promiscuous” or mixed-sex audience, African-American males were her primary targets, in which she wished to “fire the breast of every free man of color in these United

States” (Stewart 177). It was precisely her African vantage point that allowed Stewart to be critical of what she considered to be complacency in African males. From a dramatic perspective, Stewart’s rhetoric ignites sentiments of guilt and impiety in cooperating with a system that keeps African males “Down” while others are “Up” to arouse the complacent to confrontation. She also uses the rhetoric of optimism to describe the new order that can emerge from the success of the abolitionist movement.

As a powerful Black female voice, Frances Maria W. Stewart is a notable pioneer in the history of the abolitionist movement in the United States. Maria Stewart was a free Black orphan from Connecticut who was indentured to a minister’s family until the age of 15 (Bormann 176) (Richardson 3). Married at the age of 23, and widowed at 26, she began her brief career as a public lecturer at the age of 29. Although she cut short her career as an orator after giving four public speeches due to the opposition within her own community (177), she also published religious meditations, a political pamphlet, and her collected works, with a biographical preface to a new edition of her compositions written after the Civil War (Richardson xiv).

In the 1820’s and 1830’s, Boston was a hub of antislavery activity, with an especially active free Black middle class community. Boston was also the place where *The Liberator* was published by William Lloyd Garrison and collaborator Isaac Knapp, which initially had 75% of its subscriptions from the free Black population (Royster 163). Maria Stewart and her husband James W. Stewart were parishioners of Boston’s African Baptist Church, the center of the political reform movements of the day (Richardson 1).

It was at this church where the New England Abolitionist Society held its first meeting (Royster 162).

When Maria Stewart was left a widow only three years after marriage, the white co-workers of her husband divested her of what would have been a considerable estate. Two years of litigation left her destitute of what was rightfully hers (Royster 163). Jacqueline Royster contends that this experience, along with the hardships of being an indentured servant and constant encounters with discrimination, led Maria Stewart to a public life, despite its unprecedented excursion outside of a “woman’s place” (163-4). The deaths of her husband and her intellectual mentor, David Walker, within the six months of each other, led her to a deepened faith and public proclamation of her life in Christ a year later (Richardson 8). From this spirit of agitation brought forth by the indignities that she experienced, along with her firm belief that the Lord ordained her to speak on behalf of the sons and daughters of Africa, she combined the two strains of abolitionist rhetoric. While using the trope of the “bright annals of fame” to symbolize the top of the hierarchy, Maria Stewart firmly invokes the rhetoric of guilt, confrontation, optimism, and impiety to convert her audience into members of the abolitionist movement in her “Address Delivered at the African Masonic Hall.”

Stewart begins her speech by placing the responsibility of “African rights and liberty” on African descent Americans themselves. In order to ask free Black men to rise to the challenge of abolitionism, she first needed to make the free Black community aware of its collusion with the hierarchy which kept them down, hence invoking the rhetoric of guilt – the first key Burkean element found in her speech. Stewart introduces the trope of the “bright annals of fame,” symbolic of the top or “Up” status in the present

hierarchy and filled with “illustrious names” of white Americans. She queries: “Where are the names of our illustrious ones?” referring to the dearth of prominent Blacks in American society. She instigates her audience, targeting Black males, by giving credit to the observations of whites:

They [white Americans] boldly assert, that, did we possess a natural independence of soul, and feel a love for liberty within our breasts, some one of our sable race, long before this, would have testified it, notwithstanding the disadvantages under which we labor. (177)

While Stewart admits to the oppression that Black Americans have had to contend with, she doesn't feel that this alone is the cause of the degraded status of Blacks in her day. She blatantly cites a lack of “ambition and force” among Black males. Griffin observes that one of the first tasks for those who wield social movement rhetoric is to create a state of guilt:

Its first strategy designed to infuse increasing numbers of hearers (the corruptible – the potentially alienable, the uncommitted, the powerless, the “disadvantaged”, the “simply curious”), with attitudes of rejection toward the hierarchy – which is to say, with impiety, and with the Guilt that goes with impiety (for “to flourish in the state of Glory, we must first be sown in Corruption”). (463)

In Burkean terms, Stewart is summoning guilt within members of her audience who realize that they are colluding with their oppressors by accepting their place at the bottom rung of the hierarchy. She is showing that part of the source of the “corruption” is internal.

Stewart questions the whereabouts of Black men of “eminence” and “distinction” in America, further invoking the rhetoric of guilt. She wonders if there are any Black men that will throw off the “chains of ignorance” and not be content with the derogatory epithets of “clever Negroes” and “good creatures” (178). In her conception, others are

lauded for their “noble and patriotic spirit,” so why can’t these qualities be admired in Blacks? (178). While this assessment may seem to be naïve, Stewart instigates and implicates her audience further:

Where can we find amongst ourselves the man of science, or a philosopher, or an able statesman, or a counselor at law? Show me our fearless and brave, our noble and gallant ones. Where are our lecturers on natural history, and our critics in useful knowledge? There may be a few such men amongst us, but they are rare. (178)

It is clear that Stewart wants to create a “bright annals of fame” as populated with eminent Blacks in all fields of endeavor as the long list of white Americans that she mentioned before. When she boldly prods, “Have the sons of Africa no souls?”, Stewart is truly being assertive in her lecture to these men by asking rhetorical questions that would incite her audience to respond in the Negative, to “Rise Up and Say No!” in terms of the dramatisic cycle of social movements.

After establishing the guilt produced by an awareness of their collusion with the corrupt hierarchy, Stewart secondly invokes the rhetoric of confrontation to inspire her brethren to action. The rhetoric of confrontation, an assertion of opposition to the present status, is a critical term in the Burkean definition of social movements, because without it a social movement does not exist (Cathcart 367). While creating an awareness of the participation of free Blacks in their degraded status in the hierarchy, and of their guilt in not raising their arms to struggle for those in slavery, she reminds her audience of Black soldiers that did not spurn confrontation.

It is true, our fathers bled and died in the revolutionary war, and others fought bravely under the command of Jackson, in defence [sic] of liberty. But where is the man that has distinguished himself in these modern days by acting wholly in the defence [sic] of African rights and liberty? There was one – although he sleeps, his memory lives. (178)

While giving credit to courageous Black men, such as her husband who was a veteran of the War of 1812, she astutely distinguishes these noble efforts from the ones that will liberate the Black people. It is one thing to fight in defense of liberty and another to fight in defense of *African* liberty. Black servicemen, Stewart notes, are called “brave soldiers” and “fellow citizen” in times of war, but are bereft from the same liberty that they have fought for when the war is over (181). When speaking of the “one” who *did* fight for African liberty, she possibly could have been alluding to Nat Turner and his rebellion of 1831, which took place just two years earlier, thus aligning her position with that of an insurrectionist. Or, more probably, she could have been referring to David Walker, a free Black well known in the Boston circles, whose unrelenting criticism of the slaveholding South, in provocative pamphlets and articles, led to his murder. Stewart calls upon powerful examples of how Black men should distinguish themselves, even if this honor leads to their martyrdom, which is a possible consequence of social movements. Whichever example was first conjured in the minds of her audience, this rhetoric of the agitator is parallel to the rhetoric of confrontation.

Yet a rhetorical movement’s manifestation does not initially result in the victimage and mortification that ended the lives of Turner and Walker but usually begins with a verbal confrontation where the movement stands opposed to the establishment (Cathcart 367). Like most of the radical agitator abolitionists, Stewart advocates for immediate emancipation, instead of gradually achieved freedom and instigates a written form of confrontation.

It is of no use for us to wait any longer for a generation of well educated men to arise. We have slumbered and sleep too long already ... Let every man of color throughout the United States, who possesses the spirit and principles of a man,

sign a petition to Congress to *abolish slavery* in the District of Columbia, and grant you the rights and privileges of common free citizens; for if you had had *faith as a grain of a mustard seed, long before this the mountains of prejudice might have been removed.* (182) (my emphasis)

In this case, the verbal call to action is articulated in the form of a petition. Even though this sounds like a mild form of resistance, she is provoking the complacent to conflict and asking them to join the movement. While the previous fiery examples of African resistance are more militant, we must remember that this was the era of the “cult of true womanhood” where the “weaker sex” was to content itself with domestic activities, not public speaking. Hence by assuming a critical position within her community, Stewart’s call to action was radical. Also note that she is not only asking for the abolishment of slavery in D.C., which would ultimately challenge the system altogether, but she is also demanding that free Blacks be given the rights of “common” – meaning white – free citizens. This is an agitation beyond what is communicated in many speeches from white abolitionists and is combined with a call to faith stronger than any mountain of prejudice to buttress her belief that this petition will accomplish its goal.

Thirdly, Stewart invokes the rhetoric of optimism and, in doing so, uncovers hierarchies – past, present, and future – that would allow her audience of African ancestry to reach back to the past in order to move forward. She uncovers an intellectual, merit-based hierarchy, of which Blacks were once at the top but have fallen to the bottom:

Individuals have been distinguished according to their genius and talents, ever since the first formation of man, and will continue to be whilst the world stands. The different grades rise to honor and respectability as their merits may deserve. (178)

She is pointing out that color alone has not always been the sole indicator of status in society; “genius and talents” are appreciated, irrespective of color. In dramatism, the

hierarchy is a principle element of order and the cause of conflict and drama between divergent agents in society. In speaking of this propensity to create hierarchies, Griffin explains:

Because they desire Order (the reign of reason and justice), men build cooperative systems, or orders. All such orders are of necessity hierarchical, involving division, “a ladder of authority that extends from ‘lower’ to ‘higher’, while its official functions tend toward a corresponding set of social ratings”, a set of “different classes” (or “principles”, or “kinds of beings”). (458)

In Stewart’s generation, the top of this intellectual hierarchy is peopled with those in the “bright annals of fame” – white Americans. Then she reflects on the rise and fall of Africa in world history:

History informs us that we sprung from one of the most learned nations of the whole earth – from the seat, if not the parent of science; yes, poor, despised Africa was once the resort of sages and legislators of other nations, was esteemed the school for learning, and the most illustrious men in Greece flocked thither for instruction. (178-9)

She learned of Africa’s glory by her ill-fated mentor, David Walker, who was found dead shortly after a price was placed on his head for his incendiary writings (Richardson 7-8). According to Stewart, Africa once possessed a “genius and talent” that heralded it at the top of the hierarchy of ancient learning, and the highly regarded philosophers of Greece went there for instruction. She is probably referencing the library of Alexandria and the roots of Graeco-Roman learning in the earlier Egyptian civilization.

How did Africa fall from grace? She invokes the past hierarchy where African nations topped the ancient world. How did this eminence devolve into slavery? Stewart blames “sin and prodigality” as being the downfall of ancient Africa by divine wrath. Once again, she places blame for condition of Black people principally on the shoulders

of Black Americans themselves. Unless Blacks strive to achieve “true piety and virtue,” the mist of “moral gloom” will not dissipate.

In the present hierarchy, “Most of our color have been taught to stand in fear of the white man from their earliest infancy, to work as soon as they could walk, and call ‘master’ before they scarce could lisp the name of mother” (179). How would this perversion of authority ever be rectified? Stewart firstly asserts the moral uprightness that men of color need to have in order to return to the Almighty, the ultimate arbiter of the fate of nations and peoples. But this striving for righteousness (evangelist) must be coupled with a defiant fight for equal rights (agitator):

But give the man of color an *equal opportunity* with the white, from the cradle to manhood, and from manhood to the grave, and you would discover the dignified statesman, the man of science, and the philosopher . . . *O ye sons of Africa, when will your voices be heard in our legislative halls, in defiance of your enemies, contending for equal rights and liberty?* (179) (emphasis mine)

Here Stewart subverts her initial argument about the “illustrious annals of fame.” The reason why Blacks do not populate those distinguished annals is not because of innate inferiority but because of a lack of equal opportunity due to color prejudice. This is not helped by the “lack of ambition and requisite courage” that she cites initially as the cause of this dearth of honor or the “moral gloom” that is caused by neglecting God’s ways. She implores the Black male populace to fight for these rights. In dramatic terms, she is rallying Black males to say “No!” to the present order in the legislative halls.

She repeats the biblical promise found in Psalm 68:31 to spur them on in a righteous path: “Ethiopia shall again stretch forth her hands unto God” (179). Griffin describes this in detail:

And thus, perversely goaded by the spirit of hierarchy, moved by the impious dream of a mythic new Order – inspired with a new purpose, drawn anew by desire – they are moved to act: moved, ingenious men (“inventors of the negative”) to rise up and cry No to the existing order – and prophesy the coming of the new.

And thus movements begin. (460)

The dream of the new world order – the rhetoric of optimism - is inspired by an African past but firmly grounded in the American present. In this new world order, African descent Americans would be given equal opportunity to develop their merits, talent, and intellect.

Stewart also utilizes a fourth key element from the rhetoric of social movements - the rhetoric of impiety, which is appropriated by Stewart once guilt has been established. Cathcart uses Kenneth Burke’s definition of the rhetoric of piety, which is to Burke “system building,” to contrast its corollary in social movements:

There is, I believe, another kind of collective behavior which is perceived of (or reacted to) as ‘radical’ or ‘revolutionary’. Its form is *confrontational*. It contains the rhetoric of ‘corrosion’ and ‘impiety’. The dramatic enactment of this rhetoric reveals persons who have become so alienated that they reject ‘the mystery’ and cease to identify with the prevailing hierarchy. They find themselves in a scene of confrontation where they stand alone, divided from the existing order; and inevitably they dream of a new order where there will be salvation and redemption. (366)

Before a new world order can arise, the present system must be found corrupt and impious. While she is critical of her community for not doing more for the antislavery cause, she does let not America go unscathed. Stewart furthermore subverts her initial argument of the “bright annals of fame” by showing how these things were accomplished.

Like king Solomon, who put neither nail nor hammer to the temple, yet received the praise; so also have the white Americans gained themselves a name, like the names of the great men that are in the earth, whilst in reality we have been their

principal foundation and support. We have pursued the shadow, they have obtained the substance; we have performed the labor, they have received the profits; we have planted the vines, they have eaten the fruits of them. (180)

Stewart gives a biblical parallel in the example of King Solomon to the impiety of the American majority. Hence the “bright annals of fame” have been populated by those whose accomplishments can only be seen as being derived from the hard labor and effort exacted from the African slave trade. In Burkean terms, the mystery or secret is kept when white Americans can take all of the credit for filling the “bright annals of fame” with noteworthy people.

Utilizing the rhetoric of impiety, Stewart ultimately indicts America herself, for being like the sinful city of Babylon, that “is indeed a seller of slaves and the souls of men; she has made the Africans drunk with the wine of her fornication; she has put them completely beneath her feet, and she means to keep them there” (182). She urges the sons of Africa to stay away from the impious activities of gambling and dance halls, where money is squandered, and invest in schools and seminaries for Blacks. The sins that caused Africans to fall from their glory would be a continued threat to their salvation in the day of Stewart, and was being promoted by white racism.

Then they stole our fathers from their peaceful and quiet dwellings, and brought them hither and made bond men and bond women of them and their little ones; they have obliged our brethren to labor, *kept them in utter ignorance, nourished them in vice and raised them in degradation.* (183) (my italics)

In critiquing the impious behavior of Blacks, Stewart is moreover criticizing the American system that she feels encourages this behavior to maintain Blacks in an inferior status within society and is warning Blacks to not fall into the trap of vice.

Critical of faults within her community, Maria Stewart's "Address Delivered at the African Masonic Hall" speech encompasses the dramatistic elements of guilt, confrontation, optimism, and impiety, all of which are critical to social movements rhetoric. She also creates the trope of the "bright annals of fame" as indicative of the summit of the present hierarchy, a place that could be afforded to the Blacks of her day if they fight for their rights and for those trapped in slavery. In an apocalyptic fashion, she proclaims that "the oppression of injured Africa has come up before the majesty of Heaven; and when our cries shall have reached the ears of the Most High, it will be a tremendous day for the people of this land; for strong is the arm of the Lord God Almighty" (183). While Stewart's faith in divine restoration makes her an evangelist for abolition, her confrontational rhetoric also participates in the rhetoric of agitation. Throughout her writings, she makes plain that she is unafraid of the consequences of her beliefs.

... now that we have enriched their soil [white America], and filled their coffers, they say that we are not capable of becoming like white men, and that we never can rise to respectability in this country. They would drive us to a strange land. But before I go, the bayonet shall pierce me through. (183)

While she proclaims African pride in her speeches, she understands that many Black Americans of her time were four generations removed from the continent and would have returned as foreigners. Thankfully, Stewart did not have to undergo a physical conflict but her vision of enduring the ultimate confrontation of martyrdom rallied the ranks of those who would ultimately shake off the shackles of slavery.

Although William Lloyd Garrison is considered the supreme agitator of the abolitionist movement of the mid-19th century, his speeches are filled with Christian and biblical references that partake in evangelical abolitionism as well. A typical example of Garrison's rhetoric can be found in his fiery July 4th 1838 Address. A Burkean approach to social movements rhetoric unlocks Garrison's masterful revelation of the "secret" or "mystery" which hides American slavery under the glory of American patriotism. This revelation by Garrison creates an arena for the rhetoric of impiety against this deceitful message and encourages confrontation against the slave system and optimism in the triumph of his holy cause. Unlike Stewart who chose Black males as the targets of her fury, Garrison focused on shaming patriotic white Americans into becoming participants in the abolitionist social movement.

Ernest Bormann's depiction of Garrison as a disagreeable figure that did more harm than good and as an opportunist that basked in post-war glory (94-6) is typical of historians of the 20th century. It has taken many years to restore Garrison to his rightful place as a positive catalyst of the movement, instead of the pariah and troublemaker that he has been portrayed as by historians. Henry Mayer's decisive biography *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* has taken this restoration as his task by producing a notable volume in tribute to a veritable one-man powerhouse that put abolition at the center of political debate. As founder and editor of the weekly newspaper *The Liberator* that circulated from January 1831 to December of 1865, Garrison published anti-slavery tracts that were read by multitudes and many times included his own speeches (Bormann 95; Mayer xiii).

It is useful to begin an interpretation of the work of William Lloyd Garrison by describing some of the volatile events that preceded his July 4th Address of 1838. In October of 1835, Garrison was almost lynched by an angry mob in Boston. This was followed by a hiatus of Garrison from the center of abolitionist foment in Boston to New York, where he saw the birth of his first son in 1836. By this time the “gag rule” was established in Congress to avoid any discussion on the issue of slavery, and the senatorial response ranged from the valiant opposition of this rule by the aged John Quincy Adams in the House to the noncommittal Henry Clay to the outspoken proponent of slavery in John C. Calhoun of South Carolina in the Senate (Mayer 213-220).

Garrison’s brush with death caused him to seriously consider the role of pacifism in the Christian abolitionist cause. Though a pacifist for many years prior to the incident (Mayer 222), it deepened and transformed his fervor into an almost militant, radical pacifism (Bormann 96). Following the “gag rule” in Congress, the powerful clergyman Lyman Beecher declared its equivalent for Christian churches under his suasion. This meant that they would no longer permit objectionable speeches to take place in church or allow questionable individuals the opportunity to address the congregation. Garrison attacked this outrage in editorials and it forced out of him his seclusion to resume his vigorous leadership of *The Liberator* in 1836. The Massachusetts Abolitionist Society for a time gave financial support to the paper and in 1837 the American Abolitionist Society dramatically increased the number of antislavery agents in the field (Mayer 226-230).

In November 1837, the murder of abolitionist editor Elijah Lovejoy was a cause of consternation throughout the nation. While not condoning the atrocity, Garrison was

convinced that Lovejoy did not die a “Christian martyr” because of his willingness to take arms. Over 5,000 people attended the largest of the demonstrations against the death of Lovejoy in Boston. By 1837, the Grimké sisters had arisen as national advocates of both women’s rights and abolitionism. While Garrison wholeheartedly accepted the topic into his theory of “universal emancipation,” other abolitionists were less inclined to give thought to women’s issues. In 1838, Angelina Grimké, the most talented orator of the two sisters, gave a moving antislavery speech amidst an angry mob in a new Pennsylvania Hall of Philadelphia that was constructed to hold speeches on topics such as abolition. The next day, May 17th, 1838, proslavery advocates destroyed the hall, a symbolic act of intolerance for the freedom of speech (Mayer 231-239, 245-246). Incensed from this growing violence against abolitionists, Garrison uses scathing irony to compare the American Revolutionary cause to the institution of slavery and the abolitionist movement in the 4th of July address. In doing to, he also invokes the Burkean concepts of exposing the “mystery”, impiety, confrontation, and optimism, characteristic of social movement rhetoric.

Known to even burn the Constitution in a public setting one Fourth of July (Mayer xiv), William Lloyd Garrison did not attempt to hide the obvious irony and contradiction of a celebration of liberty in a land of slavery and used the holiday as an opportunity to reject the “mystery.” His 1838 address is directed at white American auditors; citizens like himself, he uses “we” throughout his speech to identify with those that would feel proud of this day but should feel shame:

Fellow Citizens: What a glorious day is this! what a glorious people are we! This is the time-honored, wine-honored, toast-drinking, powder-wasting, tyrant killing fourth of July – consecrated for the last sixty years, to bombast, to falsehood, to

impudence, to hypocrisy. It is the great carnival of *republican despotism*, and of *christian impiety*, famous the world over! (96) (emphases mine)

Already within the first two sentences of his speech, he is exposing the secret, the “mystery” around the fourth of July as a sham, an empty celebration, and espousing sentiments of impiety against the system. Of the Burkean terms pertaining to social movements rhetoric (order, guilt, the Negative, victimage, mortification, catharsis, redemption), Griffin relates that the mystery or the secret is part of what keeps order or the hierarchy: “In any ‘good’ system, men accept the ‘mystery’, strive to keep the Secret, preserve the hierarchy” (458). Hence, social movements rhetoric often is aimed at unveiling the “mystery” that keeps the masses content with the present system.

The celebration of the fourth of July, then, is “consecrated” to keep the secret and celebrate the overthrow of British tyranny while hiding the ignominious treatment of their fellow Americans of a darker complexion. Garrison continues to demystify:

Since we held it last year, we have kept securely in their chains, the stock of two millions, three hundred thousand slaves we then had on hand, in spite of every effort of fanaticism to emancipate them; and, through the goodness of God, to whom we are infinitely indebted for the divine institution of Negro slavery, have been graciously enabled to steal some seventy thousand babes, increase the stock, and expect to steal a still greater number before another “glorious” anniversary shall come round! (97)

Garrison mocks the suggestion that this could be a “divine institution” and attacks the system that would put millions of humans and their progeny in bondage. It is an example of “christian impiety” “republican despotism,” an oxymoronic celebration – liberty in the face of slavery. The “time-honored” “glorious” anniversary of freedom should actually serve as a reminder of America’s successful and institutionalized robbery of the liberty of others, one that grows in exponential numbers each year.

By debunking the mystery, Garrison compares the purpose of the day and the historical fight for freedom from the crown with the tyranny that the American Republic perpetrates in the hierarchy of slaveowners and slaves.

The day is consecrated to declamation, such as bursts from the lips of James Otis, and Joseph Warren, and Patrick Henry, in the days when a three-penny tax upon tea was not to be endured, and when taxation without representation was deemed an outrage worth periling the lives of the colonists to redress! ... Honest, righteous, soul-stirring declamation against tyranny, is music to my ears. But what harmony is there between the clanking of chains, and the shouts of the forgers of those chains? Between the shrieks of lacerated and bleeding humanity, and the vauntings of those who wield the lash? Between the groans of toil-worn slaves, and the exaltation of hypocritical freemen? (98)

The irony is deafening; the mystery unveiled. The cause of which the day is celebrated is trivial next to the “shrieks of lacerated and bleeding humanity” of the American slave. The fourth of July, a day that is a celebration against tyranny, is celebrated by oppressors of a greater order.

Garrison not only exposes the secret, he overturns the impious hierarchy to reveal where the true godly allegiance abides, and further makes his audience guilty of perjury in this celebration. He continues to reveal the extent of the “christian impiety” and “republican despotism” that have characterized America:

We have trampled all law and order under foot, resolved society into jacobinical clubs, and filled the land with mobs and riots which have ended in arson and murder, in order to show our abhorrence of those who “plead for justice in the name of humanity, and according to the law of the living God”. Hail, Columbia! Happy land! Hail, the return of the fourth of July, that we may perjure ourselves afresh, in solemnly invoking heaven and earth to witness, that “we hold these truths to be self-evident – that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness!” (97)

Garrison himself was the object of much derision during his time and could certainly attest to the presence of mob violence that almost claimed his life in the streets of Boston

for his sympathies with the oppressed (Bormann 96). Notwithstanding the peril that he often endured, Garrison continued to unite his cause to the “law of the living God” and outlined his purpose in godly terms and as a logical progression from lawful rights given by the Creator. In the context of a nation supporting slavery, the words of the Declaration of Independence are tantamount to perjury under oath before God so that each Fourth of July is seen as a new opportunity to commit perjury.

Guilt is also a significant characteristic of social movements rhetoric because when movement members reject the system and the mystery, they reveal their own complicity that maintained the system in the first place (Griffin 460). Appealing to the Christian sentiments in his audience, he indicts them as guilty of perpetrating a system where “Christians bring higher prices as working-cattle in the United States, than unbelievers,” referring to the auctioning of “born again” slaves at a higher rate than pagan slaves (101). This guilt is made even more noxious on a day proclaiming equality and liberty for all. Griffin notes that,

As the communication between classes grows ever more malign, men turn from acceptance to rejection of the “mystery”, cease to identify with the hierarchy, the prevailing system of authority. And as disloyalty spreads and the bonds of love corrode, the sense of Guilt grows increasingly greater: for in man, the symbol-maker, *Guilt is a function of impiety* – error, or the yearning to err, in the use of symbols. (460) (emphasis mine)

The irony of the celebration of liberty in the land of slavery also condemns them to commit perjury every year. Now that their crime of perjury has been revealed, their guilt is made known and no longer can the auditors go forth and perjure themselves anew by celebrating liberty in a land of slavery.

As Garrison exposes the Secret, and uses impious, ironic rhetoric to attack the system and indict his audience, he is also invoking the rhetoric of confrontation. He states his vocation as that of the agitator, whatever the confrontation costs him:

I am still resolved to link my destiny with that of the slave, to plead his cause, to rebuke his oppressor, and to AGITATE THE LAND, whether there be over my head a serene or a troubled sky – whether round about me are the elements of peace or of strife – whether men will hear or will forbear. (101)

He will not back down and cancel his request until the fourth of July is no longer a day in celebration of liberty.

And not until, by a formal vote, the people repudiate the Declaration of Independence as a rotten and dangerous instrument, and cease to keep this festival in honor and liberty, as unworthy of note or remembrance ... not until they brand Washington, and Adams, and Jefferson, and Hancock, as fanatics and madmen; not until they place themselves in the condition of colonial subserviency to Great Britain or point exultingly toward Bunker Hill, and the plains of Concord and Lexington; not, in fine, until they deny the authority of God, and proclaim themselves to be destitute of principle and humanity; will I argue the question, as one of doubtful disputation, on an occasion like this, whether our slaves are entitled to the rights and privileges of freeman. (99)

It is the ultimate heresy to the system to overthrow every patriotic name and every famous site of liberty as false until his question is answered in the emancipation of the slaves. Not until the irony of this contradictory celebration of liberty is resolved will he stop in his quest. He gives the audience two choices – either make this a celebration of liberty no more or extend liberty to all. Pride in the American system and in the names of all of those patriots that he mentioned would indicate that the clear choice is to abolish slavery and create a true republic.

Not only will he not back down from his rhetoric of confrontation against false patriotism, Garrison tacitly encourages his enslaved countrymen to confront the system as well. Published in the most famous of all the abolitionist periodicals, sympathetic readers

were the second audience of his speech, including literate slaves, such as Frederick Douglass who learned the meaning of word “abolition” from newspapers reporting on the abolitionist cause. While Garrison takes pains to identify himself as a pacifist not intending to incite insurrection, he still encourages his brethren in bonds that “it is not wrong for them to refuse to wear the yoke of slavery any longer” and “whenever and wherever they can break their fetters, God give them the courage to do so!” (99). Furthermore, “Success attend them in their flight to Canada, to touch whose monarchical soil insures freedom to every republican slave!” (99). This is extremely ironic, considering that the fourth is celebrating the freedom from the British, but American “republican” slaves can find freedom within a British colony.

Then Garrison makes a claim that puts Nat Turner in the company of the well-known patriots of the American Revolution and legitimizes his confrontation. “It is not in the power of all the slaveholders upon earth, to render odious the memory of that sable cheifan [sic]. ‘Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God,’ was our revolutionary motto. We acted upon that motto – what more did Nat Turner?” (100). Continuing his verbal confrontation against the system of slavery, he further places Nat Turner’s revolt in high esteem, as sanctified a fighter against tyranny as the revolutionary forefathers.

Was he [Nat Turner] a patriot, or a monster? Do we mean to say to the oppressed of all nations, in the 62nd year of our independence, and on the 4th of July, that our example in 1775 was a bad one, and ought not to be followed? (100)

While a pacifist, Garrison is honoring Turner’s confrontation with the system of slavery because to him “oppression and insurrection go hand in hand, as cause and effect are allied together” (99). This contradiction of Garrison honoring an insurrectionist while claiming to be a pacifist emanates from his own “militant pacifism” which often times

put him in harm's way and did not allow him to sugarcoat his message to suit an unfriendly audience (Bormann 96). Perhaps Turner also did not die a "Christian martyr" in Garrison's estimation, as Lovejoy did not, though his opposition against slavery was for a just cause.

Once Garrison exposes the "mystery" or "secret" behind the 4th of July Celebration, and invokes the rhetoric of confrontation against the impious system, he must describe an optimistic outcome for those that join him in his holy cause. Garrison paints a picture of justice that aligns his cause to God and the new world order:

The object I have in view is godlike – the principles I enunciate are just, immutable, eternal – the result of the contest must be the downfall of slavery, either with or without the consent of the planters, either by the power of moral suasion or by physical force, either by a peaceful or a bloody process. *Die it must, and die soon – but whether a peaceful or a violent death, it is for us to determine.* (101) (my italics)

Now that Garrison has definitively aligned his cause to a higher, eternal order, he names the devil term that must die – Slavery – and in doing so typifies the "cult of the Kill" that is important to social movements rhetoric. In relating this phenomena to the confrontation of the movement against the establishment (which in many cases generates a counter-movement as a response), Griffin notes: "The counter-movement provides the movement with the potential for crisis, and hence for consummation; for it provides a salient Victim, a scapegoat, a Kill – a rhetorical Vile Beast to be slain" (464). For Garrison, this "contest" or confrontation is inevitable, but the extent of the role of violence in slavery's downfall is up to the nation to determine. As a Christian pacifist, Garrison would obviously like for the downfall of slavery and the new world order to

arise from methods in line with the Prince of Peace, but he is prescient in warning that violence may be an outcome of the sinful system's overthrow.

Garrison ultimately bespeaks the rhetoric of optimism and the new order of unconditional liberty that is to replace the old. The perjurer, in the face of such a "disgusting spectacle" as this day (97), must join forces with him in his cause of abolition. Garrison asserts that the day not be squandered in hollow proclamations but takes the occasion to vie on behalf of the oppressed for their immediate and unconditional freedom:

In the name of the *God*, who has made us of one blood, and in whose image we are created; in the name of the *Messiah*, who came to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; in the name of the *Holy Ghost*, whom to despise is to perish; I demand the immediate emancipation of all who are pining in slavery on the American soil ... I make this demand, not for the children merely, but the parents also; not for one, but for all; not with restrictions and limitations, but unconditionally. I assert their equality with ourselves, as a part of the human race, and their inalienable right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. (98-9) (my italics)

This is the new order that Garrison envisions and as an agitator of immediate abolition. He proclaims this in the name the Christian trinity and without conditions. In doing so, he asserts the slaves' humanity and their claim to the same rights proclaimed by Americans on the 4th of July - life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He also boldly asserts their equality with the whites that make up his audience. In this new world order wrought from his concept of universal emancipation, preferences are not given in liberating the young over the old, or to one section of the United States over another. By letting the slaves go free, immediately and unconditionally, Garrison reveals the action that would resolve the ironic contradictions of the celebration.

Garrison closes with the rhetoric of optimism and assuredness of the holiness of his cause. He contends that the abolitionists are peaceful, they “wield no physical weapons, pledge ourselves not to countenance insurrection, and present the peaceful front of non-resistance to those who put our very lives in peril” (102). Even though they are non-violent, Garrison certainly does not consider his movement a league of cowards but for those who are “intrepid, heroic, invincible” through the divine sanction of their cause (102). In predicting a new world order and an optimistic victory in their cause, he affirms:

If it must be so, let the defenders of slavery still have all the brickbats, bowie-knives and pistols, which the land can furnish; but let us still possess all the arguments, facts, warnings and promises, which insure *the final triumph of our holy cause*. Let us take unto ourselves the whole armor of God ... taking the *helmet of salvation*, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (103) (italics mine)

By quoting Ephesians 6:13-17, Garrison makes this a confrontation of a celestial order, a dramatization of the battle between good and evil. Garrison aligns his cause to the side of God and good, ready to conquer in victory with the “gospel of peace.”

Through social movements rhetorical analysis, the dramatic concepts of revealing the Secret, the rhetoric of impiety, confrontation, and optimism are found in William Lloyd Garrison’s July 4th, 1838 address. Both Maria Stewart and Garrison share the rhetoric of impiety, confrontation, and optimism in their speeches on behalf of the abolitionist social movement. While Garrison uses scathing irony to compare the American Revolutionary movement with the institution of slavery and furthermore reveals the Secret from a Burkean view, Stewart focuses on the guilt that African descent peoples must acknowledge when they realize their contribution to the corrupt system.

These distinctions reflect the different audiences that they were speaking to as well as the role of diversity in the multiple voices that characterized the movement. Yet both rhetors within the dramatic cycle reveal an overarching vision that can be shown as illustrative of the best in the agitator and evangelical modes of abolitionist rhetoric. The evangelical call for “true piety and virtue” (Maria Stewart) and the articulation of a “holy cause” based on the “law of the living God” (Garrison) are coupled with the agitator’s fight for equal rights and the immediate abolition of slavery (Stewart and Garrison). These noteworthy arguments would find their way into both Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative* and Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

Frederick Douglass' *Narrative*

“There stood one, in physical proportion and stature commanding and exact – in intellect richly endowed – in natural eloquence a prodigy – in soul manifestly ‘created but a little lower than the angels’ – yet a slave, ay, a fugitive slave ... by the law of the land, by the voice of the people, a beast of burden, a chattel personal, nevertheless!”

From William Lloyd Garrison's Preface to the *Narrative* (4)

Such was William Lloyd Garrison's assessment of Frederick Douglass, in his endorsement of the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*. Here Garrison alludes to two distinct hierarchies of being – a future one sought by abolitionists, Christian in conception, in which Douglass is seen as a human being, created by God ‘but a little lower than the angels’ and the present one in which Douglass was regarded as a ‘beast of burden,’ a fugitive slave by law. Though Garrison and Douglass would later publicly part ranks within the abolitionist movement, Garrison's early support of Douglass' efforts was critical to the acceptance of Douglass as a new voice within the antislavery movement. The inclusion of Black abolitionist spokespersons into the movement was a significant factor that made the abolitionism of the 19th century different from previous emancipation efforts (Quarles viii). The 1845 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* holds a preeminent place in the slave narrative tradition. Published while Douglass was still legally a slave, it is a testament to the absurdity of the institution of slavery and an eloquent declaration of personhood from one who was labeled as part of the “inferior race.”

The *Narrative*, and its subsequent expansions in *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) and the post-war *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881, 1892), as well as numerous orations, journalism articles, and serving as editor of three newspapers, made Douglass a public figure of enormous proportions during the 19th century. His *Narrative* was a bestseller and it gave him an international popularity to rival any of his white autobiographical contemporaries of the day (Andrews 12). Its power as a rhetorical instrument of persuasion against a notorious social ill allowed Douglass' *Narrative*, among the many published by 1845, to emerge as a leading account of the evils of slavery and as a potent fuel for the fire of the abolitionist movement.

Before assessing whether Douglass' *Narrative* demonstrates the dramatic cycle of social movements rhetoric found in the speeches of the time, it is advantageous to understand why slave narratives as a genre were so compelling an addition to the abolitionist movement. In his landmark book on Black rhetoric, *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), Henry Louis Gates, Jr. describes how the authors of slave narratives wrote to affirm their common humanity with the white majority as well as to shed light on the American slave system. After the Age of Enlightenment, the definition of man as a rational thinker dominated Euro-centric conceptions of humanity.

The urge toward the systematization of all human knowledge, by which we characterize the Enlightenment, in other words led directly to the relegation of black people to a lower rung on the Great Chain of Being, an eighteenth century metaphor that arranged all of creation on the vertical scale from animals and plants and insects through man to the angels and God himself ... If blacks could write and publish imaginative literature, then they could, in effect, take a few giant steps up the Chain of Being ... (Gates 130).

This quest for taking “giant steps” up the Chain is consonant with Burke’s definition of man as being “goaded by the spirit of hierarchy.” If Blacks could be authors of eloquent

texts, their publication and distribution would serve as a tangible argument against slavery. Beyond simply being published, however, authors such as Douglass demonstrated intellectual and rhetorical prowess in their first hand accounts of the evils of slavery. Note Garrison's estimation of Douglass as being "in intellect richly endowed – in natural eloquence a prodigy – in soul manifestly 'created but a little lower than the angels'" (4), as if to confirm that Douglass indeed did have the intellect and eloquence to write the *Narrative* and could occupy a higher rung on the Chain of Being. This was certainly paramount in the mind of Frederick Douglass as he asserted that the narrative was "written by himself." This Chain of Being permeates the *Narrative* and is rhetorically unlinked and subverted by Douglass in his quest for literacy and freedom.

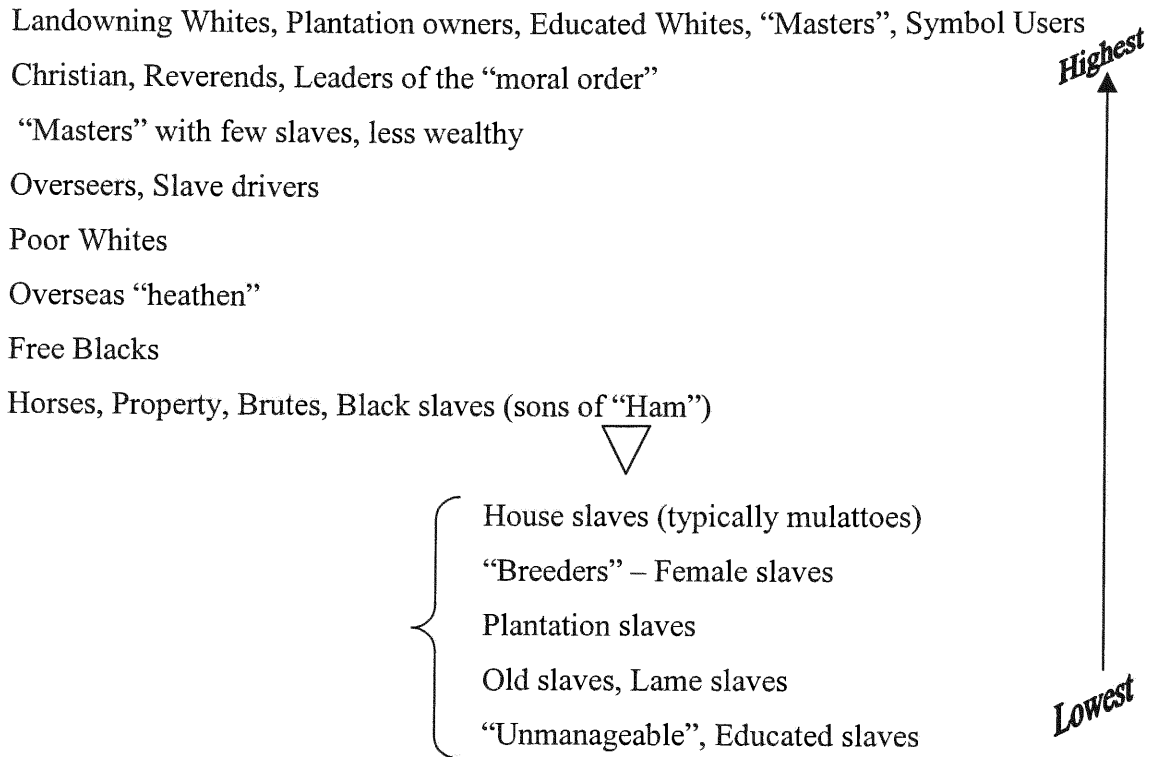
If the Great Chain of Being were to be interpreted by proponents of the American Slave system, most certainly the slaves would be lumped together with other property (see Chart 2). Let's review Burke's "Definition of Man" as it applies to the *Narrative*:

Man is
the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal
inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)
separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making
goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order)
and rotten with perfection. (Burke "Definition of Man" 507)

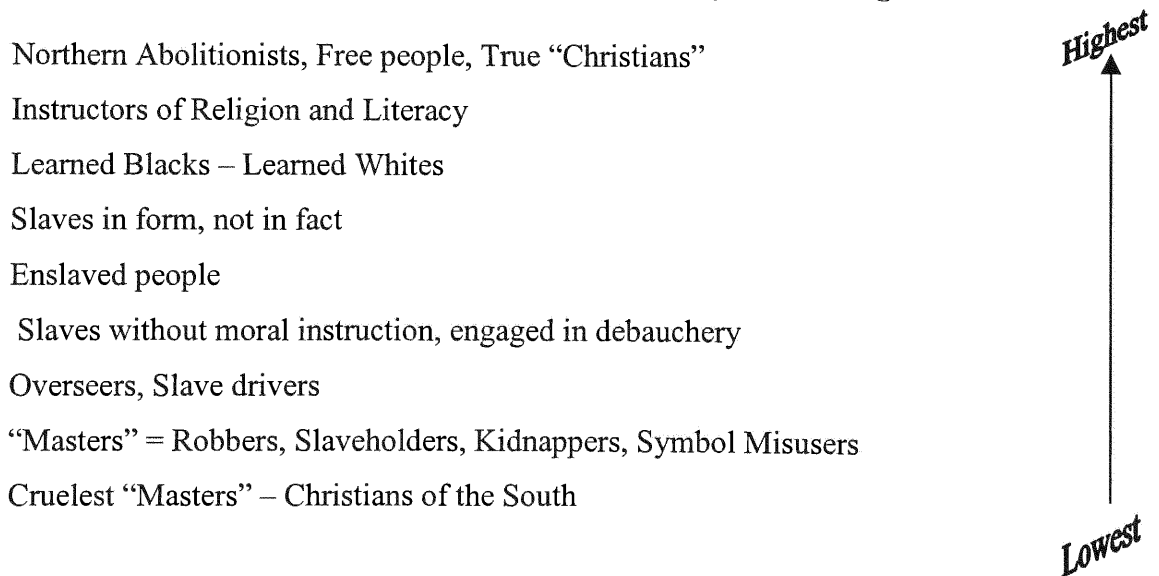
As Douglass succeeds in his quest for literacy, he rises above the brute status where his oppressors – hereby known as the symbol-misusers – would have kept him for life. What Douglass does in his *Narrative* is conceptually reorganize the hierarchy and present order by revealing the Secret and utilizing the rhetoric of impiety and confrontation against the institution of slavery.

Chart 2:

19th Century American Slave System Hierarchy as depicted in the *Narrative*



Douglass’ Rhetorical Subversion of the Slave System through the *Narrative*



The first secret that is withheld from Frederick Douglass is the date of his birth. He starts his narrative comparing himself to brutes, which are on the lower rungs of the present hierarchy. He starts his narrative not as an effective symbol user within the present order. He doesn't know his age because the slaveholders would like to keep the slaves as ignorant as horses about their ages. But since he is a human and not a horse, this bothers him and is a "source of unhappiness" to him even as a child. He can only guess his age to be about 27 or 28 at the time he is writing his narrative (Douglass 12). If man is a symbol-using and symbol-misusing creature, then is it evident that the slavemasters misused their power by withholding simple knowledge such as age from their slaves to keep the order of slave society and render them as close to brutes as possible to justify their mistreatment of their human chattel.

Another piece of knowledge that he never fully confirmed was his parentage. The dehumanization is further related in that he doesn't know who his father is (though it is suspected to be his master) and in the common practice by which he and his mother were separated from an early age in order to break the ties between mother and child. He does know that he is clearly mulatto because his mother was very black and his complexion is the telltale sign that his father was white. He comments that such were the sufferings of this class of slaves that it was in their best interest to be sold away from the wrath of their mistress lest, as it would often occur, the scene would commence where "he [master/father] must not only whip them [slave offspring] himself, but must stand by and see one white son tie up his brother, of but few shades darker complexion than himself, and ply the gory lash to his naked back" (14). Since it was law that the child must follow the condition of the mother, this allowed for the lusts of the master to be fulfilled in a

way that was profitable as well (13). The result was a total de-sanctification of the marriage vows, as well as common practice of a father selling his offspring. The Secret of this execrable practice is one that is recounted again and again in slave narratives.

By revealing the probable truth that Douglass is an offspring of his master, he immediately reveals the Secret that would undermine the system of suppression predicated on race inferiority and the biblical damnation of Ham's descendents. He observes that:

... it is nevertheless plain that a very different looking class of people are springing up at the south, and are now held in slavery, from those originally brought to this country from Africa; and if their increase will do no other good, it will do away [with] the force of the argument, that God cursed Ham, and therefore American slavery is right. (14)

By 1850, census figures show that of the 3,200,000 Black slaves, almost 250,000 were counted as mulattoes. However, the slaves that were noted "mulatto" were the ones that simply looked it, which means that the true population of mixed Anglo-African ancestry was significantly higher (Jin-Ping 9); this method of counting the population kept the real numbers a secret or mystery. The argument that places the African slave on the Great Chain of Being at a wholly subordinate to the European, like a separate species equal to beasts, is rendered null with these genealogical ties. As Douglass insinuates in his own parentage, many masters held the dual relation of master *and* father to their slaves (13).

The Secret of sexual abuses, such as those that gave birth to a proliferate mulatto population in the South, is further revealed in examples that Douglass cites. He describes the first of a series of outrages that he must witness during his time in slavery. This pertained to his aunt Hester, who was considered peerless to either Blacks or whites with her beauty. For obvious reasons, his aunt was a favorite of Master Anthony who

prohibited her from having the attentions of any colored man. One night she was caught away from his house and in the company of Ned Roberts, a Black man who had been courting her. When she was brought back, the jealous master stripped her to her waist and her hands were tied to facilitate her brutal whipping.

Her arms were stretched up at their full length, so that she stood upon the ends of her toes. He then said to her, "Now, you d----d b----h, I'll learn you how to disobey my orders!" and after rolling up his sleeves, he commenced to lay on the heavy cowskin, and soon the warm, red blood (amid heart-rending shrieks from her, and horrid oaths from him) came dripping to the floor. I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. I expected it would be my turn next. (15)

Douglass communicates the terror that this gory scene struck in him and although he was very young when it happened, he would never forget it. That slave women were seen as "breeders" and sexual prey to their brutal masters is one of the forceful arguments against slavery made throughout the *Narrative*.¹² By making Aunt Hester's endogenous attraction to Ned a punishable crime, Douglass further highlights the perversity of the African female's place in the Great Chain of Being – simultaneously a chattel slave and an object of desire.¹³

Douglass also reveals the Secret of criminal behavior enacted by the masters and mistresses, which sometimes resulted in a slave's murder. He rebuffs the impression that slaves were content with the "patriarchal institution." He describes the savage cruelty

¹² See Deborah McDowell's article "In the First Place: Making Frederick Douglass and the Afro-American Narrative Tradition" for a feminist reading on the recurrence of these bloody acts perpetrated against Black women.

¹³ In her analysis of *The Tempest*, Sylvia Wynter's denounces the absence of a mate for Caliban and his lack of an "endogenous desire for her" (361). This absence would then become paradigmatic for the colonialist treatment of Black women in the New World. Similarly, an endogenous mate for Aunt Hester is eliminated by the symbol-misusers.

laid by the overseer Mr. Gore to murdering the slave Demby. Demby jumped into a river to avoid further lashes and was murdered by gunshot:

The first call was given. Demby made no response, but stood his ground. The second and third calls were given with the same result. Mr. Gore then, without consultation or deliberation with any one, not even giving Demby an additional call, raised his musket to his face, taking deadly aim at his standing victim, and in an instant poor Demby was no more. His mangled body sank out of sight, and blood and brains marked the water where he had stood. (24)

In recalling this hideous crime, Douglass is also indicting the reader for permitting such a heinous lack of justice as the one that does not allow colored persons to give testimony against a white person.

His horrid crime was not even submitted to judicial investigation. It was committed in the presence of slaves, and they of course could neither institute a suit, nor testify against him; and thus the guilty perpetrator of one of the bloodiest and most foul murders goes unwhipped of justice, and uncensored by the community in which he lives. (24)

The secret is kept and the crime goes unpunished. Douglass goes on to recount other crimes of no less villainy and equally ignored by the keepers of justice.

As Douglass describes the corrupt slave system, he also reveals how he learns the ultimate secret in subverting the slave hierarchy. In Baltimore, young Frederick is taught his ABC's by his new mistress and is given his first chance to be an effective symbol user as well as given knowledge of how these symbols would one day aid him in his quest for freedom. Mrs. Auld, his new mistress, never owned any slaves before and would soon be corrupted by the institution. She began teaching him his ABC's when her husband scolded her. Mr. Auld thought that it was not only against the law to teach a slave how to read but downright dangerous. Douglass recounts his vehement reaction against this practice:

“If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master – to do as he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now”, said he, “if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy” (29) (my underlining).

In the rhetoric of preservation of the present order, Mr. Auld designates Douglass a “nigger” who would be spoiled by the knowledge of literacy. He would be “unmanageable” and difficult to keep control of. This was the piece of knowledge that the young Frederick needed to know:

It was a new and *special revelation*, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty – *to wit, the white man’s power to enslave the black man*. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. (29) (italics mine)

He understood that it was not by any inherent inferiority of the Black man but by the usage of symbols – knowledge and literacy - and the withholding of right to read and write these symbols by the white man that allowed for the enslavement of one by the other. “Learning” would make Douglass “unmanageable” and “unfit” to be a slave. By uncovering this mystery, he is imbued with a passion to learn and become a successful symbol user to obtain his freedom.

Once Douglass knows how to read, many more secrets are revealed to him, such as the historical antecedents that led to slavery and the meaning of word abolition. While Douglass surreptitiously learns how to read and write by employing street urchins to be his teachers, he also gains important knowledge of history that was paramount to his quest for freedom. This knowledge of history was of course withheld from the slave

population by the symbol-misusers. He lists some of the books that he happened upon and that strengthened his sentiments against the institution that sought to claim him and his descendents for life. He was at that time twelve years old. Though he yearned for the light of knowledge, this truth was painful to him:

The reading of these documents enables me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a *band of successful robbers*, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land *reduced us to slavery*. (33)

The hierarchy is overturned and now his “masters” are seen as “successful robbers” and the disparaged Africa a homeland. He is now seeing himself as emerging from a people reduced to slavery, not as part of a species of brutes fit not to even know their age or parentage. While it made him suffer to know the outrage of his condition, to the point that he wished himself an unknowing “beast” (33), he had become a symbol user and could not go back to ignorance. Paralleling Maria Stewart’s ideas, his understanding that his people were not always enslaved but stolen from their African homeland was critical to his radical role in subverting the slave system.

While Douglass reveals the Secret of the evils of slavery and the methods by which the system could be subverted, he also effectively uses the rhetoric of impiety against the slaveholder’s religion in his *Narrative*. Agitators of abolition were notoriously critical of the role of religion in perpetuating the institution of slavery. Garrison went so far as to promote the non-observance of the Sabbath in order to differentiate his holy cause from the slaveholder’s religion (Jin-Ping 40-1; Martin 24). Douglass does admit to the role of Providence in his life and occasionally invokes a

righteous God to take vengeance on those who perpetrated unspeakable horrors perpetrated in slavery.¹⁴ More often, though, he is thoroughly impious and attacks the church of the South by detailing how it worsens already cruel masters, by describing the vast dichotomy between principle and practice, and by including parodic poetry of the religion of the South in his appendix.

Douglass uses the rhetoric of impiety against the religion of the South that supported the slave system and distinguishes himself as principally an agitator for abolition. If the rhetoric of piety is “a system builder” that preserves the present order and “keeps the secret,” then the rhetoric of impiety, conversely, is destructive to the present system (Cathcart 366). Douglass gives as exemplar the detrimental effects of the religious conversion on Captain Thomas Auld and his wife. He was already described as a mean slaveholder that did not give his slaves enough to subsist on. Douglass was once again made to feel the pangs of hunger with rations that were not enough to survive on and had to resort to stealing and other devices for nourishment (41).

A great many times have we poor creatures been nearly perishing with hunger, when food in abundance lay mouldering in the safe and smoke-house, and our pious mistress was aware of the fact; and yet that mistress and her husband would kneel every morning, and pray that God would bless them in basket and store!
(39)

Christian charity, it seems, did not apply to the slaves. The effects of conversion on Captain Auld at a Methodist camp meeting were positively dreadful to the slaves: “Prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his

¹⁴ Robert O’Meally emphasizes these instances in his article “Frederick Douglass’ 1845 Narrative: The Text Was Meant to be Preached”. These instances are notable but are totally subsumed within the dominant rhetoric of impiety in the text.

slaveholding cruelty. He made the greatest pretensions to piety” (40). Piety to the religion of the South reveals the rhetoric of the proslavery order.

Douglass contrasts the peaceful precepts of the Christian religion with the despicable example of the Auld’s religion in his treatment of the slave Henny. Master Auld did not hesitate to beat and abuse Henny, a young lame woman, until the blood dripped from her naked shoulders and he would quote Biblical verses while doing so: “He that knoweth his master’s will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Luke 12:47) (41). He would later call this in one of his speeches “evangelical flogging” (“The Right to Criticize American Institutions” 160). Apparently her only crime was that she was handicapped by a fire when she was young and was consequently of little use to her master. Douglass contrasts the cruel manner in which Auld finally “set her adrift to take care of herself” with the Christian virtues that Auld was professing with such conviction that he was made a class leader by his church (40-1), thus raising his stature in the present hierarchy.¹⁵ By showing the effects of “piety” on Captain Auld and his wife, Douglass is showing them to be hypocrites and wields the rhetoric of impiety against southern religion of the time.

For Douglass, the Reverend Slaveholders are the most barbaric of them all and should occupy the lowest rung on the overturned hierarchy. Douglass, furthermore, cites a litany of cruel deeds perpetrated by the reverends within his “religionist” community. Not only did the religionists justify their cruelty with Christianity, they were bent on not having the slave population enlightened with Bible study at Sabbath School. Captain

¹⁵ Though Thomas Auld would later publicly dispute some details of the image that Douglass creates of him in the *Narrative*, he never denied the cruel recounting of his treatment of Henny (Preston 172).

Auld is not the exception of the Christian slaveholders but the rule in Douglass' experience.

I assert most unhesitatingly, that the *religion of the south* is a mere *covering* for the most horrid crimes, - a *justifier* of the most appalling barbarity, - a *sanctifier* of the most hateful frauds, - and a *dark shelter* under, which the darkest foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slaveholders find the strongest protection. (53) (my italics)

Religion of the South – the paragon of the present system and the bearer of moral instruction of the populace – is seen as a covering for crime, a justifier for barbarity, a sanctifier for fraud, indeed a dark shelter quite different from the rock of salvation it is portrayed to be. By lifting this “cover,” Douglass is certainly using the rhetoric of impiety to reveal the secret interconnection between the Church and the slave system.

In the Appendix, Douglass goes into great detail to distinguish Christianity proper from the religion of the South and the North in its complicity with slaveholders. He reiterates what is made plain in the text of the *Narrative*, that there is a big gap between the principles of Christianity and its practitioners in the South:

The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. The man who robs me of my earnings at the end of each week meets me as a class-leader on Sunday morning, to show me the way of life, and the path of salvation. He who sells my sister, for purposes of prostitution, stands forth as the pious advocate of purity. He who proclaims it a religious duty to read the Bible denies me the right of learning to read the name of the God who made me. (75)

Like the irony that Garrison finds between the principle of freedom in the Fourth of July and slavery, Douglass cannot accept the discrepancy between Christian values and their practice in the slaveholding south. The dissonance that Garrison finds in the clanking chains of slavery on a day of liberty is also parallel to the dissonance arising when the “the slave auctioneer’s bell and the church-going bell chime in with each other, and the

bitter cries of the heart-broken slave are drowned in the religious shouts of his pious master” (76). By sharing communion with slaveholders, Douglass also implies that the North is guilty of this hypocrisy as well.

In addition to citing the perversity of “evangelical flogging” and the dissonance between Christian principle and practice, Douglass also includes poetic works in his appendix to further wield verbal impiety against the slaveholding religion. Within his appendix, he includes two poems, one by anti-slavery poet John Greenleaf Whittier called “Clerical Oppressors” and the other called “A Parody” which was derived from a popular hymn of the time, “Heavenly Union.” I specifically want to call attention to “A Parody.” Though he attributes the parody to a Northern clergyman that traveled South, it sounds very similar to the rhetoric that Douglass used in his “Slaveholder’s Sermon” (Mohr 153-4), in which he would solemnly mimic and imitate southern clergymen and their ridiculous justifications of slavery.¹⁶

“Come, saints and sinners, here me tell
How pious priests whip Jack and Nell,
And women buy and children sell,
And preach all sinners down to hell,
And sing of heavenly union.

“They’ll bleat and baa, dona like goats
Gorge down black sheep, and strain at motes,
Array their backs in fine black coats,
Then seize their Negroes by their throats,
And choke, for heavenly union.

“They’ll church you if you sip a dram,
And damn you if you steal a lamb;

¹⁶ Mohr criticizes Douglass’ satirical portrayal on Southern Preachers in his “Slaveholder’s Sermon” piece as being unjust and one-sided. Douglass does mention, in his *Narrative*, that there was a kind-hearted reverend who emancipated his slaves, but most are shown as the cruelest of all masters. For a good example of the “Slaveholder’s Sermon” oration and the recorded reactions of the audience, see “The Right to Criticize American Institutions.”

Yet rob old Tony, Doll, and Sam,
Of human rights, and bread and ham;
Kidnapper's heavenly union ... (78)

And so goes forth the remaining ten stanzas of this outrageous parody of southern religion, showing the total irreconcilability of the religion of Christ to the religion of the South. It affirms the human standing of the slave while criticizing the scandalous crimes perpetrated against them by the Southern preachers. The sins that are preached against are not nearly as foul as the ones they are alleged to commit on a daily basis as slaveowners.

If the slave narrative can be seen as an autobiographical form including elements of the fictional genres of the picaresque and the sentimental novel (Gates "Binary Oppositions" 214-215), it can be argued that this poem, included in the appendix to bring clarity to his depiction of slaveholding religion, is a rhetorical tool of Douglass' own creation. This parody poem is not in the narrative proper but in the appendix with a generic function distinct from the narrative. This poem, then, is equivalent to the moment in which Douglass has made several arguments to persuade his audience, has given graphic, personal examples, and now can parody the hypocritical preachers. Whether it is really a creation of a Northern preacher traveling South, or a product of Douglass' infamous wit, the parodic impiety of this vision alone should have brought the Christian consciousness of the nation to abolish the institution of slavery.¹⁷

¹⁷ The editors of the Norton Critical Edition of the *Narrative* insinuate that it is Douglass' parody. The critical consensus however, represented best by Robert Stepto in his article "Narration, Authentication, and Authorial Control in Frederick Douglass' *Narrative* of 1845," take the appearance of the unknown preacher at face value.

While revealing the secrets of the slave system and the rhetoric of impiety are persuasive tools that reorganize the hierarchy in Frederick Douglass' *Narrative*, the rhetoric of confrontation is also significant, enabling him to trump his status as equal to a brute by becoming a literate and successful symbol user. The first important manifestation of the rhetoric of confrontation appears in Douglass' physical and intellectual confrontation with Mr. Covey. He was sent there by his Master Auld to be "broken in" for one year. Douglass sees the first six months as an example of how a man was made a slave, while the last six months were how a slave was made a man (47). He was made faint while fanning wheat and severely beaten and kicked in order to continue. He opted instead to go to his old master and plead his case. He stayed there overnight with no food and with the threat that if he did not head back Mr. Auld would give him a whipping. The acts of not continuing to fan wheat and of leaving Mr. Covey were certain to be met with a greater punishment.

Movements begin when some pivotal individual or group suffering attitudes of alienation in a given social system, and drawn (consciously or unconsciously) by the impious dream of a mythic Order – enacts, gives voice to, a No. This enactment of the Negative by a Saving Remnant ("prophets," aggressor rhetors, who "see through" the existing order and foretell the coming of the new) will itself be precipitated by some event or attitude, or cluster of events and attitudes, that symbolizes the unacceptable ... (Griffin 462)

Though he had suffered many ignominies by then, this event symbolized "the unacceptable" that impels Douglass to confront the system head on.

Douglass returns to Covey to face the inevitable consequences of his defiance, but fights back, the ultimate heresy to the slave system. Covey left him alone when he returned that Sunday but on Monday morning he was asked to tend to the horses. While performing his task, Covey took hold of his legs with a rope and planned to beat him.

Frederick thence began to fight back and grabbed him by the throat. He didn't even know where he derived the courage but he fought with him for two hours and succeeded in getting the better of Covey. When Covey inquired as to whether he would continue his resistance, Douglass answered in the rhetoric of confrontation: "I told him I did, come what might; that he had used me like a brute for six months, and that I was determined to be used so no longer" (50). Not just a physical battle, Douglass articulates his dissatisfaction with his mistreatment. It is clear that Douglass no longer accepts his place with the brutes in the present system.

This physical and verbal confrontation proved to be successful for Frederick Douglass and his fight for dignity and liberty. For the remainder of the time that he was there, Covey left him alone.

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood ... I felt as I never felt before. *It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom.* My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a *slave in form*, the day had passed forever when I could be a *slave in fact*. (50) (emphasis mine)

This confrontation in which he asserts that he will be treated like a brute no more is the point at which Douglass describes himself as a slave no more. The "rhetorical vile beast" of slavery and his former brute identity within the slave system are slain. He is slowly raising his position on a new hierarchy at odds with the present system. A new identity and personhood as well as a renewed desire for freedom emerge.

After his employment with Covey, Douglass is hired by Mr. Freeland and perpetrates another act of confrontation in keeping Sabbath school for the slaves. Douglass affirms the slaves' right to moral and religious instruction and well as literacy,

a key to subverting the present system. With Mr. Freeland, he had an easier lot and began to hold Sabbath school with other slaves and taught them how to read. As a response from the proslavery majority, two practitioners of the Christian religion broke up this Sabbath school because they wished to withhold any means of enlightenment from the slaves.

It was necessary to keep our religious masters at St. Michael's unacquainted with the fact, that, instead of spending the Sabbath in wrestling, boxing, and drinking whisky, we were trying to learn how to read the will of God; for they had much rather see us engaged in those degrading sports, than to see us behaving like *intellectual, moral, and accountable beings*. (55) (my emphasis)

It was against the law of the present order to teach a slave how to read and they were prohibited from owning a Bible. Appropriate activities for the slaves on a Sunday were physical activities and an emphasis on debauchery and depredation.

Moral and intellectual instruction was thought not to correspond to the slaves on their station in the hierarchy, making Douglass' school an act of confrontation, subversion, and corrosion to the system. Although a slave could be severely punished by the lash for attempting to read the Bible, Douglass continued to hold the Sunday school:

They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters. They had been shut up in mental darkness. I taught them, because it was the delight of my soul to be doing something that looked like bettering the condition of my race. (55)

Like the tomb of slavery that held Douglass prior to his fight with Covey, the students were also captives in a world of "mental darkness." While the Christian "class leaders" and other community violently attempted to disperse and break up the Sabbath school, they still continued to meet at increasing risk. Another successful subversion of the system, Douglass kept this school the whole year that he was under Freeland's

employment. He also mentions that he had the joy of making several of his students literate and aiding at least one to escape slavery, thus expanding the confrontation not only to counteract the brutalization of the slave but to serve as a tool for deliverance.

Douglass' two greatest confrontations while under the system of slavery were in his two attempts to escape, the first a failed attempt while the second one was successful. When the year turned 1835, he resolved to make an attempt to secure his freedom. He also began to convince his fellow brethren of the fraud of slavery and the desire to be free: "I talked to them of our want of manhood, if we submitted to our enslavement without at least one noble effort to be free" (56). This is the rhetoric of confrontation and he convinces four other slaves to join him in this effort. He describes the agonizing decision of whether to not to go through with the attempt because of the gruesome consequences incurred if he and his four compatriots were to be captured in flight.

Our path was beset with the greatest obstacles; and if we succeeded in gaining the end of it, our right to be free was yet questionable – we were yet liable to be returned to bondage. We could see no spot, this side of the ocean, where we could be free. We knew nothing of Canada. Our knowledge of the north did not extend farther than New York; and to go there, and be forever harassed with the frightful liability of being returned to slavery – with the certainty of being treated tenfold worse than before – the thought was truly a horrible one, and one which was not easy to overcome ... For my part, I should prefer death to hopeless bondage. (57)

The symbol-misusers kept secret any knowledge of the world outside of slavery. Yet Douglass' knowledge was enough to know that even in the "free" North, their lives were still in jeopardy. Even though he prefers mortification or death to slavery, the risks of this venture were daunting. This anxiety is parallel to the "hellish state of indecision" that starts a movement (Griffin 460).

In order to unite the group to move from indecision to action, Douglass must convince his movement members of the soundness of his plan and their common purpose against their present condition. An empowered symbol-user, Douglass proceeds to write protections for all of the slaves in plot with him to obtain their freedom. They had a last meeting before the day assigned to escape in which each member affirmed steadiness in his resolve.

We were now ready to move; if not now, we never should be; and if we did not intend to move now, we had as well fold our arms, sit down, and acknowledge ourselves fit only to be slaves. This, none of us were prepared to acknowledge. *Every man stood firm*; and at our last meeting, *we pledged ourselves afresh, in the most solemn manner*, that at the time appointed, we would certainly start in pursuit of freedom. (58) (emphasis mine)

They were identified with one substance, in Burkean terms, apart from their present status in the hierarchy.¹⁸ Douglass succeeded in persuading and creating identification or consubstantiality with his fellow conspirators as united against slavery. Speaking of movement members' rhetoric, Griffin reveals that:

The movement's Negative is in essence the announcement of a stand, a "*standing together*", an *understanding*. It may be called a constitution, manifesto, covenant, program, proclamation, declaration, tract for the times, statement, or counterstatement. It may be expressed in the form of an essay, document, speech, poem, sermon, novel, play, pamphlet or song. Whatever its label or mode of expression, it constitutes the initial act of the movement – the axe raised to its full height, and permitted to fall. (463) (italics mine)

In this case, it was a pledge to hold steadfast in the pursuit of the good term, freedom.

Unfortunately, they were betrayed and the authorities got hold of all of the conspirators and sent them to jail. Soon afterwards they left Frederick alone and released the rest of

¹⁸ In Burke's *A Rhetoric of Motives*, he describes the concept of identification that can be interpreted for members of a social movement: "A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with B. Or he may *identify himself* with B even their interest are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so" (Burke as cited in Brock 187).

the group, believing him to be the cause of their desire to obtain freedom (61). The reaction of the counter-movement makes Douglass a scapegoat for the group's actions. His master Captain Auld then sent him back to Baltimore to live with his brother for fear of Douglass being killed the enraged community (61). He barely escapes mortification or self-sacrifice for the cause of freedom at this point.

It was in the early part of 1838 that Douglass' restlessness could no longer be contained and he determines this year to be the one in which he makes a successful escape from slavery. He was allowed to commission his wages as a caulker and this allowed him time to reflect on the notions of freedom once more (64). He would earn high wages for his skills but was required to give them to his master. He tried to hire his time but his master saw this as a ruse to attempt to escape again and he advised him accordingly:

He exhorted me to content myself, and be obedient. He told me, if I would be happy, I must lay out no plans for the future. He said, if I behaved properly, he would take care of me. Indeed, he advised me to *complete thoughtlessness of the future*, and taught me to depend solely upon him for happiness. He seemed to see fully the pressing necessity of *setting aside my intellectual nature*, in order to [insure] contentment in slavery. (67) (my emphasis)

Once again, he is reminded the proper "brutish" behavior of a slave, as he had shown himself to be unmanageable and intellectual at this point. But as a successful symbol user, Douglass had freed himself of "mental darkness" that could accompany "complete thoughtlessness of the future," so he could not take this prescription to heart and carefully laid out plans for his escape that year. He describes the painful thought of leaving his friends forever with this new attempt (68-9), yet he held steadfast and obtained his freedom on September 3, 1838 (69), just two months after Garrison's July 4th Address.

Through the rhetoric of confrontation, impiety, and revealing the Secret, Frederick Douglass masterfully subverts the slave hierarchy and overturns his role as chattel within the system throughout the 1845 *Narrative*. As an instrument of persuasion for the abolitionist movement, the *Narrative* was extremely significant, bringing international attention to the American slave system and catapulting its author into fame and prominence. The rhetoric of optimism is also notable in Douglass' depiction of the prosperity found in the free North, despite the racism that he still encountered there.¹⁹ He even undergoes a catharsis or transformation as he chooses a new name – from Frederick Bailey to Johnson to Douglass – symbolizing a new post-slavery life. This optimism is overshadowed, however, by the caustic depictions of the system of slavery and the ongoing concern for delivering the rest of his brethren out of bondage after he escapes.

I had not long been a reader of the “Liberator,” before I got a pretty correct idea of the principles, measures and spirit of the anti-slavery reform. I took right hold of the cause. I could do but little; but what I could, I did with a joyful heart, and never felt happier than when in an anti-slavery meeting ... From that time [his first speech in 1841] until now, I have been engaged in pleading the cause of my brethren – with what success, and with what devotion, I leave those acquainted with my labors to decide. (75)

If a movement starts in stasis and ends in stasis with a new substance (Griffin 461), then it is clear that Douglass found his new substance in serving as a lecturer in the abolitionist movement and ultimately in the movement of human rights for Black Americans, a cause that would inspire him until his death in 1895.

¹⁹ The utopian tones of Douglass' description of New Bedford have been noted by commentators such as Baker in his piece “The Economics of Douglass' Narrative.” In the Burkean dramatic schema, it is definitely bespeaks the rhetoric of optimism.

CHAPTER III – Coming Full Circle: The Dramatistic Cycle of Social Movements

Rhetoric in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Uncle Tom's Cabin is by all accounts a novel that served as a political tour de force in the 19th century abolitionist movement. For all of the vehement disparagement of the work by the slave-holding South and later by the 20th century formalists as well as by African-Americans, the work is considered by some to be the “most powerful political novel” ever written (Donovan 1). The first American novel to sell over one million copies (Tompkins 504), it was the best selling book in the 19th century next to the Bible. It is also considered, in American theatre, the longest running play of all time (Donovan xvi). How do we unpack *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which created such lasting effects on American culture? Does a “key” to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* lie in the rhetoric of social movements?

Before answering those questions, it is useful to give a historical overview of the life of Harriet Beecher Stowe and events that led to the production of the novel. Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in 1811, the seventh child of the nine that were born of minister Lyman Beecher and Roxana Foote Beecher in Litchfield, Connecticut. Her mother died when she was five years old and her father remarried the following year and had three children from that marriage. Harriet was raised in a modified version of Calvinist theology that her father espoused and the bright young woman was recruited to study and teach at the Hartford Female Seminary between 1824-32, founded by her elder sister. The Beechers moved to Boston when Lyman Beecher became a minister for Hanover

Street Church in 1826. In 1829, Harriet became a full-time teacher at the Seminary (Donovan xiii).

In 1832, Lyman Beecher was appointed president of the Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio – a hotbed of friction between proslavery and abolitionist forces – and the family moved there. Her sister Catherine founded the Western Female Institute, where Harriet became an instructor. In 1833, Harriet published her first piece on language and visited neighboring Kentucky, a slave state, for the first and only time. This visit apparently made a lasting impression on Harriet, from where she derived many images that would later appear in her best-selling novel. In 1834, Harriet published her first story “Isabelle and Her Sister Kaye, and Their Cousin” (Donovan xiv). That year the famous Lane Seminary debates on the issue of slavery took place and Lyman Beecher was forced to condemn the anti-slavery stance of the students, per request of the seminary’s trustees. As a result, virtually all of the students withdrew from the institution (Gossett 33).

In 1836, Harriet Beecher married Calvin Stowe, a professor at the seminary. The years of 1836 and 1837 saw the rise of the Grimké sisters to abolitionist and women’s movements and the death of Elijah Lovejoy by a proslavery mob in Illinois. Henry Beecher, Harriet’s older brother, was a sympathizer of the abolitionist editor Lovejoy and was almost caught in the crossfire. From 1837 to 1838, Alexander Kinmont gave lectures in Cincinnati espousing romantic racialism, an ideology of character traits stemming from racial differences that permeates Stowe’s novel. In 1843, Stowe published the collection of short stories entitled *The Mayflower; or, Sketches of Scenes and Characters among the Descendants of the Pilgrims* (Donovan xiv). In that year, Stowe’s brother George was

killed by what is recorded as an accident involving a shotgun, but viewed as suicide.

Another brother in the 1880's, James Beecher, also killed himself, years after the death of Lyman Beecher. Virtually all of Stowe's seven brothers were strongly influenced by the dominant father to become ministers. Even Beecher's modified version of grim Calvinism caused major psychological and religious turmoil in the Beecher children, including Harriet (Gossett 6-7).

During the 1840's, Harriet Beecher Stowe taught former slave children while her brother Henry and husband Calvin aided a fugitive slave woman to escape and became complicit in the Underground Railroad. These encounters, as well as the recapturing of fugitive slaves by their former Kentucky owners, were pervasive in the "free state" of Ohio at that time (Stowe vii). In 1849, Stowe's one-year-old son died in a cholera epidemic; this tragedy increased her sympathy for slave mothers who could not avoid being permanently separated from their progeny. It is possible that Stowe may have met Josiah Henson, author of a slave narrative that she cites as one of the numerous sources for her novel, along with the *Narrative* of Frederick Douglass (Donovan xv).

In the year of 1850, Congress passed the infamous Fugitive Slave Law making both the North and South legally complicit in the institution of slavery. The Stowe family had relocated to New England by this time. This momentous year saw the birth of her last of seven children as well as the birth of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In 1851, Stowe began to publish her novel serially in the *National Era* and the weekly sketches ran some 9 months. In 1852, the series was published in book form and sold 50,000 copies in less than three months. That year also saw the first dramatic production of the novel. By the following year, the book sales in America and England totaled over 2.5 million (Donovan

xv – xvi). Stowe would go on to publish numerous works in her lifetime, none of which paralleled the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Succinctly stated by admirer Frederick Douglass, it “was the word for the hour” (Donovan xvii).

The 20th century saw the rise and demise of the formalist school of literary criticism, which regarded popular, “sentimental” works such as Stowe’s to be bad literature. In the last 30 years, however, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has been rescued from critical oblivion to reaffirm the presence that never completely disappeared from American culture.²⁰ Feminist scholars, Marxists, New Americanists, postmodernists, and more have revisited the work. Donovan even goes so far to imply that the novel is the first and only example of an epic written by a woman (9). The religious fervor and cultural implications have been explored, each critic attempting to explain the relevance of the novel and its currency from a different competing paradigm. Utilizing the social movements approach to rhetorical analysis provides a cohesive framework to unpack the various undercurrents that enabled the novel to become one of the best political instruments of the movement. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom's Cabin* successfully demonstrates all stages of the dramatistic cycle of social movements in the rhetoric of the proslavery order, revealing the Secret, the rhetoric of confrontation, victimage/mortification, conversion, redemption and the dream of the new world order.

Throughout these depictions, Stowe presents a multifaceted picture of the rhetoric of the proslavery order, not usually present in slave narratives or antislavery orations.

²⁰ While the novel was indeed the “word for the hour,” people who have never read the novel know its characters and to this day it is an insult to call any Black an “Uncle Tom,” synonymous with the obsequiousness of Blacks to whites. Obviously, it was not the intent of Stowe to have the hero of her novel despised as a sell-out, but this dominant view of the negative characterizations of Blacks in work attests to its lingering influence on the American psyche.

There are those that use proslavery rhetoric to justify the monetary exchange of humans as property, such as Mr. Shelby. There are those that spout the rhetoric publicly but privately act against its principles, such as Senator Bird. Then there are those that throughout remain unchanging proponents of the proslavery order and agree with the Bible being used to protect slavery, such as Marie St. Clare. They are all countered in dialogue by a character that is representative of evangelical abolition and consonant with Stowe's vision.

Mr. Shelby, for instance, uses the rhetoric of proslavery as a justification for the practice of selling his slaves. He is a relatively benevolent slave owner in comparison to the cruelty of others depicted in the novel. He is not used to selling his slaves, but is pushed to this measure by the desperate financial straits that he is in. His debts lead him to sell Uncle Tom and Harry. In speaking to his wife, who is in disbelief with his actions, he explains, "I have agreed to sell Tom and Harry both; and I don't know why I am to be rated, as if I were a monster, for doing what every one does every day" (28). He tries to make the selling seem commonplace and ordinary, even though it would be traumatic and cruel to his servants. Uncle Tom, a slave that was entrusted to him as a young boy, had been beyond faithful and trustworthy in his conduct. Young Harry was the product of the marriage of Eliza and George, their wedding arranged by Mrs. Shelby, with Harry being conceived after the sorrow of several miscarriages. Even though Mr. Shelby states it matter-of-factly, he is uncomfortable with his actions and wishes not to be there on the day of his property's parting.

His actions are in opposition to his wife's convictions; she is depicted as his superior in terms of Christian morality. Mrs. Shelby thought that she could do good as a

slave owner but concedes that the possibility of selling is an inevitable by-product of the institution. “This is God’s curse on slavery! – a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing! – a curse to the master and a curse to the slave! ... I thought, by kindness, and care, and instruction, I could make the condition of mine better than freedom – fool that I was!” (29). Later on in the novel, we also see that she is his superior in terms of financial management, but in her present role she is powerless to intercede for the slaves that were sold and act on her Christian beliefs that hold the ties between husband and wife, parent and child, to be sacred.²¹

Further into the novel, Senator Bird is also one who spouts the rhetoric of the proslavery order, but caves in the day he encounters fugitives Eliza and Harry face to face. As a senator in the free state of Ohio, his public rhetoric is influential for the passage of anti-fugitive legislation. He also privately tries to convince his Christian wife,

There has been a law passed forbidding people to help off the slaves that come over from Kentucky, my dear; so much of that thing has been done by these reckless Abolitionists, that our brethren in Kentucky are very strongly excited, and it seems necessary, and no more than Christian and kind, that something should be done by our state to quiet the excitement. (68)

He further goes on to note “you must consider it’s not a matter of private feeling, - there are great public interests involved, - there is such a state of public agitation rising, that we must put aside our private feelings,” (69). Whereas Mr. Shelby uses proslavery rhetoric to justify his desperate deeds, Senator Bird is favoring public interests over private

²¹ There have been numerous feminist perspectives on *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in the last thirty years, particularly in an attempt to include the work in the canon of 19th century American renaissance standards, alongside Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, etc. Its prior exclusion was based on the 20th century critical disdain of “women’s works” grounded in sentimental, unliterary conventions. Such was the analysis Jane Tompkins (503), which created grounds for a series of discussions from a feminist perspective. She also claims that its dynamic of savvy females displacing the patriarchal males is a strikingly subversive aspect of the novel (521).

matters of morality.²² While admitting that he also shares these private feelings of sympathy, he prefers to acquiesce to the proslavery order in order to quell the possibility of public manifestations against the “Reckless abolitionists,” like William Lloyd Garrison, that encouraged slaves to break off their fetters and search for freedom.

His wife, however, mocks these very rationalizations and is appalled at her husband’s proslavery rhetoric. Also depicted as Senator Bird’s evangelical superior, Mrs. Bird puts the doctrines that she has been taught as a Christian to “feed the hungry and clothe the naked” before human legislation and is consonant with Stowe’s views. Infuriated, she affirms, “Obeying God never brings on public evils. I know it can’t. It’s always safest, all round, to *do as He bids us*” (69). The senator was put to the test that very night with the arrival of Eliza and little Harry. Senator Bird, seeing the whip-scarred fugitive in person, even convinces Mrs. Bird to let out a dress of hers to give to Eliza and give up some clothes that were worn by his recently deceased child. Just as his wife suspected, he can’t keep the very law that he set forth in legislation.

While there are those that utter proslavery rhetoric in public, and others that use proslavery rhetoric to appease a guilty conscience complicit in the business of selling slaves, there are still others depicted in the novel that feel righteous about their ownership of other human beings, such as Marie St. Clare. Marie is the hypochondriac wife of Augustine St. Clare of New Orleans, who believes that her interests certainly come before any feelings that the slave may have. This time, the wife is the one with the

²² It is possible that the attitude of Senator Bird could have been inspired by Stowe’s father, the formidable preacher Lyman Beecher, who *privately* sided with the students’ right to free speech at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, of which he was president. They held a series of debates on the issue of slavery, which were seen as disagreeable to the trustees. *Publicly*, he sided with the trustees and thus saw the withdrawal of 40 students, called the Lane Rebels and lead by Theodore Weld, from which the seminary never fully recovered (Gossett 27-35).

proslavery stance even more radical than her husband's more ambivalent views. He doesn't feel that the institution is right but understands that he is financially benefited from its laborers and thus makes no pretensions of being an emancipator or an abolitionist. Their opinions differ from Augustine's cousin Ophelia, who represents the abolitionism of Stowe.²³ Ophelia believes that it is a Christian duty to treat slaves as moral human beings with immortal souls, even though she wouldn't have one come too close to her and is initially repelled by a show of affection between masters and servants.

An example of Marie's more radical stance is that she took Mammy, her servant since childhood, with her to the St. Clare estate when she married, totally disregarding her ties to her slave family. With this action, she separated Mammy from her husband and her two children. Marie won't allow her servant Mammy to *ever* return to her husband and children that she left at her father's estate and Marie even tries to convince her to take on another husband. Speaking to Augustine's cousin Ophelia, Marie notes:

“Well, of course, I couldn't bring them [Mammy's children]. There were little dirty things – I couldn't have them about; and, besides, they took up too much of her time; but I believe that Mammy has always kept up a sort of sulkiness about this. She won't marry anybody else; and I do believe, now, though she knows how necessary she is to me, and how feeble my health is, she would go back to her husband to-morrow, if she only could. I do, indeed,” said Marie; “they are just so selfish, now, the best of them” (147).

While Mammy's husband is a blacksmith and considered too valuable to leave her father's estate, Mammy's children are at the bottom of the slave hierarchy, treated as filthy animals that cannot be compared to Marie's golden child Eva. Augustine tries to convince his wife to let her servant return to her family, but to no avail. Whereas Mrs.

²³ In his famously stinging review of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, James Baldwin also contends that Ophelia speaks for the author but describes the evangelism of Stowe as emanating from her “theological terror” of damnation, similar to the religious fanaticism that engendered the Salem witch hunt, expressing a fear of the “dark” ones that she was trying to save (495-8).

Shelby was not allowed to intercede on behalf of Tom and Harry, Augustine also fails in his intercession on behalf of Mammy. While Mr. Shelby was going to hide from the departure scene of Uncle Tom from his family, Marie wouldn't have been moved one iota for she doesn't respect their right to kinship.

Marie is representative of the popular view of the time that the Negro people were of a degraded race and that it was right to keep the slave class down. She is annoyed with her daughter because Evangeline insists on treating slaves as her equals. She continues to talk to the Northern Ophelia:

“Now, there's no way with servants,” said Marie, “but to *put them down*, and keep them down . . . I hold to being *kind* to servants – I always am; but you must make 'em *know their place*. Eva never does; there's no getting into the child's head the first beginning of an idea of what a servant's place is!” (149).

A servant's place is obviously at the bottom of the hierarchy, way below her position of privilege. Were it not for her poor health, Marie admits that she would whip them more often and would send them to be publicly flogged, if Augustine were not against such actions. Augustine's *laissez faire* governing of his slaves is completely at odds with Marie's dictatorial manner and, later, Marie is shown to be a much harder mistress than Augustine was as a master upon his death.

A newcomer to the South, Ophelia is against any institution that would deny the Christian view of both Blacks and whites being equally of God's creation, even if it's separate but equal. Ophelia continues to inquire of Marie's opinions on slavery:

“Don't you believe that the Lord made them of one blood with us?” said Miss Ophelia, shortly.

“No, indeed, not I! A pretty story, truly! They are a degraded race.”

“Don't you think they've got immortal souls?” said Miss Ophelia, with increasing indignation.

“O, well,” said Marie, yawning, “that, of course – nobody doubts that. But as to putting them on any sort of equality with us, you know, as if we could be compared, why it’s impossible!” (151).

Marie clearly articulates the rhetoric of the proslavery order of white supremacy where there is no such thing as equality in humanity. Ophelia is eventually given the care of Topsy, a mischievous slave that tries all of her patience in her attempt to Christianize a “heathen.” The child picks up Ophelia’s dislike of her presence and does everything contrary to Ophelia’s rules. Subsequently Ophelia takes Topsy North and gives her freedom. Ophelia acts on her Christian consciousness and becomes part of the abolitionist movement as Topsy’s emancipator.

While Ophelia uses the Bible to reason that the slave and the master are of one blood, Marie St. Clare cites a preacher’s Biblical justification of the slave system that “expressed all my views exactly” (158). Speaking to the ambivalent Augustine, she declares:

“The text was, ‘He hath made everything beautiful in its season;’ and he showed how all the orders and distinctions in society came from God; and that it was so appropriate, you know, and beautiful, that some should be high and some low, and that some were born to rule and some to serve, and all that, you know; and he applied it so well to all this ridiculous fuss that is made about slavery, and he proved distinctly that the Bible was on our side, and supported all our institutions so convincingly” (158).

Quoting Ecclesiastes 3:11, Marie agrees with the preacher’s justification of slavery through the argument for variety in nature. Marie is affirming the proslavery hierarchy and order that favors her privileged position and believes that the institution is divinely ordained by the Bible. Marie’s depiction is consonant with the proslavery religionists described in Douglass’ *Narrative*.

While Augustine is also part of the proslavery order, he doesn't acknowledge the validity of the Biblical justifications for slavery. He bluntly states the commercial/monetary reason for the institution of slavery: "'We're in for it; we've got 'em, and mean to keep 'em, - it's for our convenience and our interest;' for that's the long and short of it, - that's just the whole of what all this sanctified stuff amounts to, after all'" (159). Continuing in his commercial argument to counter the Biblical justification, he makes this observation:

"Well," said St. Clare, "suppose that something should bring down the price of cotton once and forever, and make the whole slave property a drug in the market, don't you think we should soon have another version of the Scripture doctrine? What a flood of light would pour into the church, all at once, and how immediately it would be discovered that everything in the Bible and reason went the other way!" (160).

While Marie finds justification for slavery in the Bible, and Ophelia sees slavery as a contraction to Christian principles, Augustine discerns that Biblical exegesis can come up with a multiplicity of meanings, each contradicting the other. Ophelia is closer to Stowe's view that trumps "Cursed be Canaan" with the immortality of all souls in Christ.

While exposing and countering the various views within the rhetoric of the present order, Stowe also uncovers the Secrets that maintain a system like slavery. Stowe depicts the Secrets not only in rhetorical exchanges between characters, but with acerbic authorial asides, and through imagery where slave cargo cannot be ignored and the separation of slave families is exposed. When Uncle Tom joins the slave trader Haley and his gang of chained slaves, they leave on a steamboat down the Mississippi River, destination New Orleans.

The La Belle Riviere, as brave and beautiful a boat as ever walked the waters of her namesake river, was floating gaily down the stream, under a brilliant sky, the

stripes and stars of free America waving and fluttering over head; the guards crowded with well-dressed ladies and gentlemen walking and enjoying the delightful day. All was full of life, buoyant and rejoicing; - all but Haley's gang, who were stored, with other freight, on the lower deck, and who somehow, did not seem to appreciate their various privileges, as they sat in a knot, talking to each other in low tones. (106)

The slaves are kept on the lower deck to hide the unpleasant reality of the secret that there were slaves on board, transported as cargo, the lowest rung in the proslavery hierarchy. Through imagery, the contrast of the patriotic and free upper deck with the sorrowful, chained lower deck is parallel to Garrison's comparison of slavery in the land of liberty celebrated on the 4th of July.

The discovery of the gang of slaves by a child to her mother initiates a heated rhetorical debate amongst the mother, a genteel woman, a cleric, a drover, and the slave trader Haley on the issue of slavery.

"What a shame to our country that such sights are to be seen!" said another lady. "O, there's a great deal to be said on both sides of the subject," said a genteel woman, who sat at her state-room door sewing, *while her little girl and boy were playing round her*. "I've been south, and I must say I think the Negroes are better off than they would be free."

"In some respects, some of them are well off, I grant," said the lady to whose remark she had answered. "The most dreadful part of slavery, to my mind, is its outrages on the feelings and affections, - the separation of families, for example." "That *is* a bad thing, certainly," said the other lady *holding up a baby's dress* she had just completed, and looking intently on its trimmings; "but then, I fancy, it don't occur often." (106-7) (italics mine)

Stowe allows for us to view the irony of the genteel woman's interest in her children and the disinterested way in which slave families were torn apart. When the cleric chimes in "Cursed be Canaan," quoting the infamous scriptural verse that was used as a justification of slavery, the drover sarcastically remarks that such views are "refreshing" to Haley, who declined to comment because he doesn't have "larning" (108). After all, "I

took up the trade just to make a living” (108). Another observer on the scene, closer to Stowe’s evangelical views, notes that the Golden Rule is just as biblical as “Cursed be Canaan” and pronounces a malediction on Haley’s soul for his trade. In depicting a society ripe for the rise of a social movement, Griffins observes, “It is an order [here, the proslavery society] marked by misunderstanding, the growth of absurdity and injustice, the increasing loss of communication and identification” (459-60). Members of the society soon begin to reject the mystery – “what a shame to our country” - and expose the Secret, as in this conversation. The power of the exposing the secret of slaves on the lower deck shows the confrontation of various oppositional points of view, which would invariably come to a head with the Civil War.

During this scene, the secret of the separation of families is also powerfully exposed when a Black woman rushes onto the scene to hug her husband for the last time. The genteel woman’s assertion, the rarity of the dissolution of familial ties, gets contradicted in this obvious division.

As the boat stopped a black woman came running wildly up the plank, darted into the crowd, flew up to where the slave gang sat, and threw her arms round that unfortunate piece of merchandise before enumerated – “John, aged thirty,” and with sobs and tears bemoaned him as her husband.

But what needs tell the story, told too oft, - every day told, - of heartstrings rent and broken, - the weak broken and torn for the profit and convenience of the strong! It needs not be told; - every day is telling it, - telling it, too, in the ear of One who is not deaf, though he be long silent. (108)

An even more desperate scene preceded this one with the separation of an aged matriarch Hagar from her only child left, Albert, aged 14. This group included “John, aged thirty,” and despite every entreaty to keep the two together, they were separated and the old woman treated as an item to be discarded since she was worn with the service she had

given to her former master's family. This auction is similar to the depiction in Frederick Douglass' *Narrative*; like Douglass' grandmother, the aged Hagar is also left without any of her children and the bonds between mother and child desecrated. In her authorial aside, Stowe confirms that the separation of families happens everyday and warns of a divine retribution for these despicable acts, as the secret is not hidden from God.

As the Secrets of the proslavery order are being exposed and its arguments are countered, the social movement must confront the present order in the all-important moment in which a resounding "No!" is shouted at the establishment. This is the defining moment that turns guilt and dissatisfaction with the present order into a confrontation. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, there are at least three characters that evoke the Burkean "No!" against the pro-slavery order. One of these is George Harris, Eliza's husband, an intelligent mulatto man that is despised by his owner for his very intelligence, as this was not a positive trait for slaves in the proslavery order. Similar to the proslavery hierarchy depicted in the *Narrative*, educated slaves are also threatening to the system depicted in Stowe's novel. The defining moment for George that symbolizes the "unacceptable" occurs when his master wishes that he take on a new wife and break all ties with Eliza and his son Harry.

At first he only scolded and grumbled these things; but yesterday he told me that I should take Mina for a wife, and settle down in a cabin with her, or he would sell me down river ... Don't you know a slave can't be married? There is no law in this country for that; I can't hold you for my wife, if he chooses to part us. (15)

The bonds of husband and wife, father and son would have been severed with this action. He decides to try to find Canada and becomes a fugitive slave. His plan is to arrive in Canada and earn a living so that he can "buy" his wife and son.

Eliza soon takes on the same challenge when it is abundantly clear that the slave trader Haley has just bought Uncle Tom and her son. Eliza was the typical house slave and lived with privileges not usually granted to field slave, such as living in the “great house”. She even lived under the illusion that she was lawfully married to her husband and had a “Christian” ceremony, performed by a minister. When she hears the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Shelby, she steels her will and takes off with her son, warns Uncle Tom and his family, and leaves the Shelby residence a fugitive. The selling of her only child, Harry, severing the ties between mother and child, is the “unacceptable” that impels Eliza to confront the proslavery system. She leaves a note that thanks her mistress but counters the system that can put a price on the life of a child: “O, Missis! Dear Missis! Don’t think me ungrateful, - don’t think hard of me, any way, - I heard all you and master said to-night. I am going to try to save my boy – you will not blame me! God bless and reward you for all your kindness!” (31). While Eliza fights the system, Tom reasons that he must bear and endure; his “No!” resounds in a different manner.

George Harris is reunited with his wife and child on the Quaker settlement and confronts the proponents of the proslavery order in a heroic defense of his right to freedom. The reaction to the “No!”, the negation of the present order in the form of a confrontation usually spawns a countermovement derived to reaffirm the present order. The rhetorical confrontation between the movement and the establishment “is a dramatization created by the forced juxtaposing of two agents, one standing for the evil, erroneous system and the other upholding the new or ‘perfect’ order” (Cathcart 369). In this case, the countermovement upholding the established order is represented by Haley,

Tom Loker, Marks and a bunch of rowdies gathered from a local tavern when they announced their mission to recapture the runaway slaves.

When the countermovement catches up with George and the abolitionist Quakers helping him, his wife, child, and two other slaves to escape, George announces a sort of declaration of his independence from the American system called slavery:

I am George Harris. A Mr. Harris, of Kentucky, did call me his property. But now I'm a free man, standing on God's free soil; and my wife and my child I claim as mine. Jim and his mother are here. We have arms to defend ourselves, and we mean to do it ... I know very well that you've got the law on your side, and the power ... You mean to take my wife to sell in New Orleans, and put my boy like a calf in a trader's pen, and send Jim's old mother to the brute that whipped and abused her before, because he couldn't abuse her son. You want to send Jim and me back to be whipped and tortured, and ground down under the heels of them that you call masters; and your laws will bear you out in it, - more shame for you and them! But you haven't got us. We don't want your laws; we don't own your country; we stand here as free, under God's sky, as you are; and, by the great God that made us, we'll fight for our liberty till we die. (171-2)

This is both a physical and verbal confrontation against the slave system. Like Frederick Douglass' rhetorical subversion, George's speech manifests several oppositional dichotomies, where the values of the proslavery order are replaced by the prophetic new world order that George is envisioning. He contrasts the difference between slave law that would allow him, his family, and companions to be recaptured into slavery and torture with the higher authority of God's laws. He describes "your country" – white man's America – against the greater claim of God's sky and God's free soil. Whereas Eliza would be a hot commodity in the New Orleans slave market, he claims her as his lawful Christian wife. Whereas his son would be treated like a calf or an animal product of other domestic animals for market and slaughter, he claims Harry as his son. Whereas he was once a slave and claimed by a former master Mr. Harris, he is now a free man.

This is similar to Frederick Douglass' liberation from the tomb of slavery; whatever the consequences of this altercation, George Harris is no longer a slave in fact.

While Uncle Tom meekly bears his cross and obeys his master and goes with Haley, he would also become controversial in his slave role, particularly when he is sold to perhaps the worst of all masters ever depicted in fictional form, Simon Legree. After leaving the Shelby residence, he spends several years with the lenient slave owner Augustine St. Clare. In his role as the slave of Mr. Shelby and St. Clare, Uncle Tom "keeps the secret," allows for bonds of family to be severed, and does not confront the system. The mysteries that keep him subjugated are hidden under veil. In both of these relatively benign forms of slavery, he was allowed to practice the Christian religion and read the Bible. "Thy will be done" was his response to change of circumstances in leaving the Shelby residence.

Unfortunately, the untimely death of St. Clare left his slaves without any protection and soon he was on the auction block once more. The spiritual Tom falls into the hands of the coarsest and cruelest of all the buyers present that day, one who prides himself in his iron fists hardened by "knocking down niggers," one who gives his slaves one coarse garment a year, and one who doesn't care how long his slaves last (their lifespan under his auspices was barely a few years if that), because he can always buy more (293-4). As Legree reviews the contents of Tom's clothes, he notices his Methodist hymnbook.

"Well, I'll soon have that out of you. I have none o' yer bawling, praying, singing niggers on my place; so remember. Now, mind yourself," he said, with a stamp and a fierce glance of his gray eye, directed at Tom, "*I'm* your church now! You understand, - you've got to be as *I* say,"

Something within the silent black man answered *No!* and, as if repeated by an invisible voice, came the words of an old prophetic scroll, as Eva had often read them to him, - "Fear not! For I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by my name. Thou art MINE! (292-3)

Legree is the only "deity" that his slaves should ever appease, so Tom's pious manner and Methodist hymns annoyed him, but he assumed that, like so many others, Tom would be easily broken in. Tom silently replaces Legree's law with God's law. This internal cry of No! against the slave system, parallel to the Burkean one important to social movements rhetoric, begins the confrontation that would soon lead to Tom's martyrdom.

When the well-priced Tom proves to be unsuitable for the overseer role that Legree bought him for, the confrontation arises between the proslavery order, with their omnipotent role in the lives of slaves, and the slaves' desire to act with dignity often times deemed "above their station." Tom did not fight the system as a runaway but fought it by refusing to do things he deemed unchristian and morally dubious to him. When Tom is ordered to whip a woman who had not picked enough cotton in the end-of-the-day inspection, he refuses.

"What! Ye blasted *black beast!* Tell me ye don't think it right to do what I tell ye! What have any of you cussed *cattle* to do with thinking what's right? I'll put a stop to it! Why, what do ye think ye are? May be ye think ye'r a *gentleman, master Tom*, to be telling your master what's right, and what an't! So you pretend it's wrong to flog the gal!" (309) (italics mine)

While Legree is attempting to belittle Tom's reluctance to beat this sickly woman and to remind him of his place as a "black beast" and a "cattle," Legree is admitting that Tom's sense of morals makes Tom the greater gentlemen, rivaling a "master." Not only does Tom stand firm in his decision that he will not beat this woman, he asserts that his soul is not Legree's but God's.

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

In the very depth of physical suffering, bowed by brutal oppression, this question shot a gleam of joy and triumph through Tom's soul. He suddenly stretched himself up, and, looking earnestly to heaven, while the tears and blood that flowed down his face mingled, he exclaimed,

"No! no! No! My soul an't yours, Mas'r! You haven't bought it, - ye can't buy it! It's been bought and paid for, by one that is able to keep it; - no matter, no matter, you can't harm me!" (309) (italics mine)

Tom rises up and says "No!" in as valiant a manner as George Harris' declaration, though the circumstances are quite different. Unarmed, Tom sticks to his Christian principles to the end, even if it means receiving a far worse beating than the one he may have inflicted on the poor woman that he was trying to save. This defiance was certain to incur the ire of the tyrant that is the sole ruler of his plantation universe, with the next nearby estate being 10 miles away.

Just as in Douglass' confrontation with Covey and George's address to the posse, there is a point in which Tom might be a slave in form but is no longer a slave in fact and uses his faith to subvert the system predicated on the absolute authority of Legree. After seeming to wonder whether God abandoned him, Tom becomes convinced that, come what may, he should not submit to the evilness of Legree. As Tom is singing a Methodist hymn, Legree is outraged that Tom could still be happy after being repeatedly beaten and abused. He begins to strike him,

But the blows fell now only on the outer man, and not, as before, on the heart. Tom stood perfectly submissive; and yet Legree could not hide from himself that his power over his bond thrall was somehow gone. (342)

Like Douglass' subversive instruction of his fellow slaves, Tom did whatever he could do to minister to and aid his companions, despite the "every man for himself" attitude that permeated the premises before his arrival.

This man [Tom], at last, began to have a strange power over them; and, when the pressing season was past, and they were allowed again their Sundays for their own use, many would gather together to hear from him of Jesus. They would gladly have met to hear, and pray, and sing, in some place, together; but Legree would not permit it, and more than once broke up such attempts, with oaths and brutal execrations... (343)

This subversion finally came to a head when Cassy and Emmeline escape the Legree premises and Tom admits that he knows of them but will not tell of their escape or be complicit in their recapture. In this case, victimage or mortification in the murder of Uncle Tom by his master was the result of the confrontation with the proslavery order and its defiant victims.

Once the Secrets are exposed of the dominant order and confrontations occur, the movement must evidence in its rhetoric the element of conversion to convince others to join the ranks, if it is to succeed and triumph over the present order. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the rhetoric of conversion emanates from the evangelical strand of abolition. Conversion to Christianity and conversion to the abolitionist movement are simultaneous productions in Stowe, for if you are a "true" Christian believer, you cannot uphold a system bent on the degradation and damnation of souls that could be saved for Christ. There are numerous evangelical characters in the novel, but the major wielders of the rhetoric of conversion are Evangeline and Uncle Tom.²⁴ They are also characters that

²⁴ Several critics, such as Jane Tompkins, cite Eva and Tom as the key Christ-like figures of the novel (516).

undergo the victimage/mortification stage of rhetorical movements in their evangelical vocations.

Evangeline is the pious daughter of Augustine St. Clare, Uncle Tom's first owner after he leaves the Shelby residence. She is depicted in a rather unrealistic way for a child of 6 years. She is always dressed in white and haloed with light, to signify the holiness that her person enshrines. When Uncle Tom meets her on the ship, she is a bright and vivacious girl that charmed all who met her. She took to Uncle Tom so much that she asked her father to buy him.²⁵ Eventually, slavery and its injustices sickened her so deeply that she contracted tuberculosis and soon became terminally ill from the malady. In speaking to Uncle Tom about understanding why Jesus died for humanity, she proposes that she would - if she could - die for the salvation of the slaves:

“I can't tell you; but, when I saw those poor creatures on the boat, you know, when you came up and I, - some had lost their mothers, and some their husbands, and some mothers cried for their little children, - and when I heard about poor Prue, - oh, wasn't that dreadful! - and a great many other times, I've felt that I would be glad to die, if my dying could stop all this misery. I would die for them, Tom, if I could,” said the child, earnestly, laying her little thin hand on his. (240)

Regardless of the unlikelihood of a child this young speaking of her own martyrdom, her character encapsulates Stowe's vision of Christian martyrdom for the antislavery cause, as much as Uncle Tom's eventual death does as well. By being exposed to the secret of the separation of families and the cruelty of the death by starvation of old Prue, the wise Evangeline makes the connection between the deliverance and salvation of Jesus Christ and the salvation of those pinning under the institution of slavery. Griffin reminds us that death itself can be rhetorical:

²⁵ Hortense Spillers in “Changing the Letters” mentions the line in which Eva expresses her “wanting” Uncle Tom to be shockingly replete with sexual connotations between the emasculated black male and the prepubescent white female (557-8).

“It must not be forgotten, in sum, that rhetoric, though in the order of Victimage, is also in the order of Mortification; nor that Mortification, at its highest mounting, is in the order of perfect love (*‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man give up his life for his friends’*).” (461)

Eva has unconditional love for the slave class and would like to become a Christian martyr for the antislavery cause. She wishes that her death could stop all of the suffering of her slave friends.

Eva apparently was more concerned about the fate of slaves and converting them to Christianity than either her mother or her father. Her mother, Marie St. Clare, thought her to be an odd child to be harping on such matters that she felt were the normal circumstances of the patriarchal, divinely sanctified institution. Eva even tries at one point, when she is certain of her upcoming death, to convert her father and convince him to become an emancipator and an abolitionist for her sake. When describing the things that make her sad, she notes to her father:

“O, things that are done, and done all the time. I feel sad for our poor people; they love me dearly, and they are all good and kind to me. I wish, papa, they were all *free* ... Papa, you are such a good man, and so noble, and kind, and you always have a way of saying things that is so pleasant, couldn't you go all round and try to persuade people to do right about this? When I am dead, papa, then you will think of me, and do it for my sake. I would do it, if I could.” (241)

Augustine is rather ambivalent about the slavery question. He admits that it is wrong but doesn't do anything to end the suffering. His slaves are better off than most, but even Eva sees that they would be in a heap of danger if something should happen to him. She would be an evangelist for the abolitionist cause if she could, but she's a child and not really talented with words, like her father (though much more articulate than the average school age child learning their ABCs!). Even though her character is largely overdrawn

by Stowe, to the point of her being named Evangeline, her pious example and method of conversion is similar to the evangelical mode of abolitionist rhetoric.

While Eva's death cannot serve to stop the sufferings of the slave class, she leaves them with a sermon and a token of her friendship that would serve as a reminder to lead a life in Christ. Eva decides to cut off her prized golden curls and given them out to the slaves. She preaches to them the following:

“I want to speak to you about your souls Many of you, I am afraid, are very careless. You are thinking only about this world. I want you to remember that there is a beautiful world, where Jesus is. I am going there, and you can go there. It is for you, as much as me. But, if you want to go there, you must not live idle, careless, thoughtless lives. You must be Christians. You must remember that each one of you can become angels, and be angels forever If you want to be Christians, Jesus will help you.” (251)

Child prodigy or mouthpiece to Stowe's worldview? Definitely the latter is apparent here. Eva is depicted as being a better evangelist than her 45 year-old Aunt Ophelia and is able to convince the restless Topsy that she too can become an angel even if she is Black. Unable to fully persuade her ambiguous father to emancipate their slaves, she wields the rhetoric of conversion and leaves them with a token of the life that they ought to live in her memory. If they can't be free, at least they can be Christians and send their prayers of deliverance to the “One who is not deaf though he be long silent.”

If Eva is symbolic of the white evangelists for abolition, Uncle Tom could be seen a version of primitive Black evangelism. Both are considered untutored and naturally pious, but even Eva reads the Bible to Uncle Tom, making her the more empowered symbol user of the two. Just as Eva preaches the Gospel to the slaves in her farewell speech to them, Uncle Tom also perpetuates confrontations against the system of Simon Legree by acts of kindness and ministry. For example, he convinces Cassy that it would

be a sin to murder Legree when she has a chance to, even though she had suffered numerous abuses at his hands. In a sort of narrative and authorial aside, Stowe comments of the effects of Uncle Tom on the rest of the slaves:

Yet who can speak the simple joy with which some of those poor outcasts, to whom life was a joyless journey to a dark unknown, heard of a compassionate Redeemer and a heavenly home? It is the statement of missionaries, that, of all races of the earth, none have received the Gospel with such eager docility as the African. The principle of reliance and unquestioning faith, which is its foundation, is more a native element in this race than any other; and it has often been found among them, that a stray seed of truth, borne on some breeze of accident into hearts the most ignorant, had sprung up into fruit, whose abundance has shamed that of higher and more skilful culture. (343)

While not as radical as George Harris, Uncle Tom does perpetuate resistance to the slave system intent on degrading and demeaning him and his fellow companions in servitude by telling them of a “Redeemer and a heavenly home.” Uncle Tom represents the form of Black evangelism that is based on blind faith and hearing the Gospel. Stowe’s opinion of the meek, “docile African” compared to the “hot-blooded Anglo-Saxon” with their “higher and more skilful culture” permeates the novel and leads to the final vision of a new world order in the colonization movement.²⁶

The final stages in the Burkean cycle of social movements rhetoric evolves from the rhetoric of redemption and conversion to the cause and leads to the dream of a new world order. In Stowe’s version of evangelical abolition, the paths of three African

²⁶ George Fredrickson gives an excellent analysis of the romantic racialism that was prevalent in the 19th century. He argues that Stowe may have been familiar with the work of Alexander Kinmont, who held that there were key, radical differences in the races and that each race was destined to manifest and perfect a certain quality better than any other race. So while the “meek docility” that Stowe ascribes to the African seems patently racist today, it could have emanated from this romantic conception of racial difference and seen as a positive appellation in attributing a virtue or a quality to the African. Critics of Stowe’s day were outraged that Uncle Tom, a black man, be given such positive (and therefore suspect) virtues and saw her as favoring the Black over the white (Holmes 471).

descent characters imply that this new world order, Christian in development, must find its existence outside of America.

Rhetorically, George Harris is transformed from a doubter to a believer in Christ, from seeking a life in Canada to searching for the Promised Land or the new world order in Liberia through colonization. His first encounter with a version of a society based on Christian principles is when he arrives at the Quaker settlement as a fugitive slave. The Quaker estate is notable for its utopian depiction of Quaker piety and Christian brotherhood. Their interchanges are filled with “thee’s” and “thou’s”; the women are rosy cheeked, rotund, and bonneted, busy cooking delicacies for their guests. The family patriarch sets the Christian tone for discourse and no judgment is passed on the fugitives for breaking the law and escaping their masters. “The Lord hath ordered it so that never hath a fugitive been stolen from our village. I trust thine will not be the first,” the Quaker Rachel Halliday assures Eliza (117). It is here where an uneasy George first sits at a table to eat with whites as equals and it is here that the conversion full takes place in him:

This, indeed, was a home, - *home*, - a word that George had never yet known a meaning for; and a belief in God, and trust in his providence, began to encircle his heart, as, with a golden cloud of protection and confidence, dark, misanthropic, pining, atheistic doubts, and fierce despair, melted away before the light of a living Gospel, breathed in living faces, preached by a thousand unconscious acts of love and good will, which, like the cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, shall never lose their reward. (122)

Though they risked imprisonment and fines, the elder Simeon made it clear that they could stay as long as needed. Knowing that their captors were close by, George Harris and his fellow fugitives wasted no time in continuing their painstaking way to Canada in search of freedom.

By the time George makes his declaration of independence from the slave system, he is a converted Christian and thus prepared for his new role in the colonization of Liberia. When he finally reaches Canada after a long and arduous journey, he is reunited with his sister, his wife, and his wife's mother. While enjoying the liberty that he feels in Canada, he is not content with living amongst the white Canadians. After leaving Canada to study in France, he decides that he will leave Canada for good and find a life in Liberia, in his homeland of Africa. In a letter to a friend, he explains his sentiments:

My sympathies are not for my father's race, but for my mother's. To him I was no more than a fine dog or horse: to my poor heart-broken mother I was a *child*; and though I never saw her, after the cruel sale that separated us, till she died, yet I *know* she always loved me dearly. I know it by my own heart. When I think of all she suffered, of my own early sufferings, of the distresses and struggles of my heroic wife, of my sister, sold in the New Orleans slave-market, - though I hope to have no unchristian sentiments, yet I may be excused for saying, I have no wish to pass for an American, or to identify myself with them.

It is with the oppressed, enslaved African race that I cast in my lot; and, if I wished anything, I would wish myself two shades darker, rather than one lighter. The desire and yearning of my soul is for an African *nationality*. I want a people that shall have a tangible, separate existence of its own. (374) (underlining mine)

Maria Stewart and Frederick Douglass believed that Blacks could prosper in the United States if the institution of slavery were eradicated. While Stowe cites some cases of Blacks prospering in the Free North, she forcefully presents the colonization movement as the most viable possibility for Blacks. In line with the colonization movement, George Harris rejects the existing order in the form of life in America.

The symbolic rejection of the existing order is a purgative act of transformation and transcendence. It affirms the commitment of the converted to the movement – to the new understanding ... And hence it endows them with a new condition or 'substance' – with a new identity, a new unity, a new motive. (Griffin 465)

With his new understanding, George Harris realizes that neither the Quaker settlement on American soil nor Canada could ever give him a permanent home. His new substance

and motive is in the colonization movement where he can identify himself not as American or Canadian but with an African nationality.²⁷ Just like the ethereal Evangeline and the pious Ophelia, at this point George Harris becomes a mouthpiece for Stowe's views.

Rejecting the other alternatives as white utopias, the only place that George Harris feels he could live in peace is in the Black utopian "promised land" of Liberia, a new world order that has gained recognition and legitimacy from England and France.

On the shores of Africa I see a republic, - a republic formed of picked men, who by energy and self-educating force, have, in many cases, individually, raised themselves above a condition of slavery. Having gone through a preparatory stage of feebleness, this republic has, at last, become an acknowledged nation on the face of the earth, - acknowledged by both France and England. There it is my wish to go, and *find myself a people*. (374) (emphasis mine)

"His people" are the African people, no matter how little of that ancestry remains in his whitened appearance for he'd rather be "two shades darker than one shade lighter." Transformed from his previous state of doubt, Harris describes himself as a "Christian" and the development of Africa "essentially a Christian one" (376).

In addition to George Harris' decision to find a new world order in Liberia, the "back to Africa" argument is exhibited in another character in the novel. Topsy, the mischievous slave that Ophelia is given, eventually is taken to the North by the aunt and educated there. She ultimately becomes a missionary and goes "back to her people," to Africa.

²⁷ From its initial critical response to the present, this ending of George Harris' story has been criticized. William G. Allen gave a positive review of the novel in 1852, but noted "as to the talk about African nationality, this is sheer nonsense, if by African nationality is meant, a nation composed entirely of pure African" (462). Such was the uproar, particularly in the Black community, against the colonization movement that it has been reported that Stowe commented at an abolitionist meeting "that if she were to write 'Uncle Tom' again, she would not send George Harris to Liberia" (Levine 536).

At the age of womanhood, she was, by her own request, baptized, and became a member of the Christian church in the place; and showed so much intelligence, activity and zeal, and desire to do good in the world, that she was at last recommended, and approved, as a *missionary to one of the stations in Africa*; and we have heard that the same activity and ingenuity which, when a child, made her so multiform and restless in her developments, is now employed, in a safer and wholesomer manner, *in teaching the children of her own country*. (377) (my italics)

Once again, we see the zealous piety of the “African” that Stowe elaborated on earlier in the novel, this time coupled with the intelligence cultivated in her Northern education. Also not content to live amongst whites, when she is of age, she becomes a missionary teaching children of “her own country.” But was Topsy described as a native African? *No*. She is clearly of African descent, as evidenced by her rich complexion. But she knows no African language, and is introduced to us as a product of unknown slave origin, raised by a speculator, with “lots of others.” Hence she is a product of the *American* slave system, but Stowe cannot conceive of her being happy as an American even in the free North. Topsy’s final representation as an intelligent, zealous Christian is more similar to the Black evangelism of Maria Stewart than Uncle Tom’s untutored version, yet her final sojourn to Africa couldn’t be more different than Stewart’s defiance to stay in America. Topsy must return home to “her own country,” with the added benefit of being “saved” through Christianity and spreading its influence to “her people.”

This new world order in Stowe is prominently Christian in character and one where the Christian church of the North must play a vital role in the education of freed Blacks before colonization can take place. She remarks in her chapter titled “Concluding Remarks”:

To fill up Liberia with an ignorant, inexperienced, half-barbarized race, just escaped from the chains of slavery, would be only to prolong, for ages, the period

of struggle and conflict which attends the inception of new enterprises. Let the church of the north receive these poor sufferers in the spirit of Christ; receive them to the educating advantages of Christian republican society and schools, until they have attained to somewhat of a *moral and intellectual maturity*, and *then assist them in their passage to those shores*, where they may put in practice the lessons they have learned in America. (386) (emphases mine)

While this may seem much more a humane thing to do than to have slaves suffering under the likes of Simon Legree and the American Slave System, Stowe is clearly demonstrating her sympathies with the controversial and ill-fated colonization movement. In Stowe's view, the church of the North, represented in Ophelia, would take in the slaves, educate them but only to ultimately "assist them in their passage" to Africa, away from America. Hence, Ophelia's acceptance of the African's immortal souls but dislike of their presence is also Stowe's. Her insistence that the church play a role in educating the slaves until they reach "moral and intellectual maturity" demonstrates her patronizing opinion of the childlike, barbarized slave. It is this rhetorical strategy that allows her to reach an unsympathetic, racist audience by meeting them halfway and asking them to claim this role as a Christian. With a colonized mindset, the repatriated Blacks can bring the Christian "lessons" from America with them.

For Stowe, the new world order does not include a vision of Blacks permanently and happily residing in the United States. While George finds his new world order and redemption in his effort to go to Liberia and Topsy goes to Africa to spread the Christian religion, Uncle Tom finds his new world order in dying and thus entering the Promised Land of Heaven. When Master George Shelby, son of the Shelbys and former companion of Uncle Tom, arrives a young man to buy Uncle Tom from Simon Legree, it is too late. Uncle Tom has been beaten to death and is entering the Promised Land:

“O, Mas’r George, ye’re too late. The Lord’s bought me, and is going to take me home, - and I long to go. Heaven is better than Kintuck.”

“O, don’t die! It’ll kill me! - it’ll break my heart to think what you’ve suffered, - and lying in this old shed, here! Poor, poor fellow!”

“Don’t call me poor fellow!” said Tom, solemnly. “I have been poor fellow; but that’s all past and gone, now. I’m right in the door, going into glory! O, Mas’r George! Heaven has come! I’ve got the victory! – the Lord Jesus has given it to me! Glory be to His name!” (362)

Neither Kentucky – the state of his birth – nor America itself can be depicted as a homeland for Uncle Tom either. His “escape” from the evils of slavery is through death and by entering the Promised Land given to him by his faith in Jesus. He has been transformed into being a slave in form, not in fact. No longer a “poor fellow,” by his resistance to evil and his resolve to moral uprightness, he has been ushered into new world where there is slavery no more. Like Eva’s “beautiful world where Jesus is,” heaven seems to be the only place in the novel where Blacks and whites can live in harmony. Neither the Quaker settlement nor the Free North nor Canada is depicted as places where Blacks can permanently coexist in harmony with whites. They must either go back to Africa and lead separate lives or go to a better place in heaven. If death can be rhetorical, Uncle Tom’s death communicates the wrongs of slavery and transforms the young George Shelby, who then returns to the Shelby residence and emancipates all of his slaves.

The complete dramatic cycle of social movements rhetoric is portrayed in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s still powerful and fascinating protest novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. It moves the reader through each rhetorical phase and allows the reader to sympathize with or disagree with the various oppositional arguments and with the ultimate fate of the major and minor characters. These arguments appeared in the orations and slave

narratives of the heyday of abolitionism, but were ultimately transformed by the art of Stowe into a work that surpassed its sources.

Each of the authors that we have encountered had a different view of the new world order, even though each agreed that it would not be a slave state. For Maria Stewart, it was a society free from slavery where Blacks could be given equal opportunities and the rights of American citizenship. For William Lloyd Garrison, it was the dream of universal emancipation, where the immediate emancipation of all slaves throughout the United States would be a reality and where the fourth of July would no longer be a mockery. For Frederick Douglass, it was the ultimate liberation of the slaves and the advancement of African descent peoples in the United States. For Stowe, it was a world where the Fugitive Slave Law would be abolished as well as the obliteration of the institution of slavery and all of the detrimental effects that it had on Black families and the natural ties of mother and child, husband and wife. Whereas others viewed the colonization movement to relocate Blacks to Africa as a countermovement designed to eradicate the African presence in America, Stowe considered it a real possibility that could triumph over these interests through the creation of Christian republics. The possibility of a successful colonization movement in Stowe was predicated on the idea that Blacks would naturally want to return to living with their own, no matter how many generations they were removed from their motherland.

CONCLUSION

“For ourselves, we confess to have read it with the unbroken attention with which we absorbed Uncle Tom’s Cabin. It has the advantage of the latter book in that it is no fiction. Of course, it is impossible to say how far the author’s prejudices, and remembrances of wrong, may have deepened the color of his pictures, but the general tone of them is truthful.” - Anonymous “The Life and Bondage of Frederick Douglass” (Davis and Gates 30).

This anonymous reviewer of Douglass’ second autobiographical work – *My Life and My Bondage* – asserts its relevance over *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in that it is factual but simultaneously admits that there is a thin line between fact and fiction. This thesis has attempted to cross those lines in applying a Burkean approach to social movements rhetoric by assessing significant orations, then analyzing the prototypical slave narrative of the day, and lastly dealing with the powerful protest novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. When viewed from the lens of dramatism, each of these works attempted to persuade the reader or auditor to join the abolitionist cause through symbolic action in their rhetoric. Specifically, the four works under study, crossing three genres, all exhibited the critical elements of the rhetoric of impiety, confrontation, and optimism.

Stewart, Garrison, and Douglass capitalize on the rhetoric of impiety to convince their audience and readers to see America as a place of “christian impiety,” a “Babylon” for harboring the institution of slavery, with a proslavery religion that is a “dark shelter” for the “foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds.” Stowe also created characters in agreement that slavery is “a curse to the master and a curse to the slave” and a “shame to our country.” The novel’s multiple voices allow Stowe to emphasize the misunderstanding that occurs in a society ripe for a social movement with dialogues that represent divergent viewpoints concerning slavery. Within each dialogue or heated discussion, there is a vocal proponent of evangelical abolition close to her viewpoints.

Related to this stage of social movements rhetoric, “Revealing the Secret” is best exemplified in William Lloyd Garrison's fiery speech and is also evident in Douglass' *Narrative* and Stowe's novel. Stewart furthermore uses the rhetoric of guilt to target the Black males in her audience.

Maria Stewart's “Address Delivered at the African Masonic Hall,” William Lloyd Garrison's July 4th 1838 Address, Frederick Douglass' *Narrative*, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* all manifest the rhetoric of confrontation, which is essential to a true social movement. While Stewart wanted to ignite the spirit of every Black male in the United States to sign a petition calling for the ending of slavery in the District of Columbia, and Garrison called for the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery throughout the United States, Douglass depicted in narrative form his numerous confrontations against the slave system and how he used his confrontational rhetoric to convince others to move from the “hellish state of indecision” to action. Stowe's novelistic form allowed her to create three characters that invoke the Burkean “No!” against the slave system, George Harris, Eliza Harris, and Uncle Tom himself.

While disgruntled members of a society can complain about the present system, there needs to be envisioned an alternative or a dream of a new world order which would impel these members to risk ostracism, imprisonment, and even death to a movement's success. As such, all works in this study did exhibit the rhetoric of optimism or the dream of a new world order outside of slavery. For Maria Stewart, this new world order would be one in which African descent Americans could flourish in a society free from slavery and crippling prejudice. In order to inspire her audience members to see this vision, she reached back to an African past of glory and eminence to predict a future

glory in which “Ethiopia” would stretch forth its hands unto God once again. Judging from Gates and West’s recent work proclaiming the 20th century *The African American Century* (2000), filled with names to populate the “bright annals of fame,” perhaps Stewart’s prediction came true. For Garrison, this new world order meant a society in which universal emancipation became a reality and it embraced not only the abolitionist movement but the women’s movement as well, another successful movement that would more fully realize itself in the 20th century than in the 19th.

In Douglass, the rhetoric of optimism manifests itself in the utopian description of New Bedford, causing him to reassess the idea that there could be no refinement or sophisticated living that was not predicated on the slave system, a common myth in the South. Stowe’s configuration of the rhetoric of optimism was perhaps the most controversial of the four, because she truly believed that the colonization movement was a viable and logical solution to the problem of slavery. Unfortunately, her depiction of three African descent characters – George Harris, Topsy, and Uncle Tom – gives the impression that there could be no society in which Blacks and whites coexist together in harmony on earth. Hence, the dream of a new world order for Blacks is found either in a separate society from whites in Africa or in coexistence in heaven.

But the did the anonymous 19th century reviewer have a point in privileging the factual over the fictional? Where does the slave narrative fall between the orations of the day and fictional works? When compiling a book of criticism on the slave narrative, Davis and Gates assert that even though there were narratives written after the Civil War by ex-slaves, the genre is delimited to works published before 1865 because their immediacy to the cause gives them a rhetoric distinct from the later autobiographical

works (xxii). As the reviewer notes, they were read with unmitigated interest because of their truthfulness in describing slavery as it really was. Then later on they were discredited as historical documents, but have since been restored to serve as both historical documents and literary works (xxxii). Hence, slave narratives derived their rhetorical power from their testimony and proximity to issue of the day but move its present day readers to sympathize with narrators whose pleas have long been answered.

If we respond more readily to symbols created from reality, why did *Uncle Tom's Cabin* outsell every book in the 19th century besides the Bible? While the power of the orations and pamphlets lie in their proximity to its cause, Stowe's work clearly borrowed its cogent arguments from the debates of the day and slave narratives but transformed them into a work that surpassed its sources and continues to involve readers in the story of characters with issues that have long since been resolved in history. Whether these symbols were created from real life situations, as in Douglass, or from parallels to veracious accounts of slavery, as in Stowe, or from direct pleas calculated to effect moral suasion on the auditor/reader, as in Stewart and Garrison, the texts are equally capable of "inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols," to use Burke's definition of rhetoric found in the *Rhetoric of Religion* (reprinted in *On Symbols and Society* 188).

This study limited itself to the 19th century abolitionist movement in the United States. As the analysis shifted from the arena of public speeches to slave narratives, to fictional, literary works, the work of literature was limited to the genre of the novel, as its length allowed for the exploration of social movements discourse more fully than, for example, poetry. As such, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did exhibit the entire cycle of social

movements rhetoric. This sequence can also be exhibited in a series of speeches by the same rhetor or different rhetors as the movement progressed from being a force at odds with the present society to initiating widespread emancipation.

One might argue that the abolitionist movement was ideally suited for this approach as Burke derived his logology and dramatism from secular parallels to religion, for this movement had its derivations in evangelism and revivalism. Indeed, when we get to the conversion part of the dramatistic cycle, the two collide in Stowe and in other abolitionists, for to be converted to Christianity was, in effect, to be converted to abolitionism as movement members could see the Christ image in all humankind. However, this certainly does not mean that the approach is only limited to social movements which derive their power from religious orthodoxies. It is precisely Burke's point that these elements have *secular* counterparts in society. Furthermore, these elements are transtemporal and in a sense archetypal. They speak to us because the same stages articulated in the abolitionist social movement are reinterpreted in today's movements and in earlier historical movements.

Further research extending from this project could encompass a transnational study to see if this approach is applicable to the rhetoric of abolition in other countries, such as Cuba and Brazil. An emphasis on studying the texts in their original languages would be critical to the success of such a venture. Another possibility would be to study a notable rhetorician of evangelical abolition and discern the dramatistic cycle of social movements rhetoric in their tenure on the stump in comparison with Stowe's version. Additionally, there could be an analysis of Frederick Douglass' three autobiographical works from this approach to see if these elements shifted as his experiences in slavery

were more and more distant from him and as he changed his focus from abolishing slavery to equal rights for all Americans, regardless of color – ending one movement, beginning another.

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