

[This piece is designed to be a potential second chapter in a book-length manuscript. The project is still very much underway. Tentatively, it includes four main chapters:

- 1). The first establishes a cultural history interested in how white hearing practices transform in the United States in the 1830s to late 1840s, ending with an analysis of how Stowe draws on these changes in her *UTC*. I'm particularly interested in the ways in which white listeners seemed to struggle at times to distinguish between black and white sonorities—and what this says about the science of sound as an embodied aesthetic—and what I see as a potential rupture between prophetic speech and sacred music practice as spiritual/disembodied aural expressions.
- 2). The second is the manuscript draft viewed for this workshop. In it, I seek to establish how proslavery authors (not exclusively southern) responded to the aural landscape Stowe crafted/reflected in *UTC*, beginning first with a look at how the southern soundscape was typically heard prior to the rise of the abolitionist movement and then moving more extensively into an examination of two anti-Uncle Tom novels written post-Stowe.
- 3). The third plans to examine Stowe's later *Dred*, a text that returns to the southern plantation but pits a black masculine prophetic voice (in *Dred*, who is based mainly on Nat Turner and is claimed to be a descendent of Denmark Vesey) against a feminized musical expression practiced by both black and white individuals in the novel.
- 4). The fourth intends to work with antislavery activist Lydia Maria Child's *A Romance of the Republic* and how the period's white fascination with the slave spiritual as an "authentic national" music in the years leading to the Civil War (culminating in part with the work of William Allen, Lucy McKim Garrison, and Charles Pickard Ware in *Slave Songs of the United States*) influences her representation the mixed-race musicians, Rosa and Flora Royal.]

**"MY EARS FLOP IN YOUR FAVOR":
EARLY AMERICAN PLANTATION NOVELS AND THE SOUNDS OF SLAVERY**

Land of beauty, land of beauty...
There the mocking-bird and linden
Fill each silent wood and grove
With a music sweet as heaven
Teaming with its notes of love.
J. R. Barrick, "The South"¹

Swedish novelist Frederika Bremer found much about the northeast that both "pleased" and "annoyed" her during an 1849-1851 trip to the United States and Cuba.² "I am...almost as much burdened as elevated by the crowd of impressions and thoughts which, as it were, rush in upon me," she wrote to her sister Agatha in a series of letters Bremer would later publish as *Homes of the New World; Impressions of America*.³ New York's "bustling Broadway" left her "bewildered" while the "peaceful and rural character" of Brooklyn garnered praise.⁴ In Boston, Bremer complained of her lack of "quiet hours" but relished the long "quiet days" Cambridge afforded.⁵ Still, the constant press of "social duties" that

accompanied Bremer's travels throughout the north grew wearying.⁶ "How I long for the South," she wrote partway through her journey, for its sunnier clime promised both the "repose, and health" she was missing in the North.⁷ By late spring, Bremer had landed finally in Charleston. There, she expressed surprise at the "great number of negroes" in the streets.⁸ She was also displeased with the "chaos of negro lads...pretending to be waiters" at her hotel.⁹ But Bremer soon found the peace and quiet she longed for: just outside the city's limits was a "paradisaical wilderness" in full bloom.¹⁰ "I can understand how the mariners who first approached these shores, and felt these gentle breezes," she wrote Agatha, "believed that they were drinking an elixir of life."¹¹

Bremer's juxtaposition of northern bustle with southern repose, although not always consistent in her letters home, ultimately reproduced how many writers, both foreign and national, had come to conceptualize the sectional differences that shaped the United States. Antebellum elites relied on their sensory experiences—what they smelled, heard, saw, and overall felt—to rationalize the world around them. Sensory historians like Peter Hoffer, Mark Smith, Jonathan Crary, among others, attest to the importance of these multisensory perceptions to colonial and antebellum American belief systems: for the "world was (and is) not only perceived, but observed, explained and reported via the senses."¹² In the early decades of the nineteenth century, writers in the plantation literary tradition certainly relied on multisensory descriptions to preserve the image of the South as a "land of beauty." While these early accounts are rich in visual and tactile imagery, aural impressions—like Barrick's "silent wood...with a music sweet"—played an important role in constructing the South's "paradisiacal wilderness."

To truly enjoy this southern Elysium, however, necessitated a kind of selective hearing, as Bremer was all too aware. "I wish...to avoid conversations on slavery with people in general," she told Agatha.¹³ But shutting one's ears to the sounds of slavery proved much harder to do than she first imagined.¹⁴ She was both "astonish[ed]" and "annoy[ed]" at how southern slaveowners "make use of every argument, sometimes the most opposite, to convince me that the slaves are the happiest people in the world."¹⁵ Far more impressive were the "musical talents" of the enslaved people. Their "beautiful, pure voices" were so "remarkable" that, by the end of her visit, Bremer had been convinced that the

South's greatest asset was in fact its "negroes, and negro-songs."¹⁶ For they collectively represented, she claimed, "the life and the good humor of the South."¹⁷ In this way, Bremer's *Homes of the New World* records what ultimately became an aural disconnect between the South she first longed for and the one she found, illustrating in the process how easily the idealized southern soundscape could erode. All it took was her willingness to listen.

By midcentury, white Americans and other travelers to the United States had certainly been aurally primed. But how they came to understand what they heard reveals sound's function in early America as a discursive tool capable of shaping prominent socio-political debates. Nina Sun Eidsheim reminds us that "Because listening is never neutral, but rather always actively produces meaning, it is a political act. Through listening, we name and define."¹⁸ Often the very same sounds were heard by white ears in very different ways—a form of "timbral discrimination" that speaks not to an "objective set of data" but rather to a listener's own biased taxonomy.¹⁹ What is clear, however, is how the southern "sensescape" had become an ideological battleground in the years leading up to the Civil War.²⁰ From the 1830s on, antislavery advocates worked tirelessly, and on a much more public stage than before, to give voice to the voiceless. They wrote pamphlets advocating for the oppressed, established antislavery newspapers, organized lyceum lectures, composed and sung protest songs, and petitioned to evoke change.²¹ This vocal activism helped recategorize the southern soundscape with all its dissonance.

Defenders of slavery conversely responded by censoring and silencing these very voices. The Gag Rule of 1836-1844, for instance, denied Congressional consideration of antislavery petitions while southern states further attempted to criminalize the circulation of antislavery texts amongst their population. Proslavery mobs targeted northern presses and apologists for slavery both north and south of the Mason-Dixon Line called for southern writers to defend their institution. As one embittered southerner told Bremer during her travels, "The world is against us, and we shall be overpowered by voices and condemned without justice, for what we are, and for what we are doing on behalf of our servants."²² Both northern antislavery advocates and southern defenders of slavery thus turned to their respective sonic environments for evidence of their superiority, a practice of hearing that often relied on

how the other sounded for confirmation of their alleged failings. In the words of the southern-born writer Maria McIntosh, the “rude, laborious North” could only but pale in comparison to “the South, with its quiet loveliness.”²³

Despite these efforts, by 1851, and with the help of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the southern soundscape had been re-written. I track this shifting aural landscape from the early plantation novels of George Tucker, Sarah Josepha Hale, and John Pendleton Kennedy to the later anti-Uncle Tom novels of William L.G. Smith and Caroline Hentz, examining how their popular plantation fiction attempted to establish and regain aural control over slavery’s national narrative. While the white sonorities of this earlier literature largely muffled the sounds of slavery, portraying the South as place “where calm reigned and harmony was heard,” the anti-Uncle Tom fiction of the 1850s proved much more vocal.²⁴ William L.G. Smith’s *Life at the South, Or, ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ As It Is: Being Narratives, Scenes, and Incidents in the Real ‘Life of the Lowly’*—considered “the most direct response” to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*—drew on an emergent pseudoscientific discourse to challenge the hearing practices of the northern abolitionists.²⁵ Comparative anatomists like Samuel Cartwright argued that physiological differences between whites and blacks were found not only in skin color, but in how each respectively saw, heard, smelled, and tasted the world around them. These sensory stereotypes allowed Smith to allege that the enslaved population’s desire for freedom was merely the product of a diseased ear soured by abolitionist talk. This assessment of the perceived aural sensitivities of black Americans took on a different weight, however, in Caroline Lee Hentz’s *The Planter’s Northern Bride*. Published in the wake of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, *The Planter’s Northern Bride* warned that if white southerners wanted to quell the “flames of insurrection” abolitionism encouraged, they needed to find a better way to listen.²⁶ Only by calling on the prophetic soundings of the black population could slaveholders ensure their own safety.

That these fictive soundscapes would fail to preserve the aural landscape of the South as a “land of beauty...with a music sweet” in the years preceding the Civil War ultimately speaks to the power of abolitionism’s competing narratives and, perhaps more pointedly, to the black voices that writers like

Hentz, Smith, Kennedy, Tucker, and Hale tried poorly to control. Even those visitors already primed to hear only a “paradisiacal wilderness,” as Bremer had been, found they heard differently once introduced to the black sonorities the South actually contained. “One must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their lives,” Bremer wrote to Agatha.²⁷ For the white renderings of black sound would always fail to do justice to a more authentic sounding. “Nothing can be more radically unlike,” she told Agatha of the former, “for the most essential part of the resemblance fails—namely, *the life*.”²⁸

“...THAT SHE MIGHT NOT HEAR THE SCREAMS”: INTERRUPTING THE SOUTHERN PLANTATION TRADITION

Late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century descriptions of colonial life found much to praise in what would eventually become the South. In this “pleasant & fertile Country,” Samuel Wilson wrote in his *Account of the Province of Carolina in America* (1682), settlers were “abounding in health and pleasure.”²⁹ Chronicles of colonial settlement like Robert Beverley’s *The History of the Present State of Virginia* (1705) similarly extolled the South’s prosperous beginnings, claiming, “in so happy a climate...nobody is poor enough to beg.”³⁰ William Stith’s *History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia* (1747) offered a comparable view, reporting that the English in Virginia “lived in great Peace and Tranquility,” having “settled the Colony in perfect Quiet and Content.”³¹ Eighteenth-century reading practices further strengthened southern landowners’ interest in developing the appearance of a “genteel culture.”³² Although the first southern printing press was established in Maryland in 1726, followed by a second in Virginia in 1730, southern landowners imported an abundance of British books in order to better learn how “to emulate the lifestyle of English country gentlemen.”³³

These early accounts and reading practices helped cultivate the myth of southern tranquility and repose that later writers took for granted. By the 1820s, fictionalized narratives of plantation life by both northern and southern writers were available to antebellum readers, thanks in part to the efforts of the southerner George Tucker, whose *The Valley of Shenandoah; or, Memoirs of the Graysons* William Taylor identifies as “the first novel to employ the plantation setting in any important way.”³⁴ In *The Valley of Shenandoah*, Tucker offers a pastoral reading of southern plantation life. Its relatively bland

aural landscape speaks to the “tranquility of...the country” and to the genteel comportment of the Grayson family.³⁵ At Beechwood, evenings are spent participating in “music, reading, and conversation” (*VS* 126); in the day, a quietude prevails, only to be occasionally disrupted by lovers’ tiffs or the “opening cry” of a hunting party’s hounds (*VS* 224). Outside these pleasant domestic auralities, *The Valley of Shenandoah* largely remains silent, especially on issues related to slavery. Tucker’s Virginian protagonist, Edward Grayson, does freely acknowledge slavery “to be an evil, both moral and political” to his northern companion Gildon (*VS* 84). But he maintains that the only “safe remedy” is to “endeavor to *mitigate* a disease which admits of *no cure*” (*VS* 86, 85).³⁶ Besides, Grayson argues, the black population on his plantation were “born slaves” and do not feel their “privation” (*VS* 87), even though he does admit that slaveowners “occasionally subject them to punishment” (*VS* 86). When Grayson’s field slaves later greet him, their “unaffected joy” seems to confirm Grayson’s sentiments (*VS* 90).

The northern-born Sarah Josepha Hale would take more liberties in her acoustic framing of plantation life in *Northwood; or, Life North and South: Showing the True Character of Both* (1827). Although called “A New England Tale” in its London edition, *Northwood* opens with the northern-born Lydia Romilly Brainard’s adjustment to plantation life post-marriage. When first introduced to her house servants, she screams in terror, “thinking some of them might have knives in their hands to kill us,” as she writes her mother.³⁷ She soon learns, however, that these northern-born apprehensions are unfounded. Her husband’s plantation includes only slaves like Cato, a “merry creature” who “laughed the loudest of any person” (*NW* 341). Unlike her predecessor, Hale proved more willing to acknowledge the suffering of slaves. When Mr. Brainard dies, all of his property is sold thanks to a debt he incurs through the nefarious schemes of the northern Mr. Cox. When Mr. Brainard’s nephew, Sydney, eventually regains his uncle’s estate, he hurries home, having been informed by his lawyer Howard that “your uncle’s servants are groaning worse than the Israelites did in Egypt” under the “iron sway” of their new master (*NW* 365). Once there, he quickly rights all the wrongs his slaves experienced under another’s harsh hand—a reversal Hale chooses to capture aurally: “their tears were literally turned to songs, and their groans to such loud peals of laughter as made the whole neighborhood ring,” Hale writes (*NW* 367).

This return to aural order concludes with Sydney's intent to "help colonize Liberia," a commitment to the American Colonization Society that mirrored Hale's own (*NW* 405). Although a moderate abolitionist, Hale was "hostile to partisanship" and expressed concern over abolitionist extremism, preferring to promote African American emigration.³⁸ *Northwood* thus tries to strike a balance between northern calls for liberty and the anxieties white southerners expressed over what an emancipated South would look like. Most plantation novels in this period, however, offered much more conservative views. A few years after *Northwood's* publication, John Pendleton Kennedy, a descendent of Virginian aristocracy, published his own *Swallow Barn, or a Sojourn in the Old Dominion*, the novel most frequently cited as the "first major work of the plantation tradition."³⁹ In it, Kennedy laboriously details life on a southern plantation from an outsider's perspective. His narrator, Mark Littleton, hails from New York, but soon settles into a leisurely southern life while visiting the Hazard family. Plantation life in Kennedy's retelling is not devoid of aural disturbances. In the "morning stir," the "ears of the sleepers" awaken to the "dry-rubbing of the floors; ... the grinding of coffee-mills; and the gibber of ducks and chickens, and turkeys."⁴⁰ These "homely sounds," however, merely reinforce the domestic plantation's "organic social order" and, as such, were "considered quiet in an abstract sense" (*SB* 38).⁴¹

In *Swallow Barn*, the aural presence of slave labor similarly testifies to the plantation's industriousness. To Littleton's ears, the "shrill music" of enslaved washerwomen is just part of the plantation's soundscape, no different than the "tree-frog and owl" that sang him to sleep or the "voluble note of the mocking-bird" waking him the next morning (*SB* 29, 25). While the northern Littleton does hear both "chains" and "plaintive moaning" early in his stay, these sounds are not reflective of the slaveowner's violence, but rather of a productive and paternalistic plantation. Frank Meriwether, the "master" of *Swallow Barn's* "lordly domain," carries with him a "heavy bunch of seals, suspended by a chain of gold" that "jingles as he moves" revealing him to be "a man of superfluities" (*SB* 31). The "plaintive moaning" similarly proves to be merely the sound of the spinning-wheel (*SB* 40). Meriwether does admit to the existence of slave punishment but maintains there is more "malice of invention than truth" in reports of their "severities." Rather, he tells Littleton, "our slaves are punished for

misdeemeanors, pretty much as disorderly persons are punished in all societies” (*SB* 457). To Kennedy’s ears, then, the violent auralities associated with slave owning practices were only “inventions,” more akin to the spinning-wheel’s sounds which rose like “the fancied notes of a hobgoblin as they are sometimes imitated in the stories with which we frighten children” (*SB* 40).

Although Kennedy wrote *Swallow Barn* at a time when “sectional allegiance was only weakly established,” the novel would remain an inspiration for defenders of southern slavery well into the 1850s.⁴² “I am glad to hear that we are to have a new edition of *Swallow Barn*,” William Gilmore Simms wrote to Kennedy in 1851. For Simms, *Swallow Barn* offered a much-needed reproof to antislavery writing. The novel’s “genial & natural pictures of Virginia Life,” he claimed, “are in fact the most conclusive answer to the abolitionists...that could be made.” But Simms worried anti-slavery activists were “not a people to need or to tolerate an answer. They will not listen any more than Pilate.” This alleged deafness—“to the very truths which they profess to solicit”—encouraged southern states to consider secession.⁴³ They “have utterly subverted the only bond (that of sympathy), by which the people of our separate sections were ever truly held together.”⁴⁴ States like his own South Carolina therefore had no choice but “to *recede* from our position...or to *secede*, at our peril,” he wrote Kennedy.⁴⁵

Simms’s response to what he termed abolitionism’s “mischief” expressed what some white southerners had been stating since the nullification crisis of 1832.⁴⁶ Southern defenders of slavery like John C. Calhoun, the “mastermind of ‘nullification,’” had “invoked disunion as a way to systematically build a Southern proslavery consensus impervious to Northern interference,” as Elizabeth Varon has shown.⁴⁷ The antislavery campaign petition at that time gave additional fuel to the fire, allowing Calhoun and others to “exaggerate the influence of the abolitionists” on the general populace in the North.⁴⁸ When “economic depression, population shifts, and political realignment threatened to reduce the South to minority status” even further, white southern writers and other defenders of the southern way of life became “anxious to rationalize their fall from preeminence, [and] sought and found an explanation and an enemy in northern society.”⁴⁹ Even though abolitionism was not the sole contributor to the “political rigidification” of the South, it was, perhaps, its noisiest cause.⁵⁰ Abolitionists insisted upon being heard,

whether or not their countrymen and women wanted to listen. “I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD,” William Lloyd Garrison memorably proclaimed in *The Liberator’s* first issue.⁵¹

Anti-slavery advocates like Garrison, David Walker, the Grimke sisters, and others, used their growing platforms to build “an understanding of slavery that [was] visual, physical, and sensory as well as intellectual.”⁵² Particularly potent were the aural renderings of the slaves, whose “cries of anguish” could be heard “thrilling through” the southern air.⁵³ Abolitionists writers frequently contrasted these “shrieks and lamentations” to the silence of white America.⁵⁴ “Every person who...does not raise his voice against this crying sin,” Nehemiah Caulkins proclaimed in his testimony for Theodore Weld’s *American Slavery as It Is*, “but by silence gives consent to its continuance, [and] is chargeable with guilt in the sight of God.”⁵⁵ For this reason, antislavery advocates urged southern elites in particular to “listen to the Christian remonstrances” and not “silence the voice of conscience.”⁵⁶ “Does not the voice of the slave vibrate on your ear, as it floats over the sultry plains of the South,” asked Sarah Grimke in her “Epistle to the Clergy of the Southern States.”⁵⁷

Antislavery writers still worried that the frequency in which slaveowners “heard the shrieks of slave” had made them too “hardened” to care or unwilling to listen.⁵⁸ Northerners who travelled south emphasized these selective hearing practices in their reports back to abolitionist organizations, noting, for instance, of how one plantation mistress confessed that she “very often stopped her ears that she might not hear the screams of slaves who were under the lash.” When that failed, she would “[retire] to a place more distant, in order to get away from their agonizing cries.”⁵⁹ Such portrayals certainly shifted how even moderate defenders of the institution of slavery understood the importance of controlling their sensescapes, aural and otherwise. When antislavery organizations sent thousands of pamphlets southward in the 1830s, President Andrew Jackson sought to silence their message, encouraging postmasters in 1835 to “take the names down” of all subscribers to the “inflammatory papers” of abolitionist organizations and expose them “thro the publik journals as subscribers to this wicked plan of exciting the negroes to insurrection and to massacre.”⁶⁰ A year later, the House of Representatives tried to quiet the growing

discord further, passing a resolution—afterwards known as the Gag Rule—to automatically table all slavery-related petitions.

Still, southern elites warned against the adverse impact abolitionist extremism might have on the landowning population. “Their speeches breathe a spirit, which if it were to become general, would soon bring to ruin the state in which we live,” a South Carolinian newspaper cautioned in 1827.⁶¹ If white southerners were unable to stem the tide of abolitionist tracts, as well as the missionaries who “go about like roaring lions, full of fury and fanaticism,” those with weaker temperaments might begin to falter in their allegiance to the South.⁶² These “timid men...whose ears have been long assailed with outcries of tyranny and oppression,” the *Southern Literary Journal and Magazine of Arts* complained in 1837, “begin to look fearfully around them.”⁶³ Indeed, the very identity of the South demanded a swift intervention, or so the editors of the *Southern Ladies’ Book* argued. Even though “all things that meet the senses in the ‘sunny South’ ... preach generosity,” they stated, abolitionist “fanaticism” had “created a monster” that “irritat[ed]” the South’s image.⁶⁴ What was needed, they claimed, was “the voice of a home-born literature.”⁶⁵ Unfortunately, such a literature was “almost unheard” in both the North and the South.⁶⁶

Elite southern magazines and newspapers sought to fill this void, as the growing titles of journals and literary magazines like the *Southern Review* (founded in 1828), *Southern Literary Gazette* (founded in 1828), *Southern Rosebud* (founded in 1833), *Southern Literary Messenger* (founded in 1834), *Southern Literary Journal and Magazine of Arts* (founded in 1837), *Southern Ladies’ Book* (founded in 1840), and *Magnolia; or, Southern Appalachian* (founded in 1842) suggest. These, and others like them, increasingly called for defenders of slavery and southerners in particular to lend their voice to the southern cause.⁶⁷ “Are we doomed forever to a kind of vassalage to our northern neighbors?” the *Southern Literary Messenger* asked in its inaugural issue.⁶⁸ Many of these publications “perished rather quickly” thanks in part to their dependence on northern fiscal backing.⁶⁹ The financial panic of 1837 further hampered southern efforts to print “books for the Southern people” when the market for longer fiction deflated.⁷⁰ But in 1852, after a forty-week serial run in *The National Era*, the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* rejuvenated this market.

Stowe's novel reinforced the aural soundscape defenders of slavery had come to fear. Although she drew her inspiration from "words and expressions really uttered," as her *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* later insisted, the impetus to write came from the antislavery debates that, by the late 1840s, had become increasingly hard not to hear.⁷¹ So much so that in 1850 Henry Clay would turn to the voice of a dead man to make his case for compromise. Presenting a piece of Washington's coffin recently gifted to him, Clay, a man known for his oratorical skill, reminded the gathered assembly that even though Washington could no longer speak on behalf of the nation—for his "earthly remains" "now repose in silence, in sleep, and speechless"—his symbolic voice could still be heard. "Was it portentous that it should have been thus presented to me?" Clay asked, holding up the relic, "No, sir, no. It was a warning voice, coming from the grave to the Congress now in Session, to beware, to pause, to reflect before they lend themselves to any purposes which shall destroy that Union."⁷²

When Congress eventually passed the Compromise of 1850, which included the newly revised and more restrictive Fugitive Slave Act, in September of that year, antislavery activists decried its passing, with some arguing for a more active resistance. As one Boston abolitionist put it, "We may as well disband at once, if our meetings and papers are all talk and we never do anything but talk."⁷³ "To me it is incredible, amazing, mournful!" Stowe would write of the newly passed law to her brother William in December of 1850, further wishing that their "father would come to Boston and preach on the Fugitive Slave Law, as he once preached on the slave-trade."⁷⁴ Almost a month later Stowe would begin work on her own sermon to answer what she claimed was her individual divine call. "It all came before me in visions, one after another, and I put them down in words," Stowe wrote a friend of *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* inception.⁷⁵

Proslavery Americans bemoaned the impact of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on the general populace. Stowe's hold of the American ear was, as one southern publication put it, a kind of wizardry. She had stolen "into our unsuspecting favor, mumble[d] her incantations before we recognize[d] them as the song of Canidia, and distil[ed] into our ears the venom of her tongue, before any apprehension [was] awakened."⁷⁶ Defenders of slavery, both North and South, "called for writers to answer Stowe in novel form,"

producing what would be later termed anti-Uncle Tom novels.⁷⁷ In a space of a few years, over thirty texts offered their reply, of which at least six found print in 1852 alone, including Mary Henderson Eastman's *Aunt Phillis's Cabin: Or, Southern Life as It Is*, Robert Criswell's '*Uncle Tom's Cabin' Contrasted with Buckingham Hall, the Planter's Home, Or, A Fair View of Both Sides of the Slavery Question*, Baynard Rush Hall's *Frank Freeman's Barber Shop*, Charles Jacobs Peterson's *The Cabin and Parlor; Or, Slaves and Masters*, Caroline Rush's *The North and South, Or, Slavery and Its Contrasts: A Tale of Real Life*, and William L. G. Smith's *Life at the South, or, 'Uncle Tom' as It Is*.⁷⁸ Others, like David Brown's *The Planter; Or, Thirteen Years in the South, by a Northern Man* (1853), Caroline Hentz's *The Planter's Northern Bride* (1854), and Maria McIntosh's *The Lofty and the Lowly; Or, Good in All, and None All Good* (1854), soon followed.⁷⁹

In their own way, each author sought to reclaim the southern soundscape that Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had unraveled. As Mary Eastman complained in *Aunt Phillis's Cabin*, considered the "most widely read of the proslavery responses to Stowe," *Uncle Tom's Cabin* included "no inviting sounds," only "hoarse, guttural voices," in its portrayal of plantation slave life.⁸⁰ All one needed to do was go to a real slave cabin and "hear the odd, but sweet and musical song that arrests the traveler as he goes on his way" or "listen to the ready jest which is ever on [the slave's] lips" to know the true South.⁸¹ If only northerners would spend "a few months in the South, with...eyes and ears open," David Brown similarly insisted in *The Planter*, they would soon hear and see the institution of slavery differently.⁸² The slaves' "songs and laughter" provide ample proof, he continued, of how "much greater amount of real pleasure very plainly fell to their lot."⁸³

Two of these works—William L. G. Smith's *Life at the South, or, 'Uncle Tom As It Is* and Caroline Lee Hentz's *The Planter's Northern Bride*—went out of their way to ensure that the southern soundscape resounded with evidence of the master's benevolence, even though neither author was from the South. Smith was born in Vermont in 1814 and educated as a lawyer at Middlebury College in the 1830s.⁸⁴ Later in life he served at the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai, publishing his observations on those experiences in 1863. His earlier foray into fiction, *Life at the South*, found print roughly three months after Stowe's

Uncle Tom's Cabin was published in book form. His response promised to depict “the condition of the Slave in his rude but comfortable cabin...showing that, in the case of the slave at least, contentment bestows more happiness than freedom,” according to a July 1852 advertisement.⁸⁵ *The Liberator's* November 5th, 1852 review of Smith's work, calling it the “first and most loudly heralded” reply to Stowe, found the novel to be in totally inept, writing “it contained not a single well-drawn character, not a single natural conversation” in its pages.⁸⁶ Still, the novel apparently appealed to a broader audience. It was rumored to have sold 15,000 copies in 15 days.⁸⁷

Like Smith, Caroline Lee Hentz was of northern birth. A Massachusetts native, she traveled extensively throughout the South, largely thanks to her husband Nicholas Marcellus, a Frenchman who relocated his family from Massachusetts to North Carolina and then to Kentucky, Ohio, and Alabama in the space of a few short years. While living in Cincinnati in 1832, Hentz encountered Stowe when they attended “the same literary society.”⁸⁸ Both women also “produced fiction prolifically to help support their families.”⁸⁹ Despite these similar experiences, their observations of southern plantation life were markedly different. Hentz, however, had not always spoken highly of the southern states. “I look in vain for Northern neatness and comfort,” she wrote of her initial journey south.⁹⁰ In Alabama, she proved particularly critical of the white planter class, finding the men to be “angry and ungentlemanlike” and the women “hardened.”⁹¹ But she was also clearly discomfited by the presence of slaves, objecting to the “swarm of greasy negroes filling the houses & streets” and professing her wish to be “far removed from...the children of Africa.”⁹² Despite these racially motivated misgivings, by the 1850s, Hentz had clearly built her literary career around plantation life and these “children of Africa.” Much of her early fiction—*Linda, or The Young Pilot of the Belle Creole* (1850), *Marcus Warland, or the Long Moss Spring* (1852), *Eoline, or Magnolia Vale* (1852), and, of course, *The Planter's Northern Bride*—extolled a “plantation luxuriance” that Hentz herself had never experienced, largely thanks to her husband's financial struggles.⁹³

In their replies to Stowe, Hentz and Smith certainly returned to a soundscape earlier literature of the plantation tradition had built. But unlike the often overtly white sonorities that marked this earlier fiction,

their plantation novels offered a more robust sounding of life in the south—one that sought to challenge in its depiction of slavery the aural imagery Stowe had so convincingly voiced in her *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Even though both *Life at the South* and *The Planter's Northern Bride* worked to disavow the period's conflicted sonorities regarding the issue of slavery, neither could do so without including the very abolitionist voices they wished to stifle, requiring a delicate tonal balance. For Smith, the answer was found in the sensory stereotypes whites had increasingly adopted to define racial difference. Hentz's response proved more complicated. With the country seemingly headed to Civil War, Hentz called on the oracular soundings of the black population for proof of slavery's inherent divinity; only in these prophetic revelations could the South hope to stop the "fires of insurrection" consuming their region (*PNB* 154).

"YOUR TALK DRIVES ME ALMOST MAD": THE AURALLY SENSITIVE SLAVE IN SMITH'S *LIFE AT THE SOUTH*

Smith sets *Life at the South* in the midst of the antislavery petition campaign, choosing 1839 as the starting date of his story. In the novel's opening chapter, the Virginian planter, Mr. Erskine, travels to Washington D.C. in order to better assess the potential "assaults" he, and his fellow slaveholders, might expect on their "political privileges" as a result of these antislavery efforts (*LS* 18). There, he hears the northern congressman Mr. Pettibone address the House on "whether a petition, praying for the passage of an act abolishing the traffic of slavery in the District of Columbia, should be respectfully received or thrown under the table" (*LS* 21). An abolitionist, Mr. Pettibone argues in favor of the former, using information gleaned from the *Emancipator*—the official newspaper of the American Anti-Slavery Society—and "other pamphlets" to make his point (*LS* 24). Although Erskine listens attentively to Mr. Pettibone speak, he can't help but find Pettibone's oratorical skills to be lacking, an observation he feels others in the room share: "he was surprised, that Mr. Pettibone's arguments or eloquence failed to enchain the attention of his fellow-members; and instead of an attractive, appeared to possess, so far as he could discover, a repelling influence," Smith writes; "For one seat after another was gradually become vacant, until...scarcely a quorum was in attendance" (*LS* 22).

More concerning, however, were the false charges, in Mr. Erskine's view at least, Mr. Pettibone brings against the South for its "evil tendencies" (LS 22). He decides to approach Mr. Pettibone "in a quiet and gentlemanly way" in order to "vindicate himself and neighbors from the false and ungenerous imputations...cast upon them" (LS 23). "It is very easy...to say" that slavery is a "curse to the country," he tells Mr. Pettibone, inviting him to come "into the interior of Old Virginy, and view the life of the lowly, as it is" (LS 27). Once there, Mr. Erskine promises that Mr. Pettibone will discover the true "unwritten pages" about slavery in the Old Dominion (LS 13). In this way, Smith's opening chapter takes to task what defenders of slavery had long decried about the abolitionist movement—its penchant for "graphical descriptions of slavery" (LS 21) in place of 'truer' representations of "Virginia hospitality" (LS 28). "The life and livelihood of the slave should be seen with the naked eyesight, and viewed as it is," Smith explains, "not confining the observation to extreme cases of happiness or misery" (LS 17). It is this lack of vision—"strained through the magnifying lenses of idle rumor and imaginative story"—that his *Life at the South* hopes to correct (LS 17). But unlike the northern abolitionists' "graphical descriptions" and failed eloquence, Smith intends to make his case as Mr. Erskine does, bringing "order out of chaos" in a "quiet and gentlemanly way" (LS 19).

Although Smith uses a variety of sensory impressions throughout *Life at the South*, sound remains a central focus, particularly in the novel's more explicit explorations of slavery "as it is." For when Erskine finally returns south, it is the sounds of the enslaved population that confirms his and, by extension, Smith's, views of southern slavery. During his visit to the plantation, Mr. Erskine's "kind word[s]" and compliments to the slaves laboring in his fields earn their admiration. "Pleased with his condescension and affability, they respected, if not loved him more than ever," Smith writes, "and, after he walked on, chatted his praise to each other" (LS 42). Bringing gifts to the slave quarters, Mr. Erskine is further met with their vocal approval: "the little tenements resounded with their thanks and merry laughter" (LS 43). The only blemish to this aurally pleasant scene occurs when he visits Uncle Tom—the "heirloom to the estate" and Smith's obvious nod to Stowe's own Uncle Tom (LS 33). There, Mr. Erskine notices an "unusual reserve in his demeanor" (LS 43). He learns later from the overseer that Tom's quiet

surliness was the result of a competitive game that had gone awry while he was in Washington. After losing a corn planting race, Tom gets in a funk and refuses to work. “The more he was urged to work, the more dilatory he became” (*LS* 40). Even Tom’s wife Dinah’s admonition to “dance” out his feelings—“Drive um out dar”—has no impact, for, as he tells his wife, he has “too much debbil in my feelings for dat” (*LS* 51). Performing the role of benevolent master, Mr. Erskine recommends first a physician visit to determine if “the disease was laziness,” telling his overseer “to apply the proper antidote at once” if that turns out to be the case (*LS* 44). When the physician’s report confirms that Tom has “feigned sickness” (*LS* 48), Mr. Erskine opts not to “ply the lash” (*LS* 44) but to “use other antidotes” instead (*LS* 48), choosing to place Tom in solitary confinement.

Mr. Erskine’s choice of punishment gestures toward the importance of aurality to plantation management practices more broadly. As Mark Smith has shown, slaveowners “went to great lengths to discipline plantation soundscapes by insisting on quietude and trying to delimit slaves’ sounds.”⁹⁴ As one slaveowner told his bondsperson, “I am master of your tongue as well as your time.”⁹⁵ Such aural control was expressed, however, in a variety of ways. Some plantation owners attached bells to their slaves in order to discourage them from running away.⁹⁶ Others turned to “aural deprivation and stimulation”—as Mr. Erskine does—to punish slaves deemed disobedient.⁹⁷ “I find it better to whip very little,” one slave owner remarked in an 1851 article on the “Management of Negroes” published in *De Bow’s Southern and Western Review*. Confinement, he argued, proved more effective. “Negroes are gregarious; they dread solitariness, and to be deprived from the little weekly dances and chit-chat,” he explained. For that reason, “they will work to death rather than be shut up.”⁹⁸

Mr. Erskine hopes for a similar result when he imposes the penalty of solitary confinement over the lash. He further heightens the potency of this sentence by choosing the night of a much-anticipated dance to enforce it. Mr. Erskine’s goal is not merely to make Tom reflect on the pleasures his sentence denies, but to ensure that Tom—shut up in an “old, tenantless log hovel” with only a small window open to the world (*LS* 58)—hears the dance from within his prison. As Smith writes, “Mr. Erskine...did not wish the sound of merriment from the grove wholly to escape the ears of the slave” (*LS* 59). The dance

begins with Jeff's fiddling a "soul-inspiring" music that sets everyone dancing to "its enlivening strains" (LS 53):

The company were as ready to dance as Jeff was to draw the bow...So engaged, finally, did they become in the frolic, that they were not content simply with dancing, but made the grove echo with the melody of their songs. Jeff caught the contagion, and commenced singing to a familiar air—

Millwood ladies sing dis song,
Du da, du da...

And when he had sung as far as this, the whole company joined in chorus, beating time with their feet:

Guine to run all night,
Guine to run all day... (LS 53-54)⁹⁹

At the conclusion of the song, Jeff's fellow musician Pompey, with banjo in hand, turns to a softer piece, a "ditty" about the "cruel Lucy Bell" who "ran away, / An' Pompey's heart was slain!" (LS 55). This "lub song" is cut short as the slaves demand to hear Jeff "draw dat ar' bow...and gib um glory!"—a request he happily obliges by "fiddl[ing] at the rate of ten knots an hour" (LS 56).

Smith's choice of music here is quite telling. The two songs that he identifies during the dance—"Camptown Races" and "Cruel Lucy Bell"—were both blackface minstrel fodder, as is the song "Lubly Rosa," which Smith features in a later "*scrub* race with the violin" (LS 161). While it is possible that Smith had heard "actual slaves...singing 'slave songs' produced by Northern blackface songwriters"—Brian Roberts explains, for instance, that blackface minstrelsy had "spread quickly into the South" by the 1850s—it is more likely that, to Smith's northern trained ears at least, blackface best captured the plantation Elysium southern slaveholders most wanted to hear.¹⁰⁰ White planters certainly sought to control the feelings of their slave population through music. To that purpose, what kind of music slaves performed, and when such music could be performed, was strictly regulated. As Francis Kemble reported of her time south, "I have heard that many of the masters and overseers on these plantations prohibit melancholy tunes or words, and encourage nothing but cheerful music and senseless words."¹⁰¹ The "peculiar musical sensibility" of slaves made "sadder strains" too risky, she explained, especially "any songs of a plaintive character, and having any reference to their particular hardships."¹⁰² In contrast, master-approved dances, like the one held in *Life at the South*, "reaffirmed to masters the realness of the slave as the 'happy singing subject.'"¹⁰³

In *Life in the South*, the “symphony” of sound the dance produces certainly quells any fears Mr. Erskine had over potential discontent in his slave quarters. His surveillance of the festivities merely increases their merriment as “the slaves appeared happier than ever” (*LS* 53). No longer “fearful that Uncle Tom’s disease would be contagious” (*LS* 44-45), Mr. Erskine rests easy that night, “lulled to sleep by the rapturous melody, as it sweetly and faintly fell upon his ears from the river-side” (*LS* 56). For Tom, however, the juxtaposition between his solitude and the sound of his fellow bondspeople as they “cracked their jokes, sung their songs, and frolicked with merry glee, until a late hour” almost turns him mad (*LS* 56): “his thoughts whirled wildly in his brain, and with more insanity than grief” (*LS* 59). Eventually, though, the “sweet strains of Jeff’s fiddle and Pompey’s banjo” call him back to “consciousness,” quieting his mood as he “listened with rapture” to their music (*LS* 59). It is through this music then, that Tom is ultimately “mastered,” so much so that, when he is finally “left to silent reflection” once the dance concludes, Tom willingly turns his thoughts to a past time when he had “contentedly...lived, basking in the smiles of his master” (*LS* 60). With tears trickling “freely down his cheeks,” Tom ends his night wishing “he was a better man” (*LS* 60-61).

Music’s capacity to regulate a listeners’ emotions, as it does for Tom, was widely acknowledged in the United States at the time Smith was writing. Music primers like Henry Moore’s *A Musical Catechism*, for instance, attested to music’s “powerful charms,” for under its influence even “the most discordant passions may be harmonized by it, and brought in to perfect unison.”¹⁰⁴ Prominent physicians like Benjamin Rush similarly extolled music’s healing power, writing of its ability to “defend” music’s practitioner “from those diseases to which climate and other causes expose him.”¹⁰⁵ For this reason, one writer for the *Southern Rose* explained, “the history of Music is very curious, not only in its power over the human mind, ... but also in the *medicinal* power attributed to the melody of sweet sounds.”¹⁰⁶ While all could certainly experience this “mysterious influence,” some individuals, particularly those of African heritage, were thought to be more susceptible to its charms by the very nature of their physiology.¹⁰⁷ “The negro’s hearing is better, his sight is stronger” than those of a white person,” Samuel Cartwright argued in his 1851 *Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race*, namely due to an “excess

of nervous matter” which also conveniently, for defenders of slavery, “rendered the people of Africa unable to take care of themselves.”¹⁰⁸

In this way, solitary confinement, or what was in fact a controlled form of enforced listening, seems to work, at least at first, as an effective mode of punishment in *Life at the South*. Tom’s discontent—the “disease” Mr. Erskine fears would be “contagious”—is alleviated by the aural “contagion” of the frolic, as it is “wafted by the gentle night-breeze from the grove...[to] his ear” (*LS* 59). In the morning, Tom greets the overseer “in a repentant mood,” “praying, from the bottom of his heart, to be released from imprisonment” and thankful for a master who “abundantly supplied...all the necessaries of life” (*LS* 66, 65). His transformation, however, is short lived. Soon falling again into his funk, Tom tells his friend Jeff, “my feeling hab come back again” (*LS* 68). In fact, Tom’s time in solitary confinement has further injured his already sensitive ears, or at least Smith’s narrative seems to imply. For it was not just Tom’s loss at the corn planting race that has led to his despondency, but rather the aural harangue he experienced afterwards. Tom “disliked to be a butt for ridicule and merriment,” Smith writes, and grew “very restive” under the “jokes and gibes” that followed his loss (*LS* 39). This “annoyance” was further exacerbated by the overseer, who—seeing Tom’s “drooping spirits”—“reproved him, again and again” (*LS* 39). “Instead of dealing gently,” Smith writes, “he used harsher language and a more authoritative tone of voice” (*LS* 39).

Having once been a favorite of the plantation, Tom takes his fall from grace, vocalized as it is in the overseer’s harsh tones, especially hard. Not even music can bring him right. In this way Smith suggests, albeit somewhat indirectly, that the vocal assaults Tom experiences injures him in an irreparable manner. Although plantation management guides encouraged the use of solitary confinement, they did warn against “abusive language.”¹⁰⁹ In *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes*, for instance, Philip Gibbes advised slaveowners to avoid “epithets of reproach and abuse, whether delivered with a stern countenance, and a loud voice, or in a peevish snarl of affected moderation.”¹¹⁰ Such vocalizations had a tendency to “degrade, deject, and sink the negroes to the grave,” he claimed.¹¹¹ An article “On the Management of Negroes,” published in *The Southern Agriculturist, and Register of Rural Affairs*, offered

similar advice, noting that “praise now and then, judiciously used, goes a great way in [slave] management.”¹¹²

In *Life at the South*, this aural vulnerability not only makes Tom susceptible to the “harsh” tones of the overseer, but also to the vocal influences of Mr. Bates, a northern teacher who travels south in search of employment but ends up convincing Tom to run away. Even though the northern Bates has “ulterior designs,” he is not an “ultra abolitionist” nor even particularly interested in the welfare of the slaves (*LS* 101).¹¹³ When tasked with educating the younger members of the plantation’s black population—“They have brains, and I am as much entitled to use them as I have the body,” Mr. Erskine informs him (*LS* 80)—Mr. Bates “did not relish the idea” (*LS* 80). His outlook, however, changes when Mr. Erskine’s daughter Mary repulses his advances. Her rejection drives Mr. Bates to encourage insurrection amongst the Erskine slaves—to “*rise together*” as a “*tell* against this evil institution of slavery” (*LS* 129).

Elite southerners and other defenders of slavery had warned against the negative influence abolitionist discourse might have on both free blacks living in the North and those enslaved in the South. David Brown, for instance, argued in *The Planter* that the abolitionist movement “crazes” the free people of color living in the North.¹¹⁴ “What they learn from antislavery lectures and sermons,” he warned, “makes them discontented with their degraded condition; and discontent makes them vicious and criminal.”¹¹⁵ The very presence of a northerner in *Life at the South* seems to have the same impact, if only on the already “crazed” Tom. “If you would listen to me, as a friend,” Mr. Bates tells him “in a tone almost of a whisper” (*LS* 122), “I should advise you to get out of his clutches as soon as possible” (*LS* 127). Even though Tom is not a ready listener, he struggles to articulate his reasons why—his words get “stuck in his throat” (*LS* 128). This symbolic silencing allows Bates to drive his point home: “I am glad that language fails you. I would not hear you speak, unless you can talk freedom,” he said tauntingly” (*LS* 128). Vocally rebuked, Tom finally acquiesces, telling Mr. Bates “I’m all ears” (*LS* 130). That night, they hatch a plan to make fugitives of Mr. Erskine’s most prominent slaves—Tom, Hector, Caesar, and Jeff—on the evening of the fourth of July.¹¹⁶

Mr. Bates' aural control proves limited however, thanks in part to an ill-timed "frolic" celebrating the nation's independence (*LS* 176). Gathering at the town's center to hear "the music of the fiddle and the banjo" (*LS* 177), Tom, along with his fellow bondspeople, calls for a song "fit for to-day...none of your common nigger songs" (*LS* 178). Mr. Bates, disguised as a "country-looking chap, poorly clad, ... stepped forward and volunteered his services" (*LS* 178). Although Caesar exclaims, "Dat's no nigger!" the crowd proves willing enough to listen. "If he can sing, let him do so," one participant yells back (*LS* 178). With a subsequent "murmur of approbation" from the crowd (*LS* 178), Mr. Bates, merely identified as "the songster" at this point in the novel, chooses a curious song to perform known as "Old Grimes' Son":

Old Grimes' boy lives in our town,
 A clever lad is he—
 He's long enough, if cut in half,
 To make two men like me.

He has a sort of waggish look,
 And cracks a harmless jest—
 His clothes are rather worse for wear,
 Except his Sunday's best.

[...]

When once oppress'd, he prov'd his blood
 Not covered with the yoke—
 But now he sports a freeman's cap,
 And when it rains, a cloak!

He's drooped beneath a southern sky,
 He's trod the northern snows—
 He's taller by a *foot* or more,
 When standing on his toes! (*LS* 178-179)

"Old Grimes' Son" was first published in the *Atkinson's Casket* in 1834. It built on the legacy Albert Gorton Greene first established in 1822 with the publication of "Old Grimes," a "lengthy comic catalog of social reputation and the distinctive clothing" of the elderly Grimes.¹¹⁷ Originally set to the tune "John Gilpin was a Citizen," Greene's poem was "frequently reprinted and anthologized throughout the nineteenth century" but had a prominent place in William Grimes' 1825 narrative, *Life of William Grimes, The Runaway Slave*.¹¹⁸ Grimes, a fugitive slave from Virginia, opted to use Greene's poem to establish his own kind of legacy, claiming in *Life* that the elderly gentleman spoofed in "Old Grimes" was

in fact his grandfather. “By 1834,” Sylvia Jenkins Cook explains, “Greene’s ‘Old Grimes’ and the living former slave William Grimes were both sufficiently recognized ... for a parody entitled ‘Old Grimes’ Son’ (about the former slave William) to be published in *Atkinson’s Casket*.”¹¹⁹

In *Life at the South*, “Old Grimes’ Son,” when sung by Mr. Bates, is clearly meant to encourage Erskine’s slaves to embrace, as William Grimes did, the fugitive life—to sport “a freeman’s cap.” But the song’s reference to Grimes’ “waggish look” and “clothes...rather worse for wear” also gestures toward Mr. Bates’ own disguise. While this reference can be read as the schoolteacher’s attempt to reverse the racial identity of Old Grimes’ son—who was historically a black man—it functions more in *Life at the South* as a kind of blackface performance, with Mr. Bates playing the role of fugitive. By volunteering to sing at the frolic at all, Mr. Bates is symbolically embodying a black identity, a kind of passing that Caesar calls out when he yells “Dat’s no nigger!” Interestingly it is Mr. Bates’ voice and not his appearance that unmasks the charade: “‘Hark’ee, Uncle Tom,’ said Caesar, ‘dat am de schoolmaster, by golly!’” (*LS* 180). In this way, Mr. Bates’ singing speaks to his attempt to pass as “friend” to the enslaved population while also gesturing toward the racial gymnastics he feels he must perform in order to do so. But this performance, although “loudly and rapturously encored,” turns out to be unpersuasive (*LS* 180). The gathered slaves may enjoy Mr. Bates’ singing, but they are not deceived by it. It is just a performance—a kind of tomfoolery worthy only of a laugh.

Mr. Bates tries similar aural tactics later in the novel, this time during a Sunday service. When the minister fails to arrive, Bates proposes that those gathered for service, a predominately black congregation, sing Isaac Watts’ “As Long as Life Its Term Extends.” Mr. Bates uses this “holy chant” to set the context for a sermon on “the escape of the chosen people of Israel from Egypt” (*LS* 253, 255). While the sermon was “emphatically enunciated by the reader” and created a “sensation” in its listeners, it fails to impress on the black audience any emancipatory thoughts. “It was talked of in the same spirit,” Smith writes, “as if the people had...attended a show” (*LS* 256). This failure, however, is not due to the religious sentiments of Mr. Bates’ listeners. Their singing of Watts’ anthem is so moving that it recalls “the melody of patriarchs and prophets...echoed back...in sacred grandeur” (*LS* 253).¹²⁰ Rather, it is Mr.

Bates' own religiosity that is suspect. His opening prayer is given in an "unfeeling voice" reflective of his want of religious inspiration (*LS* 253).

Even though Mr. Bates was "prone to religiousness," Smith writes, he was also "addicted to imaginary conceptions" (*LS* 184). After his failed attempt to "despoil the planters of their honestly-acquired property" on the fourth, Mr. Bates returns to his chambers and beseeches God to "'help make his paths straight'" (*LS* 183, 184). God seems to answer his prayer aurally:

He had no more than done this, when, as sweet a strain of music as ever broke upon mortal ear, filled the apartment with its enchanting melody. He tried to say Amen, but his senses were enraptured; and some influence emanating, as it seemed to him, from beyond the confines of earth, stayed the organ of speech in its office. (*LS* 184)

What follows is a revelatory vision of "wildest enthusiasm" depicting "the whole human family dwelling together in a state of unity and equality" (*LS* 184-185). That God could speak to the faithful was not an uncommon belief at the time Smith was writing. Evangelical protestants, particularly those following the doctrines of John Wesley, "defended the possibility of a direct or immediate experience of the Spirit of God."¹²¹ Spiritual hearing often authenticated this Christian experience, "legitimat[ing] the voices that the faithful heard."¹²² Bates' revelatory trance, however, proves to be as inauthentic as his performance of "Old Grimes' Son." The music he mistakenly hears as God's answer is merely the sound of Tom below his window, playing an accordion in hopes of waking his northern mentor.

Life at the South does not discount the possibility of divine communication, but relegates these listening powers to Tom's wife, Dinah. Caught in a dream where she was "buried up in de ground" Dinah claims that she was, like Mr. Bates, awoken by a heavenly sound. "I heard a noise—" she tells Tom and the schoolteacher, "such as the river makes when de waters pours over the falls, up by big bend." This sound of rushing water is followed by a "terrible sound—as if de whole sky was rent wid thunder," freeing Dinah from her grave (*LS* 238). What follows is a revelation that challenges Bates' own dream of equality. Ascending with her deceased daughter "high in de air," Dinah surveys all that is around her (*LS* 239):

"I looked in dis direction, and here was de ole cabin; but I could not see Tommy. I thought perhaps he was off in de North, an' so I cast my eyes 'way dar, but could see noffin but white

people. A person dat resembled one of de angels pictured in de Bible, inquired what I would find? I answered, by dear husband; and de angel remarked that the colored people dwelled in one country, an' de white in anoder. I instantly turned around; for I kno'd, mass'r, whar' de color'd people dwell'd, and I beheld Tommy an' Caesar dancing to Jeff's ole fiddle...I was so tickled at the antics which they cut up, dat I tried to burst out laughing." (LS 239-240)

Dinah's "manifestation" (LS 240) refutes Bates' own "heavenly sight" of equality (LS 185), giving weight instead to the southern racial hierarchy separating blacks from whites. Freedom, in Dinah's vision at least, is found not in the North where there is "noffin but white people" but at the "de ole cabin" where slaves spend their days in a musical frolic. Even though Mr. Bates interprets Dinah's vision as "nothing but a dream" (LS 240), Dinah insists she was "awake" and it was her "spirit," and not her body, that received the revelation (LS 239). *Life at the South* does not readily confirm the authenticity of what she heard and saw. But Smith does suggest that Dinah may be the better spiritual listener. Unlike Mr. Bates, whose false revelation exposes his own misguided morality (in Smith's estimation at least), Dinah, along with her husband Tom, were both "zealous members" of the Methodist Episcopal church (LS 48). All who knew them found them to be "sincere and constant believers in the faith" (LS 48). Dinah at very least can tell the difference between an authentic and false testimony. As she tells Tom after Mr. Bates' uninspired sermon, "He speaks that he can not know" (LS 259).

In a similar manner does Tom's own aural connection with the divine, expressed not in revelations but through sacred music, nearly undo the aural damage caused by Bates' talk of freedom. Inspired by a recent sermon, the pious Tom sings the hymn "There Is a Land of Pure Delight" with a "voice" that, "from sorrow, gave peculiar softness" to his singing (LS 200). This hymn by Isaac Watts leads Tom to question whether he could access this "land of pure delight" only in the North, asking the schoolteacher to "explain ... de difference between mounting to glory here, and in de state of freedom" (LS 200). This question almost silences Mr. Bates in a manner akin to the way their first conversation on freedom silenced Tom. Here, though, it is Mr. Bates who is struck dumb. Smith writes, "He attempted an answer, but it stuck in his throat" (LS 201). This passage highlights the potential power of black song to correct the perceived negative influence of abolitionists in the South. For it is Tom's "exquisitely pathetic" singing that almost makes Mr. Bates, moved to "tears," repent of his actions (LS 200). But when

Tom asks again for Mr. Bates' response—"enty you guine to speak nothin' to me," he asks (*LS* 201)—the schoolteacher regains his voice, stating "in such a tone of awful solemnity, that it fairly thrilled the heart of the slave," "Have you not heard, again and again, that the blasphemmer cannot enter the gate of heaven?" (201). With this proclamation, Tom's fate is sealed.

In the end, all but Tom prove resistant to Bates' aural manipulation. "Dar's no use of talking to dis nigger—ha! haw! haw! Fireproof to all your dirty artillery—ha! haw! haw!" Caesar tells Tom when he tries to convince him to run away (*LS* 170). Tom, however, remains vulnerable to this aural "artillery," so much so that the other slaves begin to suspect that he has been irreparably damaged by Bates' talk of freedom. "Dat disease will be the death of you" (*LS* 281), Caesar warns his friend, counseling Tom he must "talk nat'ral" (*LS* 282) and "git sensible agin" (*LS* 284). Even though Tom wants to listen—he tells Caesar, "I was always glad to hear you talk. My ears flop in your favor"—he finds himself unable to "hear...in the right spirit" (*LS* 285). Even Dinah's admonition to "go and hear Jeff fiddle" to "dance off 'the blues'" falls on deaf ears. "Dat am impossible! Yer music will do no good," he tells her, further remarking, "I would like to listen to de fiddle; but dat instrument now disconcerts my thoughts" (*LS* 290). No longer willing to be swayed by those around him—through their words or music—Tom stops his ears. "I am sick of de sound," he tells Dinah of her pleas to remain in his current position (*LS* 290).

When Tom finally makes his way north, he does so alone. There, he finds nothing but hardship and solitude. His first place of employment is in a run-down inn in a "retired little village" so devoid of people that it is reminiscent of his confinement in the hovel (*LS* 334). Here, though, the sounds of fiddle and banjo cannot reach him. Encouraged to try his luck in Buffalo, Tom moves further north, but continues to struggle, almost dying in a sensory disorientating snowstorm. "If this am mass'r Bates' Kanon," Tom ruminates, "give dis nigger ole Egypt, wid plenty o' corn and hoecake" (*LS* 402). Further seeking his fortunes in Canada, Tom hears that his former master is at Niagara Falls and heads there in hopes of seeing his wife Dinah. At Niagara, with the sound of "de waters [as it] pours over the falls" thundering in the background, Dinah's prophetic revelation comes true. Mr. Erskine offers to take Tom back to the plantation with a "kindness of manner" that undoes all past harm (*LS* 489). Even though Tom tells Mr.

Erskine “your talk drives me almost mad,” it is the kind of talk that cures Tom of his “diseased” desire for freedom (LS 490). “Now you do act like de real Uncle Tom,” Dinah exclaims when he confirms his willingness to return south (LS 492). “As for dis nigger,” Tom happily tells those around him, “he’s guine to ole Virginny” (LS 508). *Life at the South* thus concludes with the “merry laugh and lively talk” of slaves gathered to greet Tom on his return home (LS 516). Finally restored to “de ole cabin,” Tom enjoys “the sweet repose of a quiet conscience,” thanking God in a “simple but expressive prayer” for “his master, father, home” (LS 518).

Far from acoustically flat then, *Life at the South* crafts a southern soundscape designed to cure the listening practices of northerners whose ears had become “diseased,” like Tom’s, by talk of freedom. Anti-slavery advocates may have tarnished the image of southern hospitality with their “graphical descriptions of slavery” (LS 21), but “life at the South” would remain acoustically resilient, thanks in part to the “merry laugh and lively talk” of slaves. For bondage, as Smith’s *Life at the South* contends, was nothing but a never-ending musical frolic. “Gib me de rollicking life of de South!,” Dinah’s friend Philisee declares, for “when de work is ober for de day, we sing um, dance um, an’ laugh um, as happy an’ gay as the chirping birds of morning” (LS 208). If the period’s sensory stereotypes allowed Smith to discount, through the aural sensitives of Tom’s damaged ears and Dinah’s own divine listening, the enslaved population’s desire for freedom, then these very same sensitivities could also lead to the South’s downfall, or so Caroline Hentz would argue a few years later. Although like Smith, Hentz would seek to capitalize on black prophetic speech—appropriating black American aural spiritual traditions for the master’s use—*The Planter’s Northern Bride* would also caution that this very same religious proselytization could lead to the South’s destruction by muffling the early warning signals of insurrectionary violence.

“IT WON’T DO TO BELIEVE EVERYTHING WE HEAR”: LISTENING TO THE DEVINE IN *THE PLANTER’S NORTHERN BRIDE*

Caroline Hentz offered her own take on these acoustic tensions in 1854 with her novel *The Planter’s Northern Bride*. In its preface, Hentz asserted that she wanted to correct the “intolerant and fanatical

spirit” that had “tarnished” the South’s “*national* honor” (*PNB* 4). Even though Hentz imagined herself as an impartial advocate—“being a native of the North and a dweller of the South,” Hentz said she had “affections strongly clinging to both of the beautiful divisions”—*The Planter’s Northern Bride* clearly sought to strengthen bonds with her newly planted southern roots.¹²³ “Should no Northern heart respond to our earnest appeal,” she wrote, “we trust the voice of the South will answer to our own, not in a faint, cold, dying echo, but in a full, spontaneous strain” (*PNB* 10-11). Like other anti-Uncle Tom writers, Hentz protested the factionalism abolitionism in her view encouraged, using aural imagery to do so. “Those who speak and write bitter things of the South,” she declared in *The Planter’s Northern Bride*, “turn a deaf ear to the history of the master’s kindness, humanity, and benevolence” (*PNB* 237). “Can you sever the interests of the North and South,” she further asked, “without lifting a fratricidal hand?” (*PNB* 238).

Traveling in New England on business, Mr. Moreland first encounters evidence of this northern hostility when he stops in a “sweet country village,” the home of his future wife, Eulalia Hastings (*PNB* 14). His first impression of the town, however, is positive—thanks to an acoustic landscape rife with religiosity. Set apart from the bustling metropolis of Boston, Eula’s northern village is nestled in a “valley so serene and quiet, that it seemed as if Nature enjoyed in its shades the repose of an eternal Sabbath” (*PNB* 14), offering Moreland a kind of peace and quiet he finds particularly soothing. Only the church bells that “reverberated and vibrated” through the evening hours interrupts the “deep tranquility” of the town (*PNB* 19, 18). This stillness, sanctified by the church’s “majestic” sounds (*PNB* 19), speaks to Moreland of “a far-off world.” Later, called to a Sunday service by these “deep toned” bells (*PNB* 33), Moreland encounters Eulalia, a “sweet-voiced maiden” who “sings like an angel” (*PNB* 39). Like her country village, Eula’s first impression on Moreland comes to him initially through sound. “His ear was gratified before his eye,” Hentz writes (*PNB* 34).

Part of the “vestal choir,” Eula helps open the service with the anthem “Before Jehovah’s Awful Thorne” (*PNB* 34). Even though Moreland was eager to “see the figures...as well as hear their mingling voices,” the “invisible band” of choristers remain sequestered behind the gallery’s curtains for this

opening hymn (*PNB* 34). Though unseen, Eula still stands out. “Among the voices,” Hentz writes, “was one which, though sweet and soft and feminine beyond expression, seemed to drown every other. It rose like the imagined hymn of an angel, clear and swelling” (*PNB* 34). Moreland, listening “with breathless rapture” (*PNB* 35), is immediately “charmed” (*PNB* 36). Indeed, so powerful is Eulalia’s seemingly God-given “seraph voice” (*PNB* 44) that it extends a “dark magnetism” over the southern planter, exerting a “sudden, powerful attraction” of which he finds he cannot shake free (*PNB* 37).

In this way, Hentz’s opening chapters cloak both the New England landscape and its people in a sanctified aurality, presenting the North as a place of repose peopled by the faithful. Soon, however, Moreland discovers that this “quiet resting spot” (*PNB* 48) was in fact “the very hot-bed of fanaticism” (*PNB* 22-23) and that Eula’s father, far from being receptive to the possibility of a southern son-in-law, “edits a paper called the ‘Emancipator’” (*PNB* 39). In a public tavern full of “eager listeners,” Moreland is forced to defend his southern practices by Mr. Hastings (*PNB* 82). This debate echoes the heated conversation Mr. Pettibone and Mr. Erskine have in *Life at the South*, but on a more public stage. Accused of ignoring the daily “cries of anguish” that resulted from the practice of southern slavery (*PNB* 83), Moreland answers Hastings’ vocal assault in measured tones, asking those gathered to “lay aside all belligerent weapons, and cultivate that friendly communion which no sectional interest should disturb or destroy” (*PNB* 87). We should be “co-labourers,” he tells his white audience, “instead of antagonists” (*PNB* 86).

Like Mr. Pettibone, Mr. Hastings lacks the eloquence required to make a compelling case. His “voice often shivered and broke” and became “thick and incoherent in the vehemence of argument” (*PNB* 87). Antebellum listeners, both North and South, certainly “recognized the power of oratory” in defining “what society and culture should be like.”¹²⁴ Eighteenth-century philologists and elocutionists had argued that “real meaning lay in the speaker’s feelings and intentions and not in the words themselves,” making a speaker’s “sounds, tones, and facial expressions” paramount to his persuasiveness.¹²⁵ Writers in the early decades of the nineteenth century similarly asserted that one could aurally track a speaker’s “purified and exalted heart” by his eloquence.¹²⁶ For this reason, as Henry Philip Tappan would claim in *An Essay on*

the Expression of Passion in Oratory (1848), “Oratory is not an accomplishment of the schoolboy, but the attribute of a ripened and godlike mind.”¹²⁷ Mr. Hastings’ “thick and incoherent” voice thus speaks to the former’s “blind fanaticism” when it comes to the topic of slavery (*PNB* 87, 124). Outside the tavern’s debate—when, for instance, Mr. Hastings joins his family in sacred singing—his voice, Hentz writes, was very “fine” indeed (*PNB* 69). But on a public stage, his “bitter” words reveal a heart misled by its abolitionist fervor.

Moreland, in contrast, “had an exceedingly clear, sweet, and finely modulated voice,” which “swelling like a well-tuned melodious instrument, charmed the ear, while it riveted the attention” (*PNB* 87). Hentz’s emphasis here on Moreland’s musicality of voice, an echo of Eula’s earlier “seraph voice” which also “charmed” the “ear” (*PNB* 36), is designed to further reveal his authenticity of thought. Writers in the period argued that musical tones, especially when linked to the “pure and simple tones” of the voice, expressed a “heavenly” connection.¹²⁸ “There is no instrument comparable to the God-tuned human voice,” Hentz herself would write in *The Planter’s Northern Bride*, of Eula’s singing (*PNB* 306). For such tones were the “natural language” of “religious sentiment,” as prominent music enthusiasts similarly argued in the antebellum era century.¹²⁹ In fact, some proponents even maintained that music could *only* express the godly if properly exercised: “it cannot narrow or cloak the message which it bears; it cannot lie; it cannot raise questions in the mind, or excite any other than a pure enthusiasm,” the prominent music critic and Transcendentalist John Sullivan Dwight asserted in 1849.¹³⁰ For this reason, music was both “religious and prophetic,” offering “angelic wisdom” to those who cared to listen.¹³¹

Moreland’s “thrilling accents” certainly testify to his “God-tuned” mind (as Hentz depicts it)—so much so that his listeners “began to think there could be two sides to a question” (*PNB* 87). In this way, *The Planter’s Northern Bride* tempers abolitionism’s too-often persuasive “eloquence,” but only when uttered on a public stage (*PNB* 15). Later in the novel Hentz offers a different take in her portrayal of the quiet insinuations of the abolitionists Mr. and Mrs. Softly. Moreland’s sister, Ildegerte, and her ailing husband, Richard, encounter the Softlys when they travel to Cincinnati, “the resort of runaway negroes,” for Richard’s health (*PNB* 253). There, the Softlys convince Ildegerte’s personal slave, the once-devoted

Crissy, to run away. Hentz suggests that it is the Softly's "soft" way and manner of speaking that allows them to "bewitch" Crissy from her mistress (*PNB* 291). "Mrs. Softly had the softest voice in the world, and the softest step," she writes, "leaving no echo of her footfalls, giving no warning of her approach" (*PNB* 268-9). By working outside of the slave owner's hearing, the Softlys persuade Crissy to leave Ildegerte on the night of Richard's death. When her "imploring cry for Crissy" goes unanswered, Ildegerte suspects they are the cause of her servant's desertion (*PNB* 287). In a grief-stricken "delirium," she curses the Softlys for their actions: "'You, you have done me this foul wrong!' she cried; 'and may God avenge me in his own good time!'" (*PNB* 288).

Ildegerte's invocation of a higher power—a "religious and prophetic" voicing—ultimately calls for a punishment that she, as a newly widowed woman, could not herself enact. In enlisting God's aid, Ildegerte formulates a curse that transforms her into a kind of oracle heralding the Softlys' doom.¹³² A confirmed Presbyterian, thanks to her participation in "a revival of tremendous power," Hentz would have given weight to such performative speech acts.¹³³ Her husband, Nicholas, often "engaged in ejaculatory prayer in public," dropping to one knee "in devotion."¹³⁴ Hentz herself praised God for helping her tune her heart's "discordant sounds" to a "greater harmony," as she wrote nearly a year after her conversion.¹³⁵ Although Hentz worried her dreams sometimes "assume[d] the form of avenging spirits," her attendance at church often alleviated her "hypochondriac fits," calling forth memories of her "native valley" and "dear mother's voice" singing "that fervent hymn of mourning praise. 'How pleased and best was I / To hear the people cry / Come let us seek our Lord today,'" as she wrote in February of 1836.¹³⁶

Even though such spiritual soundings elevated the intensity of Hentz's religious belief, they also made her ambivalent to their power, particularly in their use to both aid and suppress antislavery violence. For unlike Smith's *Life at the South*, which only hints at the possibility of a slave uprising, *The Planter's Northern Bride* fully embraces the potential for antislavery speech to instigate rebellion—particularly when it is cloaked in the "godlike mind" of the reverend Mr. Brainard, a northern missionary who hopes to make himself "most useful by preaching to those who have become civilized and partly Christianized by slavery" (*PNB* 407). Unlike Mr. Bates, Brainard does not immediately receive a ready welcome in the

South—a change perhaps reflective of the years intervening *Life at the South's* and *The Planter's Northern Bride's* respective publications. Rather, Mr. Moreland openly admits to Brainard the caution he and other planters must exercise to protect “our institutions” from the “agents of fanaticism” who “in the name of the living God [are] endeavoring to destroy our liberties and rights” (*PNB* 407). But Brainard assures Moreland he is innocent of these charges. “All my desire,” he tells him, “is to preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” further noting he felt called to do so: “I think God anointed me with his Holy Spirit for that one purpose” (*PNB* 408).

Brainard's speech, uttered in a “low musical voice” that “dropped with silver cadence on the ear of night” (*PNB* 408), wins Moreland over, who promises to help him “find a cordial greeting” amongst the “most influential religious persons in the city” (*PNB* 409). Like Moreland's “clear, sweet, and finely modulated voice” and Eula's “low, sweet voice” (*PNB* 125), Brainard's vocal quality seems to attest to his religious authority, variously described as “very sweet-toned” (*PNB* 401), “meek” (*PNB* 409) “low, clear, and sweet” (*PNB* 414), “soothing” (415), and “a voice of plaintive melody” (*PNB* 446). The northern missionary's religious profession further accentuates his connection to the divine. “He has flights of eloquence that bear the soul up to heaven itself,” Moreland states of Brainard's oratorical power (*PNB* 442). But Brainard is a “wolf in sheep-skin,” as Crissy suspects, having already been duped once by the “soft” words of abolitionists (*PNB* 411). Born into poverty and imprisoned for theft at a young age, Brainard had committed his life to “deceiving and mocking the judgment of those who had known him as a transgressing boy”—a profession he proves particularly successful at thanks in large part to a “voice of rare and winning power” (*PNB* 459).

In the South, Brainard excels at manipulating his voice to “cloak the message,” transforming that which should be “religious and prophetic,” as Hentz depicts it, into insurrectionary fodder. He dupes the ears of the white overseer who hears only “*religion*”—the “cloak that mantled all”—in Brainard's “resistless influence” (*PNB* 455). The “many white men” who come to hear him preach similarly suspect nothing, leaving his church service “deeply impressed in the eloquence of the preacher” (*PNB* 415, 416). Even Moreland, who attends Brainard's first sermon, struggles to make sense of what he hears (*PNB*

413). “At one moment he was strongly attracted,” Hentz writes, “at another as strongly repelled. Sometimes he thought him one of those holy, self-sacrificing beings, who... shouted amid the agonies of martyrdom. Then, again, he imagined there was something sinister and insidious about him” (*PNB* 413-414). Although educated to hear differently—trained to listen for the sounds of slave uprising and the “undermining influences” of the North’s “agents of fanaticism” (*PNB* 407)—the white population in *The Planter’s Northern Bride* remain deaf to all but what this “wildly splendid orator” wants them to hear (*PNB* 415). They are “borne along,” as Moreland is, “upon the fiery waves of his eloquence” (*PNB* 415). “Surely it was the inspiration of religion!” Hentz coyly declares (*PNB* 415).

Brainard’s “God-tuned” voice in short allows him to pass as a friend of the southerner. But his vocal power takes on a much more dangerous resonance with a slave population who are, as Hentz describes them, “peculiarly susceptible” to the aural influences of “religious impressions” (*PNB* 416). The “religious proselytization” of enslaved people of color, although heavily debated in the eighteenth century, had “helped inaugurate a new slave subjectivity” in the antebellum era that allowed abolitionists to recognize “slaves as injured but retrievable social subjects,” as Jon Cruz and others have argued.¹³⁷ Hentz does not deny the “premise that slaves, like their masters, had souls,” but, like other apologists for slavery, believed that slavery “was meant to coexist with the Christianization of slaves.”¹³⁸ Her portrayal in *The Planter’s Northern Bride* of black religious practices—most notably its noise—worked, however, to accentuate the difference between a white and black religiosity.¹³⁹ As Moreland states of his bondsperson and those from the neighboring plantations, “They all expect to go to heaven with shouts of glory and songs of victory, or never reach there at all. There is no silent path for them” (*PNB* 409).

Silence reigns, however, on the day Brainard steps into the “fine church, belonging exclusively to the Africans” for his first sermon (*PNB* 409). There, the congregation—a “reverential, waiting, listening throng”—had gathered “to witness the ‘stately steppings’ of God’s mighty spirit” (*PNB* 413). This silence is quickly broken by Brainard’s “eloquence,” transforming the “meek, humble traveler” into a powerful orator, thrilling all who hear him, both black and white (*PNB* 415):

He commenced in a low, clear, and sweet voice, and in a calm, dispassionate manner...He told them that he was a stranger, come among them to do them good,---...all he wanted was the willing spirit, the listening ear, and the believing heart....Then gradually he kindled into deeper fervor, and made those startling appeals to the imagination which the negro never hears unmoved....His eyes flashed like the lightnings of heaven; his voice deepened into its thunders. (*PNB* 414-415)

Brainard's Methodist evangelicalism inspires a revivalist fervor in his listeners. The black congregation initially responds with "a faint groaning sound" that grew to a "shout" quickly followed by "shriek[s]" of "Glory! Glory!" till the walls resounded with the hosannas" (*PNB* 415). Subsequent sermons, "preached...under the canopy of heaven" thanks to Brainard's growing popularity (*PNB* 416), are equally deafening, filled with "the wildest excitement and confusion" (*PNB* 448). "Groans mingled with shouts, and sobs with loud hosannas," as his congregation "took in every word with breathless attention" (*PNB* 448).

Recalling the "dark magnetism" that draws Moreland to Eula, Brainard exerts such an influence on his listeners that they seem "magnetised" by him (*PNB* 448). The plantation's "negro preacher," Uncle Paul in particular begins to mirror Brainard's movements: "Every time Brainard waved his arm in the energy of speaking, Uncle Paul waved his in response. If he bowed his head to give emphasis to his words, Uncle Paul would bow his likewise" (*PNB* 448). "I never hearn afore Africa such a great country," Paul tells the northern missionary afterwards, adding that his sermon left a "tingling in my ears as if someting had stung 'em" (*PNB* 450). Like Smith's Dinah and Tom then, the ears of Hentz's black population prove particularly open to Brainard's religious influences. But, whereas in *Life at the South* Dinah's black spiritual hearing at least saves her from northern "aggressions," those enslaved in *The Planter's Northern Bride* are seemingly unable to distinguish between a true and false prophetic voice, hearing only the divine in Brainard's sermon. "The negroes listened, and thought an angel was before them, sent by the Almighty for the ransom of their souls" (*PNB* 445-446). They are, in short, all Uncle Toms (of the Smith variety).

In this way, *The Planter's Northern Bride* uses religious sound to further disenfranchise its "susceptible and believing Africans" (*PNB* 412). Once out of Moreland's hearing, Brainard makes his agenda clear, explain to those gathered that slavery was a "robbery of your dearest, most sacred rights"

(*PNB* 451). “Instead of slaves,” he tells them, “you can be men” (*PNB* 451). Although Brainard’s sermons provide the framework for the power he holds over his listeners, it is his invocation of an oath—sworn on the Bible—that confirms his dominance. Brainard begins with Uncle Paul on the night Paul felt his ears “tingling.” Determined “to stir up the quiet pool of contentment in the negro’s mind,” Brainard “talked till the midnight stars flashed” while Paul “listened, like one awaking from a dream” (*PNB* 452). In a bid to silence the black preacher—ensuring his complicity in Brainard’s insurrectionary plans while also removing his vocal agency—Brainard tells Paul to “Swear, then, over this sacred volume, never to speak of what I have this night revealed to you, without my permission... Swear that death itself shall not wrest from you the secret of his hour” (*PNB* 453). This oath, in Hentz’s construction of it, essentially transfers Moreland’s ownership of Paul over to Brainard: Paul, “bewildered and awestruck, ...mechanically obeyed the bidding of the master-will, acting upon him with such iron force” (*PNB* 453). Even though, like Tom, Paul wavers in his design, each time he hears Brainard speak he comes “again under the magnetic influence” of the white minister (*PNB* 454). Once successful with the preacher, Brainard extends his influence out from Paul—later called “the voice of [his] brethren” (*PNB* 501)—to the other slaves until “the elements of insurrection began to roar, in sullen murmurs” (*PNB* 455).

Under Brainard’s vocal control, the South’s soundscape changes. “There was sullenness and gloom,” Hentz writes, “where, formerly, cheerfulness and good-humour enlivened the labours of the field; and the merry laugh, the spontaneous song no longer were heard in the evening twilight” (*PNB* 455). Although both Moreland and Eula recognize Mr. Brainard’s arrival as the “source of disquietude” on their plantation, they cannot exactly define why (*PNB* 420). “What is the silent, invisible influence he is exerting, that is so fatal to my peace?” Eula asks (*PNB* 438). By thus muffling the early warning signals of insurrectionary violence, Brainard’s proselytization of Moreland’s slaves almost leads to the white plantation owners’ death. It is only thanks to an act of overhearing—of a southerner’s own auditory duplicity—that the insurrection is averted. In a scene mirroring Moreland’s first acoustic “glimpse” of Eula, Mrs. Wood, the jailer’s wife, eavesdrops on a conversation between two imprisoned slaves, Jerry and Jack, about the plot to “[kill and burn] folks in the dark” (*PNB* 484). Even though both Jerry and Jack

are sentenced to “solitary confinement” (*PNB* 482), the “thin” partition that separates them, with “many a chink and crevice,” allows “voices” to “easily penetrate the barrier” (*PNB* 481). “Thus the prisoners, though nominally divided,” Hentz writes, “could hold occasional intercourse with each other, when they believed themselves safe from vigilant and listening ears” (*PNB* 481). Mrs. Wood, “startled by the sound of voices,” engages in this act of clandestine listening (*PNB* 482). “Stepping to the door on tiptoe, she put her ear to the key-hole, and held her breath to listen” (*PNB* 482). In this manner, she uncovers Brainard’s insurrectionary plot—the details of which she flushes out by threatening to “swing” both slaves “from the scaffold into flames hotter than your Christmas bonfires” (*PNB* 487).

Just as it is the slaves’ new-found voices that give them away in a particularly cruel twist, so too does the prophetic voice of one their own—the “prophetess” Dilsy (*PNB* 499)—ultimately reinstate the southern master’s control over them. For when Moreland hears of his slave’s insurrectionary plot, he goes to the plantation with his family and summons the slaves with “a long, winding blast of the bugle-horn” (*PNB* 498). Once gathered, he leads them to the “grave of the old prophetess” (*PNB* 499). Dilsy “had been favoured with marvellous revelations from the other world, and thus acquired the influence of a prophetess among here people,” Hentz explains (*PNB* 232). “Sanctified” by her “holy fastings and prayers,” her “exhortations were received as the oracles of truth and wisdom” by her fellow bondspeople (*PNB* 347). Moreland and Eula visit the prophetess on the night she dies. From her cabin they “heard low, monotonous, ejaculatory sounds” with the “accents of prayer” (*PNB* 348). This soundscape, reminiscent of the revivalist fervor Brainard inspires in its “loud sobs” and a “shout of ‘glory’” that is repeated by “several voices...till the hosannas seemed too swelling for that little cabin” (*PNB* 351), ultimately frames the pledge that cements Moreland’s position as master, voiced through Dilsy’s final words.

“If we’d all staid in de heathn land, where all de black folks come from,” Dilsy tells those gathered to attend her passing, “we’d neber known noting ‘bout heben, noting ‘bout de hebenly ‘deemer” (*PNB* 351). Then asking Eula to “sing one of de songs of Zion” (*PNB* 351), she dies listening to the “low and soft” notes of the Wesley hymn, “Jesus! Lover of My Soul” (*PNB* 351, 352). At her grave, Moreland recalls

Dilsy's last words and constructs a "new covenant" from them, binding the gathered slaves to him through her sacralized utterances:

"You heard...her dying blessing upon your master. You heard what she said she would repeat before God and his angels. Do you believe her words were true? ... Then," said Moreland, "let us make a new covenant together, and let this grave be a witness between us all, that we do it in sincerity and truth. I call upon you all to renew your promises of fidelity and obedience. I pledge myself anew to watch over your best interest for time and eternity." (*PNB* 354-56)

He then calls on Paul to "consecrate this burial spot by the breath of prayer" (*PNB* 356).

It is to this grave that Moreland gathers his rebelling slaves, to a place they had avoided for fear that the "spirits of the dead" would "shriek in their ear some unearthly denunciation" (*PNB* 499). Once there, with a "voice deepening into sternness," Moreland denounces those gathered for "listening to a traitor and villain" (*PNB* 500). Even though he offers a religious argument to counter Brainard's portrayals of freedom—"You and I are as God Almighty made us" (*PNB* 502)—his authority largely derives from the covenant sanctified by Dilsy's dying breath and his own remembrance of his dying mother. "More than two years have passed," Moreland tells them, "since I stood on this spot, on which the grave-clods had just been thrown...At that hour, I renewed the vows of protection and kindness to you which I uttered, when a boy, in the ear of a dying mother" (*PNB* 500).¹⁴⁰ Reminding them of their own promise "to continue faithful, trustworthy, and obedient," Moreland undermines the oath Brainard had established with his bondspeople with a covenant made more powerful for its connection to the prophetic soundings of one of their own (*PNB* 500). All but one slave, the blacksmith Vulcan, agrees to "submit to [the master's] authority" (*PNB* 506).

In this way, *The Planter's Northern Bride* capitalizes on black prophetic speech—appropriating the aural spiritual traditions of black Americans for the master's use. The novel ends, however, in the North with a warning for those who listen too carefully to abolitionist discourse. In Eula's hometown, the escaped Brainard with Vulcan in tow delivers an antislavery lecture designed to "curdle the blood with horror" (*PNB* 526). Listening to his descriptions of "the shrieks of womanhood, the cries of infancy, and the lamentations of age," the white audience in attendance become "painfully excited" (*PNB* 560), mimicking the sounds of Brainard's earlier black congregation in their "groans and faint shrieks" (*PNB*

561). But again, black voices disrupt his power. Albert, once again visiting in the North with Moreland, breaks through the crowd and denounces the words of the “hideous speaker”: “I’ll call you a story-teller and a rogue,” he cries, “I’d a heap rather be killed, than stand still and hear the best master that ever lived made out a monster of a brute” (*PNB* 562). Alone, Albert’s voice carries little weight. But when Vulcan, commanded by Moreland to “speak!”, finally admits the “truth,” Brainard is apprehended amidst “hootings and hissings of scorn” (*PNB* 564). “I begin to think we have been a *little* too hard on the Southern people,” the tavern-owner, Mr. Grimby, admits; “It won’t do to believe everything we hear” (*PNB* 572).

“...THE GOLDEN LINK OF UNION”

Like the literary plantation tradition that came before them, both *Life at the South* and *The Planter’s Northern Bride* ultimately expressed the hope that white Americans at odds over the practice of slavery could reconcile. To do so, however, required militant ears tuned in to the “master’s kindness” and hard of hearing when it came to the slave’s pleas (*PNB* 237). While both novels champion the possibility that white southern voices could counter antislavery appeals, neither *Life at the South* nor *The Planter’s Northern Bride* suggest that these voices—most often masculine in their public voicing—can do so alone. Certainly, Mr. Erskine’s kind words and Moreland’s “finely modulated voice” do much to correct the “fanatical spirit” of abolitionist discourse (*PNB* 4). But it is the black Dinah and Dilsy, and especially the white Eula, who prove to possess the oratorical and listening faculties needed to give them undisputed power. These women gain their control, although in varied ways, through their connection to the divine. Although Hentz places a lot of weight on the “marvellous revelations” of Dilsy, her white Eulalia figures as an almost divine mediator between the North and South. She sings with a purity of voice that seems to materialize the divine. In listening to her at church, Moreland “kept looking up, almost expecting to see [her notes] forming into something visible, as well as audible” (*PNB* 35). Her repeat performance at the end of the novel, of the “sublime hymn” “Before Jehovah’s Awful Throne,” further moves the audience “to tears” with its “angelic sweetness and power” (*PNB* 550). This final performance, as Hentz writes, seems to offer the promise of a future filled with perfect “harmony...between two regions which God has

so greatly glorified” (*PNB* 551). In this way, Eulalia fulfills what was at the novel’s start the “prophetic words” spoken by her church’s minister (*PNB* 136). Commenting on her future marriage to Moreland, he states, “you will be the golden link of union between the divided interests of humanity” (*PNB* 136).

In this way, *The Planter’s Northern Bride* seems to cast the voice of white womanhood as the saving grace amid the “groans and shrieks” of the North’s abolitionist spirit (*PNB* 561). Hentz, writing in both the plantation and domestic tradition, would have found reason to champion the voice of women. Although most literature in the plantation tradition supported “the economic interests of a white patriarchal culture,” “male and female writers had different ideas concerning how best to achieve that end.”¹⁴¹ Female domestic novelists like Hentz argued that “the economic and political circumstances of the contemporary South demanded heroic efforts on the part of its daughters.”¹⁴² Hentz herself would come to be viewed as this champion of the South, thanks in large part to the success of *The Planter’s Northern Bride*. In *Songs and Poems of the South* (1857), Alexander Meek, editor of the literary monthly magazine *The Southron* (founded in 1839) and a prominent southern poet, eulogized Hentz in his “Bird of the South.” Subtitled “An Allegory: for Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz,” “Bird of the South” claims Hentz’s “wild minstrelsy” as uniquely southern.¹⁴³ “Bird of my-own-land!” he rhapsodies, “Pour forth thy wild numbers, / And gladden the sky with its sabbath again!”¹⁴⁴

To Meek’s ears it may have been Hentz’s song that “rose in the air like the hymn of an angel” in its defense of the South. In *The Planter’s Northern Bride* that song belongs to Eulalia. Moreland’s “powerful and instantaneous” attraction to Eulalia’s voice ultimately convinces him to challenge Hastings’ abolitionist views—eventually silencing, by the novel’s end, New England’s symbolic “fanatical” voice (*PNB* 70). Eulalia further aids in her husband’s efforts, convincing her family of the South’s misrepresentation in her letters home. Though these actions do much to forward the proslavery beliefs of the South, it is Eula’s song of “Jesus! Lover of My Soul,” sung with Dilsy’s “gasping breath” in the background (*PNB* 352), that most clearly reveals Hentz’s aural vision. That Dilsy, in a cabin full of people of color who love and cherish her, would turn to the little-known white Eula to sing her final benediction is telling. It speaks to Hentz’s final valuation of the need for both the voices of both black and

white women to evoke reconciliation. Although she gives decided preference to the white voice of Eulalia, *The Planter's Northern Bride* does suggest that it is only when Eula's "sweet and soft and feminine" voice finds its accompaniment in the "marvellous...exhortations" of Dilsy that the covenant between master and slave could be blessed. Only with such a blessing could the nation's "struggling soul," like Dilsy's own, hope to "rent its passage to eternity" (PNB 352).

This vision of black and white voices intermingling would find an unusual resonance in Harriet Beecher Stowe's forthcoming novel, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). Stowe would return to this sacralized mix in her own dismal tale, highlighting the revolutionary possibilities of sound in shaping white representations of black agency in the South. In the next chapter, I argue that black sound and music become sites of resistance in Stowe's handling, a potent challenge to a slave system that limited the rights of African Americans. While Stowe may reject the insurrectionary potential of Dred's prophetic utterances, as we shall see, Stowe does locate another aurally subversive tradition in the singing of the white Nina and the black Tiff and Millie: an acoustic tradition perhaps better suited to her interest in "feeling right" about slavery, but no less influential in its divinely ordained power.

¹ J.R. Barrick, "The South," *Southern Ladies' Book* 1.4 (February 1853) in *Southern Ladies' Book. Volume I; From November, 1852, to May, 1853*, ed. L. Virginia Smith and Wm. T. Leonard (New Orleans: Daily True Delta Office, 1852-1853), 193, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

² Fredrika Bremer, *Homes of the New World; Impressions of America*, vol. 1, trans. Mary Howitt (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853), iii, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>

³ Bremer, *Homes*, 17.

⁴ Bremer, *Homes*, 12, 52.

⁵ Bremer, *Homes*, 126, 133.

⁶ Bremer, *Homes*, 238.

⁷ Bremer, *Homes*, 260, 266.

⁸ Bremer, *Homes*, 264.

⁹ Bremer, *Homes*, 265.

¹⁰ Bremer, *Homes*, 268.

¹¹ Bremer, *Homes*, 268.

¹² Daniela Hacke and Paul Musselwhite, "Introduction: Making Sense of Colonial Encounters and New Worlds," *Empire of the Senses: Sensory Practices of Colonialism in Early America*, ed. Musselwhite and Hacke (Brill: Boston, 2018), 4. See also Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992); Peter Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Mark M. Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) and *How Race is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

¹³ Bremer, *Homes*, 266.

¹⁴ Bremer considered herself a “moderate” abolitionist, having found the “ultras” like William Lloyd Garrison to be too “unreasonable” in their positions (*Homes*, 258). When Bremer met Garrison, she “told him candidly that I thought the extravagance in the proceedings of the Abolitionists, their want of moderation, and the violent tone of their attacks could not benefit, but rather must damage their cause” (*Homes*, 123).

¹⁵ Bremer, *Homes*, 275.

¹⁶ Bremer, *Homes*, 315, 384.

¹⁷ Bremer, *Homes*, 384. Bremer further wished that the South would “silence the mouth of their opponents...by laws which would bring about a gradual emancipation” (*Homes*, 383).

¹⁸ Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 24.

¹⁹ Eidsheim, *Race of Sound*, 4, 6.

²⁰ Hacke and Musselwhite, “Making Sense,” 32.

²¹ The work of abolitionist helped altered the white hearing practices of black sonorities, particularly of their musical expressions. Jon Cruz explains, for instance, that “prior to the mid-nineteenth century black music appears to have been heard by captors and overseers primarily as *noise*—that is, as strange, unfathomable, and incomprehensible. However, with the rise of the abolitionist movement, black song making became considered increasingly as a font of black meanings” (*Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and the Rise of American Cultural Interpretation*. [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999], 43).

²² Bremer, *Homes*, 389.

²³ Maria McIntosh, *Woman in America: Her Work and Her Reward* (D. Appleton, 1850), 116, 127, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>. Mark M. Smith explains “elites north and south appealed to the heard world when defining and reaffirming some of the core values of their class and sectional identity” (*Listening*, 7). Ryan McCormack further discusses aurality’s role in “critiquing the sensory dominance of vision (embodied through the eye) and orality (embodied through the voice and language),” a process that helps transform “the ear from an organ of passive engagement to one of active inquiring” in *The Sculpted Ear: Aurality and Statuary in the West* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2020), [page](#).

²⁴ Smith, *Listening*, 20.

²⁵ Brian Roberts, *Blackface Nation: Race, Reform, and Identity in American Popular Music, 1812-1925* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 242. Roberts is one of the few scholars to offer a slightly extended reading of *Life at the South*. See also Gavin Jones and Judith Richardson, “Proslavery Fiction” in *The Cambridge Companion to Slavery in American Literature*, ed. Ezra Tawil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 100-114, especially 107-108. Briefer mentions in broader discussions of anti-Uncle Tom literature can also be found in works like Joy Jordan-Lake, *Whitewashing Uncle Tom’s Cabin: Nineteenth-Century Women Novelists Respond to Stowe* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), 14; Eric Schocket, *Vanishing Moments: Class and American Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 54; Ritchie Devon Watson, *Normans and Saxons: Southern Race Mythology and the Intellectual History of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 111-112

²⁶ Caroline Lee Hentz, *The Planter’s Northern Bride*, intro. Rhoda Coleman Ellison (1854; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 166; hereafter cited in-text as *PNB*. *The Planter’s Northern Bride* has a wider critical reception than Smith’s *Life at the South*. See, for instance, Elizabeth Moss, *Domestic Novelists in the Old South: Defenders of Southern Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1992), 107-112; Miriam J. Shillingsburg, “Caroline Lee Hentz,” *The History of Southern Women’s Literature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2020); Karen Tracey, *Plots and Proposals: American Women’s Fiction, 1850-90* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Cindy Weinstein, *Family, Kinship, and Sympathy in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 76-85; Carme Manuel Cuenca, “An Angel in the Plantation: The Economics of Slavery and the Politics of Literary Domesticity in Caroline Lee Hentz’s *The Planter’s Northern Bride*,” *Mississippi Quarterly* 51.1 (Winter 1997-98): 87-104; Petra Meyer-Frazier, “Music, Novels, and Women: Nineteenth-Century Prescriptions for an Ideal Life,” *Women & Music* 10 (2006): 45-59; Miriam J. Shillingsburg, “The Ascent of Woman, Southern Style: Hentz, King, Chopin” in *Southern Literature in Transition: Heritage and Promise*, ed. Philip Castille and William Osborne (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1983), 127-140.

²⁷ Bremer, *Homes*, 393-394.

²⁸ Bremer, *Homes*, 393-394.

²⁹ Samuel Wilson, *Account of the Province of Carolina in America* (1682), 17, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

³⁰ Robert Beverley, *The History of the Present State of Virginia* (1705), 223, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

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- ³¹ William Stith, *History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia* (1747), 272, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>. Robert Bain explains that we owe our definition of the “myth of the old South” to William Byrd’s 5 July 1726 letter to the Earl Orrery; Byrd’s letter is a “Virgilian pastoral” that “anticipates Jefferson’s judgement [on slavery] fifty years later,” see Robert Bain, “William Byrd of Westover,” *The History of Southern Literature*, gen. ed. Louis D. Rubin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 48-56, pp. 51-52 for discussion.
- ³² Catherine Kerrison, *Claiming the Pen: Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 9.
- ³³ Kerrison, *Claiming the Pen*, 7.
- ³⁴ William Taylor, *Cavalier & Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 149. In 1796, Tucker worried that the southern United States remained too far behind its northern neighbors in its “encouragement to literary pursuits.” “With us,” he wrote Jeremy Belknap, “the dawn of literary achievements is still, I fear, very far removed.” See George Tucker, “Judge Tucker to Dr. Belknap,” (August 9, 1796), *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol 3 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1877, 424, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.
- ³⁵ George Tucker, *The Valley of Shenandoah; or, Memoirs of the Graysons*, second edition (New York: Orville A. Roorbach, 1828), 2, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>; hereafter cited in-text as *VS*.
- ³⁶ Tucker argues that “no thinking man supposes that we could emancipate them, and safely let them remain in the country” for, to do so, he warns, “would run the risk of renewing the scenes which have made St. Domingo one general scene of waste and butchery” (*VS*, 84).
- ³⁷ Sarah Josepha Hale, *Northwood; or, Life North and South: Showing the True Character of Both*, fifth edition (1827; New York: H. Long & Brother, 1852), 24, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>; hereafter cited in-text as *NW*.
- ³⁸ Patricia Okker, *Our Sister Editors: Sarah J. Hale and the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century American Women Editors* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 80. For an extended discussion on Hale’s views of slavery, see Okker, pp. 80-83.
- ³⁹ Craig Werner, “The Old South, 1815-1840,” *The History of Southern Literature*, gen. ed. Louis D. Rubin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 90. According to Christopher Apap, “The success of *Swallow Barn* and its local model is indicated not only by its own critical reception, but by the growing market for Southern literature across sections: in the five years following *Swallow Barn*, a veritable explosion of novels by Southern writers occurs”; see his *The Genius of Place: The Geographic Imagination in the Early Republic* (Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2016), 122. Although identified by scholars as the “flagship novel of the plantation genre,” *Swallow Barn* may not have set out to be an explicitly proslavery text but became identified as such in the years following its publication. See Leonard Cassuto, *The Inhuman Race: The Racial Grotesque in American Literature and Culture* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1997), 140.
- ⁴⁰ John Pendleton Kennedy, *Swallow Barn, Or, A Sojourn in the Old Dominion*, rev. ed. (1832; New York: G.P. Putnam, 1853), 38, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>; hereafter cited in-text as *SB*.
- ⁴¹ Smith, *Listening*, 20. On this “organic social order,” Smith further writes that slaveholders “increasingly heard boisterous industrialism, unfettered democracy, and wage labor capitalism” in northern landscapes and “countered” with their own soundscapes that stressed “the rhythm of industriousness, not industrialism, and the sober tones of organic social and economic relations” (*Listening*, 20).
- ⁴² John L. Hare, *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?: Family and Sectionalism in the Virginia Novels of Kennedy, Caruthers, and Tucker, 1830-1845* (New York: Routledge, 2002), introduction [need page](#).
- ⁴³ William Gilmore Simms, “My dear Kennedy. Woodlands S. C. May 12. [1851],” *The Simms Reader: Selections from the Writings of William Gilmore Simms*, editor John Caldwell Guilds, (University Press of Virginia, 2001), 65.
- ⁴⁴ Simms, “My dear Kennedy,” 66.
- ⁴⁵ Simms, “My dear Kennedy,” 66.
- ⁴⁶ Simms, “My dear Kennedy,” 66.
- ⁴⁷ Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 11.
- ⁴⁸ Varon, *Disunion!*, 11.
- ⁴⁹ Elizabeth Moss, *Domestic Novelists in the Old South: Defenders of Southern Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1992), 61. Louis D. Rubin also identifies the 1830s and 1840s and the period where “the idea of a ‘Southern’ literature came into being as a thing distinct from American literature as a whole” in his “Introduction” to *The History of Southern Literature*, gen. ed. Louis D. Rubin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 4.

- ⁵⁰ Jordan-Lake, *Whitewashing*, 1.
- ⁵¹ William Lloyd Garrison, "To the Public," *The Liberator* 1.1 (1 January 1831), 1.
- ⁵² Martha Cutter, *Empathy, Graphic Narrative, and the Visual Culture of the Transatlantic Abolition Movement, 1800-1852* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 24.
- ⁵³ T., "Slavery Record. A Sketch of Slavery. To the Editor of the Liberator," *The Liberator* 1.2 (19 February 1831), 30.
- ⁵⁴ Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833; Bedford: Applewood Books, 2008), 6.
- ⁵⁵ Caulkins is cited in Theodore Dwight Weld, *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York: Published by the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839), 17, Documenting the American South. University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000, retrieved from <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/weld/weld.html>
- ⁵⁶ Sarah Moore Grimke, *An Epistle to the Clergy of the Southern States* (New York: 1836), 1, 8, retrieved from Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive Part 1, GALE|DS0100148295.
- ⁵⁷ Grime, "An Epistle," 12.
- ⁵⁸ Weld, *American Slavery*, 103.
- ⁵⁹ Weld, *American Slavery*, 46.
- ⁶⁰ Andrew Jackson, "Andrew Jackson to Amos Kendall, August 9," August 9, 1835, Manuscript/Mixed Material, Library of Congress, retrieved from <https://www.loc.gov/item/maj014432/>.
- ⁶¹ "The Crisis-No. 23," *Columbia Telescope*, 16 Nov. 1827, Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers (accessed January 30, 2021), retrieved from https://link-gale-com.proxy.wichita.edu/apps/doc/GT3011013880/NCNP?u=ksstate_wichita&sid=NCNP&xid=a454748d.
- ⁶² "Anti-Slavery Meetings," *Raleigh Register*, May 27, 1834, Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers (accessed January 30, 2021). https://link-gale-com.proxy.wichita.edu/apps/doc/GT3012686592/NCNP?u=ksstate_wichita&sid=NCNP&xid=7959f5cb.
- ⁶³ "Natural History of the Negro Race [From our Arm-Chair]," *Southern Literary Journal and Magazine of Arts* 1.1 (March, 1837), 91, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.
- ⁶⁴ L., "The South—What is it?" *Southern Ladies' Book*, 1.1 (November 1852) in *Southern Ladies' Book. Volume I; From November, 1852, to May, 1853*, ed. L. Virginia Smith and Wm. T. Leonard (New Orleans: Daily True Delta Office, 1852-1853), 45, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>
- ⁶⁵ "Uncle Tom's Cabin" *Southern Ladies' Book*, 1.4 (February, 1853), in *Southern Ladies' Book. Volume I; From November, 1852, to May, 1853*, ed. L. Virginia Smith and Wm. T. Leonard (New Orleans: Daily True Delta Office, 1852-1853), 230, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.
- ⁶⁶ "Uncle Tom's Cabin," 230.
- ⁶⁷ For more on publication history in the South, see Susan B. Riley, "The Southern Literary Magazine of the Mid-Nineteenth Century" *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 23.3 (September 1964), 221-236; Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010), Johanna Shields, *Freedom in a Slave Society: Stories from the Antebellum South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Shields also includes a discussion of Hentz's work with southern literary magazines; see pp. 40-44. s
- ⁶⁸ "Southern Literature," *The Southern Literary Messenger*, 1.1 (August 1834) in *The Southern Literary Messenger: Devoted to Every Department of Literature and the Fine Arts: Volume One* (Richmond: T.W. White Publisher and Proprietor, 1834), 1.
- ⁶⁹ Richard J. Calhoun, "Literary Magazines in the Old South," *The History of Southern Literature*, gen. ed. Louis D. Rubin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 158.
- ⁷⁰ "Southern Education—Books," *The Magnolia* (July 1842) in *The Magnolia; or, Southern Apalachian. A Literary Magazine and Monthly Review. Volume One (July-December 1842)*, ed. William Simms (Charleston: Burges and James, 1842), 59. For a discussion on the publication market in the South, see Mary Ann Wimsatt and Robert L. Philips, "Antebellum Humor," *The History of Southern Literature*, gen. ed. Louis D. Rubin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 141.
- ⁷¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin; Presenting the Original Facts and Documents Upon Which the Story is Founded Together with Corroborative Statements Verifying the Truth of the Work*, volume one (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1853), 1, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.
- ⁷² Henry Clay, *The Works of Henry Clay*, volume 3, (A.S. Barnes and Burr, 1863), 124, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>. Robert Criswell's anti-Uncle Tom novel, *'Uncle Tom's Cabin' Contrasted with Buckingham Hall, the Planter's Home, Or, A Fair View of Both Sides of the Slavery Question* [(New York, 1852),

retrieved from <http://books.google.com>) opens with this scene to help frame his own “warning” against Stowe’s novel.

⁷³ Cited in James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 156.

⁷⁴ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Compiled From Her Letters and Journals*, editor Charles Edward Stowe (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889), 146.

⁷⁵ Thomas Gossett, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and American Culture* (Southern Methodist University Press, 1985), 96.

⁷⁶ “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” 226.

⁷⁷ Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 75.

⁷⁸ Mary Henderson Eastman, *Aunt Phillis’s Cabin: Or, Southern Life as It Is* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Company, 1852), retrieved from <http://books.google.com>; Baynard Rush Hall, *Frank Freeman’s Barber Shop* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1852), retrieved from <http://books.google.com>; Charles Jacobs Peterson, *The Cabin and Parlor; Or, Slaves and Masters* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson, 1852), retrieved from <http://books.google.com>; Caroline Rush, *The North and South, Or, Slavery and Its Contrasts: A Tale of Real Life* (Crissy and Markley, 1852), retrieved from <http://books.google.com>; and William L. G. Smith’s *Life at the South, or, ‘Uncle Tom’ as It Is* (Buffalo: George H. Derby and Company, 1852), retrieved from <http://books.google.com>, hereafter cited in-text as *LS*. For a list of anti-Uncle Tom novels, see Gossett, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 185, 430ff and Jane Gardiner, “Pro-Slavery Propaganda in Fiction Written in Answer to ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin,’ 1852-1861: An Annotated Checklist” *Resources for American Literary Study* 7.2 (Autumn 1977), 201-209.

⁷⁹ David Brown, *The Planter; Or, Thirteen Years in the South, by a Northern Man* (H. Hooker, 1853), retrieved from <http://books.google.com>; Maria McIntosh, *The Lofty and the Lowly; Or, Good in All, and None All Good* (1854; reprint, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1874), retrieved from <http://books.google.com>. Some of the anti-Uncle Tom fiction gained notable success. Eastman’s *Aunt Phillis’s Cabin* “achieved sales of 18,000” (Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania*, 77). The anti-Uncle Tom narratives frequently denounced Stowe and her novel. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was a “vile and mischievous calumny from beginning to end,” a veritable “firebrand of destruction” said Brown in *The Planter* (25, 31). Criswell’s prefatorial similarly expressed the hope his *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* would “modify” that “agitation” Stowe’s provoked “by representing the Planter and Slave in a more favorable light” (7). Prior accounts of plantation life also were rejuvenated as the market welcomed reprints of Kennedy’s *Swallow Barn*, and Hale’s *Northwood*, and Caroline Gilman’s *Recollections of a Southern Matron* ([1836; revised, New York: G.P. Putnam and Company, 1852], retrieved from <http://books.google.com>)—often with substantial edits designed to defend the southern institution of slavery.

⁸⁰ Jordan-Lake, *Whitewashing*, 64; Eastman, *Aunt Phillis’s*, 118.

⁸¹ Eastman, *Aunt Phillis’s*, 118.

⁸² Brown, *Planter*, 83.

⁸³ Brown, *Planter*, 84, 85.

⁸⁴ *Herringshaw’s Encyclopedia of American Biography of the Nineteenth Century* (ed. Thomas William Herringshaw, American Publisher’s Association, 1904) includes a brief entry on Smith, p. 868.

⁸⁵ William L.G. Smith, [Advertisement for the book *Life at the South, or “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” as it is!*], Gilder Lehrman Collection #GLCO6464, retrieved from <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc06464>.

⁸⁶ C.K.W., “Pro-Slavery Literature,” *The Liberator* (5 November 1852).

⁸⁷ Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary*, 2164.

⁸⁸ Rhoda Coleman Ellison, “Introduction” in *The Planter’s Northern Bride*, intro. Rhoda Coleman Ellison (1854; reprint Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), viii. Ellison also offers an analysis of Hentz’s diary from 1836. See “Caroline Lee Hentz’s Alabama Diary, 1836, *The Alabama Review* (October 1859), 254-270.

⁸⁹ Ellison, “Introduction,” viii.

⁹⁰ Cited in Charles A. Hentz, *Autobiography of Charles A. Hentz, Part I*, 12/11. Look up *A Southern Practice: The Diary and Autobiography of Charles A. Hentz, MD*.

⁹¹ Caroline Lee Hentz, 10 February 1836, *Diaries of Caroline Lee Hentz, 1836* in the Hentz Family Papers #332, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, retrieved from https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00332/#folder_16#1; Hentz, 15 May 1836, *Diaries*.

⁹² Hentz cited in cited in Moss, *Domestic Novelists*, 77; Hentz, 20 May 1836, *Diaries*.

⁹³ Ellison, “Alabama Diary,” 255. Caroline Lee Hentz, *Linda, or The Young Pilot of the Belle Creole. A Tale of Southern Life* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1850); Hentz, *Marcus Warland, or the Long Moss Spring. A Tale of the South* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1852); Hentz, *Eoline, or Magnolia Vale* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1852).

⁹⁴ Smith, *Listening*, 68.

⁹⁵ Cited in Smith, *Listening*, 72.

⁹⁶ See Smith, *Listening*, 73.

⁹⁷ Smith, *Listening*, 71.

⁹⁸ Small Farmer, "Art. III.—Management of Negroes," *De Bow's Southern and Western Review*, 11.4 (October 1851), in *De Bow's Review of the Southern and Western States*, ed. J.D.B. De Bow, vol. 11, (New Orleans, 1851), 371, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>. Mark Smith also discusses this passage, using it to exemplify how "the production of sound served as an incentive; its prevention, a punishment" in slave institutions (*Listening*, 71)

⁹⁹ Brian Roberts offers insight into Smith's use of Stephen Foster's "Camptown Races" (see p. 242), but does not include a discussion of Smith's later use of "Lubly Rosa." This song, however, also belongs to the blackface stage and can be found in Charles White's collection, *White's New Ethiopian Song Book: Containing a Collection of all New and Most Popular Songs, Glees, Chorusses, Parodies, Duets, Trios, Burlesque Lectures, Jokes, Conundrums, &c., as Sung By White's Band of Serenaders* (New York: H. Long & Brother, 1850?), Temple University Libraries, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, 54-55. *Life at the South*, of course, was not the only plantation novel to rely on the "queer songs" of slaves for evidence of their contentment (Criswell, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," 149). Depictions of secular performances not only emphasized the "very merry" side of slavery, but tended to use blackface tunes to do so (Criswell, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," 67). In Peterson's *The Cabin and Parlor*, for instance, the southern Courtenay family organize a ball featuring the music of Tony: "Every one appeared to have caught the contagion" as Tony led the dancers in a "perfect frenzy of fun" with his performance of the "immortal 'Dan Tucker'" (10). Such portrayals help lead to the "increasing numbers of Americans [who] would equate black song with slavery," as Roberts argues (*Blackface Nation*, 119). It is also interesting to note that Peterson, like Smith, viewed such music as a kind of "contagion."

¹⁰⁰ Roberts, *Blackface Nation*, 242. Travelers south frequently commented on the failure of blackface minstrelsy to capture the true essence of black music; for examples, see Bremer, *Homes*, 394 and Frances Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864), 96, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>. Although blackface minstrelsy gained prominence in the North in the 1840s, it drew on a longer tradition of enslaved blacks performing for white audience, both on the southern plantation and throughout the transatlantic slave trade, as Katrina Thompson Moore has shown in *Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014). Eric Lott offers the landmark study of northern blackface performance's influence on and interaction with white working-class identities in *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, 20th anniversary edition (1995; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁰¹ Kemble, *Journal*, 129.

¹⁰² Kemble, *Journal*, 129.

¹⁰³ Smith, *Listening*, 36.

¹⁰⁴ Henry Eaton Moore, *A Musical Catechism, on those Rules which will have the Greatest Effect in Leading the Mind of the Pupil to the Science of Musick* (Plymouth: H.E. Moore, 1824), iii, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹⁰⁵ Rush is here cited in "Vocal Music," *Southern Rose Bud: Volume 3, Sept 1834-1835*, ed. Caroline Gilman (Charleston: James S. Burges, 1834-1835), 85, retrieved from <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008696529> Note original quote. Rush's statement was commonly republished in a variety of venue. He originally published these statements in his "Thoughts Upon Female Education...Addressed to the Visitors of the Young Ladies' Academy in Philadelphia, 28th July, 1787," reprinted in his *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical* (1798; reprint, Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1806), 80, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹⁰⁶ "Music. [From the Charleston Courier]," *The Southern Rose* (16 Feb 1839) in *Southern Rose*, volume 6-7 (Charleston: James S. Burges: 1837-1839), 206, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹⁰⁷ "Music," *Southern Rose*, 206.

¹⁰⁸ Samuel Cartwright, "Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race," *The New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* (May 1851), 693, 694, 693, retrieved from <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.slavery/disphycnr0001&i=1>.

¹⁰⁹ Philip Gibbes, *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes, &c.* (London: Shepperson and Reynolds, 1786), 72, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹¹⁰ Gibbes, *Instructions*, 72.

¹¹¹ Gibbes, *Instructions*, 72.

¹¹² H. C., "Art. XLVI.—On the Management of Negroes—Addressed to the Farmers and Planters of Virginia; by H.C.," *The Southern Agriculturist, and Register of Rural Affairs; Adapted to the Southern Section of the United*

States, 7.7 (July, 1834) in *The Southern Agriculturist and Register of Rural Affairs*, vol. 7 (1834), 368, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹¹³ The term “ultra abolitionist” was frequently used in this period in both proslavery and antislavery writings. Eastman, an active defender of slavery, uses it in *Aunt Phillis’s Cabin* to critique northern abolitionists (see p. 54); Bremer, who was opposed to slavery, also uses it to distinguish her own moderate abolitionist beliefs from others like Garrison—an “ultra”—in *Homes* (see p. 258).

¹¹⁴ Brown, *The Planter*, 232.

¹¹⁵ Brown, *The Planter*, 237.

¹¹⁶ Smith’s selection of July fourth for the intended insurrection may speak to the significance of that day to black revolts which were often tied to the “eschatology of the American Revolution,” as Eric Sundquist argues of Nat Turner’s revolt, initially planned for Independence Day but delayed due to sickness. See Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 64 for citation and 64-67 for a more extended discussion.

¹¹⁷ Sylvia Jenkins Cook, *Clothed in Meaning: Literature, Labor, and Cotton in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020), 73.

¹¹⁸ Cook, *Clothed*, 74.

¹¹⁹ Cook, *Clothed*, 74. See also p. 266, 12ff.

¹²⁰ Most anti-Uncle Tom novels emphasize in some way the importance of religion to maintaining the southern soundscape. “The heart must bet steeled against the sweet influences of the Christian religion,” Eastman would write in *Aunt Phillis’s Cabin*, “which listens not with an earnest pleasure to the voice of the slave, singing the songs of Zion” (124).

¹²¹ Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, 48.

¹²² Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000), 55.

¹²³ Hentz, *Marcus Warland*, vii.

¹²⁴ Dickson Bruce, *Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 179.

¹²⁵ Jay Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and the Culture of Performance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 48. See also Christopher Looby, *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Sandra Gustafson, *Eloquence Is Power: Oratory & Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

¹²⁶ Henry Tappan, *An Essay on the Expression of Passion in Oratory* (New York: C.W. Benedict, 1848), 17, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹²⁷ Tappan, *An Essay*, 17.

¹²⁸ Lowell Mason, *Manual of the Boston Academy of Music. For Instruction in the Elements of Vocal Music, on the System of Pestalozzi*, second edition (Boston: J.H. Wilkins and R.B. Carter, 1836), 20, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹²⁹ John Sullivan Dwight, “Article II. Music,” *Aesthetic Papers*, ed. Elizabeth Peabody (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1849), 31, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹³⁰ Dwight, “Article II,” 31.

¹³¹ Dwight, “Article II,” 31, 30.

¹³² Caleb Smith offers a compelling analysis of the use of the oracle, in “which legal authorities position themselves as the mouthpieces of a law whose origins are elsewhere,” and the curse, or “the invocation of higher law by unapologetic offenders, righteous dissidents, and defiant martyrs,” in his *The Oracle and the Curse: A Poetics of Justice from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2013), 5.

¹³³ Charles Hentz, *Autobiography of Charles A. Hentz, 1894* in the Hentz Family Papers #332, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, scan 50, retrieved from https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00332/#folder_24#1.

¹³⁴ Charles Hentz, *Autobiography*, scan 20.

¹³⁵ Caroline Hentz, 7 February 1836, *Diaries*.

¹³⁶ Hentz, 9 March 1836, *Diaries*; Hentz, 27 April 1836, *Diaries*; Hentz, 20 February 1836, *Diaries*.

¹³⁷ Cruz, *Culture*, 69, 73. See also Dena Epstein’s *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War*, anniversary edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Cheryl Boots, *Singing for Equality: Hymns in the American Antislavery and Indian Rights Movements, 1640-1855* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2013); Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1972).

¹³⁸ Cruz, *Culture*, 72.

¹³⁹ Cruz, *Culture*, 72. Mark Smith notes that genteel southerners generally distinguished between their religious practices and those of the “lower orders” who could include both black and white people (*Listening* 61).

¹⁴⁰ Moreland also reads a letter from a former slave, Davy, who complains of the inhospitality of the North, asking Moreland to “send somebody to take back my wife and children” (*PNB* 504).

¹⁴¹ Jordan-Lake, *Whitewashing*, xvi; Moss, *Domestic*, 22.

¹⁴² Moss, *Domestic*, 42.

¹⁴³ Alexander Meek, *Songs and Poems of the South* (Mobile: S.H. Goetzel & Com., 1857), 153, retrieved from <http://books.google.com>.

¹⁴⁴ Meek, *Songs and Poems*, 153.