HALF-BAKED MEN:
DOUGHFACE MASCULINITY AND THE ANTEBELLUM POLITICS OF HOUSEHOLD

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ABSTRACT

JOSHUA A. LYNN: Half-Baked Men:
Doughface Masculinity and the Antebellum Politics of Household
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In the antebellum politics of household, political legitimacy stemmed from domestic life. As white northern families and southern plantation households constituted distinct domesticities, northern "Doughface" Democrats betrayed the northern home by catering to southern planters. Doughfaces argued that they demonstrated a manly independence in treating all families equally. In reality, however, their doctrine of popular sovereignty unfairly benefited southern households in the federal territories in the late 1840s and 1850s. Antislavery northerners responded with accusations of unmasculine servility. In the 1856 presidential election, Democrats portrayed James Buchanan, a Doughface and a bachelor, as a man who transcended competing conceptions of the household. At the same time, they offered him to southern voters as a fellow paternalist. Northerners subsequently charged Buchanan with treason against the northern home and against the concept of household itself. Doughfacism illustrates the intersection of politics, gender, and domesticity, and how political culture began at home.

To Rupert Hemingway

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1860, the American Democracy ruptured.[1] The great bisectional party which had dominated antebellum politics for almost three decades finally buckled under sectional strain, splintering into northern and southern wings over the course of its presidential nominating conventions held in Charleston and Baltimore. One man, at least, relished the opportunities which the breakdown of the last major national organization presented. Like a carrion bird patiently presiding over a slow death, the irascible Alabama fire-eater William Lowndes Yancey gleefully superintended the entire process, making certain that the Democracy would not survive the presidential election of 1860 as a united party.

When the Democratic national convention met in Charleston in April, Yancey prepared to lead a walk-out of Deep South delegates if northerners did not yield to southern demands for federal protection of slavery in the national territories. Yancey and his radical, states' rights cohort found many seemingly moderate southerners increasingly wary of their erstwhile northern allies. Northerners, on the other hand, were also newly reluctant to compromise with the South. Alarmed by the rapid rise of antislavery

[1]The "American Democracy" was the common name for the Democratic party in the nineteenth century. The name was meant to conflate the party with democratic practices more broadly and to avoid the odium commonly attached to political parties. Jean H. Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (1983; repr., New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 112-14.

Republicanism and by constituents weary of catering to the Slave Power, northern Democrats rallied behind Illinois senator Stephen A. Douglas. Douglas opposed federal protection of slavery, opting instead for Congressional non-interference with territorial slavery along the lines of his pet doctrine of popular sovereignty, which granted territorial settlers the power to decide whether to legalize slavery.

Two inflexible factions thus faced off at Charleston. Undoubtedly savoring the tense impasse as he addressed the frustrated delegates, Yancey recapitulated a hackneyed argument for why the North ought to yield. He thundered, "ours is the honor at stake—the honor of children, the honor of families, the lives, perhaps, of all—all of which rests upon what your course may ultimately make a great heaving volcano of passion and crime, if you are enabled to consummate your designs."[2] Yancey claimed that southerners had more at stake than northerners who were irresponsibly meddling with an issue that did not affect the security of their families. When a majority of delegates rejected the proslavery platform, Yancey led the cotton states out of the convention. In June the party lumbered back together in Baltimore for one last attempt at compromise. This sequel ended predictably, with another walkout and the subsequent formation of two rival parties which proceeded to nominate a southern Democrat and a northern Democrat for president—both of whom would, of course, lose to Republican Abraham Lincoln.[3]

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[2]*Speech of the Hon. William L. Yancey, Of Alabama, Delivered in the National Democratic Convention, Charleston, April 28th, 1860. With the Protest of the Alabama Delegation* (1860), 4.

[3]For an overview of the Charleston and Baltimore conventions, see Roy Franklin Nichols, *The Disruption of American Democracy* (1948; repr., New York: The Free Press, 1968), 288-320. For a nuanced portrayal of Yancey's central role in the conventions, see William W. Freehling, *Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-1861*, vol. 2 of *The Road to Disunion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 271-322.

Yancey had attempted a similar disruption of the Democracy twelve years earlier; at that time, only one delegate followed him out of the 1848 national convention.[4] He later encouraged the South to secede rather than accept the humiliating Compromise of 1850. With these efforts stymied, his disunionist crusade abated until the opportunity of the 1860 conventions. Yancey disingenuously explained his decade-long hiatus to the southern Democrats in Baltimore, "From that day to this, under all these wrongs, I have not urged them as a sufficient cause why the Union shall be dissolved."[5] Yancey bent the truth somewhat—his disunionism never hibernated. Hardly content to remain in the Democracy or the Union through the 1850s, he simply found himself unable to galvanize his fellow southerners.

Throughout the 1850s, secessionists such as Yancey failed to precipitate the South out of the Democracy as "Doughfaces"—those oft-caricatured "northern men with southern principles"—controlled the northern Democracy and successfully bulwarked southerners' prerogatives within the party. When Yancey argued at Charleston that the security of white southern families demanded northern acquiescence, he did not expect the newly-resolute Yankees to yield. Gone were the tractable northerners who would have responded to such pleas. Yet, throughout the 1850s plenty of northerners did politically foreground the needs of white southern families. They not only responded to arguments such as the one Yancey made in 1860, but they made such appeals their own.

The years of Yancey's failed secession—1848—and of his successful one—1860—cordon off a period which neatly parallels the Doughface ascendancy. From 1848

[4]David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976), 80-81.

[5]"Speech of the Hon. Wm. L. Yancey," June 23, 1860, *Washington, D. C. Constitution*, June 27, 1860.

when the Doughface presidential candidate adopted the doctrine of popular sovereignty until 1860 when the theoretical poverty of that principle sundered the Democracy, Doughfaces wielded an effective formula to appease the South. Popular sovereignty, first popularized by Democrats in the late 1840s and then ardently championed by Douglas in the 1850s, accorded territorial settlers the right to decide on the status of slavery in the territories. Explaining that the doctrine denied Congress the power to regulate the territories, Democrats extolled popular sovereignty as the essence of democracy and local self-rule. While Democrats celebrated the doctrine as impartial and democratic, they simultaneously stressed to southerners that popular sovereignty, by opening up the possibility of slavery's expansion, favored the interests of southern families.

Doughfacism thus represented a union of "northern men" with a doctrine touted as a peculiarly "southern principle." This winning combination kept Doughfaces in power through the 1850s with a Doughface in the White House eight of the twelve years between 1849 and 1861 and as the Democratic presidential candidate in 1848, 1852, and 1856.[6] Despite this success, Doughfacism had become an increasingly untenable position by the late 1850s as it became ever more apparent just how much popular sovereignty favored the South. Excoriated by the North as unmasculine, treasonous trucklers and by the South for not being southern enough, Doughfaces lost control of the party, resulting in the Charleston and Baltimore debacles.

Although ultimately unsuccessful, the role of the Doughfaces in soothing white southern men's anxieties over their domestic sovereignty in the 1850s deserves attention.

[6]Millard Fillmore is often considered a Doughface. However, in this paper I argue that Doughfacism was peculiarly Democratic, thus excluding those northern Whigs viewed as truckling to the South. While the phenomenon of northern men catering to southern demands was hardly unique to one party, Democratic Doughfacism represented a distinct ideology.

These figures, often dismissed contemptuously by historians and contemporaries alike, performed an impressive feat in antebellum politics. They straddled the sectionalized nature of domesticity and reinvented themselves as the guardians of white southern families in their effort to defuse sectional rancor and keep their party and the Union intact. With these men at the helm, moderate southerners felt at ease within the Democracy, insulated from both the disunionist tirades of fire-eaters such as Yancey and the denunciations of free-soil northerners unfriendly toward slavery.

Yet the causes of the Doughfaces' ultimate downfall stemmed from the singular role they carved out for themselves. Doughfaces found themselves susceptible to accusations of sectional treason from antislavery northerners. It is easy to comprehend how northerners could see Doughfaces' prosouthernism as traitorous to the free states and to the Union. But this disloyalty included another dimension—Doughfaces were arraigned for betraying white northern families by favoring southern families. Doughfaces, in appealing to southern households, and antislavery northerners, in charging Doughfaces with betraying the northern home, expressed their understanding of the sectional differentiation of white antebellum families.

Doughfaces highlighted these sectionally divergent domesticities as they engaged in the politics of household by stepping beyond the walls of the northern home to appeal to southern constructions of mastery. In antebellum politics, a man's political legitimacy derived from his private domestic relations. The politically engaged were concerned with more than whether or not a political actor seemed manly or honorable as they also judged the type of household which shaped a politician's actions. As southern plantation

households and white northern households differed fundamentally in their domestic components, it follows that politicians saw the two types of family yielding two types of political leaders.

Historians who have charted the phenomenon of divergent domesticities see it as a factor in the sectionalism of the Civil War era, a period in which the turbulence of secession and war, in the words of LeeAnn Whites, "turned the household inside out," making it easier to glimpse component gender relations. The notion of divergent domesticities rests on the premise that northern society broke down into a private domestic sphere, centered in the home, and a public sphere of economic and civic participation. The southern plantation household, meanwhile, as a site of combined domestic and economic ventures, lacked such a distinction. Whites finds that the rise of a separate domestic sphere in the North provided a space from which female abolitionists could attack slavery, while, by contrast, elite, white southern women sought to perpetuate slavery and, consequently, their own power as members of the master class. Nina Silber concludes that divergent domesticities shaped how northern and southern soldiers experienced the Civil War. Union men, capable of conceptualizing a nation beyond their family because of daily experience in the public sphere, fought for the abstract "Union." Confederates, meanwhile, went to war to preserve the family structure that produced their economic and political power.[7]

[7]LeeAnn Whites, "The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender," in *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 11-24, quotation on 5; Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 1-40; Nina Silber, *Gender and the Sectional Conflict* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), xi-xxi, 1-36. See also, Laura F. Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 2-4, 15-16. Kenneth S. Greenberg attributes the South's distinctive political culture to the lack of separate spheres. Men conducted themselves the same as masters of plantations as they did as statesmen in public. Elizabeth R. Varon does find the existence of separate spheres shaping the discourse surrounding white women's

A second historiographical theme which helps explain how Doughfaces practiced the sectional politics of household is southern mastery. The unique nature of the plantation household, a combination of public and private realms and economic and domestic pursuits, conferred a correlative sense of mastery on household heads who conceptualized their "family" as including white familial dependents and an enslaved workforce. Mastery stemmed from more than race or gender. As Nancy Bercaw aptly summarizes in her work on households in the Mississippi Delta, "neither whiteness nor manhood alone guaranteed a white man full rights. […] In short, one had to meet standards of whiteness, manhood, and a household to be fully independent."[8] Stephanie McCurry has provided one of the most illuminating studies of how mastery functioned in the antebellum South. In her study of yeoman households in the South Carolina Low Country, she concludes that yeomen embraced secession as a means to ensure their own mastery. Although a vast gulf of inequality separated yeomen from planters, the two groups shared a common interest in perpetuating a system in which control over household dependents produced independence. Mastery thus constituted a powerful construct in the antebellum South, conferring manhood, citizenship, and political

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political participation in antebellum Virginia. However, a tension consistently manifested itself between women's domestically-inspired public role as disinterested mediators and their more conventionally political role as partisans. The wartime ideal of "Confederate Womanhood" sought to collapse these two roles during the war. Thus, the demarcation of the spheres was not as distinct as in the North, leading to distinctly southern political roles for women. Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Masters and Statesman: The Political Culture of American Slavery* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), vii-ix, 20; Elizabeth R. Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 1-2, 13-15, 80, 163-64.

[8]Nancy Bercaw, *Gendered Freedoms: Race, Rights, and the Politics of Household in the Delta, 1861-1875* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003), 77.

standing. Those who wished to make inroads in that region, such as evangelicals and, I argue, northern Democrats, had to cater to southern sensibilities concerning mastery.[9]

Historians disagree, however, as to the precise means by which individuals achieved manhood in the antebellum South. Those scholars such as McCurry who focus on mastery emphasize that manhood derived from the *private* relations of household dependency. Other scholars, following the work of Bertram Wyatt-Brown, maintain that southerners conferred manhood, rendered as honor, through *public* rituals according to communal norms.[10] This historiographical impasse has given way to what Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover label the "honor-mastery paradigm."[11] Of the two concepts, mastery possesses more explanatory potential as, keyed to dominance over slaves, it speaks to southern distinctiveness and more effectively explains sectionalism and secession.

The rigid construction of mastery, rooted in the specific physical relations of the household, nevertheless denies it the flexibility by which recognition of honor varied by community and could apply to seemingly aberrant men. Strict criteria of mastery, such as slave ownership and marriage, cannot account for how men such as bachelors rose to

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[9]Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeomen Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). For evangelicalism, see Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 117-60. Heyrman shows that southern household heads originally distrusted evangelicals as they seemingly undermined the structure of white southern families. Only by bulwarking the southern familial ideal and by actually encouraging preachers to model themselves on secular masters did evangelicals establish themselves in the South.

[10]Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). See also, Greenberg, *Masters and Statesmen*; and Steven M. Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

[11]Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover, "Rethinking Southern Masculinity: An Introduction," in *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South*, eds. Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2004), vii-xvii, quotation on x.

political prominence in the South. Recent work suggests ways of moving beyond the dichotomy of public honor and private mastery by investigating the public means by which men performed mastery. Bercaw defines the concept of household itself as an "ideology," in which the components of household mastery could shift to exclude certain groups from power. Glover also blurs the distinction by exploring how young, elite southern men established their own households by means of a publicly-mediated "process."[12]

Examining Doughfacism lends further credence to the public and performative dimensions of mastery, as northern Democrats couched their pleas for southern support in the language of mastery, even going so far as to market northern candidates as southern patriarchs. This strategy illustrates that, lacking the actual prerequisites of mastery, men could perform it, rhetorically construct it, and have it bestowed upon them by others through public acknowledgment. Doughface rhetoric thereby offers an intriguing means by which to refine historical understanding of divergent domesticities and southern mastery, as well as to reappraise antebellum partisan politics and the disruption of the Democratic party more generally.[13] Doughfacism reveals how cultural constructions of

[12]Bercaw, *Gendered Freedoms*, 4, 67, 168-84; Lorri Glover, *Southern Sons: Becoming Men in the New Nation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 1-3, 115-46. Glover's analysis, although conceptualizing manhood and household mastery as a process that was performed, still defines the components of mastery narrowly. Bachelors, therefore, would have been excluded from mastery as marriage was an essential prerequisite. See also, John Mayfield, *Counterfeit Gentlemen: Manhood and Humor in the Old South* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2009). Mayfield finds that antebellum southern humorists experimented with a myriad of definitions of manhood in response to economic and social changes.

[13]Historians have posited several explanations for the disruption of the Democracy in the context of the 1850s partisan realignment and the coming of the Civil War. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. argues that true Jacksonians left the Democracy due to that party's increasing dedication to slavery and joined the nascent Republicans, while, concurrently, conservative former Whigs took over the Democratic party. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), 432-33, 469-93. In contrast to Schlesinger's emphasis on slavery, consensus historians of the mid-twentieth century such as Roy F. Nichols downplayed fundamental cleavages in politics, attributing the collapse of the Democracy to

gender translated into politics, how political culture originated at home, and how the mutable concepts of "man" and "statesman" reinforced one another and took on sectional meanings.

Doughfaces voiced divergent domesticities and appealed to southern mastery primarily through campaign rhetoric. This rhetoric reveals that Democrats shared a national political message rooted in the ideology of "Democratic conservatism," of which popular sovereignty formed the core. This conservative ideology functioned to define Democrats in response to the tumultuous 1850s partisan realignment. The second American party system which had matched Whigs against Democrats through much of the antebellum period collapsed in the 1850s. The concurrent rise of the antislavery Republicans after 1854 as the Democrats' new competitors led to the institutionalization of a new party system. The evanescent American or "Know-Nothing" party, a nativist and anti-Catholic organization, also made a failed bid for longevity on the national political stage in the middle of the decade.[14]

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divisive sectional politicians outmaneuvering conservative Unionists. Nichols, *The Disruption of American Democracy*, 7-9, 33-53, 318-20, 502-6. Beginning in the 1960s, as American historians more generally recognized slavery as a fundamental division in antebellum society, several scholars have attributed Democratic divisions to slavery. Eric Foner, in an updated form of Schlesinger's thesis, argues that ideological opposition to slavery and southern power drove many northern Democrats into the Republican party. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (1970; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 149-85. Michael F. Holt challenges the historiographical trend prioritizing slavery, arguing that the second party system collapsed due to systemic weaknesses after Democrats and Whigs no longer differed on slavery and economic issues, thereby failing to offer voters distinct choices. Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (1978; repr., New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1983).

[14]Michael F. Holt argues that many historians unfairly dismiss the Know-Nothings as a viable contender for a permanent place in a new party system after the disintegration of the Whigs. Although the Know-Nothings' inability to speak to the issue of slavery doomed their ability to solidify their status during a period of partisan flux driven by disputes over slavery, Holt's argument is instructive when considering Democratic anxiety over the emergence of this party. Democrats certainly did not dismiss the Know-Nothing threat. Michael F. Holt, "Another Look at the Election of 1856," in *James Buchanan and the*

During this transitional period, Democrats often treated their diverse competitors as a common "fanatical" enemy, against which they juxtaposed their shared conservatism. At the same time, Democrats tailored their national message to suit local and sectional sensibilities. Popular sovereignty comprised the elastic core of Democratic conservatism and allowed Democrats to target certain constituencies by arguing either that popular sovereignty benefited northern and southern families equally in allowing both to spread to the territories or that it especially privileged the plantation household. As such, the household represented an additional audience which Democrats addressed. Taking a cue from studies of material culture, Mark E. Neely, Jr. finds that partisan print culture occupied a privileged place in homes as signifiers of bourgeois respectability. Neely, as such, has recently called for political historians to consider how national politics unfolded within the home.[15]

Political leaders themselves were fully aware of the reach of their rhetoric and of its consumption within the home. Democrats campaigned in the Capitol, anticipating that their remarks would reach a large readership through the *Congressional Globe*, the serialized record of Congress.[16] Stump speeches from throughout the nation, moreover, reappeared as pamphlets or in newspapers published by Democratic presses, with congressmen using franking privileges to subsidize mailing.[17] Democrats banked on this

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Political Crisis of the 1850s, ed. Michael J. Birkner (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1996), 37-42.

[15]Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Boundaries of American Political Culture in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 1-29.

[16]Roy F. Nichols and Philip S. Klein, "Election of 1856," in *History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1027; Eugene H. Roseboom, *A History of Presidential Elections* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), 164.

[17]Nichols, *The Disruption of American Democracy*, 55-56.

massive circulation reaching householders. Judah P. Benjamin, for example, admonished a Senate colleague that his reckless misstatement "will be spread through the machinery of the Federal post office. It is printed in your Globe. It will be read probably by millions of people" as it spread to "every village, to every hamlet, to every cottage."[18]

Through this campaign literature, Doughfaces spoke to men far removed from themselves in both space and worldview—the masters of southern plantations. Doughfaces specifically attempted to convince these men that northern Democrats could defend their domestic prerogatives. Doughfaces first appeared in national politics during the Missouri Crisis when antislavery northerners developed the concept of Doughfacism to castigate seemingly prosouthern northerners with the stigma of unrepublican dependence, unmasculine servility, and treason. These weak and unmanly northern men fought to overcome these negative connotations when they found their southern principle—popular sovereignty—in the late 1840s. To northern audiences Doughfaces stressed that this doctrine impartially oversaw competition between antislavery and plantation households in the territories. To southern masters, however, they confided that popular sovereignty prioritized southern domesticity.

The conjunction of the northern men with this southern principle reached its mature form in the presidential election of 1856. Democrats appealed to southern planters by arguing that their candidate, James Buchanan, sympathized with southern families and actually adhered to southern tenets of mastery himself. Similar to the

[18]*Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1855-56, pt. 2:1094. Benjamin was addressing Republican William Henry Seward. Roy F. Nichols and Michael F. Holt both caution against viewing antebellum parties as national organizations beyond the state level. Despite the decentralized organization of the antebellum Democracy and state parties' need to cater to local electorates, print culture produced for national consumption proves that Democrats shared a common ideology, if not a national structure. Nichols, *The Disruption of American Democracy*, 20-21; Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*, ix, 14-16.

platform including popular sovereignty on which he stood, Democrats presented Buchanan to the North as an equal arbitrator of northern and southern families, but to the South as a stalwart proponent of the plantation household. This duality did not escape antislavery voters, who since 1820 had consistently charged Doughfaces with treason against the northern home. In transgressing sectional norms of domesticity by trying to appease southern masters, Doughfaces betrayed northern families, exacerbated sectional tensions, and ultimately enervated the bisectional party they sought to hold together.

CHAPTER 2

THE NORTHERN MEN: THE ORIGINS OF DOUGHFACISM IN THE MISSOURI CRISIS

> From all dough-faced, half-baked, and slack-baked representatives; Good Lord, deliver us.
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> —*New Haven, Connecticut Journal*, June 20, 1820

In the debates over the statehood of Missouri territory, Representative John Randolph of Roanoke coined the epithet "dough face" when he lambasted those northern congressmen who actually facilitated his and other southerners' desire for an additional slave state. In March 1820, enough northern representatives voted with the South to permit Missouri's entrance into the Union with slavery. Despite this assistance, Randolph viciously declared:

> I knew *these would give way*.—They were scared at their own dough faces—yes, they were scared at their own dough faces! We had *them*, and if we had wanted *three* more, we could have had them; yes, and if *these* had failed, we could have had three more of these men, whose conscience and morality and religion extend to thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude. You can never find any difficulty in obtaining the support of men whose principles of morality and religion are bounded by thirty six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude![19]

As Congress did not at this time keep a full record of its debates, ambiguity immediately surrounded Randolph's pronouncement, and, as historian Leonard L. Richards accurately

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[19]*Springfield (MA) Hampden Federalist and Public Journal*, April 12, 1820. With "thirty six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude," Randolph was referring to one of the components of the Missouri Compromise finalized in March 1820. In return for Missouri's entrance as a slave state, Maine would join the Union as a free state. In addition, all subsequent states carved out of the territory of the Louisiana Purchase above 36°30´ north latitude (the southern boundary of Missouri) would be free states. For an overview of the Missouri Crisis, see Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), 222-37.

put it, "no one dared to ask for an explanation" from the unstable and violent Virginian.[20] Randolph, who underscored his temper with the accompaniment of high-pitched tirades, often paraded booted and spurred, armed with riding crop and flanked by dogs, about the floor of the House. Members were wisely cautious with his touchy sense of honor.

Newspapers—mostly in the North—therefore engaged in a national debate to ascertain whether Randolph said "doe" or "dough" and to determine what he could possibly have meant with either homophone. Despite the uncertainty, some constant themes ran through the discussion, establishing negative and gendered connotations of "dough face" which would endure through the 1850s. Contemporaries indicted Doughfaces for violating norms of masculinity and of republicanism; moreover, they accused them of treason against the northern household.

Whether rendered as "doe face" or "dough face," the expression implicated the designee's manhood.[21] These men were cowards, frightened into doing the bidding of the South. Comparing these northerners to skittish female deer, commentators remarked that their performance was "emblematical of timidity."[22] When derided as "dough" faces, the defectors' "pallid hue of unbaked pastry" stood in contrast with the "healthful

[20]Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 86.

[21]For a contemporary overview of the various meanings assigned to the term, see, *New Haven, Connecticut Journal*, June 20, 1820; and *Boston Daily Advertiser*, June 22, 1820. For the etymology of "doughface," see Hans Sperber and James N. Tidwell, "Words and Phrases in American Politics," *American Speech* 25, no. 2 (May 1950): 91-100.

[22]*Hudson (NY) Northern Whig*, May 2, 1820; *Windsor, Vermont Journal*, June 12, 1820; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, June 22, 1820. Quotation from *Windsor, Vermont Journal*.

brown" of the finished product.[23] Another explanation for the term originated in a children's game in which girls and boys smeared their faces with dough and wrapped their bodies in sheets to frighten their playmates.[24] Just as these children could become startled at their own spectral physiognomy staring back at them from the mirror, northern representatives showed they were "alarmed at the creatures of their own imaginary formation" and "frightened at their own shadows," thereby resembling "craven spirits who cowed before the storm."[25] When faced with southern cries of disunion should the South not get its way, these northerners buckled under such ominous threats. These men seemed duplicitous and weak, unmasculine and useless.[26]

Connotations of Doughface, in addition to impugning one's manhood, also challenged politicians' adherence to the tenets of virtuous and independent statesmanship enshrined in the republican ideology—the set of political beliefs which guided the American Revolution and remained the bedrock of the nation's political culture in the antebellum period. Republicans sought above all to preserve their political independence, lest they become slaves to others' ambitions. The independent statesman ought to be suspicious of power, as concentrations of it could enable conspiracies to undermine liberty and enslave the people.[27] The ideal "statesman" at the heart of republicanism intersected with the ideal "man" at the core of antebellum gender

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[23]*Boston Daily Advertiser*, June 22, 1820.

[24]Ibid.; *New Haven, Connecticut Journal*, June 20, 1820.

[25]Quotations from, respectively, *New Haven, Connecticut Journal*, June 20, 1820; *City of Washington (District of Columbia) Gazette*, December 14, 1820; and *Hudson (NY) Northern Whig*, May 2, 1820.

[26]*New Haven, Connecticut Journal*, June 20, 1820.

[27]For a brief overview of the tenets of the republican ideology, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, 1967, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 55-93.

constructions. Viewing political culture from this intersection, the ideal of political masculinity crystallizes. One could not be a statesman without first proving oneself a man. Thus, cowardice as a man resulted in servility in politics. If one was timid as a deer in personal life, so too in public life, permitting enslavement by more courageous men—in this case, by imperious southerners.

By disregarding the antislavery beliefs that many critics felt they ought to have espoused as representatives of the free North, Doughfaces subordinated principle to policy and became the "*servile*" tools of others.[28] In light of this course, the "anti-republican"[29] meaning of Doughface becomes clear—those who abandoned morality and principle, those who could be "moulded into any shape."[30] One northern newspaper labeled them "*slave-voter[s]*."[31] This strong appellation can be read in two ways—as referring to those who voted to broaden the demesne of slavery by admitting Missouri and who, in the process, became slaves themselves by conceding to slaveholders. Indeed, as Randolph's diatribe suggests, some southerners held their northern allies in contempt for abandoning their independence—southerners "love the *treason*, but hate the *traitor*."[32] Southern slaveholders chastised their northern accomplices with "the lash of satire," much as they would physically whip slaves who, for their lack of cherished

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[28]*Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows' Falls Advertiser*, May 1, 1820.

[29]*Keene, New-Hampshire Sentinel*, June 3, 1820. During the so-called "Era of Good Feelings," most political disagreement was maintained within a single party—the Democratic-Republicans. "Republican," therefore, could signify both the abstract notion of republicanism or the tenets of the party. However, this distinction is not at all clear, as Republicans heralded their party as the only true adherent to republicanism, thus conflating "Republican" and "republican."

[30]*Carlisle (PA) Republican*, October 6, 1820. See also, *Boston Daily Advertiser*, June 22, 1820; and *Palmyra (NY) Register*, December 6, 1820.

[31]*Providence (RI) Gazette*, August 14, 1820.

[32]*Providence, Rhode-Island American, and General Advertiser*, March 17, 1820. See also, *Hudson (NY) Northern Whig*, May 2, 1820.

autonomy, they could not but hold in contempt.[33] In the antebellum South, the complete abnegation of liberty represented by slavery functioned negatively to define men. White southerners did not see male slaves as men, dependent as they were upon a master's will.[34] So strong were these political norms that, even though Doughfaces gave the South crucial votes, southerners could not recognize them as men due to their violation of republican dictates. Slavery and manhood were mutually exclusive in antebellum political culture.

In flouting republican maxims by surrendering the moral position of the North, Doughfaces not only emasculated and enslaved themselves, but also risked enslaving all white northerners. One of the most serious charges aimed at Doughfaces that persisted into the 1850s was that of treason. Antislavery northerners indicted Doughfaces for treason in domestic terms—by denouncing them for betraying northern households. In leveling this accusation, northern critics voiced their recognition of the differences between white domestic life in the North and in the South. In the process, they also demonstrated how the politics of household functioned by communicating their belief that these differences at home gave rise to disparities in how men conducted themselves in public.

Northerners disappointed with Doughfaces lamented how even New Englanders, who especially ought to have known better, aided the spread of southern domestic values. Just as Doughface treachery ensured that slavery would advance geographically, so too

[33]*Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows' Falls Advertiser*, May 1, 1820.

[34]Greenberg, *Masters and Statesmen*, vii-xi.

would southern domesticity spread culturally. Disloyal northerners permitted southerners rooted in an alien domestic world, where they grew up "nursed in the lap of slavery," to overtake the North. One editor made the linkage between the household and politics explicit by arguing that southern homes yielded distinct political behavior. Describing southern children exposed to slavery, he observed, "They are born little sovereigns." With this upbringing, it was no surprise that southern men "should strive for dominion in public life; and manifest in the councils of the Union the same dispositions, which they have been in the habit of indulging in domestic circles." Doughfaces, yielding to the dictates of southerners accustomed to unconditional obedience, consequently enabled southern "domestic despotism" to translate into political tyranny.[35]

In their initial reaction to Doughfacism in 1820, antislavery northerners traced a flimsy demarcation between public and private, political and domestic spheres in the South. Slaveowners could easily extend the mastery they exercised over their white dependents and slaves to dominate northerners as well. Such unadulterated power rang alarms for sturdy republicans. Just as the Missouri Compromise allowed actual plantation households to spread across space, so too could southern conceptions of mastery gain wider currency. The equivalence between southern domestic and political dominance was anathema to northern men, who valued the home as a refuge from politics, not as the source of political power. Southern ideas of mastery could ultimately poison this sanctified private sphere. Those northerners who facilitated this dismal future could be considered nothing less than traitors to the embattled northern household.

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[35]*Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows' Falls Advertiser*, May 1, 1820. See also, *Amherst (NH) Hillsboro' Telegraph*, March 18, 1820; *Keene, New-Hampshire Sentinel*, April 1, 1820; *Boston Columbian Centinel*, July 19, 1820; and *Providence (RI) Gazette*, August 14, 1820.

Thomas Jefferson famously called the debates over Missouri a "fire bell in the night," knelling the dissolution of the Union.[36] Out of those heated debates, many Americans heralded an enduring compromise. But another legacy emerged from the conflagration, one uncooked by the flames—the Doughfaces. Whether through their duplicitous voting or by actually withdrawing from the House chamber to permit southerners to carry the issue,[37] these men had stayed on the margins—they were "set too near the mouth of the oven."[38] The Missouri Compromise, forged directly in the fire, on the other hand, was celebrated for its "finality" and would become sacrosanct in American political culture.[39] Ironically, it would be those unfinished goods who would outlast the supposedly more thoroughly baked Compromise and would actually engineer its repeal when, reaching the height of their power in the 1850s, the Doughfaces cooked up a new concoction—the doctrine of popular sovereignty. A commentator in 1820 hoped that in the future "none but men of manly minds" would return to Congress.[40] Much to opponents' chagrin, the unpalatable half-baked men would remain a constant in American politics until the Civil War.

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[36]Jefferson quoted in Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 236. Lacy K. Ford notes that fire bells rang with a distinctly southern accent as signals of slave uprisings. Doughfaces promised to quiet such nocturnal alarms by preventing fellow northerners from agitating the issue of slavery, thus avoiding future Missouri Crises and the servile insurrections they could produce. Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 66-67.

[37]One defender of several northerners who voted with the South argued that Randolph's "dough face" epithet referred to those northerners who actually left the House chamber to avoid the vote. Those who had remained to vote with the South, for "the good of their country," acted respectably. *Newark (NJ) Centinel of Freedom*, May 23, 1820.

[38]*Boston Daily Advertiser*, June 22, 1820.

[39]James Buchanan, for example, who would later support the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, which explicitly repealed the Missouri restriction, originally praised the finality of the Compromise. James Buchanan, "Remarks, April 2 and 4, 1836, On the Admission of Arkansas into the Union," in *The Works of James Buchanan*: *Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, ed. John Bassett Moore (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1908-1911), 3:51.

[40]*Hudson (NY) Northern Whig*, May 2, 1820.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOUTHERN PRINCIPLE: POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY AND THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT

> John Randolph sneeringly said—"if we had needed more of them, we should have had them, Sir." And was he not right? and has not the South now, and before now, *got* "more of them"? […] Freemen of the North, of whatever party, shall we follow *such men*?
>
> —*A Bake Pan. For the Dough-Faces*, 1854

With the term itself coined as early as 1820, the concept of Doughfacism underwent further refinement during the antebellum period, reaching its mature formulation by the mid-1850s. In the late 1840s, Democrats added the essential ingredient—the doctrine of popular sovereignty. This principle, unique to the Democracy, ensured that the concept of Doughfacism which took shape after 1848 constituted a distinctly Democratic ideology. While the Whig party and, later, the Know-Nothing party would count among their numbers northern men obsequious to the South, the combination of pliant northerners with a principle that facilitated the expansion of plantation households marked Doughfacism as a coherent ideology and lodged it squarely within the party's broader worldview of Democratic conservatism.

Although Americans nationwide had lionized the Missouri Compromise as the definitive settlement of the issue of territorial slavery, the acquisition of additional territory wrenched from a subjugated Mexico in 1848 raised anew the question of slavery's future in the Union. Party warhorse Lewis Cass of Michigan first popularized

the idea of popular sovereignty in a public letter announcing his candidacy for the 1848 Democratic presidential nomination.[41] With this solution, Cass hoped to remove the contentious issue of slavery from national politics by granting territorial settlers, not Congress, the exclusive right to decide on slavery. Cass explained his rationale: "Leave to the people who will be affected by this question, to adjust it upon their own responsibility, and in their own manner, and we shall render another tribute to the original principles of our government, and furnish another guarantee for its permanence and prosperity."[42] Cass subsequently received the nomination, but lost the election. Congress did selectively incorporate popular sovereignty into the Compromise of 1850, allowing some territories to decide on the legality of slavery.[43] The doctrine reemerged as a divisive test of party loyalty when Illinois senator Stephen A. Douglas used it to frame the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. This legislation organized the territories of Nebraska and Kansas under the parameters of popular sovereignty, thereby reopening portions of the Louisiana Purchase to slavery. Many northerners recoiled in horror at the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the prospect of slavery spreading to previously

[41]Cass's idea was not the only Democratic answer to the territorial question. James Buchanan, also announcing his candidacy in a public letter, proposed the extension of the Missouri line of 36°30´ north latitude across the new territories. His initial position is significant in light of the fact that he later ran on a popular sovereignty platform in 1856. Democrats, both North and South, went to great lengths to assure voters that, despite his early idea, he had emphatically converted to popular sovereignty. James Buchanan to Charles Kessler et al., Washington, D. C., August 25, 1847, in *The Works of James Buchanan*, 7:385-87. This letter is known as Buchanan's "Harvest Home" letter. See also, Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 56-58, 69-76.

[42]Cass to A. O. P. Nicholson, Washington, D. C., December 24, 1847, in *Letter from Hon. Lewis Cass, of Michigan, On The War and the Wilmot Proviso* (Washington, D. C.: Blair and Rives, 1847), 7.

[43]Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 115-16. New Mexico and Utah territories were organized according to popular sovereignty.

free areas. The fact that a substantial number of northern Democrats voted for the legislation only compounded their disgust.[44]

While Democrats originally seized on popular sovereignty as a means to deflate divisions over territorial slavery, the doctrine served an additional purpose—it allowed Doughfaces to rebut the negative gendered connotations attached to them during the Missouri Crisis and to posture as the defenders of white families in the North and in the South. As in 1820, politicians in the 1850s rendered political differences in terms of antagonistic conceptions of the household. Virginian Muscoe R. H. Garnett, writing in 1850, for instance, showed that the cult of domesticity and its accompanying ideology of separate spheres did not constitute a national phenomenon. He attacked northerners because "they divide the household into separate interests" coded by gender, thereby undermining organic domestic hierarchies with false notions of equality. The result was not only sexual profligacy but the inadequacy of northern leaders in comparison to "the superiority of Southern statesmen" who benefited from "the management of the little commonwealth of the plantation [which] is an excellent training for the administration of a larger State."[45]

In 1854 a northern pamphleteer, attempting to "bake" Doughfaces out of their complacent prosouthernism regarding the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, responded directly to Garnett's charges by attacking southern families. He defined the

[44]In the 1854 Congressional elections, sixty-six of ninety-one Democrats representing free states lost their seats—punishment for the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 175. For an overview of popular sovereignty and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, see Willard Carl Klunder, "Lewis Cass, Stephen Douglas, and Popular Sovereignty: The Demise of the Democratic Party," in *Politics and Culture of the Civil War Era: Essays in Honor of Robert W. Johannsen*, eds. Daniel McDonough and Kenneth W. Noe (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehana University Press, 2006), 129-53.

[45][Muscoe R. H. Garnett], *The Union, Past and Future: How it Works, and How to Save It. By a Citizen of Virginia*, 3rd ed. (Washington: John T. Towers, 1850), 25-29, quotations on 25 and 28.

southern home as "a *household including slaves—their families* are a unit." Lacking "separate interests," there were no barriers to miscegenation, with the outcome that planters "*sell* the members of the 'domestic hearth' (as they sometimes condescendingly call them) not excepting their own children!!" The author urged Doughfaces to cease serving as "pimps and peddlers" to such licentiousness.[46] These two pamphlets illustrate that politicians continued to practice the politics of household by distinguishing between white northern and southern families and by maintaining that these distinct domesticities yielded different types of politicians. Doughfaces in the late 1840s and 1850s, therefore, by brandishing a doctrine that they claimed amounted to a manly defense of the prerogatives of northern and southern household heads, exposed themselves once again to charges of unmasculine treason against the northern home due to the latent prosouthern bias of popular sovereignty.

Democrats touted popular sovereignty as an inherently masculine doctrine that stood in stark contrast to the "puling sentimentality"[47] of moral zealots such as abolitionists. As such, popular sovereignty merged with the larger ideology of Democratic conservatism, which held that Democrats ought to be amoral referees standing aloof from efforts to implement normative visions of society. Democratic conservatism congealed in reaction to the partisan upheaval of the 1850s. During this period of flux, Democrats witnessed the coalescence of parties which they feared would

[46][Leonard Marsh], *A Bake-Pan. For the Dough-Faces. By One of Them* (Burlington, VT: C. Goodrich, 1854), 10-11, 17, 25, 35, 47, 64, quotations on 11.

[47]Lewis Cass, "Nebraska and Kansas. Speech of Hon. Lewis Cass, of Michigan, In the Senate, February 20, 1854," *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Cong., 1st sess., 1853-54, appendix:276.

impose exclusionary conceptions of the good society through the mechanisms of the federal government. Democrats subsequently melded the antislavery views of Republicans and abolitionists, the anti-Catholicism and nativism of Know-Nothings, and the enforced prohibition sought by a politicized temperance movement into a monolithic enemy labeled "fanaticism." This foe, they warned, would trespass upon not only individual self-determination, but also against the sacrosanct boundaries of the household.

With the term "fanaticism," Democrats singled out what they saw as the inappropriate imposition of normative morality by governmental means, in opposition to which they championed their "conservative" tolerance for diversity. New York's Horatio Seymour posited that the "meddling theory of government," which "claims the exclusive championship of morals, religion and liberty," served as the "common sentiment" animating fanatics.[48] Illinois congressman Samuel S. Marshall, in a remarkable address tellingly entitled, "Insanity of the Times," explicitly grounded Republican and Know-Nothing fanaticism in a contemporary mindset where "there is no folly so great, no theory in religion, morals, or politics, so wild and visionary, that it will not find numerous and zealous advocates among our people."[49] Democrats situated their conservatism in a larger indictment of political orientations stemming from "false theories, ancient dogmas, and miserable fallacies,"[50] "wild and crazy theories," and dangerous "*isms.*"[51]

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[48]*Speech of the Hon. Horatio Seymour at Springfield, Mass., July 4, 1856* (Buffalo, NY: 1856), 3.

[49]Samuel S. Marshall, "Insanity of the Times—Present Condition of Political Parties. Speech of Hon. S. S. Marshall, of Illinois, In the House of Representatives, August 6, 1856," *Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1855-56, appendix:1226.

[50]David Barclay, "National Politics. Speech of Hon. David Barclay, of Pennsylvania, In the House of Representatives, August 6, 1856," *Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1855-56, appendix:1088.

Characterizing their political struggles in terms of a war against fanatical impulses more broadly, as opposed to discrete political parties, Democrats also took the time to denounce "free-love societies,"[52] "agrarianism," "higher-lawism,"[53] "Maine Law-ism, Woman's Rights-ism, and every other ism that can be conceived of."[54]

The fusion of all these moral impulses into one "medley of united fanaticisms" provided a rhetorical plane on which Democrats north and south could cooperate.[55] Popular sovereignty thus granted the Democracy incredible flexibility, as state and local politicians, whether protesting temperance in Delaware, railing against nativism in Massachusetts, or defending slaveholding as the basis of legislative apportionment in North Carolina, could denounce their enemies as fanatics who impinged upon another's autonomy.[56] At the same time, Democrats deployed the ideology pragmatically in order

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[51]Marshall, "Insanity of the Times," 1227. Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. notes that antebellum conservatives in Virginia shared in a wider conservative tradition, dating back to Edmund Burke, of denouncing reform efforts and political orientations rooted in abstract theory, as opposed to experience. Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., *The Rhetoric of Conservatism: The Virginia Convention of 1829-30 and the Conservative Tradition in the South* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1982), xvi, 84-89, 164-69.

[52]Marshall, "Insanity of the Times," 1227.

[53]James A. Stewart, "The Slavery Question. Speech of Hon. James A. Stewart, of Maryland, In the House of Representatives, July 23, 1856," *Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1855-56, appendix:992.

[54]Daniel S. Dickinson, "Speech on the Maine Law Question. Delivered at a Democratic Ratification Meeting, Held at the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, November 1, 1854," in *Speeches, Correspondence, Etc., of the Late Daniel S. Dickinson, of New York. Including: Addresses on Important Public Topics; Speeches in the State and United States Senate, and in Support of the Government during the Rebellion; Correspondence, Private and Political (Collected and Arranged by Mrs. Dickinson), Poems (Collected and Arranged by Mrs. Mygatt), Etc*., ed. John R. Dickinson (New York: G. P. Putnam and Son, 1867), 1:506. "Maine Law-ism" referred to Maine's temperance law which was simultaneously lauded and feared as a prototype for other states.

[55]Marshall, "Insanity of the Times," 1227. See also, "The Union—The Democratic Party—The Administration," *The United States Democratic Review*, June 1856, 435-46. Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. similarly argues that antebellum southern conservatism entailed more than a defense of slavery. Bruce, *The Rhetoric of Conservatism*, xi, 92, 175-76.

[56]*Dover, Delaware State Reporter*, February 15 and 19, 1856; *A Speech Delivered at Webster, Mass., Providence, R. I., Nashua, N. H., and Other Places, during the Presidential Campaign of 1856, in Support*

to avoid the same charges of theoretical zealotry for which they denounced fanatics. They often resisted following popular sovereignty to its logical, and unpopular, conclusions. Polygamy in Utah, for example, despite its sanction by the territorial government, did not receive Democratic approval as an expression of popular sovereignty.[57] Democratic conservatism, as such, hardly constituted a consistent ideology; rather, it was a remarkably effective way to gloss over political divisions within a party that, unlike all others in the 1850s, managed to retain a diverse, national constituency. In fact, Democrats would have countered, the tendency to eschew ideological consistency itself signified masculine pragmatism.

The difference between conservatism and fanaticism thus took on gendered meanings, as Democrats contended that it was a sign of masculine independence to decide one's own moral code, as opposed to feminine submission to moral absolutes. While those northerners dedicated to moral progress praised themselves as "Reformers harnessed for the moral war,"[58] Democrats derided groups such as abolitionists as "snuffy old women," "lank-jawed, hungry-eyed men,"[59] and "busy-bodies and meddlers."[60] Senator Daniel S. Dickinson of New York rendered fanaticism itself as a woman,

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of James Buchanan, by George B. Loring, of Salem (Boston: Office of the Boston Post, 1856), 3-10; *To the People of North-Carolina* (Raleigh: Office of the North-Carolina Standard, 1856), 1-4.

[57]Richard Franklin Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* (1990; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 89-91; James Buchanan, "First Annual Message, December 8, 1857," in *The Works of James Buchanan*, 10:151-54; James Buchanan, "Proclamation on the Rebellion in Utah, April 6, 1858," in *The Works of James Buchanan*, 10:202-6; Kenneth M. Stampp, *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 199-203.

[58]*Nebraska: A Poem, Personal and Political* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854), 18.

[59]S. W. C., "Wisdom and Folly," *The United States Democratic Review*, July 1856, 574.

[60]Loring, *A Speech Delivered at Webster, Mass.*, 6.

predicting that "fanaticism, with her loins girt about, and shod with sandals, will, like Peter the Hermit" wander into the territories of Kansas and Nebraska.[61] Allowing another to dictate moral norms paled beside a conservative moral relativism by which each white man had the right to worship, drink, and own slaves as he saw fit. Horatio Seymour aptly summarized, "The principle of local and distributed jurisdiction, not only makes good government, but it also makes good manhood."[62]

As the legislative manifestation of Democratic conservatism, popular sovereignty would, Democrats explained, reinforce manhood and bulwark the prerogatives of all household heads. Dickinson, who first proposed popular sovereignty in Congress, boasted that the policy represented faith in "the capacity of man for his own government." He added that if political leaders deem an individual man "incapable of discharging this duty himself, [than] he should not be intrusted with the destiny of others." In other words, doubting the efficacy of popular sovereignty amounted to distrust of American men's individual autonomy. Stephen A. Douglas suggested that succumbing to "congressional dictation" in the territories was "degrading," while Cass lamented that "pseudo reformers are entering our domestic circles, and striving to break up our family organizations." Samuel Tilden of New York, demonstrating that popular sovereignty did not only apply to the territories, argued against a temperance law in his

[61]Daniel S. Dickinson, "Speech Delivered at Delhi, Delaware County, N. Y., at a Meeting of the 'Hardshell' or National Democracy of the County, September 29, 1854," in *Speeches, Correspondence, Etc., of the Late Daniel S. Dickinson*, 1:494.

[62]*Speech of the Hon. Horatio Seymour*, 2. Historian John Stauffer describes how New England writers reevaluated their manhood in light of popular views that southerners were more masculine. These writers began to eschew sentimentality because "Moral certainty was also gendered: it meant an adherence to principle, and tended toward emasculation." John Stauffer, "Embattled Manhood and New England Writers, 1860-1870," in *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War*, eds. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 133.

state, claiming that such legislation "invades the rightful domain of the individual judgment and conscience, and takes a step backward toward that barbarian age when the wages of labor, the prices of commodities, a man's food and clothing, were dictated to him by a government calling itself paternal."[63] Presumably, Democrats had no qualms with paternalism, provided its subjects were African American and white female dependents. When paternalism encroached on a white man's self-determination, on the other hand, it threatened emasculation. Democrats stressed their dedication to preserving the integrity of all white households; yet, as would become evident, southern masters received the most consideration.

Despite assurances that popular sovereignty treated all families impartially, dependency on popular sovereignty left northern Democrats susceptible to the same accusations of unmasculine, Doughface treason as in 1820. Theoretical inconsistencies wracked popular sovereignty, producing a resultant bias in favor of southern households. The theoretical poverty of popular sovereignty provided its malleability, yet poisoned the Democrats that attempted to use it by exposing them as tools of the South. The most obvious flaw was the uncertainty as to whether a territorial legislature could outlaw slavery during the territorial phase or whether only a constitutional convention could prohibit slavery when actually applying for statehood. Northerners favored the former as settlers could prohibit slavery soon after a territory's organization. Southerners,

[63]Daniel S. Dickinson, "Speech on the Acquisition of Territory, and the Formation of Governments for the Territories.—The Doctrine of 'Popular Sovereignty' Proposed and Defended. Delivered in the Senate of the United States, January 12, 1848," in *Speeches, Correspondence, Etc., of the Late Daniel S. Dickinson*, 1:230, 241; Stephen A. Douglas, "The Territorial Question. Speech of Mr. Douglas, of Illinois, In the Senate, March 13 and 14, 1850," *Congressional Globe*, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1849-50, appendix 1:370; Cass, "Nebraska and Kansas," 276; Samuel J. Tilden "Coercive Temperance," October 3, 1855, in *The Writings and Speeches of Samuel J. Tilden*, ed. John Bigelow (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1885), 1:283.

meanwhile, preferred the latter schedule, which would permit slavery to gain a foothold in a territory, thereby increasing the likelihood that it would come into the Union as a slave state. Janus-faced, the Democracy appealed to the sections differently to win elections, profiting from what David M. Potter labeled "a proposal possessing all the charms of ambiguity."[64]

Due to a deeper theoretical impurity, moreover, the dispute between the southern and northern interpretations was to some extent an academic debate. Democrats proclaimed that popular sovereignty allowed individuals to determine their own "domestic relations." This absolute autonomy functioned only so long as a referendum never occurred, for when one side lost, it would have to yield to the dictates of others. James Buchanan, referencing the idea at the heart of popular sovereignty, admonished, "Without a cheerful submission to the will of the majority no democratic government can exist."[65] Yet "cheerful submission" would inherently deprive some citizens of masculine independence and self-determination. Popular sovereignty placated dueling moralities and conceptions of domesticity only so long as a vote never took place. As one critical congressman tartly observed, "Well, it seems that you have got the Kansas-Nebraska bill passed; and the doctrine is […] a sort of panacea to be applied to heal all divisions and all diversity of feeling in this great Union." Pointing to the rampant violence in Kansas between free-soil and proslavery settlers, he mocked the presumption of this severely flawed principle.[66]

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[64]Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 57-59.

[65]Chronicle of the Month, *The United States Democratic Review*, June 1856, 516.

[66]Jonas A. Hughston, "The Slavery Question. Speech of Hon. J. A. Hughston, of New York, In the House of Representatives, April 8, 1856," *Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1855-56, appendix:365. Another obvious flaw in the doctrine, to which most white Americans were blind, was that African

Many antislavery northerners maintained that the mere presence of slavery, because it degraded free labor and debauched morals, automatically closed the territories to northern families. Peaceful coexistence between proslavery and antislavery families was, therefore, impossible. The doctrine's effectiveness required an unrealistic suspension of moral judgment so that antagonistic family types could interact in what approximated an amoral state of nature. This theoretical equilibrium broke down in violence long before Kansas was ready for statehood. Congressman Joshua R. Giddings explained that the very passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act amounted to Congressional approval of slavery in the territories and would "exclude free men from it; for, as I have said, free laborers, bred up with feelings of self-respect, cannot, and will not, mingle with slaves."[67] One anti-Cass pamphlet similarly warned that northern families would not emigrate because "They will not expose their children and their children's children to such deplorable contingencies."[68] Slaveholders were also wary about relocating if slavery could eventually be outlawed. Yet, many non-slaveholding southerners did move to Kansas as a vanguard, even though the enslaved population never numbered much more than two hundred. Slaveholders could make Kansas a slave state without risking

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Americans, although the most affected by any decision regarding territorial slavery, were not accorded sovereignty. One politician who pointed out this inconsistency was Joshua R. Giddings. See "Moral Responsibility of Statesmen. Speech of Hon. J. R. Giddings, of Ohio, In the House of Representatives, May 16, 1854," *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Cong., 1st sess., 1853-54, appendix:988. See also, James L. Huston, "Putting African Americans in the Center of National Political Discourse: The Strange Fate of Popular Sovereignty," in *Politics and Culture of the Civil War Era: Essays in Honor of Robert W. Johannsen*, eds. Daniel McDonough and Kenneth W. Noe (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehana University Press, 2006), 109-20.

[67]Giddings, "Moral Responsibility of Statesmen," 986-89, quotation on 989. See also, Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 173-74.

[68]Russell Jarvis, *Facts and Arguments against the Election of General Cass, Respectfully Addressed to the Whigs and Democrats of All the Free States. By an Anti-Abolitionist* (New York: R. Craighead, 1848), 61.

the loss of their slaves, while free-soilers perceived inherent barriers to settling Kansas, revealing the latent prosouthernism of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.[69]

As if these theoretical flaws were not enough, Doughfaces exposed themselves to charges of treason with overt declarations that popular sovereignty was preservative of southern mastery. In his original articulation of the idea, Cass explained, "For, if the relation of master and servant may be regulated or annihilated by its [Congress's] legislation, so may the relation of husband and wife, of parent and child, and of any other condition which our institutions and the habits of our society recognize." Recoiling at this eventuality, he queried, "What would be thought if Congress should undertake to prescribe the terms of marriage in New York, or to regulate the authority of parents over their children in Pennsylvania?"[70] Although he suggested that popular sovereignty guaranteed the inviolability of all homes nationwide, Cass illustrated that the primary concern was to safeguard the specific relations of dependency—those of "master and servant"—that composed the plantation household and forged southern mastery. He thereby reassured southerners that his doctrine would keep an encroaching and paternal federal government from interfering with their own paternalism at home.

Faced with such blatant appeals to southern mastery, antislavery northerners cried treason. One northerner complained that southerners rejected all attempts to limit slavery "as an invasion of their domestic hearths, as fraught with insurrection, [and] massacre to themselves." Unfortunately, northerners such as Cass echoed this refrain when they catered to southern demands, an action which betrayed their own domestic values as these Doughfaces had been "born and trained at firesides where slavery was ever

[69]Freehling, *Secessionists Triumphant*, 123-28.

[70]Cass to A. O. P. Nicholson, Washington, D. C., December 24, 1847, 4.

regarded as a criminal violation of natural rights, a severe moral and political evil."[71] Antislavery northerners denounced the "northern doughface[s] with a cotton heart" and deployed familiar gendered slurs, attacking Stephen A. Douglas, the "Little Giant" himself, because, lacking "the stature of a full-grown man / […] / this Tom Thumb Titan is not seen / Save when he climbs upon a negro's back."[72] Such unmasculine traitors as Douglas numbered among slaveholders' dependents, as they required southern patronage to appear politically full-grown. The servile, effeminate, unrepublican, and traitorous reputation Doughfaces earned in 1820 clearly endured.

Doughfaces created a distinct niche for themselves in the late 1840s and 1850s by transgressing sectional boundaries of domesticity to placate southern anxieties with popular sovereignty. In doing so, however, they betrayed the northern household. Mocking northerners so enamored of the South that they aspired to planter status themselves, a critical poem implicated Doughface masculinity:

> The native southron is a nobleman
> Contrasted with the turncoat of the north,
> ……..
> He has not southern hospitality,
> ……...
> And he has not the southern chivalry,
> Which cowards dread and gallant men admire.[73]

Excoriated by antislavery northerners, Doughfaces were simultaneously not manly enough to conform to southern domestic conventions. In the short-term, this liminal

[71]Jarvis, *Facts and Arguments against the Election of General Cass*, 3.

[72]*Nebraska: A Poem*, 22, 12.

[73]Ibid., 41.

position provided Doughfaces with political capital. Nonetheless, rejection by the North and inability to sufficiently satisfy the South would eventually leave them homeless.

CHAPTER 4

DOUGHFACES TRIUMPHANT: THE 1856 BUCHANAN CAMPAIGN

I am not a man, but a President—a democratic President.

—*Leaven for Doughfaces*, 1856

Stressing that James Buchanan, the 1856 Democratic presidential candidate, was devoted to treating all Americans fairly, one campaign document informed Pennsylvania voters that "Whenever he emerged from his quiet home, it was to demand the recognition of all the guarantees of the Constitution to all the States."[74] Buchanan and his fellow presidential aspirants endured scrutiny not only of their public record, but also of the type of home from which they "emerged" into the political arena, as observers judged the candidates' political legitimacy based upon their domestic lives. Democrats had to work especially hard as their man, in addition to being "the consummate 'doughface,'" [75] was also a bachelor, a liability for any politician. Because of his marital status, which both supporters and opponents seized upon, Buchanan's candidacy constitutes an exceptional example of how the politics of household functioned. The Democrat's lack of a normative family led many to dwell on the type of "quiet home" Buchanan hailed from in order to predict the type of home, northern or southern, he would favor as president.

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[74]Democratic State Central Committee of Pennsylvania, *Memoir of James Buchanan, Of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman and Son, 1856), 11.

[75]Stampp, *America in 1857*, 48.

James Buchanan of Pennsylvania led his party to victory in 1856 over John C. Frémont, candidate of the exclusively northern Republican party, and Millard Fillmore, the nominee of the Know-Nothing party, which counted its main support in the Upper South. Fillmore also had the backing of a rump convention of Whigs, who were defunct as a nationally competitive organization. The Republican and Know-Nothing parties made their presidential election debuts in 1856, and neither the Whigs nor the Know-Nothings would survive the campaign.[76] This transitional election therefore marked the end of the second American party system, which had pitted Whigs against Democrats since the 1830s, as well as the commencement of a new two-party system matching Democrats against Republicans.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of this campaign was the politicization of the candidates' marital status and family life. Reporting on rumors such as those surrounding Buchanan's "celibacy" and Frémont's elopement, the *New York Herald* lamented, "What has all this to do with the capacity, public services and real eminence of our distinguished men?" The paper answered its own question when it observed that electioneers sought "some advantages of a domestic character—in this struggle to get into the White House."[77] In 1856 discussion of the candidates' domestic lives intersected with campaign concerns. Amidst the charged anti-Catholicism of the Know-Nothing campaign, for example, Frémont's suspected marriage by a Catholic priest as well as the alleged Catholic ancestry of Fillmore's deceased wife represented more than entertaining

[76]Frémont also ran as the nominee of the North Americans—northern antislavery defectors from the Know-Nothing party. This defection resulted in the primarily southern constituency of the Know-Nothings. For a brief overview of the election, see Nichols and Klein, "Election of 1856," 1005-33.

[77]Quotations from, respectively, *New York Herald*, July 1 and 20, 1856.

speculations.[78] Indeed, the *Herald*, which endorsed Frémont, soon abandoned its principled course and assailed Buchanan's bachelorhood.[79] In a political culture premised on competing conceptions of the household and in which a political actor's domestic relations determined his political viability, it followed that Buchanan, seemingly without a household, elicited the most scrutiny.

As the only bachelor to serve as president in American history, Buchanan required a more creative defense than that which sufficed for Doughfaces in the past. Critics could paint him as a traitor to more than just the northern family—they also accused him of treason against American families and manhood more generally. In marked contrast to steady advancement in his public career—serving as Pennsylvania legislator, Unites States representative and senator, secretary of state, and minister to Russia and to the Court of St. James—Buchanan's heterosexual romantic life stalled early. He became engaged in 1819 at age twenty-eight to Ann Coleman, who died possibly from suicide, before they married.[80] Buchanan clung to the traumatic loss of his betrothed as the reason for his self-enforced bachelorhood.

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[78]*Columbus, Ohio State Journal*, September 17, 1856; *New York Herald*, July 1, 11, 19, 20, August 1, and September 19, 1856; *Sacramento Daily Democratic State Journal*, August 13, 1856.

[79]In August 1856 an account, allegedly provided by Buchanan, that sought to explain his bachelorhood appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Although containing many errors, multiple papers reprinted it, and the *Herald* concluded that "the story is published by the Buchanan party as an electioneering document." Arguing that this Democratic ploy legitimized discussion of Buchanan's private life, the *Herald* promptly began to assail his bachelorhood. Quotation from *New York Herald*, July 23, 1856. See also, Editor's Drawer, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, August 1856, 421-22; *New York Herald* July 1, 11, 19, 20, 23, August 1, 7, and October 17; *Madison, Wisconsin Patriot*, August 23, 1856; *Sacramento Daily Democratic State Journal*, August 20, 1856; *Stockton (CA) Weekly San Joaquin Republican*, August 23, 1856; and Philip G. Auchampaugh, "James Buchanan, The Bachelor of the White House: An Inquiry on the Subject of Feminine Influence in the Life of Our Fifteenth President," *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 20, no. 1 (July 1938): 160-61.

[80]Philip S. Klein, *President James Buchanan: A Biography* (1962; repr., Newton, CT: American Political Biography Press, 2006), 27-35.

At the same time, Buchanan may have been involved in a relationship even more unspeakable, not the least because antebellum Americans did not have an appropriate vocabulary with which to describe it.[81] Buchanan enjoyed a close, lifetime friendship with Alabama senator and fellow bachelor William R. King who died in 1853 while serving as vice president under Franklin Pierce. Building on contemporary gossip, such as one congressman's reference to the two men as "Buchanan & his wife," and surviving circumstantial evidence, imaginative historians have filled in the gaps, elaborating a possible romantic and sexual relationship between the two Democrats.[82] Whether or not their bond transcended friendship, the intimacy between the two men did not escape the notice of contemporaries.[83]

Even without such speculation, bachelorhood itself represented a profound transgression against both American political culture, in which domesticity and

[81]On antebellum Americans' reluctance to admit the very existence of male homosexuality, see Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 251-52.

[82]Jean H. Baker, Buchanan's most recent, and most critical, biographer, lends credence to the possibility of Buchanan's homosexuality. In fact, she unfairly dwells on his bachelorhood as the defining aspect of his character, his politics, and his failed presidency. She describes a perennially lonely man who enjoyed the friendship of southerners, leading him to advance the interests of that section politically and to protect southern families. Baker writes, "For the bachelor Buchanan, slavery emerged as a domestic affair in two senses—first, because it was under the constitutional jurisdiction of the states as a local matter, and second, because it affected the families of southerners." Jean H. Baker, *James Buchanan* (New York: Times Books, 2004), 18-22, 25-26, 28, 33, 78, 137-38, 150-52, quotation on 33, congressman quoted on 25. For a differing view of Buchanan's sexuality and its influence on his politics, see Auchampaugh, "James Buchanan, The Bachelor of the White House," 161-63, 227-34.

[83]Buchanan's campaign biography, for example, attempted to turn what was possibly a politically awkward relationship between the two men into a boon for Buchanan, by emphasizing his close relationship with a well-respected southerner. His biographer quotes an observer who, in describing Buchanan's home, wrote, "I was much gratified in finding in his library a likeness of the late Vice-President King, whom he loved (and who did not?) He declared that he was the purest public man that he ever knew, and that during his intimate acquaintance of thirty years he had never known him to perform a selfish act." R. G. Horton, *The Life and Public Services of James Buchanan. Late Minister to England and Formerly Minister to Russia, Senator and Representative in Congress, And Secretary of State: Including The Most Important of His State Papers* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856), 424.

statesmanship mutually reinforced one another, and, more specifically, against southern constructions of mastery. Nancy Cott finds that in the late nineteenth century marriage conferred male citizenship. As the state defined marriage, deviation from accepted practices amounted to treason. Additionally, in a southern context, manhood defined as mastery assumed marriage and control of household dependents as prerequisites. Buchanan—unmarried, childless, and slaveless—seemed to strike out on all counts. Adding one more barrier to Buchanan's candidacy, the Democracy prided itself as the most masculine party and indeed was less open than was the Whig party to female participation. While bachelorhood certainly bore an unmasculine stigma, the more serious transgression was not the lack of virility but the absence of household mastery, as, in the politics of household, political legitimacy began at home.[84]

As Democrats struggled to portray their seemingly unmasculine candidate as another hero in the vein of Andrew Jackson, Buchanan's bachelorhood did present them with an opportunity to bind him more closely to the principle of popular sovereignty and to depict him as *the* national candidate. Buchanan's potential ability to rise above all households whether northern or southern, because he did not head a normative family of his own, allowed Democrats to craft an image of him as the ideal moderator of sectional passions, moral visions, and contrasting conceptions of the family—a true reflection of the amoral refereeing to which popular sovereignty aspired. As an accurate embodiment of that doctrine, however, Buchanan was also offered to southern audiences as prosouthern. This selective presentation, as well as antislavery opponents' contention

[84]Nancy F. Cott, "'Giving Character to Our Whole Civil Polity': Marriage and the Public Order in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *U. S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays*, eds. Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Kathryn Kish Sklar (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 107-21; Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted*, 82-87; Glover, *Southern Sons*, 115, 132-34.

that Buchanan's lack of a family left him unable to understand the distinct needs of northern households, consequently exposed him to charges of Doughface treason.

Democrats heralded Buchanan as the ideal national candidate capable of placating their bisectional party and the nation it supposedly represented in two ways. First, campaigners equated him with popular sovereignty, because he stood on a platform that included that doctrine. Democrats repeatedly emphasized that the "spirit of the Democratic party resides in its principles more than in its men."[85] Jean H. Baker notes that antebellum politicians understood platforms as a tool with which to differentiate political parties in a metaphorical sense—platforms functioned as "a special place for Democrats to stand during the campaign."[86] Democrats employed such language as they debated the plank-by-plank construction of a platform and which candidate should mount it. As popular sovereignty was a doctrine that could supposedly balance sectional interests, Howell Cobb could declare, "The platform we stand upon is as broad as the Union and as national as the constitution, and invites to its defence patriots of all parties and all sections."[87] Democrats celebrated their "Cincinnati platform," so named because the party's 1856 national convention held in that city crafted it, as a large enough stage

[85]This sentiment was voiced by the Illinois delegation at the Cincinnati convention when they, after supporting another contender for the nomination, swung behind Buchanan to help make his nomination unanimous. *Proceedings of the National Democratic Convention, Held in Cincinnati, June 2-6, 1856. Reported for the Cincinnati Enquirer* (Cincinnati: Enquirer Steam Print, 1856), 24. See also, Chronicle of the Month, *The United States Democratic Review*, June 1856, 515.

[86]Baker, *Affairs of Party*, 285.

[87]*Speech of Hon. Howell Cobb, Of Georgia, Delivered in Concord, N. H., At a Mass Meeting of the Democratic Party of Merrimac County* (n. d.), 12.

upon which the whole nation could unite.[88] With core principles enshrined in the platform, the candidate who stood upon it became the physical manifestation of those ideals; thus, Buchanan, similarly, was obviously a "man upon whom all can unite."[89]

Republicans and Know-Nothings also testified to Buchanan's identification with popular sovereignty through their criticism of him as weak and overly dependent upon the Cincinnati platform. It appeared to many as if Buchanan had "renounce[d] his Identity" in professing his dedication to the platform.[90] Know-Nothing supporter Charles B. Calvert of Maryland commented that Millard Fillmore's "manly independence, in qualifying his acceptance of the American [Know-Nothing] platform, stands out in bold relief, when contrasted with the subserviency of the acceptance of his competitor."[91] Detractors went further than simply noting that Buchanan had subsumed himself into a certain platform; they attacked him for his specific association with the repugnant doctrine of popular sovereignty. One campaign song presented the issue presciently, if crudely, by having Buchanan declare:

> The South "demands more room"—the West and North
> must bow,
> And the East must knuckle down—and the Niggers hold the plow,

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[88]The Cincinnati platform reads, "the American Democracy recognize and adopt the principles contained in the organic laws establishing the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska as embodying the only sound and safe solution of the 'slavery question' upon which the great national idea of the people of this whole country can repose in its determined conservatism of the Union." "Democratic Platform of 1856," in *National Party Platforms, 1840-1964*, eds. Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 25.

[89]*Proceedings of the National Democratic Convention, Held in Cincinnati*, 35. See also, William Barksdale, "Presidential Election. Speech of Hon. W. Barksdale, of Mississippi, In the House of Representatives, July 23, 1856," *Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1855-56, appendix:1183.

[90]*James Buchanan, His Doctrines and Policy: As Exhibited by Himself and Friends* (New York: Tribune Office, 1856), 9.

[91]*Buchanan's Political Record: Let the South Beware!* (1856), 11-12.

For "Platform" James am I.[92]

Critics who attacked Buchanan did so with familiar insinuations of unmasculine subserviency to the South—in this case dependency upon a prosouthern platform.

Despite Democratic claims to honor principles over men, Buchanan was not a mere cipher.[93] He brought distinct advantages as a candidate once supporters stumbled upon a way to overcome the potential handicap of his marital status by boldly branding him a superior statesman due to his bachelorhood—the second means by which Democrats offered Buchanan as the lone national candidate. As they explained it, a bachelor seemed predisposed to standing on such an inclusive platform as that of popular sovereignty. Immediately after Buchanan's nomination, Pennsylvanian Samuel W. Black rose to convey his state's appreciation to the Democratic national convention and also to assuage any remaining anxieties. In what would become a theme of the campaign, Black told the raucous crowd:

> Now let me set Mr. Buchanan right on the matrimonial question (hurra! hurra for old Buch!) Though our beloved chieftain has not, in his own person, exactly (laughter) fulfilled (renewed laughter) the duties that every man owes to the sex, and to society, there is a reason. Ever since James Buchanan was a marrying man, he has been wedded to THE CONSTITUTION, *and in Pennsylvania we do not allow bigamy*. (The Convention flings its hats to the ceiling.)[94]

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[92]*The Life of the Hon. James Buchanan, As Written by Himself, And Set to Music by an Old Democrat, To the Tune of "Poor Old Horse Let Him Die!" Price—"Half a Jimmy!"* (Lancaster, Near Wheatland, PA: 1856), 8. Even this pamphlet's place of publication is a jab at Buchanan, who often wrote "Wheatland, Near Lancaster" as the return address on his correspondence.

[93]Newspaperman Murat Halstead, with characteristic wit, accurately criticized Buchanan's seeming lack of substance and principles, claiming he could easily wear "either a Northern or Southern face," an attribute which could "combine the radical and conservative sections of the [Democratic] party North and South." *Trimmers, Trucklers and Temporizers: Notes of Murat Halstead from the Political Conventions of 1856*, eds. William B. Hesseltine and Rex G. Fisher (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1961), 24.

[94]*Proceedings of the National Democratic Convention, Held in Cincinnati*, 36. See also, *Columbus, Ohio State Journal*, September 17, 1856.

This remarkable utterance demonstrates one way in which Democrats sought to alleviate fears over Buchanan's manhood. Buchanan was not guilty of treason in not fulfilling the "duties" of a man; rather, he practiced a higher form of statesmanship. Black translated bachelorhood into a sort of monastic abstention from a more worldly union of flesh that could only distract less pure statesmen from their mission. In this rendering, bachelorhood in private life paralleled the amoral neutrality of Democratic conservatism, as both promised an unbiased orientation.

While Black contended that bachelorhood enhanced statesmanship, one pamphleteer located the same benefit in childlessness. Lacking his own progeny, the nation was Buchanan's charge. The author asserted that "Like Washington, Madison, and Jackson, Mr. Buchanan is childless. God has denied these benefactors children, 'that a nation might call them father.'" By filling the role of the stern and impartial father/statesman, Buchanan could calm the territories, the site of active contestation under the parameters popular sovereignty. Like a good father, Buchanan would "separate these angry foes, not by ideal lines and unequal privileges, but by giving the right to each to enter upon and occupy ample and abundant territory."[95] The interests of both antislavery and plantation households would rest secure under Buchanan's paternal gaze.

Especially when targeting northerners, Democrats presented Buchanan, long plagued by charges of Doughfacism, as an unprejudiced umpire of sectional animosities. One piece of campaign literature addressed specifically to Buchanan's fellow Pennsylvanians praised him, equipped as he was with "the moderate and unsectional feeling of a Pennsylvanian," for his ability to mediate between "peaceful citizens from

[95]*The Agitation of Slavery. Who Commenced! And Who Can End It!! Buchanan and Fillmore Compared from the Record* (Washington: Union Office, 1856), 35.

the North and from the South, from a distance and from near at hand, who come to settle in good faith." Even though he accorded equal consideration to the South, his election would prevent the entrance of more slave states.[96] Treating the South fairly need not imply treason but rather suggested manly independence; as such, his past actions in defense of southern rights evinced "firmness only too rare in those days among Northern men." The ability to straddle this sectional divide was, like Democrats' conservatism, a testament to manhood.[97]

Buchanan himself postured as a wise old sage capable of managing bickering children. Accepting the Democratic nomination, he advised, "Let the members of the family abstain from intermeddling with the exclusive domestic concerns of each other."[98] Although he struck the pose of an unbiased arbitrator, Buchanan often revealed that he did in fact favor the South, as he repeatedly blamed the North for inciting the slave states. Taking a tone which would have smacked of rank condescension to antislavery northerners, Buchanan lectured in his victory speech, "all we of the North have to do is to permit our Southern neighbors to manage their own domestic affairs, as they permit us to manage ours. It is merely to adopt the golden rule, and do unto them as we would they should do unto us, in the like circumstances."[99] The Democratic nominee, like the doctrine at the heart of the platform on which he perched, clearly played favorites.

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[96]*The Last Appeal to Pennsylvania* (1856), 3, 5, 6.

[97]Democratic State Central Committee of Pennsylvania, *Memoir of James Buchanan,* 10-11.

[98]James Buchanan to the Committee of Notification, Wheatland, (near Lancaster), PA, June 16, 1856, in *The Works of James Buchanan*, 10:84.

[99]James Buchanan, "Speech at Wheatland, November 6, 1856," in *The Works of James Buchanan*, 10:97.

Mirroring the prosouthern reality of the supposedly neutral Kansas-Nebraska Act, Democrats, when appealing to southerners, stressed that Buchanan would aggressively promote the interests of their families. Despite lacking the private prerequisites of marriage and mastery over household dependents which defined manhood in the South, Buchanan's supporters publicly performed his masculinity. By rhetorically constructing Buchanan as a southern paternalist, Democrats illustrated that the distinction between privately achieved mastery and publicly mediated constructions of masculine honor was not absolute. The public, performative dimension of manhood in the antebellum South allowed for seemingly aberrant men such as bachelors to lay claim to mastery and to interact as equals with other men in the political arena.

To prove that Buchanan would act as any good southern head of household would, Democrats paraded Buchanan's lifelong defense of southern domesticity. Reaching all the way back to the Congressional debates over the reception of abolitionist petitions in 1836, Democrats asserted, truthfully, that Buchanan had consistently defended white southern families. Arguing that Congress should not entertain antislavery petitions lest they incite slaves, Buchanan had originally proclaimed, "Touch this question of slavery seriously—let it once be made manifest to the people of the south that they cannot live with us, except in a state of continual apprehension and alarm for their wives and their children, for all that is near and dear to them upon the earth,—and the Union is from that moment dissolved." The North, Buchanan stressed, did not have near as much at stake in debates over slavery, "a question brought home to the fireside, to the domestic circle, of every white man in the southern States."[100] Statements such as this, recapitulated nearly verbatim, amounted to motifs in Buchanan's public speeches for the

[100]*Congressional Globe*, 24th Cong., 1st sess., 1835-36, 222.

rest of his career. Twenty years later, upon his electoral victory, for instance, Buchanan rebuked the North: "With the South it is a question of self-preservation, of personal security around the family altar, of life or of death."[101] With so much at stake, how could patriotic northerners not yield to southern demands?

Southerners seized upon their candidate's lengthy record of prosouthernism and reprinted his ancient addresses.[102] Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia, referencing the notorious slave uprising in his own state, declared, "When the issue of incendiary publications arose, he [Buchanan] voted to violate the very mails rather than permit the agitators of a Nat Turner insurrection to light the fires of incendiarism."[103] Democrats reminded wary planters that Millard Fillmore, in contrast, had voted for Congress to accept abolitionist petitions,[104] while John C. Frémont allied himself with "fanatics" such as Joshua R. Giddings who actually invited "*servile insurrection.*"[105] Southern Democrats could satisfactorily conclude that, unlike both antislavery northerners and the many southerners who chose not to back Buchanan, the Democratic nominee knew "*the consequences of abolition*" as well as any paranoid plantation owner.[106]

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[101]Buchanan, "Speech at Wheatland, November 6, 1856," 96.

[102]*The Agitation of Slavery*, 11-15.

[103]"Speech of Governor H. A. Wise, At Richmond, June 13, 1856," in *James Buchanan, His Doctrines and Policy*, 10.

[104]*The Agitation of Slavery*, 16.

[105]*The Fearful Issue to Be Decided in November Next! Shall the Constitution and the Union Stand or Fall? Fremont, The Sectional Candidate of the Advocates of Dissolution! Buchanan, The Candidate of Those Who Advocate One Country! One Union! One Constitution! And One Destiny!* (1856), 9-10. The quotation is from one of Giddings's speeches, reprinted to demonstrate his fanaticism.

[106]*The Agitation of Slavery*, 11.

Buchanan appeared similar to planters in more than his preoccupation with slave uprisings when Democrats rhetorically styled him a patriarch akin to southern masters. His campaign biography presented him as a country squire, reposing at his "Wheatland" estate near Lancaster, Pennsylvania.[107] A true "benefactor," Buchanan elicited praise for protecting female dependents such as elderly widows.[108] One newspaper countered assertions that Buchanan "has no sympathy or regard for the [female] sex" by stating that his establishment of a fund to purchase "fuel for indigent females" in his hometown ensured that "Many a desolate hearth has been made glad by his noble charity, and many more will hereafter reap its benefits."[109] Not only did Buchanan, without his own normative family, still manage to protect women in other households, he also defended traditional gender roles more broadly. Registering disapproval over "abolition females" who took on public roles in the Frémont campaign, one Texas newspaper applauded "how much more like women the Buchanan and Fillmore ladies behave than their opponents."[110] Supporters described the portly, white-haired, sixty-five-year-old guardian of female modesty as "muscular," "in the vigor of health, intellectually and physically," and, amazingly, as "a man of Herculean labor."[111] Despite the stereotype of

[107]Horton, *The Life and Public Services of James Buchanan*, 419-28. Jean H. Baker notes that, in one particular campaign biography meant to circulate in the South, an image of Wheatland was included, meant to evoke a southern plantation. Baker, *James Buchanan*, 47.

[108]Horton, *The Life and Public Services of James Buchanan*, 18-19, 422-25.

[109]Quotations from *Stockton (CA) Weekly San Joaquin Republican*, September 27, 1856. See also, *New York Herald*, September 28, 1856.

[110]*Dallas Herald*, September 6, 1856.

[111]Quotations from, respectively, Horton, *The Life and Public Services of James Buchanan*, 425; Democratic State Central Committee of Pennsylvania, *Memoir of James Buchanan*, 3; and "Speech of Governor H. A. Wise," 10.

the "cold blooded, imperturbable and selfish old bachelor,"[112] Buchanan was actually quite personable and noted for his hospitality.[113] Henry A. Wise, in another example of the positive appropriation of bachelorhood, went so far as to posit that Buchanan's vitality resulted from his sexual abstinence, claiming, "a man of sound morals, he has conserved himself" so that in this national crisis he could be "called upon at the right time, for his conservatisms."[114]

With these assertions, southerners and national campaign literature directed at southerners contradicted the image of Buchanan as an impartial candidate who would ensure that all parts of the Union received equal treatment. Southerners noted that "he has stood in the breach, and fought in defence of the constitutional rights of the South against fanaticism in all its forms." In contrast, they attacked Fillmore for his "state of executive neutrality" by maintaining that he would not use the veto power to preferentially favor the South. Southerners even adopted the concept of Doughfacism itself, declaring that the South had its own Doughfaces—those who would please the North by betraying the slave states. Loyal southerners would, on the other hand, vote for the candidate who promised additional territory for slavery. In 1856 this candidate was, ironically, a Yankee bachelor.[115] Mississippi's Albert Gallatin Brown took the argument to its ridiculous extreme, hyperbolically praising Buchanan's prosouthernism by

[112]*New York Herald*, July 19, 1856.

[113]Horton, *The Life and Public Services of James Buchanan*, 420, 426.

[114]"Speech of Governor H. A. Wise," 10, 13. Wise may have been alluding to the teachings of Sylvester Graham, an antebellum health reformer who preached asceticism from a variety of physical stimulants and who particularly emphasized sexual abstinence as the key to manhood. For a brief overview of Grahamism, see Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 246-54.

[115]*The Agitation of Slavery*, 4-8, 15, 34.

declaring, "In my judgment *he is as worthy of Southern confidence and Southern votes as Mr. Calhoun ever was*."[116]

Faced with such deliberate attempts to offer Buchanan to southern voters as one of their own, opponents did not have to work hard to denounce him for Doughface treason. Yet they did more than just cite Democrats' own prosouthern appeals. They too focused on Buchanan's bachelorhood by claiming that his lack of a conventional household prevented him from being able to empathize with the plight of white northern families. Some Republicans contented themselves with mocking Buchanan as unmanly for having never married, and campaign literature was rife with stereotypical depictions of either the lascivious bachelor untempered by feminine influence or the effeminate bachelor obviously suffering from "a lack of some essential quality." Denunciations of Buchanan's bachelorhood, both flippant and vicious, nonetheless represented more than crude innuendo and often contained serious messages about the political ramifications of the sectionalized nature of domesticity.[117]

For many critics Buchanan's lack of a spouse not only cast doubt upon his manhood but also on his statesmanship—his very legitimacy as a political actor. A pseudonymous correspondent to the *New York Evening Post* made this point clear. "An

[116]A. G. Brown to S. R. Adams, Washington, D. C., June 18, 1856, in *James Buchanan, His Doctrines and Policy*, 16.

[117]Quotation from *New York Herald*, July 23, 1856. See also, *Columbus (GA) Enquirer, Tri-Weekly*, July 3, 1856; and *New York Herald*, August 1, 1856. John Gilbert McCurdy, in his recent work on the evolving identity of the bachelor in the colonial and early national periods, notes the existence of both of these stereotypes in literary depictions of single men. McCurdy finds that, after the American Revolution, bachelors achieved equal status as men and that bachelorhood came to be seen as a masculine identity. Projecting his argument forward in time, he severely underestimates the fundamental transgression Buchanan's candidacy represented. John Gilbert McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors: Manhood and the Creation of the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 117-18, 164-70, 198-200.

Ex-Old Maid" declared that "an Old Bachelor is at most but a half man." As if this did not constitute reason enough to oppose Buchanan, the writer then queried, "and how can such a person make more than a half-President?"[118] Even women barred from voting appeared to possess greater political viability than Buchanan. Republicans, both female and male, boasting that "WE'LL GIVE 'EM JESSIE!" practically turned Jessie Benton Frémont, the wife of the Republican nominee, into a candidate herself. To many supporters she seemed more worthy of occupying the White House than the Democratic bachelor.[119]

While the absence of manly attributes certainly implicated Buchanan's statesmanship, his perceived inability to head a household most undermined his legitimacy in the eyes of critics. Republicans questioned the bachelor's ability to understand and defend white northern households. The fact that Buchanan never entered into a marital union led many to ask whether he could ever administer evenhandedly the analogous Union of North and South. One campaign song creatively juxtaposed the Democratic bachelor with the Republican couple of John C. Frémont as the representative of the North and Jessie Benton Frémont as a daughter of the South:

> The "White House" has no place
> That a bachelor can grace,
> So with "Jessie" we'll adorn it anew! […]
> "Fremont and Jessie" will be faithful;

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[118] *Columbus, Ohio State Journal*, June 18, 1856.

[119] *Boston Daily Atlas*, June 27, 1856. See also, "Oh, Jessie Is a Sweet, Bright Lady," in *Songs for Freemen: A Collection of Campaign and Patriotic Songs for the People, Adapted to Familiar and Popular Melodies, and Designed to Promote the Cause of "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Soil, Free Men, and Fremont"* (Utica: H. H. Hawley, Publisher, 1856), 47-48. Frémont commented on the attention she received during the campaign: "Just here & just now I am quite the fashion—5th Avenue asks itself, 'Have we a Presidentess among us—.'" Frémont to Elizabeth Blair Lee, New York, April 18, 1856, in *The Letters of Jessie Benton Frémont*, eds. Pamela Herr and Mary Lee Spence (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 98.

"Union"—"of hearts" be their sway,
'Tween the sunny, balmy South,
And the steadfast, busy North,
The dawn of FREEDOM'S GLORIOUS DAY![120]

By conflating marriage between a northerner and a southerner with the Union more broadly, antislavery northerners implied that the solitary Democrat could not preside without prejudice over both sections. One Republican speaker, after denouncing Doughfaces as those "who desecrate the soil on which they were born," made a similar linkage between bachelorhood and Doughfacism, telling a mass meeting in New York City, "No wonder this man [Buchanan] is a sectionalist. He was never for union in all his life."[121]

Continuing the theme taken up in the 1820 debates over Missouri, Republicans once again articulated that northern and southern families constituted distinct households and that Doughfaces, in catering to those of the South, betrayed northern homes. A speaker warned a gathering of German-American Republicans in Philadelphia that the Democracy's proslavery stance threatened their families in the territories. Adding an element unique to the campaign rhetoric of 1856, he cast Buchanan's bachelorhood and consequent inability to empathize with antislavery families in terms of Doughface treason. He warned an enthusiastic crowd, "Truly, the politicians who propose to the Germans, or to any other class of people, having families to provide for, to vote the Cincinnati platform, must think them insane." He continued, "It may be all very well for an old bachelor [applause and laughter] in easy circumstances, who has no posterity to take care of, to stand on that platform," while "we, for our part, have not the heart in us to

[120]"Political Judgment Day," in *Songs for Freemen*, 28-29.

[121]"Republican Mass Meeting in Union Square. Speech of Anson Burlingame, of Massachusetts," *New York Herald*, September 25, 1856.

take their [our children's] future bread out of their mouths, to give it to a few great gentlemen, who live quite comfortably without it, on the labor of their slaves."[122] As in 1820 and in 1854, antislavery northerners, by accusing Doughfaces of treason, pointed to the existence of divergent domesticities. In 1856, their charges possessed additional salience, coupled as they were with denunciations of a Doughface who appeared even more predisposed to committing treason against the northern home because, as a "dried up old bachelor,"[123] he rejected the very concept of household.

[122]"Dr. Solger's Address, At the German Republican Mass Meeting at Philadelphia, on Saturday Evening, Oct. 11," *Boston Daily Atlas*, October 18, 1856.

[123]*Boston Daily Atlas*, June 10, 1856.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

> The fault in southern statesmanship has been that we have thrown the burden of the battle for Southern rights upon our allies at the North, and then have acquiesced in the inevitable result—their defeat and destruction. Northern sentiment must and will overwhelm any men or any party at the North, placed in the attitude of fighting simply for the opinions and interests (and may be rights) of another section, against Northern views and Northern interests. We cannot expect men at the North, however well disposed, to lead a forlorn hope on such terms of disadvantage. The South herself must fight the fight.
>
> —*Charleston Mercury*, April 25, 1860

Despite Buchanan's hopeful prediction in his inaugural address that with his election "the people proclaimed their will, [and] the tempest at once subsided, and all was calm,"[124] his administration unfolded as an extended commentary on the corrosive potential of popular sovereignty. Emboldened by the United States Supreme Court's 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, in which the Court suggested that a territorial legislature could not prohibit slavery, southerners definitively scrapped the northern interpretation of popular sovereignty in favor of positive protection for their "domestic institution" in the territories. Buchanan himself undermined the supposed neutrality of popular sovereignty and compounded sectional animosity by trying to force through Congress a proslavery and blatantly fraudulent state constitution for Kansas. Taken together, the Court's ruling and Buchanan's heavy-handed prosouthern policies alienated many northern Democrats.

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[124]James Buchanan, "Inaugural Address, March 4, 1857," in *The Works of James Buchanan*, 10:105.

A newly resolute northern Democracy, aware that the North would no longer tolerate such rank prosouthernism, rallied behind Stephen A. Douglas who still clung to the northern interpretation of popular sovereignty—that a territorial legislature could ban slavery.[125] Southerners, following the lead of hard-liners such as William Lowndes Yancey, repudiated Cass's original idea of Congressional non-interference in the territories by demanding the inclusion of Congressional protection of territorial slavery in the Democracy's 1860 platform. In the midst of his party's disintegration, Buchanan and the Doughface alternative he represented seemed largely irrelevant. Where once Democrats lauded popular sovereignty as a masculine exercise of masterly prerogative, Yancey now cast it aside as an "effete doctrine."[126] This impasse had always been implicit within popular sovereignty. The charged politics of the late 1850s brought the divisions into the open at the Charleston convention in 1860 when the party fractured.

In the end, Doughfaces and popular sovereignty required too much of northern families. Claiming that meddling northerners who understood slavery only as an abstract issue endangered the sanctity of the southern household, Doughfaces always demanded that the North yield. In his inaugural address, Buchanan, true to form, chided his fellow northerners, "this question of domestic slavery is of far graver importance than any mere political question, because, should the agitation continue, it may eventually endanger the personal safety of a large portion of our countrymen where the institution exists," leading inevitably to the "loss of peace and domestic security around the family altar."[127]

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[125]Douglas, although a notorious Doughface himself, diverged with his fellows in maintaining that popular sovereignty was sectionally neutral, while Buchanan and Cass seemed willing to dispense with that veneer altogether. See Klunder, "Lewis Cass, Stephen Douglas, and Popular Sovereignty," 144-51.

[126]"Speech of the Hon. Wm. L. Yancey," June 23, 1860.

[127]Buchanan, "Inaugural Address, March 4, 1857," 109.

Doughfaces placed the burden of southern familial security on northerners, giving little thought to the distinct needs of northern families, even those of fellow Democrats. One Democratic periodical boasted, "In this spectacle of moral and political grandeur, the Northern Democracy stands preeminently conspicuous—theirs is exclusively a contest of principle."[128] Northern Democratic families, not facing such dramatic threats to their domestic inviolability as slave uprisings, were expected to be completely selfless. Yet these households obviously had concerns about their own material well-being. Assurances that they fought for a principle of equality that in reality advantaged the South could hardly have consoled them. Northern families knew they had more at stake than a principle from which they derived no benefit—they had their own future economic and domestic happiness, the realization of which proved incompatible with slavery.

Doughfaces postured as impartial sectional mediators, and, for a time, they did superficially bridge disagreements between the North and South, although their maneuvering increased sectional obstinacy in the long-term. Ever since their appearance in 1820, they had to convince skeptical northerners that they were not servile and unmasculine trucklers to the Slave Power. Rather, they argued, their ability to transcend their own sectional and domestic interests signified masculine autonomy and a manly tolerance for competing conceptions of morality and domesticity. The Doughface doctrine of popular sovereignty and the culminating Doughface candidacy of James Buchanan, however, revealed the prosouthern bias of their supposedly masculine neutrality. Doughfaces rhetorically linked their manhood to their purported ability to stand aloof from vying interests. When critics noted the inconsistencies in this position,

[128]"The Union—The Democratic Party—The Administration," *The United States Democratic Review*, June 1856, 442.

Doughface manhood consequently suffered. They could not be the masculine statesmen to which they aspired, because they could never achieve true independence. In coddling southern slaveholders, Doughfaces appeared to antislavery northerners as an additional link in the vast web of dependency which nourished southern mastery. By playing the dependent in plantation households, Doughfaces committed treason against the northern home and emasculated themselves.

Republicans, in contrast, promised territories free from slavery for settlement by northern families. They also held out the prospect of homesteads to eager emigrants and the industrial development of the West. Doughfaces offered an alleged equality in the territories that would actually exclude antislavery families that could not stomach mixing with the economic degradation and moral pollution of slavery. Ultimately, Democrats and Republicans and, more broadly, "conservatives" and "fanatics" differed as to the appropriate political response to the presence of evil in society and, more specifically, within the household. Democrats urged tolerance, while Republicans demanded extirpation and proscription, even of the families which housed the evil.

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