
Summer 2013

David Walker, Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Logic of Sentimental Terror

Kevin Pelletier

University of Richmond, kpelleti@richmond.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/english-faculty-publications>



Part of the [Literature in English, North America Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pelletier, Kevin. "David Walker, Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Logic of Sentimental Terror." *African American Review* 46, no. 2-3 (Summer/Fall 2013): 255-69.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

David Walker, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and the Logic of Sentimental Terror

With few exceptions, contemporary criticism reads nineteenth-century sentimental fiction as a literature of love.¹ When Harriet Beecher Stowe famously asserted that the moral growth of the nation depended on each citizen's ability to "feel right," she voiced a sentiment shared by many of her contemporaries. It is no surprise, then, that scholars have assumed Stowe's injunction to "feel right" was a call to feel compassion and love, for it was ostensibly through a rhetoric of Christian love that Stowe was able to foment a passionate outcry against slavery from many of her Northern readers. Indeed, sentimentalism's transformative potential is best expressed in Stowe's antislavery writing, and scholars continue to uphold her fiction as the paradigmatic example of nineteenth-century abolitionist sentimentality. The ascendancy of love as *the* identifiable trait of nineteenth-century sentimental writing, moreover, marks a crucial moment in literary criticism. Modern scholars who wanted to claim that a formidable feminist presence existed within the American Renaissance had to separate the sentimental tradition from nineteenth-century Calvinism, which scholars have historically equated with patriarchal power. They have thus detached Calvinism's severe brand of evangelical theology, which stressed the judgment of God, from a feminized sentimental philosophy that emphasized salvation through motherly love.² As a result, the prevailing scholarly view understands love to be the revolutionary impulse behind nineteenth-century sentimental reform, and critics use "sympathy" and "sympathetic identification" as shorthand for this process whereby love and compassion result from an affective bond formed across lines of difference.³

Arguments that see sympathy and love as the inevitable outcome of sentimental narration are founded on the widely shared assumption that quintessential sentimental scenes will inevitably produce quintessential sentimental responses, so that representations of compassion will, in turn, arouse compassion in the reader: sympathy will invoke sympathy, love will generate even more love. Because these views understand sympathy and love to be autotelic, however, they fail to recognize instances when sympathetic love is not the source of itself, when some other force is needed to guarantee its activation. Scholars have overlooked this important dimension of sentimental writing, even though the works of many nineteenth-century sentimentalists recognize that love may not be a natural or an automatic response, that sometimes compassion needs to be coerced. When love could not be depended on as a guaranteed effect, fear often served as an incentive to love, energizing love's power and underwriting its potential to transform readers from fallible sinners into moral beings. And prophecies of a retributive God, in particular, were a familiar source of fear and constituted the most efficient way to politicize terror in the antebellum period.

Rather than continue to treat sentimental calls for love and threats of divine retribution as fundamentally separate and even oppositional impulses, I explore in this article the dramatic convergence of emergent sentimental practices with the fire-and-brimstone rhetoric of evangelical Christianity within nineteenth-century antislavery writing. I consider how pleas for love and warnings of God's wrath often appear in tandem, with the latter serving as a goad for the former, and I term this dynamic "apocalyptic sentimentalism" precisely as a way to underscore the

fundamental interrelation between the seemingly antithetical notions of love and vengeance, sympathy and retribution. Terror, as I will argue, is foundational to the logic of antislavery sentimentality and must be read in concert with and as an incitement to love. Antislavery writers, for example, who demanded that white Americans sympathize with slaves, understood that simply pleading for sympathy or representing scenes of suffering slaves did not ensure a sympathetic response from readers. To facilitate a compassionate identification with Negro slaves, many abolitionist writers used threats of God's apocalyptic retribution to stimulate a loving response in readers, and this interaction, where calls for love are supported by warnings of divine vengeance, will come to form a common rhetorical technique within abolitionist sentimentality.

Despite the prevalence of apocalyptic sentimentalism within the highly charged reform setting of Northern abolition, critics rarely regard this deployment of politicized fear to be a sentimental gesture. They see, in other words, love and vengeance to be inherently and irreconcilably antagonistic. Gregg Camfield, for example, insists that the Scottish Common Sense tradition, which stressed "moral sense" and sympathy as primary ways of establishing intersubjective relations, constituted the epistemological source of nineteenth-century American sentimentalism. Because the Scottish Enlightenment developed, at least in part, in opposition to Calvinist doctrine, something like apocalyptic fear could not be seen as part of the grammar of sentimental narration. Camfield's view is one that critics presumably share, given that none has described fear as sentimental affect.⁴ What Camfield's argument misses, however, are the ways in which nineteenth-century sentimentality is profoundly energized by the evangelical fervor of the Second Great Awakening. Despite challenges to Calvinist theology that occurred throughout the early part of the nineteenth century by more moderate denominations like the Methodists and Baptists,⁵ representations of apocalypse—often constructed through fire-and-brimstone rhetoric and warnings of retribution and judgment—nevertheless remained and proliferated across denominational lines. This was especially true within abolition, where the apocalypse was deployed as a political category (and not merely a theological one) that antislavery radicals used to inspire a properly Christian response from their audiences: sympathize with and learn to love America's slaves or suffer the wrath of God.

I explore the interplay between calls for sympathy and love with threats of divine wrath and vengeance by way of an unlikely pairing: David Walker and Harriet Beecher Stowe. In part one, I illustrate how Walker's *Appeal* helped to establish some of the foundational narrative structures and tropes of antislavery sentimentality, thus serving as an instructive model for reading fear as a sentimental mode in the antebellum period. Rather than keeping the sentimental in an antagonistic relationship to apocalyptic theology, I will demonstrate how Walker marshals the mutually enforcing affects of love and terror, thus energizing his pleas for sympathy and compassion with threats of apocalyptic retribution for those who fail to renounce slavery. Walker's *Appeal* constitutes one of the earliest examples of this dynamic, making him a forerunner of apocalyptic sentimentalism. Radicalized within the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Charleston, South Carolina in the era of Denmark Vesey, David Walker portends catastrophic consequences for America's slaveholders, even as he somewhat surprisingly adumbrates a theory of sympathy that might save the nation from complete ruin.⁶ Traditionally viewed as a love-based, often melodramatic domestic ideology, abolitionist sentimentality had a ruthless and vengeful streak running through it, a streak that is not ancillary or accidental but constitutive of its very makeup.

In part two, I investigate Harriet Beecher Stowe's second major antislavery novel, *Dred; A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, in order to demonstrate how the most famous sentimentalist of the nineteenth century replicates Walker's sentimental structure in

her own fiction, using fear of God's apocalyptic vengeance to inspire sympathy and compassion in her readers. Reading Walker and Stowe together in this way, I explore how terror is a fundamental affect within abolitionist sentimentality, a reality that scholars have obscured by obsession with the primacy of love at the complete exclusion of theological wrath. I also examine how sentimental discourse has roots in a burgeoning black literary tradition as well as suggests that gendered spheres in the nineteenth century and the modes of discourse that characterize them (fire-and-brimstone for the masculine sphere, love and sentiment for the feminine) may be more permeable than scholars have assumed. In one final and related point, I argue that in addition to sanitizing the sentimental by completely submerging terror, modern critics have fundamentally mischaracterized the forms of violence that appear in these texts. Against these critics, who read scenes of resistance in the *Appeal* and *Dred* as examples of "revolutionary" violence, I instead contend that Walker and Stowe are more committed to a form of terror-inducing, scripturally sanctioned religious violence. Revolutionary violence and theological vengeance are not necessarily the same thing, in other words, and while exploring the productive uses of religiously motivated terror and violence is a challenging task in our post-9/11 world, we cannot avoid such an undertaking, especially when the sentimental tradition I describe in this article is deeply invested in the possibility of divine retribution and the fear that this possibility engenders as a proper response to slavery. Indeed, full engagement with sentimental terror as I propose may illuminate a useful framework for thinking about rhetorics of terror that mark the contemporary moment.⁷

Terror and Sentiment

“**B**ut why are the Americans so very fearfully terrified respecting my Book?” (*Appeal* 72). This question, posed by David Walker about his *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, will no doubt strike modern readers as disingenuous, given what we know about the effects his work had throughout the slaveholding South. Once the *Appeal* began circulating, officials arrested anyone who possessed copies of the document. Laws were enacted quarantining Northern black sailors in order to prevent them from disseminating Walker's polemic or any other literature thought to agitate slaves or endanger the autonomy of the planter class. In fact, Southern authorities were in such a state of agitation that prohibitions against black literacy were reinvigorated and earnestly enforced.⁸ As one writer in the *North Star* put it, “This little book produced more commotion among slaveholders than any volume of its size that was ever issued from an American press” (Henry Highland Garnet qtd. in *Appeal* 4). Indeed, the *Appeal* was the most incendiary attack against slavery in the antebellum period, and it achieved this status by constructing a rhetoric of terror that both portended bloody insurrection and linked ideas of slave rebellion with prophecies of God's apocalyptic retribution. “Perhaps,” warns Walker in a paradigmatic example of this linkage, “they will laugh at or make light of this; but I tell you Americans! that unless you speedily alter your course, *you and your Country are gone!* !!!!! For God Almighty will tear up the very face of the earth! !” (39; original emphasis). Warnings such as this one pervade the *Appeal* and inflamed the anxieties of Southerners, many of whom would have remembered Gabriel Prosser's and Denmark Vesey's thwarted but nevertheless alarming attempts at insurrection, and wondered if similar rebellions were being organized in which slaves would ultimately succeed in killing their masters.

Scholarly readings of the *Appeal* must inevitably account for Walker's deeply divisive and highly inflammatory language, and critics often treat Walker's meditations

on theological wrath as a metonym for revolutionary black resistance. Gene Andrew Jarrett, Robert Levine, and Jeremy Engles have all recently contended that Walker's theory of slave resistance aligns with what Maggie Sale has succinctly identified as the "trope of revolutionary struggle" (6). Walker's emphatic critique of Jefferson's racist views in *Notes on the State of Virginia* as well as his co-option of the Declaration of Independence (the revolutionary document *par excellence*) only further underscores his apparent investment in revolutionary modes of critique. In the way Walker engages Jefferson's ideas on freedom, ideas that form the bedrock of American liberal selfhood, it would appear that he is deliberately locating himself within a genealogy of revolution that traces back to the nation's founding.⁹ As Eric J. Sundquist has argued, "African American writers such as [Frederick] Douglass, [Martin] Delany, [David] Walker, William Wells Brown, and Harriet Jacobs" were deeply invested in strategies for resisting enslavement and "had been quick to link slavery [and slave resistance] to its complex revolutionary heritage" (29).¹⁰ Critics continue to read Walker specifically, and nineteenth-century arguments supporting slave insurrection more generally, as signs that antebellum black Americans were revolutionaries insofar as they opposed institutions that violated rights intrinsic to nature and guaranteed by God, confirming, in Wendell Phillips's words, that "colored men" like Walker are "patriotic—though denied a country:—and all show a wish, on their part, to prove themselves men, in a land whose laws refuse to recognise their manhood" (Nell 8). The story of America's revolutionary origins remains a favorite among modern critics as a way to frame how the most subversive abolitionists justified violence as a chief mechanism for emancipating Negro slaves.¹¹

While most scholars have treated evangelical theology as a cooperative worldview in the service of revolution, I want to separate them in this article in order to contextualize the terror that Walker's blazing religious discourse engendered. Ideas regarding the slaves' revolutionary agency, which have been a particular obsession among critics for at least the past forty years, tend to submerge the terror that apocalyptic prophecy is intended to produce. When scholars marshal the "revolutionary" as an ideological category, they invoke a set of associations, specifically liberal rights, democratic citizenship, and the inherent equality of all persons. Those scholars who avow Walker often do so by normalizing the violence he promotes, claiming that he is a "revolutionary" in the eighteenth-century understanding of this notion. By making violence revolutionary and not theological or merely retributive, critics unwittingly temper Walker's incendiary presence by placing him in a tradition in which violence was necessary to preserve the self-evident freedoms that inhere in all persons. Anyone who fights for these rights, including Negro slaves, is identified as a revolutionary, so that revolutionary violence is understood to be a rational phenomenon and indicator of the Enlightenment push towards the perfectibility of the human spirit. Revolutionary violence, then, is not destabilizing or destructive in these views, but normative and constructive of a world where all persons enjoy the rights and privileges of citizenship. Given that most slaves were desirous of freedom and equality, and in light of scholarly interest in the forms of nineteenth-century slave resistance, it makes sense that modern critics would apply a revolutionary framework to interpret acts of violent resistance. As a result of their fixation on the revolutionary, however, scholars have left very little room for discussing the emotionality of those arguments that, like Walker's, are predicated on apocalyptic terror.

Rather than equating black violence with revolutionary resistance, I want to return to the rhetoric of terror that is so emblematic of Walker's *Appeal* and that made it such a dangerous document in the antebellum period. Even though it is not typically identified as an example of sentimental writing and often appears more concerned with punishing slaveholders than it does with inspiring in them feelings of love and compassion, the *Appeal* stands as an influential model for the kind of antislavery argument that depends on fear to stir affective bonds between black and white Americans, bonds that may in turn catalyze a change in or even a dismantling

of the slave system. Walker's plea is designed to establish a form of sympathetic connection between his white audience and the slaves that they oppress, and he relies throughout the *Appeal* on what will become by midcentury a classic strategy for sentimental writers: an address as directed toward his readers' hearts. Walker announces to his audience early in the *Appeal* that, with God's help, he will "open [their] hearts to understand and believe the truth" (*Appeal* 1) of the slave's degradation and the need for Southerners to relinquish their slaveholding practices. "I appeal to every man of feeling" (10), says Walker, suggesting that moral reform begins with feeling right, a view that Harriet Beecher Stowe will codify twenty years later in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Walker reasons that a man who witnesses firsthand the slave's burden, provided he is "not a tyrant, but has the feelings of a human being, who can feel for a fellow creature" will surely "see enough to make his very heart bleed" (21). The bleeding heart is a sympathetic heart, and redressing slavery begins for Walker as it will begin for so many antislavery reformers who adopt sentimental conventions: with appeals to emotion and calls for the reformation of feeling.

Walker believes that white and black Americans can learn to live together harmoniously, provided a proper affective bond between them can be constituted. Indeed, his ultimate goal in the *Appeal* is a racially integrated nation in which blacks enjoy the same respect and rights as citizens that whites enjoy. "Treat us like men," says Walker, "and there is no danger but we will all live in peace and happiness together. . . . Treat us like men, and we will be your friends" (*Appeal* 70). Given the *Appeal's* angry rhetoric, it would be easy to overlook Walker's reconciliatory vision, where racial segregation and acrimony are overcome in favor of amity between all citizens, regardless of skin color. Walker remains emphatic, though, in his desire for unity, assuring readers that any misgivings they may have are unfounded, and underscoring interraciality as a necessary national ethos as well as a real political possibility. "And there is not a doubt in my mind," Walker states, "but that the whole of the past will be sunk into oblivion, and we yet, under God, will become a united and happy people. The whites may say it is impossible, but remember that nothing is impossible with God" (70). Notwithstanding the hardships they have suffered under slavery, black Americans will surrender the past in order to realize a more promising future. It could be said, then, that the aim of the *Appeal* is nothing less than the creation of a racially heterogeneous but nevertheless unified nation state that is sanctioned by God and federated by feeling, with each citizen affectively associated with every other citizen.

Even as he unfolds this vision in which a compassionate white audience feels for black slaves, and this sentimental solidarity in turn leads to national unity, Walker faces a problem, one that antislavery reformers and sentimental writers throughout the 1840s and '50s would continue to face: namely, that white Americans are simply not feeling for or sympathizing with slaves, regardless of how pitiable or deplorable the slaves' circumstances might be. Calling for sympathy, in other words, or representing scenes that are meant to elicit a compassionate response from white readers, is not necessarily going to achieve the desired effect. Walker explicitly engages the failure of white Americans to sympathize with slaves and their willingness to take the slaves' wretchedness as a fact of nature and a reflection of God's will. "But the Americans," says Walker, "having introduced slavery among them, their hearts have become almost seared, as with an hot iron, and God has nearly given them up to believe a lie in preference to the truth! !!" (*Appeal* 43). Instead of enabling whites to bond with and learn to care for blacks, white hearts have been hardened by slavery and have thus lost their capacity to facilitate feeling. Walker cannot simply appeal to the hearts of white readers when these hearts no longer perform their primary function as repositories of emotion and agents of sympathetic identification. Walker needs some corrective measure to activate white sympathy and to calibrate these

sympathies with their proper object, and he finds this measure in the threat of God's vengeance, a threat that immediately follows the preceding passage:

And I am awfully afraid that pride, prejudice, avarice and blood, will, before long prove the final ruin of this happy republic, or land of *liberty*!!!! . . . Will the Lord suffer this people to go on much longer, taking his holy name in vain? Will he not stop them, PREACHERS and all? O Americans! O Americans! I call God—I call angels—I call men, to witness, that your DESTRUCTION is *at hand*, and will be speedily consummated unless you REPENT. (43; original emphasis)

Warnings like this one of God's apocalyptic retribution can be found throughout the *Appeal*, underscoring that terror and love are inseparably linked, with the former serving as an incitement to and prerequisite for the latter. What may seem counter-intuitive to modern readers is precisely what Walker regards as self-evident: love is not an absolute or self-sufficient emotion, but rather requires a threat to activate its power. Walker appreciates that hearts do not necessarily sympathize independently, but instead require some reason to feel. His own theory of sentiments is structured such that the threat of God's retributive wrath, and the fear that this threat engenders, will motivate whites to feel and perhaps even learn to care for blacks. Like later works of sentimental narrative, Walker's argument is predicated on a sympathetic connection that is rooted in deeply felt emotion, but unlike scholarly claims that understand love and sympathy to be autogenic, Walker positions fear as a necessary inspiration for sympathetic affection. America can only achieve a multiracial union when whites are bonded by sympathy to their black brethren, and this sympathetic connection will only be established if it is energized by the fear of divine vengeance.

Walker inscribes the apocalyptic as both a theological prophecy and a sentimental register, combining established religious ideas regarding God's judgment with emergent sentimental ones. Indeed, fire-and-brimstone rhetoric and representations of retribution and judgment—familiar early nineteenth-century conceptions of apocalypse that helped form a powerful epistemology within the evangelical culture of the Second Great Awakening—are designed to inspire an emotional response in the reader, and it is on this level of affect that the sentimental and the apocalyptic converge. Walker's repeated use of violent and bloody imagery is grounded in the highly charged political and cultural climate in which his antislavery sensibilities matured. His participation in the AME Church in Charleston, and his possible involvement in the Denmark Vesey plot no doubt made a formative impression on his thinking about violent rebellion.¹² Like Vesey, Walker's notions of rebellion are thoroughly based on Scripture and modeled on those passages from the Bible that portray God smiting unregenerate sinners in all of his apocalyptic fury.¹³ Walker summons the apocalyptic, not merely to challenge the institution of slavery, but also to inspire terror in his audience by invoking a wrathful divinity that has promised to mete out punishment. The forms of violence Walker depicts are not meant to replace a tyrannical form of governance with a benevolent one, as is suggested in the Declaration of Independence. To the extent that it is figured apocalyptically, violence in Walker's *Appeal* is widespread, bloody, and complete, with God separating the saints from the sinners, the wheat from the chaff.

Surprisingly, these same representations of a violent Biblical apocalypse also constitute some of the paradigmatic sentimental expressions of the antebellum period, and Walker's invocations of God's vengeance function in the *Appeal* as an indispensable blueprint for sentimental persuasion.¹⁴ It is precisely because compassion and fear are paired in this way that one often finds in the *Appeal* lamentations about a lack of love in whites immediately followed by threats of God's wrath. One emotional economy bolsters the other. "I hope that the Americans may hear," pleads Walker, "but I am afraid that they have done us so much injury, and are so firm in the belief that our Creator made us to be an inheritance to them for ever,

that their hearts will be hardened, so that their destruction may be sure" (*Appeal* 40; emphasis added). Hardened hearts are poor conductors of sympathy, and instead of merely depicting scenes of the slaves' sorrow, as if images of a suffering slave could somehow guarantee a sympathetic response, Walker reminds his readers of the destructive consequences that will ensue if they do not reform their sentiments. "This language," Walker continues, "perhaps is too harsh for the American's delicate ears. But Oh Americans! Americans! I warn you in the name of the Lord, (whether you will hear, or forbear,) to repent and reform, or you are ruined! !!" (45). Fear resuscitates unresponsive hearts and is targeted at those Americans who exist furthest outside the bonds of sympathy and compassion. "For I declare to you. . .," says Walker, "that there are some on this continent of America, who will never be able to repent. God will surely destroy them, to show you his disapprobation of the murders they and you have inflicted on us" (69). Acknowledging the problem of readers who are disinclined to feel compassion for slaves and who consequentially must be provoked into penitence, Walker encourages an antislavery approach in which inspiring readers to "feel right" entails first making them afraid so that they may avoid the apocalyptic repercussions that in his *Appeal* seem so inevitable.

And it is precisely the inevitability of apocalypse/insurrection that makes Walker's *Appeal* such a terrifying indictment of slavery. Given how emphatic Walker renders his threats (the capital letters, the frequent use of exclamation points, etc.), there is a sense that it is almost too late, that the nation is precipitously close to the edge, and that what Walker really desires is to give America a shove into bloodshed and torment. It is typically at this moment that scholars retreat from the full implications of the *Appeal's* argument, claiming Walker as a revolutionary in order to allay the anxiety that comes with full realization that he is championing an antislavery response founded on terror and religious violence that does not accord with American liberal ideals. Robert Levine, for instance, avoids the reading of Walker I am offering here. Acknowledging that the *Appeal* ends with an enthusiastic call for "black vengeance," Levine nevertheless claims that Walker's ideas of violence are fundamentally informed by his reading of the Declaration of Independence (107). Levine highlights the way Walker marshals the Declaration as part of his critique of the nation's hypocrisy, but he nevertheless overlooks how the examples he quotes from the *Appeal* show Walker referring to America's founding document as "*your* Declaration of Independence" and "*your* language" and "*their* Declaration" (107, 110; emphases added). Walker suggests, in other words, that he does not share a common language of freedom with white Americans; nor do his ideas of liberty and resistance originate from the same ideological source. And why should they? America already had one revolution, and it did nothing to improve the lives of America's slaves. Given the failure of America's revolutionary history as it bears on slavery, it stands to reason that Walker would adopt an alternative world-view in order to theorize new modes of resistance. In fact, as I have been arguing, Walker is much more indebted to the emancipatory potential of radical Christianity than he is the Declaration of Independence—a point that is concealed when apocalypse and evolution are treated as synonyms, or when the theological is so thoroughly subsumed by the revolutionary that it is barely distinguishable from its privileged counterpart.¹⁵

The terrifying prescience of Walker's words was amplified with Nat Turner's insurrection in 1831 and the subsequent publication of his *Confessions*. Turner represents the incarnated threat that Walker prophesied only two years earlier. And in the way it articulates an affiliation between apocalyptic prophecy and violent responses to slavery, Nat Turner's *Confessions* constitutes an important companion text to Walker's *Appeal*. Indeed, what makes the historical moment in which the *Appeal* and *Confessions* appear so powerful is the combined statement on apocalyptic fear that each makes. Turner's *Confessions* also serves as a useful bridge linking David Walker to Harriet Beecher Stowe, given that Stowe will directly engage with the historical

problem of Turner in her second major work of antislavery fiction, *Dred*. The theological terror that operates in Walker's *Appeal* and Turner's *Confessions* is equally a part of Stowe's intellectual and aesthetic itineraries; she is always threatening God's judgment, always prophesying apocalyptic destruction. And Turner is a formative and abiding presence in Stowe's sentimental imagination, so much so that she includes much of Turner's confession in the first Appendix of *Dred*. Unlike Turner, however, whose "object" was to "carry terror and devastation" wherever he went, and whose sole intent was to "strike terror to the inhabitants" (50-51), Stowe fuses images that inspire terror with calls for compassion and love, articulating a sentimentality in which fear and love constitute the emotional foundation of moral reform.

***Dred* and the Sentimental Apocalypse**

Published only four years after *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe's second major antislavery novel, *Dred* appeared just as some of the most controversial and divisive issues within the slavery crisis were unfolding, such as the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), South Carolina Congressman Preston Brooks's beating of abolitionist Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner on the Senate floor, and John Brown's raids in Kansas (both 1856), and the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857). In many ways, the novel attempts to explore fictionally what was occurring within America's cultural, political, and legal landscapes.¹⁶ For the first seventeen chapters, the novel portrays "ordinary" life in Canema, a pleasant and typically Southern plantation, and focuses specifically on Nina, a young, white Southern heiress, and her romantic relationships, especially the one she entertains with Edward Clayton. Given the novel's title, Dred's arrival in the eighteenth chapter might have seemed surprisingly late to Stowe's readers. Even as the novel paints this portrait of idyllic Southern life, however, those readers realize some two hundred pages into the narrative that Dred has been there the entire time. He lurks on the margins and in the swamp, waiting for the opportunity to exact vengeance on the white slaveholding South. In the pages that follow, I argue that Dred, a plotting insurrectionist who repeatedly portends apocalyptic destruction to Southern slaveholders, does not exist outside of the sentimental or in conflict with it, but in fact becomes precisely the engine of the sentimental as Stowe constructs it in this narrative. Indeed, following David Walker, Stowe uses the threat of insurrectionary violence as a way to motivate her readers to reform their views about slavery. In this way, she further develops the rhetoric of apocalyptic sentimentality that Walker first outlined in his *Appeal*, where warnings of God's (or the slave's) retributive wrath are meant to inspire in white readers sympathy and compassion for black slaves. As her most audacious gesture, Stowe sentimentalizes the legacy of Nat Turner, transforming insurrection into a foundational component of the nineteenth-century sentimental imagination.¹⁷

Near the halfway point of the novel, Stowe gives her readers the most resounding statement regarding the apocalyptic dimension of *Dred's* sentimentality. At a large camp-meeting near the Canema plantation, Nina Gordon and Edward Clayton listen to one of Father Bonnie's impassioned sermons. "I tell you the Lord is looking now down on you," Father Bonnie proclaims, "out of that moon! He is looking down in mercy! But, I tell you, he'll look down quite another way, one of these days! O, there'll be a time of wrath, by and by, if you don't repent!" With language emblematic of the Jeremianic tradition, Father Bonnie warns, "There's a judgment-day for you! O, sinner, what will become of you in that day? Never cry, Lord, Lord! Too late—too late, man! You wouldn't take mercy when it was offered, and now you shall have

wrath!" (*Dred* 259).¹⁸ The terrifying threats contained in Father Bonnie's sermon inspire Nina Gordon, the novel's heroine, to ask what is, essentially, the foundational question regarding sentimentalism within the novel: "Can fear of fire make me love?" (261). For Nina, the question of whether fear is a necessary dimension of affect in the creation of a loving Christian heart is an urgent one in light of Father Bonnie's warning to sinners that they are running out of time. Clayton's response to Nina is telling: "If we may judge our Father by his voice in nature," Clayton says, "he deems severity a necessary part of our training. Fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind, fulfilling his word—all these have crushing regularity in the movements, which show that he is to be feared as well as loved" (261).

This exchange between Nina and Clayton illuminates a disjunction that has occurred between Stowe's time and our own. That is, what for Stowe and her contemporaries was axiomatic remains for many modern readers a paradox that must be explained away or ignored: namely, that the Biblical god is simultaneously loving and vengeful, merciful and brimming with fury. Stowe harmonizes these ostensibly competing impulses, and *Dred* is a novel that expands upon the sentimental structure I described in Walker's *Appeal*, where theological terror was used to bolster love when love was either lacking or not present at all. While love is the ultimate goal of sentimentalism, one cannot assume it will appear simply by invoking it. This reality concerning the unreliability of love would have been especially important to someone like Stowe, who was convinced that America was on the precipice of disaster over its inability or reluctance to resolve the slavery issue in a way that conformed to what she understood to be the indisputable moral tenets of Christianity.

That readers continue to overlook this structuring of the sentimental in Stowe's antislavery fiction can be seen in the way they privilege the authority of the character Milly at the exclusion of Dred. Because of the way Milly proselytizes an ethic of Christian love, readers continue to champion her as the purest expression of sentimentality in the novel. In fact, many scholars completely evade considering Dred as a sentimental figure by separating Dred from the sentimental dynamics of the novel, treating him as a black revolutionary, even though virtually every word he speaks is about the fulfillment of apocalyptic prophecy, not revolution.¹⁹ The most powerful piece of "evidence" readers use to discount Dred's importance in favor of Milly's is the scene in which Milly interrupts a meeting between Dred and his co-conspirators, and ultimately "dissuades" them from choosing violent insurrection as a means of dismantling slavery. "If dere must come a day of vengeance," says Milly to those in attendance, "pray not to be in it! It's de Lord's strange work" (*Dred* 461). She implores them to reconsider, exclaiming, "O, brethren, dere's a better way. . . . Leave de vengeance to him. Vengeance is mine—I will repay, saith de Lord" (461, 462). To her injunctions against violence, Dred replies, "Woman, thy prayers have prevailed for this time! The hour is not yet come!" (462). Dred's apparent hesitation has led scholars like Joan Hedrick to conclude that "Dred's Old Testament militancy is stilled by the words of Milly" (259) and Charles Foster to argue that Milly accomplishes the "conversion of Dred to Christian pacifism" (85). Based on the supposed supremacy of Milly's moral compass, John Carlos Rowe has even asserted that she is the "fictional persona for Stowe herself" (50).

It is understandable why critics would assume that Dred and Milly occupy antithetical positions, and that Stowe ultimately favors the former over the latter. Against these views, however, I would argue instead that these two characters actually work in concert to structure the sentimental foundation of this narrative. Dred's wrath and the fear that it produces is meant to incite an abiding commitment to compassion and forgiveness exemplified by Milly, and these two affective energies are more symbiotic than they are oppositional. Stowe favors neither Milly nor Dred, but instead constructs these characters to exemplify the Biblical figure of Jesus, a being who is both loving and vengeful, capable of mercy and prepared to mete out punishment.

In other words, Stowe does not use Milly and Dred to present two dichotomous paths, one leading to sympathy and love, the other to violence and retribution. Just because Dred concedes to Milly that the hour has not yet come does not mean that it will not, but only that Dred is willing to wait for a sign from God that the moment to insurrect has arrived. Once readers understand the affective dynamic that is created by the interaction of Dred and Milly, where the terror embodied by Dred is meant to goad the love espoused by Milly, they will more easily recognize and appreciate the countless examples throughout *Dred* where scenes foregrounding love and compassion run adjacent to and are motivated by moments that invoke wrath and woe, much like they did in Walker's *Appeal*.

If Dred is so crucial to the sentimentality of the narrative, however, why does Stowe kill him off before he can exact vengeance against slaveholders? Why does he never receive the sign he was so sure God would deliver to him to initiate violent rebellion (and that Nat Turner was so certain he did receive)? Why is it only Milly who is able to live out her days in relative freedom in New York? The killing of Dred may look like Stowe's ultimate disavowal of a character who symbolized hope for America's slaves, but who posed a threat that in the end Stowe found to be untenable. Perhaps it is for this reason that some readers have criticized Stowe for failing to depict a slave revolt.²⁰ The problem, in other words, is that Stowe is unable to follow her own antislavery politics to their logical conclusion. She lacks the courage to depict a rebellion in which slaveholders finally suffer for their sins. This view, however, misses the point entirely. Stowe does not depict Dred and his co-conspirators committing acts of violence because her solution to slavery is a *sentimental* one, not one predicated on slave rebellion. By threatening insurrection throughout the narrative, and by linking insurrection to apocalyptic prophecy, Stowe aims to inspire fear in her readers, fear that will in turn motivate them to love Negro slaves and reject slaveholding. This is the sentimental structure of Stowe's political response. If, however, she depicts Dred committing actual acts of violence—if she represents his co-conspirators killing white people—then these slaves will become, in the eyes of white readers, insurgents that are undeserving of sympathetic love. Slaves will be seen not as worthy of compassion (which would be the proper sentimental response), but as a threat that needs to be eradicated, perhaps even preemptively. By representing insurrection and not simply threatening it, Stowe would, in effect, undermine the very sentimental response that she has been trying to construct all along. An insurrectionary apocalypse functions best as a threat, not as an actual event. If Stowe promotes an antislavery view that advocates slave violence, she endangers what is for her a foremost concern: shaping a nation of readers that loves as Christ did and thus rejects America's most immoral practice. Unlike Walker, who would have welcomed insurrection and in many ways wrote the *Appeal* in order to hasten the end of days, Stowe suspends the threat by removing Dred from the narrative. Walker intimates that it may already be too late for slaveholding Americans. Stowe, however, wants to sustain the possibility of redemption, but in order to do so she must eliminate the only agent who could prematurely foreclose any possibility of reform.

The specter of slave violence does not end with the death of Dred, however. As a way to remind her readers of the very real dangers of slaveholding, Stowe concludes the narrative by appending an excerpt of Nat Turner's *Confessions*. In this way, Stowe not only links the fictional characters in *Dred* with the historical actors who participated in the Southampton revolt. She also returns to one of the most apocalyptic figures of the antebellum period who, in turn, "produces" one of the most apocalyptic texts of the entire nineteenth century.²¹ As Stowe remarks, "[one] of the principal conspirators" in the Turner-led insurrection was a man named Dred, and if readers are to understand Stowe's fictional creation, they must first consider one of the historical sources on which she bases her protagonist. Dred's

language in many ways parallels Turner's (and Walker's). As Turner says, "[On] the 12th of May, 1828, I heard a loud noise in the heavens, and the Spirit instantly appeared to me and said the Serpent was loosened, and Christ had laid down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and that I should take it on and fight against the Serpent, for the time was fast approaching when the first should be last and the last should be first" (*Dred* 557). Unlike Dred, Turner receives the sign from heaven that the bloodshed can begin, and his "object" from that moment on is "to carry terror and devastation wherever" he goes, and "neither age nor sex was to be spared—which was invariably adhered to" (558). Turner gets to do what Dred was never permitted—usher in the violence. Stowe appends Turner's *Confessions* precisely to underscore the point that Americans can expect real bloodshed, and not simply fictional warnings of it, if they fail to end slavery. Stowe cites Turner's *Confessions* in order to make a moral argument against slavery, a move that has confounded modern readers who want to claim her as a paragon of love-based sentimentality and who have had to exclude Dred (and ignore Turner) as a product of her sentimental imagination in order to do so.

Even as she uses Turner to sustain the possibility of insurrectionary violence, Stowe refuses to portray it, even though she is not responsible for Turner's actions the way she would be for Dred's. As in *Dred*, the violence is cleansed from Turner's confession. In the excerpt Stowe appends, Turner proceeds to describe the details of his violent rebellion through Southampton County, Virginia. Just as he begins to address the acts in question, the narrative voice interposes, saying, "We will not go into the horrible details of the various massacres, but only make one or two extracts, to show the spirit and feelings of Turner" (*Dred* 558). While Stowe redacts Turner's account for the purposes of her narrative and excises the most violent parts, her readers would have been acutely aware of Turner's original statement, namely those passages from his account that detail the killing of the Traverses, especially the infant "sleeping in a cradle" (Turner 49). This is the outcome towards which America is headed, with Turner acting the part of God wreaking havoc within the slaveholding community.

While modern readers—and even some of Stowe's contemporaries—might justifiably point out the naiveté or ineffectiveness of Stowe's argument, it is nevertheless imperative that we see Stowe's solution to be a decidedly sentimental one in the way it uses threats of violent reprisal to compel readers into nurturing a loving and sympathetic disposition. Between the death of Dred and the appearance of Turner, there is a narrative space where reform can occur. That is, Dred's passing does not mean that Americans have nothing left to fear because while Dred represents a fictional apocalypse, what is coming may be much worse and no longer imaginary.²² For this reason, Stowe sustains the possibility of reform far more persistently than Walker ever would. As much as she may believe America is headed towards a terrible but just end, it is an end Stowe would nevertheless prefer to avoid. Her sentimental solution to slavery is meant to stave off the impending apocalypse, whereas Walker suggests that an apocalypse is precisely what is needed for America's sins to be purged. While Stowe and Walker share a common rhetorical style, where fear acts as an incitement to love, there is a divergence in the outcomes each writer is willing to entertain, a divergence that is no doubt informed by their racial, gender, and class positions, and the larger literary contexts from which they write. The fact that Walker is a free black writing in a racially segregated and economically stratified Boston in 1829, and Stowe a middle-class white woman from a prominent family writing in the 1850s informs the way they would have explored violence as a response to slavery, and determines how far they would be willing to promote bloodshed as a legitimate form of resistance.

Conclusion: Apocalyptic Sentimentalism

This sentimental configuration, in which threats of apocalyptic destruction are used to motivate sympathetic connections, will surface throughout the anti-slavery discourses of the antebellum period. Writers as varied in their aesthetic and political sensibilities as Maria Stewart, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and Martin Delany will imitate Walker's and Stowe's sentimental model, accompanying calls for love with terrifying images of God's vengeance, using fear of God's wrath as a sentimental support system for sympathy and compassion. And while it might initially seem strange to regard him as a precursor to a form of sentimentalism, it is important to locate Walker at the beginning of the tradition I have been describing in this article. The first sustained critique of slavery by an African American, Walker's *Appeal* precludes a trend within American sentimental culture where calls for greater love are conjoined with and motivated by threats of apocalyptic retribution. Sentimental culture is often thought to be a middle-class phenomenon, and literary sentimentalism a style that blossomed among white, midcentury, bourgeois women. Reading Walker on the threshold of this blossoming helps us frame and explain the emotional dynamism of his argument, a topic that has been sorely neglected by critics. Such a perspective should also help us revise our views about the racial and class origins of American sentimentalism so that we begin to see its emergence rooted in white *and* black forms of representation. As a forerunner of apocalyptic sentimentalism, Walker's *Appeal* expands the category of the sentimental and should be read alongside lesser-known, but no less important African American writers who share aspects of Walker's approach, such as Maria Stewart, Jarena Lee, and Rebecca Cox Jackson, as well as the more well-known sentimentalists, like Harriet Beecher Stowe. Indeed, by establishing this link between Walker and Stowe, and by recognizing that a rhetorical style present in Walker's *Appeal* reappears in Stowe's antislavery fiction, we are forced to reassess what we mean when we deploy the term "sentimentalism," beginning with our ideas about sentimentalism's relationship to evangelical theology. Rather than existing outside of or in conflict with sentimentalism, it appears instead that prophecies of apocalypse helped to shape the very formation of nineteenth-century abolitionist sentimentalism.

The contexts surrounding Walker's *Appeal* and Stowe's *Dred* resonate perhaps somewhat uncomfortably with our contemporary moment, where Americans grapple daily with the global politics of terror and the disastrous consequences that ensue when these politics are brought to their logical conclusion. Of course, not all forms of terror are the same.²³ Terror is neither a prepolitical nor a transcendental category, but is instead deeply historical. *Dred* and the *Appeal* were produced at a particular moment under very specific cultural and ideological constraints and were designed to achieve a certain set of ends. Our ability to chart how terror exerts an influence in a given text like the *Appeal* or *Dred*, as well as in a particular context like nineteenth-century abolition, may allow us to think more deeply about how and why the contemporary moment is so thoroughly marked by various rhetorics of terror. Reading abolitionist sentimentality precisely for the powerful way it mobilizes figurations of apocalypse to inspire terror in its audience could allow us to uncover the often insidious motivations behind and anticipate the possible consequences of contemporary deployments of terror when they occur. This cultural work begins, at least in part, when we recognize that incitements to terror are always tactical; they have histories and make sense only in context. And few settings provide a better blueprint for reading contemporary deployments of terror than the sentimental imaginary of nineteenth-century abolition.

The author would like to thank Amy Howard, Elizabeth Outka, Monika Siebert, and *African American Review's* external readers for their thoughtful contributions to this essay.

1. For a sampling of scholars who treat love and compassion as central to the logic of sentimentalism, see Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford UP, 1985); *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, Shirley Samuels, ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1992); Camfield; Elizabeth Barnes, *States of Sympathy: Seduction and Democracy in the American Novel* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997); Lora Romero, *Home Fronts: Domesticity and Its Critics* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997); Julia Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997); Lori Merish, *Sentimental Materialism: Gender, Commodity Culture, and Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000); Glenn Hendler, *Public Sentiments: Structures of Feeling in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2001); Weinstein; and Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke UP, 2008).

2. According to Weinstein, "the generic goal" of the sentimental novel "is the substitution of freely given love, rather than blood, as the invincible tie that binds together individuals in a family" (8). Love is what unites members of a family and coheres families into larger communities. Samuels explains that "The reform literature associated with sentimentality works as a set of rules for how to 'feel right,' privileging compassion in calibrating and adjusting the sensations of the reader in finely tuned and predictable responses to what is viewed or read" (5).

3. As Hendler argues, "[s]ympathetic identification . . . works through a logic of equivalence based on affect. Any being capable of feeling, ostensibly regardless of social differences such as race and age, can evoke sympathy, especially from a female character or reader who has had comparable feelings herself" ("Limits" 688). This is not to suggest that scholars have an uncritical view of sympathy and love and the identitarian differences that they obscure. For critiques of sympathy, see Marianne Noble, "The Ecstasies of Sentimental Wounding in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 10.2 (1997): 295-320; Hendler, *Public Sentiments*; Laura Wexler, "Tender Violence: Literary Eavesdropping, Domestic Fiction, and Educational Reform," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, Shirley Samuels, ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1992), 9-38; and Weinstein.

4. See Camfield 27-35. For more on the relationship between nineteenth-century U. S. sentimentalism and Scottish Common Sense philosophy, see Terence Martin, *The Instructed Vision: Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and the Origins of American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1961); June Howard, "What is Sentimentality?" *American Literary History* 11.1 (1999): 63-81; Merish; Marianne Noble, "Sentimental Epistemologies in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The House of the Seven Gables*," in *Separate Spheres No More: Gender Convergence in American Literature, 1830-1930*, Monika M. Elbert, ed. (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2000), 261-81; and Gregg Crane, *Race, Citizenship, and Law in American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002).

5. The scholarship on denominational disputes in antebellum America is obviously vast. For very useful studies, see Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989); and Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1972).

6. Despite claims by Michael P. Johnson (in "Denmark Vesey and his Co-conspirators," *William & Mary Quarterly* 58.4 [2001]: 915-76) that the Vesey plot was itself a fabricated conspiracy, Hinks has presented compelling evidence to suggest that Walker was indeed in South Carolina in the early 1820s and may have even participated in the plot's organization. At the very least, Walker probably attended the AME Church in which Vesey and his co-conspirators planned their attack. For a full account of Walker's possible relationship to Denmark Vesey, see Hinks ch. 2. For a useful historical overview of the Denmark Vesey affair, see *Design* 1-164.

7. I am not, of course, suggesting that apocalypse and revolution can never be used interchangeably. I am arguing that such a conflation of these two categories should not be the scholarly default setting, as it obfuscates important distinctions between them.

8. For an excellent discussion of the circulation of Walker's *Appeal* and the ramifications of its presence in the South, see Hinks ch. 5.

9. According to Jarrett, one of the ways Walker challenges Jefferson's ostensibly scientific claims regarding African Americans' inherent inability to exist as free citizens is through what he calls a "black revolutionary lexicon" (298-99). Levine maintains that Walker's entire notion of slave resistance is organized in relation to his reading of the Declaration of Independence, a document that ironically not only sanctions but also encourages the use of violence against repressive governing regimes (107-08).

10. Sundquist does not discount Walker's religiosity, but instead unfolds Christianity into a revolutionary framework, creating what he calls a "revolutionary Christianity" (67). For an excellent reading of the way Walker uses the Exodus story to claim America as a land fundamentally shaped by the presence of

African Americans, see Christopher Apap, " 'Let no man of us budge one step': David Walker and the Rhetoric of African American Emplacement," *New Essays on "Race," Writing and Representation in Early American Literature*, Robert S. Levine, ed., spec. issue of *Early American Literature* 46.2 (2011): 319-50.

11. Scholarly readings seem to take their cue from Nell, who in 1855 included Walker in his *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*. According to Nell's depiction of Walker as a black revolutionary, scholars continue to talk about the *Appeal* and its account of slave rebellion as an expression of Walker's revolutionary spirit, suggesting that black violence is revolutionary violence transposed to a different but nevertheless equivalent set of historical circumstances.

12. While many mainstream Southern Methodist churches in the early decades of the nineteenth century were becoming less emphatic in their antislavery stance in order appeal to the planter class whose membership they sought, the AME Church in cities like Philadelphia and Charleston remained on the front lines of antislavery activism and worked aggressively to counter growing racism within white Methodist ranks, as well as within society at large. As regards the AME Church's presence in Charleston, Hinks argues, "Planning for [Vesey's] revolt and preparing the minds of numerous blacks for justifying it certainly occurred in one form or another within the several African congregations and their associated classes" within Charleston. "While black revolt in the Charleston of 1822 would have been possible without the AME Church," Hinks continues, "its organizational potential would have been severely curtailed. One can legitimately call the Charleston AME Church the center of the Vesey conspiracy" (38). It is within this context that Walker's ideas regarding slave resistance likely formed.

13. For a detailed explanation of the theological origins of Walker's and Vesey's ideas on rebellion, see Hinks ch. 2. For an extensive analysis of "prophetic ethics" and Walker's relationship to the Hebrew prophetic tradition, see Rufus Burrow, *God and Human Responsibility: David Walker and Ethical Prophecy* (Macon: Mercer UP, 2003).

14. At this moment in America, representations of apocalypse were everywhere, from mainstream best-sellers to other forms of cultural production, including broadsides, emblem books, juvenile literature, ballads, religious hymns, political caricatures, pamphlets, paintings, and sermons. These various "texts," which are often cited as evidence that nineteenth-century sentimentality was organized around ideas of love, also frequently contain depictions of a wrathful God and threats of an impending apocalypse.

15. Jarrett maintains that Walker ultimately disavows the practical usage of violence because it contradicts leading black activists who promoted moral solutions to slavery rather than violent ones (313). Glaude argues that "Walker was not advocating a destructive expression of anger. Not at all. His intent was to shift the center of gravity in our morality to a place where our justification for action emanates not from custom or habit but from conscience or some principle of thought" (40). I have been suggesting, in contrast to claims offered by Jarrett and Glaude, that Walker's calls for violence are not only sincere, they are practical insofar as they might move readers to change their minds, after changing their hearts, about the morality of slavery.

16. For an excellent assessment of the way Stowe's novel engaged with the issues of the day, see Robert Levine's Introduction in Stowe, *Dred* ix-xxxv.

17. While I choose to look at *Dred* here, one should not mistakenly assume that the structure of affect I have been describing is absent in Stowe's first major work of antislavery fiction. Indeed, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* presents the most consolidated account of nineteenth-century apocalyptic sentimentality that Stowe returns to and augments in *Dred*, a topic I fully investigate in my forthcoming book, *Apocalyptic Sentimentalism: Love and Fear in US Antebellum Literature*. See also David Pelletier, "Uncle Tom's Cabin and Apocalyptic Sentimentalism," *LIT* 20.4 (2009): 266-87. I choose to focus on *Dred* in this article because of the way Stowe meditates on slave insurrection much more concertedly than she did in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the novel's preoccupation with rebellion dramatizes its discursive connection to Walker's *Appeal*.

18. These types of apocalyptic warnings appear throughout *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dred*, reflecting, no doubt, Stowe's Presbyterian roots. Much has been made of Stowe's relationship to her father, Lyman Beecher, a Calvinist minister, and her attempt to adopt a less severe theology. For more on the evolution of Stowe's religious thinking, see Hedrick chs. 13-14; and Marie Caskey, *Chariot of Fire: Religion and the Beecher Family* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1978). For more on the way early American ministers used anxiety, crisis, and the idea of a wrathful god to motivate congregants, see Bercovitch.

19. For scholars who read Milly as the moral foundation of the novel, see Mary Kemp Davis, *Before the Bar of Judgment: Fictional Treatments of the Southampton Slave Insurrection* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1999), 133; and Elizabeth Duquette, "The Republican Mammy? Imagining Civic Engagement in *Dred*," *American Literature* 80.1 (2008), 13. Critics who highlight *Dred*'s revolutionary agency in the novel include Crane 74, 76; Rowe 51; Robert S. Levine, *Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1997), ch. 4; and Maria Karafilis, "Spaces of Democracy in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*," *Arizona Quarterly* 55.3 (1999), 44.

20. See Maria Karafilis, "Spaces of Democracy in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*," *Arizona Quarterly* 55.3 (1999), 44; and Cynthia S. Hamilton, "Dred: Intemperate Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 34.2 (2000), 277.

21. I am reading Turner's confession as an historical document and not as a literal confession. As Greenberg writes in his Introduction, "Nat Turner was not the author of *The Confessions of Nat Turner*—at least not in the conventional sense of 'author.' He did not write the words which appeared on the printed page, and he did not give overall structure to the document" (8). Thomas Gray, who interviewed Turner in jail and composed much of the written document based on quotes he transcribed from his interviews, is just as much of an author of *Confessions* as Turner is. However, the document that Stowe's readers would have read is the same document that she includes in the appendix. Whether or not it can be considered a "true" confession is less important than how Stowe's readers might have reacted upon reading the document.

22. Indeed, in *Apocalyptic Sentimentalism*, the book I am currently completing, I argue that Stowe's prediction comes to fruition in the form of John Brown.

23. I am, of course, in no way suggesting that nineteenth-century radical abolitionists and twenty-first-century radical Islamists are the same. Most abolitionists, for one, used literary techniques like fictional representations of apocalypse to invoke terror, which is markedly different than employing suicide bombers or hijacking aircraft. Of course, while terror within abolition was mostly imaginative, at certain moments it spilled into the realm of the real. Nat Turner and John Brown are cases in point. Turner and Brown, I would suggest, provide useful opportunities for us to think about the relationship between fictional and actual acts that engender terror.

- Camfield, Gregg. *Sentimental Twain: Samuel Clemens in the Maze of Moral Philosophy*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1994.
- Designs against Charleston: The Trial Record of the Denmark Vesey Slave Conspiracy of 1822*. Ed. Edward A. Pearson. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1999.
- Foster, Charles. *The Rungless Ladder*. Durham: Duke UP, 1954.
- Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Exodus! Race, Religion, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black America*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000.
- Greenberg, Kenneth S. Introduction. Turner 1-35.
- Hedrick, Joan. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*. New York: Oxford UP, 1994.
- Hendler, Glenn. "The Limits of Sympathy: Louisa May Alcott and the Sentimental Novel." *American Literary History* 3.4 (1991): 685-705.
- Hinks, Peter. *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1997.
- Jarrett, Gene Andrew. "'To Refute Mr. Jefferson's Arguments Respecting Us': Thomas Jefferson, David Walker, and the Politics of Early African American Literature." *New Essays on "Race," Writing and Representation in Early American Literature*. Ed. Robert S. Levine. Spec. issue of *Early American Literature* 46.2 (2011): 291-318.
- Levine, Robert S. *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth-Century American Literary Nationalism*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2008.
- Nell, William Cooper. *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*. Boston: Robert W. Wallcut, 1855.
- Rowe, John Carlos. "Stowe's Rainbow Sign: Violence and Community in *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856)." *Arizona Quarterly* 58.1 (2002): 37-55.
- Sale, Maggie Montesinos. *The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious Masculinity*. Durham: Duke UP, 1997.
- Samuels, Shirley. Introduction. *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*. Ed. Shirley Samuels. New York: Oxford UP, 1992. 3-8.
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*. 1856. Ed. Robert S. Levine. New York: Penguin, 2000.
- . *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly*. 1852. New York: Modern Library, 2001.
- Sundquist, Eric J. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*. Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1993.
- Turner, Nat. *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents*. Ed. Kenneth S. Greenberg. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996.
- Walker, David. *Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, To The Coloured Citizens of the World, but in particular, and every expressly, to those of the United States of America*. 1829. Ed. Sean Wilentz. New York: Hill and Wang, 1995.
- Weinstein, Cindy. *Family, Kinship, and Sympathy in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Works Cited

Copyright of African American Review is the property of African American Review and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.