

**JOHN F. KENNEDY-INSTITUT  
FÜR NORDAMERIKASTUDIEN**

**ABTEILUNG FÜR KULTUR**

**Working Paper No. 96/1997**

***Shirley Samuels***

**Miscegenated America:**

**The Civil War**

**Copyright © 1997 by Shirley Samuels**

**Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY  
U. S. A.**

**ISSN 0948-9436**

Shirley Samuels

Miscegenated America: The Civil War

-- 1 --

This essay enacts the stresses of what it tries to explicate: competing identities for the American nation between the revolution and the Civil War. Such competitions draw on racial and sexual embodiments even at moments when the text or institution under discussion -- such as the Declaration of Independence or the Bank of the United States -- appears removed from race or sex or body. If one is tempted to perform the sort of "literary Caesarean" that Mark Twain describes as his act of pulling Those Extraordinary Twins from Pudd'nhead Wilson,<sup>1</sup> I want to trace the competing identities within this composite body as it moves toward an uncertain gestation.

Twain's fantasy of a literary Caesarean in his novel of a Civil War within reveals and covers for the centrality of monstrous birth in his project of imagining race. That is, it reveals -- literally opens -- a woman's body and yet covers that body in its deflection onto the text brought forth. The unsteadiness of whether a woman is even visible in the imagination of birth might invoke Roxy's near invisibility in Pudd'nhead Wilson. This is a familiar deflection: in the period of the earlier republic that Twain's later projects so uncomfortably recapitulate, the figuring of Columbia as a

maternal emblem of the republic paradoxically suggests the invisibility of domesticity and housekeeping to conceptions of the republic as a house. . In unsteady relation to the image of Columbia as a national mother, to ask who shall have access to the national home and to ask who shall have access to this woman's body become two sides of the same question.

The further appropriateness of the problematic imagining of birth within Twain's text is its application to a work in which the legally mandated separation of Siamese twins means death. To pull one body from another in birth is to produce two bodies from one. To find two amalgamated bodies in one and then to pull them apart here means death for both. The twinned bodies that supplant those extraordinary twins in Pudd'nhead Wilson are two boys with juridically distinct racial identities who are switched after birth by Roxy, the mother of one and the nursing mother of the other. The defining moment for Puddnhead Wilson, the lawyer who will eventually pull them apart, is his ironic announcement when annoyed by a town dog that, if he owned "half that dog," he would kill his half. What I want to follow through here is the stunning sense that what miscegenation produces in many representations is a fatal desire to pull apart one body from another, a desire that produces bodily instantiations of the house divided.

Such unsteadiness infuses Civil War political representations that focus on maternal monitoring over who will occupy the national home, especially as a house divided along racial lines. Through a close look at two pictorial

representations of this national house, I want to begin to discuss how such imaginings of a home cast into sharp relief the constitution (in the racial and the federal sense) of the families imagined to live in this home and nation. Beginning with these pictures, I will proceed through the biography of Stephen Girard, the Philadelphia philanthropist par excellence, and will turn finally to Uncle Tom's Cabin to ask what determinations of the boundaries of families, homes, and nations are posited there.

Both pictures, "South Carolina Topsey in a Fix" (1861) and "Abraham's Dream" (1864), have a political purpose; they seek to describe a historical situation as well as to motivate political action, motivations perhaps clearer for their contemporary viewers than for us. Baldly put, that purpose might be described as blaming the victim, though what they produce along the path of that blame is what concerns me here. The action in both cartoons is dominated by the extremely powerful form of Columbia. As the national monitor, she regulates, she disposes, she kills. Notably, bodies are refused or killed at the point of their insertion into or removal from an emblematic national space -- that of the flag of the United States in the first, of the white house, in the second.

In the first cartoon, allusions to Uncle Tom's Cabin specifically locate the plantation home as the appropriate site of national values. "South Carolina Topsy" shows a white matron who rebukes "Topsy" for "picking stars out" of the nation's flag,

an allusion to her sleight of hand disruptions of housekeeping in Stowe's novel. Abject before the violation of national cloth, Topsy is blamed for disunion: she is found "at the bottom" of this "piece of work," work that runs against the housekeeping values of her white accuser. Echoing Stowe's infamous object of pity and dread in Uncle Tom's Cabin, this Topsy can only answer, "cause I's so wicked," about a scenario in which she has no opportunity to have a national voice; she stands forlornly as a resonant example of a continuing political strategy to reverse categories of blame and responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

Images of Columbia as the republic thus show her to be the republican mother as a national housekeeper who assists with domesticity and racial violence. In both cartoons, the woman guards the entrance to the national home, protecting and disbarring. Inside the republic in "Topsy in a Fix" is the viewer -- who watches apparently from the front door and looks onto the veranda. Positioned inside the home guarded by the national mother, the viewer is both infantilized and implicated in the transparently specious form of blaming in which she engages:

So, Topsey, you're at the bottom of this piece of wicked work -- picking stars out of this sacred flag. What would your forefathers say, do you think? I'll just hand you over to the new overseer Uncle Abe. He'll fix you.<sup>3</sup>

But why Topsy, the misbehaving orphan of Uncle Tom's Cabin whose domestic pilfering prompts the northern Aunt Ophelia to try

various ineffectual punishments? Topsy, who "never had no mother nor father, nor nothing," has been raised by speculators, her family origins obscured as she is produced as property. Hence property's attack on property is at the bottom of this piece of work, picking out stars or states from the national fabric. Slavery is held responsible for secession and the loss of property in the nation or the change in the boundaries of the nation made comparable to the texture of the material Columbia holds on her lap.

Holding the American flag on her lap, the accusing matron has her face in shadow and her arm and her lap in the light. The shading across her face peculiarly suggests her whiteness is already compromised, the shadow cast by the roof of the house on whose veranda she sits.<sup>4</sup> The scarcely-to-be-named possibility that this shading suggests is that Columbia herself is the offspring of a miscegenated union, that she has inherited more than whiteness from the forefathers that she asks Topsy to think of. Presented as without mother or father, Topsy is imagined with white forefathers (and an overseer who will "fix" her, uncomfortably suggesting an assault on her own reproductive future). That, raised by speculators and reproved by a symbolic mother, she should understand herself to be answerable to forefathers seems odd; that is, that she should feel loyalty to men from whom she is not biologically descended and whose legislative determinations concerning her status have left her as property not person.

The shadow cast across the face of this matron also produces an effect where her dark head and light body are mirrored by the light head and dark body of the eagle incongruously perched at her left. This national symbol further suggests the shadows Topsy's putative "forefathers" cast across the founding document of the republic. After ratifying the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the assembled delegates addressed the articles of confederation. The first debates concerned the relation of war to taxation and citizenship to representation. What counted as property and what counted as a person preoccupied the delegates the most, according to Thomas Jefferson's Autobiography.<sup>5</sup> When the delegates tried to determine what sort of nation they were bringing into being they began by counting inhabitants and assessing property. Slavery was the exacerbating factor in that accounting. As they debated the prosperity of a state and determined the relation between inhabitants and property, they asserted that "negroes are property... that negroes should not be considered as members of the state more than cattle and that they have no more interest in it" (25).<sup>6</sup>

The infamous subtraction of agency that slavery performs in conflating cattle with chattel led the delegates to further qualify their positions. According to Jefferson, "Mr. John Adams observed that ... in some countries the laboring poor were called freemen, in others they were called slaves; but that the difference as to the states was imaginary only" (25). He tried to recuperate this "imaginary" distinction by asserting "that the



condition of the laboring poor in most countries is as abject as that of slaves" (26). While such a contrast foreshadows the pro-slavery justifications of antebellum America, these debates also establish a hierarchy of national values that has persistently embedded capitalist determinations about labor within democracy. The delegates' attention seems limited to what to "call" slaves as though, whatever the nomenclature, their subject positions could not be altered. Although the Federalist concern with relating agency to property, with John Adams as a notable spokesperson, is an understood inheritance of the early national period, the implication of so rendering property and persons together and its effect on the national imagining of racial and gendered identifications haunts these narratives.

Jefferson's original wording displays the destructive ambivalence expressed by a Declaration of Independence that retained slavery. His Autobiography famously restores the passage that was excised from the final document. At first, the delegates' decision to remove this paragraph seems to have the effect of toning down inflammatory accusations, a clear effect of other excisions from the declared production of two political entities where there had been only one. According to the removed passage, the king of England has, among other abuses already enumerated,

waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's [sic] most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and

carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither... Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another.

This passage locates the "sacred rights" of life and liberty in "persons" who are held as slaves. As such a challenge to slaveholding practices in the colonies that are declaring themselves free, its very removal calls attention to an untenable contradiction. These colonies, themselves determined to keep open markets to buy and sell "MEN," are filled with the "very people" who might "rise in arms among us," suggesting a repetition of the seizure of liberty that the delegates are in the act of endorsing.

That Jefferson is further disturbed by a "market where MEN should be bought and sold" and does not mention women suggests the invisibility of women's labor in "this execrable commerce" as well as occludes a different form of repetition. What is not

surprising is that this economic and gender conflation at once removes sexuality and reproduction and retains the threat. That sexual reproduction will supplant the overseas traffic in human bodies and that notoriously these very forefathers are implicated in such new marketing practices further align national economic, racial, and sexual practices. Beyond their uneasy position in the market is the danger that these "MEN," like the men who meet to debate this document, might "rise in arms among us" and bound up with the attention to (or, paradoxically, the invisibility of) the threat of reproduction, it is the threat of repeating the gesture of rising that fuels much political rhetoric of the early republic.

-- 2 --

The white woman as emblem of America confronts the racial other as she takes over admonition and housekeeping in the national house. In the second, anti-Lincoln, cartoon, the national home is the White House. "Abraham's Dream" (1864) shows a prostrate Lincoln in the foreground. Beyond the blanket of stars that covers his body and beneath the arch of a labelled White House, an irate Columbia kicks at a smaller disguised Lincoln while she holds aloft a severed head. Driven off by the decapitating force of the national female, he can only say, "This don't remind me of any joke!" Clutching a severed head with the caricatured features of a male slave, this American Medusa

freezes onlookers in a vision of national horror displaced onto female embodiment.<sup>7</sup>

In thus interpreting the woman who guards the national home, I find content that for its primary audience may have been not only not obvious but conceivably not even latent. This image may have been presented as a proleptic celebration of the triumph of the trim masculine figure of McClelland over the faintly feminized disguise of Abraham Lincoln, who races clumsily away from the outstretched foot of Columbia.<sup>8</sup> The allusion to Judith and Holofernes, that is, that Judith's sexual complicity made it possible for her to decapitate the enemy general, would have been available to its audience. For the slave to be identified as the enemy is a deflection, yet also a conflation of Lincoln's position with that of the slave. These images thus mobilize cognitive energies which they cannot presume to control. The citation, quotation, and allusion of the text buttresses or calls into question the citation, quotation, or allusion of the image. Such a relation between word and image complicates, extends, and shifts our sense of what we respond to: that we cannot "read" and "see" at once might mean that to choose either at least momentarily dislodges the force and effect of the other. Hence, in the oscillation between one and the other, the stasis of allegory is nudged by language that alludes to or insists on a connection to other images and texts.<sup>9</sup>

As broadsides sold to be displayed in city streets, these images were intended for reproduction and mass circulation. They

were packaged and sold to be public art, and also to influence a public that viewed them in the context of literary and political events.<sup>10</sup> In the case of these political cartoons, suturing (how the identity of the observing subject might be understood to be formed by the staging of these objects and actions) takes on a still more problematic valence. The subject who faces this version of Medusa's head may be frozen, but these images are not to be contemplated in immobility, not to be understood as private, but rather in their public display, are to mobilize to action. Taken off the street, these images appear at once iconographically (as visual codifications of ideology) and as multivalently referential (as situated within a framework of literary and political texts).

It is not surprising that the presidential campaigns that took place during the American Civil War used caricatures of the president and a female embodiment of the American nation. Nor should it be surprising that some chastising be depicted. But the particular shame and humiliation here and the rather unusual establishment of these scenes on the threshold of an imagined national home appear quite stunning. Homi Bhabha has argued, in "DissemiNation," that it is through the "syntax of forgetting" that "the problematic identification of a national people becomes visible" -- "being obliged to forget becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identification."<sup>11</sup> While these cartoons remind us of powerful

and disturbing omissions and insist on certain forms of forgetting, what peopling the nation anew might mean without reproduction is arguably as problematic in Bhabha as in these imaginings of the nation. They provide a "liberating" form of cultural and national identification insofar as to identify with this white woman's body as a repository of national beliefs is "to forget" that she can literally people the nation anew.

A woman stands at the door to the "white house" and warns away the man who wants to enter (only tangentially the President of the United States). She invites another suitor. The item she uses to frighten away the white man who wants to enter her house is the severed head of an African American man with caricatured features, who presumably has already been in the house with her for her to have had the opportunity -- a la Judith and Holofernes -- to decapitate him. By means of this white woman's body we see the massively compromised republic. And she is represented as the "dream" of a recumbent man snuggled under a blanket with stars on it -- domesticity and national eroticism snuggle together in a dream about a white woman and an African American man in the white house. Both images depict reprimand and shame and the force of this shame persists to the present where we can scarcely, for the sake of our own embarrassment about the indecorousness of such comments on or about the body of the president of the United States, note that his upraised and foreshortened knee resembles an erection beneath the blanket of stars that covers his limbs.<sup>12</sup> The stars that have been picked

out of the national flag in the first image have returned to be incorporated in the bedclothing of the dreamer, the president who dreams of castration displacing miscegenation but finds it no "joke."

To look at a dream of race in the nation is to look at sexualized racial difference and to try to understand stereotypes and cliches as powerful negotiators of national imaginings about race and sexuality.<sup>13</sup> In Michel de Certeau's account, "intelligibility is established through a relation with the other." Hence history is a "practice of meaning" that "'legitimizes' the force that power exerts; it provides this force with a familial, political, or moral genealogy." Such a legitimizing practice of meaning emerges in fictional narratives as well: "fiction can be found at the end of the process, the product of the manipulation and the analysis."<sup>14</sup> A literary history of such nation/home imagining has always implied the presence of sexual misconduct with an alien or alienated population, from the homes with secret closets of Charles Brockden Brown's Wieland to the secret abortion of Caroline Kirkland's A New Home, Who'll Follow?, from the map of Indian territory in the hidden space behind the patriarchal portrait of Nathaniel Hawthorne's The House of the Seven Gables to the intimate space of Uncle Tom's Cabin, a home whose enshrined portrait of George Washington makes the national father unrecognizable. As Cassy and Emmeline make themselves into ghosts in the attic at the end of Uncle Tom's Cabin, the horror

they reveal is what bodies can occupy these homes or what nations these homes can be inhabited in.<sup>15</sup> For Stowe, the answer is emigration to Liberia and not assimilation in the United States, and like so many of these narratives the attempt to imagine a home in the nation and a nation in the home results in the unheimlich business of dispossession -- of removal to a new territory. A New Home, Who'll Follow? can only be told by someone who has retreated from the landscape of mudholes back to the urban territory of her readers. Stowe's readers are already in the north that her subjects journey toward and yet, for all her appeals to the home, they cannot be found at home -- the gothic horror in this narrative remains in attempts to locate home, as precisely what is celebrated is most abhorred.

-- 3 --

To lay claim to a home in the nation is to lay claim to an inheritance, to property transmitted through generations. Obsessions with genealogy and with the hereditary transmission of identity compete in the narratives of the early republic with a concept of identity transmitted through writing, or print culture.<sup>16</sup> Documents such as the Declaration of Independence or Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography equivalently display extraordinary faith in the effect of written declarations of identity that supersede biology or nation. The anxiety about how to manage an inheritance of identity as well as property informs



the context of another surprise bestseller in nineteenth-century America, the last will and testament of Stephen Girard, who among other feats singlehandedly purchased the Bank of the United States and bailed out the nation by underwriting the War of 1812. Some similar conjunctions of money and race emerge among the stranger details of the posthumous biography written by his employee Stephen Simpson, obviously to cash in on the excitement generated by the death of the richest man in America, but also because Girard, a sort of alternative Franklin, refused to write any account of himself other than his will -- leaving his will to represent him in the dispersals of cash since he left no offspring. With no son to inherit, his wealth took on a different character: "To money, -- to millions only could he look, as the medium between him and after times" (45).

Along with the French revolution, the San Domingo insurrection posed the greatest challenge to an identity born from revolution since slaves did become free, "rise in arms among us," and "purchase" liberty through murder. According to his 1832 biographer, Girard's extraordinary fortune had an unlikely origin in the San Domingo uprising. Since he was heavily engaged in shipping, Girard's ships were in the harbor when the planters who "rushed" to them "to deposit their most valuable property" returned to meet "an unexpected doom from the hands of their slaves. In this manner the most precious valuables were deposited in his vessels, whose proprietors and heirs were cut off, by the ruthless sword of massacre." When the ships hurried

out to sea, "much of the unclaimed and heirless property, justly fell to the lot of the owners. Girard received a large accession to his wealth by this terrific scourge of the hapless planters of St. Domingo. All heirship was swept away, in the total extinguishment of entire families, and the most extensive advertising failed to produce a legal claimant to the property thus poured into his lap."<sup>17</sup> This origin story about his wealth may be combined with the salacious detail provided by his biographer who notes that the walls of his bedroom "were ornamented with coloured prints, representing the female negroes of St. Domingo..." (187).<sup>18</sup> Both the presumed sexual availability of such women and the erotics of property poured into his lap.

In seeking to connect with posterity through his money, Girard wished historical immortality: "that the name of Girard should be lisped by infant tongues, and extolled by ancient wisdom, when that of Penn should be almost forgotten, and that of Franklin was only to be found in books" (64). The romance of the republic for him was to run "the institution of a bank, destined to control millions, and to rescue a sinking country from impending ruin; whose operations were to become blended with the currency of the nation." (96) Speculating in the stock of the old "Bank of the United States ... an institution founded by GEORGE WASHINGTON" led him to it. He bought the Bank of the U.S. for \$120,000 and supported the United States after the War of 1812 broke out.<sup>19</sup> In saving the Bank of the United States he

acted to maintain the civil and economic order of the government. "Money is the sinew of war. A nation that becomes belligerent, without having previously amassed wealth, must necessarily become more or less a slave to the capitalist" (128).<sup>20</sup> The slavery exacted by this capitalist included the conversion of all objects and persons under his control as part of a particular passion for production.

A typical physiocrat economics emerges, for example, in the details of Girard's exemplary utilitarian relation to men and plants. Like Crèvecoeur, Girard understood men and plants as "producers" and had little patience or interest in other claims for his sympathy: "The great object of his life was to produce." "So powerful was this passion for production," says his biographer, "that he often declared it was ridiculous to plant a tree that would not bear fruit" (151).<sup>21</sup> The conversion of persons into categories of economic interest may be seen as already coextensive with such conversions or reductions in slavery and also as displaced sexual production. Girard's affection for gardening, for example, had extreme results: "his passion for pruning was excessive; and often found no end but in the total extermination of the tree; especially when he found it obstinate in growth, or slow in bearing fruit" (150-51).

Girard's last illness kept all of Philadelphia in suspense, perhaps because he had loaned out four million dollars. Rumors "followed one another in quick succession, till the excitement of the public mind grew to a pitch equal to that which would have

attended the illness of the first public character of the republic" (210). After Girard, the first great American financier, finally died, his will was published. "Thousands of copies were disposed of in a few days; and being quickly copied into the public journals throughout the Union, it was more extensively diffused than any document of a similar character, not excepting the will of George Washington" (213).<sup>22</sup> The provisions he made for canals, public building, and Girard College were debated, but there was also prurient curiosity about his personal bequests and moral judgements passed on other decisions. "That part of his Will respecting the slaves on his Louisiana Estate has been justly and warmly condemned, as at total variance with the character of philanthropy that has been so lavishly ascribed to him." That he "left them in perpetual bondage" when he could have "provided the fiscal means to transport these miserables to their native country; and have provided them with the means of independent subsistence for a limited number of years... The colony of Liberia would have been the proper destination of these unfortunate beings" (267). His capitalist construction of the nation becomes inseparable from origin stories through slavery and revolution or dissemination stories that work through slavery and exile.

The manner in which the erotics of slavery haunts the nation becomes visible, for instance, through repeated references to the uprisings in San Domingo. In what Stowe's novel calls "the San Domingo hour," she imagines that "sons of white fathers will rise

... and raise with them their mother's race." Her already compromised solution or evasion of such domestic and national violence is relocation to a new nation based on race.

Colonization to Liberia was a suspect and challenged project twenty years before the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin -- that she cannot imagine a nation not based on race informs Stowe's colonialism from the inside out. According to a recent study of their origins,

"race" and "nation" derive from the same concept of "lineage" or "stock" yet it was "race" that ultimately became the major term of ethnographic scholarship while "nation" was reserved to describe the political and social divisions of Europe... In our century, the close relation of "race" and "nation" has proved to be an especially volatile source of political passions and conflict.<sup>23</sup>

In the late eighteenth century, race became separated from nation according to the same binary logic that opposed biology to custom or nature to habits and beliefs. In the mid-nineteenth century, there was a "violent reunion" (258).

The violence of this reunion -- of putting nation and race back together -- is most emphatic in the racial and sexual violence of miscegenation. What do we see when we see race? The matter of skin might be inconsequential to this seeing. The matter of sexuality might be central to it. To "rescue" Uncle Tom's Cabin as a woman's novel is not yet to address the imbrications of sexuality with racial identification.<sup>24</sup> If to

see race in Uncle Tom's Cabin means to see miscegenation, what image of miscegenation is presented? What we see when we see race in these representations is sexual -- that is to say, both sexual availability and the promise/threat of miscegenation.

In "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," Hortense Spillers calls attention to the crisis caused by "laws of inheritance" which "need to know which son of the Father's is the legitimate heir and which one the imposter. For that reason, property seems wholly the business of the male."<sup>25</sup> As property and inheritance are so bound up with legitimacy, so property becomes bound up with subjectivity:

1) the captive body becomes the source of an irresistible, destructive sensuality; 2) at the same time -- in stunning contradiction -- the captive body reduces to a thing, becoming being for the captor; 3) in this absence from a subject position, the captured sexualities provide a physical and biological expression of 'otherness'; 4) as a category of 'otherness,' the captive body translates into a potential for pornotroping and embodies sheer physical powerlessness that slides into a more general 'powerlessness,' resonating through various centers of human and social meaning. (67)

To rework this model of the gendering of race for the purposes of imagining the relations of families and nations, we might look at how "captured sexualities [that] provide a physical and biological expression of 'otherness'" extend into the matter of

miscegenation. Racism in many respects depends on keeping otherness in view and the visible changes that result from miscegenation make that, at the least, difficult.

The loss of subjectivity translates not just into being a "thing" -- for example in the original subtitle of Uncle Tom's Cabin, "The Man Who Was a Thing" -- but crucially into "being for the captor." In "being for," the possibility of being becomes always connected to a primary subject who owns. Yet if the captor's being has been incorporated in "being for the captor," then the place of both captor and captive seems vividly threatened. Such destabilized positions may explain abolitionist interest in promoting the figure of the tragic mulatta. To contemplate this figure arouses at once the sexuality and the implicated identity of the onlooker if not the possessor/father.

To imagine eradicating that connection is also to question the possibility of ownership. It is necessary not only to promote the ownership of yourself ("being for" yourself), but also to evade the loss of ownership experienced in the moments where the self-owned becomes the other-owned, when being for yourself becomes being for anyone else who might claim you.<sup>26</sup> But the relations of families and nations incorporate property in the matter of reproduction. To quote Spillers again: "Certainly if 'kinship' were possible, the property relations would be undermined, since the offspring would then 'belong' to a mother and a father." The matter of belonging means in effect that "genetic reproduction" appears as "an extension of the boundaries

of proliferating properties." Finally, "the captive female body locates precisely a moment of converging political and social vectors that mark the flesh as a prime commodity of exchange. (74, 75) To note how flesh is marked as a commodity for exchange moves the matter of desire in the direction of reproduction. That both desire and reproduction are political emerges in the political cartoons, that, among other things, unite the imagined sexuality and/or violence of an African American identity with the body of the president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln.

Now Lincoln famously did (or did not) say upon meeting Harriet Beecher Stowe that she had started this "big war." That act of naming, placing credit and blame for the bloodiest conflict in the history of the United States on the shoulders of a small New England housewife, also condenses (or places in strange perspective) the attitude that fiction permeates national politics. In considering the interrelation of political and artistic acts of representation, we discover in their shared images and anxieties a sort of telos for how national identities are produced.<sup>27</sup>

-- 4 --

The convergence of racial and sexual matters leads me to consider again the extraordinary twins of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Augustine St. Clare explains, halfway through the novel, "My brother and I were twins... but we were in all points a contrast.



He had black, fiery eyes, coal-black hair, a Roman profile, and a rich brown complexion. I had blue eyes, golden hair, a Grecian profile, and a fair complexion" (244). In so describing the contrast of their appearances, it is as though his brother passes for white. They also "claim" different parents, a prelude to the amazing statement that sons of white father will rise and that in rising they will take with them their mother's race. Since the sons of white fathers must emerge from the same body as the sons of their presumed not-white mothers, the separation of twinned racial identities in the ideological claims of these brothers seems all the stranger. In debating the San Domingo uprising, the darker brother Alfred says "The Haytiens were not Anglo-Saxons; if they had been, there would have been another story. The Anglo-Saxon is the dominant race of the world, and is to be so." Such certainty eerily echoes the portion of the Declaration of Independence which posits that these united colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states. One implication of the possible contradiction that lurks beneath Alfred's prophetic utterance of "is to be so" is seized on by his brother.

"Well, there is a pretty fair infusion of Anglo-Saxon blood among our slaves, now," said Augustine. "There are plenty among them who have only enough of the African to give a sort of tropical warmth and fervor to our calculating firmness and foresight. If ever the St. Domingo hour comes, Anglo-Saxon blood will lead on the day. Sons of white

fathers, with all our haughty feelings burning in their veins, will not always be bought and sold and traded. They will rise, and raise with them their mother's race." (290)

How to imagine racial separation within one body is the project not only of these twins but of Twain's twinning of Pudd'nhead Wilson with Those Extraordinary Twins. Myra Jehlen, among others, has noted how the attempt to imagine the nature/nurture debate through race becomes as painful and inextricable as the separation of Siamese twins -- which is guilty?<sup>28</sup> To separate out the body that commits the crime from the body that is innocent radically unsettles how to understand that racially, but also how to understand that sexually -- how did the sons of white fathers become engendered?

Pregnancy is already two bodies in one, but to have twins literalizes the split. Two bodies emerge from one and racializing the two bodies is at the core of the problem of reproduction. An unnerving detail about women in this account is that bodies emerge from them bearing the blood of the fathers. Bodily impressibility -- bodily inscription -- is the crime and the punishment at once. And the bodily inscription can be lethal: slavery kills little Eva as, echoing Frederick Douglass's narrative, she announces that "these things sink into my heart" (237).<sup>29</sup>

Dramatizations of the novel take further the possibility of revenge. What kinds of revenge are acted out in scenes where Cassy gets to shoot Haley or where Haley is revealed as the

villain who stabbed St. Clare -- or where Eva and Uncle Tom are reunited in Heaven? These scenes -- seen through an amazing proliferation of stage companies who specialized in "Tomming" by even more people than the extraordinary number who read the novel -- collapse property and will: property willed ethereally where it cannot be left materially.<sup>30</sup> In the concluding scene, staged for many audiences, was a "safe" version of their worst nightmare: the body of a white female entwined with the body of an African American male. In the novel, Eva kisses Uncle Tom, drapes him with flowers, gives him a lock of her hair. In the dramatization, she waits for him in heaven with her arms outstretched -- they are joined in the afterlife in a transubstantial miscegenation.<sup>31</sup>

George Aiken's Uncle Tom's Cabin brings the drama to a close when Marks shows up as a comical lawyer who presents a warrant for the arrest of Legree for murdering Augustine St. Clair just as "Cassy produces a knife and stabs Legree who falls dead." In another version by Aiken, Legree is shot by Marks. In still another version, by Thomas Hailes Lacey, he is shot by Cassy who says, "now we are quits, and if they burn me alive, I shall die rejoicing in the deed that has avenged the martyrdom of so many hapless victims." George Harris enters with George Shelby and the last lines of the play, from Uncle Tom, are "bless you, George Harris! -- bless you, dear -- little -- mas'r George!"

This last dramatization emphasizes another form of implicit twinning in Stowe's novel: the case of the two "Georges," George

Shelby and George Harris, twinned Georges who may be understood as the alternative sons of the father, George Washington. While this dramatization finds them together at the end, blessed by Uncle Tom, the novel places them very far apart. After his doomed journey to the South, George Shelby returns to Kentucky. After his successful escape to the north, passing as a white man despite the brand left on his hand, George Harris heads to Liberia.

Stowe's novel explicitly aligns race and nation when George Harris writes of his choice of nation. Where his earlier declaration of independence has him declare himself ready to die for freedom, he now proclaims himself ready to "work till I die" (216, 462). He says, "My sympathies are not for my father's race but for my mother's" (459). The separation of an inherited biological identity between mother and father changes from racial to national: "I have no wish to pass for an American... The desire and yearning of my soul is for an African nationality" (460). Still nationality is read as a racial inheritance that, he laments, cannot be found in the uprisings of San Domingo: "the race that formed the character of the Haytiens was a worn-out effeminate one" (460). He proclaims that "A nation has a right to argue... the cause of its race, -- which an individual has not" (461).<sup>32</sup> Seeking to find a nation which can make such an argument, he claims that, "In these days, a nation is born in a day" (460). The day of this imagined nation's birth, like the "birth" of the United States, shows a nationalism inseparable

from sexuality and race. If a nation which has the "right" to argue the cause of its race can be born in a day, the engendering makes race and sexuality inseparable.

1. Samuels Clemens, Pudd'nhead Wilson; and Those Extraordinary Twins (New York: Norton, 1980), p. 119.
2. I have in mind the stereotyping of the welfare mother as the "blame figure" for the crisis of family values in an election year.
3. I had associated the use of "uncle" with uncle Sam, but Trudier Harris recently pointed out to me that to call this "new overseer" by that name suggests that he shares the familiar African-American appellation with uncle Tom.
4. In Uncle Tom's Cabin, Topsy calls her "Miss Feely," and it is her learned ability to feel for Topsy that redeems Miss Ophelia in the novel and that makes her a model for northern women readers.
5. In his Autobiography, where Jefferson uses the notes he took on the occasion. I have also used his accounts of the speeches of the delegates in Writings (Library of America, 1984). For another account of Jefferson's revisions, see Garry Wills, Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978).
6. The etymological relation between the origins of cattle and chattel arguably influences their conjunction in slavery discussions. John Adams further asserts, according to Jefferson, that "Reason, justice, and equity never had weight enough on the face of the earth to govern the councils of men. It is interest alone which does it, and it is interest alone which can be trusted" (29).
7. For a complementary discussion of the trope of the Medusa, see the introduction to my Romances of the Republic: Women, the Family, and Violence in the Literature of the Early American Nation (Oxford Univ. Press, 1996).
8. Lincoln was ridiculed for a rumored attempt to enter Washington, D. C. disguised as a Scotchman after an assassination threat.
9. In Picture Theory (Chicago, 1994), W. J. T. Mitchell approaches the "'matter' of the image-text conjunction" in cartoons through the concept of "suture" -- which he derives from Stephen Heath, "On Suture," in Questions of Cinema (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1981) pp. 76-112. Heath in turn derives suture from Lacan's "junction of the imaginary and the symbolic" to describe the construction of the cinema spectator's position (quoted in Heath, p. 86). Mitchell wants to extend this position to include that of the "reader and listener" and he further asserts that the cartoon page involves "the clear subordination and suturing of one medium to the other" in which "word is to image as speech (or thought) is to action and bodies" (91-2). The incitement to action is an understood way of separating

propaganda from art, though I want to put aside whether to understand this as art and what the implications of such understanding might be.

10. Some of the images carry at their borders details on how to purchase them. The racist anti-Lincoln print of "Miscegenation, or the Millenium of Abolitionism" (1864), for example, could be bought in bulk from Currier and Ives, 170 Nassau St., New York City, otherwise famous as purveyors of pastoral landscape images. This purchasing of political art further extends the implications of the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. For reproduction of this print (1864-38) as well as others in the collection of the Library of Congress and for helpful commentary, see Bernard Reilly, American Political Prints, 1766-1876 (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1991).

11. "DissemiNation" in The Location of Culture (Routledge, 1994) pp. 160, 161.

12. Is Abe's dream a sexual or a political fantasy? How might one tell the difference here between dreaming about the nation or about race? As an election campaign tactic, it rivals Willie Horton's image plastered across TV screens in a recent presidential election. To assume exemplarity or to assert the choice of these images as representative depends on relating the racism they depict to "popular" attitudes. Parenthetically, only after looking at this image many times, did I notice that the president has his arm around the shoulders of a body whose frilled cap is all that signals an identity, presumably that of Mary Todd, the irrelevance of whose presence may be noted in what he dreams about.

13. See for instance, the discussion in Robyn Wiegman, American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender (Duke Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 43-62.

14. Michel de Certeau, The Writing of History trans. Tom Conley (Columbia Univ. Press, 1988), pp. 3, 7, 9.

15. I'm also drawing on the forms of gothic imaginings about women threatened at home, and in particular on the account Karen Halttunen gives of Uncle Tom's Cabin as a gothic narrative informed by the temperance agitation rhetoric of Henry Ward Beecher. "Gothic Imagination and Social Reform: The Haunted Houses of Lyman Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, and Harriet Beecher Stowe," in New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin, ed. Eric Sundquist (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

16. See the variant accounts of transmitting identity through language in this period, one emphasizing performance and the other publication, by Jay Fliegelman, Declaring Independence: Jefferson's Natural Language and the Culture of Performance (Stanford Univ.

Press, 1993) and Michael Warner, Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America (Harvard Univ. Press, 1990).

17. Stephen Simpson, Biography of Stephen Girard, with his Will Affixed; Comprising an Account of his Private Life, Habits, Genius, and Manners; Together with a Detailed History of his Banking and Financial Operations for the last Twenty Years. Accompanied with Philosophical and Moral Reflections, upon the Man, the Merchant, the Patriot, and the Philanthropist. (1832) (41-42). I also have in mind the contrast here between two monolithic, extraordinary, willfully dynastic figures, Toussaint L'Ouverture and Stephen Girard. Each successfully tried to imagine himself within the context of a nation-building enterprise that transforms him from his origins.

18. "An exception to [his calculated austerity] existed in his susceptibility of solace from female intercourse. On this point, he never professed to be fastidiously chaste; and there is good reason to believe, that he was disposed, both by constitution and habits, to the free indulgence of lubricity. It is believed, that, in this particular, the force of his passions overcame his love of frugality, and led him into what he, in other matters, would have deemed extravagance" (191). Among his books, were found Voltaire and a French dissertation on gardening, planting, and pruning" (177).

19. As a "coat of arms" for his bank notes he adapted the American eagle and a ship under full sail (112).

20. Simpson sexualizes his description of Girard's opponents to the formation of a new National Bank, finding them "burning with unchaste fever of speculation, to prostitute it to the unwarrantable purposes of private aggrandizement and personal gain" (130).

21. "Sympathy, feeling, friendship, pity, love or commiseration, were emotions that never ruffled the equanimity of his mind; at least to such a degree, as to relax his energy of accumulation... Friends, relations, old companions, confidential agents, or the general family of mankind, might sicken and die around him, and he would not part with his money to relieve and save one among them" (46). Instead, "His pity, his charity, his benevolence, were all to descend to posterity, in order that the act [might] consecrate him to fame" (47). "It was evident to me at that time, that he placed no more estimate upon men, than upon so many machines or instruments, by which to acquire money; which he could throw by, at any moment, without any feeling of regret, or any expression of sentiment" (164). "All about him manifested this passion for eternal duration; and even in his Will, his papers and books are to be preserved FOREVER -- his property is to endure FOREVER -- his buildings are to last FOREVER-- and his



fame will not be less in its perpetuity" (173).

22. "Perhaps the anxiety, as well as depth of the emotions excited by his unique Will in the public mind, were never before equalled. The craving of the public to read the WILL, exceeded that of the populace of Rome to peruse the last testament of Julius Caesar." (213)

23. Nicholas Hudson, "From 'Nation' to 'Race': The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought" Eighteenth-Century Studies vol. 29, no. 3 (sp 96) p. 248.

24. As Jane Tompkins reputedly has done in the essay that became part of Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction (Oxford University Press, 1986).

25. Diacritics (Summer 1987), p. 65. I've also been influenced by "Changing the Letter: The Yokes, the Jokes of Discourse, or Mrs. Stowe, Mr. Reed" in Deborah McDowell and Arnold Rampersad, ed., Slavery and the Literary Imagination -- Selected Papers from the English Institute 1987 (Johns Hopkins, 1989).

26. Hence the attention to possessive individualism and sentimental fetishism in Gillian Brown's accounts of Stowe. Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America (Univ. of California Press, 1990).

27. A number of abstract categories here could use, as ever, unpacking: "race," "nation," and "identity" are mutually constitutive, hardly, and only with violence, to be separated into the components that fracture the surfaces of these fictions and cartoons. A trajectory of readings about nationalism are also mapped here. If all nationalisms are gendered, as Anne McClintock asserts, then how do relations of gender and race become coherent? Are the origins of nation and race simultaneous, as Hudson argues, and what might this mean? An inevitable blindness or occlusion -- does money "cover" the story as Gillian Brown convincingly argues it does in turning it into the matter of sentimental fetishism, a possessive individualism? Or can we still find some uneasiness in the interjection of nationalism? What happens to these categories when they can't all stay in together? In addition to works already cited, see Benedict Anderson's germinal assertions about how to have a nationalism seems as inevitable as to have a gender in Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (Verso, 1983), p. 14; and the implicit response in Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context (Routledge, 1995), pp. 352-364; further articulations of the problem are in Etienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism" in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities (Verso, 1991), pp. 37-63. See also Eric Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism Since 1780

(Cambridge, 1990) and Ernst Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (Blackwell, 1983).

28. Harriet Beecher Stowe's first children were twins: daughters born when her husband was off in Europe buying books for Lane Seminary. She named the first-born after her husband's first (deceased) wife Eliza and the second she named Isabella. When her husband returned and found out the names he wrote her very excitedly to insist that the second be renamed: "Eliza and Harriet! Eliza and Harriet! ELIZA AND HARRIET!" He wanted to give these twins the twinned identities of his two wives. That Stowe then gives the name of Eliza to the heroine of her most famous episode places her own identity as a shadow twin to this protagonist. Calvin Stowe to Harriet Beecher Stowe, January 23, 1837; cited in Joan Hedrick, Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), p. 112. Stowe later wrote that one child was "hers" and the other "his" -- an early instance of the strange sense of separate gestations that pervades her account of Alfred and Augustine St. Clare. For another intriguing account of essentialist identity, see Myra Jehlen, "The Ties That Bind: Race and Sex in Pudd'nhead Wilson," repr. in Gordon Hutner, ed., The American Literary History Reader (Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 149-165.

29. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself (1845), repr. in The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader, ed. William Andrews, p. 48: "These words sank deep into my heart." His protest about the use of women as breeders is spurred in part by the one slave owned by William Covey, a woman whose value is assured when she gives birth to twins. Uncle Tom's Cabin attempts to show the horrors of the effect of slavery on women by showing infanticide and suicide, such as Cassy's poisoning of her child. The understood agony of her retelling of this story, like the painful explication of Sethe's actions in Toni Morrison's Beloved, is that her loss of children has driven her to such a mode of "protection."

30. The first stage version was presented three months before the serialization in the National Era was completed. On September 27, 1852, the version penned by the 22 year old George Aiken was first produced. (The first version was staged on January 5, 1852, and, of course, did not contain the ending.) By the fall of 1853, five versions were playing simultaneously in NYC, including one at P. T. Barnum's American Museum that had a happy ending. During the Civil War the drama fell into disuse. In the 1870s it was revived with a vengeance. In 1879, the NY Dramatic Mirror reported on 49 travelling companies of Tommers. Twenty years later there were close to 500.

31. Last scene in Aiken: "Gorgeous clouds, tinted with sunlight. Eva, robed in white, is discovered on the back of a milk-white dove, with expanded wings, as if just soaring upward. Her hands

are extended in benediction over St. Clare and Uncle Tom, who are kneeling and gazing up to her. Impressive music. Slow curtain."

32. Frederick Douglass may be seen responding to this in his plea for individual as opposed to national rights: "Oceans no longer divide, but link nations together." In "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July" (1852) repr. in The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader, p. 129.

STRONG'S DIME CARICATURES.—No. 3.



Never had no father, nor mother, nor nothing! I was ruined by speculators! It's mighty wicked, any-how! "What makes me ask so?" Don no, misrite—I specks cause I's so wicked!

Hand us over to de Albe, eh? Ies off!

So, Topsey, you're at the bottom of this piece of wicked work—picking stars out of this sacred flag! What would your forefathers say, do you think? I'll just hand you over to the new overner, Uncle Abe. He'll fix you!

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1861, by T. W. STODOL, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of New York.

SOUTH CAROLINA TOPSEY IN A FIX.

WHITE HOUSE.



This don't remind me of any job!

THE MONARCHY

26328 963

# ABRAHAM'S DREAM!

"COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE."

Published by Currier & Ives, 157 Nassau St. N.Y.

NOV 27 1861