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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS
University College

*Selections from the Seedbed of Cultural Creativity:
Where “the Religious” and “the Secular” Converge.
or
How We Went from Antebellum Post-millennialism
to Cold War “Armageddon Theology.”*

by
Mary Lee Bigham-Bartling

A thesis presented to
The Graduate School
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Liberal Arts

May 2018
St. Louis, Missouri

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Projects of this nature do not take place in a vacuum, and this one is no different.

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My son, Adam Bartling, engaged in seemingly endless dialogues about liminality, myth, and apocalyptic media. And my husband, Andy Bartling, provided a veritable mountain of support during the research and writing of this thesis, regardless of whether I had control over it, or it had control of me (which, a time or two, seemed to have been the case).

Mary Bigham-Bartling

Washington University in St. Louis
May 2018

Thesis Examination Committee:
Dr. Abram Van Engen, Chair
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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Selections from the Seedbed of Cultural Creativity:

Where “the Religious” and “the Secular” Converge.

or

How We Went from Antebellum Post-millennialism

to Cold War “Armageddon Theology.”

by

Mary Lee Bigham-Bartling

Doctor of Liberal Arts

University College

Washington University in St. Louis, 2018

Dr. Abram Van Engen, Chair

This thesis examines a particular strand of American Protestantism, the shift from the “commonly received doctrine” being post-millennialism, founded on gradual improvement and reforming the world, to a significant number of Americans adhering to the form of pre-millennial dispensationalism that has been referred to as “Armageddon theology.” This transition is considered through the filter of the sentiment Talal Asad encapsulates in his observation that “the ‘religious’ and the

‘secular’ are not essentially fixed categories,” contending that, over time these domains influence and shape one another.

“The secular” is viewed in a bifurcated fashion, comprised of popular media, as well as historical events, with the contention that both categories of this sector shape, and are shaped, by the “religious” sphere. This position is grounded in Victor Turner’s assertion that modern genres, like literature, “play” with cultural elements such as religion, and reshape the normative order. The influence each of these spheres exerts on the others is examined through the process Turner associates with transformative events and the human experiences they provoke.

Chapter one outlines this project’s structure, and speaks to foundational concepts. As a means of establishing the environment from which this eschatological transition emerged, chapter two contains a close reading of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which embodies post-millennial thought in terms of the novel’s form, as well as its message. Contemplating why this eschatological shift occurred, chapter three begins with a brief historical overview of the transition from antebellum post-millennialism to Cold War “Armageddon Theology.” Correlations are drawn to concepts within Robert J. Lifton’s work regarding impaired spiritual and psychological connections that stem from broken symbol structures, relating them to Hans Blumenberg’s work on mythology as necessary to human orientation. These concepts are further aligned with the pattern Turner applies to transformative human experience.

The literary selection for this chapter, Russell Hoban's post-apocalyptic novel *Riddley Walker*, conveys this process, also in the context of the nuclear reality of the society in question.

Chapter four considers "where we go next," and contains a survey of new images, and perspectives that emerge in a variety of media as "Armageddon theology" engages the "secular." This sampling demonstrates the level to which concepts with this form of pre-millennial dispensationalism have become entrenched in American culture at large.

Chapter 1: Hey, How Did We Get Here?

Borrowing David Byrne's query in the Talking Heads song, *Once in a Lifetime*, I pose the question, "Well, how did we get here?" By "here" I refer to the shift in a particular strand of American Protestantism,* from the "commonly received doctrine" being founded on gradual improvement and reforming the world, to a significant number of Americans adhering to the form of pre-millennial dispensationalism that has been referred to as "Armageddon theology."¹ This Cold War eschatology is grounded in a reading of scripture, that, as Paul Boyer writes, turns the bible into a "manual of atomic age combat."² How, and more importantly, why this transition occurred is a complicated question. And any attempt to answer it will necessarily be equally complex.

¹"History of Opinions Respecting the Millennium." *American Theological Review*, 4 (November, 1859), 655; Finney, Charles Grandison. "Letters on Revivals." No. 23. *The Gospel Truth*. https://www.gospeltruth.net/1846OE/46_lets_art/460121_let_on_revival_23.htm. (accessed: March 2, 2017); "Armageddon Theology and Presidential Decision-Making: Religious Leaders' Concern." *Transcript of a Press Conference for Religious Issues '84*. (San Francisco Press Club: in Association with Conference on the fate of the Earth and Washington Research Center, October 24, 1984). <http://www.rumormillnews.com/ARMAGEDDON%20THEOLOGY.htm> (accessed: July 3, 2017).

*Use of the term "shift," is not intended to indicate movement in American Protestantism as a whole, as if it is a monolithic entity. Therefore, I do not contend that pre-millennial thought is non-existent within nineteenth-century Protestantism prior to the events in question. Nor do I suggest that post-millennialism ceases to exist following the advent of pre-millennial dispensationalism. I do, however, pull on a particular strand within American Protestantism, and consider its development. Over the course of this thesis, I examine the thread that connects antebellum post-millennialism to Cold War "Armageddon Theology."

² Boyer, Paul. *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 127. *eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost. (Accessed: March 4, 2017).

I consider the question of “how we got here” through the filter of the sentiment Talal Asad encapsulates in his observation that “the ‘religious’,” (the object of which is the sacred) and “the ‘secular’ are not essentially fixed categories.”³ These terms have been viewed as standing in opposition to one another since “secular’s” Latin precursor, *saeculum*, (an age of approximately one hundred years) evolved to be used in the Christian Latin of medieval times to distinguish the temporal, material world from the eternal realm of God.⁴ I maintain that these domains (as Asad further states), “depend” on each other.⁵ Consequently, I hold (as is implicit in Asad’s statement), that in order to understand and define one sphere, you have to, in the process, understand and define the other. I further contend, that, over time these sectors influence and shape one another. Arguably, this claim has already been demonstrated (at least to some degree) by historians writing on evangelicalism during this period. Scholars such as Paul Boyer, Matthew Avery Sutton, and Timothy Weber, do indeed identify causal

³ Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 25.

⁴ Zuckerman, Phil and John R. Shook. “Introduction: The Study of Secularism.” *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*. Edited by Phil Zuckerman and John R. Shook. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 4. The term “secular” was adopted by Romance languages and entered Middle English. It is defined in Samuel Johnson’s 1755 edition of *A Dictionary of the English Language* (among the earliest and considered to be one of the most influential dictionaries in the history of the English language), as “Not spiritual, relating to the affairs of the present world, not holy, worldly.” Dictionaries following Johnson’s have consistently repeated this definition, including the current *Oxford Dictionary of English*. (Johnson, Samuel. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. Vol. 2. London: W. Strahan, 1755; “secular.” *Oxford Dictionary of English*. Third Edition. Edited by Angus Stevenson. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). The terms “secularism,” and “secularist” were introduced by George Jacob Holyoake as a distinction from atheism. (Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, 23.) For more information regarding the study of the secular, secularity and secularism, see *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁵ Asad, 22, 26.

relationships between secular events (in this case, three wars, and the advent of the atomic bomb), and developments in “American evangelical apocalypticism.”⁶

However, as indicated in the diagram below, like Asad, I consider “the secular” in a bifurcated fashion, including products of culture, as well as historical events. The process depicted in Figure 1 is modeled on what anthropologist Victor Turner refers to as the “seedbed of cultural creativity.”⁷ Turner defines the seedbed of cultural creativity as the “setting in which new symbols, models, and paradigms arise.”⁸ It is in this regard that the tri-partite “seedbed” illustrated in the aforementioned diagram plays a significant role in this examination of the transition from antebellum post-millennialism to Cold War “Armageddon Theology.”

The “seedbed of cultural creativity” concept emerged from Turner’s research on liminality, the chaotic state of flux “betwixt and between” the two stable points of any given transition (where it started, and where it ends up).⁹ His focus on new symbols that arise from this state, and how they feed back into societal constructs, informs the processes I employ throughout my consideration of “How we got here.”¹⁰ Turner’s

⁶ Sutton, Matthew Avery. *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 359.

⁷ Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), 28.

⁸ Turner (1982), 28.

⁹ Turner, Victor. “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage.” *Betwixt & Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*. Edited by Lois Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, Meredith Little. (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1987), 7.

¹⁰ Turner, Victor. *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience*. (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), 9.

work stems from that of Arnold Van Gennep, who, in his 1909 study of ritual passage in small-scale (or “tribal”) societies titled *The Rites of Passage*, identified a seemingly universal pattern within ritual, regardless of type, or culture of origin.¹¹ Turner applied a processual approach* to Van Gennep’s work, and focuses on “the importance of liminality.”¹²

A vital aspect of the liminal phase within rites of passage is reflection, for ritual subjects to consider their cosmos, contemplate their society, and think about “the powers that sustain them.”¹³ Tribal elders of the small-scale societies studied, utilized dance, as well as sacred objects like relics, masks, and sculptures, to initiate the process. In order to provoke a reflective state, certain natural and cultural elements, such as a head, phallus, or nose, the figure’s bow, or meal mortar, are represented as disproportionately small, or large. *The Man Without Arms* exemplifies this practice, a figurine of a lazy man who has “an enormous penis,” but no arms with which to work.¹⁴ Most striking, however, is the “monster or fantasy making” recombination, which throws the components of masks and effigies into relief, in that they are “so radically ill-

¹¹ Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), vi; Thomassen, Bjørn. “The Uses and Meanings of Liminality.” *International Political Anthropology* Vol. 2 (2009) No. 1, 6.

¹² Thomassen, 14.

*A processual approach is defined by John S. Justeson as: traditional archaeology [a subset of anthropology] is concerned with the reconstruction of ancient cultural systems while the “new archaeologist” looks for explanations of cultural change that can be used to predict particular changes in particular situations. (Justeson, John S. “Limitations of Archaeological Inference: An Information-Theoretic Approach with Applications in Methodology.” *American Antiquity*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (April 1973), 131).

¹³ Turner (1987), 14.

¹⁴ Richards, Audrey. *Chisungu: A Girl’s Initiation Ceremony Among the Bemba of Zambia*. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 211.

sorted” they stand out and become points of reflection, and contemplation.¹⁵ This recombination engenders new ideas, which eventually become established, and “break the cake of custom,” and ultimately revitalize societal make-up.¹⁶

These days, Turner maintains, “cultural performance arenas are the exploring antennae by which we move forward.”¹⁷ He contends that within industrialized societies, it is genres like film, popular music, and literature, that “play” with elements of culture, provoke reflection, and engender new insights which take root and reshape the normative order.¹⁸

Though the diagram below resembles a Venn diagram (where points of convergence simply indicate commonality), it functions on a reciprocity akin to Marx’s Superstructure: Base model, in that the overlapping spheres “play” with the elements within them, thereby influencing and shaping each other. As indicated in the aforementioned chart, my variation on the seedbed concept operates on three-way percolation, rather than two elements as in Marx’s system, for as touched upon above, I incorporate world events as a component. It is interesting to note that this churning rendition of a Venn diagram is itself the product of such a process, as it is an amalgamation of concepts and ideas from Asad, Marx, and Turner.

¹⁵ Turner (1987), 15.

¹⁶ Turner (1987), 15; Thomassen, 14.

¹⁷ Turner (1985), 10.

¹⁸ Turner (1982), 40-45; Turner, Victor. "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology." *Rice Institute Pamphlet - Rice University Studies*, 60, no. 3 (1974), 71.

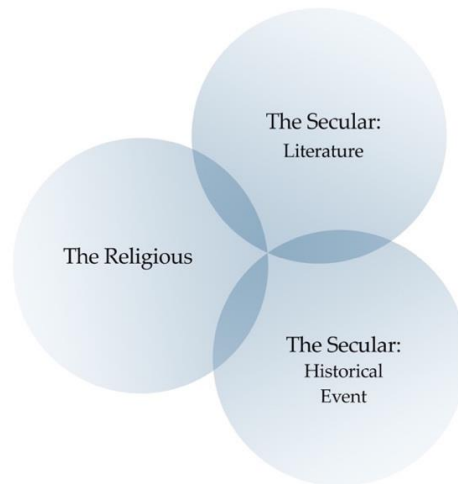


Figure 1: *Seedbed Template.*

My point of entry into this examination of “*how we got here,*” however, is through literature. The following quotations express my reasoning for doing so quite eloquently.

As Turner states, referencing Wilhelm Dilthey:

We are social beings, and we want to tell what we have learned from experience. The arts depend on this urge to confession or declamation. The hard-won meanings should be said, painted, danced, dramatized, put into circulation.¹⁹

And speaking to the significance of reading literature, as Ursula K. Le Guin writes:

...a person who had never listened to nor read a tale or myth or parable or story, would remain ignorant of his own emotional and spiritual heights and depths, would not know quite fully what it is to be human. For the story—from *Rumpelstiltskin* to *War and Peace*—is one of the basic tools invented by the mind of man, for the purpose of gaining understanding. *There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories* (emphasis mine).²⁰

¹⁹ Turner, Victor. “Dewey, Dilthey, and Drama: An Essay in the Anthropology of Experience.” *The Anthropology of Experience*. Edited by Victor W. Turner, and Edward M. Bruner. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 37.

Concisely put by Frank Kermode, “fictions are for finding things out.”²¹ What we find out, of course, is what the authors of a given historical era have learned. Not simply what occurred, or even how a particular sequence of events unfolded, but the psychological, emotional and spiritual implications of historical events. As Kermode further contends, fictions “change as the needs of sense-making change.”²² It should come as no surprise, then, that the sentimental literature Stowe produces — “works whose stated purpose,” according to Jane Tompkins, are “to influence the course of history” — is at its peak during a time when the “commonly held doctrine” is post-millennialism, a human-driven, tradition of gradual improvement.²³ Neither should we be astonished that Cold War era science fiction addresses many of the same issues as apocalyptic literature.²⁴

As a means of establishing “*where we started*,” Chapter 2 contains a close reading of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s iconic work, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which as I demonstrate, embodies post-millennial thought in terms of the novel’s form, as well as its message. In an effort to address “*why we end up here*,” in Chapter 3, I begin with a brief historical

²⁰ Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Edited by Susan Wood. (New York: Ultramarine Publishing, 1979), 31.

²¹ Kermode, Frank. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 39.

²² Kermode, 39.

²³ Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 125.

²⁴ Gilbert, James. *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 239.

overview of the transition from antebellum post-millennialism to Cold War

“Armageddon Theology.” I note correlations to concepts within Robert J. Lifton’s work regarding impaired spiritual and psychological connections that stem from broken symbol structures, relating them to Hans Blumenberg’s work on mythology as necessary to human orientation. Further, I align these concepts with the pattern Turner associates with transformative events and the human experiences they provoke.

Considering “*where we go next*,” Chapter 4 contains a survey of new images, and perspectives that emerge in a variety of media as “Armageddon theology” churns its way through the “seedbed of cultural creativity,” demonstrating how entrenched its concepts have become in American culture at large.

My first selection from the “seedbed” is Harriet Beecher Stowe’s, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and, as indicated above, is addressed in Chapter 2. Stowe’s work starts where this thesis begins, with post-millennialism. As indicated in the diagram above, *Uncle Tom’s* journey through the “seedbed” exemplifies the way “the religious” engages, shapes, and can ultimately transform, “the secular.” Given Stowe’s remarks in the book’s preface about a “general movement” of benevolence and reform, how the influence of literature and the arts are “becoming more and more in unison with the great master chord of Christianity,” *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is clearly an expression of post-

millennial thought.²⁵ As I demonstrate in Chapter 2, the various locations within the book exhibit the defining characteristics of progressing epochs within providential history, a notion which emerges from the post-millennialism of her Calvinist upbringing.²⁶

Post-millennial thought also shapes the development of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in regard to Stowe's choice of literary devices. While Stowe's admonishment to "feel right," has been the focus of significant scholarship, consistent with the human-driven nature of post-millennialism, I consider her call to *action*. I also examine the rhetorical devices she employs to impel readers toward that end, in keeping with post-millennialism's imperative of moral suasion. The action in question, of course, is putting an end to slavery, a reform that, according to Stowe's millennial view, will advance God's divine plan, bringing the world one step closer to the realization of Christ's heavenly kingdom on earth.

Chapter 3 involves Russell Hoban's post-apocalyptic work, *Riddley Walker*, but the movement of this chapter does not begin with the novel. In direct contrast to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, this chapter demonstrates the way "the secular" influences, shapes, and ultimately transforms "the religious," specifically, the atomic bomb's influence on

²⁵ Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly*. 2nd edition. (New York: Norton & Co., 2010), xiii; Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Woman in Sacred History: A Series of Sketches Drawn from Scriptural, Historical, and Legendary Sources*. (New York: J.B. Ford and Co., 1874), [19th page, though not numbered].

²⁶ Stowe (1874), [19th page, though not numbered].

premillennial dispensationalism. I describe this chapter as “involving” *Riddley Walker* because, unlike *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Hoban’s work does not constitute the precise delineation of a distinct eschatology which expresses a particular cultural moment. In short, *Riddley Walker* is not an explicit articulation of the premillennial dispensationalism referred to as “Armageddon Theology.”

Rather, while Hoban’s work does indeed revolve around a religion that, like “Armageddon Theology,” is grounded in the nuclear reality of the society in question, *Riddley Walker* speaks to the mythologizing process itself. This process is, of course, the “crux” of the issue at hand, the means for ascertaining an answer to the question “How did we get here,” at the heart of this thesis. Conforming to the pattern Turner associates with human experience, this “selection from the seedbed” depicts how symbolic mechanisms evolve, which according to Hans Blumenberg, occurs in response to the “practical business of life.”²⁷ Or, as Mircea Eliade phrases it, when “earlier expressions” of mythical thought “become out-moded by history.”²⁸

Consistent with their contrasting perspectives, the structure of this chapter differs from that of the segment dedicated to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Rather than simply marching through the text, drawing parallels to a specific eschatology, I “front load”

²⁷ Blumenberg, Hans. *Work on Myth*. Translated by Robert M. Wallace. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1985), ix. *eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost. (Accessed: August 12, 2017).

²⁸ Eliade, Mircea. *Myth and Reality*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. (New York: Harper Collins, 1963), 176.

this chapter, if you will, with a summary of the transition from antebellum post-millennialism to dispensational pre-millennialism, and its subsequent development into so-called “Armageddon theology.” As mentioned above, I apply Lifton’s concepts regarding the impaired psychological and spiritual connections that stem from invalidated symbol structures, to historic events.²⁹ I also touch upon Hans Blumenberg’s work on the evolution of mythology, aligning both with Turner’s structure of human experience.

After this groundwork has been laid, I turn to an analysis of *Riddley Walker*. Prior to delving into my examination of Hoban’s work (which won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for Best Science Fiction Novel), I touch upon what makes science fiction an appropriate genre for this “selection from the seedbed,” noting commonalities between science fiction and apocalyptic literature. Ultimately, I consider Hoban’s novel through the same Lifton-Blumenberg-Turner filter utilized in my examination of historic events. I apply Turner’s pattern of human experience to the

²⁹ A number of historians, have been hesitant to incorporate psychology into their field. This occurs, at least in part, as Robert Gilbert points out, because “one cannot reliably psychoanalyze the dead.” While there is certainly truth to this conventional wisdom, the point is not, as Jerry S. Piven encapsulates the sentiment, to “diagnose Joan of Arc as a schizophrenic and be done with her,” for example, but “to make sense of the why.” Though I am not, like Lifton, a psychiatrist, it is in the spirit of gaining insight into human motivation, that I consider the eschatological evolution at the heart of this thesis in the context of his paradigm regarding broken connections.

(Gilbert, Robert. “Douglas MacArthur: Disordered Narcissist.” *Constructing the Past*. Volume 15: Issue 1. (2014), 15. <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/constructing/vol15iss1/5>. Accessed: Dec. 15, 2017); (Piven, Jerry S. “The Weirdness of History.” *The Journal of Psychohistory*, Volume 28, No. 1 (Summer, 2000), 91. <http://libproxy.wustl.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.wustl.edu/docview/1305590665?accountid=15159>. Accessed: December 15, 2017).

work's narrative arc. Paralleling the process applied to the transformation from antebellum post-millennialism to Cold War "Armageddon Theology," I delineate the evolution of the text's nuclear-based mythology, simultaneously drawing parallels to transformative historic events, and related concepts within that transition. In doing so, I align the mythologizing process embodied in *Riddley Walker's* narrative with the eschatological transitions and developments considered over the course of this thesis.

Next, I expand on the question of "*How did we get here?*" by touching on what it looks like when Cold War Armageddon theology interacts with "genres of industrial leisure," mentioned above, specifically, film, music, and literature. Consequently, the movement of Chapter 4 begins with a brief synopsis of Turner's concepts regarding how "genres of industrial leisure" came to be the locus for the recombination of cultural elements, for engendering new insights and paradigms. And in conclusion, I offer a survey of examples produced by this scenario, manifestations of recombination in the aforementioned genres of industrial leisure.

Chapter 2: What Can Any Individual Do?

Uncle Tom's Cabin is at once both one of the most thoroughly American and piously Christian of major nineteenth-century fictions.

Charles Johnson

Nothing could have better suited the moral and humane requirements of the hour. Its effect was amazing, instantaneous, and universal.

Frederick Douglass

According to an anecdote recounted by publisher John P. Jewett, Calvin Stowe carried modest ambitions into his negotiations for printing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in book form. (Massachusetts law prohibited married women from signing contracts rendering Calvin, as Melissa Homestead phrases it, "the single legal subject of [his] marriage" with Harriet).¹ Professor Stowe hoped that his wife's work would garner enough to purchase "a good black silk dress."² The publisher alleges, in an interview some years later that he could probably have bought the story "for twenty-five dollars."³ In the end, of course, the rights to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were not ceded in exchange for such a paltry sum. Rather, a more realistic deal was struck, with Calvin settling on ten percent of

¹Parfait, Claire. *The Publishing History of Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852-2002*. [e-book]. (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Routledge, 2007), 33. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost), Ipswich, MA. (Accessed: April 5, 2017); Homestead, Melissa J. *American Women Authors and Literary Property, 1822-1869*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 148.

²"Uncle Tom's Cabin." *The Manhattan: An Illustrated Literary Magazine*. Vol. I. (January – June, 1883). 29.

³*The Manhattan*, 29.

sales, followed by Jewett's announcement that 50,000 copies of a two-volume edition had been sold, less than ninety days after Harriet's work is published in book form.⁴

The following January (1853), *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* declared *Uncle Tom's Cabin* a "miracle," reporting that by year's end (a mere nine months after the work "makes its appearance among books"), sales of various editions had exceeded a million copies, setting a new standard for publishing success.⁵ The *Putnam* article further stated that publishers are unable to meet growing demand, despite running their presses day and night.⁶ Noting that much of this demand stemmed from England, the piece responds to Sydney Smith's sardonic critique on American literature in an 1820 edition of his *Edinburgh Monthly Review*, "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?"⁷ This criticism is turned back onto Smith, with a resounding "who does not?" In addition to its statistic-based adulations, the *Putnam* piece explicitly draws attention to the fact that this unprecedented success "was accomplished by an American woman," ironic indeed, given that this very same woman was prohibited from even signing the contract that facilitates this publishing milestone.⁸

⁴ Parfait, 34-35.

⁵ "Uncle Tomitudes." *Putnam's Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science and Art*. Volume 1. Issue 1. (January, 1853). 98..

⁶ *Putnam's*, 98.

⁷ Smith, Sydney. "Statistical Annals of the United States, by Adam Seybert." *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*. January - May, 1820. Volume 33. (Edinburgh: David Willison, 1820), 79. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019933784;view=1up;seq=7> (Accessed: April 6, 2017), cited in *Putnam's*, 98.

⁸ *Putnam's*, 98.

My choice to examine *Uncle Tom's Cabin* stems from the sentiment scholar Charles Johnson articulates in his characterization of Stowe's novel as "at once both one of the most thoroughly American and piously Christian of major nineteenth-century fictions."⁹ Johnson's observation is a testament to Talal Asad's contention that that "the 'religious' and the 'secular' are not essentially fixed categories," the filter through which I examine the transition from antebellum post-millennialism to Armageddon theology. Given the role elements of culture play within my methodology (with its notion of a seedbed of cultural creativity), it is also significant that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as Johnson further portrays it, has "transcended the category of literature to become that rarest of products: a cultural artifact."¹⁰

Johnson's claim echoes Frederick Douglass's declaration that following this "flash from the heart-supplied intellect of Harriet Beecher Stowe," coming generations will look upon this era as "the age of anti-slavery literature."¹¹ As Douglass maintains, "nothing could have better suited the moral and human requirements of the hour," than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. "Its effect was amazing, instantaneous and universal," whether in regard to sales, advancing the progress of women, or Stowe's self-stated purpose of "awakening sympathy and feeling for the African race," working toward a day when

⁹ Johnson, Charles. "Introduction." *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Harriet Beecher Stowe. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), v.

¹⁰ Johnson, Charles, v.

¹¹ Douglass, Frederick. *My Bondage and My Freedom*. (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), 461.

“the world has outlived the slave-trade.”¹² Gamaliel Bailey, editor of *The National Era*, remarked that “the human being who can read it through with dry eyes, is commended to Barnum.”¹³

Commentary from Southern readers is understandably less favorable. In fact, some remarks are downright hostile, like those in George F. Holmes’ review for the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Holmes alleges that Stowe utilizes fiction for the express purpose of “more effectively disseminating a slander,” and despite the disagreeable nature of the duty at hand, he will “follow [the abhorrent text] through all the loathsome labyrinths of imaginary cruelty and crime, in which its prurient fancy loves to roam.”¹⁴ Though as Holmes sees it, Stowe’s foray into political activity results in forfeiture of her hallowed status as a “lady” (and by extension immunity from indecorous treatment), he elects to curtail the “critical lash,” and concentrate his “reprehension on her book.”¹⁵

Criticism like Holmes’ contributed to Langston Hughes’ characterization of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as “the most cussed and discussed book of its time.”¹⁶ Stowe’s critics,

¹² Douglass, Frederick. *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, from 1817-1882*. (London: Christian Age Office, 1882), 247; Stowe (2010,) xiii.

¹³ Bailey, Gamaliel. “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” *The National Era*. (Washington D.C.: Gamaliel Bailey, April 15, 1852).

¹⁴ Holmes, George Frederick. “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” *Southern Literary Messenger: Devoted to Every Department of Literature and the Fine Arts*. Volume 18. Issue 12. (December, 1852), 722, 723.

¹⁵ Holmes, 722.

¹⁶ Hughes, Langston. “Introduction.” *Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Harriet Beecher Stowe.* *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes, Volume 9: Essays on Art, Race, Politics and World Affairs*. Edited by Christopher C. De Santis. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 490.

however, were not limited to pro-slavery Southerners. Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, for example, finds the Harris family's relocation to Liberia, and Stowe's remarks regarding African colonization (seen by many as a means of sidestepping the unimaginable prospect of racial equality), "objectionable."¹⁷ Garrison also challenges Stowe's advocacy of the "Christian non-resistance" Uncle Tom exemplifies, questioning whether she believes it to be the duty of "the white man, under all possible outrage and peril, as well as for the black man."¹⁸ Or, is the notion that slaves must "suffer with Christ if they would reign with him," a belief that is "taken for granted because the VICTIMS ARE BLACK (original emphasis)."¹⁹ Garrison wonders whether Stowe would deem it appropriate to defend herself, her husband, or her country "in case of malignant assault," calling upon the revered example of "our Revolutionary sires" to drive his point home.²⁰ While Hughes' description of Stowe's work as "the most cussed and discussed book of its time" does indeed acknowledge the divisive nature of her material, more importantly his observation recognizes *Uncle Tom's* place as one of the most significant books of the nation.

The consequential nature of Stowe's work is not limited to the realm of politics. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is equally noteworthy in terms of the sentimental piety that emerges

¹⁷ Garrison, William Lloyd. "Review of Uncle Tom's Cabin.; or, Life among the Lowly" *The Liberator*. (Boston, Massachusetts), March 26, 1852.

¹⁸ Garrison.

¹⁹ Garrison.

²⁰ Garrison.

from the cultural context of the Second Great Awakening, with its increased tolerance for female religious leadership and notion of Methodist perfectionism.²¹ Echoing both Johnson and Hughes, Jane Tompkins refers to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as "the most important book of the century."²² Though Tompkins considers it stylistically unremarkable, she deems *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the "*summa theologica* of nineteenth-century America's religion of domesticity," a piety revolving around the concept of "salvation through motherly love."²³ As Tompkins further observes, Stowe retells nineteenth-century America's cardinal religious myth (the crucifixion). And she does so in terms of the nation's most profound political conflict (slavery), and its most venerated social beliefs, the sanctity of motherhood and family,²⁴ another example of how "the religious," and "the secular" depend on each other.²⁵

²¹Stokes, Claudia. *The Altar at Home: Sentimental Literature and Nineteenth-Century American Religion*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,2014), 15-31.

²² Tompkins, 124.

²³ Tompkins, 125.

²⁴ Tompkins, 134.

²⁵Asad, 26.

I wrote what I did because as a woman, as a mother, I was oppressed and broken-hearted, with sorrows and injustice I saw, because as a Christian I felt the dishonor to Christianity-- because as a lover of my country I trembled at the coming day of wrath.

Harriet Beecher Stowe in a letter to Lord Denman, January 20, 1853

Clearly, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a significant contribution to American culture... but why did Stowe write this groundbreaking anti-slavery work in the first place?

According to her son Charles, Stowe was prompted to write what ultimately became *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by a letter from her sister-in-law, Isabella Porter Beecher. Isabella's husband, Edward Beecher, was a friend and ally of abolitionist publisher Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, and scarcely avoided being on the scene when Lovejoy was murdered at the hands of a pro-slavery "mob."²⁶ Isabella related that she had been "nourishing an Anti-Slavery spirit" ever since, which was galvanized by the "inhuman" nature of the recently instated Fugitive Slave Law. Following much family discussion on the topic, and many epistles discussing story after heart-wrenching story about those effected by this legislation, Isabella's letter included the following impassioned plea, "Now Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is."²⁷ Though Stowe did not identify as an

²⁶ Beecher, Edward. *Narrative of riots at Alton: in Connection With the death of Reverend Elijah P. Lovejoy*. (Alton: George Holton, 1838), 106.

²⁷ Campbell, Susan. *Tempest-Tossed: The Spirit of Isabella Beecher Hooker*. (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2014), 62; Stowe, Charles Edward and Lyman Beecher Stowe. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: The Story of Her Life*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 138.

Abolitionist, considering the movement too radical and politically inflammatory, this she could do! However, while Stowe had resolved to write something that addresses the slavery issue, she had no idea what that something would be.²⁸

Inspiration struck shortly after a visit to her brother Edward in Boston, where she met Reverend Josiah Henson and heard the story of his escape from slavery. Henson told of his father's death at the hands of a white overseer, enraged because this "mere slave" defended the mother of his children, a woman he "pretended" was his wife, from an "indecent assault" by the same overseer.²⁹ Stowe's son discloses that Henson's "sweet Christian spirit," evident even while recounting injuries specifically intended to rouse the victim to "a frenzy of vindictive revengefulness," had a profound impact on Stowe.³⁰ The full effect of this experience became clear after she returned home to Brunswick. During communion service with her children, Stowe experienced, as Thomas Gossett states, "what she could only describe as a 'vision,'" one that appears to merge Henson's portrayal of his father's death with the crucifixion imagery Stowe was immersed in.³¹ As if "blown into her mind as by the rushing of a mighty wind," the scene of Uncle Tom's death passed before her eyes, while the words of Jesus rang in her ears: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have

²⁸ Stowe, Charles Edward and Lyman Beecher Stowe. 144.

²⁹ Stowe, Charles Edward, and Lyman Beecher Stowe, 144.

³⁰ Stowe, Charles Edward, and Lyman Beecher Stowe, 144.

³¹ Gossett, Thomas. *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1985), 91.

done it unto me.”³² That afternoon, Stowe retreated to her room and wrote what ultimately became the chapter called “The Death of Uncle Tom.” Later that evening, she read the sketch to her family, who reacted as one would expect, with tears and exclamations as to the cruelty of slavery.

While Stowe’s stated *purpose* in writing *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is to “awaken sympathy and feeling” for the African slaves suffering under the cruel and unjust system of chattel slavery, her larger consideration is theological rather than political.³³ Being Lyman Beecher’s daughter, Stowe’s upbringing was permeated with contemporary post-millennial theology. Broadly speaking, post-millennialism is the belief that Christ’s return to earth will occur after the thousand-year period of bliss foretold in Revelations 20. More relevant to this study, however, is post-millennialism’s vision of a “this-worldly Kingdom of God,” the product of unending progress facilitated by human enterprise.³⁴ For, Stowe’s motive in writing *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, is that of advancing the coming millennium, to make a personal contribution, however small, toward the inauguration of a future millennial age.

Of particular concern for Stowe is that America fulfills its duty in the coming millennium as an “ascendant” nation, intended by God to play an exemplary role in

³² Stowe, Charles Edward. *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe: Compiled from Her Letters and Journals*. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889),148; Stowe, Charles Edward, and Lyman Beecher Stowe, 145.

³³ Stowe (2010), xiii.

³⁴ Moorhead, James. *World Without End: Mainstream American Protestant Visions of the Last Things, 1880-1925*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), ix.

spreading the gospel.³⁵ Comforted to know that many injustices of past ages have been “lived down,” Stowe hopes her nation will do the same regarding slavery.³⁶ Stowe’s wish, nay, her mission, is that “sketches” like *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* remain valuable only as “memorials of what has long ceased to be.”³⁷ But this would not possible unless (or until) America puts an end to slavery, and she invokes prophetic scripture to remind readers of the divine repercussions should the nation fail to do so. Stowe points out in her preface, that though “politicians contend,” and men vacillate in a sea of conflicting “interest[s] and passion[s],” human liberty lies in God’s hands, who “shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth.”³⁸

In an effort to ensure that her country lives up to its responsibilities as an ascendant nation, merging the post-Revolutionary idea that America is a nation of individuals, with the human agency inherent in post-millennialism, Stowe employs a form of the moral suasion she practiced as a teacher.³⁹ Rather than admonishing students publicly (which had been the tradition), those whose behavior warranted it would be brought before the teachers individually, deemed culpable, and “asked to

³⁵ Schnell, Michael. “Lyman Beecher’s Nativist History.” *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, Vol. 27, Issue 1, Spring 2000; Westra, Helen Petter. “Confronting Antichrist: The Influence of Jonathan Edwards’s Millennial Vision.” *The Stowe Debate: Rhetorical Strategies in Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Edited by Lowance, Mason I, et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 144.

³⁶ Stowe (2010), xiv.

³⁷ Stowe (2010), xiv.

³⁸ Stowe (2010), xiv.

³⁹ Hedrick, Joan. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 62.

give an account of themselves.”⁴⁰ Near the end of her anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Stowe famously poses the question, “What can any individual do?” The scholarly field of sentimentalism focuses on Stowe’s assertion, “they can see to it that they *feel right*,” and this focus has produced significant work regarding domestic theology.⁴¹ I contend, her question, posed following many pages of heart wrenching narrative, is intended to deem her contemporary readers culpable, impel them to account for their actions (even if only own inwardly), and induce action beyond the critical first step of “*feeling right*.” Only then will slavery come to an end. Only then will America fulfill the exemplary role God has called her to do. Only then can divine judgment visited upon the nation for failing to do so be avoided.

⁴⁰ Hedrick (1994), 62.

⁴¹ Stowe (2010), 404.

Stowe's reworking of Calvinism makes the spider the heroine of the salvation drama.⁴²

Joan Hedrick

In keeping with Stowe's self-proclaimed vocation to "preach on paper," *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has been described as a religious text.⁴³ And Stowe's use of prophetic scripture, at the close of the book's preface (as well as in the novel itself), confirms the work's sermonic function. Still, as is evident by the book's impact, Stowe's motivation for writing the novel, and the work's preface, slavery is both a political as well as a religious consideration. This double intentionality is embodied in the book itself. Political concerns are carried in *Uncle Tom's* overarching narrative, while Stowe's eschatology provides the defining characteristics of its sub-plots.

Jonathan Edwards is considered America's first major postmillennial thinker, and while they famously differ on the subject of predestination, given her Calvinist background, his millennial view clearly informs the eschatology she employs in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁴⁴ Edwards sees the millennium as within the context of a historical pattern

⁴² Hedrick (1994), 280.

⁴³ Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Letter to George Beecher, February 20, (1830?). Acquisitions, Stowe-Day Library, Hartford, Connecticut. Cited in Hendrick 1994, 64.

⁴⁴ Goen, C. G. "Jonathan Edwards: A New Departure in Eschatology." *Church History*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Mar., 1959), 38; Moorhead, James. "Between Progress and Apocalypse: A Reassessment of Millennialism in American Religious Thought, 1800-1880." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Dec. 1984), 527.

of “successive great events” that facilitate “setting up of the kingdom of Christ.”⁴⁵ Considering biblical history in the context of I Corinthians 10:11, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the *ends of the world* (emphasis mine) are come,” Edwards concludes that the world has “several endings,” as constructs of the material world vanish by degree, and only those things that remain eternally endure.⁴⁶ The book of Isaiah describes this state as “*a new heaven and a new earth* (Edwards’ emphasis).”⁴⁷ The first such event is the destruction of Jerusalem, “*to give place* (Edwards’ emphasis) to the setting up of the spiritual temple and city, which are to last forever.”⁴⁸ Next, Edwards cites the demise of the Roman empire, which terminates the “Heathen” empire, preparing the way for the empire of Christ, “which shall last to all eternity.”⁴⁹ Ultimately, the fall of the Anti-Christ will put an end to Satan’s visible kingdom, thereby establishing the eternal kingdom of Christ.

Edwards writes that prior to the arrival of the last judgment, and the “new heaven” and “new earth,” what Michael McClymond refers to as “a final historical drama” will ensue.⁵⁰ And it will do so in two parts, beginning with a 250-year period of

⁴⁵ Edwards, Jonathan. *A History of the Work of Redemption; Comprising an Outline of Church History*. (New York: American Tract Society, 1816), 269.

⁴⁶ Edwards (1816), 264, 266.

⁴⁷ Edwards (1816), 266.

⁴⁸ Edwards (1816), 265.

⁴⁹ Edwards (1816), 265.

⁵⁰ McClymond, Michael and Gerald R. McDermott. *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 572.

“that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind,” culminating in a “triumphant state” of the church.⁵¹ This gradual process of change and transition paves the way for the millennium itself, which is to be a blissful, and unchanging, age of peace.⁵²

Edwards likens the gradual nature of postmillennialism to the pace by which the “children of Israel were gradually brought out of the Babylonish captivity, first one company, and then another,” slowly and steadily rebuilding their city and temple.⁵³ Clearly, God could have elected to bring about Christ’s kingdom in an instant.⁵⁴ But if He had, not only would all that glory overpower “our sight and capacities,” Edwards contends, there would be no opportunity to perceive the “particular steps of divine wisdom,” or observe their effect as they unfold.⁵⁵

The next logical consideration is how “this glorious work “is accomplished. Edwards’ answer is that it occurs through the Spirit of God, “poured out for the wonderful *revival and propagation* of religion (original emphasis).”⁵⁶ Edwards maintains that the “great work” of furthering the millennial age is most decidedly *not* carried out

⁵¹ Edwards, Jonathan. “Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, 1740.” *The Works of President Edwards: A Reprint of the Worcester Edition*. Vol. 3. (New York: Leavitt, 1857), 493, 313; Edwards, Jonathan. “Notes on the Bible.” *The Works of President Edwards*. Vol. 9. (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830b), 455.

⁵² McClymond, Michael and Gerald R. McDermott (2012), 573.

⁵³ Edwards (1816,) 375.

⁵⁴ Edwards (1816,) 274.

⁵⁵ Edwards (1816,) 274.

⁵⁶ Edwards (1816,) 376.

“by the authority of princes,” nor does it occur through “the wisdom of learned men.”⁵⁷ He states in no uncertain terms that the millennium can only be advanced by “God’s Holy Spirit.”⁵⁸ This thinking is consistent with Edwards’ larger Calvinist theology. As Conrad Cherry remarks, the cornerstone of Edwards’ Calvinism is an unrelenting insistence that God is sovereign in every facet of man’s eternal salvation.⁵⁹ Edwards explicitly states that man is completely dependent on God’s will from “the foundation to the top stone.”⁶⁰ In keeping with his Calvinist theology, Edwards adheres to predestination, the doctrine of election which ordains salvation by sovereign grace to an elect few:

...whereby some, with the very same sincerity of endeavour, with the same degree of endeavour, and the same use of means, nay, although all things are exactly equal in both cases, both as to their persons and behaviour; yet one has that success by sovereign grace and God's arbitrary pleasure, that is not given to another.⁶¹

Consequently, those not “gifted” with God’s sovereign grace are destined to eternal punishment, for, due to his fallen nature, “all that a natural man doth is sin.”⁶² Under this scenario, seeking faith clearly does not guarantee salvation, regardless of how

⁵⁷ Edwards (1816), 376.

⁵⁸ Edwards (1816), 376.

⁵⁹ Cherry, Conrad. *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 56.

⁶⁰ Edwards, Jonathan. “God’s Sovereignty in the Salvation of Men.” *The Works of President Edwards: With a Memoir of His Life*. Vol. 5. (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830), 119.

⁶¹ Edwards, Jonathan. “Concerning Efficacious Grace.” *The Works of President Edwards*. Volume VIII. (Leeds: Edward Baines, 1811), 435.

⁶² Edwards, Jonathan. “‘Miscellanies,’ Number 676.” *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards: From His Private Notebook*. Edited by Harvey G. Townsend. (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 244.

much sincere effort is put toward that end. One may remain obedient to the law, abandon “any worldly enjoyment whatsoever,” and done so as others are “soon enlightened and comforted while you remain long in darkness.”⁶³ Even then, Edwards declares, “God will not hold himself obliged to shew you mercy at last.”⁶⁴ Raised in a devoutly Calvinist family, the daughter of revivalist Lyman Beecher, Stowe struggles mightily with the implications this doctrine has on the prospects of her salvation. It will soon become apparent how this mindset influences the formation of Stowe’s eschatology.

Conversion, the reception of sovereign grace that turns elect individuals toward a life of faith, parallels advancement toward the millennium, in that it is unmediated. As to the process of conversion, Edwards upholds the basic Puritan premise that this regenerative experience is necessarily preceded by some form of preparation. For, it is only through stimulation of the Holy Spirit that one is called into faith. Consequently, while God operates in an unmediated fashion, He does so in conjunction with external means of grace. Evocative constructs such as ceremonies, scripture and preaching, are specifically designed to render one receptive to the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵

Though Edwards notes differences in the “particular manner of persons’ experiences,” he maintains that at the “bottom and foundation” of conversion, the

⁶³ Edwards, Jonathan. “Pressing into the Kingdom of God.” *The Works of President Edwards*. Vol. 5. (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830a), 465, 467.

⁶⁴ Edwards (1830a), 467.

⁶⁵ Cherry, 57-61; McClymond, Michael and Gerald R. McDermott, 374.

convert is “first awakened with a sense of their miserable condition by nature.”⁶⁶

Recognizing this state of affairs leads to the realization that one is in danger of “perishing eternally,” as well as the importance of “get[ting] into a better state.”⁶⁷

Edwards is quick to point out, however, that despite their catalytic nature, these external means do not, themselves, bring about salvation. Furthermore, any power these means may have to evoke faith belongs to God, who alone determines their efficacy.⁶⁸ And they are effective indeed, to the degree that:

Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as black as midnight to them a little before the day dawns in their souls; some few instances there have been of persons, who have had such a sense of God’s wrath for sin, that they have been overborne, and made to cry out under an astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth, and that he doth not immediately send them to hell...⁶⁹

Edwards’ sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, in which the sinner is likened to a spider that God dangles over a metaphoric pit of hell, as He contemplates “withdraw[ing] His hand,” is known to have elicited such response.⁷⁰ Stowe describes this style of preaching, specifically Edwards’ sermons on “the sufferings of the lost,” as the “refined poetry of torture.”⁷¹ She found them personally agonizing, and considered

⁶⁶ Edwards, Jonathan. *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*. (Boston: Sabbath School Book-Store, 1831), 36; Edwards, Jonathan. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, A. M. Vol. 1. (London: William Ball, 1839), lxxiii; Cherry, 64.

⁶⁷ Edwards 1831, 36.

⁶⁸ Cherry, 57-61; McClymond, Michael and Gerald R. McDermott, 374.

⁶⁹ Edwards (1831), 40.

⁷⁰ Edwards, Jonathan. “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” *Selected Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904), 85, 87.

⁷¹ Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *The Minister’s Wooing*. (New York: Penguin, 1999), 195.

the topic of these sermons, the doctrine of predestination, to be a damaging spiritual double-bind. Stowe's sentiment is encapsulated in this passage from *The Minister's*

Wooing:

The human race, without exception, coming into existence "under God's wrath and curse," with a nature so fatally disordered, that, although perfect free agents, men were infallibly certain to do nothing to Divine acceptance until regenerated by the supernatural aid of God's Spirit, -- this aid being given only to a certain decreed number of the human race, the rest, with enough free agency to make them responsible, but without this indispensable assistance exposed to the malignant assaults of evil spirits versed in every art of temptation, were sure to fall hopelessly into perdition.⁷²

The congregation listening to Edwards' sermon is clearly intended to relate to the spider and its perilous situation, while, as Joan Hedrick observes, Edwards identifies with God. More relevant to this analysis than her reaction to this dynamic is that, as Hedrick further notes, "Stowe's reworking of Calvinism makes the spider the heroine of the salvation drama."⁷³

Stowe's theology empowers the individual, and fosters community, whose metaphoric web expands toward the "saintly elevation" of salvation.⁷⁴ "The 'Christian family' and 'Christian neighborhood'" Stowe contends, "become the grand ministry, as they were designed to be, in training our whole race for heaven."⁷⁵ Furthermore, "the

⁷² Stowe (1999), 194-195.

⁷³ Hedrick (1988,) 321.

⁷⁴ Stowe (1999), 53.

⁷⁵ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The American Woman's Home: on Principles of Domestic Science; Being A Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes*. (New York: J. B. Ford and Co., 1869), 458.

cheering example would soon spread, and ere long colonies from these prosperous and Christian communities [will] go forth to shine as 'lights of the world' in all the now darkened nations."⁷⁶ Thus, the conversion of individuals does not merely compare to the coming of the millennium, it is actually part of the process, a view that parallels James Moorhead's characterization of mid-nineteenth century post-millennialism as spreading in "reticular," net-like fashion.⁷⁷

Stowe's metaphoric "spider" is personified by Miss Prissy, the local seamstress in *The Minister's Wooing*, whose amiable gossip serves to stitch the community together, and in doing so, fashions the framework of salvation.⁷⁸ Stowe's dressmaker is a welcome guest in every home. Consequently, her arrival is like a "domestic show-case," through which one could see the "never-ending drama of life,—births, marriages, deaths,—joy of new-made mothers...and tears of Rachels who wept for their children."⁷⁹ Stowe writes in a religious tract that experiences such as these serve as "one long discipline" toward "the soul's human education," designed to "fit the soul for its immortality."⁸⁰ And they do so within the web-like context of community.

Carrying the imagery of connectivity through to the work's terminal symbol, were it not for Miss Prissy, Stowe's main character, Mary Scudder, would never have

⁷⁶ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 458.

⁷⁷ Moorhead (Dec. 1984), 530.

⁷⁸ Hedrick (1988), 321.

⁷⁹ Stowe (1999), 113-114.

⁸⁰ Stowe 1999, 53; Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Earthly Care, a Heavenly Discipline*. (New York: American Reform and Tract Society, 1852a), 5.

married her long-lost love, James Marvyn. Without Prissy, the “fair poetic maiden” would never have become “priestess, wife and mother,” who “ministers daily in holy works of household peace.”⁸¹ Absent Miss Prissy, Mary would never have “outgrown the human, and change[d]... into the image of the divine.”⁸²

Another such character is George Shelby, who Uncle Tom lovingly refers to as “young Mas’r George.”⁸³ Shelby reunites an extended family torn apart by the institution of slavery, whose members are scattered from Canada to the West Indies. Among them is Cassandra, whose “despairing, haggard expression” softens to “one of gentle trust,” whose “shattered and wearied mind” is soothed by her daughter’s “consistent piety,” who yields “with her whole soul,” to become a “devout and tender Christian.”⁸⁴

And both characters, Miss Prissy and George, align with what Mark Noll describes as “the spirit of the [American] Revolution, in this “new era of populist democracy.”⁸⁵ Referring to sentiment consistent with Stowe’s regarding predestination, Noll notes that “new prominence to the notion of the sovereignty of the people no doubt had something to do with the gradual decline of Calvinism, particularly its

⁸¹ Stowe (1999), 326.

⁸² Stowe (1999), 53.

⁸³ Stowe (2010,) 19.

⁸⁴ Stowe (2010), 392.

⁸⁵ Noll, Mark A. *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 149, 148.

insistence on the jealous sovereignty of God.”⁸⁶ Consequently, unlike Edwards’ divinely-induced post-millennialism of the eighteenth century, with its emphasis on God’s sovereignty, the commonly received doctrine of the mid-nineteenth century is human driven. Whether by means of personal proselytizing, prayer meetings or voluntary associations designed to promulgate Christian influence, this eschatology is advanced through human agency. It is furthered by individuals, acting either independently or collectively until “earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.”⁸⁷

Since proliferation of the Kingdom of God is contingent on the labor of believers, however, the millennium is hindered should those adherents prove to be lax in their efforts. Though Lyman Beecher’s theology diverges from Stowe’s in many respects, distinct from Edwards’, functioning as a theological bridge of sorts, to that of Stowe, they both acknowledge the role of human agency (albeit in differing degrees), in bringing about the millennium.⁸⁸ As such, Beecher addresses the aforementioned concern in a discourse before the American Board of Foreign Missions:

From the beginning, the cause of God on earth has been maintained and

⁸⁶ Noll, 149.

⁸⁷ *Proceedings of the First Ten Years of the American Tract Society, Instituted at Boston, 1814.* (Boston: The American Tract Society, 1824), 102.

⁸⁸ While a place certainly exists in Edwards’ theology for human action (preaching, for example), it is a sovereign God who chooses to “pour out” his spirit. (see *A History of the Work of Redemption.*) For Beecher, the matter still begins with God, but is proliferated through human effort, (primarily at an institutional level, exemplified by settling, and therefore, Christianizing the American west. See *A Plea for the West.*) Stowe’s theology is founded on New Testament promises of the Savior, grounded in love and functioning on community. Her work *The Minister’s Wooing* provides but one example.

carried forward only by the most heroic exertion. Christianity, even in the age of miracles, was not propagated but by stupendous efforts. *And it is only by a revival of primitive zeal and enterprise, that the glorious things spoken of the city of our God can be accomplished.*⁸⁹

Therefore, as Moorhead indicates, “a delicate balance” between “hope and anxiety” is required to “induce maximum evangelical exertion.”⁹⁰

As Beecher maintains within the same address, the means by which these stupendous efforts are incited is also consequential:

*...when God has formed moral beings, even he can govern them, as such, only by moral influence, and in accordance with the laws of mind; mere omnipotence being as irrelevant to the government of mind, as moral influence would be to the government of the material universe (my emphasis).*⁹¹

In other words, the motivation must come by means of persuasion rather than power, asserting that God does so guarantees the rationality of the universe. For antebellum America, a people pre-occupied with reason and law, suggesting that God requires “legions of angels,” or other supernatural means to subject the world, is, quite simply, offensive.⁹² Stowe’s tone, and rhetorical devices examined later in this analysis are employed as a means of persuasion, impelling readers to advance the Kingdom of God by taking action against slavery.

What is Consistent between Edwards’ eighteenth century post-millennialism and

⁸⁹ Beecher, Lyman. “Discourse XVIII. Resources of the Adversary, and Means of Their Destruction.” *A Voice from the Sanctuary on the Missionary Enterprise: Being a Series of Discourses*. (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1845), 338.

⁹⁰ Moorhead (Dec. 1984), 527.

⁹¹ Beecher, Lyman (1845,) 327.

⁹² Moorhead (Dec. 1984), 529.

the commonly received doctrine of the mid-nineteenth century, is the belief that the millennium will “commence in America.”⁹³ In keeping with the shift from a divinely-inspired eschatology to a human-driven millennialism, the specific visions differ. Edwards’ view is that the millennium will first signal its arrival in America, doing so with an emanation of the Spirit that renovates mankind, driving away “heresies, infidelity and superstition,” to bring about the kingdom of God on earth.⁹⁴ Beecher, on the other hand, sees America as providing the “central energy” for renovating the earth through volunteer associations, and the “civil liberty,” inherent in Christian republicanism as preparing the way for the Lord.⁹⁵ Stowe also considers America to have an exemplary purpose in spreading the gospel and overcoming evil in preparation for the millennium. Beecher says of his daughter, “No Jewish maiden ever grew up with a more earnest faith that she belonged to a consecrated race, a people especially called and chosen by God for some great work on earth.”⁹⁶

While Edwards’ millennial vision turns on achieving “doctrinal purity,” (battling “the kingdom of Antichrist” manifest in religious “distortions” like Deism, Judaism, and Mohammedanism), as Helen Petter Westra notes, Lyman Beecher’s millennial

⁹³ Beecher, Lyman. *A Plea for the West*. (Cincinnati: Truman and Smith, 1835), 9. Cited in Westra, 147.

⁹⁴ Edwards (1816,) 384.

⁹⁵ Beecher, Lyman. (1835), 9; Westra, 147.

⁹⁶ Wagenknecht, Edward. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: The Known and the Unknown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 135. Cited in Westra, 146.

vision functions through a Protestant and democratic America.⁹⁷ For Beecher, the great evil to be vanquished is Catholicism. Michael Schnell locates Beecher's anti-Catholic perspective within the "overturnings," delineated in his so-called "nativist polemic" *A Plea for the West*, "the West succeeds the East, which succeeded Protestant Europe, which succeeded Catholic Europe, which succeeded pagan Rome and Old-Testament Israel, which succeeded all of the kingdoms of the heathen that it overthrew."⁹⁸ In Beecher's expansionist thinking, Catholicism constitutes backward movement. He sees the papacy and canon law as threatening Protestant progress, and hindering the democracy that "show[s] the world, by one great successful experiment, of what man is capable," that by God's design, will "awake the slumbering eye, and rouse the torpid mind, and nerve the palsied arm of millions," to launch the millennial age.⁹⁹

Though Stowe shares her father's vision of a strong, Christian, "ascendant" nation, her eschatology is not grounded in refashioning the world's nations after America's religious and democratic example.¹⁰⁰ As Westra rightfully points out, the millennium Stowe envisions is consistent with her theology of love. Stowe's son Charles describes "The three words, 'God is love'" as "sum[ing] up her theology."¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Westra, 146; Edwards (1816), 384; Westra, 149.

⁹⁸ Schnell.

⁹⁹ Westra, 149; Beecher, Lyman. "The Memory of our Fathers." Lecture XIV. *Beecher's Works. Vol. I. Lectures on Political Atheism and Kindred Subjects; Together with Six Lectures on Intemperance.* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1852.)

¹⁰⁰ Westra, 146; Schnell.

¹⁰¹ Stowe, Charles Edward and Lyman Beecher Stowe, 64.

“Love became her gospel, the Alpha and Omega of her existence, love for her *God*, for her *friends*, and finally,” in reticular, web-like fashion, “for *humanity*.”¹⁰² For Stowe, the new age dawns in the hearts of Christians, who would emancipate the enslaved, liberate the captive and free the oppressed, thereby quelling the great anti-Christian “Leviathan” of slavery, and bringing peace into their lives.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Stowe, Charles Edward and Lyman Beecher Stowe, 64.

¹⁰³ Westra, 146; Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1853), 223.

We are taught that the Creator revealed himself to man, not at once, but by a system progressively developing from age to age.

Harriet Beecher Stowe

The *aim* of a novel, as Mary Louise Kete reminds us, is to tell a story. Regardless of Stowe's motivation, whatever her purpose in writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she attempts to accomplish it by telling a story, and "following Aristotle" (as does Kete), "stories represent a movement through time."¹⁰⁴ The time Stowe concerns herself with is millennial, rather than chronological, time, and, as Kevin Pelletier points out, this millennial narrative "subsumes and supersedes" the earthly, political concern of ending slavery.¹⁰⁵ While the plot of her literary quest extends to the country's Northern and Southern borders, on the symbolic level these regions are not associated with the prevalent political, anti-slavery: pro-slavery divide. Rather, echoing the post-millennialism of her Calvinist upbringing, these regions correspond to the distinguishing characteristics of progressing epochs, defined by the evolving ways "the Creator revealed himself to man," ages Stowe depicts in her work *Woman in Sacred History*.¹⁰⁶ The defining characteristic of each age coincides with the sub-plot associated with a given region. These symbolic inferences underscore Stowe's argument that

¹⁰⁴ Kete, Mary Louise. *Sentimental Collaboration: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 89.

¹⁰⁵ Pelletier, Kevin. *Apocalyptic Sentimentalism: Love and Fear in U.S. Antebellum Literature*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 118.

¹⁰⁶ Stowe (1874), [19th page, not numbered]

slavery is not simply a matter of secular politics, but a question of religious ethics with repercussions toward individual Judgment, and more importantly, the millennium.

The first of Stowe's epochs consists of the "Patriarchal Ages."¹⁰⁷ She notes that God selected one man, and "made of his posterity a sacerdotal nation," further stating:

By this nation the Scriptures, which we reverence, were written and preserved. From it came all the precepts and teachings by which our lives are guided in things highest and holiest; from it came He who is at once the highest Ideal of human perfection and the clearest revelation of the Divine.¹⁰⁸

In keeping with Stowe's observation, the divergent plot lines of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* have a shared point of origin, the Shelby farm, symbolically aligning this location with the Patriarchal Ages. The names of Chloe and Tom's sons, Mose(s) and Pete(r), clearly named for the biblical figures who embody the Old Testament's exodus and the New Testament's gospel respectively, reinforces this symbolism of common origin. Stowe defines the "Patriarchal Age" as "the interval between the calling of Abraham and the public mission of Moses," also indicating that "family affection appears to be the strongest force in it."¹⁰⁹

Life on the Shelby farm conforms to this description. The dinner scene that takes place in Uncle Tom's cabin within the early pages of the work, marked by rambunctious children and laughter-filled conversation, is the very personification of "familial affection." Tom sets baby Polly, a "peart young un," on his shoulders and begins

¹⁰⁷ Stowe (1874,) [19th page, not numbered]

¹⁰⁸ Stowe (1874), [19th page, not numbered]

¹⁰⁹ Stowe (1874), [20th page, not numbered]

“capering and dancing with her,” noting how Mose and Pete are “so full of tickle all the while, they can’t behave theirselves.”¹¹⁰ Even Aunt Chloe’s admonition, “I’ll take ye down a button-hole lower, when Mas’r George is gone,” is steeped in obvious affection.¹¹¹ Young George Shelby also takes part in the fun, flicking his handkerchief at the baby on Tom’s shoulders, as Mose and Pete “roared after her like bears.”¹¹²

The Shelby farm is also the only location in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* where the familial relations of un-emancipated slaves are recognized as such by their masters. Mr. and Mrs. Shelby not only allow Eliza to marry George, “by the minister, as much as if [they’d] been a white [couple],” the ceremony takes place in “her mistresses’ great parlor.”¹¹³ And, in clear disregard for class boundaries to the point of a reversal in roles, Mrs. Shelby herself, “adorned the bride’s beautiful hair with orange-blossoms.”¹¹⁴ She also supports Aunt Chloe’s suggestion of being hired out to a “perfectioner” (confectioner) in Louisville, in order to earn enough money to buy Tom back.¹¹⁵ Mrs. Shelby gives her consent without claiming her lawful share in the proceeds, stating, “your wages shall every cent be laid aside for your husband’s redemption.”¹¹⁶ The most significant aspect of this scenario, however, is not that Mrs. Shelby relinquishes

¹¹⁰ Stowe (2010), 24, 23.

¹¹¹ Stowe (2010), 23.

¹¹² Stowe (2010), 24.

¹¹³ Stowe (2010), 16.

¹¹⁴ Stowe (2010), 16.

¹¹⁵ Stowe (2010), 232.

¹¹⁶ Stowe (2010), 234.

potential income, but that she recognizes Tom as Chloe's husband. It is also significant that Mrs. Shelby inquires as to whether Chloe is sure about leaving her children behind during the years it will take to earn the required amount, rather than viewing them as property.

While "familial affection" may indeed constitute the strongest force in the Patriarchal Age, Stowe further states, "it is family affection with the defects of an untaught, untrained morality."¹¹⁷ Given *Uncle Tom's* status as "*summa theologica* of nineteenth-century America's religion of domesticity," these defects are the result of home not under the leadership of a Christian woman.¹¹⁸ Mr. Shelby's response to a plan suggested by Mrs. Shelby that would allow him to "straighten matters" regarding his debt to the slave trader, exemplifies this shortcoming.¹¹⁹ Her idea is deemed "ridiculous," and Mr. Shelby points out that though Mrs. Shelby is "the finest woman in Kentucky," she still "[hasn't] the sense" to realize her inability to understand business, "women never do, and never can."¹²⁰ Pontificating further, Mr. Shelby proclaims, "once get business running wrong, there does seem to be no end to it. It's like jumping from one bog to another, all through a swamp; borrow of one to pay another, and then

¹¹⁷ Stowe (1874), [19th page, not numbered]

¹¹⁸ Tompkins, 144.

¹¹⁹ Stowe (2010), 231.

¹²⁰ Stowe (2010), 231.

borrow of another to pay one..."¹²¹ Which is, of course, the origin of Eliza and Tom's shared dilemma.

After departing the Shelby farm/Patriarchal Age, Eliza and Tom's respective plot-lines reflect the defining characteristics of subsequent ages Stowe depicts in *Woman in Sacred History*. The Harris family's northward trajectory to freedom in Canada and onward to the fledgling colony of Liberia, manifest attributes of the epoch Stowe terms the "National Period."¹²² Tom's southern course, and function as symbolic Christ, clearly embody those of the "Christian Period."¹²³

The figure Stowe associates with the "National Period" is Moses, who leads the children of Israel out of slavery, and molds them into a nation. The biblical exodus is a common cultural reference to escape from the South's peculiar institution, and Stowe avails herself to its imagery, as evinced by Sam's response to Mrs. Shelby when asked about Eliza's whereabouts:

Wal, she's clar 'cross Jordan. As a body may say, in the land o' Canaan... Wal, Missis, de Lord he persarves his own. Lizy's done gone over the river into 'Hio, as 'markably as if de Lord took her over in a charrit of fire and two hosses.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Stowe (2010), 231.

¹²² Stowe (1874), [23rd page, not numbered]

¹²³ Stowe (1874), [18th, 23rd page, not numbered]

¹²⁴ Stowe (2010), 65.

Such exodus imagery clearly links the Harris family's plot-line to Moses and the "National Period" he facilitates. Consistent with Moses' role as "great lawgiver," issues of state are deliberated within this plot-line, specifically The Fugitive Slave Law.¹²⁵ Stowe's commentary on the un-Christian nature of The Fugitive Slave Law is delivered by Mrs. Bird. Her remarks are, of course, directed at readers who invoke the common excuses for inaction conveyed by Senator Bird. Over the course of an evening intended as a respite from his "senatorial tour," Senator Bird's wife, Mary, asks about what they have "been doing in the Senate."¹²⁶ She presses for an answer, stating that she has "heard talk" of a law "forbidding people to give meat and drink to those poor colored folks that come along, but "didn't think any Christian legislature would pass it!"¹²⁷ Of Course, Senator Bird is forced to acknowledge that such a law has indeed been passed. At this point, Stowe reveals that Mrs. Bird is a "timid, blushing little women," who would be frightened by a good-sized turkey "at the very first gobble."¹²⁸ She deals with her husband and children tenderly, through "entreaty and persuasion."¹²⁹ Nevertheless, "anything in the shape of cruelty would throw her into a passion, which was the more alarming and inexplicable in proportion to the general softness of her nature."¹³⁰ She considers The Fugitive Slave Law nothing less than "shameful, wicked, [and]

¹²⁵ Stowe (1874), [22nd page, not numbered]

¹²⁶ Stowe (2010), 71.

¹²⁷ Stowe (2010), 71.

¹²⁸ Stowe (2010), 71.

¹²⁹ Stowe (2010), 72.

¹³⁰ Stowe (2010), 72.

abominable,” and reacts accordingly.¹³¹ A red-cheeked Mrs. Bird challenges her husband, who rationalizes and cites the “great public interests” at stake.¹³² In case the reader missed the more subtle admonishments dropped throughout the scene, Stowe’s message to readers attempting to straddle the proverbial fence issues loud, and clear, from Mrs. Bird’s mouth:

Now, John, I don’t know anything about politics, but I can read my Bible; and there I see that I must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the desolate; and that Bible I mean to follow... Obeying God never brings on public evils. I know it can’t. It’s always safest, all around, to *do as He* bids us (original emphasis).¹³³

Consistent with Stowe’s hopes for the reader, Senator Bird comes to see Mrs. Bird’s perspective. Though he continues to invoke “duty,” as a reason to comply with The Fugitive Slave Law, when faced with the decision, he puts himself at the center of a plan to aid Eliza and Harry’s escape.¹³⁴ With a statement steeped in Stowe’s theology of love, Mrs. Bird commends him, “Your heart is better than your head, in this case, John... Could I ever have loved you, had I not known you better than you know yourself?”¹³⁵

Until Eliza and Harry show up at Senator Bird’s door, with their tale of crossing the river “on the ice,” Stowe writes, it had never occurred to the good Senator that a

¹³¹ Stowe (2010), 72.

¹³² Stowe (2010), 72.

¹³³ Stowe (2010), 72.

¹³⁴ Stowe (2010), 73.

¹³⁵ Stowe (2010), 79.

“fugitive” slave could be a “hapless mother,” or a “defenceless child.”¹³⁶ He had never contemplated the reality of the child, “a baby that had never been away from his mother in his life,” being sold down south, “to go all alone.”¹³⁷ He had not considered that the mother whose “comfort and pride” was sold down south would no longer “be good for anything.”¹³⁸ Nor had this “patriotic senator” thought about the woman who may never see her husband again because he belongs to another master, one who “won’t let him come to see [her].”¹³⁹ Senator Bird had only seen the husband who has been sold “down river” in the context of a “newspaper picture of a man with a stick and bundle, with ‘Ran away from the subscriber’” under it.¹⁴⁰ The same can be said for many readers of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

The northern/Eliza Harris plot-line’s focus on the repercussions slavery has on the family, align with Stowe’s remarks regarding the concern for “family life” during the “National Period.” She writes that “the interests of the family” are central to “the institutes of Moses,” distinguishing them from “the laws of all other ancient nations.”¹⁴¹ George Harris’ reflections on a free life in Canada are consistent with Stowe’s observation that such laws “give a quality of stability and perpetuity to the family.”¹⁴²

¹³⁶ Stowe (2010), 81.

¹³⁷ Stowe (2010), 76.

¹³⁸ Stowe (2010), 76.

¹³⁹ Stowe (2010), 80, 77.

¹⁴⁰ Stowe (2010), 16, 80.

¹⁴¹ Stowe (1874), [23rd page, not numbered]

¹⁴² Stowe (1874), [23rd page, not numbered]

Harris articulates the dynamics of this circumstance in the following testimony to his wife:

Yes, Eliza, so long as we have each other and our boy. O! Eliza, if these people only knew what a blessing it is for a man to feel that his wife and child belong to *him!* I've often wondered to see men that would call their wives and children *their* own fretting and worrying about anything else. Why, I feel rich and strong, though we have nothing but our bare hands. I feel as if I could scarcely ask God for any more.¹⁴³

Harris' new-found mindset is more than simply a matter of psychology. Heretofore too "full of bitterness" to trust in God, he is now able to "put away every hard and bitter feeling, and read [his] Bible, and learn to be a good man," and by that he means embrace Christianity.¹⁴⁴ Though it remains unspoken, given that a Christianized world is critical to the onset of the millennium, Harris' opened heart becomes more than a personal matter limited to the enslaved persons he exemplifies. Stowe's implicit message, is firstly, to remind Christians of their duty in furthering a Christianized world, and secondly, bringing them to the realization that in order for this to be accomplished, slavery must end.

The essential characteristic of Stowe's "National Period," is clearly the establishment of an earthly Hebrew nation, which the trajectory of the Harris family story-line parallels. George Harris' avowal (expressed in a letter several years after gaining his freedom, and establishing a life with his family), that "the desire and

¹⁴³ Stowe (2010), 170.

¹⁴⁴ Stowe (2010), 15, 170.

yearning of my soul is for an African *nationality*," explicitly reflects this characteristic.¹⁴⁵

In the same communication, Harris writes:

True, as you have said to me, I might mingle in the circles of the whites, but I have no wish to... My sympathies are not for my father's race, but for my mother's... It is with the oppressed, enslaved African race that I cast in my lot...¹⁴⁶

The Moses/ Hebrew nation: Harris/African nation correlation is also evident between the disclosure above, and the following characterization of Moses within *Woman in Sacred History*, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season..."¹⁴⁷ Moses and Harris both forego the life of ease available to them by virtue of their association with the privileged class, for Moses his adoptive Egyptian mother, and in Harris' case his light skin, the result of having been sired by his mother's white master. Both Moses and Harris align themselves with long-suffering brethren, intending to mold them into a new society. This symbolic alignment constitutes the culmination, the final stage, of the link established by Stowe's use of exodus imagery early in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. However, while Moses' Hebrew nation is a matter of historic record, the "African *nationality*" Harris yearns for has yet to be realized. It is significant that Harris' avowal, his allusion to "an African *nationality*," is expressed in future (rather than present) tense. In the context of Stowe's

¹⁴⁵ Stowe (2010), 393.

¹⁴⁶ Stowe (2010), 393.

¹⁴⁷ Stowe (1874), [21st page not numbered].

eschatological purpose, Harris' vision is directed toward the millennium, for Stowe believes that (paralleling Israel) Liberia will become the next covenantal nation, whose conversion to the Christian faith signals that the apocalypse is at hand.

I continue this analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with an examination of Tom's southern plot-line, which corresponds to the distinguishing characteristics of the "Christian Period," matters of the spirit, and Tom's function as Christ figure. As the *crossing* of a river underpins the exodus symbolism intrinsic to the Harris family plot-line, Tom's travel *on the river*, also functions metaphorically. Clearly, practical reasons exist for Tom's mode of travel, those pertaining to accuracy. Given that Stowe locates the Shelby farm in the border state of Kentucky, Tom will certainly be sold "down river." Steamboat is the standard means of transportation to Southern destinations, and her characterization of the Mississippi as transformed from a "river of dreams and wild romance," to one that bears "fearful freight—the tears of the oppressed," functions at this level.¹⁴⁸

At the deepest level of signification, however, the river operates in its well-established association with time, specifically what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson refer to as "Moving Time metaphor."¹⁴⁹ Simply put, in this metaphor, the part of the river immediately around us constitutes the present, while the future consists of the

¹⁴⁸ Stowe (2010), 130.

¹⁴⁹ Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 159.

water flowing toward us (or in the case of a steamboat, the water we are moving toward), and the past... well, that is the water we have already passed through.¹⁵⁰ In order to fully appreciate Stowe's symbolism, this river as time imagery must be considered in the context of St. Augustine's contemplation regarding the nature of time:

Those two times then, past and to come, how are they, seeing the past now is not, and that to come is not yet? But the present, *should it always be present, and never pass into time past, verily it should not be time, but eternity* (emphasis mine).¹⁵¹

Stowe's characterization of Eva as "something almost divine," marked by the "spiritual gravity of her violet blue eyes," who Tom "half believe[s]" is "one of the "angels stepped out of his New Testament," also comes into play.¹⁵² In keeping with Augustine's delineation of time, when Tom pulls Eva from the river after she falls overboard, her moment in the water is prevented from becoming "past," and therefore, remains ever-present. Clearly, time as a plot element does not stop, and the story line continues. Tom's action serves to establish, consistent with Stowe's "Christian Period," that matters to be deliberated in the "St. Clare" segment of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are of an eternal nature.

This contention is underscored by Augustine St. Clare's name, a reference to St. Augustine of Hippo, referenced above, who Stowe refers to as "that great poet of

¹⁵⁰ Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson, 159.

¹⁵¹ St. Augustine. *The Confessions of S. Augustine*. Translated by Rev. E. B. Pusey, D. D. (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1843), 235.

¹⁵² Stowe (2010), 133, 132, 133.

theology.”¹⁵³ It is Augustine’s rungs, Stowe considers Edwards to have “knocked out” of the ladder to heaven, in her criticism of his systemized theology.¹⁵⁴ As Stowe’s comment suggests, and historian Perry Miller maintains, (though they did not agree with Augustine on every point) the essence of American Puritanism is situated in the “Augustinian strain of piety.”¹⁵⁵ Consequently, Augustine is considered by many scholars of American religious thought to have contributed as much as Calvin to the theological foundation of the New England mind, be it Jonathan Edwards or Harriet Beecher Stowe.¹⁵⁶ Peter Thuesen points out that “intense introspection” is the “hallmark” of Augustinian piety, a notion clearly at work in the Calvinism of Jonathan Edwards.¹⁵⁷ Intense introspection is also the concept underpinning this segment of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, one of the aforementioned precepts by which our lives are guided, whether concerning the highest questions of ethics surrounding slavery, or the holiest spiritual matters, such as those that revolve around Eva.

The philosophical debate between Ophelia and her southern cousin regarding slavery as an institution, and the question of “How came *you* in this state of sin and misery? (Augustine’s emphasis)” echoes the theologian’s treatise *City of God*.¹⁵⁸ St.

¹⁵³ Stowe (1999), 198.

¹⁵⁴ Stowe (1999), 54.

¹⁵⁵ Miller, Perry. *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1939), 4-5, 3.

¹⁵⁶ Thuesen, Peter J. “The ‘African Enslavement of Anglo-Saxon Minds’ The Beechers as Critics of Augustine.” *Church History*. Vol. 72, No. 3 (September, 2003), 570.

¹⁵⁷ Thuesen, 570.

¹⁵⁸ Stowe (2010), 205.

Augustine's contemplation of his path to faith contains an allegory with two branches of humanity. One branch, St. Augustine describes as an "earthly city," which "consists of those who live by human standards," and is ultimately "doomed to undergo eternal punishment with the Devil."¹⁵⁹ St. Augustine links this earthly city to the Roman Empire, and traces it to Cain, first offspring of a fallen humanity, based on the Apostle Paul's declaration, "it is not the spiritual element which comes first, but the animal; and afterwards comes the spiritual."¹⁶⁰ Even the gods of Rome, who feed war and the "acqui[sition] of so vast an empire," are grounded in materiality, which St. Augustine condemns, stating, "to make war and to extend the realm by crushing other peoples, is good fortune in the eyes of the wicked."¹⁶¹

St. Augustine's other branch of humanity, he terms the "City of God."¹⁶² The "citizens," of this City live according to God's will, and shall "reign with God for all eternity."¹⁶³ In his consideration of the City of God, St. Augustine draws parallels between Christianity and the Platonism of ancient Greece. Unlike Rome, "they raised their eyes above all material objects in their search for God."¹⁶⁴ St. Augustine deems Platonists' "glorious reputation," well-deserved given that, "They saw also that in every mutable being the form which determines its being, its mode of being and its nature,

¹⁵⁹ St. Augustine of Hippo. *City of God*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 204, 595.

¹⁶⁰ St. Augustine (1984), 596, citing I Corinthians 5:46.

¹⁶¹ St. Augustine (1984), 154.

¹⁶² St. Augustine (1984), 5.

¹⁶³ St. Augustine (1984), 595.

¹⁶⁴ St. Augustine (1984), 307.

can only come from him who truly is, because he exists immutably.”¹⁶⁵ This Roman: earthly city, Greek: City of God symbolization extends into Stowe’s work. The “fine Roman profile” of Albert, the consummate plantation-owner, marks him as citizen of the earthly city. And St. Clare’s “Greek outline” defines him as belonging to the City of God.¹⁶⁶ According to St. Augustine, because earthly society is deficient, St. Clare’s link to the City of God also renders him a “pilgrim in a foreign land” as “long as he is in his mortal body,” and therefore “away from God.”¹⁶⁷ This discomposure, which his lackadaisical personality is intended to ameliorate, comes to the fore during his discussion with Ophelia regarding the seemingly impossible proposition of ending slavery.

Though the focus of their deliberation, and the question Ophelia poses regarding, “How came *you* in this state of sin and misery?” appears to be the St. Clare character, its content is directed squarely at the North.¹⁶⁸ Given that Miss Ophelia is a transplanted Northerner, at plot level she is physically a “pilgrim in a foreign land.” On the symbolic level, Ophelia represents the North at large, thereby linking Augustinian “pilgrim in a foreign land” imagery to the North. Thus, Stowe’s message to the North is that though, like St. Clare, they raise their eyes above material objects (meaning the institution of slavery), also like St. Clare, the society they live in is deficient and

¹⁶⁵ St. Augustine (1984), 307.

¹⁶⁶ Stowe (2010), 205, 204.

¹⁶⁷ St. Augustine (1984), 873.

¹⁶⁸ Stowe (2010), 205.

therefore away from God. Not only do they live in this society, in many ways they contribute to it, if only through lack of action. Through assertions like St. Clare's response to Ophelia's reaction upon seeing Topsy for the first time, Stowe points out that in many respects Northern sentiment is no better than that in the South. Ophelia's initial reaction, "Augustine, what in the world have you brought that thing here for?" elicits the following response from St. Clare:

That's you Christians, all over! -- you'll get up a society, and get some poor missionary to spend all his days among just such heathen. But let me see one of you that would take one into your house with you, and take the labor of their conversion on yourselves! No, when it comes to that, they are dirty and disagreeable, and it's too much care, and so on.¹⁶⁹

Driving St. Clare's point home, the reader discovers that he bought Topsy strictly to save her from the daily beatings she regularly received at the hands of the drunken couple who owned her.

In keeping with the eternal nature of matters to be deliberated in this segment, the main thrust of Stowe's admonishment is that the North will continue to live away from God as long as slavery exists in America. She calls on New England's intense Calvinist introspection to bring them to this realization, and their granite-like conscience, as embodied in Miss Ophelia, to take action. Stowe characterizes Ophelia as the "absolute bond-slave to the 'ought,'" stating, once she has determined:

¹⁶⁹ Stowe (2010), 218, 219.

that the “path of duty,” as she commonly phrased it, lay in any given direction, and fire and water could not keep her from it. She would walk straight down into a well, or up to a loaded cannon’s mouth, if she were only quite sure that there the path lay.¹⁷⁰

Miss Ophelia stands in stark contrast to the pained and indecisive Augustine St. Clare, who wrestles with a life lived between two *Cities*. Not only does Ophelia ultimately press St. Clare for Topsy’s emancipation papers, she takes Topsy with her when she returns North, to care for the child and see to her education. While Stowe considers it her moral obligation to point out the “path to duty,” it is also her expectation that Northern readers heed her message and follow that clearly defined path of duty, just as Miss Ophelia does. Otherwise, it is not only Southern slave-owners who live apart from God, but Northerners as well. The question remains, “How came *you* in this state of sin and misery?”

The next segment of Stowe’s work, characterized by Stowe’s “Christian Period,” transpires on Simon Legree’s plantation, where the symbolism of Tom as Christ figure becomes fully realized. Though Legree’s plantation is typically interpreted as hell, exemplified in Elizabeth Ammon’s essay *Heroines in ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin,’* I contend this portion of the novel more closely aligns with Christ’s temptation in the wilderness. Legree’s property is a “lone plantation, ten miles from any other,” located at the end of

¹⁷⁰ Stowe (2010), 145.

a “wild, forsaken road,” that winds through “dreary pine barrens.”¹⁷¹ Though Tom is not alone, he is indeed isolated, a fact Cassy drives home, cautioning him that there is “not a white person here, who could testify, if you were burned alive,—if you were scalded, cut into inch-pieces, set up for the dogs to tear, or hung up and whipped to death.”¹⁷² In addition, Legree’s taunt for Tom to throw away his Bible and “join my church” is reminiscent of Satan’s mocking challenge for Christ to turn desert stones to bread. Finally, Tom refers to Cassy as “an embodiment of the temptation with which he had been wrestling,” the temptation to admit that the “devil” Legree is stronger than either him, or his faith.¹⁷³

Stowe shifts to the Gothic style for this setting, as Karen Halttunen observes, noting its similarities to Lyman Beecher’s powerful reform sermons containing passages that represent intemperance as a haunted house.¹⁷⁴ Though Legree’s plantation is indeed hellish, it is not intended to represent the realm of eternal damnation. Rather, this depiction reflects the spiritually corrosive nature of slavery, not only for the slave, (as embodied in Sambo and Quimbo), and the slave-owner (personified by Legree), but

¹⁷¹ Stowe (2010), 327, 312.

¹⁷² Stowe (2010), 327.

¹⁷³ Stowe (2010), 327.

¹⁷⁴ Halttunen, Karen. “Gothic Imagination and Social Reform: The Haunted Houses of Lyman Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.” *New Essays on Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Edited by Eric J. Sundquist. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 109.

the nation itself, signified by a once beautiful estate now the product of neglect, and the sitting room that smells of “mingled damp, dirt and decay.”¹⁷⁵

What Stowe evokes, contemporary anti-slavery publications explicitly state— “slavery destroys immortal souls,” which constitutes the millennial-directed message within this section.¹⁷⁶ Missionary and reformed slave-owner, Thomas Lafon, writes in his tract for aspiring missionaries on the topic of slavery, that oppression “crush[es] the minds and hearts of those under its influence,” resulting in “mental paralysis,” and the sullen, “imbruted men,” and “feeble, discouraged women” Tom encounters upon his arrival.¹⁷⁷ Legree’s slaves had either never heard of a Bible, leaving them with nothing to break the “yoke, which bore them down,” or have reached the same conclusion as Cassy, that “there isn’t any God, I believe; or if there is, he’s taken sides against us.”¹⁷⁸ Tom’s response to Cassy’s surprise at his refusal to become Legree’s new driver, awakens her to just how demoralized she has become. Though Tom agrees that God would not hold any slave responsible for doing what is necessary to survive, it is *being* wicked that is the issue for Tom, dreading a corrupted soul more than death itself.

This soul-crushing experience is problematic in a millennial context on several levels, and Stowe highlights a number of them. As she indicates from the beginning of

¹⁷⁵ Stowe (2010), 336.

¹⁷⁶ *The Liberator from Boston, Massachusetts*. Dec. 20, 1839.

¹⁷⁷ Lafon, Thomas. *The Great Obstruction to the Conversion of Souls at Home and Abroad*. (New York: Union Mission Society, 1843), 11, 10; Stowe (2010), 317.

¹⁷⁸ *Lafon*, 13; Stowe (2010), 327.

her work, due to cruelties visited upon the enslaved, slavery's mere existence hinders onset of the millennium. As written in William Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, the institution also frustrates the advent of the Kingdom of God because it "opposes the spread of the Gospel."¹⁷⁹ According to *The Liberator*, and exemplified on Legree's plantation, "two and a half millions, of our countrymen" are forbidden to read, much less own a Bible, making it impossible to succeed in "converting the world."¹⁸⁰ The fact that newspapers like William Garrison's call attention to such considerations, makes it likely that references like the following exchange, one that occurs in response to Tom reading a passage from the Bible, resonate with readers in a millennial context:

"Them's good words, enough," said the woman; "who says 'em?"
"The Lord," said Tom.
"jest wish I know'd whar to find Him," said the woman...¹⁸¹

Finally, the oppression that leads many, like Cassy, to forego their faith, renders them "heathen," effectively unwinding millennial progress.

The corrosive element eroding Legree's soul, on the other hand, is guilt, as distinct from remorse, in that he is not repentant for any of the despicable and violent acts he has committed. His is not the feeling of sinfulness grounded in the Christian concern for his soul, but the psychological guilt that manifests as superstition in

¹⁷⁹ *The Liberator* Dec. 20, 1839.

¹⁸⁰ *The Liberator* Dec. 20, 1839

¹⁸¹ Stowe (2010), 318.

“godless and cruel men” like Legree.¹⁸² Though Legree starts life “rocked on the bosom” of a fair-haired mother who taught him to “worship and pray,” he “br[eaks] from her,” violently, to seek his fortune at sea, never to see his mother again, symbolically choosing money over God. Legree learns of his mother’s death in a letter, a message of forgiveness written as she died. In keeping with tradition, the envelope also contains a lock of his mother’s hair. Stowe eloquently recounts the mental and emotional process in play, as Legree’s guilt begins to rise:

There is a dread, unhallowed necromancy of evil, that turns things sweetest and holiest to phantoms of horror and affright That pale, loving mother,--her dying prayers, her forgiving love,--wrought in that demoniac heart of sin only as a damning sentence, bringing with it a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. Legree burned the hair, and burned the letter; and when he saw them hissing and crackling in the flame, inly shuddered as he thought of everlasting fires.¹⁸³

The seed of Legree’s guilty conscience has been planted, and his subsequent years steeped in the greed and violence of the slave-trade feed his paranoiac guilt to the point of becoming “that frightful disease that seems to throw lurid shadows of a coming retribution back into the present life.”¹⁸⁴ This is, of course, the mental state Cassy exploits to make her escape with Emmeline. It is also the state of mind that sets Legree raving and screaming, frightened to death in his bed. The not so subtle message is

¹⁸² Stowe (2010), 338.

¹⁸³ Stowe (2010), 339-340.

¹⁸⁴ Stowe (2010,) 385.

clear... "Make no mistake slave-holder, this is slowly, but surely, happening to your soul too."

Until now, in an effort to awaken sympathy, and situate ending slavery in a millennial context, Stowe's chronicle has been backward-looking, recounting what *has* happened, and the previous means God has utilized to reveal himself to humankind. As they diverged from Stowe's Patriarchal Age, the Northern sub-plot (with its focus on family and the concerns of an earthly nation), and the Southern story-line (which addresses eternal matters and includes Tom as symbolic Christ), reconverge, anticipating the coming post-millennial "Kingdom of God on earth."¹⁸⁵ At this point in the text, the present has been established, and with it, the transition to a forward-facing narrative, toward future prospects and the advent of the millennial age. Marking this shift, in classic "looking to the future" symbolism, the elder Shelby has passed away, and "young Mas'r George" is now in charge of the Shelby farm.

Not coincidentally, it is George Shelby and actions he takes as a result of his experience on Legree's plantation, that facilitate this reintegration of narrative strands. The turn of events in question is a testament to the impact "any individual" can have, setting the stage for Stowe's call to action at the close of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Consistent with the "web-like" nature of her millennial view, Shelby's actions radiate, revealing connections between characters from each faction. Thus, a loose collection of characters

¹⁸⁵ Moorhead (Dec.1984), 524.

is transformed into an extended family and beyond, representing the larger Christian community of the coming millennium. Underscoring this melding of cohorts, is the fact that both Shelby and Eliza's husband, heads of their respective families, are both named George.

Stowe herself identified George Shelby as St. George, in reference to his physical confrontation with Legree. The villainous slave-trader represents the dragon, of course, which in turn signifies Satan. Yet, the symbolism goes beyond simple analogy. As the legend goes, St. George comes upon a village that is being ravaged by a dragon, and agrees to kill the dragon, on the condition that everyone in the hamlet is baptized as a Christian. Upon dispatching the beast, St. George performs a mass, village-wide baptism. The obvious allusion to slavery as the evil represented by the dragon holds, with emancipation relating to salvation, and the baptism that facilitates it. In Stowe's work, the baptism imagery associated with the legend of St. George functions on a double signification with Shelby presenting his farm hands with freedom papers.¹⁸⁶ Those enslaved on the Shelby farm are baptized into freedom, in one fell swoop, as the expression goes, and farm-wide. This turn of events provokes readers to contemplate what this scenario might look like, should it actually come to pass nationwide, effectively pointing them squarely toward the future.

¹⁸⁶ Collins, Michael H. "St George and the Dragon: The Golden Legend." <http://collinsm.com/the-golden-legend/> (Accessed: April 17, 2017).

The name George is derived from Greek elements that mean to “work the earth,” to cultivate the land, a function George Harris metaphorically fulfills, cultivating souls in his work as missionary, which he, himself, refers to as a “field of work” in a letter he writes to a friend regarding his plans for a future in Africa.¹⁸⁷ “Let us, then,” Harris states:

all take hold together, with all our might, and see what we can do with this new enterprise, and the whole splendid continent of Africa opens before us and our children... To the Anglo-saxon race has been intrusted the destinies of the world, during its pioneer period of struggle and conflict. To that mission its stern, inflexible, energetic elements, were well adapted; but, as a Christian, I look for another era to arise. On its borders I trust we stand; and the throes that now convulse the nations are, to my hope, but the birth-pangs of an hour of universal peace and brotherhood... I expect to work with both hands, --to work hard; to work against all sorts of difficulties and discouragements; and to work till I die. This is what I go for; and in this I am quite sure I shall not be disappointed.¹⁸⁸

Harris’ letter reiterates the following passage, in which Stowe delineates her view of Liberia as the next covenantal nation:

If ever Africa shall show an elevated and cultivated race—and come it must, some time, her turn to figure in the great drama of human improvement,—life will awake there with a gorgeousness and splendor of which our cold western tribes faintly have conceived;...and the Negro race, no longer despised and trodden down, will, perhaps, show forth some of the latest and most magnificent revelations of human life... In all these they will exhibit the highest form of the peculiarly *Christian life* (original emphasis), and perhaps, as God chasteneth whom he loveth, he hath chosen poor Africa in the furnace of affliction, to make her the highest and noblest in that kingdom which he will set up, when every other kingdom has been tried, and failed; *for the first shall be last, and the last*

¹⁸⁷ “George.” *Behind the Name*. <https://www.behindthename.com/name/George> (Accessed: April 17, 2017); Stowe (2010), 395.

¹⁸⁸ Stowe (2010), 394-395.

first.¹⁸⁹

Though established early in this analysis, it bears repeating... the prevailing concern of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is with the realization of Stowe's millennial vision. And this "colonizationist ending" is a fundamental aspect of what Pelletier refers to as "the novel's apocalyptic logic."¹⁹⁰ Stowe considers the conversion of Africa to be a sign of Christ's return, and Harris' plans to minister in Liberia furthers the millennium in that regard. Therefore, she does not understand colonization as "politically regressive," in fact, quite the opposite.¹⁹¹ Rather than offering ex-slaves full status as citizens into a "corrupt nation," Stowe "posits them as God's elect," and sees Liberia's colonization as essential to fulfilling her millennial view. Stowe's religious worldview, of course, can only be fully fathomed in the context of mid-nineteenth century politics, which reinforces the notion underpinning this project, that "secular" and "religious" are not fixed categories, and any attempt to understand one of these terms requires simultaneous effort to appreciate the other.

¹⁸⁹ Pelletier 117, 116; Stowe (2010), 163-164 as cited in Pelletier, 113.

¹⁹⁰ Pelletier 101.

¹⁹¹ Pelletier 117.

My vocation is simply that of a *painter*, and my object will be to hold up in the most lifelike and graphic manner possible slavery, its reverses, changes, and the negro character, which I have had ample opportunities for studying. There is no arguing with *pictures*, and everybody is impressed by them, whether they mean to be or not.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, letter to Gamaliel Bailey, 1851

In her oft-quoted letter to Gamaliel Bailey, Stowe purports her “vocation [to be] simply that of a *painter* (emphasis original),” she rightly claims “there is no arguing with *pictures* (emphasis original),” stating that “everybody is impressed by them, whether they mean to be or not.”¹⁹² Stowe further declares her intention “to hold up in the most lifelike and graphic manner possible slavery,” and she employs a number of tools to accomplish this goal.¹⁹³ I continue this study of Stowe’s work by exploring these devices, those she employs to evoke “sympathy and feeling for the African race.”¹⁹⁴ The relevance of the rhetorical devices Stowe utilizes is two-fold. They are significant given that, in widening the “web” of community to encompass those suffering under the institution of slavery, these mechanisms manifest her theology of love. More relevant to this thesis, however, these tools exemplify the post-millennial vision of a Kingdom of God ushered in through persuasive means, and expanding moral influence, rather than domination.

¹⁹² Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Letter to Gamaliel Bailey. [Brunswick, Maine, March 9, 1851] <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/uncletom/utlthbsht.html> (Accessed: April 2, 2017).

¹⁹³ Stowe (1851).

¹⁹⁴ Stowe (2010). xiii.

Stowe's fundamental tactic consists of recognizing the importance of what has come to be known as the *Mother Theresa effect*, or particularity, in the parlance of sentimental literature scholarship. Echoing Aristotle, and authors of sentimental literature, Mother Theresa of Calcutta is credited with saying, "If I look at the mass I will never act. If I look at *the one*, I will (emphasis mine)." ¹⁹⁵ According to a brief for the American Psychological Association, the psychological factor Mother Theresa's self-aware observation reveals is that, when confronted with large scale pain and suffering, such as institutional slavery, people become "numbly indifferent." ¹⁹⁶ However, as writers of sentimental literature knew intuitively, when an individual is isolated, he or she becomes actualized, no longer an object but a human being, and as such emotionally accessible. Therefore, "the particular," Ann Van Sant writes glossing Aristotle, "moves the passions more effectively than the universal." ¹⁹⁷ Consequently, particularity is the tool writers employ to create images that allow readers to "locate," in fact, help create, by virtue of imagining a given character, and "look at him." ¹⁹⁸ Stowe embodies this sentimental technique in Senator Bird, with his inability to see fugitive slaves as anything more than property to be returned, until faced with Eliza's

¹⁹⁵ Slovic, Paul. "Psychic Numbing and Genocide." *American Psychological Association*. November 2007. (Accessed: April 29, 2017). <http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2007/11/slovic.aspx>

¹⁹⁶ Slovic.

¹⁹⁷ Van Sant, Ann Jessie. *Eighteenth-century sensibility and the novel: The senses in social context*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28.

¹⁹⁸ Van Sant, 28.

“imploring human eye,” “frail trembling hand,” and despairing appeal of helpless agony.¹⁹⁹

It is possible, however, to be “seen without being noticed, “like certain chimney sweeps who were refused child labor laws despite presenting “a particular object of misery.”²⁰⁰ Unlike individuals benefitting from well-endowed philanthropic organizations, the chimney sweeps were not “experimental material.”²⁰¹ It was the chimney sweeps’ conditions that required changing, rather than the children themselves. Consequently, there was no engaging interest in changing the children’s conditions. And the same could be said for America’s enslaved. It was their condition, rather than the individuals themselves, that required changing. Stowe seems to have this psychological proclivity in mind as she lists the successes of emancipated individuals. First, she changes the narrative, describing them (due to the treatment visited upon them as slaves) as “ignorant, inexperienced, half-barbarized.”²⁰² It is no longer their condition that needs changing, but the fugitive slaves themselves. In doing so, undoubtedly in an effort to establish an engaging interest in changing their condition, she frames them as an ongoing social enterprise, like those benefiting from established philanthropic organizations:

¹⁹⁹ Stowe (2010,) 81.

²⁰⁰ Van Sant, 28.

²⁰¹ Van Sant, 41.

²⁰² Stowe (2010), 405.

B_____. Furniture maker; twenty years in [Cincinnati]; worth ten thousand dollars, all his own earnings; a Baptist.

C_____. Full black; stolen from Africa; sold in New Orleans; been free fifteen years; owns several farms in Indiana...

K_____. Full black; dealer in real estate; worth thirty thousand dollars... free six years...member of the Baptist church...

J. W. C. Pennington, among clergymen, Frederick Douglas and Samuel Ringgold Ward, among editors, are well known instances.

In order to reach the reader's heart, a writer must engage his imagination, thereby converting him into a spectator. Referencing *Tristram Shandy*, Van Sant identifies the eye, either physical, or the imaginative "mind's eye," as having "the quickest commerce with the soul."²⁰³ This view is consistent with psychologist Paul Slovic's view that images play a significant role in what he identifies as the most basic form of feeling, "affect," the intuitive sense that something is good, or whether it is bad.²⁰⁴ Once again, psychology and writers of sentimental literature converge, this time regarding what constitutes an image. In both of these contexts, the concept not only means visuals, but includes memories and products of our imagination.²⁰⁵ Stowe employs both to great effect, her call to mothers who have lost children, as well as her "non-description" of Tom's fatal flogging, "what man has nerve to do, man has not nerve to hear."²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Van Sant, 29.

²⁰⁴ Slovic.

²⁰⁵ Slovic.

²⁰⁶ Stowe (2010), 376.

Stowe's use of imagination as affective image in the scenes surrounding Tom's martyrdom also derive from a recent cultural development, this time in relation to pain. The implications of pain go beyond its basis in biological fact. As David Morris phrases it, pain "draws us inside a structure of changing interpretations," related to our societal and cultural background.²⁰⁷ While pain was previously viewed as largely unavoidable, due to philosophical shifts, it is now considered what Halttunen describes as "loathsome and unacceptable," and therefore, seemingly counter to the millennium.²⁰⁸ It is not until the nineteenth century, however, that the aversion to pain reaches the point of "full revulsion and horror" Stowe strives to elicit with her lifelike and graphic" imagery.²⁰⁹ Stowe's conscious exclusion of specifics highlights its salacious nature, underscoring the notion that the pain Tom suffers is immoral.²¹⁰ More importantly, the images of Tom's deadly thrashing are conjured in the reader's own mind. They are fashioned with deep-seated fears, from a catalog of painful experiences in a pre-anesthesia world, rendering the reader's identification with Tom's pain, not only evocative, but exceedingly personal.

²⁰⁷ Morris, David. *The Culture of Pain*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 38.

²⁰⁸ Halttunen, Karen. "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture." *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 2 (Apr.,1995), 310.

²⁰⁹ Halttunen (1995), 310; Stowe,(1851).

²¹⁰ Halttunen (1995), 329.

And you, mothers of America,--you, who have learned, by the cradles of your own children, to love and feel for all mankind,--by the sacred love you bear your child...--*I beseech you, pity the mother* who has all your affections, and not one legal right to protect, guide, or educate, the child of her bosom!

Harriet Beecher Stowe -- narrator directive in Uncle Tom's Cabin

I have analyzed the ways sacred history informs *Uncle Tom's* story-lines, which Stowe uses to delineate her arguments in an effort to *convince* the reader of slavery's cruelty (emotional as well as physical), and its corrosive effects on the spirit and psyche. Not only is such cruelty, on its face, contrary to Stowe's theology of love, dividing families stands in opposition to the domestic theology "in whose hands," Stowe believes, "rest the real destinies of the Republic."²¹¹ In the larger eschatological context, the corrosive effects of cruelty, those detailed in my examination of Tom's experience on Legree's plantation, hinders the coming of the millennial age. I have also considered the rhetorical devices she employs to allow enslaved Africans to be "seen" for the first time, to *evoke* sympathy and compassion for those enslaved. I proceed by examining Stowe's narrative voice and use of sermonic tone, both of which she utilizes to *impel* the reader to take action toward ending the institution of slavery. Given the eschatological purpose of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it is important to reiterate that Stowe's tactics are in keeping with the mid-nineteenth century post-millennial vision of "an essentially

²¹¹ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, front matter.

voluntaristic kingdom," to borrow Moorhead's description, "bound together by allegiance freely given and expanding its domain by its persuasive power."²¹²

While the rhetorical devices heretofore examined promotes what Mary Louise Kete refers to as "emotional affinity" between the reader and characters in her novel, Stowe's narrative commentary serves to "coerce the reader into collaborating with the author."²¹³ Her use of what Robyn Warhol refers to as "engaging narrator," facilitates the reader's active engagement in "the work of the novel" through "passages of direct address."²¹⁴ As, Warhol rightly contends, "engaging narrative" is central to Stowe's "idea of fiction," underscored by the fact that her narrator interrupts the story with asides to the reader on no fewer than forty-three occasions.²¹⁵ While Kete consider direct address to be a form of apostrophe, deeming it "the essential rhetorical trope of sentimentalism," Warhol makes a subtle, but significant, distinction between the two.²¹⁶ She maintains that the third party evoked in apostrophe is "indisputably a literary construct," such as "the Muse," the "West Wind", or "a deceased and honored poet."²¹⁷ The focus of direct address, on the other hand, is "the 'you' that must be present in any

²¹² Moorhead (1999), 8.

²¹³ Kete, 90, 89.

²¹⁴ Warhol, Robyn. "Poetics and Persuasion: Uncle Tom's Cabin as a Realist Novel." *Essays in Literature*. Volume 13, No. 2. (Fall 1986), 292; Kete, 91; Warhol (Fall 1986), 292.

²¹⁵ Warhol, Robyn. "Toward a Theory of the Engaging Narrator: Earnest Interventions in Gaskell, Stowe, and Eliot." *PMLA*, Vol. 101, No. 5 (Oct., 1986), 811; Warhol (Fall 1986), 292.

²¹⁶ Kete, 18.

²¹⁷ Warhol, Robyn. *Gendered Interventions: Narrative Discourse in the Victorian Novel*. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 202.

act of reading, the ‘you’ that really means ‘you, reader.’”²¹⁸ Warhol characterizes Stowe’s “authorial intrusions” as “engaging” because, though any direct address implies the presence of an actual reader, not all encourage “the person who holds the book,” to identify with the “you” in the text (to whom the narrator recounts her narrative).²¹⁹

Like apostrophe, direct address differs from other rhetorical devices, in that, it does not make its point through double meanings of a word, or second-level interpretations.²²⁰ Rather, Stowe’s “engaging interventions” function on the pattern, or “circuit” of communication itself.²²¹ While all varieties of narrative intervention call attention to the fact that the novel in question is “only a story,” “engaging narrators,” like Stowe’s, propose that the characters are conceivably as real as the author and reader.²²² In an effort to stimulate sympathetic action once the book is put aside, Stowe’s narrator points out that her characters—“or people exactly resembling them”—actually exist:

The personal appearance of Eliza, the character ascribed to her, are sketches drawn from life...The incident of the mother’s crossing the Ohio river on the ice is a well-known fact...

²¹⁸ Warhol (1989), 202.

²¹⁹ Warhol (1989), 196; Warhol (Oct. 1986), 811.

²²⁰ Culler, Jonathan. *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 135.

²²¹ Warhol (1989), 17; Culler, 135 cited in Warhol 1989, 201.

²²² Warhol (1989), 41.

The story of “old Prue,” in the second volume, was an incident that fell under the personal observation of a brother of the writer, then collecting-clerk to a large mercantile house, in New Orleans...

That the tragical fate of Tom, also, has too many times had its parallel, there are living witnesses, all over our land, to testify.²²³

Stowe’s engaging narrator reminds the reader that, though fiction, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* reflects “real-world conditions”:

But what needs tell the story, told too oft,--every day told,--of heart-strings rent and broken,--the weak broken and torn for the profit and convenience of the strong! It needs not to be told;--every day is telling it,--telling it, too, in the ear of One who is not deaf, though he be long silent.²²⁴

This passage refers to an episode involving a sobbing black woman who comes “running wildly” up the plank of a steamboat, throwing her arms around an “unfortunate piece of merchandise before enumerated – John, aged thirty.”²²⁵ The narrator’s direct address serves to remind the reader how often such incidents actually occur. So frequently, in fact, that he or she does not need to be told precisely how the scene concludes. The reader is also admonished that such events transpire, for no reason other than the “profit and convenience” of slaveholders.²²⁶ And while the final line is often interpreted in the context of theodicy, Kete’s insightful observation holds true, Stowe’s direct address calls for “a practice consistent with the Protestant tradition

²²³ Warhol (1989), 39; Stowe (2010), 400-401.

²²⁴ Warhol (1989), 41; Stowe (2010,) 113.

²²⁵ Stowe (2010), 113.

²²⁶ Stowe (2010), 113.

of self-examination."²²⁷ If the reader has reached the point where she is "feeling right" (sees the sobbing woman as a particular, actualized human being, recognizes the sinful nature of slavery, and acknowledges her complicity in the institution), the phrase "One who is not deaf," is easily understood as a reminder of the very real specter of judgment day.

To awaken sympathy and inspire the actual reader, as Warhol points out, is to make something happen, and "that something" takes place in "real time," at the time of reading, rather than within the temporal parameters of the narrative.²²⁸ Regardless of whether direct address is distinct from, or a variety of apostrophe, it fulfills Culler's designation as an event.²²⁹ Direct address is not simply "the representation of an event."²³⁰ Rather, "it produces a fictive, discursive event."²³¹ As with the methods Stowe employs to "paint" her lifelike and graphic "pictures," her engaging interventions serve to engender the reader's participation in the act of representing a recognizable world by invoking his or her experiences and emotions, and applying them to the narrative.²³²

Stowe generally relies on engaging narrative in moments when her reader's sympathy is essential to her rhetorical objective, such as when Tom and Eliza realize the emotional implications of their circumstances:

²²⁷ Kete, 43.

²²⁸ Warhol (1989), 201.

²²⁹ Warhol (1989), 202.

²³⁰ Culler, 153.

²³¹ Culler, 153.

²³² Warhol (Fall 1986), 293.

Here he turned to the rough trundle-bed full of little woolly heads, and broke fairly down. He leaned over the back of the chair and covered his face with his large hands. Sobs, heavy, hoarse and loud, shook the chair, and great tears fell through his fingers on the floor; just such tears, sir, as you dropped into the coffin where lay your first-born son; such tears, woman, as you shed when you heard the cries of your dying babe. *For, sir, he was a man,--and you are but another man. And, woman, though dressed in silk and jewels, you are but a woman, and, in life's great straits and mighty griefs, ye feel but one sorrow!* (emphasis mine).²³³

If it were *your* Harry, mother, or your Willie, that were going to be torn from you by a brutal trader, to-morrow morning,--if you had seen the man, and heard that the papers were signed and delivered, and you had only from twelve o'clock till morning to make good your escape,--how fast could *you* walk? How many miles could you make in those few brief hours, with the darling at your bosom,--the little sleepy head on your shoulder,--the small soft arms trustingly holding on to your neck? (original emphasis).²³⁴

Stowe's intent in both passages above is for the reader, not only to see Tom and Eliza as actualized human beings, but to recognize parallels between the lives of these fictional slaves and their own.²³⁵ Once this parallel has been established, Stowe employs this technique to bolster the reader's sympathy for the character in question. For example, "And oh! Mother that reads this, has there never been in your house a drawer, or a closet, the opening of which has been to you like the opening again of a little grave? Ah! Happy mother that you are, if it has not been so."²³⁶ Though prompted by the actions of Mrs. Bird, this passage particularly applies to Eliza, bearing in mind that her

²³³ Warhol (Oct. 1986), 817; Stowe (2010), 36.

²³⁴ Stowe (2010), 46.

²³⁵ Warhol (Fall 1986), 295.

²³⁶ Stowe (2010), 79.

loss of two children to death makes the prospect of losing Harry all the more unbearable.

Establishing readers' recognition of parallels between the lives of fictional slaves and their own can be problematic. For, as Samuel Johnson observed in a 1750 essay:

Our passions are therefore more strongly moved, in proportion as we can more readily adopt the pains or pleasures proposed to our minds, by recognizing them as our own, or considering them as naturally incident to our state of life. It is not easy for the most artful writer to give us an interest in happiness or misery, which we think ourselves never likely to feel, and which we have never yet been made acquainted.²³⁷

Though her intended audience is not likely to experience the misery of enslavement, Stowe's purpose in writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is much larger, and of greater consequence, than the histories to which Johnson refers. Consequently, while her audience may never find themselves in Eliza's position (making it difficult to see any parallel), they are subject to Judgment Day, when they will be held accountable for actions (or lack there-of) they have taken in regard to the evil that slavery constitutes. Returning to the web imagery I have associated with Stowe's millennial view, the reader's web of likely experience has expanded to include a scenario rendering the ending of slavery incident to her state of life, and as such, a means of moving her passions.

²³⁷ Johnson, Samuel. *The Rambler*. No. 60. Saturday, October 13, 1750. Vol. 3. The second edition. (Edinburgh, 1751), 54.

And Stowe is a masterful writer. Her direct addresses, as Joan Hedrick observes, are not simply disparate remarks peppered throughout her work. Evincing the notion underlying this thesis, the coming together, and blurring, of “the secular,” and “the religious,” her interventions function as a system, which “skillfully manipulate[s]” the social and political outlook of the reader. They hone the reader’s views with consistent, yet increasing rhetorical pressure, toward Stowe’s eschatological ends.²³⁸ Though known for her use of sentiment, the tenor of her rhetoric is not at all homogenous. Stowe also puts sarcasm to rhetorical use, in the shaping of her reader’s social and political views. For example, Stowe employs a considerable amount of rhetoric, to cement the reader’s disdain for slave traders and catchers, culminating in explicit statements such as, “He’s a shocking creature, isn’t he,-- this trader? So unfeeling! It’s dreadful, really! O, but nobody thinks anything of these traders! They are universally despised, --never received into any decent society.”²³⁹ Then, as Hedrick describes, Stowe “gathers up” that disdain and turns it back on the reader, and she does so “with a vengeance,” in the original, eschatological context of that expression:

Are you educated and he ignorant, you high and he low, you refined and he coarse, you talented and he simple?
In the day of a future Judgment, these very considerations may make it more tolerable for him than for you.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Hedrick (1994), 216.

²³⁹ Stowe (2010), 121.

²⁴⁰ Hedrick (1994), 216; Stowe (2010), 121 cited in Hedrick (1994), 216.

Stowe's engaging interventions frequently work in tandem with her sermonistic tone, which is examined in its own right in the next segment. Though only eleven pages long, as Warhol notes, the final "sermon-like" chapter contains five separate passages addressing "you" directly, one of which is the following request for the reader to, as Kete phrases it, "participat[e] in the project of overturning the mores of slave-holding America:"

And you, mothers of America,--you, who have learned, by the cradles of your own children, to love and feel for all mankind,--by the sacred love you bear your child...--*I beseech you, pity the mother* who has all your affections, and not one legal right to protect, guide, or educate, the child of her bosom! By the sick hour of your child; by those dying eyes, which you can never forget; by those last cries, that wrung your heart when you could neither help nor save...--*I beseech you, pity those mothers* that are constantly made childless by the American slave-trade! And say, mothers of America, is this a thing to be defended, sympathized with, passed over in silence? (emphasis mine).²⁴¹

Upon arousing the reader's maternal feelings, Stowe specifically directs her to project those emotions, in the form of compassion, toward actual slaves.²⁴² In fulfilling these "imaginative assignments," the reader has been primed to act in real time, when Stowe poses her famous question, "What can any Individual do?" toward bringing an end to slavery in America.²⁴³ And lest the reader lose sight of what is ultimately at stake, Stowe delivers her admonishment in prophetic voice.

²⁴¹ Kete, 94; Stowe (2010), 404, cited in Warhol (Oct, 1986), 815.

²⁴² Warhol (Oct.,1986), 815.

²⁴³ Warhol (Fall 1986), 295.

...if Christ meant nothing by his terribly plain words—or meant that everybody eventually and somehow or other would come out right—then his preaching, life and death was without point...God is love—salvation free—the spirit and the bride say come—but come you must or be lost.

Harriet Beecher Stowe -- letter to her son, Charles

Though Stowe's "reworking of Calvinism" rejects the idea of eternal punishment predicated on a sinful nature, or for past sins generally, her theology of love, as Kevin Pelletier writes, encompasses a Christ who, "while loving, will bring apocalyptic retribution on unregenerate sinners nonetheless."²⁴⁴ Stowe reserves the Puritan notion of retribution in the afterlife, however, for those who exhibit an "eternal persistence in evil."²⁴⁵ She stipulates this condition based on her conviction that evil induces misery. And slavery clearly induces misery, rendering not only plantation-owners and slave-traders unregenerate sinners, but also those who fail to take action against the institution. As such, they are deserving of divine justice.²⁴⁶

The nineteenth-century emphasis on religious conversion establishes a complex symbolic linking of individual destiny and the sense of history inherent in millennial thought. Consequently, according to Moorhead, striving for personal salvation results

²⁴⁴Pelletier, 102.

²⁴⁵ Stowe, Charles Edward, 340 (30 June 1858 to Lady Byron), cited in Kimball, Gayle. "Harriet Beecher Stowe's Revision of New England Theology." *The Journal of Presbyterian History*. Vol. 58, No. 1. 1980, 78.

²⁴⁶ Stowe, Charles Edward, 78.

in “imaginative participation in the last things.”²⁴⁷ Meaning, that the mental anguish of those yet unregenerate causes them to imagine themselves cast into the flames of hell at the hour of their death. Regardless of how many years between any given moment and judgment day, a person faces the decision that determines his or her fate today, a point that Stowe is frequently wont to make.²⁴⁸

Stowe considers teaching retribution essential to engendering moral behavior in people, as Gayle Kimball points out in her study of Stowe’s revision of New England theology.²⁴⁹ Though it may initially seem so, this stance is not antithetical to Stowe’s religion of love, nor does it contradict the domestic theology she is associated with. While a loving Christ, who is available to everyone, “like sunshine,” is at the center of Stowe’s theology, she contends we have free will to adhere to Christ’s design for our salvation... *or not*.²⁵⁰ Consequently, as Stowe admonishes her son in the oft-quoted passage opening this segment: “God is love—salvation free—the spirit and the bride say come—*but come you must or be lost*” (emphasis mine).²⁵¹

In their combined effort, *The American Woman’s Home*, which could be described as the guidebook to domestic theology, Stowe and her sister, Catharine Beecher,

²⁴⁷ Moorhead (Dec., 1984), 539.

²⁴⁸ Moorhead (Dec., 1984), 539.

²⁴⁹ Kimball, 78.

²⁵⁰ Kimball, 76.

²⁵¹ Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Oldtown Folks*. (London: Sampson Low, Son & Marston, 1870), 211, cited in Kimball, 76; HBS to Charlie, March 7, 1879, Mandrin, Folder 196, Schlesinger A. also cited in Kimball, 7.

delineate the means and methods which women establish and sustain “the family state Jesus Christ came into this world to secure.”²⁵² The aim of this “family state” is identified as “provid[ing] for the training of our race to the highest possible intelligence, virtue, and happiness... with chief reference to a future immortal existence.”²⁵³ As Tompkins indicates, throughout the text, detailed instruction is provided for everything women need to organize, and properly maintain, home and family. This includes a chapter titled “The Management of Young Children,” which, not surprisingly, contains advice pertaining to discipline.²⁵⁴ Stowe contends that “*love* and *hope* (original emphasis)” should be the principles a mother predominantly relies on.²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, certain faults, among them willful disobedience, lying, or profane language, “should be punished with severe penalties,” but only after the child has been instructed to the “evil” of the infraction in question.²⁵⁶ Beecher and Stowe also maintain that when discipline is steady and “certain [to] attend disobedience,” children “no more think of disobeying than they do of putting their fingers into a burning candle.”²⁵⁷ They are quick to point out, however, (echoing Stowe’s comments regarding Jonathan Edwards’ brand of Calvinism), that constant fear of harsh discipline is “very injurious and

²⁵² Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 18.

²⁵³ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 18.

²⁵⁴ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 275.

²⁵⁵ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 283.

²⁵⁶ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 282.

²⁵⁷ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 282.

degrading.”²⁵⁸ So, though Stowe’s reliance on teaching retribution seems antithetical, it does not contradict either domestic theology, or her religion of love.

Akin to the way Stowe places sermons in the mouths of her characters, exemplified by Eva in this work, and Candace in *The Minister’s Wooing*, Mrs. Bird, embodies a practical, earthly form of retribution, one consistent with the aforementioned disciplinary parameters. Though typically the picture of virtue and domestic tranquility, as noted in the section regarding Stowe’s Patriarchal Age, “anything in the shape of cruelty would throw her into a passion.” Upon discovering her sons are “leagued with several graceless boys,” in the stoning of a “defenceless kitten,” Mrs. Bird, uncharacteristically, “bestow[s]” a “most vehement chastisement,” on her offspring, to the point of frightening them.²⁵⁹ Consequently, the boys have a “very reverent remembrance” of the event. More to the point, however, in re-telling this story (presumably as an adult), “Master Bill” states, “I’ll tell you what...we boys never stoned another kitten!”²⁶⁰ Mrs. Bird’s (usually) mild demeanor, Christian outlook, and sympathy for Eliza’s situation, indicate that Stowe sees such punishment for the boys’ cruelty as in keeping with the domestic theology she espouses, and consistent with Mrs. Bird’s maternal duty to shape her sons’ moral behavior. And so it is with Stowe’s efforts to shape her readers’ behavior as it pertains to ending slavery, thereby furthering the

²⁵⁸ Beecher, Catharine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 283.

²⁵⁹ Stowe (2010), 72.

²⁶⁰ Stowe (2010), 72.

millennium. The passage's placement early in the novel establishes its function as a template, for later in the work when the retribution Stowe invokes is divine, rather than maternal, in nature.

As nineteenth-century readers would recognize tears as transformative "expressions of faith" rather than simply a penchant for "lachrymose scenes," Pelletier contends that Stowe's contemporary audience would understand her "pleas for love" and "warning of apocalypse" to be yoked, in a "symbiotic pairing," — much like they are, as embodied in Mrs. Bird.²⁶¹ Though Stowe clearly sees love as essential to her mission, she understands that her readers are likely to remain disengaged, even if she succeeds in evoking their sympathy. Love may be a powerful force, but, as Pelletier also notes, it is not autogenous. Consequently, Stowe utilizes "a discourse of judgment" to stimulate the reader's sympathy for slaves, exemplified by the following passage:

So speaks the poor soul, in sore discouragement; for she knows that to-morrow any man, however vile and brutal, however godless and merciless, if he only has money to pay for her, may become owner of her daughter, body and soul; and then, how is the child to be faithful? She thinks of all this, as she holds her daughter in her arms ... But she has no resort but to pray; and many such prayers to God have gone up from those same trim, neatly-arranged, respectable slave-prisons, -- *prayers which God has not forgotten, as a coming day shall show* (emphasis mine) for it is written, "Whoso causeth one of these little ones to offend, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."²⁶²

²⁶¹ Lutz, Tom. *Crying: A Natural and Cultural History of Tears*. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2001), 52; Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 130; Pelletier, 98.

²⁶² Pelletier, 26, 98; Stowe (2010,) 301-302 cited in Coleman, Dawn. *Preaching and the Rise of the American Novel*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013), 162.

Though not addressed directly, the reader is clearly urged to sympathize with the women in this scenario. At this point in the novel, as Dawn Coleman notes, Stowe has “adequately trained” the reader in “emotional identification,” especially regarding mothers who have lost children, in one fashion or another, to the institution of slavery.²⁶³ She has also made it clear by this point in the work, that those who actively participate in the institution of slavery are not the only ones responsible, so are those who allow these injustices through inaction. Further, Stowe draws a parallel between the reader and the slaves referred to in the text, by indicating their Christian faith, thereby invoking that of the reader. But to ensure that the he or she engages, Stowe appeals to judgment day, thereby setting in motion the “imaginative participation in the last things” mentioned above. The reader’s decision today, to actively work toward ending slavery, will preclude her from experiencing whatever her imagination conjures that is worse than having a mill-stone hanged about her neck, and being drowned in the depths of the sea. Stowe’s rhetoric substantiates Oliver Wendell Holmes’ remark to Stowe, “I do not believe you or I can ever get the iron of Calvinism out of our souls,” in that, her language echoes the insinuated fate of Edwards’ spider in *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.²⁶⁴ The parallel is striking, as the imaginations of both audiences are “harrowed-up” in an explicit effort to elicit emotion. Having said that, a significant

²⁶³ Coleman, 162.

²⁶⁴ Morse, John T. *Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes*. (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1896), 246.

distinction comes into play. Unlike Edwards, Stowe provides rungs for her proverbial ladder. To avoid divine retribution, concrete action must be taken toward ending the obscene, immoral institution that not only allows such practices, but incorporates them into the system.

There are those, however, like the slave-trader, Haley, who plan to “tend to [their] soul[s] and them ar matters,” after they have financial “matters tight and snug.”²⁶⁵ Then, of course, there are those who simply procrastinate, but the result is ultimately the same...inaction. Which is why linking the reader’s actions to the realization of God’s earthly kingdom is as important as invoking divine retribution. Figuratively speaking, in addition to invoking the metaphoric stick of divine justice, Stowe utilizes the proverbial carrot. She extends the inducement of being among those who experience a world “in unison with the great master chord of Christianity.”²⁶⁶ Given that Stowe’s call to action (ending slavery) is seen as “consistent with God’s divine plan,” doing so motivated mid-nineteenth century evangelicals into acting immediately, rather than in the nick of time to save themselves from the stick of divine retribution.²⁶⁷

Ending slavery conforms to Stowe’s view of God’s plan on several points. As Moorhead points out, broadly, for post-millennialists, the realization of God’s earthly

²⁶⁵ Stowe (2010), 60.

²⁶⁶ Stowe (2010), xiii.

²⁶⁷ Pelletier, 19.

kingdom is human-driven and founded on development. It is up to mankind to make it happen. As an ascendant nation, America has a divine duty to act as moral exemplar for the world. Following previously-established logic, slavery causes misery, and as such, is necessarily sinful. Given the sinful nature of chattel slavery, the institution must end. If enslaved Africans in America are not emancipated, colonization in Liberia will not occur. And it is essential that this takes place, for in Stowe's eschatology, a colonized Liberia is not only the next ascendant nation, it is an indication of a Christianized world, and as such, harbinger of Christ's kingdom here on earth. And none of this will happen without a sense of urgency in regard to slavery. The millennium will be delayed, as development toward Christ's kingdom on earth spins in an eddy of sinfulness and inaction.

Consequently, over the course of the novel, Stowe's tenor becomes increasingly powerful, from the sermonic tone Coleman associates with passages "summoning" sympathy, to the prophetic voice that accompanies admonishments of the collective sins of the American church, and indeed, those of the nation.²⁶⁸ In Stowe's concluding remarks, she revisits the emotional touchpoints within the narrative. She calls out, in what Warhol characterizes as "Whitman-like" fashion, "men and women of America," "farmers of Vermont," "sailors and ship-owners of Maine," regarding the evil that is the

²⁶⁸ Coleman, 160; Westra, 154.

slave-trade, and their role in supporting the institution, if only through lack of action.²⁶⁹ When emotions are high and the reader is primed to respond, Stowe poses her question, “But what can any individual do? Of that every individual can judge. There is one thing that every individual can do, --they can see to it that *they feel right* (original emphasis).”²⁷⁰ Stowe calls upon the reader to see that his or her sympathies are “in harmony” with those of Christ. Though significant scholarship, particularly the field of sentimentalism, focuses on feeling right, Stowe continues, declaring, “you have another power; you can *pray!*” She tasks the reader with praying “for those distressed Christians whose whole chance of religious improvement is an accident of trade and sale.”²⁷¹

“But still more,” Stowe asserts, admonishing the reader to give refuge and education to those who have escaped “by miraculous providence.”²⁷² As stated above, her question is posed following a heart wrenching narrative, packed with rhetorical devices designed to illicit sympathy, and prime the reader for what she now recognizes as a prompt. What can any individual do?—take practical action, born of compassion infused with a sense of responsibility. Northern churches can open their doors for escaped and emancipated slaves, they could establish schools “in the spirit of Christ.”²⁷³

²⁶⁹ Warhol (1989), 34; Stowe (2010), 403-404.

²⁷⁰ Stowe (2010), 404.

²⁷¹ Stowe (2010), 405.

²⁷² Stowe (2010), 405.

²⁷³ Stowe (2010), 405.

To do so, in Stowe's view, constitutes a means of reparation for the "wrongs the American nation has brought upon them," an act consistent with her theology of love.²⁷⁴

Beyond its function as a form of reparation, Stowe aligns education and knowledge with Christianization generally, for they are tools which "conform the world to faith."²⁷⁵ Therefore, from her theological perspective, to provide education for those who have escaped "from the surges of slavery," is in effect to promote Christianity itself, which in turn works to advance the millennium generally. More pointedly, and specific to the "great work" Stowe considers God to have called America to perform as ascendant nation, "an enlightened and Christianized community" aids in the success of Liberia. As addressed at several points throughout this study, Stowe sees Liberia as the next ascendant nation, "carrying laws, language and literature, drawn from among us," to become a Christianized and Christianizing "hub," if you will.²⁷⁶ She envisions the millennium with Liberia "roll[ing] the tide of civilization and Christianity," planting "mighty republics" for all coming ages, specifically the millennial age.²⁷⁷ Therefore, in Stowe's typical web-like fashion, when "any individual" provides refuge and education for fugitive slaves, their act not only reverberates globally, but has eternal repercussions.

²⁷⁴ Stowe (2010), 405.

²⁷⁵ Moorhead (1999), xv.

²⁷⁶ Stowe (2010), xiv.

²⁷⁷ Stowe (2010,) 395.

Next, Stowe takes on the mantle of the prophet, “reformers, and reprovers of idolatry, iniquity, and hypocrisy” throughout the Old Testament, whose primary function is to convey a divine warning to a people who have gone astray.²⁷⁸ In keeping with her trend of employing direct address at emotional points in the narrative, Stowe speaks directly to her audience. More importantly however, Stowe’s tone shifts from sermonic, defined by Dawn Coleman as “sentimental” in nature, the “emotional plea for fellow-feeling,” to prophetic, which is “increasing theological,” steeped in Stowe’s millennial vision, arousing the sense of urgency that emerges when political action is linked to the realization of “God’s plan.”²⁷⁹ Near the close of her Concluding Remarks, Stowe’s rhetoric of millennial vision “crescendos” (aptly characterized by Coleman), in a series of “hard-hitting interrogatives,” similar to those found in Calvinist sermons, utilized to produce “theological terror.”²⁸⁰ She employs a rhetoric designed to shock the reader, and frighten him or her into action:

This is an age of the world when nations are trembling and convulsed. A mighty influence is abroad, surging and heaving the world, as with an earthquake. And is America safe? Every nation that carries in its bosom great and unredressed injustice has in it the elements of this last convulsion.

O, Church of Christ, read the signs of the times! Is not this power the spirit of Him whose kingdom is yet to come, and whose will to be done on earth

²⁷⁸ Scott, Thomas. *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments*. (New York: J. Leavitt, 1831), 3 cited in Landow, George P. *Elegant Jeremiahs: The Sage from Carlyle to Mailer*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 24, 57.

²⁷⁹ Coleman, 160.

²⁸⁰ Coleman, 164; Westra, 151, cited in Coleman, 164.

as it is in heaven?

But who may abide the day of his appearing? “for that day shall burn as an oven: and he shall appear as a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that *turn aside the stranger in his right*: and he shall break in pieces the oppressor.”

Are not these dread words for a nation bearing in her bosom so might an injustice? Christians! Every time that you pray that the kingdom of Christ may come, can you forget that prophecy associates, in dread fellowship, the *day of vengeance* with the year of his redeemed?

A day of grace is yet held out to us. Both North and South have been guilty before God; and the *Christian church* has a heavy account to answer. Not by combining together, to protect injustice and cruelty, and making a common capital of sin, is this Union to be saved,-- but by repentance, justice and mercy; for, not surer is the eternal law by which the millstone sinks in the ocean, than that stronger law, by which injustice and cruelty shall bring on nations the wrath of Almighty God! (original emphasis).²⁸¹

A number of scholars note a resemblance between *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the American jeremiad, defined by Sacvan Bercovitch as “a mode of public exhortation... designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal, public to private identity, the shifting ‘signs of the times’ to certain traditional metaphors, themes, and symbols.”²⁸² As evinced throughout her work, Stowe clearly associates slavery with a need for “repentance, justice and mercy.”²⁸³ She links “North and South,” which are both “guilty before God,” and the “Christian church,” that has a “heavy account to answer,” to the

²⁸¹ Stowe (2010), 408.

²⁸² Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), xi cited in Tompkins, Jane. *Sentimental Designs*, 140.

²⁸³ Stowe (2010), 408.

Christian, who “pray[s] that the kingdom of Christ may come.”²⁸⁴ The aforementioned metaphors, themes and symbols, of course, pertain to the commencement of the millennium, both in regard to America fulfilling its role, as well as the realization of Christ’s heavenly kingdom on earth.

The purpose of such admonition, encapsulated in the passage above, is “to direct an imperiled people of God toward the fulfillment of their destiny.”²⁸⁵ As Bercovitch specifies, “guid[ing] them individually towards salvation, and collectively, toward the American city of God.”²⁸⁶ In the initial segment of the passage above, Stowe alludes to America’s tenuous circumstances (due to its “unredressed injustice” of slavery), in this age, when “nations are trembling and convulsed” by the Spirit of Him whose will [is] to be done on earth as it is in heaven.”²⁸⁷ She directs her cautionary query, “But who may abide the day of his appearing” toward the individual reader, with the not-so-thinly-veiled implication being, certainly not those who bear any degree of responsibility for the institution of slavery (either explicitly, or by inaction). Stowe closes this passage, and indeed the printed text, by calling on the disparate factions of North, South and the Christian church, to cast aside the injustice and cruelty of slavery, to come together in repentance and save this Union, the covenant nation of America.

²⁸⁴ Stowe (2010), 408.

²⁸⁵ Bercovitch, 9 cited in Tompkins, 139.

²⁸⁶ Bercovitch, 9 cited in Tompkins, 139.

²⁸⁷ Stowe (2010,) 408.

Stowe's pointed question, "But who may abide the day of his appearing," is also aimed at America itself. These are indeed "dread words for a nation bearing in her bosom so mighty an injustice" as institutional slavery. But, for America, in the context of Stowe's millennial view, this injustice carries repercussions on a level beyond that of mere sinfulness. In failing to bring an end to slavery, America has also forsaken the duties of her covenantal relationship with God, which also has repercussions on two levels. Stowe clearly wishes to prevent the divine wrath visited upon past ascendant nations who failed to fulfill the duties of their covenantal relationship with God. More relevant to the millennial context of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, if slavery is not brought to an end, there will be no influx of emancipated Africans to colonize Liberia. Therefore, "the tide of civilization and Christianity" will not roll. The "mighty republics" Liberia would have planted, those that would have Christianized the globe, will not be established. Consequently, Christ's kingdom on earth will not materialize, thereby hindering the millennial age. Consistent with the jeremiad, Stowe urges the reader to take action against a societal concern (in this case slavery), all the while reminding her of what happens if she fails to act (divine judgment). And the theological terror Stowe sets out to produce, functions at both the individual and the national level.

The tradition of the jeremiad lends insight into *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in that they are both forms of discourse that "fuse sacred and secular," binding "theology to politics

and politics to the progress of the kingdom of God.”²⁸⁸ As Tompkins notes, Bercovitch’s jeremiad and Stowe’s work are both “acts of persuasion” that aim to define social reality.²⁸⁹ In both instances, rhetoric and history do not opposed each other, with rhetoric comprised of “wish fulfillment” and history consisting of “recalcitrant facts” impervious to rhetorical bombardment.²⁹⁰ Rather, rhetoric (in this case *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*), “makes history (original emphasis)” by convincing people that its portrayal of the world is the true one (slavery is cruel, unjust, and evil).²⁹¹ Thereby molding reality to the principles of its political design (that the peculiar institution must end), which is grounded in Stowe’s millennial view, (it is America’s covenantal duty, not only to end slavery, but prepare emancipated slaves to fulfil their role in the “great drama of human improvement” as the next ascendant nation of Liberia).²⁹²

This fusion further reinforces the notion that “secular” and “religious” are not fixed categories, and any attempt to understand either of these terms requires concurrent effort to understand the other. To reiterate, the segment of this analysis regarding the eschatological significance of George Harris’s mission work in Liberia, substantiates the contention that Stowe’s religious worldview can only be comprehended in the context of mid-nineteenth century politics. The brief commentary

²⁸⁸ Bercovitch, xv cited in Coleman, 164; Tompkins, 140.

²⁸⁹ Tompkins, 141.

²⁹⁰ Tompkins, 141.

²⁹¹ Tompkins, 141.

²⁹² Stowe (2010), 163.

on similarities between *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Bercovitch's American jeremiad, on the other hand, indicates that one cannot truly appreciate mid-nineteenth century American history without also contemplating the religious environment during this period.

Finally, in her post-script following the final installment of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in *The National Era*, as Dawn Coleman notes, Stowe "reintroduces herself as a woman and mother."²⁹³ Addressing her readership as herself, she demonstrates the reticular fulfillment inherent in mid-nineteenth-century post-millennialism, the web-like affinities in which her millennial view is grounded. She thanks the "wide circle of friends, whose faces she has never seen," and the increasing number of "pleasant family circles that she has been meeting in spirit," despite never having direct contact.²⁹⁴ Returning to a tone and method appropriate to the domestic theology by which she is typically defined, in an effort to initiate the "cheering example" mentioned above, that "go[es] forth to shine," Stowe plants the seed of moral action in the minds of her younger readers:

Dear children,
you will one day be men and women; and [the author] hopes that you will learn from this story always to remember and pity the poor and oppressed, and, when you grow up, show your pity by doing all you can for them. Never, if you can help it, let a colored child be shut out of school, or treated with neglect and contempt, because of his color. Remember the sweet example of little Eva, and try to feel the same regard for all that she did; and then, when

²⁹³ Coleman, 171.

²⁹⁴ Stowe, Harriet Beecher. "Uncle Tom's Cabin." *The National Era Text*. (Washington D.C.: Gamaliel Bailey, April 1, 1852).

you grow up, we hope that the foolish and unchristian prejudice against people, merely on account of their complexion, will be done away with.²⁹⁵

Harriet Beecher Stowe does more than *feel right*. She builds on that foundation and takes action, as an individual, as a citizen of the covenantal nation of America, as a member of the soon-to-be-realized global Christian community. And *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is designed, according to human-driven post-millennial concepts, to impel her readers to do the same. The anecdote regarding President Lincoln's quip, "So, you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war," is a testament to what "any individual can do."²⁹⁶ Even the same little woman who was not allowed to negotiate her own printing contract.

Post Script: *Uncle Tom's* Journey through the "seedbed."

Consistent with Asad's contention, as well as my claim, that "the religious" and "the secular" must be considered in the context of their relationship to one another, the introduction of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* into the "seedbed of cultural creativity" elicits new insights regarding slavery and the enslaved. As printed in *The National Era*, in March 1853, Stowe's contribution to furthering the new millennium is "doing a magnificent work on the public mind," as it "thunder[s] along the pathway of reform."²⁹⁷ In reference to a shift in voting patterns, the article further states, "wherever [*Uncle Tom's*

²⁹⁵Stowe (1852).

²⁹⁶ Stowe, Charles Edward, 203.

²⁹⁷ "Extracts from Our Correspondence." *The National Era*. March 17, 1853 Vol. VII, No. 324, 44.

Cabin] goes,” prejudice toward Anti-slavery politics is disarmed.²⁹⁸ Stowe’s admonishment to “Feel Right” has clearly been heard, for the same article states, “the hearts of all are touched with a new and strange feeling, to which they before were strangers.”²⁹⁹ Though the precise nature of this “new and strange feeling” is not described, it must certainly be based on a recombination of cultural elements. Much like the tribal elder who provokes ritual subjects to contemplate their society, Stowe offers an example in Senator Bird’s realization that a “fugitive slave might be a hapless mother, a defenceless child,” rather than the image he carries in his mind of “a man with a stick and a bundle.”³⁰⁰

Stowe’s work continues to churn through the “seedbed,” and as indicated on the diagram in Chapter One, these new insights and interpretations begin to gain traction within “the secular,” and have political repercussions. According to the same *National Era* article mentioned above, opposition of long-time politicians to “Anti-slavery truth” is increasingly diminished.³⁰¹ And David Reynolds takes this observation one step further. He directly attributes dissemination of the novel through “plays, essays, reviews, and tie-in merchandise” to paving the way for “the public’s openness to an

²⁹⁸ “Extracts from Our Correspondence,” 44.

²⁹⁹ “Extracts from Our Correspondence,” 44.

³⁰⁰ Stowe (2010), 81, 80.

³⁰¹ “Extracts from Our Correspondence,” 44.

antislavery candidate like Lincoln.”³⁰² The scenario Reynolds outlines, exemplifies how insights formulated within the “seedbed” feed back into central societal constructs.

Public opinion is the logical corollary of the “seedbed of cultural creativity,” which, according to Reynolds, Alexis de Tocqueville regarded as being “stronger than the government.”³⁰³ An 1854 article in *The Liberator* by John Ball Jr. speaks to precisely this point, and in doing so, confirms the link between the “seedbed” (artistic and popular entertainment) and public opinion. Remarking on the state of the Fugitive Slave Law in Manhattan Island, Ball writes:

...perhaps a slaveholder might have succeeded in catching his “property,” as late as a year ago, but that he certainly could not do so since “Uncle Tom,” Purdy, and Nebraska Bill, and the Bowery (stage) Boys, and “Eva” Howard, and “Topsy” Dawes, and the dramatic Aitkens, and Stevens, and the scenic artist Rogers, and Free Soil Phineas, with his compromised “Cabin,” had commenced their anti-slavery campaign.³⁰⁴

Nassau William Senior, an advisor to the British government on social concerns, remarks that the novel’s moral influence “has been remarkable.”³⁰⁵ “[*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*] is an attack on the Fugitive Slave Law of America,” and, due to the novel’s popularity

³⁰² Reynolds, David. *Mightier Than the Sword: Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Battle for America*. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 117.

³⁰³ Reynolds, x.

³⁰⁴ Ball, John, Jr. “A Journey to Charleston.” *The Liberator*. September 8, 1854. Vol. 24, No 36. 144.

³⁰⁵ Senior, Nassau William. *American Slavery: A Reprint of an Article on “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1856), 2.

and subsequent shift in public opinion, “though it has not effected the repeal of that law, it has rendered its complete execution impossible.”³⁰⁶

It would appear that Tocqueville is correct, public opinion, which as demonstrated above is generated by the “seedbed,” can be stronger than government. Public opinion can at least, as the expression goes, give the government “a run for its money.” Given the topic at hand, I am clearly referring to the Civil War, where the government ultimately prevails over public opinion in the South. However, bearing this turn of events in mind, it is important to note, what is at this point obvious, that the public opinion arising from the “seedbed” is not necessarily universal. The pro-slavery South is, of course, a very different culture than that of the North.

Given this cultural divergence, as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* makes its way through the “seedbed,” it mixes with a different combination of societal “soil,” if you will, in the South than it does in the North. One ingredient is the belief that slavery is “the effect of sin,” and therefore, by “God’s appointment.”³⁰⁷ According to Virginia minister, George D. Armstrong, while slavery is indeed punitive, its “influence” is also “remedial,” and as such, “a means of saving the sinning people from that utter extermination which must otherwise be their doom.”³⁰⁸ Armstrong further states, “it would be difficult to

³⁰⁶ Senior, 2.

³⁰⁷ Armstrong, George D. *The Christian Doctrine of Slavery*. (New York: Scribner, 1857), 110.

³⁰⁸ Armstrong, 110. It is important to note that this perspective conforms to post-millennialism’s notion of perfecting. I call out this detail in an effort to underscore my earlier clarification, which is, that I examine the development of a specific thread within American Protestantism.

find an instance in which a people have made more rapid progress upward and onward than the African race has made under the operation of American slavery."³⁰⁹

Consequently, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is seen as a "scandalous libel," with every fact "distorted, every incident discolored."³¹⁰ It is no surprise, I suppose, that Stowe's work is considered fiction in the sense of deliberately "producing fictitious or false impressions."³¹¹

Another divergent ingredient in the Southern "seedbed" is the "Crisis of 1850," events surrounding the question of slavery's expansion into the newly acquired California and New Mexico territories.³¹² An unprecedented episode revolving around the aforementioned question erupts on the floor of the House of Representatives, as Georgian Robert Toombs "issued a Southern warning."³¹³ He declares that "if by your legislation you seek to drive us from the territories of California and New Mexico, purchased by the common blood and treasure of the whole people, and to abolish slavery in this district, thereby attempting to fix a national degradation upon" the Southern states, he boomed, "I am for disunion."³¹⁴ While talk of disunion has existed for nearly as long as the union itself, this time, such talk does not dissipate quickly, as it

³⁰⁹Armstrong, 113.

³¹⁰ Holmes, George Frederick. "Uncle Tom's Cabin." *Southern Literary Messenger: Devoted to Every Department of Literature and the Fine Arts*. Volume 18. Issue 12. (December 1852). 721, 723.

³¹¹ Holmes, 722.

³¹² Varon, Elizabeth R. *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 199-208.

³¹³ Waugh, John C. *On the Brink of the Civil War: The Compromise of 1850 and How It Changed the Course of American History*. (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2003), 51.

³¹⁴ Waugh, 51.

has in the past. Within the context of this event, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is viewed as an attempt to "awaken rancorous hatred and malignant jealousies between the citizens of the same republic," rather than advocate for reform that furthers the new millennium.³¹⁵

Ultimately, of course, Civil War erupts between the Northern states and the South. While it is not possible to determine the accuracy of Lincoln's quip regarding *Uncle Tom's Cabin* being responsible for starting the Civil War, regardless which direction one's "seedbed" churns, (be it North or South), Stowe's contribution to furthering God's divine plan had a significant influence on conditions leading up to that historic confrontation.³¹⁶

³¹⁵ Holmes, 723.

³¹⁶ Upon meeting Harriet Beecher Stowe, President Lincoln is said to have quipped, "So, you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war." Stowe, Charles Edward. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: The Story of Her Life*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), 203.

Chapter 3: The World is a Wrecked Vessel.

We have discovered the most terrible weapon in the history of the world. It may be the fire destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Era, after Noah and his fabulous ark.¹

Harry Truman

What was gunpowder? Trivial. What was electricity? Meaningless. This atomic bomb is the Second Coming in wrath.²

Winston Churchill

On October 24, 1984, a press conference for Religious Issues '84 was held at the San Francisco Press Club. The topic of discussion revolved around President Reagan's so-called "Armageddon Theology," and how such a religious world-view informs his "presidential decision-making," particularly as it pertains to foreign affairs during the height of the cold War.³ Reagan's relationship to the rhetoric of Hal Lindsey, author of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, was considered, the 1970s blockbuster treatment of futurist, premillennial dispensationalism which Reagan has quoted since his days as Governor of California. The discourse of Jim Robison, who delivered the opening prayer of the

¹ Truman, Harry. "Diary entry, July 25, 1945." Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. Stars and Stripes.com. <https://www.stripes.com/news/special-reports/world-war-ii-the-final-chapter/wwii-victory-in-japan/when-the-president-said-yes-to-the-bomb-truman-s-diaries-reveal-no-hesitation-some-regret-1.360308> (Accessed: September 16, 2017).

² Bundy, Harvey H. "Remembered Words." *The Atlantic*, March 1957. Vol. 3, pg 57. Cited in "Foreign relations of the United States: diplomatic papers: the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945." Volume II. (Sunday, July 22, 1945). *Office of the Historian*. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Berlinv02/d710a-59> (Accessed: April 2, 2018).

³ "Armageddon Theology and Presidential Decision-Making."

1984 Republican National Convention at President Reagan's request, was also contemplated. The dialogue of Jerry Falwell, leader of the Moral Majority who has met with President Reagan more often than any other religious leader (including a meeting with the National Security Council in March 1981) was also addressed. The relevance of these individuals to this thesis, does not solely lie in statements like Lindsey's, that:

there are many prophecies made in ancient times in the Bible which speak of the kind of destruction that will be wrought upon the earth in the last great war before Jesus comes back. And they are perfect descriptions of a nuclear war.⁴

Robison's remarks during the 1984 Republican National Convention, "There will be no peace until Jesus Comes! That is what the Anti-Christ promises. Any teaching of peace prior to his return is heresy. It is against the word of God—it is anti-Christ!" are not pertinent simply due to concern for the integration of such sentiments into the diplomatic function of American government.⁵ Falwell's declaration, "Nuclear war, and the second coming of Jesus Christ; Armageddon, and the coming war with Russia: what does all this have to do and say to you and me? It says this: 'Prepare to meet thy God!'" are not germane to this project merely because of the evangelist's conviction in unavoidable nuclear conflict, and the implications of his relationship with President

⁴ "Armageddon Theology and Presidential Decision-Making."

⁵ Halsel, Grace. *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War*. (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1986), 16.

Reagan.⁶ I am not exclusively concerned with Reagan's alignment with these views. My interest is not wholly in Ronald Reagan's belief that "We may be the generation that sees Armageddon," a statement underscored by his remarks to James Mills (formerly president pro tem of the California State Senate), during Reagan's second term as Governor of California:

All of the other prophecies that had to be fulfilled before Armageddon have come to pass. In the 38th chapter of Ezekiel it says God will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, where they'd been scattered and will gather them again in the promised land. That has finally come about after 2,000 years. For the first time ever, everything is in place for the battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ... Everything is falling into place. It can't be too long now. Ezekiel says that fire and brimstone will be rained upon the enemies of God's people. That must mean that they'll be destroyed by nuclear weapons. They exist now, and they never did in the past.⁷

Considerations such as these, however, were certainly the catalyst for convening the aforementioned press conference. The significance of President Reagan's religious worldview as it pertains to this study, his adherence to "Armageddon theology," stems from the number of those who share it, and ultimately, how it emerged as a form of premillennial dispensationalism.⁸

According to a 1984 Yankelovich poll, 39 percent of those questioned believed "when the Bible predicts that the earth will be destroyed by fire, it's telling us about a

⁶ Cuomo, Joe. *President Ronald Reagan and the Prophecy of Armageddon*. (New York: WBAI Radio, 1984), Track 6: 3:42.

⁷ Halsell, 44-45.

⁸ Herbers, John. "Religious Leaders Tell of Worry on Armageddon View Ascribed to Reagan." *The New York Times*. October 21, 1984.

nuclear war,” which, as Grace Halsell notes, translates to approximately 85 million Americans who see nuclear war as prophesied and, as such, unavoidable.⁹ This finding is reinforced by a *New York Times*—CBS television news poll conducted shortly before the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting in the fall of 1985 indicating that only half of the American public felt the summit would improve the condition of Soviet-American relations.¹⁰ A 1985 Nielsen survey indicated that 40 percent of all television viewers (which translates to 61 million Americans) tuned in to evangelists who preach the “Armageddon theology” mentioned above, a form of premillennial dispensationalism that emphasizes biblical prophecy foretelling the world’s destruction by nuclear conflict. Pat Robertson’s daily show talk-show *The 700 Club*, flagship of his Christian Broadcasting Network, reached upwards of 16 million families. In October 1985, *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker reported that Robertson’s network boasted 24 million viewers. With its three television stations, a radio station, and the CBN cable channel, Robertson has garnered “proven television appeal to an audience larger than that of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* combined.”¹¹ Following Robertson in the Nielsen survey was TV evangelist Jimmy Swaggart, with a viewership of four and one-half million households daily, and nine

⁹ *Voter Options on Nuclear Arms Policy: A Briefing Book for 1984 Elections*. (New York: Public Agenda Foundation, 1984), 40; Jones, Lawrence. “Reagan’s Religion.” *Journal of American Culture*. Vol. 8. 67; Halsell, 10.

¹⁰ Halsell, 10-11.

¹¹ Halsell 11; Wicker, Tom. “After Reagan, What?” *New York Times*, October 18, 1985. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times with Index pg. A31, cited in Halsell, 11.

and one-quarter million on Sunday. Ranking third in the survey, Jim Bakker reached nearly six million households every day. Though the aforementioned Nielsen survey is technically a sampling of television viewership rather than religious self-identification (as exemplified by Pew and Gallup polls), it constitutes a clear indicator of the significant number of Americans who actively engaged with this form of premillennial dispensationalism, this “Armageddon theology.”¹²

The other consideration delineated above, however, remains. How does “Armageddon theology” evolve? “How did we get here,” from the prevailing view of American Protestantism being founded on gradual improvement and fulfilled potential, to substantial numbers of the population adhering to an eschatological vision that revolves around nuclear war. Over the course of this chapter, I tug on the proverbial thread connecting the two. In keeping with my argument throughout this project that the “religious” and the “secular” are not essentially fixed categories, I touch on societal transitions (such as industrialization), and world events (culminating in the advent of the atomic bomb), that give impetus to incremental shifts toward the eschatology that has been labeled “Armageddon theology.” Drawing correlations between these events and “Armageddon theology” serves to explain *how* this nuclear eschatology develops.

In an effort to understand *why* this form of premillennial dispensationalism evolves in this way, I examine these connections through concepts within Robert J.

¹² Halsell, 12.

Lifton's work on symbolic breakdown. I draw parallels between the scenario surrounding these broken connections and the pattern within rites of passage, which Victor Turner applies to the overall "structure of human experience."¹³ Ultimately, I address the question of "how we got here," as well as my contention inside that concern, that the development of "Armageddon theology" exemplifies the interdependence of "the religious" and "the secular," on three levels, the historical, the psychological, and the anthropological. Doing so not only gives depth to my argument, it leads to a greater understanding of why the "religious" and the "secular" are not essentially fixed categories and the ways in which these spheres interact with each other, as it supplies information regarding the transition from antebellum post-millennialism to "Armageddon theology."

After this groundwork has been laid, I turn to an analysis of Russell Hoban's work *Riddley Walker*, this chapter's selection from the seedbed. *Riddley Walker* is a post-apocalyptic novel, in which civilization has clawed its way back from nuclear holocaust to the point David Cowart characterizes as a "second Iron Age."¹⁴ While the religion within this novel is indeed constructed around the nuclear reality of the society in question, *Riddley Walker* does not constitute the precise articulation of Cold War

¹³ Van Gennep, 10, 11; Szakolczai, Arpad. "Liminality and Experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events." *International Political Anthropology*. Vol. 2 (2009) No. 1, 147; Turner 1986, 39-43.

¹⁴ Cowart, David. *History and the Contemporary Novel*. (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 83; Hoban, Russell. *Riddley Walker*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 12.

“Armageddon Theology.” The relevance of Hoban’s work to this thesis lies in the fact that *Riddley Walker* speaks to the mythologizing process itself, which, of course, is the crux of this chapter. As Peter Schwenger notes, a scant few decades following its birth, the atomic bomb has become mythologized, a turn of events that speaks to myth’s function of enabling mankind to cope with the conditions of his existence.¹⁵ Paralleling the mythologizing that produced “Armageddon Theology,” that within Hoban’s work provides a vehicle for the expression, and perhaps catharsis of, the psychological and emotional ramifications of a nuclear reality.

As the name of the titular character suggests, the journey upon which Riddley Walker embarks functions as a metaphor for the mythologizing process. The work’s invented lexicon “Riddleyspeak,” alerts the reader that he will be doing more than simply perusing a narrative.¹⁶ Hoban describes this language as a “worn-down, broken apart” form of English, exemplified by the name of Riddley’s homeland, Inland, a bastardization of the word England. His intention, Hoban states, is to “slow the reader down,” so he “take[s] things in along with Riddley,” and engages the process.¹⁷

¹⁵ Schwenger, Peter. “Writing the Unthinkable.” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Autumn, 1986), 47; Blumenberg (1985), ix.

¹⁶ Haffenden, John. *Novelists in Interview*. (New York: Methuen and Co., 1985), 138; Pietroni, Anna Lawrence. “Learning to read Riddley.” *Russell Hoban.org*. (October 16, 2012). <http://www.russellhoban.org/essay/learning-to-read-riddley> (Accessed: December, 16, 2017).

¹⁷ Rattner, Steven. “Russell Hoban, Reinventing English.” *The New York Times*. November 1, 1981; Haffenden, 138.

Given that the mythologizing within *Riddley Walker* echoes that which produced Armageddon theology, I consider Hoban's novel through the same layers as my examination of the historical transition from antebellum post-millennialism to the aforementioned Cold War eschatology. Further, I draw parallels between the historical conditions that stimulate the development of Armageddon Theology, and those within Riddley's world. Before delving too deeply into my examination of Hoban's work, however, I touch upon what makes science fiction an appropriate genre for this "selection from the seedbed," noting commonalities between science fiction and apocalyptic literature.

As radical evangelicals* tried to make sense of the changing times... they reach the startling conclusion that they were not preparing the world for a godly millennium.¹⁸

Matthew Avery Sutton

I begin by examining the overall movement of the shift from antebellum post-millennialism to pre-millennial thought. This transition conforms to the pattern Arnold van Gennep identified in his landmark 1909 study of small scale societies, *The Rites of Passage*, which Turner later applied to the structure of human experience.

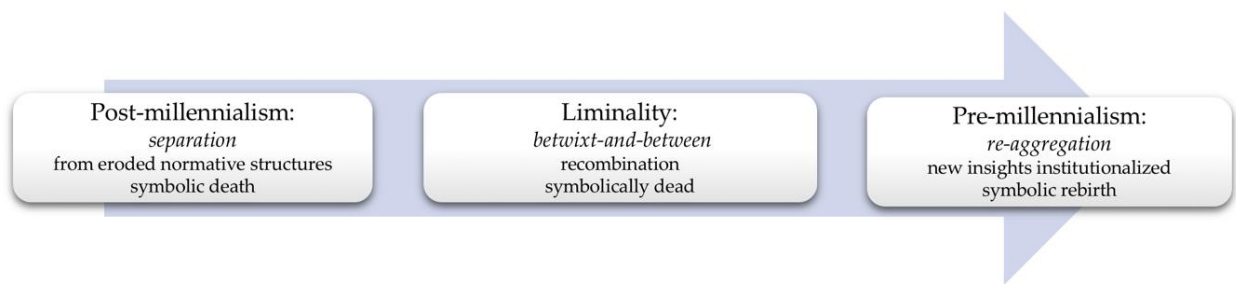


Figure 2: *Eschatological Transition.*

¹⁸ Sutton (2014,) 14.

* I utilize Matthew Avery Sutton's definition of the term "radical evangelicals": those from both the Wesleyan holiness and Higher Life Reformed traditions *who in the post-Civil War period aggressively integrated apocalyptic ideas into their faith* (my emphasis). I provide this definition because, a number of scholars associate, or even conflate, "radical evangelicals" with "fundamentalists." Though, as Paul Boyer observes, the rise of pre-millennialism parallels that of Fundamentalism, and overlap does indeed exist between the two movements, an examination of that topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that a distinction exists between the two movements, in order to avoid seeing them as identical and monolithic. See Matthew Avery Sutton's *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*, (xi-xii) for a brief overview of Ernest Sandeen, and George Marsden's, definitions of these two movements and their relationship to one another. Also see Ernest Sandeen *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970) and George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Van Gennep described the pattern delineated in the figure above as “accompany[ing] a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another,” referred to by Eliade as one “mode of being” to another.¹⁹ Examples include: transformation from childhood to adulthood, from the state of being single to a married state, or the transition from commoner to chiefdom.²⁰ Van Gennep further indicated that rites of passage are divided into three sub-categories: *rites of separation*, *transition rites*, which he labels “a liminal period,” and *rites of incorporation* (van Gennep’s emphasis).²¹ The first and last phases, as Turner notes, “speak for themselves; they detach ritual subjects from their old places in society, and replace them, inwardly transformed and outwardly changed, to new places.”²² Regarding the middle phase, the term “liminal” is derived from *limen*, the Latin for “threshold,” and, as suggested above, was selected by van Gennep as a means of indicating, the “transition between.”²³

Rites of passage function on the principle of metaphoric death and rebirth.²⁴ This turn of events is most clearly delineated in the passage from childhood to adulthood. In order to become an adult, the child must undergo a painful separation from his/her

¹⁹ Van Gennep, 10; Eliade, Mircea. *Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), xiii.

²⁰ Van Gennep, 10, 3; See Victor Turner, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage.” *Betwixt & Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*. Edited by Louis Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, Meredith Little.

²¹ Van Gennep, 10, 11 cited in Thomassen, 6.

²² Turner, Victor. “Variations on a Theme of Liminality.” *Secular Ritual*. Edited by Sally Falk Moore, Barbara G. Myerhoff. (Assen/ Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1977), 36.

²³ Turner (1982), 41.

²⁴ Eliade, (1958), xiii.

family, thereby dying “as a child.”²⁵ This detachment from previous practices, and removal of heretofore taken-for-granted structure, lands the initiate squarely in the *liminal phase*, the chaotic state of flux, where, as indicated in the diagram above, the ritual subject is “betwixt-and-between” childhood and adulthood.²⁶ In this unmoored, “limbo of statuslessness,” he/she is symbolically dead (echoing Lifton’s concepts on broken symbol systems, which will be considered at length in the segment regarding the mythologizing process as it pertains to the transition from antebellum post-millennial thought to post-millennialism).²⁷ Upon completing his/her passage through this transitional phase, the ritual subject is “re-born,” having attained “another mode of being” as an adult, a transformation consummated through *rites of incorporation*.²⁸

Significantly, Turner applied this tripartite pattern to Wilhelm Dilthey’s “structure of lived experience,” with a “transformative” event functioning as the rite of separation.²⁹ Social scientist Arpad Szalkocjai provides the following apropos definition of a transformative event:

²⁵ This passage into adulthood is not the ceremonial recognition of a naturally occurring maturation process. While ceremonies are confirmatory, ritual is transformative, in this case, transforming children into adults. See Turner, “Betwixt and Between;” Szalkocjai, 147.

²⁶ Turner (1987), 46; Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 95.

²⁷ Turner (1966), 97; Turner (1977), 37.

²⁸ Szalkocjai, 148; ²⁸ Eliade (1958), xiii; Turner (1966), 95.

²⁹ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*. Edited by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 57. See Turner, Victor. “Dewey, Dilthey, and Drama: An Essay in the Anthropology of Experience.” *The Anthropology of Experience*. Edited by Victor W. Turner, and Edward M. Bruner. 33-44. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

something that happens in real life, whether for an individual, group, or an entire civilization, that suddenly questions and even cancels previously taken-for-granted certainties, thus forcing people swept away by this storm to reflect upon their experiences.³⁰

The Civil War clearly constitutes one such event, a development frequently associated with the shift from post-millennialism to pre-millennial thought.³¹ As Randall Balmer notes, post-millennial evangelicals during the antebellum period were certain they could induce the millennium “by dint of their own efforts.”³² When war broke out in April of 1861, according to Moorhead, this belief seemed to have “suffered refutation.”³³ The war itself was a disappointment and post-millennial optimism began to fade, though northern evangelicals held out hope that the moral clarity of their stand against slavery, coupled with divine favor would bring a speedy conclusion to the conflict. However, victory was elusive. Not only had the war claimed six hundred thousand lives, as Sutton points out, the country remained deeply divided, counter to the post-millennial notion of an earthly millennial kingdom.³⁴ Consistent with a transformative event, for many evangelicals, the entire postmillennial enterprise was called into question, as manifest by Moorhead’s observation that the once dominant

³⁰ Szakolczai, 158.

³¹ See: James H. Moorhead .“Between Progress and Apocalypse: A Reassessment of Millennialism in American Religious Thought, 1800-1880.” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Dec., 1984); Also see Balmer, Randall. “Critical Junctures in American Evangelicalism: II. The Transition from Postmillennialism to Premillennialism.” *Ashland Theological Journal*, (2006);

³² Balmer (2006), 53.

³³ Moorhead (1999), 18.

³⁴ Sutton, (2014), 14.

eschatology slowly decomposed during the years following the Civil War.³⁵ Much like the child who has relinquished familiar structures but has not yet replaced them with those of adulthood, this turn of events lands individuals questioning the validity of post-millennial thought in a chaotic and untethered state of liminality.

As evinced by the ebbing away of post-millennialism following the Civil War, meaning is lost when the expected, and accepted, patterns within societal subsystems (in this case religion/ the “commonly received doctrine” of post-millennial thought) no longer relate to present circumstances.³⁶ It is at this point that liminality’s function finally comes into play. While it may indeed amount to a “world of contingency,” where ideas can be carried in new directions, liminality is not an aimless assemblage of concepts and ideas.³⁷ Rather, liminality constitutes “a striving after new forms and structures,” which Turner characterizes as a “fructile chaos.”³⁸ Concisely put, liminality functions as “a gestation process,” for modes “appropriate to post-liminal existence.”³⁹

The ambiguous nature of liminality liberates the human capacity for creativity, and cognition, thereby engendering an environment ripe for innovation.⁴⁰ The evangelicals Sutton refers to in the quote at the beginning of this segment illustrate this

³⁵ Balmer, (2006), 53; Moorhead, James. “The Erosion of Postmillennialism in American Religious Thought, 1865-1925.” *Church History*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (March, 1984), 62.

³⁶ Turner (1986), 33; “Subsystem.” <https://www.coursehero.com/file/p5fo8un/The-sociological-subsystem-of-a-culture-is-the-sum-of-those-expected-and> ; Moorhead March, 1984, 61.

³⁷ Turner (1982), 41; Thomassen, 5.

³⁸ Turner (1986), 42.

³⁹ Turner (1986), 42; Turner 1982, 45.

⁴⁰ Turner (1982), 44.

scenario. In an effort to “make sense of the changing times,” these evangelicals begin to see verses within scripture they had not noticed before, and conclude that they were not, in fact, “preparing the world for a godly millennium” with personal regeneration and moral reform.⁴¹ Rather, emerging from a recombined viewpoint informed by world events, church history and “the work of a few relatively obscure European apocalypticists,” they see themselves as living in the end times.⁴²

New-found meanings that emerge from this freeing of constraints become institutionalized, and eventually legitimated, through consolidation into central cultural domains. Pre-millennial thought becomes institutionalized through prophecy conferences, culminating in the Niagara Creed, and consolidation into a central cultural domain, in this case religion, literally takes the shape of the *Scofield Reference Bible*. As indicated in the diagram above, for (many of) those who have relinquished the stable “cultural condition” of post-millennialism, the pre-millennial movement constitutes the post-liminal new understanding, and as such re-aggregation, thereby establishing what Turner refers to as the “stable state once more.”⁴³

⁴¹ Sutton (2014), 14.

⁴² Sutton (2014), 14.

⁴³ Turner (1966), 94, 95.

As human beings we know our bodies and our minds only through what we can imagine. To grasp our humanity we need to structure these images into metaphors and models.⁴⁴

Robert J. Lifton

Next, I consider the mythologizing process as it pertains to the transition from post-millennial thought to pre-millennialism. I do so by utilizing Robert J. Lifton's concepts on broken connections to symbol systems. Touching upon Robin Fox's work regarding man as a cultural animal, I establish why collective symbol systems matter to mankind. I also consider the repercussions of impaired symbol systems, which is significant given that they are what sets the mythologizing process in motion. I address this scenario in the context of the eschatological shift at the heart of this thesis, and in doing so, align this sequence of events with the pattern Turner established for human experience.

Collective symbolizations matter to mankind because, as Lifton states in no uncertain terms, "WE LIVE ON IMAGES" (original emphasis).⁴⁵ As human beings, we apprehend our bodies and minds through mental images. In order to appreciate our humanity, we structure these images as "metaphors and models."⁴⁶ This notion

⁴⁴ Lifton, Robert J. *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 3.

⁴⁵ Lifton (1979), 3.

⁴⁶ Lifton (1979), 3.

connects with the larger anthropological view of man as “cultural animal.”⁴⁷

Anthropologist Robin Fox explicitly states what Turner suggests in his observation regarding the need to communicate hard-won meaning through the arts, that “culture is part of the biology of man.”⁴⁸ Fox elaborates on this idea, stating that as humankind diverged from the rest of the primates, and transitioned from vegetarianism to systematic hunting, culture itself became a selection pressure, one that favors animals with attributes which serve a “culture-bearing creature.”⁴⁹ She further describes humankind as, “not only the producer of culture, but its product as well,” for selection has “wired” us with propensities and characteristics that give rise to a social and cultural animal.⁵⁰ Consequently, as Clifford Geertz characterizes it, the resources of culture are “ingredient,” rather than “accessory, to human thought,” hence the significance of *collective* symbolizations, in this case myth and the religion it begets.⁵¹ A practical manifestation of the evolutionary development to which Geertz refers is at the heart of Turner’s claim that “meaning arises” when what/how we feel and think about our present point in life, aligns with conclusions settled within cultural modes like the religious, or the political.⁵²

⁴⁷ Lifton, Robert J. *The Protean Self*. (New York: Basic Books, a division of Harper Collins, 1993), 14.

⁴⁸ Lifton, (1979), 7.

⁴⁹ Fox, Robin. *The Imperial Animal*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 19-20.

⁵⁰ Fox, 20.

⁵¹ Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 83 cited in Lifton, Robert J. *The Protean Self*. (New York: Basic Books, a division of Harper Collins, 1993), 14.

⁵² Turner (1986), 33.

Part and parcel of this intrinsic human need for collective symbolization is what Lifton terms a “sense of immortality.”⁵³ This “sense,” is a psychological mechanism that allows us to face the inevitability of death. It is not denial, however, but a corollary of the knowledge of death, an “appropriate symbolization of our biological and historical connectedness.”⁵⁴ The sense of immortality expresses a universal and compelling urge to sustain a perception of self-continuity, and the drive to quest for “symbolic relationship to what has gone before and what will continue” after our finite individual existence.⁵⁵ In short, concerns involving our place in the universe, the very stuff of myth.

The first mode of symbolic immortality Lifton delineates is the biological mode, in which we “live on” in “ties of blood,” or through our “people.”⁵⁶ The sense of immortality may also be expressed in the creative mode (through our work), the natural mode (through the eternalness of nature), and the distinctive mode of experiential transcendence. These modes notwithstanding, the form of symbolic immortality most relevant to this thesis, is the theological mode, which is experienced through religious concepts concerning life after death, as well as the larger principle of a spiritual conquest of death.⁵⁷ When functioning in a state of symbolic immortality, one believes

⁵³ Lifton (1979), 13.

⁵⁴ Lifton (1979), 17.

⁵⁵ Lifton (1979), 17.

⁵⁶ Lifton (1979), 18.

⁵⁷ Lifton (1979), 20.

“or at least has no reason to question,” the significance and everlasting nature of our relation to the “chain of generations.”⁵⁸ We are secure in our connection to higher spiritual principles, to eternal nature, and to work (what gives us purpose).⁵⁹ And, we recognize “experiences of transcendence that directly affirm the intactness of [our] psychological universe,” all of which underscore the significance of collective symbolizations.⁶⁰ This state is clearly characterized by “taken-for-granted certainties,” which in turn, constitutes what Turner identifies as a stable “cultural condition.”⁶¹

One scenario that breaks the connection to symbolic modes of immortality is historical dislocation. Lifton defines historical dislocation as “the breakdown of social and institutional arrangements that ordinarily anchor human lives,” and it is what many evangelicals experience during the period following the Civil War.⁶² As addressed at length in the analysis of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, post-millennialists believe that Christ’s return will occur *after* the millennium, thereby allowing for secular improvement, and ultimately, a Christianized world. This paradigm signifies an understanding of history as gradual, and steady improvement, facilitated by rational principles that human beings could put to use.⁶³ Nevertheless, marked by America’s

⁵⁸ Lifton, Robert J. and Richard Falk. *Indefensible Weapons: The Political and Psychological Case Against Nuclearism*. (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 81.

⁵⁹ Lifton, Robert J. and Richard Falk, 81.

⁶⁰ Lifton, Robert J. and Richard Falk, 81.

⁶¹ Turner (1966), 94; Szakolczai, 158.

⁶² Lifton (1993), 14.

⁶³ Moorhead (Dec. 1984), 526.

Civil War (as touched upon in reference to transformative events), and recent revolutions in Europe, the world persistently refused to conform to post-millennialism's projected sequence of events, and a discernible pattern of improvement fails to materialize. In fact, significant evidence accumulates to the contrary, exemplified by the Chicago that Dwight L. Moody's ministry serves. Industrialization and massive urbanization were taking their toll, with sections of the seemingly "jerry-built" city abandoned to poverty.⁶⁴ In the words of Bernard A. Weisberger, "Chicago had its human refuse, too—its more poorly paid laborers, its transient tramps, its lake sailors on the beach—all those who were churned to the bottom by the wheels of progress, and those who lived by selling these outcasts cheap food and clothes, bad living quarters, whiskey and diversion."⁶⁵

While historical dislocation can be brutal, as in war (in this case the Civil War) and other forms of cruelty human beings inflict upon each other (as in churning a portion of society under the wheels of progress), generally speaking, it is a product of historical change. When this change occurs too quickly, and is "too extreme to be readily absorbed" (as occurred with industrialization and rapid urbanization), though symbol systems have not disappeared, they become impaired.⁶⁶ Due to post-millennialism's failure to produce a discernible pattern of improvement, this was, for a

⁶⁴ Weisberger, Bernard A. *They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact Upon Religion in America*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958), 182.

⁶⁵ Weisberger, 182.

⁶⁶ Lifton (1993), 14.

number of evangelicals, precisely the scenario. As noted in reference to Turner's pattern for human experience, post-millennial thought no longer rang true, the symbol system anchoring antebellum post-millennialists' lives had broken down, and with it, their symbolic sense of immortality.

Consistent with the broken connection to symbolic immortality it produces, historical dislocation engenders a "feeling of separation," and therefore, "disintegration, and stasis."⁶⁷ Given that human beings are cultural animals, when this sense of separation occurs, psychological viability is under duress. That is, until a new combination of symbols can "reanimate our perceived place in the great chain of being,"⁶⁸ Significantly, reanimating our perceived place in the great chain of being is what drives the mythologizing process.

This symbolic re-birth (following a requisite symbolic death), is consistent with rites of passage, and as such, Turner's pattern of human experience. And the psychological state produced by historic dislocation is consistent with that of liminality. While those in a liminal state are indeed "betwixt-and-between," more importantly, like those suffering from historical dislocation, they experience separation from the larger society. "Neither-here-nor-there," their existence is unmoored, one of "limbo" and "statuslessness."⁶⁹ But, as noted in the delineation of Turner's pattern for experience,

⁶⁷Lifton (1993,) 15.

⁶⁸Lifton (1993), 15.

⁶⁹Turner (1977), 37.

liminality is also “a striving after new forms and structures,” ones capable, of “reanimating our perceived place in the great chain of being.”⁷⁰

While Lifton observes a number of ways human beings react in order to escape the anxiety, indeterminacy, and restlessness, historical dislocation/ liminality breeds, the response relevant to this thesis is totalism.⁷¹ For, the recombined viewpoint radical evangelicals developed while in a liminal state (informed by world events, church history and “the work of a few relatively obscure European apocalypticists”), lead them to embrace dispensational pre-millennialism, an eschatology exhibiting totalistic** characteristics.⁷² As Lifton maintains, totalism is a reaction to being “buffeted about by unmanageable historical forces and social uncertainties,” precisely the environment in post-Civil War America.⁷³ Ultimately, totalistic forms are a response to the “fear of chaos,” an attempt to establish, in Turner’s parlance, a stable (post-liminal) condition.⁷⁴ In an effort to eliminate ambiguity and uncertainty, totalistic systems claim an “exclusive possession of truth.”⁷⁵ Also with an eye toward quelling confusion and uneasiness, such forms seek “once-and-for-all resolutions” to questions surrounding

⁷⁰ Turner (1986,) 42; Lifton 1993, 15.

⁷¹ See Robert J. Lifton, *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation*. Also see sections on psychic numbing in both *The Protean Self* and *The Broken Connection*.

⁷² Lifton (1979), 296. ** Regarding my placement of dispensational pre-millennialism on Lifton’s totalism paradigm, it is important to note his statement that “no milieu ever achieves complete totalism, and many relatively moderate environments show some signs of it.” The pre-millennial thought from which Armageddon theology emerges constitutes one such moderate environment.

⁷³ Lifton (1993), 1.

⁷⁴ Lifton (1993), 11.

⁷⁵ Lifton, (1979), 298.

death and human continuity.⁷⁶ Totalistic forms also proclaim a single “authentic avenue of immortality,” with an impulse toward “the dispensing of existence,” (metaphorically, in the case of dispensational pre-millennialism).⁷⁷

Regardless of which reaction to historical dislocation/ liminality one considers, the essential human need for symbolic immortality Lifton delineates, the significance of collective symbolizations outlined by Fox, and the repercussions of impaired symbol systems explored above, demonstrate *why* the secular and religious realms are not essentially fixed categories. Especially when aligned with the anthropological view Turner’s concepts provide, the (arguably) universal pattern of human experience. I continue by considering the ways the recombined ideas and concepts examined in this segment become institutionalized, and incorporated into already consolidated cultural domains, culminating in dispensational pre-millennialism as a “stable state once more.”⁷⁸ This sequence of events, of course, runs parallel to the larger question of *how* the “secular” (world events/ history) shapes “the religious,” as embodied in a particular thread of American Protestantism.

⁷⁶ Lifton, (1979), 299, 298.

⁷⁷ Lifton, (1979), 298.

⁷⁸ Turner (1982), 415; Turner (1966,) 95.

Some people say, "I believe Christ will come on the other side of the millennium." Where do you get it? I can't find it. The Word of God nowhere tells me to watch and wait for the coming of the millennium, but for the coming of the Lord.⁷⁹

Dwight L. Moody

Consistent with totalistic systems, pre-millennialists claim an exclusive possession of truth, manifest in Blackstone's assertion that "about the year seventeen hundred a new error crept into the Church, to-wit, Post-millennialism."⁸⁰ Ironstone underscored this remark in bold marker, metaphorically speaking, with the allegation that liberal theologians and human driven utopias are "the devil's cunning scheme for bringing in a mock millennium without Christ."⁸¹ On a more subtle note, pre-millennialists profess a strong commitment to biblical authority, practicing a literal and direct reading of scripture, over and against advocates of higher criticism. The extended title of Moody's sermon *Heaven*, signifies everything that needs to be said about pre-millennialism's "once-and-for-all resolutions" to questions of human continuity. The complete title of Moody's sermon is: "*Heaven. where it is, its inhabitants, and how to get there. The certainty of God's promise of a life beyond the grave, and the rewards that are in store*

⁷⁹ Moody, Dwight. "Our Lord's Return." *The New Sermons of Dwight Lyman Moody*. (New York: Henry S. Goodspeed, 1880), 534.

⁸⁰ Blackstone, William E. *Jesus is Coming*. (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 41.

⁸¹ Ironside, Harry A. *Lectures on the Revelation* (Neptune, N. J. Loizeaux Bros., 1919), [no numbers-Chapter 6].

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/NTStudies/LecturesonRevelationsHAIronside1920/tabid/325/Default.aspx> (Accessed: March 6, 2017).

for faithful service.”⁸² The Rapture Doctrine embodies totalism’s dispensing of existence. And the *Pre-Millennian Creed* itself confirms the movement’s single “authentic avenue of immortality,” with the attestation, “I believe the grand purpose of this present dispensation is to gather out of the world an elect people, and not to convert all mankind.”⁸³

With Moody and his associates, as Martin E. Marty observes, evangelism began to “take turns” toward pre-millennialism.⁸⁴ The aforementioned disillusionment with post-millennial thought, and subsequent attraction to pre-millennialism, are apparent in the preaching of early premillennial convert, and prime mover “Mr. Evangelical,” D. L. Moody.⁸⁵

Some people say, “I believe Christ will come on the other side of the millennium.” Where do you get it? I can’t find it. The Word of God nowhere tells me to watch and wait for the coming of the millennium, but for the coming of the Lord. I don’t find any place where God says the world is to grow better and better, and that Christ is to have a spiritual reign on earth of a thousand years... I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat, and said to me, “Moody, save all you can.” God will come in judgment and burn up this world, but the children of God don’t belong to this world; they are in it, but not of it, like a ship in the water. This world is getting darker and darker; its ruin is coming nearer and nearer.⁸⁶

⁸² Moody, D. L. *Heaven. where it is, its inhabitants, and how to get there. The certainty of God’s promise of a life beyond the grave, and the rewards that are in store for faithful service.* (Chicago: The Bible Institute, 1887).

⁸³ West, Nathaniel. *Second Coming of Christ. Premillennial Essays of the Prophetic Conference, held in the Church of the Holy Trinity, New York City.* (Chicago: F. H. Revell, 1879), 6.

⁸⁴ Marty, Martin E. *Modern American Religion: The Irony of It All.* Volume 1. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 210.

⁸⁵ Weber, Timothy. *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875-1982.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 32.

⁸⁶ Moody 1880, 534-535.

One of Moody's personality traits, according to his son William, was the evangelist's appreciation for other speakers. Moody was always on the look-out for ministers of note passing through Chicago, extending invitations to preach at his church, (once their orthodoxy is assured, of course). What William described as this "happy faculty" kept Moody in touch with "leading Christian workers," clerical or lay, local, or those from abroad.⁸⁷ Consequently, Moody soon learned of English methods he wished to explore, and in the spring of 1867, he set out for a tour of England.

Though his initial trip resulted in minimal public achievement, Moody came into contact with individuals and evangelical groups that exerted lasting influence, specifically the Plymouth Brethren. Moody's initial interest in meeting Brethren member George Mueller, revolved around Mueller's work setting up orphan schools in Bristol. However, Moody saw parallels between his religious attitudes and those of the lay, pietist sect led by the so-called "father of dispensationalism," John Nelson Darby.⁸⁸ The Plymouth Brethren supported lay ministry, and preach absolute scriptural inerrancy, as well as conversion through a "born again" experience. The Brethren also adhered to premillennialist thought, advocating the imminent bodily return of Christ, who will bring destruction and God's final judgment to the world.⁸⁹ As evinced by the sermon referenced above, these concepts become apparent in Moody's mature religious

⁸⁷ Moody, William R. *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), 131.

⁸⁸ "Christian History: John Nelson Darby" *Christianity Today*. (Accessed September 25, 2017).

⁸⁹ Findlay, James F. *Dwight L. Moody: American evangelist, 1837-1899*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 125-126.

view. Nevertheless, while clearly influenced by the Plymouth Brethren on a number of points, Moody, as James Findlay describes it, “never swallowed Brethrenism whole.”⁹⁰ Moody’s Arminian perspective on freedom of the will clashed with Darby’s stringent Calvinistic belief in predestination and doctrine of election. While Moody accepted the contours of premillennialism, he found Darby’s doctrinal severity problematic and focused primarily on more pietistic and less ideological concerns.⁹¹ Darby was both puzzled and frustrated by Moody’s acceptance of prophetic truths concerning God’s sovereignty in history, while simultaneously allowing room for the decidedly non-Calvinist view that human ability plays a role in personal salvation. However, over the course of several American tours between 1859 and 1877, Darby discovered that “old school Presbyterians,” as well as “Calvinistically committed” Baptists, exhibited a willingness to accept his views, and mode of prophetic interpretation of the Bible.⁹²

John Nelson Darby developed a form of futurist pre-millennialism known as “dispensationalism,” which teaches that God has divided human history into a sequence of chronological epochs, with differing means of salvation for each dispensation.⁹³ Or, as Balmer puts it, “God had struck a particular deal, or covenant,

⁹⁰ Findlay, 127.

⁹¹ Marsden, George. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 46.

⁹² Boyer (1992), 89-90; Findlay 127; Rennie, Ian S. “Nineteenth-Century Roots of Contemporary Prophetic Interpretation.” *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy*. Edited by Carl Edward Armerding and W. Ward Gasque. (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 58; Marsden, 46.

⁹³ Weber (1987), 17. For a more detailed delineation of Darby’s dispensationalism, see Weber pp. 17-23.

with Adam, for instance, and another with Noah and Abraham and with the people of Israel. ⁹⁴ C. I. Scofield, Darby's American follower who produced a *Reference Bible* containing his views, contended that "each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment—marking his utter failure in every dispensation."⁹⁵ According to Darby's systematized eschatology, humankind is currently in "The Church Age." This era is frequently referred to as "the Great Parenthesis," for it is situated between the course of prophesied events that culminates in Christ's crucifixion and the Rapture, which sets in motion the final sequence of dismaying events involving those who are left behind. This period begins with the so-called Tribulation (Matthew 24:21), the seven-year rule of Antichrist and the Apostate Church, of which the second half will be nothing less than "sheer hell," as Paul Boyer describes it.⁹⁶ (According to Boyer, Darby rejected Augustine's historicist approach, as well as the day = year method of earlier interpreters. Darby maintained that the 1,260 days of the Beast's rule prophesied in Daniel means precisely that: a future period of 1,260 days, or three and one-half years.) The Tribulation will end with the *Battle of Armageddon*, when Christ, the saints, and the heavenly host return to earth to vanquish Antichrist and his legion. Next comes the *Millennium*, Christ's thousand-year reign on earth, followed by Satan's doomed insurrection, resurrection of the dead, and finally,

⁹⁴ Balmer (2006), 54.

⁹⁵ Scofield, C. I. *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. (Place not identified: Pantianos Classics, 2017), 23.

⁹⁶ Boyer (1992), 88.

history's concluding event, the Last Judgment.⁹⁷

In many respects, Darby's dispensationalism contained nothing new. His focus on future realization of prophecy (as opposed to the historicist perspective, whereby prophetic scripture is seen as already having been fulfilled) echoed the eschatology of the early Christians. As noted above, premillennialism has an ancient lineage, and according to Boyer, rudimentary forms of "dispensationalism" are evident as early as Joachim of Fiore. Even the Rapture doctrine can be found in the works of earlier interpreters, including Increase Mather. What distinguishes Darby, however, is that he weaves these disparate strands into a "tight and cohesive" system, every point buttressed by copious biblical texts, grounded in "strict literalism."⁹⁸

Darby's evangelistic tours did, indeed, spur interest in pre-millennialism. Nevertheless, given that pre-millennialism is not a church or denomination but an ideology, prophecy conferences, as Matthew Avery Sutton contends, provided the best opportunity for believers in the disparate versions developing during this period, to come together and "hammer out their ideas."⁹⁹ In 1876, one such conference was initiated by a group of "emerging luminaries of the pre-millennial movement," including Nathaniel West, James H. Brookes, William J. Erdman, Henry M. Parsons and

⁹⁷ Boyer (1992), 87-88.

⁹⁸ Boyer (1992), 88; Weber (1987), 17.

⁹⁹ Sutton (2014), 26, 22.

A. J. Gordon.¹⁰⁰ Over the years this symposium came to be known as the annual Niagara Bible Conferences for prophetic study. By 1878, the Niagara meetings had engendered enough enthusiasm that the same group of organizers coordinated a larger, and more public forum in New York. Alternately designated “The First American Bible and Prophetic Conference,” or “The First International Prophecy Conference,” 122 men sign the call for the conference.¹⁰¹ Comprised of Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalist, and Methodists, the diversity of major US denominations present at this convention indicates the increasing influence of premillennialist ideas.¹⁰²

Yearly Reports of the Believers’ Meeting for Bible Study were published, containing transcripts of lectures, and doctrinal statements, such as the following— Article XIV of the 1878 Niagara Creed:

We believe that the world will not be converted during the present dispensation, but is fast ripening for judgment, while there will be a fearful apostasy in the professing Christian body; and hence that the Lord Jesus will come in person to introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; and that this personal and premillennial advent is the blessed hope set before us in the Gospel for which we should be constantly looking.¹⁰³

Post-symposium reports serve to codify and augment the work accomplished during

¹⁰⁰ Marsden, 46; Sutton, (2014), 22.

¹⁰¹ Pietsch, B. M. *Dispensational Modernism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 47.

¹⁰² Marsden, 46; Sutton (2014), 22.

¹⁰³ Brookes, James. “The 1878 Niagara Creed.” *The Truth* 4 (1878), 452-458, cited in Unger, Walter. “Earnestly Contending for the Faith: The Role of the Niagara Bible Conference in the Emergence of American Fundamentalism, 1875-1900.” Dissertation: Doctor of Philosophy. Simon Fraser University, (1981), 320.

these prophecy conferences. A variety of publications promoting pre-millennialism and outlining its relevance to the broader world were produced by laypeople, as well as scholarly theologians. Many assembled simple broadsheets that kept the faithful abreast of the growing premillennial movement. Other publications consisted of more professional, higher-circulation periodicals, such as James H. Brookes' *The Truth*, and A. J. Gordon's *The Watchword*.¹⁰⁴

The consensus among scholars as to the most significant means of propagating premillennialism, however, is the 1909 *Scofield Reference Bible*, a comprehensive new reference work, which introduced millions to the premillennial second coming in a subtle, some might say insidious, fashion.¹⁰⁵ Cyrus Scofield's motivation lies in his conviction that, "the Bible is a self-interpreting book," unlike those inspired by higher criticism.¹⁰⁶ As B. M. Pietsch contends, "the particular genius of the Scofield Reference Bible" stems from its capacity to navigate the tensions between interpretive expertise, and belief in popular perspicuity.¹⁰⁷ Scofield included notes at the bottom of nearly every page, yet these annotations were not characterized as theological commentary (which would strip the reader of interpretive power), but marketed as "methodological

¹⁰⁴ Sutton (2014), 26; Gibson, Scott M. A. *J. Gordon: American Premillennialist*. (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 2001), 164.

¹⁰⁵ Sutton (2014), 26.

¹⁰⁶ Gaebelein, Arno C. *The History of the Scofield Reference Bible* (Edinburgh: Crossreach Publications, 2017), 41.

¹⁰⁷ Pietsch, B. M. "Reference Bibles and Interpretive Authority." *The Bible in American Life*. Ed. Philip Goff, Arthur Farnsley, Peter Thuesen. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 125.

guidance.”¹⁰⁸ From time to time, Scofield injected notations into the text itself, “blurring the lines” between the scripture and his interpretation of the passages in question.¹⁰⁹ “The thought,” Arno Gaebelein writes, “is to prepare an edition of God’s Holy Word so clearly and simply divided and arranged that any believer of ordinary intelligence may read the Bible understandingly.”¹¹⁰ And the understanding readers are guided toward is a dispensational, premillennial interpretation—“whether they realize it or not.”¹¹¹ Largely viewed by scholars as the most influential publication in the historiography of premillennialism, the *Scofield Reference Bible* has come to be seen as a symbol of premillennial theology.¹¹² As Sutton succinctly phrases it, “nothing published since has matched its impact on the movement.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Pietsch (2016), 125.

¹⁰⁹ Sutton (2014), 28.

¹¹⁰ Gaebelein (2017), 41.

¹¹¹ Sutton (2014), 28.

¹¹² Marsden, 119; Sandeen, Ernest. *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British & American Millenarianism, 1800-1930*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 222; Pietsch 2016, 125.

¹¹³ Sutton (2014), 27.

*Can man know the future? We answer without hesitation, Yes. We can know the future through the Bible, the Word of God, but never apart from it.*¹¹⁴

Arno Gaebelein

Throughout Western history, Christians of varying traditions have seen hints of the coming apocalypse within dramatic social changes. Predictions of impending doom have often been intertwined with the Christian faith. The Crusades, the Reformation, and the French Revolution, for example, inspire millennial movements, though they ultimately faded into obscurity. In the United States, factions such as the Shakers, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in addition to more mainstream Protestant groups, have been known to herald Christ's coming kingdom.¹¹⁵ William Miller was one of the most ardent and precise proclaimers, whose failed predictions for Christ's return have come to be known as the Great Disappointment.¹¹⁶ The difference between these groups and the Millerites (aside from their pledge not to set a specific date for Christ's return) is the way geopolitical changes throughout the late nineteenth, and into the twentieth century, ostensibly corroborated adherents' predictions. It would seem that their pre-millennial eschatology had been right all along. Especially

¹¹⁴ Gaebelein, Arno. *World Prospects: How is it All Going to End?* (New York: Publication Office, "Our Hope," 1934), 18.

¹¹⁵ Sutton (2016a), 109.

¹¹⁶ Gaustad, Edwin and Leigh Schmidt. *The Religious History of America: The Heart of the American Story from Colonial Times to Today.* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 154.

following World War I, global events appeared to coincide with biblical prophecy as never before, supporting the methodology of Christians who utilize the Bible as an instrument for understanding the future.¹¹⁷

The practice of reading the Bible as a veritable guidebook to an apocalyptic future, however, was initially popularized by William Blackstone. Designed to illustrate just how close the world is to Armageddon, as Sutton suggests, the publication of Blackstone's *Jesus Is Coming* signaled the beginning of a radical new religious movement.¹¹⁸ Blackstone's "gloomy" view of the future, coupled with a call for action to "save some" of this "generation, which is nigh unto cursing and whose end is to be burned," appealed to a small but consequential group of Americans.¹¹⁹ Whether compelled by simple restlessness, onerous personal circumstances, or innately cynical temperament, a handful of Christians from all areas of the nation, levels of education, and walks of life, concluded they are living in a shallow and meaningless age. Seeking solutions to their problems, and ultimately those plaguing the world, they grasped "newspapers in one hand, and the prophetic books of the Bible in the other."¹²⁰ Adherents of futurist pre-millennial thought found resolution in this reworking of an ancient form of Christian millennialism. Believers saw the Bible as providing unparalleled insight into the past, present, and most importantly, the future, but only

¹¹⁷ Sutton (2016a), 109; Weber (1987), 23, 87.

¹¹⁸ Sutton (2014), 9-10.

¹¹⁹ Sutton (2014), 9; Blackstone (1908), 142;

¹²⁰ Sutton (2016a), 110; Sutton (2014), 9.

for those who know how to read it. Not only does such a reading make the Bible a malleable tool that allows adherents to find meaning in the turbulent issues occurring in the world, this understanding fostered a potent sense of purpose and personal identity, as well as a triumphant vision of the future.¹²¹

The pre-millennial view Blackstone disseminated is in line with that of John Nelson Darby, as affirmed by the American adherents of the Niagara and International Prophecy conferences mentioned above, and systematized by C. I. Scofield.¹²²

Blackstone advocated a literal fulfillment of prophecy, rather than a “spiritual” interpretation, such as one’s acceptance of Christ, and subsequent “witness of the spirit,” inherent in the born-again experience.¹²³ Neither does Christ’s Second Coming refer to His metaphorical reign over the Church. Blackstone points out, in rhetorical fashion, that the purpose of language is “to convey definite ideas.”¹²⁴ “Surely the Holy Spirit,” Blackstone continued, “could have chosen words to convey His thoughts correctly.”¹²⁵ Given that Christ came and literally fulfilled the prophecies of a suffering messiah at His first coming, Blackstone further states “will He not as surely come and likewise fulfill the prophecies” regarding His second coming, “as a glorified messiah

¹²¹ Sutton, (2014), 9-10; Sutton (2016a,) 107-108.

¹²² Marsden, 51.

¹²³ Blackstone (1908), 20.

¹²⁴ Blackstone (1908), 22.

¹²⁵ Blackstone (1908), 23.

reigning in victory and majesty.”¹²⁶

Anticipating readers’ potential disapproval for “the study of prophecy,” Blackstone distinguished a “literal fulfillment” of prophecy from the practice of setting dates or “forecasting future events.”¹²⁷ Though the Master “has withheld ‘the day and the hour’ when He will come,” Blackstone maintained, “He has commanded us to WATCH,” citing Jesus’s rebuke of the Pharisees because they failed to “discern the signs of the times.”¹²⁸ Blackstone’s advocacy of prophecy is founded on Peter, who “exhorts us to GIVE HEED to the sure word of prophecy (Blackstone’s emphasis),” buttressing his assertion with 2 Tim. 3:16, which states, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”¹²⁹ Blackstone guided those who felt they were living in a shallow and meaningless age toward a literal interpretation of prophecy with the categorical statement that “their spiritual horizon would stand out in clearer outline than before.”¹³⁰ Compelling them to read the Bible for the literal fulfillment of prophecy, Blackstone asserted, “they would find much light thrown on their present path,” stating that God “points to the prophecies fulfilled as an assurance of the

¹²⁶ Blackstone (1908), 23.

¹²⁷ Blackstone (1908), 177, 23, 177.

¹²⁸ Rev. 1: 3, Rev. 22:7, Luke 11:28 referenced in Blackstone (1908), 177.

¹²⁹ 2 Peter 1:19 referenced in Blackstone (1908), 177.

¹³⁰ Blackstone (1908,) 177.

accomplishment of the new things declared by Him.”¹³¹

In his 1904 work, *The Millennium: A Discussion of the Question, “Do the Scriptures teach that there is to be a Millennium?”* Blackstone defined the Bible as “a *political* book rather than anything else.”¹³² He explicitly stated “that the promises and the warnings and the prophecies of the Old Testament, and in a large measure also of the New, are *political*,” identifying “Christ Himself [as] a *political* Character.”¹³³ Blackstone asserted that “religion is only the highest form of politics,” which he defined as “the science of Government.”¹³⁴ Finally, Blackstone characterized God as “the greatest of all Political or Governing Beings... whether in Heaven or Earth,” further stating “the fact that men forget, ignore, or fail to recognize this, does not alter the great *fact*.”¹³⁵

Interpreting scripture through a political filter has implications beyond those of the Balfour Declaration, and the attestation within the Niagara Creed linking the millennial age with Israel’s return “to their own land.” Worrying about the “precious state” of democracy, that “communism, socialism and nihilism are lifting their godless, headless forms,” is considerably more specific than the post-millennial concern for America’s abstract role as ascendant nation.¹³⁶ The antichrist becomes a politician to be

¹³¹ Blackstone (1908), 177, 178.

¹³² Blackstone, W. E. *The Millennium: A Discussion of the Question, “Do the Scriptures teach that there is to be a Millennium?”* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904), 28.

¹³³ Blackstone (1904), 28.

¹³⁴ Blackstone (1904), 28.

¹³⁵ Blackstone (1904), 28.

¹³⁶ Sutton (2016a), 109; Blackstone 1908, 150.

anticipated, rather than a great conceptual evil to be vanquished, like “apostasy, heresy and paganism” was for Jonathan Edwards, or the “papacy and canon law,” according to Lyman Beecher, or the institution of slavery, a la Harriet Beecher Stowe.¹³⁷ The proposed League of Nations is no longer global co-operation, moving toward a unified, and Christianized, world. And post-World War I realignment of nations anticipates a totalitarian leader, the “iron” referenced in Daniel 2:40-43, supported by the “clay” of democracy.¹³⁸ As Sutton notes, anticipating the enemies of the Antichrist (from the south, the north and the east) foretold in Revelation motivates premillennialists to become devoted students of geopolitical developments.¹³⁹

World War I marked a major turning point for the growing premillennial movement, engendering the best reception of premillennial theology since the initial emergence of dispensational premillennialism. The revolutionary, and therefore portentous, nature of what has come to be known as the first modern war provided premillennialists with an unprecedented opportunity to propagate their views on a much larger scale than ever before.¹⁴⁰ While the events of World War I may not evoke interpretive change, this turn of events bolsters the argument that the “religious” and the “secular” are not fixed categories, for it is secular events that not only lend this minority view credence, but facilitate increased public response, allowing it to gain

¹³⁷ Westra 148-9.

¹³⁸ Weber (1987), 115.

¹³⁹ Sutton (2016a), 110.

¹⁴⁰ Weber (1987), 115.

traction.

For decades, diverging sharply from what is typically considered the prevailing strand of social and religious thought, Social Gospel liberals and political progressives, these radical evangelicals have believed that humankind was not improving. As stated above, according to premillennialists, the future is not bright. They realize that, contrary to its epithet, the recent World War is not “the war to end all wars,” but only the beginning of grief, chaos, and ongoing international turmoil.¹⁴¹ Every attempt at lasting peace will fail, regardless of “all efforts of pacifist diplomats.”¹⁴² Europe will inevitably realign itself into the “restored Roman Empire” predicted in Daniel, form a ten-nation confederacy, and come to be held in thrall by the last dictator.¹⁴³

All these events will occur, “not because of any prophetic insight” given to premillennialists.¹⁴⁴ They will ensue because the nations of the earth “have compelled history to run into ‘the mould of prophecy,’ that ‘the last days’ might be exactly as God said they would be.”¹⁴⁵ By having a script that takes the shape of “a very old and very much neglected book called the Bible,” premillennialists were able to explain even the

¹⁴¹ “The war to end all wars.” BBC News. 10 November 1998.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1998/10/98/world_war_i/198172.stm (Accessed: October 13, 2017).

¹⁴² Boyer (1992), 93; Riley, William Bell. “The Last Days; the Last War and the Last King.” (161-176) *Christ and Glory: Addresses delivered at the New York Prophetic Conference Carnegie Hall, November 25-28, 1918*. Edited by Arno C. Gaebelein. (New York: Our Hope, 1919), 164.

¹⁴³ Sutton (2014), 63.

¹⁴⁴ Dean, I.R. *The Coming Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Approved Book Store, 1928), 216.

¹⁴⁵ Riley, 163.

most turbulent events of their time.¹⁴⁶ The outbreak of war and ensuing global cataclysm, not only demonstrated they have interpreted biblical prophecy accurately, but that premillennialism constitutes a realistic alternative to the “rosy religion” of Social Gospel idealists.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Dean, 127.

¹⁴⁷ Sutton (2014), 48.

Prophecies are made to fail in detail but succeed in purpose.¹⁴⁸

David Spangler

Having considered the institutionalization, and legitimization (as defined by Turner) of dispensational pre-millennialism, I proceed by examining the development of the form frequently referred to as “Armageddon theology.” In keeping with its pre-millennial foundation, so-called “Armageddon theology” specifies that only “after our Lord Jesus Christ comes again, the earth will be renewed,” underscoring the notion that the Second Coming will be a “literal, personal, [and]bodily.”¹⁴⁹ Consistent with the premillennialism “hammered out” in prophecy conferences, “Armageddon theology” also stipulates that “we can know the future through the Bible.”¹⁵⁰ The fundamental distinction between earlier dispensational premillennialism and “Armageddon theology,” lies in the incorporation of the atomic bomb into this Cold War eschatology. While Blackstone’s *Jesus is Coming* popularized the notion of reading the Bible as a guidebook to an apocalyptic future, Hal Lindsey’s *The Late, Great Planet Earth* turns the Bible into a veritable “manual of atomic-age combat.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Cited in Flinn, Frank K. “Millennial Hermeneutics: 2000 Minus 20.” *The Coming Kingdom: Essays in American Millennialism and Eschatology*. Edited by M. Darrol Bryant, and Donald W. Dayton. (Barrytown, New York: International Religious Foundation, 1983), 1.

¹⁴⁹ West, 7.

¹⁵⁰ Gaebelien (1934), 18.

¹⁵¹ Sutton, Matthew Avery. “Apocalypticism in U.S. History.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). (Accessed: September 2, 2017); Boyer (1992), 127.

I approach the development of “Armageddon theology” both in terms of its capacity to engender a wave of religious revival, as well as how, and more significantly, why, the advent of the atomic bomb shaped pre-millennial thought so as to arrive at “Armageddon theology.” Wilbur M. Smith, author of *The Atomic Bomb and The Word of God*, rightly maintains:

Probably no one single day in all history, since the death and resurrection of our Lord, has witnessed any one event which has had and will continue to have such an enormous, transforming influence over the thinking of mankind, as the announcement on August 6th of what one humanly-created missile dropped from the air had been able to accomplish in a crowded city of the Far East.¹⁵²

The potential for destruction this turn of events portends makes the Civil War look like child’s play, as the saying goes. Why, then, was dispensational pre-millennialism not effectively “nullified,” why did it not “ebb” away like post-millennialism in the wake of the Civil War? As devastating as Hiroshima and Nagasaki were, this world-changing event provided radical evangelicals with a significant piece of the “prophetic puzzle.”¹⁵³ Unlike events that transpired throughout the late nineteenth-century, dropping the atomic bomb, in effect, furnished answers to eschatological questions, rather than negating fundamental concepts, and cancelling taken-for-granted-certainties. This scenario does not conform to the same tripartite pattern as the shift from post-millennialism to pre-millennial thought, which is why I refer to the progression of this

¹⁵² Smith, Wilbur M. *The Atomic Bomb and The Word of God*. (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1945), 6.

¹⁵³ Sutton (2016a), 114.

segment as development, rather than transition.

Though they still do not know *when* the world is going to end, as Sutton points out, radical evangelicals are now certain of *how* it will end. With the advent of the atomic bomb, the meaning of 2 Peter 3:10 comes clear:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.¹⁵⁴

For premillennialists, reading with the expectation of literal fulfillment of prophecy, the text clearly describes a nuclear blast. Furthermore, now that humankind has acquired the capacity to obliterate earth, God will surely intervene soon. Ernest Fremont Tittle brings this sentiment home, in a 1946 lecture on the changes in consciousness wrought by the atomic bomb. While Tittle acknowledged pre-millennialism's ancient Christian lineage, he notes, "What is new in the present situation is not the possibility of a last generation but the possibility... that *ours* may be the last generation! (original emphasis)."¹⁵⁵ As long as the United States continued to be the only nation with nuclear capacity, most see minimal risk of humanity destroying itself. Yet, should Russia, or any other rival nation, acquire nuclear power, the "train to Armageddon," as Sutton writes,

¹⁵⁴ Sutton (2014), 296.

¹⁵⁵ Tittle, Ernest Fremont. "Reconciliation or Atomic Destruction?" *Christian Century*. (May 1, 1946), 556. Cited in Boyer, Paul. *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 237. <https://quod-lib-umich-edu.libproxy.wustl.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb01617.0001.001> (Accessed: March 10, 2017).

would accelerate.”¹⁵⁶

A mere four years later, President Truman announced to the nation, “We have evidence that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the U.S.S.R.”¹⁵⁷ It is at this point, as Lisa Vox observes, that dispensational premillennialism began “making inroads” among evangelicals more broadly.¹⁵⁸ Evincing the capacity of the advent of the atomic bomb to engender religious revival, two days after Truman’s announcement, Billy Graham inserted the ominous news into his sermons:

How desperately we need revival! Think, for a moment, of some of the dreadful things happening throughout the western world. On Friday morning the entire world was shocked (Sept. 23, 1949)... Our President... announced to the startled world that Russia has now exploded an atomic bomb. An arms race, unprecedented in the history of the world, is driving us madly toward destruction! And I sincerely believe that it is the providence of God that He has chosen this hour for a campaign—giving this city one more chance to repent of sin and turn to a believing knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁹

Graham, as Paul Boyer notes, was immanently successful at transcribing the revived Protestant apocalyptic vision from the written pages of theological texts into the

¹⁵⁶ Sutton (2014), 298.

¹⁵⁷ Truman, Harry S. “Statement by the President on Announcing the First Atomic Explosion in the U.S.S.R.” *Harry S. Truman, Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President: January 1 to December 31, 1949*. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), 485.

¹⁵⁸ Vox, Lisa Roy. “The Death Wish of Humanity: Religious and Scientific Apocalypticism in the United States, 1859-2001.” Dissertation: Doctor of Philosophy. (History Department: Emory University, 2010), 23.

¹⁵⁹ Graham, Billy. *Revival in our Time: The Story of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Campaigns*. Including six of his sermons. (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, 1950), 71. <http://www.ccel.us/revival.toc.html> (Accessed: August 16, 2017).

“popular mind.”¹⁶⁰ For centuries, evangelists have evoked frightful images of hellfire and sudden death to compel their listeners to repent, and Graham now had “the most potent scare tactic of all: atomic war,” available to him.¹⁶¹ Graham had clearly reached the same conclusion, given his assertion, “... if ever a generation had a right to be moved by fear and get right with God, it’s our generation.”¹⁶² “Now for the first time in the history of the world,” warned Graham, “we have the weapon with which to destroy ourselves—the atomic bomb. I am persuaded that time is desperately short!”¹⁶³ Graham bolstered his admonishments with accounts of private conversations with those who wield power:

Three months ago, in the House of Parliament, a [British statesman told me that] the British government feels we have only five or ten years and our civilization will be ended. That was before he heard that Russia has the atomic bomb.¹⁶⁴

Routinely warning that Christ will soon return to separate the sheep from the goats, Graham peppered his sermons with what Boyer characterizes as “concrete, if fanciful, particulars” designed to literally bring his message home:

Do you know the area that is marked out for the enemy’s first atomic bomb? New York! Secondly, Chicago; and thirdly, the city of Los Angeles! We don’t

¹⁶⁰ Boyer, Paul. *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 239.

¹⁶¹ Boyer (1985), 239.

¹⁶² Cuomo, Joe. *President Ronald Reagan and the prophecy of Armageddon*. (New York: WBAI radio, 1984), Track 2. 1:18-128.

¹⁶³ Graham (1950), 73.

¹⁶⁴ Graham (1950), 73.

know how soon, but we do know this, that right now the grace of God can still save a poor lost sinner. We know that the gates of heaven are still open to those who will repent and believe that Jesus is God's Son and our Saviour.¹⁶⁵

Referring to the salvation of the nation as a whole, Graham asserted, "The only hope for America at this hour is for individuals, such as you and me, to turn from our sins, to turn from our lusts, our wickedness and our iniquities, and by faith receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."¹⁶⁶ But time is of the essence, Graham admonished, "what we do, we must do quickly."¹⁶⁷

Though (like everyone else), evangelicals fear Russia's growing power, as exemplified by Graham's sermons, some relished the fact that apocalyptic expectations had become part of the mainstream discussion, a sentiment Graham also makes clear:

A well-known scientist said a few days ago that the end of the world is now in sight... This was significant, it meant that a doctrine, which fifty years ago was written off as irrelevant, inconsistent and impossible, had come to be the great hope of the church of the middle of the twentieth century.¹⁶⁸

Graham underscored his assertion by stating in one of his many radio messages, "the church has been most effective in the world when she has lived in momentary expectancy of the return of Christ."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Graham (1950,) 75.

¹⁶⁶ Graham, Billy. *Spiritual Inventory: Billy Graham's Message of Faith in Tough Times*. Detroit, MI, 1953. (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1953). <https://billygraham.org/audio/spiritual-inventory/> (Accessed: August 17, 2017).

¹⁶⁷ Graham, (1953).

¹⁶⁸ Graham, Billy. *Christ is Coming*. Radio message. (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1955.) <https://billygraham.org/audio/christ-is-coming/>. (Accessed: August 17, 2017).

¹⁶⁹ Sutton (2014), 329.

Next, I address why, the advent of the atomic bomb played a role in shaping pre-millennial thought, as well as how “Armageddon Theology” developed. Doing so also speaks to my underlying contention regarding the interconnectedness of “the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular.’”¹⁷⁰ As in the transition from post-millennial thought to pre-millennialism, psychological theories, and anthropological concepts, come into play. I build on the anthropological view considered in reference to the aforementioned eschatological shift, that mankind has evolved to be a “cultural animal.” While I continue to utilize Lifton’s psychological theories, and Turner’s anthropological concepts, I also employ Hans Blumenberg’s ideas regarding man’s use of symbolic constructs to cope with conditions of existence.

The formation of culture is necessarily linked to a world that can no longer be successfully navigated with “fight or flight” behavior.¹⁷¹ For early humans, the most persistent threats came in the form of point-like stimuli. Consequently, mere movement was enough to alleviate the anxiety produced by threats to their physical existence. Therefore, according to Blumenberg, the alarm experienced would not reach the mental state of “Angst,” a pathological, “dominating condition of anxiety,” defined by intense, ambiguous dread.¹⁷² Coming out of the primeval rainforest presents a “situational leap,” one filled by the arrival of what Blumenberg refers to as “*animal symbolicum*,” (a

¹⁷⁰ Asad, 25.

¹⁷¹ Pavesich, Vida. “Hans Blumenberg’s Philosophical Anthropology: After Heidegger and Cassirer.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 46, Number 3, (July 2008), 432.

¹⁷² Blumenberg (1985), x, 5.

symbol-making animal).¹⁷³ These days, in a world characterized by ambiguous and seemingly uncontrollable dangers, like economic collapse, perceived moral decline, or the “diffuse horror “of nuclear threat, Angst is mitigated, rendered a manageable fear, through symbolic mechanisms, such as myth and the theology it begets.¹⁷⁴ The *animal symbolicum* masters the reality that promises to be lethal by “letting it be represented,” looking away from the object in question toward one that is familiar or may be enlightening.¹⁷⁵ Blumenberg’s concept is encapsulated in Timothy Weber’s observation that, “once a historical event [is] placed somewhere within God’s eternal plan, it [loses] its ability to terrorize.”¹⁷⁶

While the disoriented state of historical dislocation prompted what James H. Brookes described as “conversion to pre-millennial truth,” nuclear threat brings an “apocalyptic aura” to that condition.¹⁷⁷ We no longer simply feel disconnected from a “sense of immortality.” Rather, death imagery takes the very real shape of species-wide annihilation. When this occurs, though religious symbolism becomes understandably

¹⁷³ Blumenberg (1985), 4.

¹⁷⁴ Schwenger, Peter. “Writing the Unthinkable.” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Autumn, 1986), 46.

¹⁷⁵ Blumenberg, Hans. “An Anthropological Approach to the Contemporary Significance of Rhetoric.” Translated by Robert M. Wallace. In *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* 429-458. Edited by Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987), 439-440.

¹⁷⁶ Weber (1987), 127.

¹⁷⁷ Williams, David Riddle. *James H. Brookes; A Memoir*. (St. Louis: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1897), 147; Lifton, Robert J. and Richard Falk. *Indefensible Weapons: The Political and Psychological Case Against Nuclearism*. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982), 84-85.

more sought after, according to Lifton, existing imagery also becomes “inadequate.”¹⁷⁸ For until now, as Gordon Kaufman indicates, “humankind was never believed to have the power to utterly destroy itself; that power lay with God alone.”¹⁷⁹ Even if one could reconcile mankind’s capacity for such power within existing religious symbolism, as Perry Miller ponders, if humanity ultimately does “do the deed itself, can it bring about more than the explosion? Can it also produce the Judgment?”¹⁸⁰ Miller further states, with humankind at the helm, the end of the world is no longer “a descent from Heaven,” but rather, “becomes more and more a contrivance,” having “less and less to do with good and evil.”¹⁸¹ E. B. White’s contemporaneous comment sums the situation up concisely:

For the first time in our lives, *we can feel the disturbing vibrations of complete human readjustment*. Usually the vibrations are so faint as to go unnoticed. This time, they are so strong that even the ending of a war is overshadowed. Today it is not so much the fact of the end of a war which engages us. It is limitless power of the victor. The quest for a substitute for God ended suddenly. The substitute turned up. And who do you suppose it was? It was man himself, stealing God’s stuff (emphasis mine).¹⁸²

When religious symbolism is rendered inadequate, as exemplified by the observations above, and human readjustment of the magnitude White delineates becomes necessary, Lifton contends that two possibilities exist. The first is toward demythologizing, which

¹⁷⁸ Lifton (1979), 339.

¹⁷⁹ Kaufman, Gordon D. *Theology for a Nuclear Age*. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 7.

¹⁸⁰ Miller, Perry. *Errand into the Wilderness*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1958), 239.

¹⁸¹ Miller (1981), 239.

¹⁸² White, E. B. “The Talk of the Town.” *The New Yorker*. August 18, 1945. 13.

he defines as, a shift “from doctrinal belief to a quality of being and a form of centering,” citing a trend to “render religion consistent with the claims of science.”¹⁸³ The alternative, and the direction relevant here, is toward an eschatology that bolsters symbolism by absorbing this nuclear reality into its doctrine. For, as Turner states (once again aligning with Lifton), the response to transformative events is “an anxious need to find meaning in what has disconcerted us.”¹⁸⁴ This process also parallels Blumenberg’s mechanism for mitigating Angst. Such a “restatement” of futurist pre-millennialism, constitutes what has come to be known as “Armageddon theology,” where what disconcerts us has been given meaning.¹⁸⁵

“No one,” writes Sutton, “tapped into evangelicals’ fascination with Armageddon better” than Hal Lindsey.¹⁸⁶ And published in 1970, his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* became the nonfiction bestseller of the decade. Boyer characterizes Lindsey’s work, which parallels *The Scofield Reference Bible’s* propagation of early pre-millennialism by way of interpretive commentary, as “a kind of *Dispensationalism for Dummies*.”¹⁸⁷ With politically oriented puns for chapter titles and subtitles, like “*Russia is a Gog, Sheik, to Sheik, and Scarlet O’Harlot*,” Lindsey employed the language of

¹⁸³ Lifton (1979), 340, 339.

¹⁸⁴ Turner (1986), 36.

¹⁸⁵ Lifton, Robert J. and Richard Falk, 81.

¹⁸⁶ Sutton (2014), 345.

¹⁸⁷ Boyer (1992), 5; Boyer, Paul. “Give Me that End-Time Religion: The Politicization of Prophetic Belief in Contemporary America.” *Reflections*. 2005. <http://reflections.yale.edu/article/end-times-and-end-gamesis-scripture-being-left-behind/give-me-end-time-religion> (Accessed: July, 30, 2017).

Pentagon strategists in his interpretation of apocalyptic scripture.¹⁸⁸ The searing heat and gruesome sores recounted in Revelation are said to describe the effects of radiation (as seen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki). Revelation's stinging locusts and falling stars are actually Cobra helicopters discharging nerve gas, and warheads launched from space platforms. Zechariah's depiction of the flesh of Israel's enemies "consum[ing] away" is "exactly what happens to those who are in a thermonuclear blast."¹⁸⁹

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Lindsey's work is that it reached many people who were typically outside the groups receptive to its message. Prophecy books were heretofore located exclusively in Christian (i.e. evangelical), or Bible bookstores. *The Late Great Planet Earth*, however, became available in "secular" bookstores, drugstores, and even supermarkets, alongside books on the latest fads. Such broad reception of Lindsey's work also indicates how the influence of pre-millennial dispensationalism continued to grow in the second half of the twentieth century. Consequently, following decades when a mere nucleus of believers kept the faith, this "prairie fire" of dispensationalism profoundly influenced how millions of Americans perceive world events.¹⁹⁰

What those millions of Americans understood is, as Jerry Falwell sets forth, "If God were removed from the events of mankind, everyone would have great reason to

¹⁸⁸ Boyer (1992), 127.

¹⁸⁹ Boyer (1992), 127; Lindsey, Hal. *The Late Great Planet Earth*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 175.

¹⁹⁰ Weber (1987), 5; Sutton (2016); Boyer (2005).

be gravely concerned about nuclear war. But praise the Lord, He is intimately involved in the affairs of mankind.”¹⁹¹ Driving the message home, and consistent with Weber’s observation regarding historical events no longer being frightening once they are placed within God’s plan, Falwell further asserted, “let us not forget there is a God who is in control.”¹⁹² The symbolic system that is “Armageddon theology” clearly functions to mitigate the Angst born of nuclear dread, given that, “as the battle of Armageddon reaches its awful climax and it appears that all life will be destroyed on earth—in this very moment Jesus Christ will return and save man from self-extinction.”¹⁹³ In fact, Falwell explicitly stated “we do not have to go to bed at night wondering if someone’s going to push the button and destroy the planet between now and sunrise.”¹⁹⁴ That is, (in keeping with pre-millennialism’s totalistic dispensation of existence) on the condition that you have “receiv[ed] Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord.”¹⁹⁵ Though according to Falwell’s unequivocal statement that the earth will not be destroyed for at least 1,007 years (due to dispensational mathematics), when the inevitable day does arrive, prior to the seven-year period of tribulation, “the blood-washed saints [will be] raptured from the earth to be with the Lord.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Falwell, Jerry. *Nuclear War and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ*. (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour, 1983), 4.

¹⁹² Falwell, 2.

¹⁹³ Lindsey, 168.

¹⁹⁴ Cuomo, Track 7. 6:50—7:00.

¹⁹⁵ Falwell, 40.

¹⁹⁶ Falwell, 6;

Lindsey referred to this apocalyptic event as “the ultimate trip,” and he definitely has a point.¹⁹⁷ While he was speaking in spiritual terms, Lindsey’s assertion is also true in a psychological context. The rapture not only assuages the immediate terror that accompanies the thought of experiencing an atomic blast, it also re-establishes a *sense* of immortality and ensures self-continuity for all eternity. Armageddon theology’s recasting of ancient prophecies in terms of Cold War fears and threats confronting humanity in the nuclear age, is a testament to, as Daniel Wojcik phrases it, the adaptability of apocalyptic belief systems.¹⁹⁸ This turn of events also provides a clear demonstration of “the secular’s” influence on “the religious,” in that the symbol system inherent in pre-millennial dispensationalism has been re-shaped to include the (ostensibly secular) atomic bomb, illustrating why, in order to understand either of these spheres, one must appreciate the other.

¹⁹⁷ Lindsey, 137.

¹⁹⁸ Wojcik, Daniel. “Embracing Doomsday: Faith, Fatalism, and Apocalyptic Beliefs in the Nuclear Age.” *Western Folklore*, Vol. 55, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), 302.

If, at its most exalted level, apocalyptic literature is religious, the concerns of such a literature, at its most popular level, find expression in the gothic mode and especially in science fiction.¹⁹⁹

David Ketterer

I now turn to an analysis of this chapter's selection from the seedbed, Russell Hoban's work *Riddley Walker*. The quote above clearly speaks to interaction between the "secular" and the "religious" spheres as it pertains to literature. It also serves to explain why my selection from the "seed bed of cultural creativity" for this chapter comes from the science fiction genre. According to H. Bruce Franklin, science fiction is the only form of "imaginative literature," that can appropriately respond to the most overwhelming feature of today's nuclear-capable world, the ever-present threat of annihilation by our own weapons.²⁰⁰ Franklin rightly maintains that any imaginative literature portraying "either nuclear war or an end to nuclear threat is by definition science fiction."²⁰¹ In fact, as he points out, "for about four decades," the atomic bomb and nuclear war only existed within science fiction.²⁰²

And science fiction frequently contains a powerful religious motivation. Much of this spirit, as historian James Gilbert indicates, reflects "the transfer of apocalyptic

¹⁹⁹ Ketterer, David. *New Worlds for Old: The Apocalyptic Imagination, Science Fiction, and American Literature*. (New York: Anchor press, 1974), 15.

²⁰⁰ Franklin, Bruce H. *Countdown to Midnight: Twelve Memorable Stories about Nuclear Warfare*. (New York: Daw Books, Inc., 1984), 11.

²⁰¹ Franklin, 11.

²⁰² Franklin, 12.

speculation from its traditional place in Christian eschatology to imagination about the future.”²⁰³ The advent of the atomic bomb, and anxieties surrounding the Cold War makes such story lines inevitable. These works frequently contain revelation of things to come, mythologies concerning origins and ends, as well as the paranormal and salvation borne from beyond (albeit often in the form of aliens)—all of which address questions traditionally answered by religion.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Gilbert, James, 239.

²⁰⁴ Gilbert, James, 239.

Rational thinking is not enough to get us through
what we have to get through.²⁰⁵

Russell Hoban

Speaking to the significance of humankind's myth-making capability, Hoban's quote reiterates the concepts of Lifton and Blumenberg that undergird my examination of how, and why, the transition from post-millennialism to "Armageddon Theology" occurred. Specifically, humankind's psychological, and evolved cultural need for symbolic imagery. Unlike *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Riddley Walker* does not illustrate a specific eschatology. Rather, Hoban's book embodies the mythologizing process itself, which as demonstrated in reference to the development of "Armageddon Theology," is the crux of this chapter. Paralleling the process that culminated in "Armageddon Theology," the evolving mythology within *Riddley Walker* also provides a vehicle for the expression, and perhaps catharsis of, the psychological and emotional ramifications of a changing nuclear reality. This study of Russell Hoban's work, *Riddley Walker*, tracks the mythologizing process, drawing parallels to the concepts of Lifton, Blumenberg and Turner, further aligning them with the development of "Armageddon Theology."

The titular character's name, *Riddley Walker*, defines the novel as hermeneutic, as a metaphor for the mythologizing process, "Walker is my name and I am the same.

²⁰⁵ Myers, Edward. "An Interview with Russell Hoban." *The Literary Review*. Vol. 28, Issue 1 (Fall 1984), 9.

Riddley Walker. Walking my riddels where ever they've took me and walking them now on this paper the same."²⁰⁶ Riddley Walker's symbolic moniker functions in tandem with Hoban's invented lexicon, a "worn-down, broken-apart" English, designed to slow the reader down to Riddley's pace, take things in "word by word," and become engaged in the hermeneutic process.²⁰⁷ And, while "Riddleyspeak" does indeed slow down, and engage the reader as intended, Hoban's "worn-down, broken-apart" English also reflects the "debased and degraded future that Riddley Walker lives in."²⁰⁸ This pattern is exemplified by the name of Riddley's homeland, Inland, a twisted-around version of the word England, as well as in the words *something*, *another* and *together*, uncoupled, and broken down, into "some thing," "a nother," and "to gether," respectively.²⁰⁹ The debased state of Riddley's world also applies to spiritual concerns, making Hoban's "broken-apart" English an apt symbol for the broken connections Lifton's work addresses.

Riddley's metaphoric odyssey stems from his reaction to concerns paralleling the conditions that prompted the transition from antebellum post-millennialism to "Armageddon theology," Lifton's concepts regarding: historical dislocation, an impaired sense of symbolic immortality, and the disruption of the symbolic structures

²⁰⁶ Hoban, Russell. *Riddley Walker*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 8.

²⁰⁷ Haffenden, 138.

²⁰⁸ Pietroni; Rattner,; Hoban, Russell. "Russell Hoban on how being friends with his head powered the writing of Riddley Walker." *The Guardian*. November 26, 2010; Haffenden, 138.

²⁰⁹ Hoban (1998), 11, 2, 6.

that have heretofore facilitated coping with the nuclear reality of his world. Consistent with this scenario, Riddley's journey conforms to the tri-partite pattern Turner applies to human experience. With the chaotic, "betwixt-and-between" state of liminality represented by the dead towns depicted in the children's rhyming game, "Fools Circel 9wys."²¹⁰ Over the course of his wanderings, Riddley's mythology evolves in response to his changing world, thereby returning him to what Turner refers to as a "stable state once more."²¹¹

Having outlined the parallels between Hoban's novel and the evolving mythology that culminates in "Armageddon Theology," I proceed to the degraded, post-apocalyptic (in the popular sense of the term), world Hoban created. *Riddley Walker* takes place in Inland, roughly 2,500 years after nuclear war devastated the planet, an event simply referred to as "Bad Time."²¹² Following years of perpetual darkness, when plagues killed-off vast numbers of people and nothing would grow in the ground, day and night finally became regular again—but never like before.²¹³ Civilization has returned to the point of transitioning from a hunter-gatherer culture, to that of an agricultural society, with people living in semi-permanent fenced settlements, or in Riddleyspeak, a "fents."²¹⁴ Hobbes is frequently, and appropriately, quoted in

²¹⁰ Turner (1987), 46; Hoban (1998), 5.

²¹¹ Hoban (1998), 5; Turner (1966), 95.

²¹² Hoban (1998), 2.

²¹³ Hoban (1998), 19.

²¹⁴ Hoban (1998), 11.

descriptions of Riddley Walker's world, which is indeed "nasty, poor, brutish, and short."²¹⁵

Dogs are no longer "man's best friend." Rather, they are "a danger," as wild packs roam the area outside the settlements, "theywl eat you if they catch you oansome" (alone) outside the "fents."²¹⁶ The peril that exists beyond the delineated "safe zone" of one's "fents," in the area between the settlements, defines it as the liminal phase of Turner's pattern of experience. In keeping with the mythological nature of Hoban's work, in addition to the practical, physical danger they present, dogs are imbued with supernatural qualities. Consequently, having a dog exhibit friendliness toward you triggers suspicion within the settlement, underscoring the separated, detached, nature of the in-between state of liminality.

Inland's religion, the "Eusa cult," provides their foundational myth, known simply as the "*Eusa Story*."²¹⁷ Revolving around the archetypal figure Eusa, this origin myth describes the primordial act that created their ultimate reality, how their "world" came to be.²¹⁸ It is Eusa who bears the responsibility for the nuclear event that devastated the world. As we discover over the course of the novel, *The Eusa Story* is founded on the description of an 1480 wall painting depicting *The Legend of St. Eustace*, a

²¹⁵ Cowart, 86.

²¹⁶ Hoban (1998), 13, 16.

²¹⁷ Hoban (1998), 2.

²¹⁸ Eliade, Mircea. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3-5.

second-century Christian martyr. Unearthed on a tourist brochure that remarkably survived nuclear holocaust, its 20th-century English leads the powers that be to view the pamphlet as sacred text. This sequence of events signifies Lifton's broken connections, in this case, the connection to Christianity, the symbol system in place at the time of the nuclear disaster. In doing so, this re-interpretation echoes the notion (of both Lifton and Blumenberg, as well as Turner), that mythologies evolve as conditions of existence change.

The "*Eusa Story*" is disseminated through "Eusa Shows," which are performed by puppeteers who travel from settlement to settlement with a modified set of Punch and Judy puppets. This method harkens back to medieval mystery plays, dramatizations of biblical narratives performed with itinerant puppet shows, transmitting the culture's truths by educating people through entertainment.²¹⁹ And the ritualistic properties of the "Eusa Show" echoes the religious nature of the mystery plays. This element within Hoban's work constitutes another symbol of evolving mythology, for reasons beyond puppet shows' historical connection to Christianity.

²¹⁹ Strut, Joseph. *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*. (London: Methuen & Co.: 1801),144-145; Speaight, George. *The History of the English Puppet Theatre*. (New York: John de Graff, 1950?), 32.; Laity, K. A. "Future Medieval Space: Performing 'Punch' in Riddley Walker." Russell Hoban.org July 9, 2012. <https://www.russellhoban.org/essay/future-medieval-space-performing-punch-in-riddley-walker> (Accessed: March 26, 20018).

Riddley's discovery of a real Punch figure sets a chain of events in motion that not only invalidates the "Eusa Story," but results in an evolved mythology.²²⁰

Riddley realizing the significance of the Punch figure he comes across while working to recover scrap iron, undoubtedly stems, as K. A. Laity notes, from the education he received preparing him to follow in his father's footsteps as settlement "connexion man."²²¹ Having recently stepped into this role, Riddley's function is to interpret the Eusa men's periodic puppet shows, divine subtly encoded correlations to recent events, and explain the significance of these incidents to the populace in what is termed a "reveal."²²² Riddley's position requires him to view the puppets at a different level of engagement than the shows' audience, demanding finely honed observation skills, ones that allow him to interpret the meanings imbedded in the shows' traditional lessons. This education also makes Riddley one of a handful of people who can read and write, (the symbolic implications of which will become apparent as the plot unfolds). Ultimately, these skills enable him to synthesize an evolved mythology when historical events render the "*Eusa Story*" ineffective.²²³

As has been my pattern throughout this thesis, now that the groundwork has been laid, I proceed, this time by delineating the mythologizing process within *Riddley Walker*. Appropriately, "broken connections" are established early in the novel's

²²⁰ Laity.

²²¹ Hoban (1998), 24.

²²² Hoban (1998), 22, 55.

²²³ Laity.

narrative arc. Hoban's work starts with the ritual killing of a wild boar on Riddley Walker's "naming day," a rite of passage into adulthood.²²⁴ While literary portrayals of such rituals commonly carry symbolic meaning, in this case Riddley's reaction is most relevant. Rather than responding with the sense of pride and accomplishment typically associated with freshly-acquired manhood, his sentiment indicates he is suffering from historical dislocation. Riddley writes in his account of the event that "the woal thing fealt just that little bit stupid."²²⁵ Given civilization's return to the point of transitioning from a hunter-gatherer culture to that of an agricultural society, it is symbolically appropriate that the boar was not only on the small side, but "he lookit poorly."²²⁶ Adding insult to injury, as the expression goes, "Us running that boar thru that las little scrump of woodlings with the forms [farms] all roun," renders it ritually anemic, if not all together meaningless.²²⁷ Riddley's sense of historical dislocation echoes that of individuals at the close of the Civil War, poised on the brink of industrialization, for whom post-millennialism no longer seemed to make sense. There used to be more people who preferred the foraging life, Riddley notes, rather than to settle in one place and work a farm, but "Now all on a suddn," he discloses, expressing his disquiet, "I wernt sure how it wer."²²⁸

²²⁴ Hoban (1998), 1.

²²⁵ Hoban (1998), 1.

²²⁶ Hoban (1998), 1.

²²⁷ Hoban (1998), 1.

²²⁸ Hoban (1998), 70.

A mere three days after Riddley Walker's naming day, his father is killed in a workplace accident. Brooder Walker is crushed while attempting to recover a "girt big rottin iron thing" from before the Bad Time that has been buried in the muck.²²⁹ This incident connotes an impaired symbolic immortality in the form of Lifton's broken connection to past generations. The fact that Brooder Walker is killed by a bomb, rather than a pack of dogs for example, is noteworthy, in that, this scenario indicates the fracturing of the symbol system that emerged in response to Bad Time, a mythology designed to prevent further death by nuclear weapons. As such, Brooder Walker's death by atomic bomb also signifies impaired symbolic immortality within the theological mode.

Riddley's reaction to his father's death is consistent with Lifton's observation that psychological viability comes under duress in a state of impaired symbolic immortality. Raising concern from his co-workers for climbing all over what is most certainly a bomb in order to "see if it had a name stamp in or raised up in the iron of it like them things do some times."²³⁰ Riddley exclaims, "My dad ben kilt by some thing I don't even know the name of aint that a larf. I begun larfing then I cudnt stop," a response that speaks to both forms of impaired symbolic immortality he suffers.²³¹ Riddley exhibits the unmoored feeling and sense of detachment noted by Lifton, as well

²²⁹ Hoban (1998), 10.

²³⁰ Hoban (1998), 11.

²³¹ Hoban (1998), 11.

as Turner's characterization of liminality, stating, "this day it seamt like the worl begun to roal," like the children's game with ball bearings one roles into the eyes of a cartoon face. "The worl begun to seam like 1 big crazy eye and roaling. I wer afeart it myt roal right off the face and dispear."²³²

The night following the "berning" of Brooder Walker's funeral pyre, an incident occurs that confirms disruption of the symbolic structures that have heretofore facilitated coping with the nuclear reality of his world. Abel Goodparley, the Pry Mincer (derived from Prime Minister), and Erny Orfing, the Wes Mincer (a play on Westminster), arrive from the Ram (originally named Ramsgate), the seat of government.²³³ Their stated purpose is not only to do a Eusa show, but "to put the scar" on Riddley, ritually marking him as his settlement's new "connexion man."²³⁴ Though Orfing starts the performance with the usual "call and response" before Goodparley's puppets take the stage, it quickly becomes clear that this is not a typical Eusa show. Instead of a conventional narrative, one akin to Bible stories that bring insight to recent events, this performance carries significant hermeneutic implications. Rather than Eusa being responsible for Bad Time as usual, Mr Clevver is named as the culpable figure. Laity draws the following astute parallel, imagine the impact on a medieval Christian

²³² Hoban (1998), 14.

²³³ Hoban (1998), 37, 28; "Annotation-Chapter 5." *Riddley Walker Annotations*. http://www.errorbar.net/rw/A_28_10 (Accessed: October 3, 2017).

²³⁴ Hoban (1998), 29.

audience at hearing that Judas had suddenly been absolved of blame for leading to Christ's crucifixion.²³⁵

Mr. Clevver's culpability for Bad Time is also significant given that he is a devil figure, with the capacity to trick and influence anyone. Orfing's challenge of Goodparley (directed to the Eusa figure he operates) at the close of the performance sums up the issue perfectly:

Orfing says, "Youre telling us you dint do none of them Bad time things youre putting it all on Mr Clevver..."

Eusa says, "Whats the diffrents if I done the acturel Bad Time things my self or if I dint?"

Orfing says, "Wel if you dint do it then it aint on you is it."

Eusa says, "And if it aint on me then what?"²³⁶

The answer to this question, which Goodparley clearly intends to be rhetorical, is, in fact, the kernel of the matter. "And if it aint on Eusa then what?" Eusa's responsibility for bringing about Bad Time is paramount to how the *Eusa Story* operates, and the function it serves. If the responsibility for Bad Time not only lies with Mr Clevver but goes unpunished, mankind is complicit in earth's devastation. But, if the blame lies solely with Eusa, then so does the guilt. Therefore, Eusa's pain, the loss of his family, the beatings that culminate with his head on a pike, events immortalized in the children's rhyming game *Fools Circel 9wys*, serve to blunt humanity's guilt.

²³⁵ Laity.

²³⁶ Hoban (1998), 52.

Validation of this understanding is located in the call and response that precedes the connexion man's divination, "Eusas pain is our gain if we look and if we lissen."²³⁷ Psychologically speaking, they are correct. And their penchant to behave in a fashion antithetical to Eusa's actions (which manifests as prohibition of the "cleverness" deemed Eusa's cardinal sin), engenders a sense of control over the possibility of renewed nuclear proliferation, allowing Inlanders to cope with the conditions of their existence. If Eusa is not responsible for Bad Time, the symbol set no longer operates as intended, much like post-millennialism's symbolization being founded on increasing improvement driven by human activity, a notion which (for many) no longer functioned in the face of multiple European revolutions, Civil War, and "jerry built" cities abandoned to poverty.

Consistent with this broken symbolization, Riddley Walker's first "reveal" is equally deficient.²³⁸ He is "took strange," and rendered silent, unable to provide the anticipated insight into recent events.²³⁹ Symbolically meaningful in that it signifies the initial stages of separation from familiar forms, Riddley awakens the following morning to hear the kids chiding him about his failed reveal the previous evening.²⁴⁰ A workplace incident the same day serves as the transformative event that ultimately

²³⁷ Hoban (1998), 55.

²³⁸ Hoban (1998), 62.

²³⁹ Hoban (1998), 63.

²⁴⁰ Hoban (1998), 63.

causes Riddley to question the previously taken-for-granted certainties produced by the Eusa myth.

Having returned to work “croaking iron at Widders Dump,” Riddley finds a Punch figure, preserved in the peat bog, replete with the hand of the puppeteer who once brought the character to life.²⁴¹ Though similar to those in the Eusa show, the Punch figure is like none he has ever seen. “It wer crookit,,” a pariah condition specific to “Eusa folk,” the progeny of nuclear physicists, the result of radiation poisoning, a mark of the guilt associated with bringing on Bad Time.²⁴² The blackened Punch figure “had a hump on its back and parper sewt there in the clof. For a wyl I cudnt think what it myt be then when it come to me what it wer I cudnt hardly beleave it yet there it nor no mistaking it. It wer a hump and it wer meant to be a hump.”²⁴³ But, how could this be, for the figure comes from a period before Bad Time occurred.

Echoing sacred articles utilized in rites of passage designed to startle initiates into thinking about their society, the Punch figure functions as an object of reflection.²⁴⁴ As Laity points out, the “unaccounted” Punch figure opens Riddley’s mind to new possibilities.²⁴⁵ Riddley “ben so interstit in the figger and the dead han I hadn’t ben

²⁴¹ Hoban (1998), 72.

²⁴² Hoban (1998), 96.

²⁴³ Hoban (1998), 72.

²⁴⁴ Turner (1987), 14.

²⁴⁵ Laity.

taking no noatis of no 1 roun me."²⁴⁶ Workers are forbidden to keep anything they find while recovering iron, and the supervisor, Belnot Phist, demands to see what Riddley has found. Push literally comes to shove and Riddley slings Phist head first into the muck. Riddley "uppit out of the hoal," jumps the fence, without even thinking, and finds himself face to face with the "black leader [of a dog pack] waiting for me with his yellor eyes. Jus stanning there in the rain and waiting for me."²⁴⁷

Jumping the fence clearly signifies the separation stage in Turner's tripartite pattern of human experience, with Riddley landing squarely in the state of liminality. He is literally outside the "fents," alone, in a dangerous realm where anything can happen. In keeping with Turner's description of liminality as "a striving after new forms and structures," over the course of his journey around the dead towns in "*Fools Circel 9wys*," Riddley contemplates a variety of new perspectives.²⁴⁸ This activity parallels radical evangelicals' shift in scriptural interpretation during the post-Civil War era, when influenced by world events, church history, and "a few relatively obscure European apocalypticists," they discover verses "they had not noticed before."²⁴⁹ Initially, Riddley becomes enamored with Goodparley's power based politics, aimed at moving Inland "frontways," out of the mud, and toward restored technological

²⁴⁶ Hoban (1998), 73.

²⁴⁷ Hoban (1998), 73.

²⁴⁸ Turner 1986, 42.

²⁴⁹ Sutton 2014, 14.

knowledge.²⁵⁰ Arriving at Cambry (Cambridge), his mind had been “binsy with myndy thinking,” “filled with “words and rimes and all kynds of jumbl” about “boats in the air” (airplanes), “picters on the wind” (movies), the “1 Litl 1” (gunpowder), and the “1 Big 1” (nuclear power).²⁵¹

In the blighted crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, Riddley undergoes a mystical experience. “Too many things coming in at 1ce. Like all ways. Mixt up I wer... It happent in my head when I seen the changing stillness of the far a way waves...”²⁵² In 1960s parlance, his mind has been expanded, and his spiritual vision no longer conforms to the confines of the “*Eusa Story*.” As Riddley succinctly puts it, “I wer progammit diffrent then from how I ben when I come in to Cambry,” and ideas that ultimately congeal to become Riddley’s new mythology begin to percolate.²⁵³

Not long after Riddley’s experience at Cambry, Goodparley is killed as a result of his attempt to reproduce gunpowder, the first step on the path to renewed technological knowledge, and nuclear proliferation.²⁵⁴ Relating Orfing’s comments regarding the re-emergence of gunpowder’s formula, Riddley writes, “Wel its luce now innit. Its luce and itwl fetch. Every 1 as can get the Nos. of the mixer [recipe] and them three gready mints [ingredients that make gunpowder] of it theywl have a go wont

²⁵⁰ Hoban 1998, 143.

²⁵¹ Hoban 1998, 166, 19, 166, 189.

²⁵² Hoban (1998), 166.

²⁵³ Hoban (1998), 166.

²⁵⁴ Hoban (1998), 193, 194.

they.”²⁵⁵ A cycle of devastation has once again been set in motion, and, obviously, Eusa can no longer function as scapegoat, for, he is long-since dead. As during the post-Civil War era, Inland’s foundational myth no longer accommodates world events. rendering an evolved mythology necessary.

Shortly before his death, Goodparley reveals a Punch & Judy “fit-up,” a stage and set of puppets, one in pristine condition, unlike the blackened figure still in Riddley’s pocket.²⁵⁶ Following Goodparley’s fitting demise, Riddley takes possession of the booth, and sets off with Orfing to “start showing.”²⁵⁷ It is through these Punch shows (like the Eusa shows performed by the Ram before them), that Riddley’s evolved mythology becomes institutionalized.

The essence of Riddley’s mythology reverberates in Orfing’s remark that while “[Goodparley] that you cud move the out side of things frontways and leave the in side to look after its self,” it is “the in side has got to do the moving.”²⁵⁸ This perspective also applies to Inlanders’ attempt to *avoid* a replay of Bad Time with a simple edict prohibiting cleverness, for the world is far too complex a place for such a simplistic solution. Riddley’s evolved mythology, on the other hand, is grounded in the notion that, “it’s the in side has got to do the moving its got to move every thing and its got to

²⁵⁵ Hoban (1998), 201.

²⁵⁶ Hoban (1998), 181.

²⁵⁷ Hoban (1998), 203.

²⁵⁸ Hoban (1998), 203.

move us as wel.”²⁵⁹ Thus (as will be examined shortly), unlike *The Eusa Story*, Riddley’s evolved mythology addresses the emotional, spiritual and social needs of Inlanders.

And this is where the symbolic significance of Riddley’s ability to read and write comes into play. Riddley’s chronicle of his journey, this book, “walking my riddels where ever they’ve took me and walking them now on this paper the same,” constitutes the larger mythology. The fact that it is written (rather than handed down, as tradition, in oral fashion), marks Riddley’s writings as mythology, not simply because it is committed to paper, but because reading and writing is a skill associated with his position as “connexion man,” and therefore, linked to mythology and religion.

Riddley’s first Punch show takes place inside the settlement of Weeping Forms. Negotiating entry (which is not guaranteed given the recent gunpowder-related events) constitutes the re-aggregation stage in Turner’s pattern of human experience. Consistent with Turner’s description of this phase, Riddley has been inwardly transformed by his journey, and outwardly changed, represented by the set of new figures he carries (Punch rather than Eusa). We “dint blow [announce] ‘Eusa show,’” Riddley notes, “becaws it wernt no Eusa show. We blowit a different call which we meant it to say ‘New show.’”²⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the crowd insists on retaining a modified version of the call and response that opens every Eusa show, thereby preserving a sense of ritual for this New Show. Unlike Eusa Shows, as Laity points out, Riddley’s New

²⁵⁹ Hoban (1998), 203.

²⁶⁰ Hoban (1998), 208.

Show extends audience participation into the narrative itself. Consistent with traditional Punch shows, the audience must promise to help keep an eye on the baby because, when “Pooty” (Judy) briefly leaves the stage, Punch cannot be trusted with the child’s safety.²⁶¹ Doing so offers more than simply a larger role for community members’ enjoyment, it also gives them greater attendant responsibility. They can no longer simply watch, and “lissen.” They must engage the show, and by extension society at large, constituting significant social development.²⁶²

This turn of events is consistent with Erik H. Erikson’s remark that, “The social process does not mold a new being merely to housebreak him; it molds generations in order to be remolded, to be reinvigorated by them.”²⁶³ Riddley has clearly been molded by societal shifts occurring in his world. And now, his evolved mythology, is reinvigorating social development, thereby molding society. A perspective such as Erikson’s clearly undergirds Riddley’s Cambry-produced realization that the arc of history is not immutable, it is not “all the same in the end.”²⁶⁴ It can be different, “if you’ve got balls a nuff.”²⁶⁵ Riddley further contends, “It’s different right the way up to the end and that’s why the end is different. If the way is different the end is different.”²⁶⁶ Consistent with Blumenberg’s work, this possibility, imbued with a reinvigorated sense

²⁶¹ Hoban (1998), 198.

²⁶² Laity.

²⁶³ Lifton (1993), 13.

²⁶⁴ Hoban (1998), 172.

²⁶⁵ Hoban (1998), 172.

²⁶⁶ Hoban (1998), 172.

of social engagement, fulfills Inlanders' need for a renewed sense of control over the conditions of their existence, .

Fulfilling Turner's notion of (what is for Riddley,) "a stable state once more" (as pre-millennialism supplied for evangelicals transitioning from post-millennialism), when it came time to leave Weeping Forms, Rightway Flinter, his brother and their "wives and childer the woal lot roadit out with us."²⁶⁷ This coterie constitutes a group of like-minded movers, rather than a settlement divided between foragers and farmers, a scenario that mitigates the historical dislocation Riddley suffered at the beginning of the novel. This evolved mythology re-establishes Riddley's broken sense of symbolic immortality, for, he lives on through the mythology he leaves behind. With its reinvigorated sense of social engagement, this new symbol set also reanimates Inlanders' perceived place in the great chain of being. Further, the possibility of this evolved mythology succeeding where *The Eusa Story* failed, re-establishes a symbolic structure that facilitates coping with the reality of Riddley's world.

As the chronicle closes, Riddley once again departs to the sound of children singing about him, signifying the symbolic significance of the event, and marking him as the new mythology's archetypal figure. Consistent with Lifton, Blumenberg, Eliade, and Turner, in regard to the ever-evolving nature of mythology, Riddley asserts,

²⁶⁷ Hoban (1998), 219.

“becaws the end aint nothing only part of the way its just that part of the way where
you come to a stop.”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ Hoban (1998), 172.

Chapter 4: Once More Into The "Seedbed."

As evangelical apocalypticism penetrated the White House, it also became ubiquitous in American culture.¹

Matthew Avery Sutton

Having considered "*where we started*," and the post-millennialism embodied in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, examined "*why we ended up here*," and the spiritual and psychological limbo from which pre-millennialism emerges to develop into "Armageddon theology," I proceed by exploring "*where we go next*." As the quote above indicates, consistent with the "seedbed of cultural creativity" concept, what Boyer characterizes as a "prairie fire spread of dispensationalism" churns its way through American culture.² While delineating my methodology, I referenced Turner's assertion that in industrialized societies, it is genres like film or television, popular music, and literature, that play with cultural elements, provoking reflection on society.³ In this chapter, I complete the cycle illustrated by the Venn-like diagram I utilized to delineate my argument, and offer a survey considering what it looks like when this Cold War eschatology engages the aforementioned genres.

¹ Sutton (2014), 360.

² Boyer (2005).

³ For a detailed delineation of how this came to be the case, see: Turner, Victor. "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology." *Rice Institute Pamphlet - Rice University Studies*, 66, no. 3 (1974). Rice University: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/63159>, and Turner, Victor. "Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 4 (Dec., 1979).

In examining the developments this fusion produces, I further reinforce the notion underlying this thesis, that the “religious” sphere and the “secular” domain influence and shape one another. For the purpose of this survey of the intersection between “Armageddon Theology” and genres of popular American culture, I define “the religious” as specifically relating to the form of pre-millennial dispensationalism that emerges during the Cold War era, heavily influenced by Hal Lindsey’s landmark work, *The Late Great Planet Earth*. The “secular” consists of cultural genres, specifically, film and television, popular music, as well as literature, those produced primarily for the purpose of entertainment/play.

Within small scale societies, it is ritual, sacred corroboree, or carnival that play with cultural elements, and provide societal self-reflection, doing so through symbolic action such as dance, singing, and status reversal. These days however, industrialized societies have increased in both scale and complexity, as the division of labor has escalated. As the spheres of work and leisure became increasingly demarcated, the argument follows that ritual’s transformative power and cultural gravity have been curtailed. This denuding of ritual’s significance is rooted in the perceived transition from collective, and obligatory social bonds—as exemplified in rites of passage—to increasingly individualistic, voluntary affiliation, which has accompanied the development of disparate aesthetic genres as the locus for recombination of cultural

elements void of ritual context.⁴ If we accept these premises of largescale change, then we can understand “Armageddon Theology’s” varied and continuing influence on America’s popular culture.

During the era when evangelical apocalypticism “penetrates the White House,” films like *The Omen* franchise, which charts the birth, rise and political career of the Anti-christ, arrive on the scene. John Carpenter produces his “Apocalypse trilogy,” the second of which, *The Prince of Darkness*, depicts a cadre of scholars who unearth a cylinder of mysterious liquid, replete with an accompanying text identifying the artifact as the imprisoned corporeal embodiment of Satan.⁵ Not to mention the Christian apocalyptic film *A Thief in the Night*, which Amy Frykholm deems “a cult classic,” identifying it as the first of its kind.⁶ Frykholm credits the picture’s impact to its theme song, another groundbreaking development, one of the first contemporary Christian pop hits. Atop a “catchy” tune, with “hypnotic rhythms” that lodge themselves in one’s brain, the song “describes the terrible things that will take place during the end

⁴ Turner, Victor. “Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 4 (Dec., 1979), 468; Turner (1974), 65; St. John, Graham. “An introduction.” *Victor Turner and Contemporary Cultural Performance*. Edited by Graham St. John. (New York: Berghahn, 2008), 10.

⁵ “John Carpenter Introduces his Apocalypse Trilogy.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5E85qQGrAk> (Accessed: October, 23, 2017).

⁶ Frykholm, Amy. “The End Is Always with Us: The 40th Anniversary of ‘A Thief in the Night.’” *Religion & Politics: Fit For Polite Company*. November 9, 2012. <http://religionandpolitics.org/print/?pid=3855> (Accessed: 1/29/2018).

times,” with the refrain laments, “there’s no time to change your mind/the Son has come and you’ve been left behind.”⁷

The music industry at large exhibits similar influences. While rock and roll progenitors Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash, all sang traditional gospels, Larry Norman’s *Upon this Rock* is considered the first album to bring “blunt Christianity to rock’n’roll.”⁸ More interested in being “truthful than inspirational,” Norman’s release is packed with songs exemplified by the aforementioned theme of *A Thief in the Night*, the rapture-themed *I Wish We’d All Been Ready*.⁹ Progressive rock band Aphrodite’s Child releases an ambitious interpretation of the Book of Revelation entitled *666*, which includes the titles *Tribulation*, and *The Capture of the Beast*, as well as their iconic release *The Four Horsemen*.¹⁰ On their first album titled *Kill ‘Em All*, Metallica produces a song by the same name. Not surprisingly, in contrast to the lyrical treatment of Aphrodite’s Child, Metallica approaches the topic from a chaotic, raucous, mid-Armageddon perspective.¹¹

⁷ Norman, Larry. “I Wish We’d All Been Ready.” *Only Visiting This Planet*. (London: Verve, 1972).

⁸ Larry Norman. CBN music. http://www.cbn.com/cbnmusic/artists/norman_larry.aspx? (Accessed: February 20, 2018).

⁹ Thompson, John Joseph. *Raised by Wolves: The Story of Christian Rock & Roll*. (Toronto: ECW Press, 2000), 49.

¹⁰ Papathanassiou, Vangelis, and Ferris, Costas. *666*. (Santa Monica: Polygram Entertainment, 1971). <http://www.progarchives.com/album.asp?id=5958> (Accessed: October 23, 2017).

¹¹ Hetfield, James, and Lars Ulrich, Dave Mustaine. “The Four Horsemen.” *Kill ‘em All*. (Rochester: Music America Studios, 1983). <https://www.metallica.com/releases/albums/4209/kill-em-all> (Accessed: October 23, 2017).

The literature sphere evinces a comparable trend. Short story writer Damon Knight incorporates a sentiment expressed by Billy Graham, regarding nuclear war and Armageddon, into one of his works. Graham's oft-stated declaration that when atomic bombs are "ready to fly," God will intervene, take control of the situation and set End Times in motion, is undoubtedly the foundation for Knight's short story *Shall the Dust Praise Thee*.¹² In his novelette *The Beloved City*, science fiction and fantasy author, Philip Jose Farmer, demonstrates the overlap between science fiction and religious thought touched upon above, applying science fiction tropes to End Time events as delineated in premillennial dispensationalism. As Farmer's characters journey to "a site somewhere in what used to be mountainous Israel where the faithful will gather," the band of Tribulation survivors engage in discussions regarding the reality of the situation.¹³ Sounding like an episode of *Ancient Aliens*, two characters debate whether John of Patmos "may have seen Extraterrestrials and thought they were angels."¹⁴ And then, there is Salem Kirban, author of the novel *666* and its sequel *1000*, who literary reviewer Susan Gay Blue characterizes as "the Stephen King for apocalyptically savvy

¹² Graham, Billy. "Something is Happening in America." (Raleigh, NC: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. 1971). 5:00--5:06. <https://billygraham.org/audio/something-is-happening-in-america/> (Accessed: August 11, 2017); Knight, Damon. "Shall the Dust Praise Thee." *SF Masterworks: Dangerous Visions*. Edited by Harlan Ellison. (London: Gollancz, 2012).

¹³ Farmer, Philip Jose. "The Beloved City." *Signs and Wonders*. Edited by Roger Elwood. (Old Tappan, N. J.: F. H. Fleming H. Revell Co., 1972). http://www.e-reading.club/chapter.php/71734/6/Farmer_-_The_Book_of_Philip_Jose_Farmer.html (Accessed: August, 25, 2017).

¹⁴ Farmer.

evangelicals who weren't allowed to read the real King."¹⁵ Kirban "pulls plot points," from a dispensationalist reading of Revelation, such as famine and confrontation in the Middle East, adding his own flourishes, like jetpacks and electronically released guillotines.¹⁶

As demonstrated by this assimilation of dispensational concepts into popular media, genres of industrialized society do indeed "play" with elements of culture. And, the individualistic nature of industrialized society generates manifold modes of expression. I examine three basic avenues of influence "Armageddon theology" exhibits on American popular culture. First, I identify expressions that exemplify media justifying and reinforcing this form of premillennial dispensationalism. Next, I consider subversive modes of expression, media critical of dispensationalism's central concepts. Within these modes of expression, criticism frequently takes the shape of "lampooning, burlesquing," or subtly putting down a selected element of the society in question, in this case, post-Hal Lindsey dispensationalism.¹⁷ Subversive modes of expression can also take a less benign form, one that attempts to eradicate and replace the established

¹⁵ Blue, Susan Gray. "Apocalypse Then: Meet the Original Rapture Novels." *The Millions*, online magazine. July 25, 2017. <https://themillions.com/2017/07/apocalypse-then-meet-the-original-rapture-novels.html> (Accessed August 25, 2017).

¹⁶ Blue.

¹⁷ Turner (1974), 72.

order of culture (once again defined as Cold War era apocalypticism).¹⁸ Finally, I touch upon new forms and ideas that have emerged as a result of recombination.¹⁹

So-called “Rapture novels” have been around since “at least 1905,” where, in an effort to win converts, dispensationalists depict the “truth” of rapture and tribulation through fiction.²⁰ Though Kirban’s works, the aforementioned *666* and *1,000*, fit this description, a more precise depiction of these books is that they constitute the original fiction of Lindsey-era dispensationalism. It is from this form that Tim La Haye and Jerry Jenkins’ *Left Behind* books emerge. Amy Frykholm describes this series as “evangelical adventure novels,” and the collective protagonist consists of a band of post-rapture converts calling themselves “The Tribulation Force.”²¹ Not content to “hide in [the] basement with their Bibles,” this troop goes on the offensive against the Antichrist, while facing plagues, persecution, and global war, bringing nonbelievers to Christ along the way.²² The Tribulation Force is more than simply a group of dispensational “Green Berets,” however, they are the epitome of “justifying and reinforcing” premillennial dispensationalism.²³

¹⁸ Turner (1974), 72.

¹⁹ Turner (1974,) 72.

²⁰ Blue; Frykholm, Amy Johnson. *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 29.

²¹ Frykholm (2004), 3; LaHaye, Tim, and Jerry B. Jenkins. *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth’s Last Days*. (Colorado Springs: Tyndale, 1995), 424.

²² LaHaye, Tim, and Jerry B. Jenkins (1995), 424.

²³ LaHaye, Tim, and Jerry B. Jenkins. (1995), 424.

The rapture sets End Times' in motion, a horrific sequence of events those "left behind" must endure. Consequently, as Frykholm observes, the rapture is used as rhetoric, to persuade people of their need for faith, as well as facilitate a belief in dispensationalism's "superiority and rightness."²⁴ Readers of *Left Behind* novels often indicate that manifestations of the rapture depicted in these books "conjures up fears" about their salvation as well as that of their loved ones, while simultaneously providing a filter through which contemporary life can be understood.²⁵ Readers frequently identify their interaction with *Left Behind* novels as "a spiritual turning point," as the moment they came to realize just how "pressing and significant God's plan for history is," and "how imminent the end may be."²⁶ According to Frykholm, these readers feel compelled to share their new-found revelation (as well as the books) with those in their lives who are unsaved, or religiously marginal, making their way through networks of families, churches, friends and co-workers. It is in this fashion that the *Left Behind* series has grown into "a national phenomenon," their popularity and the rendition of End Times they portray spreading to become what Frykholm rightly describes as "a cultural force."²⁷

²⁴ Frykholm (2004), 11.

²⁵ Frykholm (2004), 11.

²⁶ Frykholm (2004), 11.

²⁷ When the sixteenth, and final, installment was published in April 2007, sixty-five million had been sold. Frykholm, Amy Johnson. *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7; LaHaye, Tim, Jerry B. Jenkins, Sandi L. Swanson. *The Authorized Left Behind Handbook*. (Colorado Springs: Tyndale, 2009), 9 cited in Gribben, Crawford. *Writing the Rapture: Prophecy*

Seth Rogen and James Franco's recent film *This is the End*, exemplifies the lampooning variety of the subversive modes of expression identified above, mocking themselves as well as dispensational concepts. The double-edged satire begins with a significant number of celebrity party-goers being swallowed up in fiery pits that have opened up in the backyard of Franco's ostentatious new house. The farce continues as Hollywood Hills, cast as the flaming mountain referenced in the Book of Revelation, erupts in a volcanic explosion, conflating apocalyptic literature with the entertainment industry's reputation as a modern-day Sodom (a characterization underscored by what reviewer A. O. Scott describes as the "Breughel-esque tableau of modern celebrity" that constitutes Franco's housewarming party).²⁸ In a particularly irreverent moment, Franco's ascension is reversed mid-rapture following his prideful and bawdy ridicule of cannibal gang leader Danny McBride.²⁹ Consistent with Rogen's previous body of work, the burlesque aspect of this subversive genre is front and center. Those who have not either been swallowed-up, cannibalized, or otherwise dispatched, are pursued by a red-eyed, horned demon with an enormous penis, rendering hell spawn ludicrous, and, depending on your sense of humor, laughable rather than terrifying.

Fiction in Evangelical America. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 131; Frykholm, Amy Johnson. *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 11.

²⁸ Scott, A. O. "Whoa, the Apocalypse. We're Still Buds, Right? 'This Is the End,' With Seth Rogen and James Franco." *The New York Times*. June 11, 2013.

²⁹ Rogen, Seth and Evan Goldberg (Producers) Rogen, Seth and Evan Goldberg (Directors) *This is the End*. [motion picture] Los Angeles: Columbia Pictures, 2013. 1:33:10, 31:13-15.

The satire within *This is the End* is merely intended to deride what the producers consider “vices, follies, stupidities,” evinced by the fact that they lampoon their own absurdities, as well as those they find in apocalypticism.³⁰ Marilyn Manson, on the other hand, literally embodies the subversive mode of expression that attempts to eradicate and replace the established order of culture.³¹ I describe him as literally embodying a subversive mode of expression, because Marilyn Manson is a stage persona, one engaged in the intentionally shocking, densely layered, performance art of an individual on a mission. And his mission, is “to be the loudest, most persistent alarm clock” he can be, in an effort to “snap society” out of what he characterizes as a “Christianity-and media-induced coma.”³²

In his autobiography, Manson recounts that his (or rather, inventor of the stage persona, Brian Warner’s), upbringing in the “evangelical subculture,” (specifically his experience in “Heritage Christian School”), fueled the creation of his alter-ego.³³ Having trouble fitting in, he became disillusioned with the evangelical message, and resentful toward school. “So,” in Manson’s own words, “rebellion set in.”³⁴ Teen-age angst, and the psychological implications of rebelliousness aside, the Marilyn Manson persona is a

³⁰ Turner (1974), 72.

³¹ Turner (1974), 72.

³² Strauss, Neil. *The Long Hard Road Out of Hell by Marilyn Manson*. (New York: ReganBooks, 1999), 80. Kindle Edition.

³³ Balmer, Randall. *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America, 25th Anniversary Edition*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Strauss 17.

³⁴ Strauss 24.

conflation of dispensationalism's "religious" Anti-christ, and Nietzsche's "secular" antichrist. And he promulgates his message through parodic inversion and grotesque realism, within a heavy metal version of the carnival these symbolic actions are historically associated with.³⁵

As evinced by the synthesis comprising his on-stage persona, Manson discovered a kindred spirit in Nietzsche's writings:

... like the superman theory that Nietzsche had, I think every man and woman is a star. It's just a matter of realizing it and becoming it. It's all a matter of willpower. You know, the world is just how you see it. If you want to have other people tell you how to see it, then you can. But if you want to look at it, then it's limitless what you can do.³⁶

Manson's convictions regarding Christianity are closely aligned with the philosophy delineated in *The Antichrist*. Like Nietzsche, Manson sees Christianity as "hostile," and "wag[ing] war to the death against this higher type of man," the self-realizing individual mentioned above.³⁷ As Patrick Osborne observes, Manson shares Nietzsche's view that in order to win this war against the "higher man," those who seek knowledge, or physical happiness, are considered evil by Christianity, labeled

³⁵ Halnon, Karen Bettez. "Heavy Metal Carnival and Dis-alienation: The Politics of Grotesque Realism." *Symbolic interaction*, Vol. 29, No 1 (Winter 2006), 36.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/si.2006.29.1.33?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

³⁶ Strauss, 164; Baddeley, Gavin. *Dissecting Marilyn Manson*. (London: Plexus, 2005), Location 2392. Kindle Edition.

³⁷ Strauss, 262; Nietzsche, F. W. *The Antichrist*. Translated by H. L. Mencken. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1918), 5.

“reprobate,” and “outcast among men.”³⁸ In his album *Antichrist Superstar*, Manson sets out to expose this “holy war” as the “fascist genocide” of those who refuse to conform to Christian orthodoxy, demonstrating what he describes as “irresponsible hate,” and Christian hypocrisy.³⁹

Stemming from his belief in Christianity’s war against the “higher man,” Manson uses the term *Antichrist* (the defining term in the title of his aforementioned album) as Nietzsche did, to mean anti-Christian, rather than Christianity’s “demonic anti-messiah” and “apocalyptic villain.”⁴⁰ In fact, he views this antichrist as a hero, “sav[ing] people from their own ignorance,” and Manson fulfills the role of antichrist hero by embracing a deviant nature.⁴¹ Consistent with carnival, the metasocial ritual from which heavy metal performances evolved, he puts himself on display as a product of the corrupted culture that created him.⁴² Manson “mutat[es]’ (his word)” into a persona whose very essence is to be castigated and reviled.⁴³ Consistent with liminal recombination, he painstakingly fashions his image from a “ready-made stock” of cultural symbols concerning evil and social decay, such as his demonic appearance, and

³⁸ Osborne, Patrick. “Constructing the Antichrist As Superstar: Marilyn Manson and The Mechanics of Eschatological Narrative.” *Persona Studies* 2017, vol. 3, no. 1. 49; Nietzsche, 5.

³⁹ Osborne, 49-50; Berkowitz, Daisy and Madonna Wayne Gacy, Marilyn Manson, Jeordi White. “Irresponsible Hate Anthem.” *Antichrist Superstar*. (New Orleans: Nothing Studios, 1996).

⁴⁰ Baddeley, location 2383; Strauss, 213.

⁴¹ Strauss, 214.

⁴² Halnon, 33; Conaway, Charles. “Manson’s R+J: Shakespeare, Marilyn Manson and the Fine Art of Scapegoating.” *Rock Brands: Selling Sound in a Media Saturated Culture*. Edited by Elizabeth Barfoot Christian. (New York: Lexington Books, 2011), 131.

⁴³ Wright, Robert. “‘I’d sell you suicide’” Pop Music and Moral Panic in the Age of Marilyn Manson.” *Popular Music*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Oct. 2000), 377.

destruction of bibles, topped off with carnivalesque, grotesque realism dramatized through bodily fluids.⁴⁴ In doing so, according to Patrick Osborne, Manson compels his evangelical adversaries to interpret his persona through an eschatological filter, solidifying his association with the Christian Antichrist.⁴⁵ Manson's conflation of Nietzsche's "secular" antichrist and dispensationalism's "religious" Anti-christ is complete.

Brian Warner has fashioned himself into a living symbolic object, a fantastic and monstrous recombination of "secular" philosophical notions and "religious" dispensational concepts as it travels through the "seedbed" of American popular culture. Like the *Man Without Arms* figurine, Marilyn Manson is intended to shock his audience into contemplating society. As to his mission.... It is best summed up in the following remarks regarding *Antichrist Superstar*:

I consider the record to be a ritual to bring about the Apocalypse. Each time someone plays the record, it takes them one step away from God and one step nearer to becoming an individual. In Christianity's eyes, a nation of individuals is the Apocalypse, because then they will no longer have moral control.⁴⁶

This statement makes it indisputably clear that, unlike the Rogen film considered above, Manson's intent is not merely to deride, but eradicate the traditional/Christian order (by

⁴⁴ Osborne, 47.

⁴⁵ Osborne, 45.

⁴⁶ Ingham, Chris. "Blood On Our Hands: Backstage With Marilyn Manson, Public Enemy No. 1." October 22, 2015. Teamrock.com. <http://teamrock.com/feature/2015-10-22/blood-on-our-hands-backstage-with-marilyn-manson-public-enemy-no-1>. (Accessed: February 23, 2018).

impelling listeners to move away from God) and replace it (with a nation of individuals). Paradoxically, his efforts to do so invoke the very tradition he sets out to annihilate. Manson is indeed attempting to, as Howard V. Hendrix phrases it, “lift the veil of waking illusion” from the eyes of his listeners, “to reveal a deeper reality,” albeit regarding what he perceives to be Christian hypocrisy and oppression.⁴⁷ Intentionally derogatory, yet once again consistent with the liminal recombination of cultural elements, when referring to the Apocalypse as it pertains to the Christianity he opposes, Manson reduces the term to the popular idiom “The End of the World.” This powerful eschatological concept has been diminished, shriveled, to mean merely something his adversary cannot abide.

Finally, I contemplate new forms and ideas that have developed within modern entertainment genres, specifically: a shift in the popular understanding of the term apocalypse itself, dispensationalist concepts that have made their way into existing genres, and the integration of rapture imagery into popular culture particularly. As indicated, the first new form/idea I consider is the popular meaning of the term apocalypse. “*Apocalypse*” stems from the Greek word (transliterated as) *apokalupsis*, “a disclosure of truth,” in that “events by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made visible to all,” the metaphoric lifting of the veil

⁴⁷ Hendrix, Howard V. “Agnostic at the Singularity.” *YLEM Journal: Artists Using Science and Technology*. Vol. 26. No. 10. (Sept.—Oct. 2006), 10.

mentioned above.⁴⁸ It is, of course, in this sense that the term is ultimately understood within dispensationalism, the dismantling of perceived realities, and unveiling of divine truth with its related sacred state of being, “renew[ing] as it destroys.”⁴⁹ Within today’s popular culture, however, the term brings to mind something quite different. These days, as Hendrix points out, the conventional understanding of apocalypse emphasizes the *rending*, rather than the lifting of the veil, with laser-like focus on the catastrophic events, and global destruction associated with End Times.⁵⁰ This shift occurs following the introduction of Hal Lindsey’s *Late Great Planet Earth* into the cultural seedbed, a book packed with depictions of cataclysmic events and images of annihilation, representations written with what Boyer characterizes as “pornographic fascination.”⁵¹

Given the spectacular nature of such events (whether real, or heretofore only imagined), I consider this shift in perspective through the genre of film. Though “disaster films,” in themselves, are nothing new, scholar of media industries Frederick Wasser notes a “rather dramatic period of change” during the mid-1970s.⁵² Wasser describes this transition as occurring when the era of Irwin Allen disaster films (*The*

⁴⁸ “Apokalupsis.” *The KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon*. Online. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/kjv/apokalupsis.html> (Accessed: Feb. 26, 2018).

⁴⁹ Joustra, Robert and Alissa Wilkinson. *How to Survive the Apocalypse: Zombies, Cylons, Faith and Politics at the End of the World*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 2.

⁵⁰ Hendrix, 10.

⁵¹ Boyer, (2005.)

⁵² Wasser, Frederick. “Disaster Films: Classic Heroes and Risk-Society Survivors.” *The Apocalypse in Film: Dystopias, Disasters, and Other visions about the End of the World*. Edited by Karen A. Ritzenhoff and Angela Krewani. (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2016), 120.

Towering Inferno, and *The Poseidon Adventure*, which are of much smaller scale) gave way to what he characterizes as the “thrill-ride” blockbuster that comes to fruition in films exemplified by those of Roland Emmerich (which do indeed depict the end of the world, at least as we know it).⁵³ Wasser’s bone of contention with these larger-than-life movies lies in what he perceives as formulaic storytelling and minimalist stories, which affords the filmmaker additional screen time “for destruction and mayhem.”⁵⁴ The relevance of this Hollywood turn of events, however, stems from when it occurred and began to take root in the seedbed, as much as the shift in perspective itself. The timing of this explosion in spectacular Hollywood destruction aligns with the “prairie fire spread” of dispensationalism, and the publication of Hal Lindsey’s *Late Great Planet Earth*.

Underscoring this link between the recent surge in dispensationalism’s influence (delineated in Chapter 3) and escalated filmic destruction, is a concomitant redefinition of the notion of heroism. As Wasser observes, what constitutes heroism shifts from being a leader, to that of survivor. In disaster films of Allen’s era, a human being can effect change, as represented by *The Towering Inferno*’s Doug Roberts, who joins forces with the fire chief to blow up a number of water towers, in order to save those trapped in a skyscraper engulfed in a massive fire. If it is not possible for the hero himself to “change the world,” he is able to persuade others to take action, exemplified by *The*

⁵³ Wasser, 120.

⁵⁴ Wasser, 121.

Poseidon Adventure's hero figure. Though Rev. Scott may not be able to right the overturned ocean liner in a literal sense, he persuades a group of passengers to make their way to the bottom of the ship (and the water's surface), rather than give up the hope of being recovered in a rescue mission. In either of these hero-scenarios, the world is consistently put right "by the end of the story," manifest once again, in Doug Roberts, who commits to working with the fire chief going forward, in an effort to design safer skyscrapers in the future.⁵⁵

Survivors, on the other hands, cannot forge new alliances or change hearts. In the age of blockbuster disaster films, art imitates, if not life, at least the pre-millennial sentiment that the world is a wrecked vessel and human effort to improve the situation is futile. The narrative arc of films like Emmerich's *The Day after Tomorrow*, begins long past the point when political or social action could be effective. For example, though protagonist, paleoclimatologist Jack Hall, has been warning government officials about an impending climatic catastrophe for years, they remain skeptical, and complacent. Consistent with the hero-as-survivor model, Hall is neither able to effect change, nor persuade others to take large-scale action. Therefore, akin to Moody's lifeboat, heroism has now come to be defined by facilitating the survival/salvation of you and yours. The film's plot revolves around Hall's against-all-odds mission to rescue his son, trapped in New York City after transportation services are disrupted, as a new ice age descends on

⁵⁵Wasser, 121.

the northern hemisphere. Hall's mission is, of course, successful. Both he and his son survive this catastrophic event, which has the added effect of restoring Hall's broken marriage. However, unlike the scenario in *The Towering Inferno*, human effort does not quash the disaster, only facilitates the protagonist's survival.

Next, I examine the influence of dispensationalist concepts that have made their way into existing genres. Already a product of "monster or fantasy making" recombination, zombie films also exhibit dispensational influences. The idea of a zombie has been among us for centuries, originating in magical elements of Western African religions, which made their way across the Atlantic with those forcibly transported to work West Indies sugar plantations. The notion of a zombie, "without will, without name, and trapped in a living death of unending labour," in the service of a "bokor or witch-doctor," is, of course, a logical conflation of those magical elements with the experience of slavery. As such, the concept became incorporated into Haitian folklore, appearing in the U.S. in the early part of the 20th century, as a result of America's occupation of Haiti.⁵⁶ Since they arrived, zombies have been utilized as metaphor for nearly everything from "anarchy to systemic and technological dependence to consumerism for nearly a century."⁵⁷ According to Kim Paffenroth, they

⁵⁶ Joustra, 13; Luckhurst, Roger. "Where do zombies come from?" *BBC Culture*. August 31, 2015. (Accessed: February 28, 2018).

⁵⁷ Joustra, 13; Luckhurst.

also connote “a perverted version” of the doctrine of bodily resurrection.⁵⁸ Of course, zombie films have always lent themselves to this interpretation. The express alignment of zombies rising with judgment day, however, constitutes a new, recombined form.

While zombie films have “scared the pants off us over and over again,” as Robert Joustra and Alissa Wilkinson remind us, the last few years have been a veritable bonanza for the genre.⁵⁹ The first “walking dead” movie, *White Zombie*, appeared in 1932, and, like the films of this genre for decades to come, it is grounded in zombies’ Voodoo origins. The zombies in this picture are transformed by “traditional means,” potion administered by a *bokor* for the purpose of controlling them.⁶⁰ This scenario changes with George Romero’s 1968 genre-defining classic, *Night of the Living Dead*. Though no firm explanation is given for the ghastly rising of zombies Romero depicts, consistent with the movie’s early Cold War release, it is speculated that the cause was science gone awry, radiation carried back to earth from a recent space probe.⁶¹

Romero’s 1978 sequel, *Dawn of the Dead*, on the other hand, relinquishes the science-based explanation. The risen zombies are explicitly characterized as the “walking damned.”⁶² As the movie poster proclaims, “When there is no more room in

⁵⁸ Paffenroth, Kim. *Gospel of the Living Dead: George Romero’s Visions of Hell on Earth*. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 12.

⁵⁹ Joustra, 136.

⁶⁰ Davis, Sara. “Movie History – Bring Out the Undead – The Evolution of Zombies on Film.” <http://www.amc.com/talk/2010/10/zombie-movies-2> (Accessed: February 28, 2018).

⁶¹ Paffenroth, 85.

⁶² Paffenroth, 14.

Hell, the dead will walk the earth," a notion the protagonist attributes to the Voodoo tradition from which zombies emerged.⁶³ After a generation of Hal Lindsey-influenced dispensationalism, however, replete with the *Left Behind* phenomenon, the 2004 remake puts this explanation in the mouth of a Christian minister. The rising zombies now become manifest judgment of an angry God visited upon a sinful humanity. The televangelist cites familiar evangelical issues, such as homosexuality, abortion, and pre-marital sex. Invoking Judgment Day, he poses the question, "How do you think your God will judge you?" Not surprisingly, the minister's answer is, "Well, friends, now we know."⁶⁴ The plot starts with a reversal of the rapture scenario depicted in *A Thief in the Night*, the Christian apocalyptic film considered above. As a young woman and her family awake for what they expect to be a typical morning, they are met with chaos, and commotion resulting from an eschatological event that has occurred while they slept. This time, of course, it is not the rapture. The mayhem does not stem from believers being "caught up" in the midst of daily activities. Rather, the pandemonium is caused by the bodily resurrection of the damned. And in case you miss the reference, opening credits are scored with Johnny Cash's *The Man Comes Around*, with the lyrics

⁶³ Rubenstein, Richard (Producer), and Romero, George (Director). (1978). *Dawn of the Dead*. [motion picture]. (Hollywood: United Film Distribution; Paffenroth, 85.

⁶⁴ Rubenstein, Richard (Producer), and Snyder, Zack (Director). *Dawn of the Dead*. (Universal City: Universal Studios, 2004). [motion picture]. http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie_scripts/d/dawn-of-the-dead-script-transcript.html

“It’s Alpha and Omega’s kingdom come,” playing behind the sound of screams, snarling zombies, and gunfire, searing the fused images into viewers’ minds.⁶⁵

The final new form, or idea, I consider as dispensationalism churns its way through the “seedbed,” revolves around the rapture, described by Timothy Weber as dispensationalism’s most “distinctive” doctrine.⁶⁶ The rapture, as Frykholm points out, “is woven into the fabric of American culture,” in terms of contemporary popular imagination, as well as our hopes, fears and mythology.⁶⁷ As I proceed, I touch upon both of these sub-categories, if you will. On the lightest note, popular culture is peppered with rapture imagery: from Homer Simpson starting awake, shrieking “Ahhh! It’s the Rapture! Quick! Get Bart out of the house before God comes!,” to the “opening death” of a *Six Feet Under* episode occurring when a woman mistakes inflatable dolls floating from a truckbed for the rapture, jumps out of her car, and is struck by another driver; or the cross-pollination that occurs between dispensationalism and *Star Trek*, with the rapture occasionally referred to as “‘Beam me up’ theology.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Cash, John R. “The Man Comes Around.” *Unearthed*. (Santa Monica : Universal, 2003). Metrolyrics. <http://www.metrolyrics.com/the-man-comes-around-lyrics-johnny-cash.html> (Accessed: November 4, 2017).

⁶⁶ Weber, Timothy. “Dispensational Premillennialism: The Dispensationalist Era.” *Christian History Institute*, (1999). (Accessed: December 15, 2017).

⁶⁷ Frykholm (2004), 13.

⁶⁸ Groenig, Matt. “Sideshow Bob Roberts.” *The Simpsons*. (Season 6. Episode 5. Fox network. October 9, 1994.); Ball, Alan and Rick Cleveland. “In Case of Rapture.” *Six Feet Under*. (Season 4. Episode 2. HBO. June 20, 2004.) *Six Feet Under* was a series about a family who runs a funeral home, and as indicated above, each episode starts with an “opening death;” Dart, John. “‘Beam me up’ theology: The debate over ‘Left Behind.’” *The Christian Century*. (September 25, 2002).

It should come as no surprise, that dispensationalism's concept of the rapture influences science fiction and, as Frykholm notes, the common imagination, regarding alien visitation and abduction narratives.⁶⁹ *Alien Rapture: The Chosen*, by Edgar Rothschild Fouche' and Brad Steiger, is one such example. This book is akin to Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* (published in 1953), in the respect that it explores humanity's transcendence, and the extraterrestrials who facilitate this transformation. While *Childhood's End* clearly contains a religious element, Clarke's primary focus is considering what it means to be human, the role individuality plays toward that end, and the implications of evolving beyond the human form.

In *Alien Rapture: The Chosen's* narrative, extraterrestrials known as Jexovah have been studying our genetic structure for thousands of years, manipulating it to prevent human civilization from destroying itself. The Jexovah have developed a new plan for perfecting our DNA, and once the preparations have been completed (which should take about 2,000 years), the Rapture will begin, and selected humans will be transported (presumably to a ship). Then, the manipulation of their genetic structure will be finalized, allowing them to evolve into true Jexovah, whereby "the children of God will be redeemed in the Jexovah's eyes."⁷⁰ Like the zombie genre, alien abduction stories have always lent themselves to such interpretation, but, as with zombie films, the

⁶⁹ Frykholm (2004,) 13.

⁷⁰ Fouche', Edgar Rothschild, and Brad Steiger. *Alien Rapture: The Chosen*. (Lakeville, Minnesota: Galde Press, 1998), 174.

express alignment of rapture with an alien abduction narrative occurs after the oft-mentioned “prairie fire spread” of dispensationalism, thereby constituting a new, recombined form.

Of course, incorporation of the rapture into secular literature is not confined to science fiction, or the supernatural sub-genre of speculative fiction (which has not examined but is rich with obvious possibilities). On more than one occasion, a parallel has been drawn between the “Rapture-like phenomenon,” at the heart of Tom Perrotta’s work of speculative fiction, *The Leftovers*, and the events of 9/11.⁷¹ As one interviewer remarked “many people in New York, you know did disappear. They disappeared into, into the rubble of the towers.”⁷² Though Perrotta indicates the novel was not written as a direct response to 9/11, his answer indicates that the events are nevertheless intertwined with the rapture imagery he employs. Perrotta further reveals that he conflates the continued mourning of those whose loved ones vanished that day, with the period of tribulation which follows the rapture.⁷³ In short, Perrotta utilizes eschatological imagery as a vehicle for investigating the emotional and psychological responses to events like 9/11.

⁷¹ Perrotta, Tom. *The Leftovers: A Novel*. (New York: Harper Collins, 2011), 3.

⁷² “Examining ‘The Leftovers,’ After The Rapture.” *Fresh Air*. National Public Radio. May 25, 2012. <https://www.npr.org/2014/06/27/326158610/after-the-rapture-who-are-the-leftovers>. (Accessed: June 12, 2017).

⁷³ “Examining ‘The Leftovers.’”

Significantly, *The Leftovers* constitutes the first overtly secular “new form” considered. Though the rapture imagery Perrotta employs is derived from dispensationalism, his intended purpose disassociates it from its eschatological origins. The aim of *The Leftovers*’ rapture imagery is not to “conjure up fear” in readers regarding their salvation, as in the *Left Behind* series. It is not intended to indicate that Judgment Day is upon us and humanity has been found lacking, as in Romero’s zombie films. Nor is Perrotta’s use of rapture imagery meant to represent human transcendence, as in the alien abduction novel considered above. While there is much speculation within *The Leftovers* regarding whether or not what is referred to as “The Sudden Departure” indicates any of the aforementioned scenarios, no answer is forthcoming.⁷⁴ For, as touched upon above, Perrotta did not choose this imagery for its association with the sacred. Rather, in an effort to examine human reaction to “incomprehensible events...things we can’t completely understand,” he selected rapture imagery for its connection to loss, suffering, and a need for answers, the emotions of those who are “leftover.”⁷⁵

Perrotta makes it clear early on that *The Leftovers* is not a work of rapture fiction. Experts repeatedly affirm that, though what has been labeled the “Sudden Departure” is “a Rapture-like phenomenon,... it doesn’t appear to have been the Rapture.”⁷⁶ This

⁷⁴ Perrotta, 2.

⁷⁵ “Examining ‘The Leftovers.’”

⁷⁶ Perrotta, 3.

simultaneous disappearance of millions of people around the world seems to be a “random harvest,” including Jews, as well as other non-Christian sects, not to mention atheists and homosexuals.⁷⁷ And “the one thing the Rapture couldn’t be was random,” as distraught Christians tormented by the thought of being found lacking were wont to point out.⁷⁸ However, in an effort to remain intentionally ambiguous, (given that *The Leftovers* is a study of human reaction to incomprehensible events), in the world Perrotta created, “depending on your viewing habits, you could listen to experts debating the validity of conflicting religious and scientific explanations for what was either a miracle or a tragedy.”⁷⁹

Perrotta establishes a parallel between the fictional “October 14th” and the tragic events that occurred on September 11th, predominantly through commentary on news coverage. He characterizes the coverage of October 14th as “hysterical monotony,” noting the incessant repetition of a few basic facts, the ever-rising tally of those missing, and the litany of interviews with traumatized eyewitnesses.⁸⁰ Readers old enough to remember the news coverage following September 11th are certain to make the connection. Unlike the coverage of September 11th, however, with its defining image of the burning towers, the imagery was “harder to pin down,” for October 14th is a more

⁷⁷ Perrotta, 3.

⁷⁸ Perrotta, 3.

⁷⁹ Perrotta, 51.

⁸⁰ Perrotta, 50.

“amorphous” event.⁸¹ Consistent with his intended ambiguity, despite having established that *The Leftovers* is not a work of rapture fiction, Perrotta’s imagery echoes that of the *Left Behind* series: train wrecks, enormous highway pileups, and big passenger jets landed by terrified co-pilots. And adding to the nebulous character of October 14th, unlike September 11th, there were “no bad guys to hate, which made everything that much harder to get into focus.”⁸²

Perrotta’s storyline is not concerned with providing answers as to precisely what occurred on October 14, or closure of any kind for that matter. As *The Leftovers*’ plot begins. “a full year has passed since the catastrophe; the survivors had absorbed the blow and found, to their amazement that they were still standing, though some were a bit more wobbly than others.”⁸³ Perrotta’s character-driven narrative constitutes a psychological study revolving around the Garvey family, who embody varying forms of suffering, and reactions to “incomprehensible events” like September 11th. Husband and father, Kevin Garvey, is Mapleton’s new mayor, petitioned to run for office by the recently formed, and symbolically named, “Hopeful Party.”⁸⁴ He is an “up-and-at ‘em type,” a former athlete who is naturally upbeat, “all good news all the time: Business was booming, the weather was fine, he just ran six miles in under an hour, if you could

⁸¹ Perrotta, 51.

⁸² Perrotta, 51.

⁸³ Perrotta, 4.

⁸⁴ Perrotta, 14.

believe that.”⁸⁵ To top things off, his favorite bar is the *Carpe Diem*. This is not to say that Kevin Garvey lives in denial. He admittedly struggles with repercussions of the Sudden Departure like everyone else. Quite simply, he thinks dwelling on the “terrible” and “incomprehensible” thing that occurred is not healthy.⁸⁶

Garvey just wants to expedite the healing process (including his own). He has witnessed his process before:

It didn’t matter what happened in the world—genocidal wars, natural disasters, un-speakable crimes, mass disappearances, whatever—eventually people got tired of brooding about it. Time moved on, seasons changed, individuals withdrew into their private lives, turned their faces toward the sun. On balance, he thought, it was probably a good thing.⁸⁷

Kevin Garvey’s demeanor, and the response to catastrophic events he embodies, is consistent with Noam Chomsky’s assertion:

... if you assume that there’s no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, there are opportunities to change things, etc., there’s a chance you may contribute to making a better world. That’s your choice.⁸⁸

This is why, in an effort to alleviate the constant pressure survivors bear, Garvey lobbied for an annual Hero’s Day Parade, an event which would channel at least some of Mapleton’s collective grief into a yearly observance.

⁸⁵ Perrotta, 34, 5.

⁸⁶ Perrotta, 89.

⁸⁷ Perrotta, 297.

⁸⁸ Chomsky, Noam. *Chronicles of Dissent*. Interviewed by David Barsamian. (Vancouver: New Star, 1992), 265.

Laurie Garvey, Kevin's wife, represents guilt, specifically, the unconscious, and potentially immobilizing variety associated with surviving a traumatic experience, especially one with "significant victimization."⁸⁹ According to Doctor of Social Work Kathleen Nader, survivor's guilt frequently evokes the need to elicit rejection or punishment.⁹⁰ And Laurie's certainty, despite her agnosticism, that the Rapture had indeed occurred, and God's choice not to factor religion into His decision-making deems His rejection all the more personal, exemplifies this state of mind.

Laurie's need to escape "the unreality of pretending" things were okay, that she should tend to her responsibilities, and "keep on going," is consistent with the immobilizing effects of survivor's guilt.⁹¹ Her notion, that the "regimen of hardship and humiliation" required by the cult known as the Guilty Remnant, offers "the dignity of feeling like your existence bore some sort of relationship to reality" aligns with the capacity of survivor's guilt to keep the guilt-ridden individual "stuck" in suffering, and depression.⁹² Laurie's reflections regarding the repercussions her family has suffered as a result of her decision to leave them and join the Guilty Remnant are compatible with Dr. Nader's observation that guilt often punishes more than the guilty. Not surprisingly, those closest to the guilt-ridden individual are most affected by behaviors

⁸⁹ Nader, Kathleen. "Guilt Following Traumatic Events." Gift From Within—PTSD Resources for Survivors and Caregivers. <http://www.giftfromwithin.org/html/Guilt-Following-Traumatic-Events.html> (Accessed: March 19, 2018).

⁹⁰ Nader.

⁹¹ Perrotta, 121.

⁹² Perrotta, 121; Nader.

precisely like Laurie's abandonment of her family. Finally, the fact that Laurie Garvey finds what she is looking for in a cult named the Guilty Remnant, underscores my contention about this character's connection to guilt.

Kevin and Laurie's high school aged daughter, Jill, was an eyewitness. Jill and her best friend since pre-school, "two giggly young girls," were watching YouTube videos on Jill's laptop, when "in the time it takes to click a mouse, one of them is gone, and the other is screaming."⁹³ As Kevin acknowledges, "he didn't need a psychologist to tell him that it was something she'd struggle with for the rest of her life."⁹⁴ Not surprisingly, Jill suffers from depression and post-traumatic stress.

Every bit as damaging as the immediate trauma Jill experiences, is the sense of loss, the fact that "people kept disappearing on her in the months to follow, if not so dramatically."⁹⁵ Her brother, Tom, leaves for college never to return (which I will address shortly). Her father, though physically present, has turned into "a bewildered man," who, no matter how hard he tries, "never manages to say the right thing."⁹⁶ As Perrotta writes, "How can he when he's just as lost and clueless as she is," which has lead Kevin to lose faith in his authority as father figure.⁹⁷ It was only when her mother joined the Guilty Remnant, however, that" Jill began to understand for herself how

⁹³ Perrotta, 21.

⁹⁴ Perrotta, 21.

⁹⁵ Perrotta, 21.

⁹⁶ Perrotta, 21.

⁹⁷ Perrotta, 21, 40.

absence could warp the mind.”⁹⁸ Jill’s mental trauma manifests in the “big dead eyes” and recently shaved head, belonging to someone who could be a teenage criminal, one who replaced the long-haired, sophomore who used to face the world with a sweet smile. Once a girl with perfect grades, and big plans for the future, she now spends her days drinking, and engaging in promiscuous behavior. Kevin is surprised Jill has not “run off with the Barefoot People,” a cult who takes on the trappings of 1960’s hippies. In a world where nothing matters anymore, their credo consists of “pleasure is the creator’s gift,” and “the only sin is misery.”⁹⁹

Tom Garvey is Jill’s brother, and the aforementioned never-to-return college student. While his sister loses everyone around her in one fashion or another, Tom has lost his sense of self, and as such, embodies the loss of identity that often accompanies trauma.¹⁰⁰ Tom’s first week at school, he did what a lot of college students do, “got drunk and went to a football game with a big gang from his floor.”¹⁰¹ He painted his face in the school colors, and found his place among the other students who were “roaring and chanting like a single organism,” exhilarated to feel his identity, to

⁹⁸ Perrotta, 32.

⁹⁹ Perrotta, 170.

¹⁰⁰ Haliburn, Joan. “Identity and Self: Psychotherapy in the Path to Recovery from Trauma.” *Nsw Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors*. <http://www.startts.org.au/training/clinical-training-and-seminars/clinical-master-class-evenings/sense-of-identity-after-trauma-presentation/> (Accessed: March 20,, 2018); Rosenthal, Michelle. *Your Life After Trauma: Powerful Practices to Reclaim Your Identity*. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), xvi.

¹⁰¹ Perrotta, 49.

“dissolve[] into something bigger and more powerful.”¹⁰² That feeling of belonging came to an abrupt end on October 15th. School was cancelled, students were given seven days to vacate campus, and as contributor to Recovery.org, Michelle Rosenthal, phrases it “his sense of a positive, connected identity ha[d] been snuffed out.”¹⁰³

Once universities began to re-open and Tom returned to school, his reaction is consistent with Rosenthal’s description of feeling separated from your identity, “In ripping you from the familiar and dropping you back down in a completely unfamiliar landscape, trauma can make it seem as if you no longer know yourself at all.”¹⁰⁴ Though joining a fraternity was something Tom had considered synonymous with the college experience, it now “seemed hazy and unreal to him, images from a movie he’d seen a long time ago and whose plot he could no longer remember.”¹⁰⁵ A fellow Alpha Tau Omega pledge, apparently having similar difficulties, invited Tom to see Wayne Gilchrest speak one Saturday afternoon. After several minutes relating his own experiences surrounding The Sudden Departure, Gilchrest informed the audience “I want you to let me hug you and take away your pain.”¹⁰⁶ The source of Tom’s pain, of course, is a fractured identity, and lost sense of belonging.

¹⁰² Perrotta, 49.

¹⁰³ Rosenthal (2015), xvi; Heal My PTSD with Michele Rosenthal. <http://www.healmyptsd.com/about> (Accessed March 20, 2018).

¹⁰⁴ Rosenthal (2015), xvii.

¹⁰⁵ Perrotta, 58.

¹⁰⁶ Perrotta, 68.

Wayne Gilchrest began referring to himself as Holy Wayne, and took on the role of charismatic cult leader in what he started calling the Healing Hug Movement. Being among the first volunteers of the expanding organization, Tom was given the responsibility of running the Boston chapter. He was to arrange a multi-campus speaking tour, and whatever else he and the other (now) followers thought might raise awareness in the local college population. Once again, Tom was exhilarated to be a part of something larger than himself. Of course, complications arise, and Holy Wayne winds up in legal trouble that destroys the Healing Hug Movement, but for the moment, Tom has found an identity.

Though his intended purpose of examining human reaction to incomprehensible events (such as those exhibited by the Garveys) disassociates rapture imagery from its eschatological origins, the world Perrotta creates evinces how deeply entrenched late 20th century premillennial dispensationalism has become in American Culture. While the simultaneous disappearance of millions is indeed an incomprehensible catalyst for trauma, this literary scenario would not resonate as it has (the novel's success prompting a fantastically popular HBO series) without Hal Lindsey's "prairie fire spread of dispensationalism," or its offspring, the *Left Behind* series. Phillip Wylie's 1951 novel, *The Disappearance*, testifies to this contention.¹⁰⁷ While *The Leftovers* and *The Disappearance* both revolve around the instantaneous disappearance of millions of

¹⁰⁷ Wylie, Philip. *The Disappearance*. (New York: Rinehart, 1951).

people around the globe, Wylie's work remains relatively unknown. In the pre-Hal Lindsey, "space-age" era, *The Disappearance* is overshadowed by the film version of Wylie's space-oriented work *When Worlds Collide*. Perrotta's *The Leftovers*, on the other hand, was planted in a "seedbed" rich with the dispensational imagery delineated in this survey.

It is not surprising that a number of religious cults emerge in Perrotta's world. These nascent belief practices clearly correspond to the various responses to trauma that the several members of the Garvey family embody, underscoring the process delineated throughout this study of the transition from antebellum post-millennialism to Cold War Armageddon Theology. Both *The Leftovers'* cults, and the aforementioned shift within American Protestantism, stem from, and ameliorate, responses to overwhelming events. Furthermore, regardless of whether it is "religious" imagery entrenched in American culture informing "secular" media, or "secular" events provoking the evolution of an existing theology, especially when considered in tandem, both scenarios demonstrate how the "religious" sphere and the "secular" domain influence and shape one another.

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