The focus was on the physical abuse and emotional suffering of slaves, writes Isani, an English professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The reader was seldom made witness to the harsh details of whippings and killings but was asked "in a vein of quiet melancholy" to dwell on the aftereffects—"the weeping child, the broken man, and the dead body of the suicide."

Epistolary fiction was the vogue. Often the abolitionist author invented a slave character—Corymbo, for instance, in "The African's Complaint" (1797)—to recount his tale of woe. These fictional narrators (frequently of "royal descent") wove scenes of New World misery and hardship with reminiscences of an "idyllic and pastoral" life in Africa. "My labors then were sweet," moaned one. "Strong and cheerful, I hailed the breeze of the morning." But writers made little effort to describe the African environment, mainly, Isani suggests, because few knew much about it. Instead, they gave unusual names to their characters and made passing reference to distant places (notably the Gold Coast) to provide an air of authenticity.

Several authors of early abolitionist fiction remain famous today for other accomplishments. Timothy Dwight, eighth president of Yale, tried his hand at antislavery verse; Benjamin Franklin created a fictional African, Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim. Yet "the voice of the black [was] seldom heard directly," notes Isani. One remarkable exception: ex-slave Phillis Wheatley, whose lyric verse was published in Boston magazines in the 1770s.

Fast Fadeout

"The Color Film Crisis" by Paul C. Spehr, in *American Film* (Nov. 1979), Subscription Service, P.O. Box 966, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737.

During the 1950s, Hollywood switched from Technicolor to Eastman Color (still in use today). The result has been new films that fade within a few years to an ugly purple and negatives that will be worthless within a lifetime.

Many of the films—e.g., *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *An American in Paris* (1951)—printed by the old Technicolor method retain their bright colors, notes Spehr, assistant chief of the motion picture division of the Library of Congress. But shooting in Technicolor, which records each of three primary colors—cyan, yellow, and magenta—on a separate roll of film, was time consuming. It required a bulky camera and special lighting, costumes, and sets. Moreover, the Technicolor Company kept details of the process secret; it wielded unwelcome power over the studios, sometimes demanding control of movie negatives. Eastman Color, on the other hand, records all colors on a single film roll, is less expensive, and is franchised by Kodak to the major studios. Its dyes, however, are less stable.

Film archivists currently depend on two methods to preserve a gen-

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eration of Eastman Color films. In one process, the primary colors are recorded on three separate rolls of color-keyed black-and-white film (which does not fade), an expensive undertaking—$30,000 a movie— akin to original Technicolor. At least three Hollywood companies now routinely make such black-and-white separations, although putting the three rolls back in sync for showing remains, to some extent, a matter of hit-or-miss.

Cold storage is also being tried, but, says Spehr, repeated thawing and refreezing may damage films; videodiscs, by contrast, are durable but as yet can only be shown on television screens. One preservation technique under study involves the use of laser-beam holograms (recordings of the patterns of light waves).

Many great films of the last 25 years will likely fade into oblivion before the means to save them are perfected, Spehr concludes—all because movie makers failed to reckon on the future profits to be made from the public's abiding interest in their creations.

Monet's Spontaneity

"Method and Meaning in Monet" by Robert Herbert, in *Art in America* (Sept. 1979), 542 Pacific Ave., Marion, Ohio 43302.

Conservative art historians dismiss the vibrant, multicolored landscapes and cathedral paintings of French Impressionist Claude Monet (1840–1926) as "hasty fantasy" or "melting ice-creams." Yet an analysis of the artist's brushwork by Herbert, a Yale art historian, reveals the painstaking methods Monet developed to create the illusion of spontaneity.

Monet rejected the traditional chiaroscuro approach of Delacroix and other pre-Impressionists—the formal arranging of light and dark elements in a careful synthesis of subject matter and imagination. He pursued instead a new method using pure color. So intent was he on achieving an instinctive response to a moment of "color-light" on a bridge or landscape, legend has it, that he entrusted nothing to memory; he abandoned a painting when the weather or the sun's angle changed, returning to it only under identical conditions. But this portrait of the artist is only half the truth, argues Herbert. Monet's repeated visits to his subjects were regulated by the drying times between applications of several layers of paint.

Beneath the play of surface colors in Monet's paintings lie layers of light-hued texture strokes. These vary in length, thickness, and direction. In *Stone Pine at Antibes* (1888), for instance, the artist laid down lateral strokes in areas of water and "diagonal, blossom-shaped" strokes to represent foliage. The foreground has "smaller twisting strokes—made by short, rotating stabs of the brush"; broader strokes underlie mountain and sky. Not only did Monet establish a "sense of near and far in the very texture," Herbert remarks, he also recreated different "real" substances. Atop this texture, Monet performed his ex-