

VALERIE DOMENICA LEVY

The Antislavery Web of Connection: Maria Weston Chapman's Liberty Bell (1839-1858)

Under the Direction of BARBARA MCCASKILL

Published annually from 1839 to 1858 and featuring fifteen volumes in total, Maria Weston Chapman's Liberty Bell was the longest-lived abolitionist gift-book. Though modest in appearance, since the Boston abolitionists had limited funds with which to work, the gift-book was anything but ordinary. Not only did it boast some of the world's most renowned and respected thinkers and writers of the day—from Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker to Frederick Douglass and Harriet Martineau—but its literary value made it aesthetically notable as well as politically rousing. In refutation of the lingering attitude that abolitionist short fiction, poetry, and essays are often too vociferous to be considered “good,” The Liberty Bell exemplifies the ways in which abolitionist writing produced important literary as well as social changes.

This comprehensive study of Chapman's antislavery publication demonstrates how The Liberty Bell brought women from the hearth to the podium and from the pen to the editor's desk, how it popularized the sentimental tradition through the revolutionary prose of radical women and unconventional men, how it broadened the scope of already-stable genres such as the elegiac tradition, and how it expanded the domestic and national into the foreign at a time when gift-books were “aggressively nationalistic” (Thompson 160). Maria Weston Chapman and the gift-book that she masterminded were not without their flaws, however. Thus, this dissertation also seeks to understand the gaps between ideology and action, and word and deed, especially in respect to the issue of race and how

the presence (or absence) of black writers effected the overall messages of immediate emancipation and racial integration that The Liberty Bell sought to espouse.

INDEX WORDS: Abolition(ism), Antislavery web of connection, Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, Immediate Emancipation, Multiculturalism, Sentimentalism

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LIBERTY BELL (1839-1858)

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Grace Theresa Heitler and Richard Barry Heitler.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: CREATING A “WEB OF CONNECTION”¹The Aesthetic and Social Relevance of *The Liberty Bell*

The Liberty Bell—the first antislavery gift-book of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), published annually from 1839 to 1858 and edited by Maria Weston Chapman—warrants consideration as a key source in any study of feminist-abolitionism.² Not only was The Liberty Bell the longest-lived abolitionist gift-book, but its content and form and the volatile politics surrounding both its editor and its publication make it a vital component in the evolution of the abolitionist movement in antebellum Boston. One critical goal of this study is to demonstrate the merit of the antislavery short fiction, essays, and poetry published in The Liberty Bell. Early scholars such as George Thompson claim that “the Liberty Bell, to Mrs. Chapman’s mind, was not so much a repository of excellent pieces of prose and verse as a yearly testimonial to the validity of abolitionist principles,” in which “literary quality was regarded as less important than persuasiveness” (160). Thompson, in fact, argues that “throughout the fifteen volumes of the series there is hardly to be found one creation of aesthetic value” (163). The Liberty Bell was clearly “a testimonial to the validity of abolitionist principles.” Chapman was a methodical business woman, hence her dictate to contributors to “be brief” because, in her mind, “the larger number of contributors, the better” (Thompson 160). However, Chapman’s interest in raising money for the cause by garnering a large number of contributors to fortify a united front enhanced the literary value of her gift-book as well.

First, the combination of talented writers, outspoken activists, and the popularity of the gift-book resulted in the debut of important work such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point."³ Second, much of the writing published in The Liberty Bell helped to increase the popularity of antislavery literature, which was often considered "harsh" and, therefore, unpalatable. The publication can even be said to have transformed literary standards for sentimental, expository, and political writing. This is not to say that every piece published in The Liberty Bell was a work of genius, but many were *ingenious*, while many others deserve attention for their political daring.

The success of The Liberty Bell would not have been possible without its chief engineer, Maria Weston Chapman, whose determination to bring about immediate emancipation, clever marketing skills, and impressive network of colleagues all played a part in making her gift-book an influential contribution to the creation and popularization of antislavery literature. Therefore, while a great part of my study explores the aesthetics of The Liberty Bell, I also seek to emphasize Chapman's role in cultivating the unity of spirit that helped not only to define men's *and* women's roles as integral to the growth and moral quality of the nation but also to place all of the gift-book's contributors in the center of the sociopolitical web of the antislavery movement. Scholars regard Chapman as a bit of a puzzle because of her sometimes contradictory nature, though almost all recognize her personal brand of feminism in her determination not to let quarrels over women's "proper" place obstruct the work of abolition. Ruth Bogin and Jean Fagan Yellin, for example, note that Chapman rejected "arguments that women should not forsake their male-appointed domestic sphere" (Abolitionist Sisterhood 5). And Catherine Clinton, though she recognizes Chapman's disinterest in directly supporting

the women's cause, nonetheless remarks that "[her] influence should not be underestimated" (155). Indeed, Chapman was an active player both in the eradication of America's peculiar institution and also in the more subtle advances she made for women and for the expansion of the usual harshness of abolitionist literary fare. Capitalizing upon the gift-book tradition's use of specifically feminine literary conventions, Chapman illuminated the internal, or domestic work, that women could accomplish for the sake of constructing what scholar Amy Kaplan refers to as "an infinitely expanding edifice" that would impel "the nation outward to encompass the globe" (587). Although women still met with opposition despite their increasingly active roles in antislavery reform, Chapman was able to make the female component of abolitionist activism more acceptable and, thus, helped to break down some of the physical and ideological boundaries that impeded the movement's progress.

Equally important as Chapman's advocacy of women's antislavery work was her role in building international ties to support abolitionism in America. A close friend of William Lloyd Garrison's and devoted to his radical politics, Chapman and her circle—which included three of her sisters Caroline, Anne, and Deborah Weston; William Lloyd Garrison; Samuel May; Wendell Phillips; and Edmund Quincy—formed what they called the "Boston Clique." Edmund Quincy explained the nickname to Richard D. Webb in 1843 as "the system that, in the eloquent phrase of Elizur Wright Jr. 'wabbles around a center somewhere between 25 Cornhill and the South End' [meaning 11 West Street, the house of Henry Chapman and Maria Weston Chapman, but 39 Summer St, Maria's present residence, will answer just as well]."⁴ While it is true that "this charmed circle of friends . . . preferr[ed] to stand alone or be called an exclusive elite, rather than change

their antislavery views” (Taylor, Women 51), they were not as solitary as their nickname might indicate. The “Boston Clique” had strong ties with reformers throughout Europe and was able to form what Clare Taylor calls “a transatlantic ‘clique’” (Women 18).

Their campaigns abroad not only brought in funds essential to keeping the Boston Anti-Slavery Bazaars, Garrison’s Liberator, and The Liberty Bell afloat, but also strengthened general support for Garrisonian politics, which upheld immediate emancipation, nonresistance, women’s work for the movement, and anti-Constitutional principles.

Despite Chapman’s significant role in abolitionism, scholars in the field pay intermittent attention to her and her gift-book. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne’s collection of essays, The Abolitionist Sisterhood (1994), cites The Liberty Bell in its preliminary chronology as the “first successful antislavery annual” (xvii). The study even quotes, in the opening line of its Introduction, Chapman’s reaction to the 1835 mob attack on the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, when Chapman declared, “This is a new scene for us. When before, in this city, have gentlemen of standing and influence, been incensed against a benevolent association of ladies, for holding their annual meeting, inviting a lecturer to address them, and requesting their friends to attend, after the custom of benevolent societies?”⁵ Debra Gold Hansen’s look at the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, in her important study Strained Sisterhood (1993), pays even greater attention to Chapman’s influence in antislavery politics and culture, though it does not include any reference, even in passing, to The Liberty Bell. Other critics who write biographical essays on Chapman—such as Jane H. and William H. Pease and Catherine Clinton—acknowledge the significance of both Chapman and her antislavery gift-book, but such discussions are overviews of the activist’s life and, hence, do not indicate the vital nuances

and details surrounding the political, cultural, and literary impact of The Liberty Bell and its editor. Only Clare Taylor's Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement: The Weston Sisters (1995) offers a sustained look at Chapman's life and work, though even this indispensable study is not exclusively devoted to Chapman and/or her gift-book. Given The Liberty Bell's tremendous success, it seems a peculiar oversight that no book-length investigation of it exists.

Because this study examines the erratic political affairs of the early- to mid-nineteenth century as well as the aesthetic value of Chapman's gift-book, my scholarly approach is predominantly historical, feminist, and rhetorical: historical because I am interested in the context out of which The Liberty Bell was created and promoted; feminist because of Chapman's use of a traditionally feminine tradition, the gift-book, for political purposes and because of her strides in making women a more visible part of the antislavery movement; and rhetorical because, in many ways, The Liberty Bell redefined the abolitionist voice by making it more "literary" and by offering readers a larger variety of styles and genres. While other apolitical gift-books such as Britain's The Amulet featured political commentary alongside its "Christian and literary remembrances," thereby revealing the anxiety about slavery worldwide,⁶ The Liberty Bell was exclusively devoted to abolitionism yet managed to retain a sense of literariness and mass appeal that other, plainer political gift-books, like the Star of Emancipation, did not.⁷

Exploring the "value" and "aesthetics" of any work of "art" presents complications inherent in the typically subjective nature of such analyses. To clarify my usage of terms, I wish to call attention to Joanne Dobson's article "Reclaiming Sentimental Literature," which outlines formal attributes of the sentimental tradition such as "themes, stylistic

features, and figurative conventions” (266) by which Dobson seeks to assess sentimental literature’s appeal and effectiveness. Despite her admission that sentimentalism is not so much a formal literary category or genre as it is an “imaginative orientation,” Dobson shows how mid-nineteenth-century sentimental writing “constructs the literary,” not just as a “cultural discourse” but as a “literary practice” (263-64). Likewise, I wish to focus upon the “imaginative orientation” of The Liberty Bell—the “web of connection” that helped to present abolitionism as a movement of unshakable unity, resolute republicanism, and notable literary artistry. The individual chapters of my study elucidate this unifying spirit in its various manifestations, revealing the overarching “radical” nature of the gift-book’s call for immediate emancipation and racial integration as well as its use (and sometimes transcendence) of more “traditional” abolitionist forms, tropes, and calls-to-action.

Like Chapman’s contributors who sometimes transfigured the basic precepts of their literary models, I also draw from certain (scholarly) models but break away from them as the specifics of my inquiries have demanded. Models for my study include Jean Fagan Yellin’s and Blanche Glassman Hersh’s explorations of the intersections of the abolitionist and feminist movements. Yellin’s Women and Sisters (1989) and The Abolitionist Sisterhood (1994) and Hersh’s The Slavery of Sex (1978) were valuable in their revelations of the importance of women to the cause; however, I wish to investigate also the role that men have played while working among the female abolitionists and within the arguably more “feminine” realm of literary sentimentalism. Mary Louise Kete’s Sentimental Collaborations (2000) has served as a model for me, too, in her analysis of the politics and aesthetics of the gift-book tradition, but it does not include any

extensive discussion of how the gift-book served the abolitionists. Indeed, what is noteworthy about The Liberty Bell is that it merged the public issue of abolition with the typically private gift-book tradition, thereby simultaneously merging polemics with empathy and political or (inter)national issues with more domestic concerns. Blending such seemingly opposing components depended not only upon the use of a special venue for antislavery communication, the gift-book, and upon the establishment of a sense of unity among those who contributed to the publication, but also upon the utilization of an iconographic symbol to represent the radical abolitionists' fresh literary vocalization.

The Bell as Abolitionist Icon

Since July 8, 1776, when the Liberty Bell was tolled from the Independence Hall tower in Philadelphia in order to summon citizens to hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence by Colonel John Nixon, the bell has stood as an American icon of freedom and of the sound of liberty ringing through a land. Even years before American Independence, the Liberty Bell commemorated this spirit of freedom. First ordered by the Pennsylvania Assembly to celebrate the fifty-year anniversary of William Penn's 1701 Charter of Privileges (Pennsylvania's original Constitution), the Liberty Bell was inscribed with the biblical passage, "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10). Hung in 1753 despite the large crack that was caused by the bell being too brittle in its casting, the Liberty Bell was rung on various important occasions such as when Benjamin Franklin went to England to attend to Colonial grievances in 1757, when King George III ascended to the throne in 1761, when

the citizens of Philadelphia were invited to discuss the Sugar Act in 1764 and the Stamp Act in 1765, and when news of the Battle of Lexington and Concord arrived in 1775.⁸

Although the Liberty Bell has long represented America's commitment to freedom, the abolitionists' adoption of it as an icon for the antislavery movement gave the Bell a lasting symbolic relevance in a country both devoted to freedom and "cracked" by the existence of slavery. The Bell first appeared as an antislavery icon when it was featured as a frontispiece to an 1837 edition of Liberty, published by the New York Anti-Slavery Society. William Lloyd Garrison observed the symbol in his antislavery paper, the Liberator, while reprinting a poem entitled "The Liberty Bell," which represents the first acknowledged use of the name, "Liberty Bell." When Maria Weston Chapman conceived of the idea of starting an abolitionist gift-book, the Liberty Bell seemed an apt emblem for the strong public protest she wished to communicate. Unlike the "avenging axe of liberty" that Eric J. Sundquist evokes in reference to the slave revolt in Santo Domingo (33), however, the Liberty Bell calls to mind the ideology of liberty via peaceful means, in keeping with the pacifist Garrisonians who supported more readily the notion of nonresistance. The strong republicanism associated with America's Founding Fathers and, further back in time, with the Puritan settlers who founded the New England so dear to Chapman's own life and history, was additionally in keeping with the American ideals her gift-book attempted to encapsulate. And finally, the Bell, a symbol of the *sound* of liberty, celebrates the type of revolution that could be accomplished through the power of the spoken and written word. Through the icon, Chapman linked the concept of freedom with both the actual sight of the bell and the actual sound of

liberty's revolutionary proclamation, thereby giving form and voice to radical abolitionist beliefs.

The epigraph on the frontispiece of each volume of The Liberty Bell reveals the importance of the Bell's associations with protest, republicanism, and public voicing.

The epigraph reads:

It is said that the evil spirytes that ben in the region, doubte moche when they here [sic] the Bells rongen: and this is the cause why the Bells ben rongen, whan grete tempeste and outrages of wether happen, to the end that the fiends and wicked spirytes should be abashed and flee.[?]"—*The Golden Legend*, by Wynkyn de Worde.

In illuminating the battle of good versus evil, the epigraph seems to call upon America to return to its origin of good and simultaneously gives stature to The Liberty Bell itself. To be sure, Chapman believed in the power that mottoes had to bring "Truth and Falsehood in continual juxtaposition." Her abolitionist sisters who spread the word through sewing circles, for instance, supported this view by inventing such slogans as "May the use of our needles prick the consciences of slaveholders" (Chambers-Schiller 260). Although sometimes banal, abolitionist mottoes became an effective way to raise the consciences of the less knowledgeable. Even support for The Liberty Bell's continuance seems immersed in a "bell" rhetoric that informed abolitionist consciousness. In an 1843 letter to Chapman's sister, Caroline Weston, Eliza F. Meriam writes, "I am tempted to put [The Liberty Bell] carefully by with my other valuables; but it has *rung* so many touching appeals . . . that I think I must circulate it, among the good people of Framingham,

peradventure some of its *tones* may awaken their sympathy and interest, for the poor slave” (qtd. in Chambers-Schiller 259; emphasis added).

The symbolism of the bell as metaphor for freedom (and for the ways in which America has fallen short of its promise) appears in many literary works of the nineteenth century. Herman Melville, for one, capitalized upon the suggestiveness for his title “The Bell-Tower” (1856). In this tale of misused power and exploitation, Bannadonna’s grand design—an intricate clock-bell to be sounded automatically by a mechanized creation—is tainted and destroyed through a corruption and the consequent death that becomes, quite literally, a part of the bell. Like the Liberty Bell with its distinguishing crack, Bannadonna’s contains a flaw: a piece of the murdered workman’s skull “dashed into the seething mass, and at once was melted in” (Melville 821). The blemished bell is an image of power gone awry, but Melville specifically gives his story a racial twist by prefacing his work with three epigraphs taken from what he calls a private manuscript:⁹

“Like Negroes, those powers own man sullenly; mindful of their higher master; while serving, plot revenge.”

“The world is apoplectic with high-living of ambition; and apoplexy has its fall.”

“Seeking to conquer a larger liberty, man but extends the empire of necessity.” (819)

In the parallel between the bell-tower and the American nation, Bannadonna’s creation, like America itself, has the propensity for, or at least the ideal of, glory, liberty, and beauty, but the inherent flaw of unjust dominion lends an ominous quality to the possibilities of the future. In this respect, Russ Castronovo’s assessment of “The Bell-

Tower” appears particularly informative. He argues that Melville’s story “re-examines the political traces of race within the foundations of America and discovers a set of national origins permanently disfigured by freedom coupled with slavery, by political sin cloaked with civic virtue, and by a conception of liberty shot through with rapacity.” Melville’s critical approach, however, “does not simply bemoan the degeneration of the virtue of the past into the vice of the present; instead . . . [it] configures America’s origins within a radical irony by juxtaposing founding history not against the corrupt present but against itself” (Castronovo 524). Given that the creation of an American republic was flawed from the beginning, the abolitionist icon of the cracked Liberty Bell carries a message at once glaringly obvious yet too easy to ignore.

Not surprisingly, the bell as paradoxical icon of civil liberties became a central motif in much of the material Chapman printed. Each volume of the gift-book, in fact, seems to have featured at least one piece utilizing the symbolism of the ringing bell. To emphasize the significance of her gift-book’s title, Chapman launched the first volume of The Liberty Bell with a poem she wrote entitled “Sonnet Suggested by the Inscription on the Philadelphia Liberty Bell.” Instead of reinforcing the symbolic irony of the cracked Liberty Bell, Chapman’s poem assures readers that the sound of liberty ringing is “[n]o fearful peal from cities wrapped in fire” (l. 3), but rather a “joyous clangor” (l. 6) that is to mark Liberty’s proclamation to “*all* its sons” (l. 14). The poet’s focus on the edict to “Proclaim Liberty to ALL Inhabitants” and on the inspiring nature of Liberty sets a positive tone for the ensuing volumes. Such optimism meets the parallel emphasis on those whom Liberty shall touch directly: the “mother[s]” and “sire[s]”; those “slaves made free, and friends long parted” who may meet once again (ll. 7, 12). By

emphasizing the lives at stake in very human terms, Chapman hones, from the onset, that crucial impression vocalized in Garrison's Liberator that the work of abolition is the work of humankind.¹⁰

The Inception and Marketing of *The Liberty Bell*

The Liberty Bell, or the Bell, as Chapman's team fondly called it, was born out of the annual anti-slavery bazaars headed up originally in 1834 by Lydia Maria Child as Christmas season fundraisers for the abolitionist cause. The Boston Bazaar, organized by the Chapman-Garrison faction under the auspices of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, was by far the most popular of the anti-slavery fairs. There, people could purchase books, household products and furnishings, confections, needlework, and *objets d'art*—all products donated by supporters of the cause and sold for a profit at the fair. So well respected and widely announced was the antislavery fair that “[s]ewing circles in rural New England towns worked all year to fill a box for the fair; packing-cases from British and Irish sympathizers were crammed with goods and shipped to Boston with a blessing” (Thompson 155). The Bell made its first appearance at the sixth of these fairs, held on October 29, 1839, and was marketed for the attendees, people who already shared an interest in abolitionism, if not a devotion to it.¹¹

Created by Chapman and published by “Friends of Freedom,” the first issue of the Bell was inspired by Chapman's sister-in-law Ann Greene Chapman, who died in 1837 and who had begun to collect into an album the written mementos of her antislavery friends (Thompson 157). Chapman used many of these pieces in the 1839 debut of The Liberty Bell, the outside cover of which featured a golden bell upon which is etched a

kneeling slave in chains with hands outstretched toward a savior-woman (presumably Dame Liberty herself) leaning upon a staff. Behind Lady Liberty stands a liberated man holding up broken chains in either hand. Upon the bell are the words: “Proclaim Liberty.” The icon of the ringing bell along with the motto “Proclaim Liberty to ALL the Inhabitants” was to become the call-to-arms of the new antislavery gift-book. This motto, adapted from the actual Liberty Bell’s inscription, perfectly expressed the radical mission of Chapman and her abolitionist comrades.

Although gift-books, or literary annuals, were popular during the mid-nineteenth century, appealing particularly to a middle-class white female readership in both England and in America,¹² The Liberty Bell stands out as being the first of its kind to merge successfully two of the chief literary and political interests of the day: sentimentalism and abolition. Most striking in these volumes is that the combining of literature and politics occurs across oceans, across genders, across races, and across genres. The Liberty Bell showcases the ways in which abolitionist writers transcended traditional “literary realms” in order to support a vital moral cause. The appealing make-up of the gift-book influenced people interested in expanding the boundaries of abolitionist literature and antislavery rhetoric. In addition, the Bell was the first antislavery publication to draw upon the popular gift-book tradition in order to sell abolitionist propaganda for a profit.¹³ Sold to visitors of the Anti-Slavery Bazaar, “its presentation or purchase was an acknowledgement of one’s contribution to the cause and a memento of the occasion” (Chambers-Schiller 258). According to the bazaar’s annual report, 1846 saw donations of \$221, while the 1857 bazaar brought in \$250 from contributors. This money was used to offset the costs of publication, which ranged from \$300 to \$400 each year. Although the

actual amount of sales brought in by the gift-book is unknown, Caroline Weston stated in later years that “no part of the expenses for printing and binding came from the Fair at any time.”¹⁴ In spite of the existence of other anti-slavery gift-books, such as the Oasis, Freedom’s Gift, the North Star, the Star of Emancipation, Liberty Chimes, and Autographs for Freedom, the Bell enjoyed prominence because it was the longest-lived of its kind. Less ornate on the surface than most nineteenth-century gift-books—due to Chapman’s desire to keep costs down—The Liberty Bell was nonetheless attractive to purchasers for its political content and honorable reputation.

To appeal to an audience potentially open to becoming active in antislavery politics, Chapman established a sense of credibility with her gift-book by calling upon a wide variety of distinguished writers and political figures throughout the world to contribute to her publication. Among these were political activists Theodore Parker, Thomas Clarkson, and Alexis de Tocqueville; feminists Fredrika Bremer and Margaret Fuller; poets Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and James Russell Lowell; abolitionist leaders William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Lucretia Mott; and writer/activists Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Lydia Maria Child, and Frederick Douglass. In total, nearly two hundred men and women served as contributors to The Liberty Bell, approximately seventy-five of whom were British and Irish. This statistic proves significant in light of the fact that “the average American literary annual was aggressively nationalistic” and that “American gift-books, as a class, had been extremely American” (Thompson 160-61). Chapman’s close connections to the abolitionists in Europe only strengthened her force as an abolitionist in America. Of especial importance was her friendship with Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth

Pease, and other British abolitionists who still maintained a powerful front even though their own fight to end slavery in the British territories ceased in 1833.¹⁵ Great Britain, in fact, served as a role model for American abolitionists, particularly for the Boston contingent. From their British counterparts, Chapman and her fellow Garrisonians came to comprehend the propagandistic potential of abolitionism and began using journalism, letter writing, and public speaking as the main forums to advocate for their cause. As in Great Britain, Americans began petitioning the federal government. Furthermore, the abolitionist women of England were especially supportive of and present at the Boston Bazaar, where the Bell was distributed (Taylor, British and American Abolitionists 3-4). The transatlantic ties, then, not only inspired American abolitionists but also helped to reinforce and validate the cause. In the end, Chapman's commitment to the antislavery cause allowed her to rise above "the scorn for all things foreign" (Thompson 161), and The Liberty Bell became another venue that allowed "abolitionists in both countries [to] share a common intellectual heritage and form bonds of friendship which might transcend national rivalries and distinctions" (Taylor, British and American Abolitionists 1). The notion of sharing was, in fact, the chief principle of Chapman's gift-book, a principle that inspired its purpose, guided its direction, and ensured its ultimate success.

Undoubtedly the most succinct description of the primary purpose of The Liberty Bell comes from the editor herself, in a statement published in the 1853 volume:

I am convinced that a body of good men, of all countries, who should be at the same time great enough to create for themselves a sphere of moral action higher than that of national policy and founded on the deepest principles of universal and absolute right, would soon be able to change

the moral aspect of the world and abolish such institutions as Serfdom and slavery. It is to make such men acquainted with each other for such a purpose, that the “Liberty Bell” is published (Chapman 210).¹⁶

Calling upon both men and women to create “a sphere of moral action higher than that of national policy,” Chapman’s statement implies the creation of a third “sphere” (the sphere of moral action) that is both public *and* private and, therefore, more inclusive and potentially more influential than either the public or the private sphere alone. As editor, Chapman brought together voices, including her own in the mix, as if to say that, in combination, these voices evince collective strength. Together they strengthen the abolitionist cause, which, in turn, strengthens the merit of the individual voices. Thus, though Chapman’s single-mindedness contributed to some of the political in-fighting that took place between different “sects” of American abolitionists, it played a crucial part in the creation of the “web of connection” that made Chapman and her gift-book successful and noteworthy.

The “Web of Connection”

The achievement of Chapman’s gift-book depended in large part upon the establishment of a collective ideology among the New England abolitionists who were involved in the project and who championed the antislavery creed adopted in The Liberty Bell. To inaugurate a unity of spirit, Chapman conjoined the literal union of men and women working together in their fight against slavery with a rhetorical counterpart, perhaps best elucidated in the Address of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society to the Women of New England (1844?)—signed by its President, Mary S. Parker, and

Corresponding Secretary, Maria Weston Chapman.¹⁷ In the BFASS's original "Preamble and Constitution" six years before the Society's 1840 split, the goals were to "aid and assist the antislavery movement 'as far as lies within our power,' primarily by disseminating antislavery propaganda and improving the 'moral and intellectual character' of the community's free blacks."¹⁸ Debra Gold Hansen accurately observes that the abolitionist rhetoric of the middle-class Baptist and Congregational women who were more active in the earlier BFASS reveals their interest in remaining within the "accepted" bounds of women's work than the rhetoric of the more affluent Unitarians and Quakers whose writings "suggest a religious conviction based upon liberalism, independent thought, and worldly concern . . ." (Hansen 109). Indeed, the later Address is bolder in specifying the importance and demands of women's antislavery work and reflects the involvement of the more radical Chapman-Child clique as the new BFASS became less "a symbolic" and more "a truly functioning organization" (Hansen 13). To establish the fundamental logic supporting women's expanding duty—a logic that forms the ideological backbone of The Liberty Bell—the Address consequently invokes a web of connection that points to the interconnectedness of human life, no matter how remote or alien individual lives may seem.

Beginning with appeals that speak to matters of the home, the Address argues that the women of New England are the constituents of the northern senators who have the political power to abolish slavery and "to prevent its further progress by forbidding the introduction of slaveholding Texas." The Address reminds women that "the representation of [their] country is based on the numbers of the population irrespective of sex" and that their representatives, "borne down by southern violence," need the women

in order to help them act “according to their consciences.” In this capacity, the women serve as the moral facilitators and support for the men, who are to put such morality to public, legal action.¹⁹ The Address asserts female influence from within their “private sphere,”²⁰ though such a term seems limiting in reference to many of the Boston female abolitionists, who, through their dedication to ending slavery, stepped out of their private spheres by speaking publicly against slavery, appearing at national and international antislavery conventions, and assuming, as Chapman and Lydia Maria Child did, editorial roles traditionally held only by men. In this way, the more liberal activists of the BFASS did manage to solve what Linda K. Kerber cites as an ongoing dilemma in women’s history in America: the problem of “facilitat[ing] women’s entry into politics without denying women’s commitment to domesticity” (*Women of the Republic* xii). Defining their roles as integral to the growth and moral quality of the nation, the Boston women placed themselves in the center of the social and political abolitionist web, which was both gossamer and strong, public and private.

To extend the metaphor as well as the scope of women’s influence, the Address reaches outward to establish a connection beyond the New England women and their white male relations. With female morality and empathy as their foundation, women also have the power to sympathize with the slave and, in particular, with the female slave. “Sustaining as we do, all the relations of womanhood,” the Address avers, “we cannot but be shocked at a system which debases woman to a brute, by making her an article of property, keeping her in ignorance and heathenism, buying, selling, scourging, and dividing her from children and friends at will.” In her discussion of “the sentimental politics of female suffering” in Harriet Jacobs’s 1861 slave narrative, Franny Nudelman

notes that the abolitionist tradition relied upon the revelation of the slave woman's sexual degradation (Nudelman 940), for the debasement of slave women implied the denigration of all women, which, in turn, contributed to the breakdown of American family centrality and the corresponding desecration of American social values. The Address's association of the white New England women with female slaves similarly uses a rhetoric of connection in order to espouse the sentiment that all lives are linked and depend upon one another for the solidity of the whole.

The notion of a web of connection does not halt at gender or race, though; essentially infinite, it moves beyond the temporal and evokes both the patriotic calling of abolitionists and their religious duty. In its opening call-to-action, the Address of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society positions Americans as heirs of the Protestant settlers who landed in Plymouth over two centuries earlier—a correlation that Chapman, being a New Englander herself, seems to have felt authorized to make. Using nostalgic and partisan appeals, the Address begins:

The true descendants of the pilgrims cannot fail to cherish as their inmost souls, the principles of Christian Freedom: —the children of the far-sighted founders of New England, cannot fail to perceive that, while under any pretense, one human being is held in slavery in a nation of which they form a part, their own freedom is in peril. Every dictate therefore, of Christian philanthropy and self preservation is, to strive for the extinction of slavery.

By calling its female audience “the children of the far-sighted founders of New England,” the Address emphasizes the connection of peoples across time and joins them together by a common thread: their desire to support “the principles of Christian freedom.” Such an

association additionally allows for the possibility, articulated later in the Address, that just as the abolitionists can look to the past in order to ground themselves in a specifically “American” heritage, so, too, will their own children and progeny look back upon the abolitionists’ values, motives, and deeds. This generational tie adds an element of pressure necessary for any political group that must struggle to survive. The abolitionist women, who especially felt the social anxiety inherent to both their work and their right to do such work, exert pressure back in equal measure in order to win over new supporters. Such words as “true”—as in “[t]he true descendants of the pilgrims cannot fail to cherish as their inmost souls, the principles of Christian Freedom. . . .” —reinforce the association the Address tries to establish between the abolitionists and their Protestant predecessors as well as the pride that might attend such an association.

The Address of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society compounds the political pressure by introducing religious duty to its message. Quite directly, the Address affirms the doctrine of the second coming in its claim that the nation will be punished for its “sins”:

However ignorant, thoughtless, or negligent others may be . . . let us free our souls from self-reproach: let it sink deep into our hearts that the unutterable destruction that sooner or later awaits our country unless slavery be abolished, is as certain as that God judges and punishes nations, in this world, according to their evil deeds.

The apocalyptic doom of the passage echoes the sentiments of Thomas Jefferson, who, in Query XVIII of his 1787 Notes on the State of Virginia, contemplates the consequences of slavery:

Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep for ever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference!²¹

Like Jefferson, who suggests that God's justice would consider slavery a punishable "sin," the prophecy of the BFASS Address views retribution against slavery supporters as an inevitable result of divine justice. In the Address, moreover, the issue of God's wrath corresponds to the gravity of the slavery question in women's lives in particular. Even though the idea of the inevitability of God's will again harkens back to the ideology of Protestant settlers of seventeenth-century America and to the nation's Revolutionary leaders, thereby revealing the sentiment of the BFASS's more conservative members, the later Address uses it to underscore further the extent of *women's* responsibility and the mistake of keeping silent when "conduct is the test of sincerity." In fact, the Address explicitly states that if women do not act publicly, they "are partakers of the sin." In this way, the web of connection, instead of moving outward, now works its way back to the individual, thus demonstrating the free flow of movement both outward, to other peoples and times, and inward, where it insists, finally, upon the power of individual women.

To direct the power of the individual, the Address clarifies the significance of the task at hand. Before closing with a call for petitioners, the authors recapitulate their mission by proclaiming that abolitionist women must fight

. . . for the honor of our country! for the welfare of our children
and their remotest posterity; that their inheritances of civil and religious

liberty be not vilely cast away! It is for the millions of our enslaved countrymen, and for the bondman of all future generations! It is for fundamental principles of Christianity, wherein lie our salvation.

Asking women to see themselves as upholders not only of American liberty and the freedom of the slaves but also of all slaves across space and time, the closing lines of the Address once again work outward to maintain the connective nature and, hence, value of every human life. Taken as a metaphorical unit, the web of connection iterated in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Address calls attention to women's roles in the antislavery movement and to the global community likewise devoted to ending slavery. At the same time, the Address strengthens the abolitionist cause by showing its far-reaching magnitude and unity. By making such claims for the importance of all people in struggles against iniquity, the Address encapsulates the ideological essence of what Chapman's gift-book sought to accomplish through the capitalization upon a typically female tradition, the gift-book, through the acquisition of diverse voices speaking out against slavery, and through the implied universality of The Liberty Bell's message in both its content and its form.

Chapter Breakdowns

Just as Chapman served as a facilitator of a universal dialogue, so too do the individual pieces within the Bell have their own dialectic that mirrors Chapman's larger goal of creating a unified front. The literary works I discuss are exemplary of The Liberty Bell's scope and depth but are not intended to be exhaustive. In writing about an editor's decisions, I discovered that, as "editor" of my own work, I had to rethink some

organizational strategies in order to best highlight the mixture of gender, race, and genre that Chapman's gift-book features. Rather than organize the material chronologically, I found it more helpful to arrange the material so that each chapter builds upon previous ones to emphasize the complexities of the issues that Chapman encountered and the contradictions that the gift-book reflects.

Chapter 2, "Maria Weston Chapman: A Literary Biography," provides a biographical and literary history of Chapman herself in order to explicate the influence she had as the center of the "web of connection." In all but the most modern accounts of Chapman, scholars emphasize her domineering ways or the petty wrangling amongst abolitionists in which she took a part. Chapman was indeed "guilty" of such crimes. However, the whole of her personality was concurrently characterized by the type of dedication and charisma that made Chapman's work responsible for the financial survival of the Boston abolitionists, for the creation of a lucrative antislavery gift-book, and for the general encouragement of female public activism.

By functioning as editor of the abolitionists' premier gift-book, Chapman indirectly "insisted on the right of women to speak in a public forum" (Okker 6). And, in a more aggressive way, she upheld women's right to enter public forums when she and Lydia Maria Child supported Angelina and Sarah Grimké's right to speak to "promiscuous," or mixed, audiences and "agreed that it was their moral responsibility to plead the cause of the slave and of the woman" (Hersh 20). Although Chapman herself did not enjoy the oratorical circuit because she suffered from stage fright,²² she understood that if women were to work in abolition then it was necessary that they themselves should not be "slaves" (Hersh 32). Hersh explains, "Maria Weston Chapman

viewed the women's rights controversy as an inevitable development of the antislavery struggle. She summed it up tersely: 'Freedom begets freedom.'"²³ That Chapman paid a high price for being a public woman—" [s]he was afraid to walk on Boston streets alone, she wrote [to friends], because clerks came out of their shops to shout insults at her" (Hersh 32)—only underscores further the bravado it took for her to maintain the type of energy she did for the antislavery cause. Not insignificantly, too, the seventeen pieces that Chapman contributed to the Bell are suggestive of the content and scope of the gift-book as a whole. Analyzing a representative selection from her work, I seek to explore Chapman's evolution as a writer and activist and to illuminate the impressive range of her writing—from the poetical and educational to the historical and "autobiographical." Such an array of styles demonstrates Chapman's ability to be diverse within the framework of abolition and is a general mirror of the types of pieces I investigate in the following chapters.

Because upholding the ideals of American democracy and the fundamental principles of freedom and justice were the cornerstones of The Liberty Bell's ideology, its contributors naturally drew upon them as inspiration for their audience. Consequently, much of the literature published in the Bell pays homage to the abolitionists themselves, who fought for, and sometimes died for, their beliefs. In Chapter 3, "Abolitionist Monuments: The Elegiac Tradition in Maria Weston Chapman, William Lloyd Garrison, Anne Warren Weston, and James Russell Lowell," I look at the ways in which the elegy was an important literary form for the abolitionists. On one level, the elegies honor the abolitionists who died for the cause, thereby reinforcing their heroism and commemorating their memory. On another level, the elegies serve as a reminder to

readers of the political and moral imperative of abolition. And finally, the elegies published in the gift-book allow abolitionists both to grieve together over the mystery of death and to rejoice in what they considered to be the recompense of immortal remembrance. Though the function of abolitionist elegies is not new, this chapter seeks to investigate the various ways that the elegy as a form served abolitionists, whose primary purpose as contributors to the gift-book seems, finally, to have been the upholding, not of individuals who have died for the cause, but of the cause itself.

The Liberty Bell's commitment to abolition, though sincere, experienced the pitfalls of the limitations of nineteenth-century "liberalism." Chapter 4, "Dangerous Liaisons: Sentimental Multiculturalism in the Short Fiction of Lydia Maria Child and Edmund Quincy" looks at the sentimental fiction of Child and Quincy with an eye toward its parallels with the sentimental-abolitionist tradition and its deviations from it in order to demonstrate both the political and literary innovativeness of the some of The Liberty Bell's contributors as well as the ways that arguments proposing racial harmony are often nonetheless ensconced in racist rhetoric. Many of the short stories written by Child and Quincy for publication in The Liberty Bell parallel important issues and morals outlined in Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous Uncle Tom's Cabin (1851), morals such as those demonstrating how fate may land slaves with bad masters even though the "good" masters never want it that way. Perhaps, as Clare Taylor claims, "Mrs. Stowe wrote so well that it is easy to forget that she used the same literary conventions as the Boston writers" (Women 96). Nonetheless, Child's and Quincy's writing for the Bell is crucial to an understanding of the *different* ends to which they put to use "the same literary conventions." In particular, Child and Quincy use the sentimental as an "agreeable"

frontage for their less “agreeable” opinions—namely those advocating racial integration and the formation of a more amalgamated society. Equally notable is the discrepancy between the idealized “multicultural” worlds that Child and Quincy imagine and the limiting rhetoric to which the authors frequently revert.

Though always well-meaning, the focus upon abolitionism and upon maintaining its force sometimes led to the neglect of the *people* for whom the abolitionists fought. Chapter 5, entitled “Black Gaze/White Gaze: Racial Implications in the Antislavery Writings of Maria Weston Chapman, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Frances E. W. Harper,” explores the antebellum work of black abolitionists—some of whom, like Douglass and Brown, published in the Bell, while others, like Harper, remained disturbingly absent. I chart the uniform feature of “the black gaze” in their writing, which is less a literal signification than it is another “unifying spirit.” Playing the role of “insider/outsider,” Douglass, Brown, and Harper offer antislavery literature a unique perspective on slavery and on the abolitionist movement. That Douglass’s complicated relationship with the Boston abolitionists, as well as Harper’s absence from the gift-book, leave a regrettable gap in the Bell’s content, only further illuminate the often thorny connection between abolitionists’ means and ends. To be sure, Chapman’s choices in selecting African-American contributors were limited because not many black writers (and, particularly, black female writers) were publishing regularly at the time; in addition, black abolitionists such as Frances Ellen Watkins Harper were more often choosing to write for African-American venues such as the A.M.E., Christian Recorder, or for Douglass’s North Star.²⁴ Nevertheless, social and political reasons—which I explicate in this chapter in my analysis of Chapman’s own writing—also mark this

absence of an African-American voice and reveal how the cross-section of contributors (most of whom were middle- to upper-class white Bostonian abolitionists) reflects the pervasive irony that undermined in important ways the otherwise impressive web of connection that The Liberty Bell tried to establish.

Chapter 6, “Crossing Borders: The Intercultural Poetry of Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning,” brings us back to the “ideal” of the Bell’s basic ideology and, in fact, goes beyond it in certain ways as well. Given that gift-books were notoriously nationalistic, Chapman deserves recognition for her attempts to reach out to a broader consciousness. This chapter observes the unusual contributions that Ralph Waldo Emerson made to the Bell with his “Translations from the Persian of Hafiz” and “Translations from the Persian of Nisami.” My analysis of Emerson’s contributions explores both the implicit intercultural message of the poems and the contextual interpretation they yield in light of the venue in which they appear. In addition, this chapter looks at the intercultural poetry of Garrison and Browning and reveals the ways in which imagining a unified world vision is necessary despite the glaring gap that exists between the image and the reality. Garrison’s poems to the Hungarian rebel Kossuth demonstrate the tensions that exist between distinct individuals and the causes they embrace, while Browning’s poems for the Bell—“The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point” and “A Curse for a Nation”—reveal a European vantage point unencumbered by the trappings of American identity. All three writers elicit criticism of American abolitionism or of others’ philanthropic endeavors, but their principles are nonetheless fundamentally optimistic and avail themselves of a larger world view.

All the chapters of this study aim to confront the many inconsistencies of the writers in question or of the make-up of The Liberty Bell, even as the prevailing conclusion finds a unifying spirit based upon a web of connection that both strengthens the abolitionists' cause and adds literary value to their political writing. With this in mind, Chapman's gift-book offers an unprecedented conglomeration of writing that, I maintain, had both literary and political value. Such a combination marks the essence of Chapman's talents and of The Liberty Bell's success.

CHAPTER 2

MARIA WESTON CHAPMAN: A LITERARY BIOGRAPHY

. . . no wonder if the Mexican method of preserving the memory of events by pictures, should seem preferable to our own. A succession of paintings seems capable of presenting a much clearer view of contemporaneous transactions, than any arrangement of pages. “Narrative is linear—action is solid.”

—Chapman, Right and Wrong in Massachusetts (1839), pp. 48-49.

The Early Years

As with many aspects of Maria Weston Chapman’s life, her expressed frustration at the limitations of “narrative” needs to be considered tentatively. While it is certainly true that the struggle among opposing groups of antislavery activists (which inspired her to write the above lines) was almost as frustrating as the fight against pro-slavery factions, Chapman lacked neither the support nor the means by which to let her opinions be known. Indeed, Chapman’s self-conscious sense of print underpins The Liberty Bell’s strong republicanism, use of nineteenth-century literary traditions, and adherence to the zealous voice of abolition. Additionally, her hyperconsciousness of history and awareness of the effects of the present on the future made all her work for the abolitionist movement not only “linear” but “solid” as well, for her every effort to end slavery was

tinged with her preoccupation with the interconnectedness of people's lives and, thus, speaks to us today as it spoke to her contemporaries. The abolitionist views, Chapman once stated in 1855, "are larger and our souls steadier than those of man."¹ The American abolitionist movement was not simply a timely issue that, the abolitionists could only hope, would some day be a thing of the past; it was a moral struggle that has always been and would always be.

To fight such a battle required a certain amount of moral confidence, of which Chapman had no shortage. However, the "moral courage" that Dublin abolitionist Richard Webb once praised in Chapman was the same quality that prompted enemies such as New York abolitionist Lewis Tappan to call Chapman "a talented woman with the disposition of a fiend," who "manag[e]s W. L. G[arrison,] W[endell] Phillips, [Edmund] Quincy [,] &c. as easily as she could 'untie a garter.'"² Both morally devout and fiercely aggressive, Chapman was enigmatic in her defiance of categorization. She was "a controversial, heroic type worshiped by friends and vilified by enemies" (Hersh 11). Consequently, the names with which she became associated mark the disagreement her contemporaries had about her character. John Greenleaf Whittier called her William Lloyd Garrison's "evil genius"; others who recognized her remarkable contributions to the cause called her "Garrison's chief lieutenant"; and still others, even friends, referred to her secretly as the "Lady Macbeth" of the movement or as "Captain Chapman" because of her "domineering" ways. Abby Kelley called her the abolitionists' "Moral Napoleon," while James Russell Lowell referred to her as the "Joan of our arc."³ Indeed, it may very well be said that Chapman fit all of these descriptions.

Although controversial and elusive, Chapman was, above all, a leader whose list of accomplishments looms large. Her executive career spanned from 1835 to 1862; she served fourteen terms on the business committee of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and thirteen years as a member of the American Anti-Slavery Society Executive Board. In 1839, the same year she launched The Liberty Bell, Chapman, along with Garrison, organized a pacifist group called the New England Non-Resistance Society and she became its corresponding secretary and assistant editor of its periodical, the Non-Resistant. That same year Chapman also collected manuscripts and published an antislavery songbook entitled Songs of the Free (Clinton 153). In 1840 she initiated and funded the National Anti-Slavery Standard (the abolitionist paper of New York for which Lydia Maria Child became editor in 1841) and became a member of its editorial committee from 1844 to 1848. Amidst all this activity, Chapman worked as a temporary editor for the Liberator whenever Garrison was absent or ill (Pease 34) and even helped to redraft the constitution of the Philanthropic Society of Porto Plate, a West Indian appendage of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In late 1842 she produced a sequel to her annual reports of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and called it Ten Years of Experience. And, in 1876, she wrote a 460-page supplement to the biography of Harriet Martineau, the renowned British reformer and a close friend.⁴

Born on July 25, 1806, in the town of Weymouth, Massachusetts, just south of Boston, Maria Weston enjoyed all the promise and prospects of middle-class living. She

was educated at local ladies' academies and, as a teenager, studied abroad in England, where she lived with her uncle's family until 1828. Her parents, Warren and Nancy Bates Weston, had six daughters who grew up "rich in the assurance of [the family's] Pilgrim ancestry," having come from farmers and traders established since the seventeenth century, when William Weston migrated to America and became part of the Plymouth colony in Massachusetts.⁵ Maria, the eldest of the sisters, lived on her parents' farm until sent to live with her wealthy uncle, Joshua Bates, in England, where she socialized with a cosmopolitan crowd immersed in both political and cultural affairs.⁶ Upon returning to Boston in 1828, Maria became the first "lady principal" of Ebenezer Bailey's Young Ladies High School. Two years later, on October 6, 1830, she married Henry Grafton Chapman, an affluent Boston merchant whose family was already well-established in the city's commercial community and included amongst its premier abolitionists.⁷ The Chapmans, including Maria, Henry, their three surviving children,⁸ and servants, lived comfortably on West Street, near Elizabeth Peabody's bookstore where Margaret Fuller's discussions convened and near Bronson Alcott's experimental school (Hansen, Strained 69).

Chapman credits her experiences abroad as the impetus behind her interest in reform politics, though it was not until after she married Henry Chapman that she began working in abolition full time. Her first major foray into antislavery reform began when, in October 1833, she and eleven other women helped to organize the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), which was to function as an auxiliary to Garrison's all-male Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.⁹ According to the new Society's "Preamble and Constitution," the BFASS's goal was "to 'aid and assist the antislavery movement as

far as lies within [its] power,' primarily by disseminating anti-slavery propaganda and improving the 'moral and intellectual character' of the community's free blacks."¹⁰ Over the years, the BFASS circulated more than 16,000 petitions, usually by way of members going door-to-door under the guise of "making calls."¹¹ Within a year, the BFASS included 200 members, and could later boast famous names such as Lydia Maria Child and Sophia E. Thoreau, Henry David Thoreau's sister.¹² Conservative members of the BFASS like Lucy Ball pursued "more customary female benevolent projects, such as teaching African-American children, running orphanages, and working in Sunday schools and sewing circles" (Hansen 7). Meanwhile, the more radical members, who petitioned, debated, and lectured, increasingly earned for the society a reputation as being a prominent and dynamic organization. One contributor to the November 1, 1839 Liberator noted how the once "weak" and "feeble" BFASS changed since "the acquisition to its membership of a Chapman, a Child, a Weston, a Loring, a Sergeant [*sic*], a Southwick and other kindred minds [,who] gave it not only a solid dignity of character, but new and quenchless vitality."¹³

From 1835 until the BFASS's split in 1840, Chapman served as corresponding secretary. She was a strong presence in the society, lending her cool confidence and clarity of focus to every obstacle the new society faced and triumph it secured. Almost as a foreshadowing of Chapman's strength was her presence of mind during the October 21, 1835 mob attack on William Lloyd Garrison—which actually began as an attack on the BFASS when British abolitionist George Thompson came to speak at their annual meeting on that date. Local anti-abolitionists seeking to lynch Thompson crowded the streets of Boston and broke up the BFASS meeting. When Mayor Theodore Lyman

attempted to disband the women, Chapman replied, “If this is the last bulwark of freedom, we may as well die here as anywhere.”¹⁴ It was Chapman “who protested the lack of police protection, who insisted that formal parliamentary adjournment precede dissolution of the meeting, who organized the frightened women to walk calmly, two by two, through the mob” (Pease 32). The mob sought to follow the BFASS to Chapman’s house where the meeting was to be reconvened and was sidetracked only upon discovering that Garrison was in his office and, hence, a better scapegoat for their aggression.¹⁵

Chapman’s leadership skills served her well when she grew single-minded in her endeavors to end slavery and to overcome any obstacles that might obstruct that solitary goal. Primary among her ideals was the belief held by her own liberal relatives and peers—that liberty is an inherent human right. Thus, it seems reasonable that when five clergymen of Boston and the vicinity—Charles Fitch, Joseph H. Towne, Jonas Perkins, David Sandford, and William Cornell—accused “the most prominent abolitionists, of an unkind, improper and unchristian course” (Chapman, Right and Wrong 27-28) for allowing women to speak publicly against slavery, Chapman embraced women’s rights, too. Many abolitionist church officials denounced women’s involvement as “unnatural” (Hansen, Strained 23) and felt that tangential corollaries to the slavery question such as women’s rights and nonresistance detracted from the abolitionist mission. Chapman, Garrison, and other radical abolitionists, however, asserted that all human rights issues were one and the same and that if some are enslaved, then all are enslaved. As Chapman herself rejoined during the Anti-Clerical Appeal of 1837, “How can he free the slave . . . who is occupied in imposing fetters upon the free?”¹⁶ Chapman’s steadfastness to the

greater concept of human rights extended the scope and effect of her antislavery work and, like Garrison's zeal, it incited her enemies to fear and despise her.

"Right and Wrong"

As Chapman began to make her opinions known, it became clear to her that her message might have an even more forceful effect as well as a more permanent place in history if she were to document in writing the events taking place in Boston at the time. Of immediate importance to many Boston abolitionists was the Anti-Clerical Controversy, which began in 1837 when the more radical members of the BFASS disapproved of the "strong denominational ties" that many of its conservative members like Charlotte Phelps were making with such Baptist ministers as Reverend Nathaniel Colver, in an attempt to align the Society with the clerics (Hansen, "The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society," 54). The radical abolitionists complained that the Congregationalist and Baptist churches indirectly sustained slavery by not allowing women to speak publicly on abolition and by skirting the issue of slavery in their sermons. Although the First Free Congregational Church of Boston (the "Free Church") was organized in the spring of 1835 in order to solve this problem for those disillusioned Congregationalists, it only marked the beginning of a drawn-out dispute between radical abolitionists and many of the New England clergy. Chapman had a personal stake in the issue, for she had become dissatisfied with the Federal Street Church, where Reverend William Ellery Channing allowed antislavery notices to be read but disassociated himself from the radical abolitionists and their methods.¹⁷ Unitarian women like Chapman, Abby Alcott, and the Weston sisters grew cynical about the church's lack of interference with

the moral issue of slavery and became, in Anne Warren Weston's words, "altogether opposed to every thing that look[ed] like churchdom."¹⁸

Consequently, Chapman began using her annual report of the BFASS (which, as corresponding secretary of the Society, she began writing in 1836) as her platform of choice for airing grievances against local Congregational and Baptist clergy during the Anti-Clerical Controversy. As author of Right and Wrong in Boston, Chapman first experienced the powers of the pen, and she wielded it with venomous impact, establishing a rhetorical web of connection in which she became a prominent voice for the Garrisonian faction that disapproved of the churches' complacency and conservatism. Like Garrison's writing for the Liberator, Chapman's writing for the annual reports was vociferous and incisive. She even went so far as to obtain and publicize the private letters of Charles Torrey, a New York abolitionist who opposed women's activity within the antislavery movement (Pease 41-42). As a way of lending authority to her own missive and as further testimony to her tremendous respect for Garrison, Chapman cites in full Garrison's "warning" to his New York opponents, as published in the Liberator.¹⁹ But despite Chapman's close alliance with Garrison and her commitment to the immediatist and feminist ideals for which he stood, the idea of Chapman being a "female Garrison" has its limitations. Chapman "did not blindly follow Garrison through the years" (Clinton 155), and her early writing for the BFASS reveals the many ways that her literary style, from the start, differed from the abolitionist rhetoric marked by Garrison's 1831 avowal in the first issue of the Liberator that he would be "as harsh as truth" (qtd. in Floan 5).

Chapman's 1839 annual report—whose new title, Right and Wrong in Massachusetts, is indicative of her disassociation from the conservative members of the BFASS and of the expanding scope of the Anti-Clerical issue—represents a critical starting point for her own intellectual progress, in this period, as a writer. Its primary purpose was to present the case for the Garrisonians (the “real abolitionists”) in their quarrel with those clergymen who did not use their influence for reform purposes and who, therefore, did not represent what Chapman called “the true and real church of God” (63, 15). But while it established Chapman's viewpoints without shame or apology—that is, while it was pointed and political to the extreme—Right and Wrong in Massachusetts features a variety of stylistic characteristics that elevate abolitionist rhetoric to more than just the political or the merely vociferous. Indeed, Right and Wrong in Massachusetts reads more like a personalized historical account than an annual report. Beginning with a glimpse at the state of apathy in which New England found itself in 1829, Chapman observes, “Every body was, in some way or other, actively or passively, sustaining slavery; yet every body disclaimed all responsibility for its existence, opposed all efforts for its extinction, and was ‘as much anti-slavery as any body else’” (3). The “history” that Right and Wrong in Massachusetts offers, though, is not for the dissemination of objective information. Rather, the report was propaganda, done exclusively for the espousal of the Garrisonian position.

Foremost amongst Chapman's complaints were two key issues: first, many abolitionists claimed that female abolitionists “only injure[d] the cause [they] espouse[d] by thus leaving [their] sphere. . .” (12). Chapman, however, expresses pride in the fact that the anti-slavery movement brought people together regardless of gender, class, age,

or race. Abolitionists, she liked to believe, understood that “the whole is greater than a part. . .” (7, 14). Second among her major grievances was the suspicion that Charles Torrey, his fellow New York abolitionists (including James Birney, Lewis Tappan, Henry Stanton, and Joshua Leavitt), and various New England ministers were attempting to start a new abolitionist paper in the hopes of replacing Garrison’s Liberator, diluting support for women’s participation in the movement, and scattering votes in respect to the question of whether or not the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society should be dissolved (which indeed it was, in 1839). The clergy, Chapman avers, wore “the garment of sectarian zeal” in order to “hide their want of attachment to the cause” (37) and, later on, in order to disguise their opposition to women’s rights:

In the horror of their great darkness on the subject of ‘woman’s rights,’ they trampled on human rights, and the rights of membership, in the persons of those women whom they labored to exclude. (53)

Chapman compares the existence of a new paper to that of the American Colonization Society: both “had two faces; one for the real and the other for the pretended abolitionist” (73).

Although Torrey, et. al. “denied the existence of any plot,” they did in fact establish a new paper, The Massachusetts Abolitionist, and the controversy did ultimately end in the split of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, with the anti-Garrisonians forming the American Anti-Slavery Society as a counterpoint to what they perceived to be the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society’s “no-government society” (Chapman 93, 146-47). Chapman felt vindicated, though, not only because The Massachusetts Abolitionist failed to sustain itself but because she believed that the general failure of so

strong an opposition only proved that “[t]ruth was mighty, and had prevailed. . .” (137). To claim “truth” on her side—especially when the other “side” was not slaveholders but other abolitionists—was an audacious maneuver. In many ways, Chapman’s bold disapprobation of the clergy and their morals combined with her authoritative tone again reflects Garrison’s influence on her, but Chapman also had her own wealth of experience and her own way of thinking that makes her 1839 report aesthetically noteworthy.

In Right and Wrong in Massachusetts, Chapman’s theatrical framing of her discussion attests to her education, her consciousness of history, and her attempt to mingle art and politics. On the title page, she quotes William Shakespeare’s 2 Henry IV:

There is a history in all men’s lives,
Figuring the nature of the time deceased;
The which observed, a man may prophecy,
With a clear aim at the main chance of things
As not yet come to life. (3.1.80-84)²⁰

Although Shakespeare’s diction seems tentative, Chapman uses his words to underscore the human propensity to “prophecy” about “the main chance of things” to come. And indeed Chapman’s own suspicions about the goals of her opponents were correct, for, as she reveals in the closing chapters of Right and Wrong in Massachusetts, one of her main opponents Henry Stanton finally does concede that, in his opinion, “. . .the Liberator had lowered the standard of abolition, that Mr. Garrison was recreant to the cause, and that *therefore* a new paper was indispensable” (100).

Chapman, however, does not present the details of history in a matter-of-fact manner; instead, she sets up her chapters as if the events that took place in Boston at the

time were part of a play. For instance, she calls Chapter III “The Plot,” while Chapter V is “The Denoeument” [sic]. Each chapter, moreover, begins with an epigraph that accentuates the theatrical motif. Chapter II’s epigraph, quoted from Bunyan, reads: “*Christian*: Did you know, about ten years ago, one TEMPORARY, who dwelt next door to one TURNBACK? Since we are talking about him, let us a little inquire into the reason of the sudden backsliding of him and such others. *Hopeful*: It may be profitable” (27). The often melodramatic nature of Chapman’s grievances and insults only adds to the “drama” of the tangled politics in which the abolitionists found themselves ensnared. When Chapman describes the two sides debating at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, for example, her rhetoric makes the quarrel seem epic and reduces the “players” to binary oppositions of “good” and “bad”:

Bigotry and sectarianism were pitted against religious liberty and Christian love,—openness and candor against craft and concealment,—treachery against fidelity,—falsehood against truth, and (for things that are equal to the same things are equal to one another,) freedom against bondage. (95-96)

Chapman’s characterizations were in keeping with the romantic conventions of the gift-book tradition. As critic Ralph Thompson wryly observes, “Points had to be proved. Even the most matter-of-fact reformer in the most realistic age is romantic in his inevitable exaggeration” (164). But Chapman’s endeavors in melodrama foreshadow the forays of other abolitionists, such as the dramatic versions of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin and Lydia Maria Child’s play, The Stars and Stripes. In addition, Chapman’s theatrical framework in Right and Wrong in Massachusetts gives her more

freedom to outline specific details about the individuals involved in the Anti-Clerical Appeal so as to play up their roles, making them seem either better or worse than they undoubtedly were. By depicting Garrison as victim/martyr and Stanton as traitor/enemy, Chapman dramatizes the Boston controversy and breathes life into the events that she knows will some day make history.

Rhetorically, too, Chapman brings to life certain situations through especial turns of phrase, metaphors, or otherwise colorful language. In describing the recent past, she says, “The moving principles of Northern and Southern life, had become inseparably mingled below the surface of events, like the roots of giant trees beneath the soil” (4). The idea of life becoming “inseparably mingled” has significance not only in implicating Northerners in their complicity with slavery but also in conjuring up the web of connection between all peoples that Chapman knew was central to both the creation and resolution of problems. Her reference to “the roots of giant trees” further cements through visual imagery the interconnectedness of peoples and of all things living in the natural world. Chapman’s simile, in short, underscores her claim that abolitionists unite because they understand that “the whole is greater than a part” (14). Additionally, the imaginative rhetoric of her writing for Right and Wrong in Massachusetts is evocative of the kind of writing philosophy she cultivated for the Bell; that is, experimentation was encouraged, as long as the focus upon abolitionism remained present.

Chapman’s open-mindedness in respect to literary style, however, did not coincide with a flexible political agenda. As a result, her ideologies became a dividing force within the BFASS, and her complaints and assertiveness during the Anti-Clerical Appeal left many of the Society’s women feeling misrepresented. Although the BFASS

was impressive in its diversity, including women from a variety of religious affiliations and social classes as well as “blacks from Boston’s Belknap Street ghetto and self-supporting individuals recently arrived from rural New England,” the philosophical divisions that emerged within the society occurred, as Hansen notes, along class and religious lines (Strained 6). The 1837 controversy and Chapman’s account of it only aggravated the already sensitive fissures. Chapman, who was among the more radical of the group, was also among the upper-class Unitarian faction, as opposed to the middle-class Baptists and Congregationalists such as Mary Parker and Lucy and Martha Ball, who generally were more moderate in their views about women’s proper sphere and about the role of the BFASS. The middle-class evangelicals did not approve of “the vigorous public style of the elites at the meetings” and felt that such subjects as religious freedom were “out of [their] sphere as women.”²¹ The “Chapmanites”—which included Chapman, her sisters Anne and Deborah Weston, Henrietta and Catherine Sargent, Thankful Southwick and her daughters, and Lydia Maria Child—came to view their rival society members as the “boarding house abolitionists”²² and themselves as “thorough going abolitionists” because they censured the local Congregational and Baptist clergy whom they felt interfered with the moral issue of slavery (Hansen, Strained 21, 88-95).

When the BFASS’s proclerical officers expressed disapproval of Right and Wrong in Massachusetts because of its scathing remarks against the local clergy, Chapman declared, “I shall never submit to any custom of any society that interferes with my righteous freedom.”²³ Ignoring the dissatisfaction of BFASS board members, she published Right and Wrong with a disclaimer from those who objected to its content. Nonetheless, the battle left her weary, and she and her sisters resigned from the board.

With a new attitude of “nonresistance,” the Chapmanites formed, in 1839, the New England Non-Resistance Society, which “repudiated the Old Testament eye-for-an-eye dictum [and held] that no person or agency should have the power to coerce others. As Garrison explained it [in an 1838 letter to Mary Benson], ‘The assumption that man has a right to exercise dominion over his brother has preceded every form of injustice and oppression with which the earth has been afflicted.’”²⁴ The disagreement over the woman question again aggravated the BFASS’s two factions when women were excluded from membership at the New England Anti-Slavery Convention. Not long after, in April 1840, the BFASS dissolved with the middle-class Baptists and Congregationalists forming the Massachusetts Female Emancipation Society (as an auxiliary to the Massachusetts Abolition Society) and the Chapmanites resuscitating the BFASS, saying that its dissolution was illegal and, therefore, invalid.²⁵

The Anti-Slavery Fairs

As verified by the 1837 Clerical Appeal, combating slavery also meant opposing what Chapman conceived to be the narrow-mindedness of traditional values set forth by religious, social, and national laws. Thus, a logical corollary to Chapman’s early writing was her involvement in what Kathryn Kish Sklar calls “woman’s political culture”: the political realm of activity that focused beyond “family groups” and “expresse[d] a female consciousness or awareness of women’s actions *as women*.”²⁶ Although Chapman herself did not participate in the oratorical circuit,²⁷ she understood unquestionably that if women were to work in abolition, it was necessary that they themselves should not be “slaves.” For this reason, Chapman upheld women’s prerogative to enter public forums

when she and Lydia Maria Child supported Angelina and Sarah Grimké's right to speak to "promiscuous" audiences and "agreed that it was their moral responsibility to plead the cause of the slave and of the woman" (Hersh 20). When women were denied seats at the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention in London, where Chapman was one of America's seven female representatives, Chapman shared in the grievances of her friend Anne Knight, who complained,

We tell them we are no longer the same beings as fifty years ago [and that we] no longer 'sit by the fire and spin' or distill rosemary and lavender for poor neighbors. . . . [T]hus having been driven into the forefront of the battle [and] having in the labour of collecting and going from house to house for signatures to petitions [we have] had to fight with beasts of Ephesus[.] [W]ho can any longer in this blaze of our superior experience . . . dare to omit our names from the muster-roll for the counsel-board? [W]e have a far superior claim to the men.²⁸

Chapman's own "superior experience" in abolition came not only in the form of soliciting signatures for petitions, writing essays and articles of reform, and serving on the boards of various abolitionist committees, but also in her work to raise money for abolition through her organization of the Boston Anti-Slavery Fairs.

The annual fairs, or bazaars, arranged exclusively by women, provided substantial sources of revenue for New England abolitionists. Lydia Maria Child and Ellis Gray Loring launched the first one in 1834 as a yearly Christmas fundraiser for the cause of abolition. After 1838, discord in the BFASS led to two separate fairs: Chapman's, in support of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, and Charlotte Phelps's, which

supported the Massachusetts Abolition Society. Thus began “the battle of the fairs” with each group vying to be identified as the “legitimate” BFASS annual fundraiser.²⁹ While the more conservative women “associated their mission with ‘the cause of the SLAVE and the ELEVATION OF THE COLORED POPULATION[,]’ . . . Chapman’s group came to be associated with the cause of the slave, women’s rights, and nonresistance” (Hansen, Strained 124-25). The evangelicals’ bazaars, which the moderates preferred to call “sales,” were unassuming, as was their paperbound gift-book, the Star of Emancipation, which was a direct competitor to Maria Chapman’s The Liberty Bell (Hansen, Strained 133). Unlike Chapman’s gift-book, however, the Star of Emancipation featured writing only from local antislavery supporters and achieved neither the scope nor the monetary success that was the Bell’s.

With Chapman in control of her own fundraising event, the bazaars became more fashionable than ever as well as exceptionally profitable. Chapman used all the perspicacity of a businessperson; as James Russell Lowell described it, “There was MARIA CHAPMAN, too, / With her swift eyes of clear steel-blue, / The coiled-up mainspring of the Fair.”³⁰ Lowell’s oblique acknowledgment of Chapman in this sketch presents a shrewd and ready figure that attests to Chapman’s invaluable guidance in respect to the fairs’ success and magnitude. While the first fairs were held in the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society’s rooms—with the exception of the 1835 fair, which Sarah and Henry Chapman, Sr., hosted at their Chauncy Place mansion because the previous locations proved too dangerous—by 1849, Boston’s grand Faneuil Hall became the fairs’ new location.³¹ Furthermore, profits nearly tripled in just six years, earning \$360 in 1834 and more than \$1,000 in 1840 (Hansen, Strained 127). In addition to the

many homemade products sold at the annual antislavery bazaar, the fairs featured international items such as French jewelry, English china, Scotch shawls, and Greek vases. Chapman obtained much of the merchandise through her visits to Europe and through her personal connections there. Such an assortment of goods made the fair, as Harriet Beecher Stowe put it, “decidedly the most fashionable shopping resort of the holidays.” In a Christmas Eve note, Margaret Fuller wrote to her mother: “Every body is running to the Anti-Slavery fair, said to be full of beautiful things from England. I wish I could go and buy pretty new years gifts for you and those I love, but I must . . . avoid temptation.”³²

No detail went unnoticed; Chapman and her crew placed as much attention on the fair displays as upon the items themselves, conjoining the fashionable with the moral, and contemporary motifs with remembrances of history. The abolitionists’ associations with a Puritan past that are suggested in the Address of the BFASS, for example, resurface as Chapman “arranged the donations from local societies on separate tables and draped banners bearing the town name, its motto, and original English coat of arms overhead— . . . [in order to] ‘commemorate’ New England’s Puritan ancestry, particularly its legacy of ‘moral warfare with wrong and oppression.’” In order to link further “abolitionism with New England’s Puritan and revolutionary past [and] capitalize upon the status and respectability of the women involved,” Chapman even pointed out in the 1839 Liberator that many of the fair workers were direct descendants of the town founders.³³ In every detail, Chapman tried to use the salesroom decorations not only as reminders of the abolitionists’ heritage, but as reminders of their great bravery in the face of current opposition. The 1839 fair, for instance, featured silver vase centerpieces filled with

“bouquets” of wood from the ruins of Pennsylvania Hall, which was burned by an angry mob in 1838, during the second National Women’s Antislavery Convention in Philadelphia (Hansen, Strained 138).

To be sure, Chapman’s anti-slavery bazaar was destined to be the premiere one because her group had both the time and the money to direct a great amount of attention to the event. Even though the Chapmanites’ goal in respect to the fundraising fairs was to support Garrison, the all-male Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, and the National Anti-Slavery Standard, their impressive resources, not least among them being their ingenuity, allowed them to alter the conventionality of this particular event and, thus, to call attention to women’s marketing and business capabilities. Despite the seeming frivolity that the fairs’ ostentation may evoke, their success was crucial to the continuation of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and to the Liberator. By the 1850s, profits averaged \$4,000, and “Chapman’s ingenuity often saved the Garrisonians from financial ruin” (Clinton 151). It is estimated that the total twenty-four BFASS fairs alone raised over \$65,000 for the cause.³⁴

“Sanctifying Art to the Service of Humanity”: *The Liberty Bell* (1839-1858)

Applying her resourcefulness to all her antislavery work, Chapman branched out to create what was to become the longest-lived abolitionist gift-book. Not only would The Liberty Bell bring more money for the cause, it would provide Chapman with yet another platform for projecting the radical abolitionist voice. Serving as The Liberty Bell’s editor from 1839 to 1858 and also as one of its regular contributors, Chapman placed herself in the center of a web of connection that extended both backward and

forward in time. The written word became the vehicle by which to facilitate a dialogue between upright thinkers whom Chapman saw as worthy of eternal fame. Not only were her contributors public figures of the day, but they upheld what Chapman knew to be the enduring human ideals of freedom and liberty. When, in the last volume of the Bell, she penned an essay entitled “Education,” in which she applauds Caleb Bingham’s late eighteenth-century school book “The American Preceptor” for its collection of oratorical extracts from English Classics and American Patriots, Chapman celebrates Bingham’s devotion to liberty and the intransigence of his independent spirit.³⁵ The extracts—“all awakening and cherishing justice, generosity, integrity, humanity, and high-mindedness, by illustrious examples of private and public virtue, according to the American idea of the liberty, equality, and fraternity of man”—were, to Chapman, “a reproach to frivolity, duplicity, baseness, selfishness, and bondage” (290-91). The variable circulation and reception of Bingham’s “blessed book” reflected the nation’s circumstances as when, in 1820 with the passing of the Missouri Compromise, the lack of interest in Bingham’s book signaled the nation’s “deadening. . . sense of Right, Truth, and Freedom” (291). Acutely aware of such fluctuations in history, Chapman saw them as testimony to the endurance of the human spirit and to the importance of the lessons history may teach. The Liberty Bell served as the perfect mirror of Caleb Bingham’s “American Preceptor” in its preservation of American, and universal, ideals.

Aware of refined readers’ repugnance toward “the blunt prose of the antislavery newspapers” (Chambers-Schiller 259) and of accusations that the abolitionists were excessive, imprudent, and even anarchical, Chapman, it seems, learned a few lessons from writing the BFASS’s annual reports and from the volatile public response they

sometimes provoked. To make her new gift-book as appealing as possible, she sought to temper further the rhetoric of abolition by bringing together literature and politics. In a letter to [Mary A.?] Estlin, dated January 27, 1846, Chapman outlines her strategy for the book's marketing. The American public, she writes, "must be treated like children, to whom a medicine is made as pleasant as it[s] nature admits. A childish mind receives a small measure of truth in gilt edges, when it would reject it in 'whitty-brown'" (qtd. in Chambers-Schiller 259). By the late 1830s and 1840s, abolitionism, the so-called "medicine" that Americans needed to cure them of the peculiar institution, had established itself in the American mind as either a most solemn enterprise or as a cause for outspoken fanatics. During a time when the American economy was recovering from a serious downturn, when Texas had just formed an independent slave republic, when the nation was about to embark on a run of ten "one-term" presidencies,³⁶ and when the slavery question, consequently, was becoming more and more heated, it became especially necessary to cushion "the distorting power of abolition rhetoric" (Floan 5). By drawing upon the typically female gift-book tradition, Chapman's Liberty Bell simultaneously tempered and empowered the voice of abolition.

Given the formidable animosity of the anti-abolitionists and proclerical abolitionists alike, Chapman's plan to conjoin art and political affairs was especially smart, and much of the Bell's success was due to her keen marketing insights. To appeal to a wider audience, Chapman selected pieces that engaged an array of rhetorical devices and literary styles available to the abolitionists—ranging from the sentimental and spiritual to the patriotic and poetic. Moreover, the gift-book tradition after which Chapman modeled The Liberty Bell capitalized upon the socio-economic potential of

what Mary Louise Kete calls the “collaborative self,” who “does not exist unless in an ongoing, reciprocal relationship with an other in which the boundaries between self and other, past and present, alive and dead are constantly being negotiated,” and whose function “is produced and perpetuated only through participation in an economy of emotions in which affections circulate in the form of gifts to bind disparate persons together into subjects able to recognize themselves and act on the world.”³⁷ As such, the form enabled Chapman to unite readers and writers, non-activists and activists, and buyers and sellers. Drawing upon “an economy of emotions,” Chapman solicited as contributors a remarkable and diversified group of politicians, feminists, and authors in order to demonstrate that the mission of immediatist abolitionists is or ought to be everyone’s concern and that a unity of force is possible. She “maintained a continuous barrage of letters, tracts, and newspaper articles urging women to continue working, where and as they could” (Chambers-Schiller 263-64). Moreover, in order to offer the souvenir of the gift-book to a wider audience, Chapman had a variety of bindings printed—from the more “humble” glazed paper or muslin to the more extravagant leather or silk.³⁸ In the end, Chapman’s success with The Liberty Bell suggests that being articulate, creative, and even poignant as well as demonstrative and straightforward benefited the abolitionists by making their arguments more agreeable.

Having observed closely for eight years the work Garrison performed as editor of the Liberator and having even filled in for him and contributed to the publication, Chapman had a clear notion of the trials and rewards of such a vocation. When she began her own antislavery gift-book, she understood that the job would be challenging on

many levels. Chapman's citation of William Goodell in her 1837 diatribe against the New England clergy would portend her own experiences as editor. Goodell maintained,

The task of such an editor, Mr. President, is an arduous and thankless one. He must shield his friends by movements for which they will be apt to censure him. He must save the cause by the very blows from which the apparently judicious will anticipate its annihilation. He must stand on an eminence from which he can see what other men cannot see. He must be eyes to the blind, whose want of eye-sight will lead them to make war upon their benefactor. He must rouse men from their dangerous sleep, who, while they begin to see men as trees walking, will murmur because they are waked, and instead of thanking their deliverer, find fault with the rudeness that disturbed them, and assume to give directions when they should begin to learn.³⁹

Goodell's insights were certainly accurate, but given Chapman's aptitude for keeping in the forefront of her mind the past, present, and future of her cause and the momentous impact a web of connection such as the one she was spinning could impart, she was well-prepared to counteract any arguments that she was stepping outside her proper sphere as a woman or that radical abolitionists such as herself were not to be taken seriously. In this sense, Chapman herself was the "eyes to the blind" and the one whose voice was loud enough to "rouse men from their dangerous sleep."

As editor of The Liberty Bell, Chapman initiated a dialogue that took place amongst abolitionists world-wide. To this end, many pieces feature opening passages written by Chapman that introduce her contributors to her reading public and that

demonstrate the far-reaching nature of the antislavery mission and the ways in which the American abolitionists were not alone in their fight. Her editorial prelude to the Baron de Staël-Holstein's extract in the 1852 Bell, for instance, pays homage to the "noble philanthropist" for his "Christian charity" and devotion, "in a peculiar manner[,]" to the abolition of the slave-trade in France (Chapman 252-53). With permission from the Baron's widow, Chapman prints an extract from the Baron's 1826 speech in Paris, which he gave, in Chapman's words, "while holding up to the shuddering Assembly the chains and bars forged for the better securing of Slaves" (253). In extracting a letter about the French slave trade, Chapman encourages readers to recall the partnership of France and America in the latter's revolution, a relationship already tested that should withstand the challenges of abolition. In addition, though her introduction to the Baron's speech is brief, it conjures up a visual image to her readers of the type of iniquities black people were facing worldwide as well as the universality of their plight and the corresponding need for people, like the Baron, to educate the public. Likewise, Chapman's introduction to a letter from Russian nobleman Monsieur N. Tourgueneff—to whom she had sent "certain copies of the Liberator, and Standard, and Uncle Tom's Cabin" in the hopes of exhibiting the similarities between the Russian serfs for whom he fought and the American slaves⁴⁰—offers to her readers a moment of connection. By introducing Tourgueneff as "wise" and "good," a man for whom "Freedom is a question of fundamental right as well as of national policy" (210), Chapman implicitly invites readers to emulate this "hero" and to make the correlation between oppression at home and oppression abroad. As Chapman expresses in her commemorative essay on British abolitionist Edward S. Abdy when she alludes to the Liberator's masthead motto,

“[M]an’s country [should be] the world, and his countrymen all mankind, no distinction of race or clime should bar the path of Justice or Freedom.”⁴¹

Although Chapman’s role as editor often entailed writing introductory pieces that initiated an international dialogue, such as the ones cited above, she also produced “editorial introductions” that featured, in keeping with the gift-book tradition, more stirring, romantic observations about the weight of meaning behind the words she published. One example of this other side to Chapman’s writing appears in her introduction to abolitionist Charles Follen’s poem “Farewell to Life,” published in the 1841 Bell. Herein, Chapman evokes the eternalness of literature as she writes,

. . . though we now place [Follen’s poem] on our page with something of the feeling with which one listens to a noble strain he is to hear no more, our immortal natures testify against our sorrow; and tell us that feelings, thoughts and words, like these true and fitly chosen ones, can never die; but must needs live thus noble and beautiful, forever. (142-43)

Chapman’s reference to The Liberty Bell as “*our page*” indicates the type of inclusiveness she saw her publication as embracing. In a dialectical moment with the deceased Follen, Chapman’s words echo the sentiment that he expresses in “Farewell to Life” (143-44) when his speaker steps out of time to give a seraph’s view of the abolitionist movement:

And what I held as sacred here below,
 What I embraced with quick and youthful
 glow,
 Whether I called it Liberty or Love—

A seraph now I see it stand above;

And as my sense slowly pass away,

A breath transports me to the realms of day. (ll. 9-14)

In their observation of the larger significance of what it means to support “Liberty or Love,” Chapman’s words consequently demonstrate that abolitionist literature, like music and all noble human sentiment, has the potential to touch upon the sublime. The “exchange of sympathy” generated by Follen’s farewell poem coupled with Chapman’s commemoration of him establishes “the ground for participation in a common cultural or intellectual project” (Kete xiv). In clarifying this connection, Chapman attempts to reach out to the universal and timeless aspects of life: liberty, love, and sympathy.

Indeed, Chapman was instrumental in bringing together the varied voices of abolition not only as editor selecting the works to be included and providing introductory blurbs when called for, but also as author of many articles, letters, and poems that, together, exemplify the wide-ranging literary styles she strove to encapsulate in her publication. Although most of Chapman’s non-editorial writing for The Liberty Bell features a strong sense of republicanism, the patriotic fervor of Garrisonian protest, and an eye toward nineteenth-century literary trends in sentimentalism and didacticism, it is interesting to note that her early writing is less refined and personal than her later writing. Perhaps it felt safer, in the beginning, for Chapman to maintain a tone of authority and to concentrate on timely issues. Perhaps Chapman did not yet see the value that her own experiences could lend to her writing. In any case, much of her early writing for the gift-book appears more historical, educational, and advocacy by nature—that is, pointed and, hence, “comfortable.”

“The British India Society,” published in the 1839 Bell, for instance, is a “historical/educational” piece that reveals to her readers how other parts of the world react against the institution of slavery. As both historian and teacher, Chapman praises the newly-formed British India Society for undermining slave labor and offering, instead, the free labor of British India as direct competition to it (81). Not simply informative, however, Chapman’s essay never loses sight of the unity of spirit she wishes to cultivate and is, therefore, propagandistic in its attempt to establish a unified front for the abolitionists—one that extends across the Atlantic. “The British India Society” counteracts people’s complaints that the English people should reform their East Indian oppressions “before they speak of [American oppression]” (Chapman 81). Chapman explains, the Society “arous[es] the world with the grand idea of a great nation emulous of righteousness and freedom, laboring to make the beauty of its example flame out like a beacon-light to all its peers . . .” (81). By upholding England as an example of righteousness and freedom, Chapman garners support from her British audience while simultaneously solidifying the notion that abolitionists worldwide are “peers.” Chapman additionally augments her propagandistic aims by placing pressure on American statesmen. She says that ordinary American abolitionists “could fail to be deeply moved by this commencement of a mighty moral revolution,” but that “the heads of American statesmen will not fail to perceive [the British India Society’s] importance” (82). Here, Chapman appeals to American politicians’ desires to see themselves as somehow sharper than “ordinary” folk. It is given, she would have them believe, that they would see the significance of such an effort. To finalize her challenge, in the closing paragraph, she specifically calls upon Wendell Phillips (who was then the representative of New

England abolitionists in Europe) to “animate [her audience] with all the encouraging considerations presented by this subject, and which the worn and wearied laborers for Freedom so greatly need” (83). Thus, “The British India Society” extends its message to a broad audience by educating the public about how other countries are combating slavery and also focuses on immediate, national concerns by compelling American politicians to become more active in the cause.

While “The British Indian Society” demonstrates how Chapman’s writerly tools are still blunt, her more directed protest writing proves even blunter still. Chapman’s condemnation of slavery supporters marked what may have been her favorite topic, for so much of her writing for The Liberty Bell features protest writing that was sometimes directed at general targets, such as slaveholders and apathetic Northerners, and sometimes directed toward more specific subjects. In the Bell’s premiere volume, Chapman penned a poem entitled “Lines, Inscribed to the Intolerant throughout New England and the Coasts thereof,” which is an admonishment of those “recreant few” who “[r]efuse to stitch, or knit, or sew / ‘Because,’ forsooth, ‘such fairs as these, / Go sore against their consciences!’” (ll. 11-14). When considered in light of the other pieces featured in the 1839 Bell, Chapman’s unsophisticated “Lines” foretells that amidst the “truth in gilt edges” that she sought to offer her readers lies a taste of the far less palatable “medicine in ‘whitty-brown.’” Indeed, her poetry and prose of protest often recall Right and Wrong, proving to be as brusque as any of Garrison’s most outspoken moments. Even more direct were some of the similarly-designed pieces Chapman wrote after her husband Henry died of tuberculosis, just one year after returning to the United States in 1842. Finding the cause a worthwhile diversion from her loss, Chapman

“abandoned herself to abolition” from 1842 to 1848 (Clinton 153-54). With her new focused attention, Chapman became a literary agitator, confident enough to fire her words at even more specific targets than “intolerant” New England women. In the 1843 Bell, she published a letter written to her by the Viscount Morpeth, which “decline[d] the honor of being one of [Chapman’s] contributors” (Morpeth 38). Chapman then added her own poem of protest in response, deconstructing the peculiar reasoning of Morpeth, who, purportedly, feared that “foreign co-operation” would only “irritate the elements of strife [and] give a fresh point to the aims of prejudice” (42-43). Chapman’s “Impromptu. To Viscount Morpeth” recalls the “Blanche Lion” who did not stop at the border despite the warnings he received and asks, “And now, when broader, holier fields before him / Stretch far into the depths of coming ages, / . . . Shall names and nations keep that banner furled?” (ll.5-6, 9). She answers, “They foray guiltless—[b?]e thy field the world!” (l. 10). Instead of the forthright censure so typical of her protest literature, however, Chapman’s “Impromptu” calls upon a metaphor and lets Morpeth’s letter speak for his own weakness in order to underscore the more imperative implications of the “broader, holier” battle in which the abolitionists were embroiled.

Not all of Chapman’s protest pieces, in fact, were devoid of literary merit no matter how pointed in their subject matter. Her 1856 critique of statesman Daniel Webster in “Necrology. Daniel Webster” is an apposite example of her growing ability to blend art and politics.⁴² Like “Impromptu,” which uses a specific target to draw attention to the greater cause, “Necrology” condemns a particular person—the “feeble-souled” Webster (169)—in order to point to what Chapman saw as a larger truth: a model statesman should be less concerned with “life temporal, than life eternal” (169-70).

Chapman censures Webster for allowing himself “to be floated backward and forward with the popular tide, against the onward and ever-strengthening current of the times” because, she contends,

It is at least necessary to the statesman that he should be bold and patient, having a stoic constancy, if not a Christian one. He must be able to see the fires of his hopes going out in darkness for a season, or no fulfil[l]ment can rise gloriously from their ashes. (170-71)

To be able to see the fires of one’s hopes fade so that fulfillment “can rise gloriously from their ashes” is to sacrifice one’s pride, one’s time, and one’s life for that to which one is completely faithful. For Chapman, the freedom of the slaves was the fulfillment she saw as arising out of the ashes. In an even greater sense, the defense of liberty and freedom would be the resultant legacy passed on to America’s progeny.

To emphasize the complicated connection between ambition and morality, Chapman’s essay weaves together a series of allusions that demonstrate how politics and ambition are entangled in temptation, slavery, and the sins of our fathers. Webster, Chapman argues, was “not so much the state’s *man*, as its slave” (171). She reinforces this view by juxtaposing Webster in 1820, “with his foot on Plymouth Rock, advocating against slavery,” with Webster in 1840, running for the presidency and “[selling] himself in vain” to potential voters at an Alexandria slave market. The once-untainted Webster had boldly proclaimed:

“I hear the sound of the hammer—I see the smoke of the furnaces where manacles and fetters are still forged for human limbs. I see visages of those, who by stealth, and at midnight, labour [sic] in this work of hell, foul

and dark, as may become the artificers of such instruments of misery and torture. Let that spot be purified, or let it cease to be of New England. Let it be purified, or let it be set aside from the Christian world; let it be put out of the circle of human sympathies and human regards; and let civilized man henceforth have no communion with it.” (qtd. in Chapman 175)

Appealing to his audience’s sense of Puritan cleanliness of spirit and conscience, Webster, in 1820, exploits the language of New England’s forefathers and thereby completes the “circle” that would unite New England with the proud principles upon which it was originally founded. Chapman, capitalizing upon Webster’s later hypocrisy and upon the hypocrisy of a nation that denies freedom to its colored peoples, dwells upon the idea of spots that need to be purified by comparing Webster’s fall from grace with the nation’s fall from grace. Chapman presents both desecrations of freedom as a slave auction: when people are bought and sold, souls are likewise bought and sold. The particular irony of Webster’s ambition and wavering values lies in the fact that, upon taking a stand in front of the crowds in Alexandria, Webster himself became a slave. Chapman explains:

No distinct word of Slavery, or Freedom, or Abolition, passes his lips. He dwells darkly upon ‘*this*’ subject . . . He dares not frankly cry, ‘Done!— ‘tis a bargain!’ like a bold villain; but he crouchingly *conveys* away his own freedom of soul, and independence of thought and action—his country’s safety and honour [sic]—his future hopes of renown—as far as in him lies, the best interests of universal humanity. (177)

Chapman's words, like the words of Webster, reverberate with allusions to New England's Puritan forefathers. While the adverb "darkly"—as in, "He dwells darkly upon *this* subject,"— suggests that Webster is hiding something, it also calls to mind Corinthians 1:13 and thereby alludes to the human weakness of seeing through the glass only darkly. However, Chapman does not exonerate the weakness in Webster, who is at once a fallen Adam and the "crouching" snake, for he is the prototype of he who *chooses* personal glory over "universal humanity." Indeed, Chapman's scathing "eulogy" can only end by saying that, ". . . after twelve years of degrading menial drudgery, [Webster] died [the South's] slave, at Marshfield, Massachusetts, in 1852" (178). Webster thus stands as an antihero and anti-symbol for the abolitionists; his cautionary tale illustrates the dangers of living for oneself and the corresponding need to consider one's actions in light of "life eternal."

Chapman's interest in adding the symbolic and otherwise colorful elements to her protest writing that appears in "Necrology. Daniel Webster" becomes even more prominent when, in her post-1848 writing for the Bell, she had a wealth of life experience of her own from which to draw. This more "autobiographical" phase in Chapman's writing career coincided with her 1848 move to Paris, where she and her sister Caroline lived for seven years so that Chapman's daughters could get the formative education abroad that she herself had found so advantageous and so that she could escape the ostracism she experienced in the more conservative America.⁴³ Though moving to Europe was both fashionable and strategic for many writers and activists such as Chapman and Margaret Fuller—who also resided Europe in 1848—many of Chapman's supporters expressed astonishment that she could leave the States in the midst of her

career and at the height of abolitionist activism fueled further by the tensions of the Mexican-American War. Although Chapman did continue to edit the Bell from Europe, to send forth a steady stream of sonnets and “Lines,” and to write antislavery articles as a foreign correspondent (Clinton 157), relocating to Europe forced her to rely upon others more. The production of the 1851 The Liberty Bell was apparently turned over to Edmund Quincy, one of the most active writers for abolitionism, while Chapman’s sister Anne Warren Weston became the fair organizer (Chambers-Schiller 266). Two issues, one of which was the 1856 edition, were prepared under the sole supervision of Anne Warren Weston.⁴⁴ However, the change in location seems also to have encouraged Chapman to use her experiences as inspiration for her own writing and, hence, enabled her to write pieces that resembled more closely the type of writing that popularized abolitionism by giving a more human voice to the cause and that made the gift-book such a fitting platform for the movement.

The more autobiographical pieces that Chapman produced during this phase in her career reflect an even greater cognizance of her audience and of the need to reveal the “truth in gilt edges.” Not only was the autobiographical mode of writing popularized by former slaves beginning to emerge in America and abroad as a powerful form of abolitionist representation, but the influence of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852) upon Chapman was probably responsible, at least in part, for the more “literary” turn that Chapman’s own writing took. Although Stowe’s inactivity with the BFASS and the Boston fairs was often a source of anger for Chapman and her sisters, Chapman nonetheless revered Stowe’s work, as evidenced by her recommending Uncle Tom’s Cabin to Viscount Morpeth, for example.⁴⁵

In the 1853 volume of The Liberty Bell, Chapman published two of her own pieces that draw from her life experiences and that have the plot and character development of autobiographical writing. Moreover, the writing offers anecdotes instead of Chapman's usual didacticism and is, in general, more illuminating than demonstrative. "The Young Sailor," for example, addresses issues of color prejudice by using the story of a young sailor to illustrate that

. . . prejudice against color is like ice,—subject to too many accidents to build the institutions of a nation upon. As surely as the sun and southern wind unlocks the rivers, so surely must prejudice yield to love and justice, and slavery consequently disappear. (Chapman 209)

Upon meeting a Northern college professor who supported slavery and whose ignorance, Chapman declares, would shame even "the dark ages and the dark places of the earth" (195), Chapman "meekly inquired whether, if the three millions of blacks could be suddenly turned white, he would venture to present a single one of [his] considerations for keeping them in Slavery" (196). To support her contention that such "ignorant, unthinking, vulgar" prejudice was the professor's only "ally" in the war against liberty, Chapman calls upon the example of a young sailor, whom she met in her travels in Haiti and whose extreme prejudices proved to be vulnerable in the face of love.

Chapman reveals the young sailor's story as an anecdotal story with plot, character development, and a moral. She sketches his character as showing the capacity to change, for better or for worse, and the resultant suspense adds a dramatic effect to her moral tale. Upon first meeting Chapman and her husband, and not yet knowing their names, the young sailor freely vents his prejudices by saying that "nothing can be made

[slaves] . . . They are the descendants of Cain, and their color is God's mark, set upon them that they may be avoided, wherever they go . . ." (199). He further calls abolitionists "crazy," saying they would make better use of their time and resources if they shipped all the blacks "home to Africa, where they came from" (199-200). The sailor represents to Chapman all that is ignorant, hypocritical, and unjust about slavery. Her arguments against colonization, slavery, and color prejudice surface in a myriad of scenarios she presents hypothetically to her readers in the form of all that she did *not* say to the sailor but would have liked to have said if she thought it might have made a difference:

I did not ask him what the South would do deprived of three millions of laborers; nor whether the navies of the world would suffice for their transportation; nor what resources the fatal Liberian coast offered for their subsistence; nor whether they would consent to go; nor whether the rule that made Africa their home would not make ours, and the United States[,] to the red men . . . Neither did it seem advisable to meet the other arguments—historical, theological, physiological, arithmetical, or dystogistical—to inquire what need there was of a legal prohibition of intermarriage, if such an intense repugnance existed between the races; or how color could be the mark of Cain, seeing that his posterity perished in Noah's flood . . . I omitted, too, to ask whether the Negroes were not human, and, therefore, they too, our Southern brethren, without consulting

Moses; or what was gained for Christ, by representing his teachings to be in opposition to every sentiment of honor, and justice, and humanity—every dictate of benevolence, and common sense, and religion. (200-02)

In her diatribe, Chapman deconstructs proslavery and pro-colonization reasoning by providing counterpoints to every aspect such positions might uphold. Especially important here is Chapman's reclaiming of what she conceives to be American, Christian, familial, and communal ideals. She takes back the term "home," for example, which the sailor uses when he says the blacks should be sent "home" to Africa. Home is not simply a place of origin—for if that were the case, the United States would belong to the Native Americans and she and her immediate community and family would belong in Europe, from whence their forefathers came. The idea of "home" in Chapman's representation pertains to a more immediate place—a place where people live their daily lives and plant seeds for the future. Chapman also reclaims notions of Christian brotherhood and charity by dismantling the young sailor's insinuation that the Bible supports prejudice against blacks. Chapman's reasoning demonstrates the multiple interpretations the Bible offers and suggests that prejudice is not biologically or theologically predetermined, but rather socially dictated and, thus, alterable and unstable. Finally, utilizing the double entendre of her own past work Right and Wrong in Massachusetts, Chapman states, "Taste and choice . . . were rights, in all questions of Color, while they became the deadliest wrongs in the question of Justice" (202). Here, "right" entails not only "correctness" but also a person's inalienable entitlements. The former definition of rightness as correctness is more subjective than the sailor might believe, while the latter, in Chapman's view, is utterly concrete, as dictated by natural and Christian laws. Indeed, Chapman's story ends

with the sailor falling in love with a black girl, thereby proving that a person may change his mind about what is “right” and what is “wrong.”

Chapman extends her attention to color prejudice in “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone” (1853), which, like “The Young Sailor,” is a story based on Chapman’s own experiences. In this piece, written in Paris in October of 1852, Chapman details her attempt to find Charles Cumberworth, the artist who created the bronze statuette, “The African Woman at the Fountain,” which was presented by the managers of the 1851 Boston Antislavery Bazaar to Harriet Beecher Stowe.⁴⁶ Chapman begins her piece, however, with a noteworthy description of the statuette:

It was a woman carrying water; her beautiful arm drawn downward, and displayed at its full length by the weight of the vase, and her dress and attitude chosen so as to show to the best advantage the fine African features, where nothing was exaggerated or extenuated. The sculptor had denied her no advantage of drapery or position, which a European subject might claim; and the result was such that a single glance could not fail to break the associations of ugliness and repulsiveness which Slavery has connected with the name of Africa. (246-47)

Though Chapman’s description of the statuette seems intent on emphasizing the beauty of the African race, she gives more credit to the artist than she does to the art itself or to the audience, for the artist interprets the subject matter and thereby influences his/her audience with what he/she creates and presents to the world. Here, the statuette is merely a creation of Cumberworth’s and is, grammatically, the object in all of Chapman’s sentences. The sculptor controls the image he creates and, therefore, even though

Chapman claims “nothing was exaggerated or extenuated[,]” the meditation she gives to the artist detracts from her attempts “to break the associations of ugliness and repulsiveness which Slavery has connected with the name of Africa.” Chapman’s focus on the sculptor himself, which is, after all, the main thrust of her “story,” likewise reveals her own position as editor and, more generally, as abolitionist. She, like Cumberworth, has devoted her energies by “sanctifying art to the service of humanity” (251). In Chapman’s view, what the artist creates is crucial to what the audience will perceive and, since she has already granted the artist much power, it makes sense that his vision has the power to change the world. Chapman explains, “As long . . . as we are selfish tyrants, we can see nothing upon the face of the Negro but ugliness and debasement. It is the shadow of ourselves” (248). Such art as the statuette, however, “had been shaped in a different mould. It afforded the nearest approach to a miraculous sight of the race we vilify, behind our own backs” (248). Chapman thus sees pieces like the statuette as indispensable in the education of Americans in the Northern States, “where the majority of the inhabitants so seldom see a Negro, out of whom they have not trampled the beauty and the grace of life, that they forget how differently the very same being would appear to them under different circumstances” (248).

The notion of order gone awry and the subsequent tainting of beauty and purity reemerges in one of Chapman’s final pieces, “‘The Beginning and the Ending,’” which she wrote for the 1858 volume of the Bell. She draws the reader in by offering a “story” about the seventh-generation New England Americans, descended from the Puritans and revolutionary Forefathers, and their vows of family and kinship to be the “‘alpha and omega’ of their lives—the first and the last, the beginning and the ending” (15). Thus

uniting her “characters” in their devotion to family and community, Chapman surprises her readers when she reveals that her main characters are not protagonists in her story; they are the pro-slavery Northerners who take part in the “guilty complicity” of slavery (13). With promises broken—and the corresponding breakdown of familial and community ties—Chapman’s characters star in a cautionary tale. The direct descendents of patriots who vowed “Give me liberty or give me death” (13), the slavery supporters allowed “their lower interests [to be] wrapped up with slavery; in the manufacturing and railroad stocks, the mortgages of plantations, the legal and political prospects, the social expectations, all dependent on the pleasure of slaveholders” (14). As her optimistic abolitionist ideology would have it, however, the “voices of protest, of explanation, of argument, of appeal, of sublime awakening, began to be heard in the land; and they broke into the festive circle of unaccustomed and careless hearts whose friendship was to last forever” (14). Here, Chapman lends an ironic twist to the symbolism of domestic and communal union. The circle in this scenario is tainted because the bonds that originally united the pilgrim descendents have been devalued by their complicity in slavery. The abolitionists must therefore break into “the festive circle” in order to reconfigure a community founded in actuality, not just in theory, upon the tenants of America’s Forefathers. As such, her story has a beginning, but no ending as of yet. “This is the beginning,” Chapman concludes, “And thus in every city in America have the foundations of the Anti-Slavery cause been laid. The ending is not yet—nor can be. According to their nature of blessing or curse, such things and such deeds go on as cause and effect, forever” (15). The circle of communion with the values of liberty and independence that New Englanders such as Chapman might wish to evoke may indeed

have been “caused” by the spirit inspired by America’s patriots, but the turn toward slavery necessitates a break in the circle in order to reestablish a truer one.

The manifold ways that Chapman’s own antislavery work and writing break from traditional “circles” indicate the various accomplishments and concessions necessitated by the changing face of abolition in America. As activist, editor, and writer, Chapman showed the propensity to change with the times. Although her autobiographical pieces indicate her own strides to add “gilt edges” to her abolitionist prose, Chapman’s successes and failures in this endeavor need to be considered in light of her larger repertoire of writing for The Liberty Bell. “Necrology,” “The Young Sailor,” “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone,” and “The Beginning and the Ending” demonstrate to some degree Chapman’s own evolution as a writer, but equally important in all her work is the overall inclusiveness that Chapman’s editorship embraced and that her writing represented. From the strident prose of Right and Wrong to her sentimental “Lines” and educational essays, Chapman’s work establishes the web of connection that she made between herself and other abolitionists around the world by establishing a meta-web of connection, so to speak—one that demonstrates how the different voices of abolition may be strengthened by covering a vaster range of generic and stylistic voices.

CHAPTER 3

ABOLITIONIST MONUMENTS: THE ELEGIAC TRADITION IN
 MARIA WESTON CHAPMAN, WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON,
 ANNE WARREN WESTON, AND JAMES RUSSEL LOWELL

Ah! then, how dear the Muse's favours cost,

If those paint sorrow best—who feel it most!

—Charlotte Turner Smith, from Elegiac

Sonnets and Other Poems (1784-1797)

The Elegy Reconsidered: Monumentalizing the Cause

One of the more useful genres for espousing the coalescing principles of radical abolitionists was the elegy. In its public voicing of private sentiment, the elegy as a form mirrored the merging of public-private spheres that Chapman's abolitionist gift-book sought to promote. In addition, the correlation between sentimentality and mourning was consonant not only with abolitionist literary production in general but with the keepsake tradition in particular, which affirms the importance of the gift-book's "memorial function" (Dobson 273). Indeed, given sentimentality's interest in "*lost* homes, *lost* families, and *broken* bonds," the sentimental mode "might be best understood as a specific kind of mourning" (Kete 17, 32). "In Antebellum America," Jeffrey Steele observes, "the most enduring impressions were often evoked by the pervasive rituals and signifiers of mourning" (69). Because the sense of loss caused by slavery—the slaves' own loss of family, of freedom, and of their sense of self-ownership as well as the

abolitionists' loss of "martyrs" for the cause—was ubiquitous, it seems reasonable that Chapman's gift-book would draw upon the elegiac form. In their expressions of union in the face of the disruptions of families and friends, the elegies published in the Bell stress the value of abolishing an institution that was so very destructive to social justice.

Although the abolitionist elegies published in The Liberty Bell rely upon sentimentality as "a means of confronting the philosophical problem of skepticism posed by the experience of loss" (Kete 5), their composition did not entail a de-politicization of antislavery values. In fact, instead of featuring "orthodox consolations" such as the rebirth of the dead in nature, in God, or in poetry itself (Ramazani 4), abolitionist elegies posit the dead reborn through the abolitionist movement. The deceased may be likened to a star in the sky that alights the slavery-darkened world, but more importantly, he or she becomes a symbol of abolitionist ideals. This transference of grief from the lost object to a "sign" of the deceased is not new.¹ Such a transference—as seen in the Apollo-Daphne and Pan-Syrinx myths in which the laurel tree and pipes become, respectively, the substitutive objects upon which the mourners displace their grief—is necessary to healthy mourning (Sacks 4-7). Just as the traditional elegiac apotheosis deifies the deceased or substitutes for him/her a symbolic object of affection, the deceased in abolitionist elegies becomes secondary to the uplifting of that individual to the status of martyr for the cause. Consequently, the inevitable disarticulation of the subject occurs as a direct result of the poetry's inspiration and end; that is, the deceased individual's work for the antislavery cause inspires sentimental proclamations of grief that ultimately redirect attention away from the individual and toward abolitionism, which is posited in the poetry as the crucial godly mission that makes this circle of

sentiment possible. Because the abolitionists subsume praise of the individual in praise of the cause, the poetry may be said to be an encomium rather for the antislavery movement itself.

Perhaps the most concise reason why the elegy was such an appropriate form for The Liberty Bell, however, lies in the closing words of the Address of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society to the Women of New England, in which the Boston women express a plea for the remembrance of their efforts and of the historical significance of the abolitionist mission: “[Let the Address] be a ‘memorial of us,’ that in the holy cause of Human Freedom, ‘we have done what we could.[’]”² With words serving as memorials, the female abolitionists indicate their desire to remember those who came before them as well as their wish to be remembered themselves. In The Liberty Bell, the basic tenets of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and the web of connection it establishes become reformulated in the genre of elegiac poetry, which endorses the union of lives past, present, and future. In its commemoration of those who lived for the cause and in its own circuitous reflection of the infinite circles of lives that abolitionists saw as supporting their work, the elegy proves an apposite piece for the Bell. To die for a cause is to die a hero, and the antislavery campaign sought out and rewarded its heroes accordingly, often through elegies that supported the belief in one simple theory: “To commemorate the dead is to affirm that their lives do not fall totally into nothingness” (Shaw 8). Instead of commemorating the innumerable black slaves who, like Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom, died a martyr’s death, however, the elegies of The Liberty Bell focus exclusively on the deaths of abolitionists because of the immediacy of the contributors’ relations with most of the deceased and, more subtly, because of the

abolitionist movement's tremendous need for charismatic leaders who had the agency to affect a larger sphere. As such, the elegies published in the Bell both succeed and fail to reflect upon the literal bodies of the deceased as well as upon the body politic and global community in order to affirm the web of connection between the peoples and the ideologies that propelled their daily work.

Glorifying Martyrs and Building Bridges

In order to commemorate the dead in a manner that was at once proper and artistic, abolitionist elegists not only drew from their grief but also from a strong generic tradition. As “the poetry of solace” (Ramazani 14), elegies have long served an integral function in human society. On a psychological level, they encourage acceptance of an inescapable facet of life—death. By bringing closure to lives, elegies initiate new beginnings and are, thus, a testament to the eternalness of human life. The effects of the psychology of mourning are inextricably linked to more expansive social implications as well, for mourning solidifies the bonds that unite people, a goal with the utmost immediacy for abolitionists writers. And, on a metaphysical level, elegies are “a battle with and also an acknowledgement of time” (Smith 3). Addressing that which is beyond sense confirms that the human spirit has purpose and attests to both human endurance and human fragility. Through the repetition of words and refrains, elegiac questioning, and the invocation of the dead, elegies create “a sense of continuity, of an unbroken pattern such as one may oppose to the extreme discontinuity of death” (Sacks 23). For abolitionists, such a sense of continuity not only validated all of the senseless deaths and sacrifices that were a regular part of their daily lives but represented symbolically a web

of connection sustained by the ideological principles that affirmed the confederacy of all people: black or white, man or woman, alive or deceased. Consequently, the abolitionist elegy features many of the genre's most fundamental attributes. The poetry was "normative" in respect to its propensity for transforming grief into consolation; it was also traditional in that mourning becomes compensatory and restitutive (Ramazani xi, 3). In addition, all of the elegies published in the Bell showcase the four figures of similitude that Foucault says dominate classical elegies: "adjacencies of convenience (proximities of space and time), echoes of emulation, linkages of analogy, and the sustaining power of sympathy."³ That is to say, the gift-book's elegies feature known personages of the day who, through the poet's garnering of analogy and, hence, familiarity, as well as through the evocation of sympathy, become figures fit for emulation.

Given the debt of gratitude Chapman and her Liberty Bell associates felt was owed to those who had been fighting for years against slavery in America and overseas, it is not surprising that the first issue of the Bell features more elegies than any other volume. As the debut issue, the 1839 Bell sought, among other things, to establish the sense that the abolitionists were in good company. At the time, a boost in morale was necessary in combating the backlash effect being waged by the antiabolitionists because, despite British support against slavery and the precedent set overseas, the abolitionist mission in the United States was by no means unobstructed or easy. The 1830s marked a time of increased antislavery activity—with the first publication of William Lloyd Garrison's Liberator in January 1831, the meeting of the First Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in New York in May 1837, and the prolific activism of such people as Sarah and Angelina Grimké, Lydia Maria Child, and Lucretia Mott—but, at the same

time, antiabolitionist sentiment both outside of and within the movement was intense. In 1831 Garrison remarked in the Liberator:

During my recent tour for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact, that a greater revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free states—and particularly in New England—than at the South. I found contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slaveowners themselves.⁴

The antipathy of Northerners and Southerners alike toward abolitionists was well known; Robert Penn Warren explains, “abolitionism was not a general northern doctrine[,]” and the abolitionists “were always . . . a minority” (15). In fact, the antiabolitionist trend gained momentum in the 1840s, 50s, and 60s. In an essay on a recently deceased British abolitionist, “Edward S. Abdy,” published in the Bell in 1847, Chapman applauds Abdy for sympathizing with American abolitionists whom she calls the “despised band . . . the world neglected” (296). Not just neglected, the abolitionists were regularly threatened by mob violence. As Garrisonians especially knew from first-hand experience, antiabolitionist resentment frequently became forceful and life-threatening.⁵

The death of Elijah Parish Lovejoy, who was murdered on November 7, 1837 for refusing to change his antislavery editorials for the Alton Observer, sparked widespread horror and abolitionist fervor. Lovejoy’s murder was widely commemorated by abolitionist poets, including Maria Weston Chapman and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper.⁶ In the 1839 Bell, Chapman’s elegiac poem, celebrating “The Anniversary of Lovejoy’s

Martyrdom,” was one of the few pieces in any of The Liberty Bell volumes to feature a corresponding graphic. Considering the great opposition that American antislavery advocates faced daily, utilizing illustrations and graphic propaganda became an essential means of further inculcating the abolitionist goal of immediate emancipation. The Bell’s picture of a slave kneeling before Lady Liberty bolstered abolitionist morale by associating visually “the FREEDOM of the PRESS” for which Lovejoy stood with the freedom of the slave. Significantly, the man in the graphic is presented as beseeching Lady Liberty on his knees, a position that suggests docility and that thereby frustrates the antiabolitionist tactic of portraying blacks as power-hungry and impish. Moreover, highlighting Lady Liberty’s power to grant slaves their freedom endorses woman as a model of both agency and domesticity, a parallel that is apropos in light of the work that Chapman and her female family and friends were effecting for the abolitionist movement in both Boston and abroad. In comparison, Lovejoy’s association with the graphic makes him a representative of the struggles of a race and of the imperative of free speech. More than a hero, Lovejoy becomes an invaluable symbol as what Chapman calls “The first MARTYR to American LIBERTY.”

Because Lovejoy represents the most essential call-to-arms of the abolitionists, American liberty, Chapman’s elegy, simply titled “Sonnet,” makes much of Lovejoy’s death but as an event to be celebrated, not mourned. Chapman’s poem, in fact, eschews tears. Her speaker commands, “No tears to-day! A lofty joy should crown / A deed of lofty sacrifice, like thine . . .” (ll. 1-2). The speaker does not want “that seed of Liberty, so gladly sown, [to be] . . . water[ed] with grief and tears.” Rather, tears should be shed “for the blood of others” who are still captive (ll. 5-6, 13). By asserting his right to

defend abolition and by refusing to be silenced, Lovejoy became the epitome of heroism and freedom. Thus, the speaker reasons, people should express pleasure, for Lovejoy's "blood poured forth so joyously and free" (l. 14). Like Edward Abdy whom Chapman applauds for "that discriminating moral sense, that high idea of duty, that uncompromising integrity, and that active fidelity to principle" (295), Lovejoy and others like him become symbols of the strong humanitarian who, in the face of "hostile crowds" and "darkness," shine forth as symbols "for the right" (l. 10). As a result, the distinctions of their individual personalities and lives grow blurry as abolitionists' elegiac writing favors instead more universalistic idealizations and classifications. The apotheosis of the beloved and the subsequent submersion of his/her individuality, however, entails neither a lessening of sentiment or effect nor a diminishing of the value of human life.⁷ As Shaw suggests, "To commemorate death rightly is also to magnify the life and love that make death terrible" (6). The focus of abolitionist poetry on the love of freedom and dedication to humanitarianism that those whom they commemorate evince serves as a "magnifying of a life" since so many abolitionists' lives revolved around that single purpose.

E Pluribus Unum: The Group Demand for Self-Sacrifice

When Chapman's speaker praises Lovejoy as the symbol of American liberty, she fortifies the connection between Lovejoy and other "soldiers of Truth." As a corollary of such comparisons, the elegy served as an ideal vehicle by which abolitionists could call attention to the importance of self-sacrifice. In antebellum America, antislavery advocates implemented the shift from the Romantic individual to a more traditional center, one whose preeminence of sacrifice and duty was presumably accomplished for

the good of the whole. Salvation, for American abolitionists, was similar to salvation for most British Victorians. It depended “on work in their allotted field and service to humanity” (Shaw 33). Following an elegy written by Anne Warren Weston and published in the 1839 Bell, David Lee Child penned an addendum that expresses well the spirit of self-sacrifice the abolitionists sought to uphold. Addressing those who have died for the cause, Child writes,

Blessed spirits, that have gone from mortal jars and earthly frowns
to celestial welcome and eternal peace! Ye have learned from your Savior
that God permits the highest services to humanity to be returned with
ingratitude, in order to teach men that such missions can be performed
only by the disinterested. These are the flaming cherubim to turn away the
little and the worldly-minded, lest they should encumber righteous reform
with selfish aid. (25)

Indeed, devoting one’s life to “the highest services to humanity” required a total submersion of self and created, as it were, “angels” on earth who relinquished personal reward for their work. Instead of the Victorian notion of the “angel of the house,” however, the “angels” in this case become signifiers for the global family of humanity, while the “house” becomes the world at large.

Just as the Address of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society shows the importance of service to humanity, so, too, do the abolitionist elegies in their attention to people’s altruistic triumphs and rewards. William Lloyd Garrison’s poem “To the Memory of Ann Greene Chapman,” another elegy published in the first volume of the Bell, emphasizes the interconnectedness of lives and thus accentuates the “*e pluribus*

unum” of the antislavery movement and the ways in which one can stand for many. The notion of one group (the abolitionists acting as a unified one) fighting for the many (the slaves of America) formed, in theory at least, the traditional center and core value of the abolitionists. Only when the individuals that comprised the abolitionist group were strong could they achieve the social change crucial to the lives and liberty of the many slaves in bondage.

In Garrison’s elegy, Ann Greene Chapman—whose collection of abolitionist mementos inspired the creation of the Bell—becomes, like Lovejoy, a symbol, but instead of embodying “American liberty,” she stands as an emblem of philanthropy. To underscore this characterization, Garrison personifies philanthropy as a figure who mourns “that a fearless advocate hath fled” (l. 14). Celebrating a life dedicated to God’s work, the speaker glorifies Ann Chapman and upholds her as an example of philanthropic virtue:

Earth, with its golden follies, thou didst spurn,—
 Ceaseless thy aim to do the will of God:
 How deep for outraged nature thy concern,
 And warm thy zeal to break the oppressor’s rod! (ll. 9–12)

Denigrated by antiabolitionists, antislavery proponents, in turn, “spurned” slavery and the “golden follies” of vice and materialism they felt were perpetuated by the institution. Not only was antislavery work the “will of God” but slavery itself seemed an aberration of the natural order, “outrag[ing] nature” by its existence. This pastoral element of Garrison’s elegy inverts slavery supporters’ arguments that the Bible consents to slavery by conjoining God and nature and asserting that slavery goes against both. By reiterating

this common tactic of the abolitionists, Garrison's elegy shifts in focus from the deceased individual to the cause for which she stood. Even in the speaker's consideration of the spirit of Ann Chapman, Garrison infuses his verse with antislavery sentiment and allusion. As with Lovejoy, whom Maria Weston Chapman's speaker claims finds freedom in death, so, too, is Ann Chapman's spirit uplifted and freed: "Enfranchised Spirit! now with glory crowned, / Now dwelling in the blest abode of life" (ll. 7-8). Like the slaves who often sought or were told to seek solace in the thought that they would finally be "free" in death, Garrison's speaker bestows a glory upon the "Enfranchised Spirit" of his subject. Though silenced by death, Ann Chapman, who spoke on behalf of so many, now is given voice by Garrison and by those for whom she stood. In the elegy, not only does "Philanthropy" mourn her death, but "captive millions groans do heavenward send, / Now thou art numbered with the silent dead" (ll. 15-16).

While Garrison's elegy indirectly gives voice to the deceased, Anne Warren Weston's 1839 elegy "Lines, written on hearing the remark of a friend, that a large number of Abolitionists had died during the preceding years," directly voices what the deceased abolitionists might say to their earthly counterparts. With this staging, the speaker does not implement the basic movement so common in elegies from downward darkness to upward light. Instead, the speaker reverses the direction with an interchange that features the deceased addressing from their perch atop the "spirit world" those "below" who need their guidance:

". . . Below

we meet no more,

But in the spirit-world thy soul even unto ours

may soar;
 And not one holy wish or thought, that rises in
 thy heart,
 But meets its kindred in our souls of which it
 forms a part.” (ll. 27-30)

In the poem, the antislavery proponents still stand for the disenfranchised slaves as they do in Maria Weston Chapman’s and Garrison’s elegies, and the emphasis likewise lies almost exclusively upon the work of the abolitionists and not upon those whom they serve. However, even though the living abolitionists are presented here as one group, sharing one soul, Weston’s elegy pays homage to the individual abolitionists who died for the cause and is hence a tribute not to one, but to many.

The essential element that remains intact in all three poems is the unequivocal role of memory as a unifying force in the abolitionist web of connection. Like Chapman’s and Garrison’s elegies, Weston’s poem offers conventional consolation through the restoration of the deceased’s memory. Chapman’s poem on Lovejoy is itself a reiteration of the importance of remembering his spirit, as it was published on the anniversary of his death two years earlier. Garrison’s poem asserts that Ann Chapman’s memory is cherished and shall always be, “Graven as it is on FREEDOM’S hallowed shrine” (l. 4). Not only is Ann Chapman’s spirit blessed, but freedom itself becomes holy. In Weston’s poem, remembrance of those who died for the cause becomes a source of strength for those still living: “Their shadowy presence girds our souls in hours of sacrifice” (l. 4). In troubled times, the speaker and other abolitionists may recall that their work honors the dead as well as protects the enslaved:

But while in fervent grief we weep above each
 lowly grave,
 May we like them the weak protect, from wrong
 the helpless save;
 Their pure devotion, earnest faith, and love of
 human kind,
 Within our inmost souls let these an answering
 echo find;
 And should the hour of peril come, and free-
 dom's friends turn pale,
 The memory of the faithful dead shall prove as
 triple mail. (ll. 8-12)

Here, the memory of the deceased reinforces the web of connection by strengthening the link between the abolitionist and the “weak” and “helpless” through the abolitionists’ connection to their heroes and role models. In this distinctive dialectic, the objectives of one group may find immortality in another’s “echo.” Hoping to “echo” their heroes’ “pure devotion, earnest faith, and love of human kind,” the grieving speaker and those for whom she stands find consolation in their emulation. The “echo” “makes the voicing of loss seem to come from beyond the self, from the objective world of fact” (Sacks 24). As a result, the emulation of the deceased re-inscribes the vital impact of the mission of the abolitionists still living.

More than a decade after Anne Warren Weston published her elegy in the first volume of The Liberty Bell, she wrote in the 1853 volume another elegy, entitled “In

Memory of C.S.,” which seems to be an “echo” of her own poetic voice. In her second poem, however, Weston extends the web of connection beyond her associations of the slaves with the living abolitionists and of the living abolitionists with the abolitionists who died for the cause. In fact, “In Memory of C.S.” depicts, through metaphor, the abolitionists as guides not unlike God who, as “Comforter and Source of Light” (l. 6), is a guide to the many people who seek His wisdom. In the first section of the poem, Weston sets up an allegorical framework for her commemoration of C.S. in order to establish the degree of influence he indeed had and still has on his fellow abolitionists. Drawing upon traditional images of light and dark and upon the extended metaphor of life as a series of paths to select and choices to make, the speaker states,

As the dread mystery that men call Life
 Evolves its shadowy foldings, and we feel
 Its painful tumult and perplexing strife
 About our onward pathway darkly steal,
 For Light and Comfort we at first appeal
 To Thee, O Comforter and Source of Light,
 Who can the straight and narrow way reveal
 Where sunshine rises on the darkest night.
 But as a lesser means of help and grace
 Thou in Thy Love dost give us, face to face
 A chosen few who even here below
 As they move onward without rest or stay,
 Shine bright and brighter to their perfect day,

That they to us as guiding stars may show. (ll. 1-14)

Although Weston's metaphors may seem prosaic, her comparison of God as Comforter with "[a] chosen few" who act as "guiding stars," though offering "a lesser means of help and grace" than God, represents the type of sentimental reformations that Stowe's Uncle Tom and little Eva achieve. Because they are fallible and "lesser" humans, Tom, Eva, and C.S. demonstrate more readily the potential of all abolitionists. As such, Weston's lines indicate the abolitionists' critical need for living role models to keep them on their "path."

According to Weston's elegy, C.S. is one of the chosen few fit to lead others by his morals and deeds. The speaker marvels at the "gentle force" of his "daily course" (ll. 18, 16) and says that his faith in "God's forgiving grace" has the power to make even "sorrow," "want," and "remorse" smile (ll. 20-22). Above all, the speaker commends C. S. for being, like God, one who does not discriminate: "No thought of station, color, clime, or creed, / E'er checked thy noble thought or generous deed, / Like God's, thy love enclosed the Human Race" (ll. 23-25). Weston raises him up as an example, not only to the disheartened abolitionists in general but also to herself, as her speaker begs to be taught by his example and "[r]esolves for higher effort, holier thought . . ." (ll. 26-27). That C.S. is presented as one of the chosen suggests that many of the abolitionists were well aware of their own shortcomings—namely, that those who fought for the weak and helpless were not themselves always above the prejudice and iniquity they tried to combat—and that this awareness only increased their need for heroes.

Romantic and Victorian Impulses in the Abolitionist Elegy

Although the shift from the individual to the multitudes, from the Romantic poet-speaker to the Victorian philanthropist, was becoming more popular with antislavery activists, the literature of The Liberty Bell sometimes reflects the vacillation between Romantic impulses and a Victorian way of thinking. By its very nature, elegiac poetry might seem to de-emphasize the speaker, focusing instead upon the subject. In abolitionist elegies, the subversion of the speaker is often even more evident as the cause of abolition takes center stage. James Russell Lowell's elegy published in the 1843 volume of the Bell, however, presents a different poetic voice from the consistently self-effacing and humble speakers in Chapman's, Garrison's, and Weston's poems. In "Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing," written in Boston in November 1842, Lowell's speaker stands on the cusp of Romantic and Victorian sensibilities, uplifting the poet as having a broader and more insightful view of the world and simultaneously offering praise of the cause of abolition, which, he states, has Truth and, hence, Nature on its side.

"Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing" harkens back to the ideology of Coleridge, Shelley, and Wordsworth in its construction of poet-speaker as "educator, priest, and savior of mankind" (Mellor and Matlak 127). Displaying aesthetic characteristics commonly associated with masculine Romanticism—i.e., art being "a unique and original creation of the subjective imagination that expressed the artist's individual emotional and intellectual response to a particular human or natural event"⁸—Lowell's poem begins by focusing on the poet-speaker's outlook and vision. The speaker states:

I do not come to weep above thy pall,
 And mourn the dying out of noble powers;
 The poet's clearer eye should see in all
 Earth's seeming woe the seed of Heaven's
 Flowers. (ll. 1-4)

The speaker reflects upon the specific event of Channing's death, which is both human and natural, but his "clearer eye" allows him to see the bigger picture, so to speak. As a result of his special perspective, the speaker is able to embrace an optimistic view of a teleological harmony when he declares that what seems a woe on earth is actually "the seed of Heaven's Flowers." He "watch[es] the circle of eternal years" and sees "[o]ne onward step of Truth from age to age" (ll. 17, 20). Such confident assurance has the effect of envisioning the interconnectedness of life and inspiring readers by assuring them of a divine order.

At the same time as Lowell raises the poet-speaker to the level of prophet, he imparts a very human quality to his speaker. The poet, though always a romantic figure in Lowell's elegy, nevertheless does not have the power to change the world directly even if he understands what needs to be done and how the world works. While the "poor are crushed [and] the tyrants link their chains[,] / The poet sings through narrow dungeon-grates" (ll. 21-22). As a result of the poet's great insight yet sense of being a prisoner behind narrow dungeon-grates, his only natural recourse is to reveal to the world the wisdom and beauty of his mind and heart. Thus, in the elegy, the speaker looks to the past to make sense of the present and shares in verse his theories of life and death: "Men slay the prophet," he reasons, "[b]ut Evil's triumphs are her endless loss, / And sovereign

Beauty wins the soul at last” (ll. 25, 27-28). By drawing upon what he observes from history—from the great peacemakers like Plato and Clarkson, whom the speaker believes are more noble than the warriors/soldiers Alexander [the Great] and Wellington (ll. 13-16)—the Romantic poet-speaker may easily move to a sweeping “Truth,” learned from the lessons of life. The speaker states, for instance, that “Truth needs no champions” because she lives “in the deep / Of everlasting Soul,” and “[t]hrough Nature’s veins her strength undying tides” (ll. 5, 6, 8). Moreover, he declares, “Peace is more strong than war,” and it is a “Law of Nature” that “No power can die that ever wrought for Truth” (ll. 9, 30, 29). Although such notions as a “Law of Nature” and “Truth” are subjective indeed, the Romantic visionary speaks with confidence, thereby setting up a strong framework for commemorating one whom he deems important to abolition and to the human race more generally.

Lowell’s visions of Truth, in fact, became his credo. In a series of articles on “Anti-Slavery in the United States,” published in the London Daily News in 1846, Lowell expounds:

Never in the world’s history has truth come into fair and open conflict with Falsehood, but her cause has been triumphant. That which contains within itself a spark of the divine is indestructible, unconquerable.⁹

This surety of Lowell’s first found utterance, however, in his poetry. Just as his poet-speaker’s transition from Romantic prophet to observer of facts is a smooth one, Lowell’s shift from the Romantic sensibility to a philanthropic one as his speaker moves from a discussion of his vision to a more deliberate lauding of both Dr. Channing and the

significance of abolitionist work appears natural as well. The speaker first makes a transcendentalist-influenced observation that allows him to comment on the eternal nature and interconnectedness of life: “. . . Love lives on , and hath a power to bless, / When they who loved are hidden in the grave” (ll. 11-12). Next, addressing the deceased Channing, the speaker says,

Therefore I cannot think thee wholly gone;
The better part of thee is with us still;
Thy soul its hampering clay aside hath thrown,
And only freer wrestles with the Ill.

Though livest in the life of all good things;
What words thou spak'st for Freedom cannot
die;

Thou sleepest not, for now thy Love hath wings
To soar where hence thy Hope could barely fly. (ll. 33-40)

Despite the speaker's lingering on the “hampering clay” of the deceased's body, he ultimately grants Channing immortality, for he (Channing) now lives “in the life of all good things.” Like Elijah Lovejoy and Ann Greene Chapman, Dr. Channing is raised unto the heavens and becomes a symbol of heroism and eternal hope.

The symbolism of Channing as an emblem of Freedom and as an inspiration to the living is characterized by abolitionist images of light and dark in Lowell's poem. While Channing lives in “Heaven's chambers” (l. 49), Lowell associates him with the stars and with the literal and figurative light they shine upon the darkened earth. Such

imagery corresponds to ancient rites of mourning that symbolized the death and return of the vegetation god, which later was enacted in elegies in the basic movement down “through grief or darkness” then upward “to consolation and renewal” (Sacks 20). The association of Channing with light, however, is unique, for he dwells both above and below, “wander[ing] from star to star, / Or stand[ing] with [the abolitionists] ‘neath thy church’s roof” (ll. 53-54). Like many other “great souls gone before,” Channing’s light shines “[t]o shed on struggling hearts a clearer bliss, / And clothe the Right with lustre more Divine” (ll. 42-44). In this influence, which promises that others will follow suit, Channing’s memory may live on and the web of connection may be strengthened. Like Weston’s speaker of “In Memory of C.S.,” Lowell’s speaker wishes to emulate Channing and thus be as powerful in death as in life: “When that day [death] comes, O may this hand grow cold, / Busy, like thine, for Freedom and the Right; / O may this soul, like thine, be ever bold / To face dark Slavery’s encroaching blight!” (ll. 69-72). The speaker might become yet another string on the gossamer web, a concept that returns the Romantic poet-speaker to the level of humility and allows him to say, “Let worthier hands than these thy wreath entwine” (l. 74).

The poet’s regard of himself as somehow unworthy to commemorate Channing expresses the ceremonial aspects of the elegy in two ways. First, it brings the poet closer to his audience as it displaces him further from the object of his affection. Such distancing is important to the genre; few elegies “succeed without seeming to place the dead, and death itself, at some cleared distance from the living” (Sacks 19). Although the poet-speaker intrinsically knows that he shares a commonality with Dr. Channing (their interest in abolition), he seems to recognize that the work of mourning cannot elevate

Channing for the sake of *ethos* to the detriment of his own ability to arouse *pathos* in his audience. The speaker must therefore retain Channing as a venerated symbol and maintain his own subordinate position. In this particular dramatization, the poet actively “stages” his subjects so that they may conform to their proper roles. Secondly, the phrase “[I]et worthier hands than these thy wreath entwine” is ceremonial because it evokes the recurrent image of weaving, “of creating a fabric in the place of a void,” an action that Sacks says both recalls the actual weaving of burial clothes and emphasizes how mourning is “a process of work” (19). In “Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing,” the poet-speaker claims that worthier hands should entwine Channing’s wreath, and yet the poet has already woven together a tribute to Channing by expressing his grief in verse.

Lowell’s expression of grief ultimately reinforces any distances he establishes between the poet persona and Channing so as to emphasize finally that what Channing stands for is more important than Channing’s distinctiveness. What gains prominence is the transcendent notion of the human race revering the sublimity of its soul (l. 60). And, those in most need of recognizing this lack are those who live with the institution of slavery in their homes and in their country. Therefore, the speaker says, “Upon thy grave I shed no useless tear,— / For me weep rather thou in calm divine” (ll. 75-76). Like Chapman’s elegy for Lovejoy, Lowell’s speaker recognizes that the living, not the dead, are still in need of salvation, a detail that further suggests the necessity of shifting focus from the deceased to the work of abolition.

For abolitionists in need of heroism and examples of strength and tenacity, the confident speaker who addresses both the literal and the sublime experiences of tragedy made an ideal author for the antislavery cause. But as much as the antislavery movement

needed to stay in touch with the transcendent reasons for being, it also needed money and support to keep its cause active and alive. In fact, “mourning was one of the few and first acceptable occasions for the purchase and display of nonessential commodities.”¹⁰ Maria Weston Chapman clearly expressed her preference for purpose over process in her complaint that “Emerson’s gift for beautiful language had lulled ‘hundreds of young persons’ into excuses for inaction” (Mayer 354). Because the pressure for quantity and authenticity sometimes overrode the contributors’ attention to aesthetics, The Liberty Bell also published perhaps less inspired pieces. Garrison’s “Sonnet, on the death of James Cropper, the distinguished philanthropist of England” reflects the weakness of the Bell in its banal references and clichéd concepts. Although the 1843 sonnet features the staple elements of the poetry of mourning (consolation for grief, the upraising of the deceased’s soul and memory) as well as the standards for abolitionist elegies more specifically (images of light and dark, the memorializing of the cause), Garrison’s poem lacks a certain warmth. Such an assessment may seem surprising given Cropper’s commendable ability to merge abolitionist passion and practical power as well as his personal graciousness toward Garrison when the latter visited London in 1833.¹¹ However, the speaker’s praise of Cropper’s “godlike object” in life and his decree to “let the nations of the earth lament, / With spirit broken, and with grief unfeigned” (ll. 7, 10-11) seems “feigned” because of its lack of inspiration.

Although the focus in abolitionist elegies upon what the deceased fought for rather than the deceased him/herself is a special way of paying homage to a person, in cases like Garrison’s sonnet, didacticism and politics seem to override art and sentiment. “Sonnet, on the death of James Cropper . . .” features the distancing necessary for healthy

mourning without demonstrating any real sense of personal loss. The poem, therefore, does not possess the human element so necessary for the preservation of the abolitionists who wished to be remembered for their humanity, for the preservation of those they mourn, and for the preservation of the forgotten—namely, the slaves themselves and the other black Americans who were not included amongst abolitionist circles and hardly included amongst the Bell's long list of contributors. Lowell himself saw the implicit irony of abolitionist humanitarianism when he asked, in a letter to the National Anti-Slavery Standard's Editor-in-Chief, Sydney Howard Gay: “You know that I never agreed to the Dissolution-of-the-Union movement, and simply because I think it a waste of strength. Why do we not separate ourselves from the African whom we wish to elevate? from the drunkard? from the ignorant? . . .” (qtd. in Greenslet 92). Lowell's disdain, however, presents a twofold naiveté: first, his pacifism does not correspond to the extremist motives of the abolitionist movement with which he came to be associated for a time; and second, he fails to see that “they” do indeed separate themselves from the African, the drunkard, and the ignorant. To call for a total upheaval of class and racial divisions would be impractical in the least, yet the divisions of race and class that marked America in the 1800s proved to be thorns in the abolitionists' sides and one of the group's most glaring inconsistencies.

Thus it came to pass that the abolitionist elegiac tradition was as paradoxical as its writers. The poetry is strong in its generic underpinnings and in its ability to turn grief into consolation; it is useful in its transformation of the deceased subject into a symbolic object fit for representing what at last seems to be what is truly mourned—the abolitionist movement's unity and force. But finally, the abolitionist elegiac poetry is a compass

against which we may assess the cause's chief paradox: its exclusion of the one group that most of its members wished America to include amongst its native citizens.

CHAPTER 4
DANGEROUS LIAISONS:
SENTIMENTAL MULTICULTURALISM IN THE SHORT FICTION OF
LYDIA MARIA CHILD AND EDMUND QUINCY

Spiritual light, like that of the natural sun, shines from one source, and shines alike upon all; but it is reflected and absorbed in almost infinite variety; and in the moral, as well as the natural world, the diversity of the rays is occasioned by the nature of the recipient.

—Lydia Maria Child, Hobomok, p. 69

Sentimental Politics

While the elegies published in The Liberty Bell neglect to pay adequate homage to the slaves and slavery fugitives for whom abolitionist leaders fought, the fiction writers for Chapman’s gift-book such as Lydia Maria Child and Edmund Quincy—two of the Bell’s most frequent contributors—strove, in contrast, to shed light upon the curse of slavery as it directly affected the slaves themselves. Concomitant with such an endeavor was a reliance upon the rhetorical posture of sentimentalism and an emphasis on the possibilities of racial integration and harmony. As early as 1824 when Lydia Maria Child published her first novel, Hobomok, a Tale of Early Times, she expressed to the world that the “spiritual light” she “absorbed and reflected” regarded anti-miscegenation and racial discrimination as the antithesis of democracy and freedom. As Carolyn L. Karcher

observes of Child's expanse of works—from Hobomok to her last novel, A Romance of the Republic (1867)—Child's vision of "America's destiny lies in the amalgamation of its diverse racial strains."¹ In contrast to espousing the colonization ideology Harriet Beecher Stowe proposes at the end of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Child's and Quincy's writing for The Liberty Bell uses the sentimental tradition in order to envision what American life could and should be if the divergent races were to come together to form a more unified, and diverse, whole. Such a vision tackles, as did Stowe's famous work, the reasons why slavery ought to be abolished and, like Uncle Tom's Cabin, attempts to envisage American life *beyond* the emancipation of slaves. But refusing colonization as an option, this class of sentimental abolitionism does not see colonization as "a means of preserving domestic unity" (Kaplan 593). Instead, it finds more revolutionary alternatives that surface from beneath the "gilt edges" of the sentimental. For their times, Child's and Quincy's imaginative ideology might have simply been dubbed radical, as were Chapman and the Garrisonians; today, however, we may more easily recognize this tolerant spirit as embracing a "multicultural" view of America—one that seeks to conjoin the nation's multi-racial and multi-ethnic inheritance with the Anglo-American "mainstream."

Yet despite the apparent liberality of Child's and Quincy's literary perspectives, they nonetheless rely upon a racist rhetoric that tends to detract from their multicultural and interracial visions of the future. The literary and rhetorical restraints of nineteenth-century thinking make, for instance, Child's otherwise radical first novel end with the demise of the story's crucial interracial marriage and with the assimilation of Hobomok into white culture. In much the same way, Child's and Quincy's multicultural

sentimentalism is radical in sentiment, but its prejudiced rhetoric and its “romantic racialism, in the end, reflect either the limitations of the so-called liberal ideologies of the day or the ambivalence of the writers’ own minds.”²

In spite of these arguable weaknesses of Child’s and Quincy’s writing, their fiction for Chapman’s Liberty Bell—which features twenty of their prose pieces (nineteen of them short stories and one play)—was in keeping with the publication’s objective to illuminate the web of connection between all people while working within the framework of both the gift-book tradition and abolitionism. Not only does their writing incorporate a rather common, if not defining, feature of sentimentalism—that is, “sentimental collaboration,” or “the exchange of sympathy establishing the ground for participation in a common cultural or intellectual project” (Kete xiv)—but it reveals how this ostensibly “feminine” mode gets played out in the hands of one radical woman who eschewed many social mores of the time and one male author who, though not as intrepid, advocated a similar ideology and leant a masculine edge to sentimentalism. Thus, while Child and Quincy present palatable tales that incorporate many of sentimentalism’s most prevalent features such as “an emotional and philosophical ethos that celebrates human connection, both personal and communal,” the envisioning of “the self-in-relation,” and the use of “simple and familiar language” (Dobson 266, 267, fn. 287),³ they simultaneously disarm readers by introducing a radical critique about the humanity of “civilizing” African heathens and about their very audience’s (the abolitionists themselves) complicity in the problem. Only through a modern lens do the nuances of the writers’ own biased rhetoric appear.

Indeed, political expression proves fallible by its very essence, since he or she who communicates with an agenda will invariably blur the line between so-called truths and personal opinions. In conjunction with sentimentalism, political rhetoric becomes an even more dangerous venture with the added element of ethos playing a crucial part in the expression of sentiment. Nonetheless, sentimentalism's relations with "politics" was in place long before abolitionists like Child and Quincy undertook to apply it to antislavery writing, and mastery of the pairing seems to have happened almost naturally. As early as the eighteenth century, African-American poet Phillis Wheatley was composing occasional poems and elegies that featured sentimental tropes despite their predominantly neoclassical tendencies. Her famous "To His Excellency General Washington" (1776), for example, adds the feminine signifiers of sentimentalism to a topic that is conspicuously patriotic. Of America's challenge during the Revolutionary War, Wheatley's speaker proclaims:

While freedom's cause [America's] anxious breast alarms,
 She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.
 See mother earth her offspring's fate bemoan,
 And nations gaze at scenes before unknown! (ll. 3-6)⁴

Though the purpose of the poem is to praise George Washington's "virtues" upon his being appointed General of the Continental Army, Wheatley lingers on the connection between America, freedom, and the womanly representation of both, thereby cementing the common tropes of Lady Liberty and of America as a female entity as well as the impression that "the grace and glory of [Washington's] martial band" (l. 26) is inseparable from the female elements of American life. All aspects of politics, in fact,

affected and were often guided by women's interests. In post-Civil War America, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's novel Sowing and Reaping (1876-77) used sentimental language and sentimentalism's interest in political affairs in order to espouse the importance of the temperance movement. Subtitled "A Temperance Story," Sowing and Reaping features all the stylistic devices and tropes of the nineteenth-century sentimental novel without losing sight of its political objective.

Although scholars of nineteenth-century American literature have traditionally thought of sentimentalism in respect to the ideology of separate spheres, with the home serving as a feminine realm and the public sphere functioning as "a correspondingly masculine realm, a site of rational political discourse and economic production . . ." (Chapman and Hendler 3), when coupled with the ideological and political aspects of the abolitionist movement, sentimentalism as a literary style lifted many of the restrictions of the public-private binary. Just as Chapman's work in abolition broke down the boundaries of men's work and women's work, sentimental abolitionism seems to have been a dominant force in the deconstruction of the deeply inscribed tenets of separate spheres. In the sentimental-abolitionist literature of Child and Quincy, both private and public realms play a part, to varying degrees but often in tandem, and illuminate the manifold ways that slavery was destructive to both home and nation as well as the manifold ways that other divisions, such as racial divisions, undermine American principles of freedom and democracy. A "multicultural sentimentalism" resulted, with the abolitionist movement thus bringing forth a new mode of political writing.

Child's "Colorful" Sentimentalism

With Hobomok as a literary precedent, Child garnered more of the same boldness for her abolitionist work, a labor of love for her that began in 1828 when she married David Lee Child, who was already “one of Garrison’s disciples” (Hersh 12). Child’s antislavery writing included her well-known An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans (1833), which was the first abolitionist work to be published in book form in America. “Basically,” Hersh notes, An Appeal was “a call for immediate emancipation, [and was] . . . also notable for its condemnation of racial prejudice in the North, an important Garrisonian theme” (13). Child also wrote many distinguished short stories published in The Liberty Bell, such as “The Quadroons” and “Slavery’s Pleasant Homes. A Faithful Sketch” as well as one dramatic play, The Stars and Stripes. Not only did her support of abolitionism produce a repertoire of work with tremendous social import but it also gave her experience as editor of the popular weekly Anti-Slavery Standard from 1841 to 1843. Moreover, since Child already had experience as editor and writer for her own abolitionist gift-book, The Oasis (1834), and helped to organize the first antislavery fair in America in Boston in 1834 (Sklar 330), her relationship with and influence upon Chapman must certainly have aided the latter in the organization of The Liberty Bell and of her own antislavery fairs.⁵ For the Bell, Child contributed ten pieces, some of them rather lengthy, making her a “regular.”⁶ Her short fiction, in particular, gave this “regular” the perfect platform for expressing “irregular” beliefs. Reviews of her short fiction, such as C. Robbins’ in the January 1847 Christian Examiner, praise Child’s “warmth and benevolence of sentiment” but discern her “sometimes excessive” enthusiasm and “offences against a correct taste [that] . . . might charge her with errors of

judgment, perhaps with ultraism and mysticism” (Robbins, qtd. in Mills 108). As Child explains of her 1867 novel, A Romance of the Republic, “I wanted to do something to undermine *prejudice*; and there is such a universal passion for novels, that more can be done in that way, than by the ablest arguments, and the most serious exhortations” (qtd. in Karcher, “Lydia Maria Child’s A Romance” 82). It is quite likely that her earlier short fiction served as “practice” for Child to expose America’s discriminatory legacy via a more manageable genre that nonetheless capitalized upon the popular “passion” for sentimental fare.

While Karcher, Jean Fagan Yellin, and other scholars of Lydia Maria Child have already established her contribution to the antislavery movement for refining the tragic mulatto figure common to sentimental abolitionism, for acting as editor of one of today’s most widely-read slave narratives, Harriet Jacobs’ Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861), and for committing herself to end racial prejudice, I aim to view the fiction Child contributed to the Bell in light of the ways she uses sentimentalism in order to empower the traditionally-feminine genre and to express a glimmering of the multicultural ideology so ubiquitous today, but assuredly rare in the nineteenth century. In “Re-Thinking Cultural Identity,” Timothy Powell identifies the limitations of the formative binary form of analysis that propagated cultural studies into the multicultural realm of today. One notable shortcoming of viewing art and culture through the lens of the binary is the inevitable conclusion of seeing any particular American culture or aspect(s) of that culture as separate, unequal, and isolated, whether the group be European, African, male, or female. In Child’s abolitionist fiction, there are traces not only of her dismantling traditional binaries such as black and white, but of her attending to the various ways that

different cultural and racial communities interact, overlap, and even unite. The earlier pieces that Child contributed to The Liberty Bell—“Charity Bowery” (1839), “Anecdote of Elias Hicks” (1839), “The Emancipated Slaveholders” (1839), “The Black Saxons” (1841), “The Quadroons” (1842), and “Slavery’s Pleasant Homes, A Faithful Sketch” (1843)—all reveal the growth of a multicultural sentimentalist who moves from themes that Jacobs’ narrative and Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin address to a more forthright voice that is unafraid to speak on behalf of the oppressed. The experiences of such writing, I argue, paved the way for Child’s final short story for the Bell, a little-known piece entitled “Jan and Zaida” (1856). While “Jan and Zaida” is not an especially feminist or miscegenational piece—two of the themes that reveal Child’s ability to be radical within the sentimental convention—it is distinctive because the many multicultural elements that merge within the story make it as much an homage to the multicultural American world that Child would embrace as it is an abolitionist tale written for the specific purpose of ending slavery. At the same time, however, the limitations of the story’s romantic racialism reveal the strides Child had yet to take.

The express goal of helping to abolish slavery was nonetheless inspiring enough for Child to explore the numerous possibilities of conjoining politics and art, and her early prose for The Liberty Bell shows how, from the start, the writer herself was a work in progress. “Charity Bowery,” for instance, has many of the same elements that are developed more fully in Jacobs’s Incidents. The story of Charity Bowery, a former slave living in New York, is told second hand, as the narrator (Child) reports what the aged woman tells her about her life. The narrator tries to be true to Charity’s words but admits that she may err in some names, dates, and incidents. Also, she notes that much is lost

without Charity's voice and facial expressions (26). As with Incidents, Child is acting as an "editor" of sorts, and the veracity of the story and the effectiveness of it being told become burdens not only to the story's subject, but to Child herself. The trials and tribulations of Charity Bowery mirror Jacobs's to a great extent as well: Charity represents womanhood and the oppressions that come with that status in addition to the worries of being a slave mother; she has a "spirited" son Richard, much like Jacobs's spirited brother; she suffers under the watchful eye of a jealous mistress; she sees how religion can be used as a tool of oppression; and she reveals certain truths—i.e., freedom is always better than slavery, and fate may land slaves with bad masters even though the "good" masters had better intentions.

Some of the more subversive politics that emerge from Charity's emotional life story are her comments regarding the uprising of Nat Turner and the effect the ensuing white paranoia has upon the slaves' lives. Child quotes Charity Bowery directly:

On Sundays, I have seen the Negroes up in the country going away under large oaks, and in secret places, sitting in the woods with spelling books. The brightest and best men were killed in Nat's time. Such ones are always suspected. All the colored folks were afraid to pray in the time of the old Prophet Nat. There was no law about it; but the whites reported it round among themselves that, if a note was heard, we should have some dreadful punishment; and after that, the low whites would fall upon any slaves they heard praying, or singing a hymn, and often killed them before their masters or mistresses could get to them. (41-42)

Although one of the major offshoots of Nat Turner's insurrection was the squelching of slaves' communal and spiritual rites, Charity speaks out through the medium of Child.

Upon being asked to give the narrator "a specimen of their hymns," Charity sings:

A few more beatings of the wind and rain,

Ere the winter will be over—

Glory, Hallelujah!

Some friends has gone before me,—

I must try to go and meet them—

Glory, Hallelujah!

A few more risings and settings of the sun,

Ere the winter will be over—

Glory, Hallelujah!

There's a better day a coming—

There's a better day a coming—

Oh, Glory, Hallelujah! (42-43)

Charity then remarks, "They would n't let us sing that. They would n't let us sing that.

They thought we was going to rise, because we sung 'better days are coming'" (43). That

Child ends her piece with Charity's words suggests a conscious "re-voicing" on her part.

Despite the shortcomings of the second-hand story mode, she finds a way to give voice to

what Charity and her fellow slaves were prevented from expressing. Charity's repeated

"They would n't let us sing that" points to the dual affront of the "low whites," who not

only took innocent people's lives but tried to take their voices, songs, and spirit as well.

Thus, while one of Charity's final morals is that death is a form of freedom for slaves,

Child's relaying of Charity's story implies that a better day is indeed coming for the slaves since they have opportunities to communicate and to enjoy words and worlds of their own. Though perhaps Charity herself does not see the hidden message within the hymn and though the low whites perhaps took the message all too literally, the words reveal the compelling human spirit that might encourage the oppressed and demonstrate to the free the ultimate layer of kinship that lies at the heart of existence.

It is plausible to cite the web of connection that exists between slaves and between all people, in fact, as reason in part for some of the commonalities that materialize in abolitionist literature. At the same time, it is important to note the early appearance of generic characters, modes, moods, and plots in order to see patterns of derivation and to credit Chapman's contributors accordingly. While "Charity Bowery" evokes themes and components that arise later in Child's abolitionist writing and/or editorship, her story "Anecdote of Elias Hicks," also published in the first volume of the Bell, features the familiar abolitionist theme that Stowe develops in her popular Uncle Tom's Cabin—that is, the moral (or "anecdote") that "shows so clearly the excellence of a bold meekness and Christian firmness in the discharge of duty" and the importance in the notion "that he who trusts in moral power hath ever brave indifference to threats of physical violence" ("Anecdote" 65). The general ambiguity of such "morals" allows for multiple interpretations. Both Child and Stowe link the moral specifically to a character, or, in the case of Elias Hicks, to a "real" person, who exudes "a bold meekness and Christian firmness." In addition, the prototype becomes a symbol of what the abolitionists needed to believe of themselves—i.e., that their actions were morally "right" and that, therefore, they could overcome any obstacle that came in their way. A third

correlation that stems from the prototype surfaces in another one of Child's 1839 contributions to the Bell, her story "The Emancipated Slaveholders." Like Uncle Tom, Elias Hicks, and the abolitionists in general, the main characters of this piece—former slaveholders who emancipate their slaves because they could not "reconcile the system of slavery with the dictates of their own consciences" (73)—learn the power of trusting their own moral judgment.

Because Child had such faith in her own moral standards and opinions, she was able to transgress traditional boundaries of political and social correctness, even some of her own boundaries as a writer, for the sake of her cause. She could express amusement at herself, as when, upon submitting "The Quadroons" to Maria Weston Chapman, she admitted, "You . . . will laugh at it heartily, but the young and romantic will like it. It sounds, in sooth, more like a girl of sixteen, than a woman of forty; and I can give no rational account how I happened to fall into such a strain. The fact is, I was plagued to death for a subject, and happened to hit upon one that involved much love-making."⁷ Sentimentalism and romance indeed mark Child's tale, but "The Quadroons" was to become a landmark in its personification of "the evils of slavery in an archetype that has come to be known as the 'tragic mulatto'" (Karcher, "Lydia Maria Child's A Romance" 83). Similarly, the sentimental "Slavery's Pleasant Homes" tackles controversial issues that exist inoffensively in the story alongside the frills of romance. One particular issue, which Child saves till the story's end, entails the problem of propaganda and, by extension, the problem of history-telling and "truth." When the story's main character, a quadroon slave named George, kills his master and brother Frederic Dalcho for raping and killing his (George's) wife Rosa, also a slave, and then confesses so as to save

another's life, he is lynched and characterized by newspapers in the South and in the North as a "black demon" who deserved his punishment. The narrator of the story concludes with the newspapers' words so as to give her audience a first-hand view of the ease with which a story may be twisted or otherwise misleading. She writes,

The Georgian papers thus announced the deed: '*Fiend-like Murder*. Frederic Dalcho, one of our most wealthy and respected citizens, was robbed and murdered last week, by one of his slaves. The black demon was caught and hung; and hanging was too good for him.'

The Northern papers copied this version; merely adding, 'These are the black-hearted monsters, which abolition philanthropy would let loose upon our brethren of the South.' (160)

To underscore the iniquity of propaganda that indiscriminately brands all slave dissenters as "black demons" and "black-hearted monsters," the narrator includes omitted, but pertinent, details that lend themselves to a different interpretation of the situation. She complains,

Not one [article] was found to tell how the slave's young wife had been torn from him by his own brother, and murdered with slow tortures. Not one recorded the heroism that would not purchase life by another's death, the victim was his enemy. His very *name* was left unmentioned; he was only Mr. Dalcho's *slave!*" (160)

Here, the narrator speaks out directly on behalf of the oppressed, as she similarly does in "The Black Saxons" (1841), in which one of the main characters poignantly observes, "Troubadours rarely sing of the defeated, and conquerors write their own History" (20).⁸

The message reveals the manifold challenges abolitionists face from both Southern and Northern opponents alike and, perhaps even more significantly, indicates the subtle ways that oppression manifests itself. Obviously, George and Rosa were victims of slavery, and their circumstances cost them their lives, but they were also targets of propaganda, a position that cost them their reputations, their names, and the public homage to which they were entitled.

In all of Child's prose for the Bell, her decision to show deference where it is due signifies what seems to be the main impetus behind most of her political commentary. And one of her most popular notions to champion is that which honors the multiplicity of people's lives and the many ways that they may come together. In "Manifest Domesticity," Amy Kaplan notes not only how the domestic unites against a common foreign "enemy," but also how "the home contains within itself those wild or foreign elements that must be tamed; domesticity not only monitors the borders between the civilized and the savage but also regulates traces of the savage within itself" (582). In Child's final short fiction for The Liberty Bell, "Jan and Zaida" (1856), which Karcher regards as "curiously distant from the American scene,"⁹ it seems as though, despite the fact that the "foreign" elements of the households that exist in the story are rather "tame" and often romanticized, Child creates a scenario whose effect is not to reveal how one can live with and Christianize slaves, but how slaves' indigenous cultures can enrich the lives of those they touch. Child develops this argument in both the details surrounding her characters' lives and in the narrative elements that she chooses to highlight.

Set on the island of Java in 1854 and, according to the epigraph, a true story, "Jan and Zaida" is the tale of a favored slave Jan whose kind mistress Maria Van der Veen

purchases a young female slave, Zaida, because Jan has fallen in love with the girl and wishes to marry her. The couple and their children live together blissfully for many years, only occasionally considering their precarious status as slaves and the thought that something might happen to their mistress that could endanger their happy existence. And indeed, Madame Van der Veen does die suddenly, before she has time to make the preparations necessary to free her slaves. The story moves to scenes of the auction block and to tear-evoking images of Jan and his family crying from heartbreak over the looming threat of permanent separation, but in a twist of fate, Jan is able to buy his entire family with the golden ducat an abolitionist friend of Madame Van der Veens had given him as a gift. The on-lookers, having already within them the seeds of antislavery sentiment because of the local abolitionists' campaigns, do not outbid Jan, leaving him free to live the rest of his life with his family. While the plot of the story is compelling, though not especially unique, it is the author's descriptive insertions and details that give "Jan and Zaida" its originality and reveal how difficult it seems to have been for abolitionists to create an imaginative language describing a racially harmonious world without having that language lead back to racial difference and romantic racialism.

The narrator's description of Jan, for example, both objectifies his physical attributes and makes him a symbol of multicultural possibilities because of his ever-changing persona and the symbolism of such fluidity of character. In the beginning, the young Jan is merely "a pretty play thing" (42) to his mistress. Though loved and favored, Jan is continually objectified; Madame Van der Veen calls him "little brownie" (42) and her husband "pat[s] his head, [as Jan] cre[eps] under the table to listen to the piano" (48). Jan, however, stands out for his innate musical talents, his love of beauty, and his

exquisite sense of color and taste. He is put to work as an assistant to the old Dutch gardener, a job that suits his taste for colors, smells, and beauty, and, by age six, Jan could sing and play guitar and “twine Hindoo, Arab, Javanese, English, and Dutch melodies into improvised fantasias. . .” (52). Jan’s talent for mimicking sounds—including birds and different languages as well as the nuances of cultural music—makes him a living emblem of the variety accessible to all. To be sure, such descriptions are meant to be favorable, and are in certain respects, but the narrator’s depiction of her protagonist remains conspicuously cloaked within stereotypes of the exotic “other.”

Zaida, Jan’s wife, only mirrors her husband’s symbolism further, for not only is she musically inclined too, but she is of mixed ancestry (Arabian and Balinese). Such a detail about her heritage avoids the usually pejorative descriptions of slaves’ skin color, but emphasizing Zaida’s mixed ancestry also romanticizes her mixed-race heritage by making it seem mysterious and exotic. The narrator’s presentation of a plethora of color—“blue,” “verdure,” “yellow,” “scarlet,” and “white” (62)—in the scenes that describe the couple’s budding romance reinforces such exoticism even as it highlights the sense that now their lives are vibrant and also that the multiplicity of life is what makes it beautiful. Despite the shortcomings of Child’s rhetoric in her descriptions of Jan and Zaida, the couple’s physical contrasts are meant to highlight harmony, not dissonance: “There was a harmonized contrast between [Zaida] and her bridegroom, which was extremely agreeable. The young Englishman [the abolitionist friend] compared them to the major and minor mode” (66). As in music, disparity makes for a more surprising beauty. Moreover, the music that infuses Jan’s life and, after he meets Zaida, that becomes a part of both their lives, infuses the entire story as well in both the narrator’s

diction and in secondary themes that arise. While the lovely music that Jan and Zaida make together represents the joy of their lives, the discordant “sound of the lash, accompanied with shrieks” that breaks “in upon [Jan and Zaida’s] music or the merriment, . . . and put[s] their spirits out of tune” emblemizes the horrors of slavery and the threat of its ugliness in their own lives.

The music or the various sounds of life, both good and bad, acts in conjunction with the narrator’s description of other sensory nuances that complete the symbolic representation of multiculturalism in the story. Jan and Zaida’s home, for instance, sits upon Madame Van der Veen’s property but is distinctive in appearance. A bamboo hut with two apartments, their home is more accurately marked by the division between inside-outside. For more than half the year, “all household occupations could be most conveniently performed out of doors.” Thus, the veranda “was the place where all their sedentary occupations were pursued” (67). The inside-outside motif, however, does not indicate divisiveness; rather, it demonstrates the utility of their home and symbolizes the non-Dutch elements of Jan and Zaida’s cultures as well as the duality of life that leaves their options open. Correspondingly, their home is decorated with influences from their indigenous worlds: their bed is fitted with a grass mat “of Jan’s own weaving, and pillows filled with a kind of silky down from a wild plant . . . ,” while “[g]ourd shells, a few earthen [sic] dishes, and a wooden waiter from which they ate their meals, seated on the floor, constituted their simple furniture” (67). On the veranda Zaida keeps busy at her spinning wheel and loom while Jan weaves mats and baskets. In addition, the musical instruments they own reflect their cultures: Jan owns a violin, a symbol of European influence, as well as a gambang, an instrument “with wooden bars of graduated lengths,

which he struck with a mallet to accompany the simple Javanese melodies that he and Zaida were accustomed to sing together” (68). Emphasized for the variety of music they produce, the instruments become emblems of the possibilities of “difference.” By extension, the many absorptions of culture and life that color Jan and Zaida’s world suggest the harmony that could exist between the races if only slavery and prejudice were abolished.

While all of Child’s antislavery literature underpins the fundamental hope for unity among people or, at least, exposes the problems of racial stereotyping and discrimination, her work for The Liberty Bell reveals a writer whose ideology, like Chapman’s, overrides all other considerations. Child, it seems, has honed multicultural sentimentalism to such an extent that it appears radical even amidst literature written by “radicals.” In this way, her short fiction indicates the possibilities of multiculturalism renovating the sentimental. That Child’s vision of multiculturalism cannot escape the confines of racial stereotypes only demonstrates the limitations of such a merger in nineteenth-century literature, limitations that have not been decisively eradicated even today.

Quincy’s Sentimental Subversions

The interest in interracial harmony was not an ideal exclusive to Child nor was the sentimental tradition popular to gift-books limited to female authors alone. Alongside Child in respect to his involvement with The Liberty Bell and even to his literary style and ideology was Edmund Quincy, a Boston abolitionist whose affluence and writing proved most beneficial to the cause.¹⁰ Quincy biographer Robert V. Sparks calls him

“the third member of that Boston triumvirate which formed the core of so-called Garrisonian abolitionists. If Garrison was the symbol and the formulator of policy, and [Wendell P]hillips the ‘golden trumpet’ of the movement, then Quincy was surely the most gifted and respected publicist of the movement” (iv-v). Cousin of Wendell Phillips and Samuel Joseph May, both active abolitionists, as well as the son of the president of Harvard University and mayor of Boston, Quincy became active in antislavery in 1837 when the murder of Elijah Lovejoy incited him to join the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. The following year he joined the American Anti-Slavery Society, too, and his involvement led to more abolitionist activism on his part, not just in administrative roles but as a rather prolific writer and editor as well. Quincy served as editor of the official organ of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, the Abolitionist (1839), of The Non-Resistant (1839), and of the weekly newspaper of the American Anti-Slavery Society, the National Anti-Slavery Standard (1844). In addition, he contributed to such papers as the New York Tribune, the Independent, and the Liberator.¹¹ That Quincy was also a “vigorous proponent of freedom and equality for women” (Merrill and Ruchames xxviii) made him an especially fitting writer for The Liberty Bell. Not only did he write twelve short fictions for the gift-book, but he helped with the editorship of the 1851 volume (Thompson 157). Though only one book-length study features Quincy as its subject,¹² his antislavery writing, as Merrill and Ruchames assert, “deserve[s] to be better known.” James Russell Lowell, they remark, called his abolitionist pieces “gems of Flemish art” (xxvii-xxix). More accurately, Quincy’s writing, like Child’s, is exemplary of the sentimental-abolitionist tradition even as it sometimes uses the tradition for the more

unorthodox purposes of undermining American racial prejudice and insisting upon absolute integration.

Edmund Quincy's first contribution to the Bell, a short story entitled "Mother Coelia" (1839), indicates that he was a political writer as in touch with sentimentalism as was Lydia Maria Child. In its very title the piece aligns the story's protagonist, a slave mother of royal descent taken from Africa at the age of seven, with the gift-book's female readers who, like Mother Coelia, might understand the intensity of maternal bonds. Not only does "Mother Coelia" employ standard sentimental tropes such as the slave mother who would rather "have died FREE!" than live a slave (17) and who was glad that all of her ten children died young because she did not "want slaves to live!" (14), but it also features the popular framing of the story as one told to the narrator by someone else (in this case, Quincy repeats the "true" story that his aunt told to him). Quincy demonstrates a solid understanding of sentimentality and of its audience, in fact, in all of his stories and pieces for the Bell, from the star-crossed lovers in "Philip Catesby" (1845) to the emphasis in "Nemesis" (1856) on the insult to the mythological Nemesis when she witnesses "the desecrated temples of immortal minds, and the broken altars of human hearts" (111). Taking into account the slaves' minds and hearts, Quincy invariably writes prose of human connectedness that, above all, relies upon the exchange of sympathy between himself, his characters, and his audience.

That Quincy was a male writer immersed in the sentimental may elicit pause, even though "sentimentalized literary forms that stressed relational ties . . . were consumed and utilized by both men and women" (Steele 67). Indeed, many of the nineteenth century's most popular male writers emulated this traditionally-female style.

Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville had varying success with sentimentalism, even when their aim was to satirize it. Quincy, however, could be *classified as* a “sentimental writer” because all of his short fiction for the Bell utilizes its familiar literary tropes and devices. Nonetheless, even though Quincy adopts a sentimental style without satirizing it, his gender should be taken into account, for many of his stories deviate from the customary features of sentimental abolition and rely upon and/or return to more “masculine” metaphors, themes, or settings. For instance, whereas many sentimental writers choose the domestic scene for their settings, Quincy often takes his characters from the hearth to the war field. Such is the case in both “Philip Catesby; or, a Republic’s Gratitude” and “Two Nights in St. Domingo.” Moreover, Quincy pays equal tribute to male protagonists as he does to female protagonists, which sets him apart from many women writers who are more likely to create stories around tragic mulatta or maternal figures. This is not to say that the war field was exclusively the domain of male writers; British author and poet Felicia Hemans, for one, often moved back and forth between domestic and public domains without ever losing her signature sentimental style.¹³ Nor is it to say that Quincy did not have female protagonists or that women writers did not use men as their heroes (we may readily recall Uncle Tom himself). But like Hemans, Quincy composed sentimental pieces that allowed him the freedom, thematically and stylistically, to shape his own political agenda and still capture the imagination of a predominantly female audience.

Quincy’s “Philip Catesby; or, A Republic’s Gratitude” exemplifies the subtleties of the author’s gender even as it remains foremost a sentimental story about the hypocrisy of slavery and the damage it does to familial and platonic relations. Set in

Virginia in 1776, the story's main character, Philip Catesby, is the personal attendant to his master's only son Edward. Faithful and naïve, yet strong-willed and free-thinking, Philip falls in love with Clara, the personal attendant of Catesby's only daughter, Virginia. As a foil to Philip Catesby is the master himself, Mr. Catesby, "a Virginian gentleman of the old school" who "was proud of being a Slave-holder" and who "instructed his overseer to treat his Slaves well" (103). The plot of the story unfolds as Philip joins Edward in the fight against the British, while Mr. Catesby and the plantation progressively degenerate into ruin. The sentimental vein both illuminates and depends upon the ties that Philip has with Clara, and, later, with their children, as well as upon the relation Philip has to his master and to his country, which he ultimately learns are superficial and transitory. In the end, the utter disregard for Philip's service to the country is realized when, in a parade celebrating the General who promised Philip his freedom, the crowd, which neither sees nor regards Philip's existence, tramples him to death. Assuredly, the basic features of "Philip Catesby" depend upon a sentimental sense of loss as readers witness the travesty and heartbreak of slavery with families being torn apart, promises being broken, and innocent people being killed, both physically and spiritually.

Outside of this standard framework, though, Quincy alights upon more subversive metaphors and themes that, I argue, carry an aesthetic appeal no less worthy than that we may find in a Hawthorne or Melville tale. Of especial note is Quincy's attention to what Joanne Dobson cites as a major facet of sentimentalism: "its concern with subject matter that privileges affectional ties, and . . . conventions and tropes designed to convey the primary vision of human connection in a dehumanized world" (268). Quincy uses such

conventions to convey the ways in which slavery *disrupts* human connections and how slavery supporters themselves necessarily elicit “subhuman” characteristics. In order to underscore the dehumanized (and dehumanizing) world of slavery, Quincy presents a series of incidents or scenarios that indicate the dichotomy of humanity and barbarianism. To start, the narrator dwells upon Mr. Catesby’s house itself, an old ancestral home called Presqu’île, which was, “in fact, two houses, separated at once and united by a hall of half the height of the wings” (101-02). Preceding Abraham Lincoln’s famous “house divided” metaphor, Quincy’s story emphasizes the division of Presqu’île’s architecture—the family lives in one of the wings while the other is for guests—and thereby suggests the division between the nation’s people, some being permanent citizens, who enjoy America’s democratic ideals, and the rest being quarantined slaves, to whom such freedoms are inaccessible. Like Hawthorne’s The House of the Seven Gables (1851), “Philip Catesby” associates the oppressor’s home with excess and ruin. The narrator describes Presqu’île as having “a scarcely perceptible air of dilapidation”; its gardens are lush but in a “ragged luxur[ious] way” (102). Only the stables and kennel of the fox hounds were thoroughly repaired, a peculiar detail that may indicate the “superiority” of animals in comparison to Mr. Catesby and his friends, who live, themselves, like animals: gluttonous and “barbaric” (107). Indeed, the narrator clearly aligns himself against Mr. Catesby when he describes the master as rejoicing over America’s disputes with England because it was easier to blame England for the failure of his tobacco production, for “the thriftless kind of labor which he had inherited from his fathers, and [for] . . . the wasteful mode of culture which necessarily attended it” (104). As such, Quincy establishes the division between a hard-working and loyal slave, Philip, and his lazy, self-serving

master; one goes to the fields to fight for his country while the other stays home and gripes against England, even though he had previously been “one of the most loyal subjects of his Britannic Majesty” (104). Like America during the antebellum years, the carelessness of morals and the hypocrisy of its people evoke the sense of doom that Quincy’s story presents to its readers. “Ruin,” “accursed,” “shadow,” “chill,” and “ominous” (109) are descriptions Mr. Catesby’s world warrants. Notwithstanding the more complex characterizations and characters, like Mr. Catesby’s son Edward, the story divides at many junctures, from the us-them dichotomy elicited in the description of the house itself to the relational splits between America and England, father and son, husband and wife, and old and new.

The symbolic divisions of “Philip Catesby” indicate fissures in antebellum society and also advance yet another important theme of the story: “the spectacle of human inconsistency” (112). Quincy uses this theme specifically to impugn a democracy whose founding principles of freedom are inconsistent with its practices and laws. Mr. Catesby and his drunken peers represent the paragon of such a “spectacle” as their patriotic fervor is sparked during one of their gluttonous feasts. The narrator reports,

The largest liberty, the most unqualified equality of mankind, were insisted upon with all the zeal of devotion and drink. Destruction to tyrants, and liberty to universal man, were the eloquent themes of their discourse. . . . [Yet their] discussion of the rural economics of flogging, starving, and branding . . . [marked this] spectacle of human inconsistency. . . . in the words of Dr. Johnson, ‘the loudest yelps for liberty are ever heard from the drivers of slaves.’ (112)

While calling into question the democratic principles upon which America was founded is not a particularly new tactic of radical abolitionists, Quincy's use of the issue presents an opportunity for the author to specify further the infirmity of American morals. Just as earlier innuendoes characterize Mr. Catesby and his fellow slaveholders as animals, the allusion to Johnson reinforces this view when he describes such "patriots" as yelping like dogs.

Quincy's use of typical sentimental tropes like those emphasizing a dehumanized world proffer a common abolitionist criticism of Southern life, but he proves more unpredictable in his use of other seemingly standard details. In a characteristic sentimental tale, for instance, the servant Clara's light skin color and her ability to pass for white (Quincy's narrator describes her as one who "might easily have been mistaken for one of the favored Anglo-Saxon race" [125]) is not a detail that prompts a white audience to loathe Clara's biological father, Mr. Catesby, for the author has already established him as an animal. Nor does Clara's skin color necessarily gain the audience's sympathy for someone who "looks like them"; after all, Philip, who is exoticized and romanticized as "a fitting representative of the African Hercules" (114), is the main figure and tragic hero of the story, not Clara.¹⁴ Rather, Clara's whiteness indicates the problem with that very type of literary characterization and reaction, for the narrator wryly adds that Clara "had been submitted to the 'bleaching process,' on which wise statesmen and grave divines rely for the abolition of slavery" (115). Thus, even as Quincy presents racially discriminatory information in his description of Philip, the narrator's description of Clara undermines the popular formula. In so doing, Quincy attempts to critique the prejudices of his contemporary audience by challenging their

responses to certain literary “types.” The formulaic pattern that finds Philip and Clara naively assuming that the whites fighting for their own liberties will, in turn, fight for the freedom of the slaves (116), for example, translates into a deconstruction of the antebellum assumption that abolitionists and slaves are fighting for the same causes, too. The analogy extends itself from generation to generation as well: in the story, Edward promises Philip his freedom for being such a brave soldier but never makes the appeal to his father and, thus, is complicit, like his father, in Philip’s oppression. In Quincy’s world, the question of freedom for the slaves remains similarly elusive and/or ambiguous. Even if the slaves were freed, would they be “free” to exist on their own terms or would they be expected to comply with white culture, or, even, to resettle in Africa?

Such a question might never be asked by Quincy’s audience if he were not to add more direct value judgments of their (and possibly his own) fundamental beliefs and of the rudimentary ideology that facilitates slavery in an otherwise “free” nation. Just as Hobomok and Child’s work for The Liberty Bell invite the “other” into America’s homes, thereby challenging her audience to look more closely at its own prejudices, so, too, does Quincy’s fiction shine light upon the values of his own “constituents.” Although he uses sentimental tropes in order to subtly mask and/or perpetuate this agenda, Quincy evokes more obvious stylistic devices as well. Perhaps the most palpable one is the generally sarcastic and often biting tone of his narrators. In “American Chivalry,” published in the 1842 Bell, the tongue-in-cheek style gives the author license to challenge the prejudices of his entire nation even though the piece is, most notably, a critique of “THE CHIVALRY OF THE SOUTH!” (epigraph 73). His narrator begins,

Burke was never more mistaken in his life, than when he said that ‘the Age of Chivalry was gone’ . . . he never imagined that the institution which was hallowed in his memory by so many elevating associations of story and of song, and the departure of which he lamented as a sure calamity, was not, as he had supposed, extinct, but only translated to a more congenial sphere on another continent. (73-74)

The perpetuation of a glorified past through story and song may at once question the complicity of society and the arts in the upholding of backward traditions and values even as it suggests that “chivalry,” in both its original and new manifestations, is, in fact, a myth. That the “congenial sphere” of the American South would adopt the myth as reality only further points to the desperation necessary to sustain any system in which one group of people exploits and enslaves another. For each justification that a slavery-supporter might proffer, Quincy’s black-and-white words reveal the absurdity of such logic. “But those were dark and semi-barbarous ages,” the slaver would argue. “The light of liberty and of religion had hardly dawned upon them. They had not learned the magic by which the relieving a man of himself and all that he possesses is transmuted from a capital felony into a deed of Christian beneficence and heroic virtue” (80). Here, the “true” darkness lies in the inescapable ignorance of such views; when cloaked in “practical piety,” such views indeed “[resemble] the medieval system” (89).

Though condemning the South, the narrator does not hesitate to indict New England for its connivance in the problem as well. The “we” of the piece, those apathetic New Englanders whom the narrator calls the “squires” of chivalry, become the Sanchos to the South’s Don Quixotes. The narrator observes, “And, though, like Sancho, we find

that the greater share of the drubbings falls to our lot, we do not, like him, ingloriously complain of this distribution of the rewards of Chivalry, but endure it with the most unrepining alacrity” (78). And, in an extension of the Cervantes allusion, the abolitionists themselves are the “discourteous varlets [who] presume to speak evil of the knightly character of our masters, or to deny the sacredness of their office . . .” (78). Taking the metaphor in its entirety, the underlying message, which points to the many economic rewards that the North reaps from the hands of slavery, is a condemnation of the *entire* nation’s upholding of “robbery” and “piracy” as “honorable” (79).

While “American Chivalry” is a polemical piece and not a story, Quincy adopts a similarly mocking tone in his sentimental tales as well. As in “American Chivalry,” “Dinah Rollins” (1841) deconstructs the various excuses that allow for the existence and continuance of slavery. To do so, the author uses the first few pages as a narrative prelude to the “story proper,” which then solidifies his points via the genre of sentimental prose. The sarcastic narrator begins by examining the “fabric” of the nation’s early years: “Although the Fathers of New England did not exactly make ‘Slavery the corner stone of the republican institutions,’ . . . they were not so fanatical as wholly to reject it from the fabric of their new state” (121). “Fabric,” indeed, seems an apropos term for this piece because of the many patchwork pieces that Quincy weaves together in order to demonstrate, finally, the danger of preconceptions. One piece of fabric calls into question New England’s involvement (yesterday and during his present times) with slavery; another piece recognizes both the race- and gender-relevant underpinnings of power when referring to slavery as the “patriarchal system . . . as it existed in New

England long before” (10-11); and yet another piece, Dinah Rollins’ story itself, actually proves to be as anti-sentimental as it is sentimental.

The narrative opening of “Dinah Rollins” impugns New England’s involvement with slavery by demonstrating the ways that economic and religious principles become twisted for the sake of practical and mental/emotional ease. While economic convenience makes those opposed to slavery support it, religious principles conveniently sustain the work of making “African heathens” into “American Christians” (121-22). Such inversions of principle further lead the narrator to dispute the logic behind colonization theories. He sardonically states,

The privilege of extending the advantages of modern civilization and Christianity to these savage and pagan strangers, whose experience of both during the middle passage would favorably prepare them for their reception, reconciled these good men to any apparent hardship in the mode of bringing their neophytes within the sphere of their influences. The happy project of re-shipping them . . . to their native country, after they had been fully saturated with the blessings of that of their adoption, had not then been developed, or the philanthropy of their benefactors would have received a new impulse from the beatific vision of these new apostles carrying back the civilization and religion, they had learned during their sojourn in this favored land, to that of their birth; which, if truly reported to their savage countrymen . . . could not fail of awakening in their breasts an holy emulation, and of inducing an instant renunciation of their favorite barbarisms of fighting, killing, and enslaving one another. (122-23)

Quincy's dense passage calls attention to the misguided perspective of colonizationists by highlighting the view that slaves would see their enslavement as a blessing, that the horrible passage to and from "this favored land" is but a "sojourn," and that the "barbarisms of fighting, killing, and enslaving" exist amongst Africans, but not among Americans. In her discussion of sentimental and domestic literature of the nineteenth century, Amy Kaplan suggests that one part "of the cultural work of domesticity might be to unite men and women in a national domain and to generate notions of the foreign against which the nation can be imagined as home" (582). "Dinah Rollins," however, is "anti-domestic" in the sense that, though Quincy might attempt to unite men and women, the people would have to bond upon the *folly* of such domestic-foreign (or white-black) distinctions since, after all, the story takes America off its pedestal, so to speak, dismantling the national patriotism that might only further national sin. Thus, by seeing through the nation's desire to "civilize" Africans, Quincy breaks down rather than solidifies the border between the foreign and the domestic. In this way, "Dinah Rollins" highlights what Kaplan calls domesticity's "contradictory circuits [which both] expand and contract the boundaries of home and nation . . . to produce shifting conceptions of the foreign" (583). Quincy's story produces new, often unfavorable, conceptions of the domestic as well.

Unlike many sentimental writers like Catherine Beecher or Sarah Josepha Hale, who, Kaplan observes, use sentimentality to pit American men and women against foreign "enemies," Quincy's story pits American men and women against the enemy within, thereby underscoring the fundamentally racist and sexist underpinnings of what he refers to as the "patriarchal institution." In "Dinah Rollins," the sexism of slavery is

reflected in the narrator's descriptions of Dinah and her life. Presenting Dinah as the "heroine" of this "historiette," the narrator might lead his readers to envision one of those frail, light-skinned slave women for whom slavery means most certain doom. However, even though Dinah is born both the master Judge Rollins' slave and daughter (127), she is a strong, independent woman, who, the narrator assures his readers, "certainly was a very different person from the heroines of the 'hot-pressed darlings,' which are annually furnished forth by 'the trade' to friendship and love, as gifts for Christmas and New Year" (136). The narrator feigns "concern" lest readers disapprove of Dinah's "think[ing] to assume the independence and over-shadowing nature of the elm" instead of being like a vine ". . . 'whose strength and beauty is to lean upon the trellis-work, and half conceal its clusters'" (130), and yet he relishes the seeming discrepancy between Dinah's apparent lack of beauty and the "expression of goodness and benevolence [that nonetheless] pervad[es] her countenance. . ." (136). When Dinah takes in an elderly white woman whom she once served as a slave and who now finds herself disabled and poor in her old age, she proves that "[i]f the heart is large enough, the house is seldom found too small" (132-33). Moreover, her good heart reveals the compelling wisdom of Socrates, who said, "Whatever you would seem, be" (134).

The sentimentality of such a story, which emphasizes the gifts of human connection, features an underlying critique about the way Quincy's audience and other contemporaries generally process information and form opinions. Upon witnessing the benevolence of Dinah Rollins, the narrator concludes with a moral: ". . . I perceived, that goodness of heart and refinement of feeling are not limited by color or conferred by education. I discovered, too, that the truest riches may be possessed by the poorest

person, and that there are nobler acts of munificence than those chronicled in religious newspapers” (141). Although his first two “lessons” are common sentimental morals, the final one is more subversive in its suggestion that reliable “authorities” can be deceptive and certainly do not offer a full account of a situation. Like Child, whose stories often do the work of speaking on behalf of the silenced, Quincy’s concluding moral to “Dinah Rollins” indicates the troublesome gap of information.

In this way, both Child and Quincy serve The Liberty Bell in its mission to solidify a web of connection, after all. However, their sentimental tales’ webs of connection unite the silenced with those who aim to help them, instead of skirting the real issue of racial integration or merely strengthening the ties between abolitionists alone. In this effort, Child and Quincy effectively use sentimentalism to emphasize the importance of more universal alliances. The multicultural worldview of their messages requires an antislavery response that cannot accept the option of colonizing slaves in Africa since America has, at that point in time, already been irrevocably changed by the slavery system. Instead of seeing the changes as all “bad,” the sentiment of Child’s and Quincy’s stories reveal that perhaps a “brighter day is coming” for the nation as well. If, in an attempt to pay homage to the blacks of America, Child and Quincy revert to a romantic racialism that is hyper-observant of differences between races, even when those differences reveal evidence of black superiority, it need not indict the authors’ works, but rather indicate that a nineteenth-century version of multiculturalism can renovate the sentimental to a limited degree. The discrepancies between the writers’ content and rhetoric teach us that the sentimental tradition has the potential for literary radicalism despite the potential limitations of its emotion, zeal, and intent.

CHAPTER 5
 “WHITE GAZE / BLACK GAZE”: RACIAL IMPLICATIONS IN
 THE ANTISLAVERY WRITINGS OF MARIA WESTON CHAPMAN,
 FREDERICK DOUGLASS, WILLIAM WELLS BROWN,
 AND FRANCES E. W. HARPER

(T)he notion of truth. . . remains a fundamentally Platonic one, that of an abstract eternal essence to be glimpsed in a dazzling vision or a brilliant insight; which is to say that seeing (what is hidden behind a veil of appearances) remains the only valid mode of knowing.

—Lang¹

“White Gaze / Black Gaze”

That Maria Weston Chapman enlisted Lydia Maria Child and Edmund Quincy as key contributors to her gift-book is one indication that she shared their race philosophies—and shortcomings. Like Child and Quincy, Chapman’s ideological stance on slavery and racism bordered on the radical. Not only did she fight for immediate emancipation and the campaign to allow interracial marriage in Massachusetts (Clinton 153), but her writing for The Liberty Bell consistently attempted to dismantle color prejudice and racial stereotypes. Nonetheless, Chapman, too, encounters problems of perspective in her political notions and in her abolitionist writing, often reverting, as did

Child and Quincy, to romantic racialism and the exoticism of blacks, and thereby revealing the fragility of the web of connection that she sought to spin. For Chapman, seeing “what is hidden behind a veil of appearances” might have been a “valid mode of knowing”; however, her life and work suggest the limitations of what she *could* see in her efforts to effect change on behalf of blacks in America. Though Chapman, like Garrison, desired an egalitarian society, her position as a wealthy white woman combined with her extreme political intransigence made her both a valuable advocate for the liberty of black Americans and a hindrance to that end. Like Ahab’s monomaniacal mission to kill the white whale, Chapman’s mission to end slavery blinded her to the humanity of the individuals drowned in her wake; she left no room for compromise, and her broad views thereby became narrow in their inflexibility.

Because Chapman could not see the restrictions of her position and the biases that she harbored, she took for granted the opportunity to feature more African-American abolitionist writers in her gift-book. Perhaps the segregation of the female antislavery societies may well have foreshadowed the general divisiveness in the abolitionist movement prompted by racial difference and The Liberty Bell’s shortage of African-American contributors. Even though the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, for instance, coveted African-American support “as a testament to the legitimacy of their antislavery goals, black opinions and preferences were generally unsolicited” (Hansen 10-11). The regular appearance of African-American writers in other abolitionist publications further calls attention to their absence in Chapman’s. For example, in addition to featuring articles by Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Greenleaf Whittier, Theodore Parker, Horace Greeley, W. H. Seward, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Catherine

Sedgwick, and others, the gift-book Autographs for Freedom, published by the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, contained writings by William Wells Brown, James McCune Smith, James M. Whitfield, William G. Allen, Charles L. Reason, and, of course, Frederick Douglass.¹ The Liberator also showcased work by African-American activists, including Frances E. W. Harper, Charles Remond, and William C. Nell, thereby indicating Garrison's commitment to egalitarianism. Indeed, Garrison's support of racial equality and, more specifically, of Frederick Douglass's abolitionist career is well known—as is the tumultuous end of their relationship as a result of their disagreement on the questions of pacifism, nonunion with slaveholders, and interpretations of the U.S. Constitution.²

Like Garrison, Chapman at one time embraced Frederick Douglass, with whom she had a fairly close working relationship, but came to spurn him. Consequently, The Liberty Bell did not reap the advantages to be gained by his perspective, which would have proved invaluable in offering readers an “insider” point-of-view, one with a sense of immediacy unlikely to be evinced by white abolitionists. Stylistically, too, black abolitionist literature offered a unique array of aesthetic characteristics uncommon in white antislavery writing. In the writings of such activists as Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, visual themes and images emerge, pointing to the powers of the “black gaze”—a trope I use for discussing the roles that (in)sight, (in)visibility, and (re)vision play in black abolitionists' re-appropriation of power, both linguistic and otherwise.³ In black abolitionist writing, the gaze and the tangential symbolism of seeing and looking behind the “veil of appearances” function as more than just a literary devices; they become both an emblem of power and an actual tool for

taking back power. Chapman, however, could neither recognize nor imitate the literary value of the black gaze. As such, I use it to illuminate the manifold implications of race during the antebellum years and to demonstrate how the black abolitionists' gaze functioned as an empowering attribute while the white abolitionists' gaze often revealed either lack of insight or skewed vision.

Chapman's Tangled Web

Working within the confines of her "white gaze," Chapman's prose writing for The Liberty Bell illustrates the intersection of radical activism and an unmistakable myopia, for her intense focus upon the immediate emancipation of the slaves often had the effect of narrowing, not broadening, her insights and judgments. A prime example of the paradox between Chapman's idealism and insularity appears in her 1858 essay entitled "The South," in which her propagandist pleas are quite localized and direct. In the piece, she cites various letters to show that the abolitionists' "best help is to come from the South" (274) and that abolitionists should, therefore, give monetary support to a non-slaveholder Kentuckian, William S. Bailey, who, like Elijah Parish Lovejoy, defended free press and free speech despite the opposition that had placed him in danger and in debt because of what he calls "the newspaper war." His nine-page letter, which Chapman prints in its entirety, appeals to his fellow abolitionists in the North for money and support. Both Bailey and Chapman believe slavery can be abolished by "*meeting it where it exists. . .*" (286).

Before petitioning her readers, Chapman first elicits their pathos by citing other letters that reveal how slavery is a scourge to both slaveholder and slave alike. She

begins with a letter from a female Kentucky slaveholder who says, “Ah, I know the slave’s chain; its iron has entered my life, and rusts my blood!” (275). She next cites a letter from the woman’s slave, who asks his mistress for the freedom she promised:

I do not want you to be angry with me for writing this letter, but extreme anxiety causes me to write it. You know that a slave, after having been confined for years and working hard for his master, when the first ray of Freedom shoots across his path, feels eagerness and desire that makes him overleap the bounds of prudence, and it is thus with me. (276-77)

For all the good Chapman hopes these letters will evoke on behalf of the slave, however, she seeks to achieve her end goal (liberation and freedom for the slaves) through what she perceives to be the necessity of first freeing the slaveholder and newspaper editor. Chapman steers reproach away from the female slaveholder whom she, rather, portrays as, herself, being prevented from freeing her slave because of the “unjust law (or un-law) [that] makes [her slave] chattel” (275). The female slaveholder may very well be a “victim” in her own right, knowing, as she does, “the slave’s chain.” However, Chapman seems to empathize with her to such an extent that she has no empathy left for the slave himself. In fact, Chapman is surprisingly silent about the letter penned by the Kentucky woman’s slave; she does not comment on the issue of the slaveholder’s broken promises nor does she seem to observe the apologetic tone of the slave, and, hence, the complex oppression in which he is mired. As such, Chapman inadvertently communicates the limitations of her vision even though her greater purpose is righteous.

Like “The South,” Chapman’s 1842 essay “Haiti” reveals the weaknesses of the “white gaze” even as its main goal is decidedly to educate, inform, and reform. Chapman

found inspiration for this piece when she accompanied her ill husband to Haiti in 1841, where she continued to work from afar, overseeing the Bell's editorship and offering new insights from her experiences. The island of Haiti, which she calls the "second American Republic" (164), offers Chapman a metaphor for showing her American readers how people's lives intertwine across time and space. Acknowledging the importance of Haiti's history, Chapman says that "the past is the parent of the present." More specifically, Haiti's history is "a warning—a rebuke—a proud, triumphal peal of warlike jubilee—oppression's funeral knell" (164). In both observations, Chapman unites peoples of different places and eras by invoking the familiar and, therefore, unifying tropes of the family and of the bell.

To further establish a sense of unity between Americans and Haitians remains Chapman's overriding goal, but the space between seeing that goal and achieving it remains large enough to reveal the gaps within her own sometimes incongruous convictions. If Americans "would be wise and just" (165), Chapman reasonably argues they should assess Haiti according to its own history, not the history of America's Puritan descendents. In order for Chapman to elicit her readers' compassion and awe for the great strides Haitians have made in establishing a more humane foundation for living, however, she must emphasize the various *differences* between America's and Haiti's history. She points out, for instance, that the Haitians, as opposed to New Englanders, have the "mingled blood of southern Europe and central Africa" and exhibit "the effects of climate." Moreover, instead of being a people grounded in the principles of Christianity, the Haitians' "pilgrim fathers were the Buccaneers" and their women "of the most despicable Parisian class" (165-66). Although Chapman uses the differences

between Haitians and New Englanders to show her American readers how tremendous was the Haitians' struggle to overcome their own history of oppression and, thus, how marvelous their character and vigor, the differences she highlights are not only many but sometimes unenlightened as well. Categorizing Haitians as being descended from "Buccaneers" and "despicable" Parisians has more of the effect of enforcing stereotypes than eliciting sympathy or reverence. Even when Chapman tries to offer similarities between the groups, the limitations of the "white gaze" reveal her subconscious classifying of Haitians' ties with Africa as making them somehow "lesser." Haitians, she says, "are but slightly modified Frenchmen and Spaniards [and that] [b]y their color only they hold to Africa. Their birth and languages make them European and American" (169). Though Chapman's words may evoke pity, they do not effectively elicit brotherhood or reinforce the notion of a web of connection.

Throughout "Haiti," Chapman tries to play the sympathizer, the humanitarian who sees and feels the horrors of slavery and racism, yet she consistently speaks from a white cultural world, both philosophically and rhetorically. In some cases, she conjoins the language of Christianity with the affected language the American government was using during that time in association with the Native Americans. She says, for instance, "I cannot express the satisfaction with which I look upon [the island's] unequalled beauty, and think of it as the home, the possession, the heritage of a people so unjustly despised, and so cruelly oppressed, as are these children of the Sun among the pale Americans" (169). The phrase "children of the Sun" coupled with "pale Americans" recalls the American Indians and the placating rhetoric that the American government used during the first half of the nineteenth century when it succeeded in all but extinguishing the

native peoples from their homes,⁴ but it is unclear whether Chapman appropriates such language in order to be subversive or whether it is part of her subconscious lexicon.

At times, Chapman romanticizes the Haitians and their home by adopting the rhetoric of the colonizers in their depictions of the vast American frontier.⁵ Although she often juxtaposes the richness of Haiti to “iron-bound New England, covered with their January snows” (169) in order to condemn Northern apathy and closed-mindedness, the very characteristics Chapman praises in Haiti lead her to place the island and its people into a position of inferiority or submission. Approaching the Edenic island, Chapman says it felt “as if the coming paradise were spreading abroad its arms to receive us” (170). She observes further that, at the mountains’ foothills “lies that fertile plain of the Cape of an extent and fertility that would supply New England with coffee and sugar if under cultivation. In front of all stand the eternal guardians of the harbor, protecting it from the violence of the ocean, and making foreign invasion more difficult . . .” (171). While Chapman’s words extol Haiti for its natural resources and consequent value, they read like a jealous lover—at once protective of and charmed by the island’s rich treasures. Haiti, in this precarious representation, embodies fragile womanhood, in need of protection from “the violence of the ocean,” though the prospect of “foreign invasion” seems even more formidable. Whether or not Chapman’s “language of domination” is purposeful remains ambiguous, however. Images of shadows and light that surface throughout “Haiti” may suggest Chapman’s awareness of the dangers of simplifying. For example, Chapman describes the alternating light and darkness of the ocean as she first approached Haiti as such: “The ocean, too, took tints new and beautiful as we neared the shore, growing of an emerald green in its clearness, except where shadows of purple

stretched like bars, far across its surface. . .” (170). Haiti’s dazzling splendor, it seems, can be blinding, and the republic may find itself “imprisoned” by its own natural assets.

At other times, Chapman’s references to Haiti’s past mirror the struggles of the American present in its diametrically opposed camps of French Haiti versus Spanish Haiti—as in South versus North. She compares the enterprising, slaveholding French to “a brood of serpents in the spring” (175), thereby juxtaposing evil and sin with slavery and the exploitation of nature, or, by extension, with the South’s way of life. The resultant mixed race of the Haitians further resembles the mulatto of the New Englanders’ “sister states of the South this day”:

The mixed race thus sprung up, as it is now doing at the South, numerous and hated, attracting, yet repelled,—often educated, yet shut out from all the prizes of life,—the sons of whites, yet unacknowledged in civil and social existence—the sons of blacks, yet aspiring to a more honorable position, and therefore ashamed of the parental stock;—ever in a false position, and suffering all the agonies of a wounded spirit, as their African progenitors had done the no less intense tortures of the body. (178-80)

The non-slaveholding Spaniards, on the other hand, “having glutted themselves with the destruction of the whole aboriginal race, were torpid, as if benumbed by winter.” They “attribute[d] the prosperity of the French to the slave-trade,” and “a shadow of disrepute rested upon it in the Spanish part” (175). Like the New England Americans who shirk their duty to speak out against slavery, the non-slaveholding Spaniards are frozen in apathy, an implicit comparison that Chapman solidifies by associating the Spanish Haitians with wintertime and, hence, with New Englanders. Although her condemnation

of apathetic Northerners is circuitous, Chapman nevertheless suggests that the “shadow of disrepute” rests not only upon the slaveholders themselves but upon those who support the institution of slavery through their inaction. Ultimately, Chapman’s observations about the similarities between discrimination against those of mixed blood (whether they be Haitians or Southerners) and apathetic supporters of slavery (both Spanish Haitians and Northerners alike) demonstrate both the intricacies of her understanding and her shortcomings as writer and humanitarian.

Chapman and Douglass

In light of Chapman’s shortcomings, her 1858 statement, “We deeply feel that the reformer ought to be perfect, but when would reform begin if it were to wait till there were perfect reformers?”⁶ suits her position as a flawed reformer. However, her acceptance of “imperfect reformers” does not seem to extend to Frederick Douglass, in whom Chapman may have found a good companion in arms as well as a valuable contributor to her gift-book, one who could illuminate for its readers the underlying implications of living as a black person in a slave-holding society. As early as 1843, Chapman’s desire to present the abolitionists as a unified front clashed with Douglass’s desire to speak his mind when she censured his public admonitions of fellow abolitionist John A. Collins who, to Douglass’s distaste, mixed the property issue with the antislavery campaign.⁷ Chapman supported Douglass and Charles Remond (who also objected to Collins connecting communitarianism with antislavery reform) saying, “they [k]now they may rely on their friends in Boston to put the most friendly construction on hasty acts, & to forget & forgive them . . .,” but she nonetheless called their public disapproval of

Collins “a mistake in conduct.”⁸ In 1845, many of the Boston abolitionists, including Chapman, wished, “for tactical purposes,” for Douglass to delay the purchase of his freedom. Unmoved by the “plan,” Douglass asserted his independence, purchased his freedom in December 1846, and was subsequently attacked by Chapman, who “became convinced of his treachery to the cause” (Clinton 156). In a letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe, Chapman expressed that the American Anti-Slavery Society was obliged to withdraw its recommendation of Douglass in Great Britain “since by means of it he is enabled to use money to tell falsehoods to raise more money to tell more falsehoods, all under the false pretense of serving a cause he has not the slightest interest in but as it serves his selfish purposes.” Chapman continued, “He changes his politics and his tactics exactly like a base white man. And we have been, I fear, weak on account of his color.”⁹ Chapman’s attacks on Douglass were occasioned by what she perceived to be his lack of support for the Boston abolitionist campaign, his economic interest in marketing his life story, his support of political action, and his neglect of his family for the sake of more “refined” companionship.

For their own part, however, many Irish and British abolitionists evinced confidence in and support of blacks’ successes as autonomous economic and political agents and, thus, lauded Douglass for “the good done to the cause.” As Jane Jennings enthusiastically pointed out in a letter to Chapman, “. . . for the first time some members of the Church of England have become interested—never have I known any one who has excited such general interest as Frederick . . .” To honor Douglass, Jennings elaborated, “one of the most popular soirées was given to him . . . [at which] four to five hundred of the most respectable inhabitants assembled to meet him.”¹⁰ Other British supporters of

Douglass such as Elizabeth Pease expressed the tremendous “advantage” of having had “[their] talented Brother F. Douglass” visit amongst them. The British public, she averred, was “roused” by the poor treatment of Douglass by a Liverpool agent upon Douglass’s departure from England.¹¹ Instead of praising Douglass for enlarging his social and political circles, however, Chapman saw his successes in England as detracting from the Garrisonian platform and as a threat because of the possibility that Douglass would join the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, which was closely associated with Tappan and the New York abolitionists.¹² The controversy was only further aggravated by complaints about Douglass’s “unreasonableness” and “selfishness”¹³ as well as by Douglass’s association with Julia Griffiths, his white female assistant who returned with him to the United States following his British tour.¹⁴ When Douglass launched his own antislavery paper, the North Star, in Rochester, New York, in 1847, Garrison disapproved of Douglass’s so-called “impulsiveness,” while the rest of the abolitionist community was actually enraged. The tensions between Douglass and the Boston abolitionists evolved into a complete break when, in 1851, Douglass “broke with the Garrisonian doctrine that the federal constitution was a proslavery document” (Pease and Pease, They Who Would . . . p. 88). Though publicly wishing Douglass well in his independence, Chapman expressed her true feelings privately in 1855:

The measure of his crimes is full. It is high time we took away his character. He *never had any* but what we gave him, we were all [unintelligible] into thinking he was capable of having one by his cunning

artfulness. Our committee say—‘what can one expect better of a slave’ true—but it does not absolve us from the duty of exposing him—to my judgment.¹⁵

Apparently, Chapman “accomplished this task with little regret” (Clinton 157), thereby revealing the blind spots of her practices and principles. As a result, Douglass came to view Chapman as “his inveterate enemy.”¹⁶

The “Insights” of Frederick Douglass

As an indirect, if not a direct, upshot of the tensions between Douglass and the Boston abolitionists, The Liberty Bell features only two pieces by Frederick Douglass: “The Folly of Our Opponents” and “Bibles for the Slaves,” published, respectively, in 1845 and 1848. Both pieces highlight Douglass’s polemical power, a talent he was able to hone during his many talks on the lecture circuit. Indeed, Douglass was one of the most compelling antislavery advocates of his day, in no small part because of his ability to achieve the status of both insider and outsider, to be able to speak of justice from both subjective and objective points of view. As Eric Sundquist asserts, “[V]alue cannot be severed from justice and, therefore, from politics” (17). That Douglass succeeded in melding “value” and “politics” in his writing and in promoting himself as insider/outsider needs little explanation; upon hearing the resounding cheers of his first audience in Nantucket on August 16, 1841, Douglass became convinced of the uniqueness of his experiences and of the importance of voicing them in such a way as to appeal to his white, middle- to upper-class audience. *How* he achieved such a balance, however, becomes the vital point.

In his polemical works for The Liberty Bell, Douglass adopts the role of the “seer,” who is, if not godly in his capacities, then is at least able to expose with especial vision that which others can or will not. After all, he himself had been enslaved and, therefore, could see what white abolitionists did not and what black slaves still trapped within the system could not. In “The Folly of Our Opponents,” Douglass critiques proslavery advocate Dr. Dewey’s notorious defense of “American Morals” and of the “*impassable barrier*” Dewey claims exists between the white and black people of the nation (166-67) and establishes himself as an observer who has been “on the other side” and also as a person who is at once sharp and eloquent. Engaging in a point-by-point denunciation of Dewey’s attempt to cover his guilt “with fig-like sophistry,” from “the penetrating eye and scorching rebukes of the Christian world,” Douglass shows how such people, “in seeking thus to cover their sins, succeed only in lighting the lamp of investigation by which their guilt is more completely exposed” (167-68).

Although Douglass complained that he wrote “The Folly of Our Opponents” in “great haste” and asked Chapman to correct any mistakes in it,¹⁷ he nevertheless incorporates in his essay various stylistic nuances that reveal the interconnectedness of his art and politics, of his life experiences and of his role as abolitionist educator. Not only does “The Folly of Our Opponents” include metaphoric examples of the light/dark imagery so popular in abolitionist and sentimental writing, but it also features undertones of optical imagery and visual modes that point to the ways in which Douglass is “taking” or “taking back” power.¹⁸ To Douglass, Dewey’s futile attempts to hide the shortcomings of his proslavery stance are not only disproved by “the penetrating eye . . . of the Christian world” but also by Douglass himself, a former slave whom no amount of

debasement could blind. He explains, “The light necessary to reason by is at once too painful to the eyes of these twin-monsters of darkness [slavery and prejudice] to be endured. Their motto is, ‘Put out the light!’ Thanks to Heaven ‘the morning light is breaking . . .’” (172). In this particular metaphor, the so-called twin-monsters of darkness have eyes, but they are eyes that cannot endure the “light” of reason. Their sight is faulty and weak; and, by comparison, the light of morality is superhuman—omniscient, “penetrating,” and, thus, God-like. Douglass evinces a sort of modesty when he cites the Scriptures upon saying “the morning light is breaking,” for it is Douglass who is, if not creating the light, then at least directing it toward those who might see the truth better by it. As he remarks in his famous “Fifth of July” speech, “blindness . . . seems to be the unvarying characteristic of tyrants.”¹⁹ In “The Folly of Our Opponents,” amidst Douglass’s “lighting the lamp of investigation,” visual imagery permeates his rhetoric to the extent that seeing becomes “the only valid way of knowing,” which, in turn, becomes a transforming mode of human empowerment. Douglass’s capitalization upon his role as the “seer” of events sets him apart from his white antislavery peers.

Douglass’s main duty, consequently, rested in exposing the illusions and delusions of slavery supporters and slavery opponents, as he does in “Bibles for the Slaves,” an essay that was “one of the harshest tongue-lashings ever given by an abolitionist to the church in its support of slavery.”²⁰ Giving Bibles to the slaves, Douglass argues, seems “a sham, a delusion, and a snare, and cannot be too soon exposed before all the people. It is but another illustration of the folly of putting new cloth into an old garment, and new wine into old bottles” (125). Douglass’s logic reinforces his job as the insider whose position outside of slavery makes him responsible for exposing the

discrepancy between the illusion and reality of this “apparently benevolent and Christian movement” (121). Seeing behind the façade of goodwill, Douglass changes the vision of his colleagues and helps them to glimpse the real effect of giving Bibles to slaves: “to turn off attention from the main and only momentous question connected with the Slave, and absorb energies and money in giving to him the Bible that ought to be used in giving him to *himself*” (126). It is ironic that some of the Boston abolitionists criticized his tangential interests, when Douglass likewise complained of anything that detracted from the goal of freeing the slave. The discrepancy between the *means* used by various antislavery activists accounts for this irony more than any perceivable differences between their verified *ends*. For Douglass, the final goal as expressed in “Bibles for the Slaves” seems as direct as possible:

The Slave is property. He cannot own property. He cannot own a Bible. The Slave is a thing,—and it is the all commanding duty of the American to make him a man. . . . To demand less than this, or anything else than this, is to deceive the fettered bondman, and to soothe the conscience of the slaveholder on the very point where he should be most stung with remorse and shame. (126-27)

While many abolitionists surely recognized the consequences of slavery upon the self-image of slaves, former slaves, and even free blacks, Douglass’s “gaze” and vision make it abundantly clear that for male slaves, manhood and humanity are inseparable aspects of being and that the damage done by slavery is, consequently, profound and long-lasting.

Although one may reasonably speculate that The Liberty Bell would have published more pieces by Douglass if the Chapman-Douglass falling out never occurred,

what is more significant—as well as more ascertainable—is what is *lost* by the scarcity of writing by Douglass and also by other black writers whose experiences surely would have led them to make significant and forceful contributions to Chapman’s otherwise diversified gift-book. After all, many of the eminent black antislavery writers of the antebellum years relied upon and often renovated the sentimental tradition, which was such a prominent mode of discourse in the Bell. The telling “emotional and philosophical ethos that celebrates human connection, both personal and communal” that Joanne Dobson says characterizes sentimental literature (266) seems essential to a gift-book that was attempting to emphasize the impression of the interconnectedness of all people. An omission of Douglass’s talents in the genre of sentimental writing seems unfortunate, to say the least, for an abolitionist gift-book otherwise infused with “gilt edges.” While “The Folly of Our Opponents” and “Bibles for the Slaves” both attest to Douglass’s abilities in the realm of expository writing and literary grace, they reveal only a few faces of his multifaceted talents as a writer and, thus, take Douglass out of context. We see him only as the headstrong and forceful rhetorician that he was, but we do not see the sentimental and more personal side he exudes in his Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (1845), My Bondage and My Freedom (1855), and Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (1881). As Jeffrey Steele points out, Garrison, in his Preface to Douglass’s first biography, observes Douglass as a man of deep feeling capable of appealing to readers’ hearts: “the multitudes [. . .] have been melted to tears by [Douglass’s] pathos” (qtd. in Steele 66). Douglass’s “emotionally expressive passages” in his first autobiography—which include “his characterization of mournful slave songs (Ch. 2), his lament for the abandonment of his grandmother (Ch. 8), and his

impassioned soliloquy on the bank of Chesapeake Bay (Ch. 10)” (Steele 67)—evoke the personal and emotional responses that would lend an added degree of intimacy to Chapman’s abolitionist gift-book and to the web of connection it wanted to promote.

That Chapman’s gift-book includes no excerpts from Douglass’s 1845 Narrative seems all the more surprising considering that she reviewed it in The Anti-Slavery Standard (Lutz 203). As an escaped slave whose work was among the most influential in the abolitionist movement, Douglass would have made many compelling additions to The Liberty Bell if it had included excerpts from his life story. Throughout his first autobiography he offers readers poignant insights into the intricacies of the “black gaze,” illustrating how slaves manipulated their visibility and invisibility, even while the eye of the “seer” was on them, in order to empower themselves, if not escape entirely from the bonds of slavery.²¹ The infamous slavebreaker Edward Covey, for instance, maintains power over his field slaves by spying on them, snake-like, and using the tactics of surveillance and surprise to keep them in check. Nonetheless, Douglass outsmarts the “seer” in this case, becoming himself the one whose invisibility lends him power. Upon Douglass’s return to the Covey farm after a night of partial reprieve at the unsympathetic Thomas Auld’s, Covey runs at Douglass with a cow skin, prepared to whip his disobedient slave. Douglass, however, eludes his foe by hiding in the cornfield, thereby making Covey search, unsuccessfully, until finally he must wait for Douglass to return to him (110). As such, Douglass manipulates his visibility in order to gain psychological control over Covey. Even in his famous fight with Covey Douglass’s *resolution* to do the unthinkable (to fight Covey) subsumes his physical prowess: at the instant Douglass “resolved to fight” (112), he resolved in his mind to act in accordance to his own

perception of what is right. That is to say, Douglass made a choice and, in so doing, gave himself the power necessary both to redefine himself and to plan his eventual escape from slavery. Moreover, Douglass's bout with Covey demonstrates that other slaves participated in a similar mental battle, one that required "insight" where other forms of power would have failed. In his biography of Douglass, William S. McFeely claims that Douglass's victory over Covey was not a solo effort; rather, when Douglass's peers refused to restrain the fighting Douglass as per Covey's orders, they, too, "had attacked [Covey] psychologically, with telling effect" (48). In all probability, Douglass's fellow slaves saw that the physical assault Douglass waged on Covey could be successful only if their implicit support of Douglass affirmed a social togetherness that pitted the slaves against the master instead of the slaves against each other, thereby disrupting the usual social order of slavery.

Douglass is at once an outsider to slavery who has the wherewithal to articulate its atrocities and an insider whose revelations are pointed because they are part of his real life history. Such revelations as those disclosed in Douglass's Narrative did not begin and end during his enslavement; they extended into his life even after his escape from literal slavery. Upon finding himself entangled in what he may very well have conceived of as another type of slavery in the hands of munificent people who nonetheless wished to dictate his life, Douglass once again had to manipulate his visibility in order to assert self-ownership. Although Garrison was perhaps Douglass's greatest mentor and although many of the alliances Douglass forged with the Boston abolitionists were life-long and meaningful, ultimately Douglass had to claim his independence from them and did so, as he did when he left Thomas Auld, by leaving their sight. In his move to Rochester, New

York, in 1847 Douglass became invisible to those who would tell him what to say and how to say it; his change in location and vocation thereby afforded him the freedom to find his own abolitionist voice. It is no wonder the “Boston Clique” felt cheated; they had lost one of the most valuable “servants” of the cause.

The Vision of William Wells Brown

In his Preface to Clotel or, The President’s Daughter (1853), William Wells Brown corroborates Douglass’s goal of “lighting the lamp of investigation” when he states, “The great aim of the true friends of the slave should be to lay bare the institution, so that the gaze of the world may be upon it, and cause the wise, the prudent, and the pious to withdraw their support from it, and leave it to its own fate” (16). Apparently, Brown’s part in pointing the “gaze of the world” upon slavery was indispensable since the many assets of “the wise, the prudent, and the pious” did not guarantee that their knowledge of slavery would lead to the abolition of it. By using the techniques of pastiche and bricolage (the taking of pieces of writings and [re]assembling them into something new), Brown “points to the gaps and blindness of much of the materials that he appropriates, with the large aim of helping his readers to see the culture more clearly” (Levine 7-8). This ability to see behind the veil of appearances, like Douglass’s, makes him an important contributor to The Liberty Bell.

Also an escaped slave who knew the efficacy of invisibility, of reimagining and reworking his “insights,” and of manipulating his and others’ sight, Brown was, in fact, the only other former slave besides Douglass to have contributed to Chapman’s antislavery gift-book. Like Douglass, Brown speaks from a position of both pathos and

authority and, in this way, offers readers an unparalleled view of slavery and its effects upon black life. His success as an antislavery activist entailed distancing himself from “plantation” dialect in order to reach a certain audience, and, like Douglass, Brown compensates for his “verbal distance” from slavery by emphasizing his proximity as an eyewitness *to* slavery. Brown “testifies” to the iniquity of slavery, not so much through juridical metaphors that present slaveholders as defendants and slaves as eyewitnesses,²² but through the black gaze, wherein what he sees becomes the gauge of his and others’ character. Concomitant with the moral suasionist ideology of the Garrisonian abolitionists, Brown’s “vision” undermines slavery by illumination of its inhumanity while it simultaneously uplifts his own position as antislavery spokesperson. By granting himself an insider’s insight, Brown confers upon himself the power of revelation, a faculty that no one can take from him.

As an antislavery orator and writer, Brown capitalizes upon the power of bearing witness perhaps more than upon any other mode of empowerment he had at his disposal. One piece that demonstrates on a most literal level Brown’s manipulation of his insight is his forty-eight page pamphlet published in 1849, detailing the scenes and significance of twenty-four painted canvas panels representing life in the slaveholding South.²³

Although the pictures themselves “do much to disseminate truth upon this subject” (Brown, qtd. in Ripley 74), Brown’s interpretation of them coupled with the fact that he himself witnessed many of the scenes gives the author dual authority: he is at once the first-hand seer and also the interpreter of second-hand visual representations of what he and others saw. His written analyses of the scenes become, in essence, the lens through

which his audience will see slave life in the Southern States. Subsequently, Brown's role as seer extends to his role as sculptor of history.

Brown similarly makes use of his (in)sights for the benefit of abolitionist propaganda in "The American Slave-Trade," published in the 1848 volume of The Liberty Bell, a year after he moved to Boston and became a lecturer for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. In the essay he recounts an experience in slavery, stating,

I shall never forget a scene which took place in the city of St. Louis, while I was in slavery. A man and his wife, both Slaves, were brought from the country to the city, for sale. . . . I was present. . . . My eyes were intensely fixed on the face of the woman, whose cheeks were wet with tears. . . . As soon as [the husband and wife] became aware that they were to be separated, they both burst into tears . . . I saw the countenances of a number of whites, who were present, and whose eyes were dim with tears, at hearing the man bid his wife farewell. (233-35)

As Brown's brief and apparently out-of-place sentence, "I was present," attests, seeing an event first-hand weighs more heavily than hearing about that same event through other sources. He himself saw the haunting despair of the husband and wife; their tears serve as evidence of the harm slavery causes. By adding sentimentality to his "testimony," Brown evokes the type of pathos that was to make Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 Uncle Tom's Cabin the success it was.²⁴ However, unlike Stowe, Brown underscores not only the tears that would indicate the slaves' humanity and the humanity, even, of the "number of whites . . . whose eyes were dim with tears," but his own gaze as well. That his "eyes

were intensely fixed on the face of the woman” positions Brown within the described scene, supports the truth of the story, and, as a result, enhances the effect of stirring his readers’ empathy. And yet his own eyes are not full of tears, a detail that may indicate the dual position of insider/outsider which Brown cultivates. Though he, too, is a slave at the time, Brown distances himself from the slave woman, on whom his eyes “were intensely fixed.” Perhaps he understands more than other abolitionists the pain the woman may have felt, but here he nonetheless seems to favor the outsider role—that of free black abolitionist and propagandist for the antislavery movement.

To balance his position as inside informant, the author calls upon the metaphors of silence and deafness in addition to the trope of sight and mode of sentimentality. In “The American Slave-Trade,” Brown suggests that man is deaf to the slaves’ cries: “Known to God, only, is the amount of human agony and suffering which sends its cry from these Slave-prisons, unheard or unheeded by man, up to His ear: mothers, weeping for their children,—breaking the night-silence with the shrieks of their breaking hearts” (232-33). While the recollection of mothers weeping for their children is pervasive in antislavery literature, it bespeaks the importance of the senses—of seeing and hearing and feeling—and, in so doing, guarantees former slaves the uncontested position of spokespersons. In this capacity, slaves see, hear, feel, and speak for others. They are imbued with all the influence that slavery, ironically, would take from them. With such influence, Brown lifts the veil, so to speak, in order to reveal his opinion on the subject of the slave trade: “With every disposition on the part of those who are engaged in it, to veil the truth, certain facts have, from time to time, transpired, sufficient to show, if not the full amount of the evil, at least that it is one of prodigious magnitude” (236). Although,

he suggests, truth finds its way, Brown's influence as contributor to the Bell ensures that even more of the "evil" he has experienced reaches the eyes and ears of those who cannot see, for whatever reason, the extent of the ills of slavery.

What Is Lost: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

In light of the many possibilities that featuring black writers would have had for The Liberty Bell, the absence of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper creates a regrettable gap in the publication's scope and seems even more disquieting than a shortage of Douglass's or Brown's writing. First, Harper was a prominent figure whose "literary contributions, coupled with her active participation in political movements . . . earned her a national reputation" (Foster 4). It is not unlikely that Harper and Chapman met at some point in their abolitionist careers, since, as Frances Smith Foster notes, "Harper met most active abolitionists."²⁵ Indeed, Harper was quite visible as an antislavery activist. Since the release of her first book of poetry Forest Leaves (1845), Harper published in such accredited abolitionist papers and journals as the Liberator, Frederick Douglass' Paper, National Anti-Slavery Standard, and Anglo-African Magazine. Her Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects underwent a reprint in 1857, just three years after its initial publication, and the Philadelphia abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor William Still called Harper "the leading colored poet in the United States."²⁶ Second, her abolitionist writing participated in the sentimental genre so apposite to Chapman's gift-book and was "firmly grounded in the philosophy of Christian morality" (Foster 15), thereby reinforcing the suitability of featuring a voice like Harper's among The Liberty Bell's list of contributors. Harper, I propose, deserves pause here if only to elucidate the

type of abolitionist writing being done by African Americans at the time when The Liberty Bell enjoyed publication. Not only does Harper's antislavery writing demonstrate her grasp of the sentimental, religious, and secular ideology of Garrisonian abolition, but it also reveals that Harper, like Douglass and Brown, sculpts her vision of the American world through certain twists of power that rely upon the black gaze and upon specifically African-American ways of signifying.

One wonders if it is possible that Chapman clashed with Harper, as she did with Douglass, or if she did not include Harper in the gift-book because Harper did not reside in the immediate Boston area, or if she *wished* to include Harper in The Liberty Bell but could not obtain Harper's pieces when needed. It is also possible that because Harper—like Charles Lenox Remond and Sarah Parker Remond (who also were not published in the Bell)²⁷—was not born in slavery and, in fact, enjoyed “a life of relative leisure” as daughter of an “articulate and well-respected black family” (Foster 3, 4), Chapman did not trust her authenticity or see her as being able to legitimize abolitionism as persuasively as, say, Douglass and Brown do in their essays that speak directly of their experiences as slaves. In any case, Harper's absence from the Bell is perplexing, and her unique perspective warrants a different critical vantage point than Douglass's and Brown's, not a neglect of it altogether. Unlike the two former slaves who found prose to be the most viable form of expression, Harper relied heavily upon poetry to express her political sentiments, and the language of poetics thus sets her apart as well.

That Harper, like Chapman, responded in the form of poetry to Elijah Parish Lovejoy's untimely death suggests that the affinities between the two abolitionists may not be as limited as one might think. However, in contrast to Chapman's elegiac poem

which upholds the murdered abolitionist editor as a symbol of “The first MARTYR to American LIBERTY,” Harper’s commemorative poem, “A Mother’s Heroism,” focuses instead upon the loss of Elijah’s mother and the heroic way in which she handles her son’s death. In this respect, “A Mother’s Heroism” exemplifies not only Harper’s proclivity for the sentimental but also her ability to provide a unique point of view, one that sets her remembrance of Lovejoy apart from other like pieces. By focusing on the mother’s reaction to a seemingly unjustifiable wrong, Harper explores both the influence of moral conviction and the potency of female strength.

From the start, Harper’s poem places value on the mother’s perspective by citing her and, hence, giving her voice and form. The poem begins by quoting Lovejoy’s mother in an epitaph: “When the noble mother of Lovejoy heard of her son’s death, she said, ‘It is well! I had rather he should die so than desert his principles.’”²⁸ Elizabeth Pattee Lovejoy comes to life before the poem proper even begins; with her voice in mind, readers then become open to feeling how she may have felt upon learning of her son’s death. The power the poet lends her subject is, in fact, one of the more remarkable features of “A Mother’s Heroism.” Although the mother’s “fragile form” must grapple with the information she receives (l. 15), she remains the central focus throughout. The speaker says,

The murmurs of a distant strife
 Fell on a mother’s ear;
 Her son had yielded up his life,
 Mid scenes of wrath and fear.

They told her how he'd spent his breath
 In pleading for the dumb,
 And how the glorious martyr wreath
 Her child had nobly won.

They told her of his courage high,
 Mid brutal force and might;
 How he had nerved himself to die,
 In battling for the right. (ll. 1-12)

Even though in these stanzas the action that takes place happens *to* Elizabeth Lovejoy, leaving her, grammatically at least, the object of the events, the mother and son are the only persona who, unlike the ambiguous “them,” have definite identities. Not only are the mother’s and son’s identities secure, but they are uplifted and glorified—the son becoming Christ-like with “the glorious martyr wreath” he “nobly won” and Elizabeth Lovejoy, by extension, becoming the sainted and blessed mother-martyr. The “wreath” of domestic tranquility may indeed be thorny, or broken as the metaphor may have it, but Lovejoy’s death was not in vain for he fought for his “rights” as well as for “the right.”

By illuminating the mother’s role in the tragic events surrounding Lovejoy’s death, Harper manipulates her readers’ “gaze” in order to emphasize the larger circle that racial violence disrupts. As Mary Louise Kete observes in her discussion of “sentimental collaboration,” “The ‘more perfect union’ of self to others, self to God, state to nation is modeled by the fleeting sense of unity imagined to have been felt between a mother and her child” (134). So noteworthy is Elizabeth Lovejoy’s response to her son’s death that

the rest of the poem focuses upon her physical reaction and verbal reply. Physically, her eyes alone bespeak her fortitude: “From lip and brow the color fled— / But light flashed to her eye” (ll. 17-18). While a lack of color here signifies weakness, the “light” in her eye demonstrates that the mother’s spirit feels and hurts but is nevertheless vital, strong, and even angry. Her verbal response, however, reveals not a vengeful disposition but one that is noble and proud. “‘T is well that, to his latest breath, / He plead for liberty,” she says. “Truth nerved him for the hour of death, / And taught him how to die” (ll. 21-24). Having raised her son to stand up for what is right, Lovejoy’s mother is proud of her son’s resolve and becomes, herself, a symbol of moral resolution. Such resolve marks the climax of Douglass’s narrative; in Harper’s poem, it similarly represents the ultimate form of power and strength.

Harper’s celebration of maternal courage and valor extended beyond “A Mother’s Heroism.” Many other of her poems such as “The Slave Mother” and “The Slave Mother: A Tale of the Ohio” likewise focus on the strength of mothers who have lost their children to slavery. In her poem “Eliza Harris,” Harper gives yet another twist of perspective to this favored angle by capturing in verse what Harriet Beecher Stowe captured in prose—that is, the dramatization of the extremes that a mother will go to in order to save her child. Published in the Liberator, December 16, 1853, and Frederick Douglass’s Paper, December 23, 1853, “Eliza Harris” was popular for its commemoration of one of Stowe’s most famous scenes. In reenacting Eliza Harris’s heart-pounding escape from slave catchers across an icy river with her child in her arms, Harper’s poem emphasizes Eliza’s heroism, the shame of America’s hypocrisy, and the moral right of the oppressed. In this endeavor, Harper draws upon sentimental, secular,

and religious principles, respectively. The mother, for example, shares a conviction common to the sentimental representation of slave mothers who place the freedom of their children above all else, even death. As the speaker explains simply, “For she is a mother—her child is a slave— / And she’ll give him his freedom, or find him a grave!” (ll. 7-8). In her matter-of-fact rhetoric, the speaker’s words function as Joanne Dobson claims sentimental language should: “as a highly expressive medium appropriate to the conveyance of empathy and consolation” (269). Harper combines this sentimental ethos with an emphasis on the sacred and the secular, for, as her speaker sees it, someone or something is “wrong” if a mother will risk life and limb to save her child from enslavement. In the poem, the speaker asks:

Oh! How shall I speak of my proud country’s shame?
 Of the stains on her glory, how give them their name?
 How say that her banner in mockery waves—
 Her ‘star spangled banner’—o’er millions of slaves? (ll. 17-20)

Though the speaker cannot account for the shame of her country and its blatant hypocrisy, she turns to a religious conviction that reasons Eliza Harris and, we may presume, those nonfiction counterparts who likewise escaped slavery, were “aided by Heaven” (l. 27).

Harper’s use of the three-pronged abolitionist ideology that evokes sentimental, secular, and religious doctrines places her alongside many of her antislavery peers. Yet Harper’s poem, it should be noted, stands out for the uniqueness of its speaker who acts as an eyewitness to the scene, as an insider whose perspective, like the types of perspectives we find in Douglass and Brown, provides an added plane of vision. To

resurrect a fictitious character suggests the force of Eliza Harris to move an audience; to relive the scene through the eyes of a spectator allows Harper to reinforce the lessons that *she* hoped Eliza Harris would teach. Harper establishes the speaker's point of view in the opening lines of the poem: "Like a fawn from the arrow, startled and wild, / A woman swept by us, bearing a child" (ll. 1-2). Although Harper may simply be positioning her speaker as a reader of Uncle Tom's Cabin, the perspective nevertheless has a sense of immediacy to it that matches the immediacy that Eliza Harris felt upon braving the icy Ohio. To Harper's speaker, the vision of Eliza's "innocent face" was "a vision to haunt us" (l. 9) because it illustrates that a person can withstand anything—"poverty, danger and death"—as long as "the child of her love is no longer a slave" (ll. 55-56). By recapturing the torment that Eliza Harris underwent in order to save her child, Harper emphasizes to her readers the social and moral wrong of an institution that would warrant such extreme measures.

Perhaps Chapman's Liberty Bell may have featured "Eliza Harris" or other such poems, as did Garrison's and Douglass's papers, if she had the foresight to see the generative and communicative powers of a black perspective. For as much as Chapman felt for the poor slave, she felt in a limited way. The paucity of black contributors to her gift-book indicate the myopia of Chapman's especial perspective as well as the more general penchant of white abolitionists to misinterpret, misappropriate, or, in this case, to ignore the promise of black abolitionists. The writings of Douglass, Brown, and Harper are not exhaustive of the types of outlooks and literary renovations that black abolitionists contributed to the literary canon. They are, however, suggestive of the powers of the black gaze to see what sometimes remains hidden behind the veil and to

validate a view point that too often was suppressed, even amongst the benevolent abolitionists of the Boston contingency.

CHAPTER 6
 CROSSING BORDERS: THE INTERCULTURAL POETRY OF
 RALPH WALDO EMERSON, WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON,
 AND ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

What is a man born for but to be a Reformer.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson,

“Man the Reformer,” 1841

Building International Forces

While the incontrovertible lack of African-American contributors points to the ways in which The Liberty Bell fails to establish an ideal web of connection within its own nation’s borders, Chapman’s gift-book nonetheless features a notable force working to cultivate relationships in the opposite direction, across the Atlantic to British, French Irish, and even Persian worlds. In her attempts to expand the bounds of literature and life in the name of abolition, Chapman’s own writing commemorating alternately French abolitionist Baron De Staël-Holstein, British abolitionist Edward S. Abdy, or the advocate against Russian serfdom Ivan N. Tourgueneff set the stage for the many international pieces she selected for publication. Her residence in Paris, from 1848 to 1855, further solidified international relations, and many of the people she met there—including such distinguished authors and liberals as Emile Souvestre, Alexis de Tocqueville, Victor Schoelcher, and Charles de Montalambert—contributed important antislavery pieces to The Liberty Bell.¹ Typically, the domestic, in its “intimate

opposition to the foreign[,] . . . has a double meaning that not only links the familial household to the nation but also imagines both in opposition to everything outside the geographies and conceptual border of the home” (Kaplan 581). The Bell, however, contradicts this premise. Unlike most other gift-books of the day, Chapman’s was not “aggressively nationalistic” (Thompson 161). While its sentimental literature demonstrates some of the ways in which Bell contributors dismantle notions about the humanity of “civilizing” Africans, its intercultural literature dismantles limited views of other things “foreign”— not just from Africa, but from European nations and Persia as well. American writers for The Liberty Bell such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Lloyd Garrison transcend place and time in their intercultural pieces that explore the realms of other people and cultures; and, by looking to America for their subject matter, British poets such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning also transcend place and time in an abolitionist literature that suggests the affinities between European and American social issues even while it reveals the rudimentary aspects of prejudice otherwise veiled beneath or denied behind American life. In all the Bell’s intercultural pieces, the literary crossing of national and continental borders lends a cohesiveness of sentiment despite the cultural barriers that are sometimes promoted and sustained in the process.

To be sure, abolitionists from all over the globe had been addressing the problem of slavery on behalf of nations other than their own for nearly a century by the time The Liberty Bell came into existence. Journalist Thomas Clarkson’s famous graphic of the intersection of the slave ship showing African hostages packed together with suffocating proximity certainly struck a cord with slavery opponents worldwide and inspired many silent consciences to speak publicly against slavery’s iniquity. In its depiction of “the

difference between ‘loose’ and ‘tight’ packing (allowing chained men and women room to turn over or not)” (Mellor and Matlak 74), the picture drew considerable attention to the atrocious treatment of Africans aboard slave ships and was used both in Great Britain and in the United States as an example of the brutality of slavery. The 1808 pictures, in fact, became a familiar icon, indelibly conjoining the immorality of slavery with the visual horror it provoked.¹ Out of such visual re-inscriptions of the evil of slavery came literary ones, from John Greenleaf Whittier’s poem “The Slave Ships—which moves the reader from the literal image to a metaphor for the corruptibility of both soul and nation²—to John Ruskin’s essay “Of Water, as painted by Turner,” which draws upon J. M. W. Turner’s painting, “The Slave Ship,” to denounce British imperialism.³ Although we might categorize such works as “intercultural” for the cultural unification they enact, the intercultural poetry of The Liberty Bell warrants distinction for the effect that it had as a genre of sorts, being specifically selected and grouped together in the gift-book as its own type of abolitionist force, demonstrating the expanse of the web of connection that Chapman’s gift-book promoted.

Emerson’s Holistic Vision

Chapman’s inclusion of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Translations from the Persian of Hafiz” and “Translations from the Persian of Nisami,” both published in the 1851 volume of The Liberty Bell, proves interesting for a variety of reasons. For the purposes of lending credence to the Bell, Emerson’s contribution, however small, was helpful. By the mid-century, Emerson had already established himself as a prominent lecturer and man of letters. And although Emerson’s antislavery activity was variable at best, he did

not eschew the social issue entirely, even at the risk of contradicting his theories of self-reliance and his desire not to affiliate himself with any one particular social group.⁴ As early as 1822, Emerson's "Wide World" journals reflect his belief that all men are not, in fact, created equal. Nonetheless, Emerson concedes, "No ingenious sophistry can ever reconcile the unperverted mind to the pardon of *Slavery*; nothing but tremendous familiarity, and the bias on private *interest*."⁵ His first antislavery speech, delivered in November 1837 and apparently inspired by the murder of abolitionist printer Elijah P. Lovejoy that month, was a disappointment to the abolitionists, for Emerson focused upon upholding free speech rather than upon abolishing slavery. However, with his famous address "On the Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies," delivered in Concord on August 1, 1844, Emerson more readily embraced an issue that was at once "so manifestly human and social" (von Frank 327). As Len Gougeon avers, Emerson "was profoundly affected, both emotionally and intellectually, by his preparation for this address, as well as by the historical developments that prompted him to give it" (171). In turn, the Boston abolitionists were profoundly affected by what appeared to be Emerson's latent interest in abolitionism. Before this time, Maria Weston Chapman observed that Emerson's "remaining in known *unconnection* (I cannot stop for approved words) with us operated as a virtual discountenance and opposition."⁶ With Emerson's new involvement with the abolitionists, however fleeting, Chapman and her peers could draw upon the philosopher's reputation and wisdom in order to validate their cause.

Emerson's belief that the reformation of society should begin with individual reform corresponded well to the radical abolitionists' emphasis on moral suasion, and, ironically, Emerson's very abstractions and distaste for being associated with reform

groups are what inevitably expand The Liberty Bell's generic scope by adding the poetics of artistic idealism and loftiness to the plainer poetics of politics. Because Emerson disliked the idea of speaking directly on a specific social issue, his contributions to the Bell are quite general compared to much of the other poetry published there and even seem, upon first glance, unrelated to antislavery objectives. Moreover, Emerson's contributions are translations, not originals, which further distances him from the cause. Even so, the appropriateness of his selections, which suggest the universal significance of wisdom and peace, is important to the sense that the activity and concerns of American abolitionists do not exist in a vacuum. The notion of the interconnectedness of human forces, a vital principle for Chapman, became solidified with such pieces as Emerson's translations that looked outside of America and out of the present time in order to reveal greater truths upon which people might draw strength and inspiration.

Both "Translations from the Persian of Hafiz" and "Translations from the Persian of Nisami" stand apart from many of the other pieces in The Liberty Bell because they showcase not the reformer, but the poet, whom Emerson believes "is the most complete and has the most to offer others" (Earhart 289). They are poems of spiritual wealth and insight that question the definition of value and what it means to have values. Hafiz, a Persian poet who wrote a famous cycle of love poems, The Divan, was included in Emerson's library collection and was of especial interest to Emerson, who translated (from a German translation) many of his poems.⁷ Emerson's interest in Orientalism found an agreeable home with an antislavery gift-book such as The Liberty Bell because, as Al-Da'mi observes,

Emerson did not actually want to devalue this Orient, nor did he try to revalue the standard themes held about it; he, rather, wanted his allusions to other cultures in general to serve nationalist purposes which contemplate the development of an American cultural identity through comparisons and contrasts, ideals to follow and examples to fear. (15)

Although Al-Da'mi sees Emerson's Orientalism as reductive and faulty—as “adher[ing] to the European stereotypes which stress Islam's sword rather than its spiritual and moral appeal, the Arabesque rather than the Arab” (12)—I suggest that not only is it natural for a person to look at his/her own culture “through comparisons and contrasts, ideals to follow and examples to fear,” but that Emerson's translations suggest a sensitivity to and respect for Asian spirituality and morality. In offering the translations from the Persian of Hafiz and the Persian of Nisami for representation in an antislavery publication, Emerson upholds an example of the East that the West would be prudent to follow. “If,” Emerson once stated, “the East loves infinity, the West delighted in boundaries.”⁸ Given the context in which we see Emerson's translations, they tend to break down these boundaries of the western world, offering abolitionists moral “ideals to follow” that are not bound up with the American politics and social institutions Emerson found objectionable.

“Translations from the Persian of Hafiz” places the life of humans into the context of the infinite and, in so doing, suggests that love, faith in Allah (or God), and a clarity of insight are amongst humans' most vital needs. Underscoring such a simple yet opaque philosophy, the first group of poems—“The Phoenix,” “Faith,” “The Poet,” and “To Himself”—are arranged together in the Bell to iterate in four different ways the

. . . 'Be all ear:

Thou seest I'm dumb; be thou, too, dumb.

I, experienced in affairs,

See fifty things, say never one.

But thee the people prizes not,

Who, doing nothing, say a hundred.

To me, appointed to the chase,

The king's hand gives the grouse's breast,

Whilst a chatterer like thee

Must gnaw worms in the thorns. Farewell!' (ll. 12-21)

Emerson's choice of this poem for inclusion in Chapman's antislavery gift-book seems potentially underhanded. On the one hand, Chapman and her peers must certainly have read the poem as a call-to-arms, as a command to actively stand upon principle. If such were Emerson's intentions (which his general desire to improve humanity indicates an affirmative), then Nisami's poem becomes appropriate to the milieu in which we see it. On the other hand, Chapman and the other abolitionists with whom Emerson refused to align himself may themselves represent the Nightingale whose actions become overshadowed by its incessant prattle.

Although the more tangible correlations of Emerson's translations to the antislavery movement remain elusive while the inspirational aspects are clearer, the poems were nonetheless published in an antislavery gift-book, and their effect upon its readers thus deserves consideration. Frederic Carpenter perhaps best elucidates the connection between the translations and reform when he says that

. . . the general spirit of imaginative liberation characteristic of these Persians so inspired Emerson that it is often not possible to say exactly whether some of his own poems are ‘translations,’ or new expressions of the old spirit. At the opposite pole from his Puritan ancestors, these Persians offered him both the ideas and the images of an imaginative freedom without occidental inhibitions. (213)

Regardless of Emerson’s rationale for choosing the poetry of Hafiz and Nisami for publication in the Bell, the poetry’s implication in an abolitionist venue is the offering of “new expressions of the old spirit,” ones that conjure “images of an imaginative freedom,” if not images of actual liberty in the place of slavery. Neither Puritan nor American Revolutionary, the Asian allusions add a dimension of worldliness to the abolitionist ideology of the Bell that begins to suggest that American history and world history are not mutually exclusive. Yohannan maintains that “Persian poetry served primarily to emancipate Emerson’s thought from the narrow confines of convention and to enrich the store of imagery by which he gave expression to that thought” (“The Influence. . .” 25). Perhaps doing the same for his abolitionist audience was the hope of Emerson as well. By adding to the West’s repertoire of philosophy yet another whose message is at once divine and universal, Emerson might expand the domestic and national into the foreign and thereby help to reinvent the way that American abolitionists envisioned their cause and their own identity as Americans.

Garrison among Revolutionaries

To gain the support of humanitarians and revolutionaries worldwide was an important goal of The Liberty Bell, but because the American antislavery agenda ultimately took precedence over all other considerations, Chapman's endeavors in this arena confirmed the fragility of her gossamer web of connection. The whirlwind relationship between Garrison and Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian radical who fought against Austrian dominion of his home country,⁹ demonstrates the political progressiveness of the Garrisonians as well as the difficulty abolitionists had maintaining such openness in matters of international diplomacy. Following the precedent of an international way of seeing the antislavery mission, Garrison celebrated the "abolition" of tyranny throughout the world by celebrating one particular revolutionary, Louis Kossuth. While the Mexican-American War was nearing its end in the late 1840s, revolution in France triggered other revolutions across Europe. As an influential member of the Diet, Louis Kossuth sought autonomy for Hungary and quickly won "the use of national languages, the abolition of serfdom, [and] an end to the nobility's exemption from taxes" (Mayer 378). Like Garrison, Kossuth was in contact with other "revolutionaries," most notably Giuseppe Garibaldi and Giuseppe Mazzini, in the hopes that the international crises "might one day turn to the advantage of his cause" (Macartney 9). Because Kossuth defended the liberty of his country, Garrison came to regard him as an ally in the "kindred love of Right" (l. 14), and America, too, welcomed Kossuth once he was banished from Hungary in 1849.

Garrison's initial support of Kossuth in America, where the exile took refuge from 1851 to 1852, was tremendously enthusiastic, as evidenced in his poem "To

Heart-broken, bleeding, crushed beyond com-
pare

At public sale with swine and cattle ranking,

The wretched victims of complete despair! (ll. 37-42)

Always conscious of his duty to disparage American slavery and to oppose anyone who would ignore or deny the wickedness of it, Garrison turns to the sentimental ideology of abolitionist rhetoric by calling to mind the physical and emotional suffering of the slave—their “galling chains” and “heart-broken,” “crushed” spirits. Moreover, the speaker complains, the very laws of American government support the break-up of families and homes, “[f]or ‘t is by law the father, son, and brother, / Know nought of filial or parental ties; / By law the sister, daughter, wife, and mother, / Must claim no kindred here beneath the skies. . .” (ll. 49-52). Because Garrison and Kossuth share a “kindred love of Right,” the conservation of all “kindred” purity, in Garrison’s view, becomes as essential to their individual fights as the defense of the more specific wars they each waged against injustice. It is not enough for Kossuth to fight for the liberation of Hungary; he must also fight against the inhumanity of American slavery and must, therefore, “[r]ebuke each merciless plantation Nero; / Reprove our land in accents loud and clear! . . . / Tell us our faults,—expose our crime of crimes” (ll. 83-84, 86). In beseeching Kossuth to be consistent with his values, Garrison incidentally asks the same of his readers and uses the opportunity as a call for more protestors.

Garrison was to be tremendously disappointed, however. Upon recognizing that Kossuth’s primary loyalty was to his native land and not to America—a fact that Kossuth repeated “endlessly, in nearly every speech” (Spencer 183)—Garrison issued “To Louis

Kossuth,” a 266-line poem published in the 1852 Bell that severs all the good will that his original poem dispensed. Because Garrison’s expectations of Kossuth were high, his disappointment led Garrison to compose a poem as scathing as his first poem was complimentary. Garrison goes so far as to use Austria (Kossuth’s inveterate enemy) as a point of comparison against which to judge Kossuth, whom he criticizes for speaking before the slaveholders in Montgomery, Alabama—“Ay, in the presence of three million Slaves, / Whose chains would fall beneath an Austrian flag” (ll. 108-09). Amidst the extreme emotion of “To Louis Kossuth,” in fact, Garrison seems to lose his perspective when he resorts to stereotypes of the “Orient. ” His speaker says to Kossuth,

Thy rhetoric wears an oriental glow,
 And in thy myriad speeches much is found
 To stir the pulse and magnetize the heart:
 But wherefore this great deluge of fine talk? (ll. 59-62)

Calling in to question the essence and heart of Kossuth’s specific mission, Garrison simultaneously objectifies the Eastern world by suggesting that the bedazzlement of an “oriental glow” is an empty façade, devoid of substance or value. Thus, while “To Louis Kossuth” does the cultural work of discrediting one man, its inadvertent effect is to discredit that man’s nation as well, even though Garrison’s speaker attempts to uphold the love of humankind above all else. The speaker concedes to Kossuth’s noble suffering for the cause of Hungary’s deliverance from Austria; “[b]ut love of country is not love of man,” he makes clear, “Is not the noblest attribute of mind, / Is limited in feeling and design, / Not comprehensive of the human race” (ll. 41-44). Such a position endeavors to support an international connection between all people in the struggle against iniquity

even as it dissolves the ties between Garrison and Kossuth and even as it appears amidst culturally damaging stereotypes.

Garrison's fluctuating message becomes more befuddled *because* he tries to restrict his critique to Kossuth, not to Kossuth's nation, and thereby retain the sentiment of American and Hungarian infinitudes. The speaker says,

Thou art a mere Hungarian—nothing more;
 Intensely selfish for thy native land;
 A man of impulse, not of steady power—
 Ardent in feeling, chivalric in aim,
 But swayed by worldly policy too oft,
 Trusting the end will sanctify the means,
 The good to be achieved atonement make
 For any evil winked at—showing thus,
 Distrust of God and lack of principle . . . (ll. 49-57)

Garrison's speaker admits of Kossuth's fierce defense of his native land; he cannot, however, accept the tactics Kossuth employs. Even though Garrison's commitment to American abolition was as central to his life as Hungary's liberation seemed to be to Kossuth's, Garrison was guided by his own divine, moral "principle" that upheld the love of man over the love and nation and whose lack he could not tolerate in others. In light of Garrison's principles, it is ironic that his lines attempt to censure the man (Kossuth) and support the nation (Hungary). Consequently, Garrison's philosophy, in a twisted way, both raises boundaries in order to shut out a fellow revolutionary who evaded the question of American slavery and opens new passages between nations in an expansion

that, like Emerson's translations, might breathe a bit of the future into the abolitionist movement.

The future Garrison envisions is finally intended to reinforce the solidarity of the world's people, a solidarity that entails the extension of philanthropic efforts to all one's neighbors in need. Kossuth's justification for his "parasitic praise / Of 'the free ground of free America'" (Garrison, ll. 166-67) goes against the entire point of establishing a web of connection in the fight against slavery because it is founded upon a theory of non-interference by foreigners. In his Address to the People of the United States (as quoted by Garrison in a footnote to his poem), Kossuth states, "My principle is, that every nation has the sovereign right to dispose of its own domestic affairs, without any foreign interference." Kossuth may indeed have believed in the right of a nation to rule in its own way, yet the support he received from America's own revolutionaries reveals that foreign endorsement was important even if foreign interference were condemnable. Garrison's tongue-in-cheek response—"May only Britons censure British crimes?" (l. 204)—suggests the implausibility of attaining foreign endorsement without also opening oneself or one's country up for foreign interference. In the name of truth, both are the same to Garrison and, in light of this truth, Garrison's final words in the poem clarify his hitherto unsettled position that people must "*[r]emember those in bonds as bound with them*" (l. 264).

The type of reasoning that leads Garrison to invite foreign censure of American slavery requires the questioning of authority vital to the success of the abolitionist movement. After all, antislavery advocates were fighting not only against a legalized wrong—made "right" in the eyes of the government—and against social institutions

originating out of the less tangible enemy of prejudice, but also against nearly a century of identity-building that would position America as Kossuth envisioned it: as a land of the free, founded upon Protestant principles of freedom and defended, by the Revolutionary “Forefathers,” for the sake of that freedom as well. Emerson’s contributions to The Liberty Bell suggest an awareness of the smallness of American thinking and self-imposed restrictions because the translations grapple with what Emerson perceived to be the greater work of self improvement that ought to precede social improvement. Garrison’s poems to Kossuth challenge traditional representations of authority, for the poems condemn the hypocrisy implicit in any praise of American liberty. As Americans themselves, Emerson and Garrison present opinions that appear radical, and, therefore, important to facilitating change. However, denunciation of the discrepancy between America’s claimed foundations and actual behavior from people *other* than Americans had its own special value in exposing slavery in a new light. From a “foreigner’s” perspective, the institution of slavery might be uprooted at its source—at the identity-forming structure of the nation itself.

Blessings and Curses from England

Elizabeth Barrett Browning appears in The Liberty Bell as an effective and inimitable voice in exposing the hypocrisy of American slavery. A veritable celebrity by the early 1840s, Barrett Browning was extolled by Edgar Allan Poe, whose dedication of his collection The Raven and other Poems (1845) called her “the Noblest of her Sex” and evinced “the most Enthusiastic Admiration” and “the most Sincere Esteem” of her.¹⁰ Moreover, Barrett Browning had published in many American journals, including

Arcturus (1841), the North American Review (1842), and Democratic Review (1844), among others. Given Barrett Browning's popularity and position as a British writer, the debut appearances of "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" in the 1848 Liberty Bell and "A Curse for a Nation" in the 1856 volume served well to provide abolitionists with a new perspective to an old problem. In a letter to Samuel May, Jr. on October 21, 1871, Caroline Weston (Maria Weston Chapman's sister) reminisced about Barrett Browning's contributions, saying, "[She] gave us *two* of her most remarkable poems."¹¹ Indeed, Barrett Browning's evocative poems could cause a stir for reasons illuminated not only by her position as a British woman poet, but by the poems themselves, which are severe in their messages yet so compelling that they are, in the end, successful.

Although Sarah Brophy speculates that the two-year delay in the publication of "The Runaway Slave" (Barrett Browning submitted it in 1846) may attest "to a hesitation on the part of the editors when confronted with what the poet described in a letter to her friend Hugh Boyd as the poem's 'too ferocious' quality" (275), it seems to me that the sensibility of "The Runaway Slave" was probably quite befitting of Chapman and her peers' brand of radical abolition, as befitting, at least, as any of Garrison's "harsh as truth" anti-Constitutional declarations were. Unlike Garrison's antislavery verse, however, Barrett Browning's poem offers a European viewpoint not mired in the personal complexities of American identity building (or denouncing, as the case may be). Additionally, in contrast to the common polemic of speaking as one abolitionist to other abolitionists like the Bell's other antislavery poems typically do, "The Runaway Slave" offers a fictionalized slave's point of view and, what is more, a female slave's point of view. While many critics have praised "The Runaway Slave" as unconventional and

revolutionary on this count, others have tempered the praise by pointing to the limitations of Barrett Browning's general emulation of and reverence for male literary models (Brophy 280) or to the limitations of the sentimentality of the poem, which, Brophy argues, "suggests that [the slave woman] finally rescinds any capacity to question her own position" (279).¹² I would like to submit here that the sentimentalism that the speaker finally adopts is neither radical nor feeble. Rather, it is a stylistic choice on the part of Barrett Browning, a choice that ultimately concedes to the task at hand with outstanding insight. To clarify, Barrett Browning was explicitly invited to contribute an antislavery poem to the Bell. Her product, "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point," shows both the poet's understanding of her audience (after all, the sentimental mode was a signature style of Chapman's gift-book) and the poet's attention to the type of criticism that might make Americans heed an abolitionist voice without recognizing that voice as "just another abolitionist voice." By providing a female slave's point of view, Barrett Browning gives a European point of view, for, ultimately, the abolitionist fight was on behalf of the slaves, a fact that sometimes became lost in the confusion of American social and political trivialities.

Because "The Runaway Slave" is, in fact, the only abolitionist poem in The Liberty Bell to provide a slave's viewpoint, this feature of Barrett Browning's work—no matter how complacent, sentimental, traditional, or, finally, defeated the slave woman seems to become—is what allows the poet to deconstruct the American identity as a duplicitous home of the free in a way that Emerson, Garrison, and even the former slaves published in the gift-book themselves could not. Just as Douglass's and Brown's outsider status lent a special credence to their stories, so too does Barrett Browning enjoy certain

advantages due to her status as a British voice against slavery. In this role, Barrett Browning could be seen to represent the outsider who, now being amongst those who already live in a slavery-free nation, can lecture vociferously upon the ills of the evil institution. Lecturing, however, might only squelch Barrett Browning's passion for poetry which was equal to her passion for abolition. Indeed, not least of the strengths of Barrett Browning's choice to write the poem from the perspective of a black female slave is overcoming the very real challenge of inciting an abolitionist audience without any of the usual didacticism of antislavery rhetoric. While Harriet Beecher Stowe accomplishes this task in Uncle Tom's Cabin through the pathos that novels may, arguably, more naturally evoke, Barrett Browning achieves a similar effect through verse. Using her ability to assume a public voice—an ability whose lack made the popular poet L. E. L. a target for Barrett Browning¹³—the poet simultaneously evokes sympathy for a slave woman whose very personal story is told with moving passion. As such, Barrett Browning combines the “public” and “private” spheres, thereby reaching an expanded audience with telling effect. Moreover, the personal, more “feminine” aspects of “The Runaway Slave” demonstrate the power of a genre hitherto less plot-driven in the abolitionist world. In support of her love of the genre, Barrett Browning wrote in a letter to Mary Russell Mitford,

[Y]ou are quite right in telling me not to give up poetry for magazine-writing, or for prose of a higher character. You will be satisfied when you hear me say that I couldn't if I tried. Whatever degree of faculty I have lies in poetry—still more of personal happiness lies in it—still more of my love. . . . There will be no bitterness in the process whatever the

labor . . . because it is not for the sake of popularity, no, nor of a higher kind of fame, but for poetry's own sake—rather, to speak more humbly and accurately, for the sake of my love of it. Love is the safest and most unwearied moving principle in all things—it is an heroic worker.¹⁴

Given her devotion to the art of poetry, Barrett Browning finds herself in a queerly liberating position, even as she still writes under the influence of masculine and fatherly role models, for her everyday detachment from the antislavery movement gives her the creative freedom to place herself in the position of an American slave as opposed to the position of a free white American fighting against slavery. To be sure, pathos and empathy are the general prerequisites of antislavery activism; however, “The Runaway Slave” reveals a sensibility that has declared independence from the country and, thus, can more effectively criticize it.

In order to communicate her critique, the speaker of the poem addresses America's “first white pilgrim” ancestors so that she may curse the legacy of iniquity and hypocrisy that their progeny have established (l. 2).¹⁵ Brophy argues that in appealing to white men, the poem “does not investigate questions of representation . . . [or] challenge the concentration of power in the hands of male authorities, but focuses on persuading them to do good.” Indeed, she maintains, all of Barrett Browning's antislavery poems are limited to a critique of “an entirely abstract conviction regarding the moral evil of such oppression” (279, 281). I disagree with this line of thinking on many levels. First, in respect to issues of representation, we need to reconsider to whom the poem is directed and in what fashion the poem's protagonist directs her voice as well. Second, the question of abstract convictions versus specific critiques must be reconsidered as well,

for the poem, in my view, is as “un-abstract” as an abolitionist poem may be without losing its aesthetic virtues by becoming only voluble and didactic.

In her discussion of Barrett Browning’s invocation of the fallen woman as both sister and muse in “A Curse for a Nation,” Angela Leighton observes, “The political other is the poetic self.”¹⁶ Such could also be said of the political “other”—the female slave—in “The Runaway Slave,” whose voice Barrett Browning appropriates, not to create a “representative,” but to represent a typically silenced voice. To give voice to a female slave woman has its merits for the obvious reasons of humanizing an otherwise relegated group and eliciting pathos for their very human sufferings. But Barrett Browning adds to these merits in choosing the white pilgrim ancestors and their heirs as the speaker’s target. I propose that the combination of black female speaker and white pilgrim “audience” *within* the poem lends itself to a forceful way of influencing the poet’s ultimate audience, her white abolitionist contemporaries, because the monologue enables Barrett Browning to strike at the heart of American hypocrisy. In the poem, the slave laments, “O pilgrims, I have gasped and run / All night long from the whips of one / Who in your names works sin and woe!” (ll. 12-14). Although, in her anger and despair, the female slave curses America in the name of the first white pilgrims (l. 20), it is the pilgrims’ progeny who have sinned against her, not the original pilgrims themselves. Why not, we may ask, curse America in the names of the slavers and the supporters of slavery? Because an attack at the supposed “representation” of human rights and liberty is more effective in its indirect relation, for the attack then suggests that being founded upon benevolent principles does not confirm the sanctity of the nation evermore. The slaveholders and slave supporters devalue the nation’s associations with freedom,

morality, and brotherhood—associations upon which American identity in the antebellum days still depended. In this way, representation becomes absolutely crucial, for, in my reading, an attack on the foundation of antebellum culture becomes an attack on the heart. As Barrett Browning wrote in a letter to Mrs. Martin in December 1860, the death of America's morality "would be sadder than the mere dissolution of States however sad. It is the difference between the death of the soul and of the body" (qtd. in Gould 51).

Despite Barrett Browning's obvious concern for the "morality" of America as a nation, I disagree with the contention that her antislavery poetry is too abstract in its convictions and return again to the poet's representation of a female slave speaker cursing the first white pilgrims in "The Runaway Slave" to clarify my position. That the slave addresses the "first" white settlers is notable since it may seem an unfair scapegoating given the Plymouth migrants did not own slaves and were, themselves, struggling to obtain a certain degree of freedom. One might argue that the slave woman should condemn the slavers only and curse the land in their names instead. However, Barrett Browning's choice of targets helps to underscore a very specific critique leveled at the deep underpinnings of color prejudice because it parallels the iniquity of the first pilgrims being responsible for their ancestor's sins with the iniquity of blacks being scapegoats for white ignorance, fear, and greed. It is no coincidence that the poem's "refrains" consist of the slave's lament, "I am black , I am black" and "we . . . are dark, we are dark" (ll. 22, 36), for the color of the speaker's skin becomes the central cause and focus of her life's woes. She is a slave because she is black; she loses her lover because he is black; she is raped by her white master because she is black; and she kills her child because he is not black. As Leighton avers, "The new moral order is simply one of white

and black, and even the prototypically innocent child cannot escape it” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 40-41). In the stanza that illuminates the senselessness of color prejudice, the slave woman notes that she is a creation of God and that there is beauty and goodness in blackness:

And yet He has made dark things
 To be glad and merry as light:
 There’s a little dark bird sits and sings,
 There’s a dark stream ripples out of sight,
 And the dark frogs chant in the safe morass,
 And the sweetest stars are made to pass
 O’er the face of the darkest night. (ll. 29-35)

The slave’s observations point to the illogic of color prejudice, a mindset that is as unfair as is the desecration of an entire nation and its Puritan settlers because a reasonably angry slave woman chooses as her outlet the debasement of everything in which the “first white pilgrims” found sanctity and truth. As such, “The Runaway Slave,” becomes a very explicit condemnation of an issue many abolitionists refused to or could not address: discrimination against a people based upon differences in skin color. It is a topic few abolitionists broached directly perhaps because they became so fixated upon the ills of slavery that they neglected to look into the shortcomings of their own racial dealings. Barrett Browning’s account of racial prejudice thus addresses an issue that Americans, being too close to the complexities of black and white relations in their own country, did not often discuss frankly or truthfully.

Like “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point,” “A Curse for a Nation” achieves similar effectiveness in disparaging the root of America’s “problem” because it, too, consists of a framing that frees Barrett Browning from the restraints of representation.¹⁷ Although the boldness of the poem is tempered by the fact that the speaker can only fashion a curse under the auspices of being commanded by an angel to “write a nation’s curse . . . / And send it over the western sea” (ll. 3-4),¹⁸ the poem nonetheless seems to feature Barrett Browning’s own voice, a detail that may indicate a more intrepid, authoritative poet.¹⁹ In contrast to the speaker in “The Runaway Slave,” Barrett Browning’s speaker in “A Curse for a Nation” remains constant in her “old Testament” tone (Stone 185) and also in her reiteration of the curse at the end of the poem. While the speaker of “The Runaway Slave” ultimately leaves the white men “all curse-free / In [her] broken heart’s disdain!” (ll. 252-253), Barrett Browning’s arguably more mature antislavery poem repeats the angel’s initial edict:

When fools write taunts on your gate,
 Your scorn ye shall somewhat abate
 As ye look o’er the wall;
 For your conscience, tradition, and name
 Strike back with a deadlier blame
 Than the worst of them all.
 This is the curse—write!

Go! While ill deeds shall be done,
 Plant on your flag in the sun

Besides the ill-doers;
 And shrink from clenching the curse
 Of the witnessing universe,
 With a curse of yours!

This is the curse—write! (ll. 109-122)

Marjorie Stone has noted that the angel in the poem frees the female speaker from “blame” by providing justification for her pronouncing “the sort of curse women were conventionally not permitted to utter” (195). Barrett Browning uses this liberty to write a curse leveled at those same white pilgrim fathers whom the slave woman curses in “The Runaway Slave.”

Although the speaker of “A Curse for a Nation” is far different, the message is similar—that is, it is a warning concerned with legacies, good and bad; it is a raising up of “conscience, tradition, and name” over any present luxuries and/or weaknesses; and finally, it is, in essence, a curse that, if heeded, might salvage a bit of the idealism upon which free nations are founded. In this way, the “curse” takes on manifold effect, depending upon who is reading and/or heeding it, which is why Barrett Browning was able to move it to a volume of poetry on Italian Independence, Poems Before Congress, four years after it was published in the Bell. In 1862, the “high level of generalization in the expression of her views” came to be regarded as an attack on England, since Barrett Browning openly blamed England for its political and social policies in respect to her native land’s objectives in France’s designs on Italy.²⁰ As Stone expresses it,

The range and ingenuity of Barrett Browning’s cursing are indeed remarkable. She is capable of turning the cry of children or the silent

gesture of a statue into a curse. She shows how blessings can function as curses, and how the very act of revoking a curse can have all the force of pronouncing it. (184)

Barrett Browning's versatile poem reveals the tremendous internationalism of political issues. At the same time, for American abolitionists like Chapman seeking to find powerful representations of truth that might promote the antislavery cause, the poem reveals how curses can also function as blessings.

The borders that The Liberty Bell attempts to break through or transcend were often so forbidding that they required persistent agitators like Emerson, Garrison, and Barrett Browning to make use of their own unique artillery, whether their weapons were generalized sentiments of the gift of poetry and human benevolence, the more brusque expressions of moral principles, or the curses of one incited enough to unveil some of the subtler, but nonetheless vicious, problems of America's social climate. Taken as a group, the writings of Emerson, Garrison, and Barrett Browning, lend abolitionist poetry a new strength and work almost as a distinct genre unto itself. That they appear within the bounds of a gift-book imply, as Emerson's translation of "The Poet" suggests, that art is indeed a gift and that the message of that art is a gift as well. The messages of the intercultural poetry published in the Bell have their basis in the concerns of either how people world-wide deal with (or do not deal with) the problem of slavery in a contemporary world or how people world-wide transcend the burden of such evil by finding beauty within themselves, beauty that, through example, would ideally creep into other people's ideas of accepted truths. What remains significant here is that connection occurs at the intersection of the us-them, here-there, and then-now dichotomies that might

normally be accepted as unsurpassable boundaries. Although the poetry and/or the poets may be flawed, their very idiosyncrasies further support the main impulse of their writing—to unite different people for the sake of creating a more dignified, unified world—and reflect the tangled cultural connections between American abolitionists and those who opposed similar iniquities throughout the world.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF THE LIBERTY BELLCreating “a sphere of moral action”

The various chapters and phases of the abolitionist world in which Chapman played a significant part suggest that societal fissures, bureaucratic hurdles, and personal differences are the inevitable offshoots of any political movement. The challenges of the abolitionists also show that disagreements and even permanent splits do not necessarily indicate weakness in a movement and are, in fact, more often a sign of progress. After all, it is against the general tide of mass opinion that progressive thinkers usually fight. For Maria Weston Chapman and the Boston Clique, such resistance was an inevitable part of the unity of spirit that they had to cultivate. In a free marketplace of ideas, as suggested by the precepts of the Bill of Rights, the lively and sometimes acrimonious forum of public opinion becomes the battleground for truth. The Liberty Bell, it can be said, mirrored this battleground, for its creation, content, and sustenance were effected by the good and bad of friction and, ultimately, by the expression of opinion in new and sometimes unsettling ways. As the main force behind The Liberty Bell, Chapman likewise elicited the spirit that her gift-book would come to evoke, and it becomes difficult to see the two (Chapman and her publication) as independent of each other. Just as Chapman’s determination, moral imperative, and business savvy influenced her “project,” so too did her project influence her, giving her a sense of purpose and allowing her to rally antislavery activists in a meaningful way. Perhaps the

Bell “could hardly have made many converts,” as Thompson speculates, but it “may have created a greater zeal on the part of the abolitionists themselves” (163). Such an impact should not be understated or undervalued. Not only did American abolitionists need to pull themselves from the margins to the center of societal acceptance and to form international coalitions that would aid them in their endeavors, but they needed to use their social, political, and educational assets in order to give abolition a dignity that matched the purpose that its proponents sought to uphold.

The literary value of The Liberty Bell helped greatly in fortifying a sense of dignity for the radical abolitionists who contributed to its pages, but its most significant expression comes from Chapman herself, when she articulated in “Russia and the Russians” (The Liberty Bell 1853) how she wished to create “a sphere of moral action higher than that of national policy and founded on the deepest principles of universal and absolute right” (210). Though drawing upon the typically feminine gift-book tradition and though Chapman herself “was not attracted to feminism” as its own discrete movement (Clinton 161), The Liberty Bell nonetheless destabilizes the conventional bipartite of the public and private spheres by forming, in a sense, a third “sphere of moral action” that intersects the two. Neither a radical feminist like Mary Wollstonecraft or Margaret Fuller nor a “nonfeminist” like the then-popular Catharine Beecher and Hannah More, Chapman was more a moderate when it came to the “woman question.”¹ Combined with her radical ideas about abolition, such moderation led Chapman to expand the scope of women’s political work without losing focus on her main objective to facilitate immediate emancipation. Consequently, Chapman’s abolitionist gift-book took the more “private” acts of writing, mourning, sentimentalizing, divulging, and

sharing into more “public” domains, which allowed Chapman to invite larger, more diversified groups to participate in The Liberty Bell’s creation, distribution, enjoyment, and achievement. In turn, the large and diverse list of contributors helped create a more effective sphere of moral action because the variety and innovation of the literary content of the gift-book lent it more universal appeal.

In essence, the literature of the Bell became the vehicle through which Chapman and her contributors were able to spin a web of connection between antislavery supporters and to rethink the societal boundaries that continued to hinder the cause. Through the sentimental tradition, writers such as Lydia Maria Child and Edmund Quincy embraced the good of diversity by offering examples of its benefits to society as represented in fictionalized versions of public and private worlds. As a result, they were in large part responsible for the honing of the sentimental tradition’s being used for political ends that Harriet Beecher Stowe was to perfect even further through the genre of the novel. The elegies of Maria Weston Chapman, William Lloyd Garrison, Anne Warren Weston, and James Russell Lowell were noteworthy as well, bringing the privacy of mourning into a realm that was not only public but that was specifically political as well. As such, the abolitionist elegy was able to use morality as the conjoiner of peoples from different parts of the world and even from different times, thereby contributing to the sense of unity that Chapman sought to create. Although the gift-book’s shortage of African-American contributors reveals some of the problems of the antislavery movement, The Liberty Bell’s black writers, Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown, also added to the “sphere of moral action” in prose that deconstructed the notion of public and private spheres by making public the inherent privacy of “insider”

perspectives even as the contributors preserved an ultimate power through the “black gaze” and through the perception they maintained therein. And finally, the intercultural poetry of Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning revealed that the abolitionist movement and Chapman’s gift-book specifically could withstand criticism and disappointment because the sphere of moral action from which it got its force was self-sustaining and self-regenerating.

By highlighting the different styles and genres of The Liberty Bell in all of the chapters of this study, I hope to have illuminated how difference and variety imparted strength and unity to a literary publication, to the abolitionist community, and to the literary world at large. The problems inherent in engaging the “unified divisions” of the Bell and addressing those divisions in my own chapter breakdowns reflect not only the seeming paradoxes of editing but also the challenges that the Boston abolitionists faced, whether those challenges entailed combating proslavery advocates, antislavery conservatives, or their own prejudices and social differences. Consequently, I hope to leave with the impression not that The Liberty Bell was a compelling and successful abolitionist project because Chapman and her supporters were able to orchestrate its production and effect flawlessly, but that The Liberty Bell was a success despite the many snags it encountered during its publication tenure. Such perseverance in the face of obstacles not only kept the gift-book afloat but marks the same characteristic that allowed abolitionists worldwide to overcome the tremendous opposition of proslavery advocates, whose force was not just ideological but economic and social as well.

Chapman's Later Years

For many years Chapman remained completely devoted to the Boston fairs and to The Liberty Bell. Even when she accompanied her invalid husband Henry Grafton Chapman to Haiti in 1841, she continued to work from afar, overseeing the Bell's editorship and offering new insights from her experiences, as those highlighted in her essay "Haiti" (1842). Before he died, on October 3, 1842, just one year later after returning to the United States, he reportedly told Chapman on his deathbed, "I leave you to the Cause" (qtd. in Clinton 153). Although much aggrieved by her loss, Chapman found solace in her husband's final words, which freed her from some of the guilt she felt about trying to balance family and work. True to his wish, she worked tirelessly from 1842 to 1848, with her sisters helping to care for her children, along with their legal guardian, Wendell Phillips, who was the husband of Chapman's cousin Ann Terry Greene. In 1848, Chapman moved to Europe with her three children, her sister Caroline, her sister-in-law, Mary Chapman, widower of Charles Follen, Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, and her sister Susan Cabot in order "to educate – and marry off – her children, give her unmarried sisters an escape from 'provincial' Boston, and convince European abolitionists of the need to support Garrison and end slavery in America" (Taylor, Women 58). In these endeavors, Chapman was only partially successful. During her time abroad, her daughter Lizzie married Auguste Laugel from Strasbourg, secretary to the exiled royal family. A liberal journalist lecturing at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, Laugel was also an antislavery proponent and, hence, an acceptable match for Chapman's daughter. Years later, her daughter Anne married as well, though Chapman's sisters remained single throughout their lives. Professionally, too, Chapman met with variable

success. She gave some antislavery lectures in England in 1851, “which was unusual for her” (Taylor, Women 81), met a variety of distinguished people, many of whom wrote for The Liberty Bell, and continued to edit and write for the Bell. No issues were published for the years 1850, 1854, and 1855, however, because of time constraints. In addition, the tremendous success of Uncle Tom’s Cabin in 1852 made rallying on behalf of Garrison more difficult because it “inspired and renewed conservative anti-slavery leadership, too strong for Garrisonians to counter” (Taylor, Women 83).

When Chapman returned to the United States in 1855, she retired to her hometown in Weymouth, where she continued her abolitionist activism and work for The Liberty Bell. In 1858, she decided to discontinue the Boston bazaars as well as the publication of the Bell in favor of organizing an antislavery salon, or the “Subscription Anniversary”—“a moral uplift soirée, complete with musicale, speeches, tea and cookies, and conversation to draw the wealthy and relieve them of large sums of money for the cause” (Pease 45). Pease speculates that Chapman got the soirée idea while in Europe and that abandoning the fairs was like abandoning “more conventional women like Mrs. May and Eliza Wigham” in favor of identifying herself and the cause with “leading women litterateurs like Eliza Follen, Harriet Martineau, and Harriet Beecher Stowe” (46). The salon, or soirée, “seems to have been confined to tea-drinking and speech-making” (Thompson fn 157), but it was a monetary success, which proved to Chapman her hunch was correct that The Liberty Bell and antislavery fairs were not the only viable fundraising entities. Indeed, the “Subscription Anniversary” “netted a profit of \$5,700—\$1,200 more than the most lucrative of fairs” (Clinton 157-58). Thus, even though 1858

marked the end of her antislavery gift-book and the Boston fairs, Chapman maintained a steady job in abolitionist activism throughout the duration of the Civil War.

Still a pacifist, Chapman nonetheless came to support the war “as an end to appeasement” (Taylor, Women 111). In letters to her daughters, she tried to reconcile the violence with the ends: “*This* is the way our *victory* is to be won. By constant disaster like iron under the hammer are the US people made what they ought to be. . . . Negroes as citizens will save our institutions. They will vote at the end of the war.”² Chapman, however, did not take any active role in facilitating such ends. Her energy dissipated, and she believed the next generation should and would take over where hers left off. As she declared in a letter to Garrison,

There is no need for me now—I mean in any strenuous absorbing sense—for I draw with the millions the stones of reconstruction though we were alone in the duty of demolition. . . . Quiet hard work now is better than anything else. I cannot be too glad that I had an experience of life, anterior to our anti-slavery life so that I did not get so bent to battle in the days when battle was *sina qua non*, that I am unable to fulfill the duties of victory.³

Even after realigning herself with her family, Chapman never fully recovered from the remorse she felt over having spent so much time crusading for abolitionism and so little time raising her children. She remained close to her sisters, who lived with her in Weymouth from 1862 till her death, but had a falling out with her daughter Lizzie in 1864 because of differences in opinion over Chapman’s disapproval of Wendell Phillips’ “bullying” the government and over her support of Harriet Martineau. As unflinching as

ever, Chapman explained in a letter to Lizzie that she would not write to her daughters anymore, “after learning that you did not want to hear from me as I am – and not made up of a false appearance.”⁴ It would be the one conflict she could never quite resolve.

Maria Weston Chapman died in her hometown, Weymouth, in 1885, at the age of 79. Her impact on the abolitionist and women’s movements, however, did not die with her. Through her philanthropic and fundraising endeavors, she helped sustain vital appendages to the abolitionist cause. In addition, The Liberty Bell lives on—a written testament to the web of connection that united a significant group of people in the cause for American freedom and justice. Chapman was a considerable force in resurrecting the ideals of the nation’s Puritan ancestors, ideals that would not only influence the nation in its final stand against slavery but that would, in later years, be revived again and again in future disputes about what it means to be American and what it means to be free. As James Russell Lowell expressed in his poem “Letter from Boston,” describing the 1846 Boston Anti-Slavery Fair, Chapman was an “expansive force, without a sound, / That whirls a hundred wheels around.”⁵ Indeed, she put the wheels in motion, so to speak, and, once started, they never ceased.

The Bell’s Lasting Resonance

Many people commend Chapman’s devotion to the cause and recognize her role as political agitator. Harriet Martineau, for one, made Chapman a heroine in her 1838 article in Westminster Review, “The Martyr Age of the United States” (Hassett 379). Indeed, in terms of social status, Chapman did evince martyr-like qualities: “[W]e were possessors of great social influence before we were abolitionists,” she commented in

1855. “Now let us use it—for we have never lost it.”⁶ Unafraid of what she might personally lose as a result of being aggressive and disagreeable, Chapman allowed herself to focus on the importance of the issue at hand, on the need to end slavery and thereby redeem America and its ostensible reputation as home of the free. For all of Chapman’s “heroic” acts and accomplishments in the realm of abolitionist reform, she is understandably remembered as an activist, not a writer. Nevertheless, the work she did for The Liberty Bell indicates that she should be received as an author as well.

Throughout her thirty years in abolition, Chapman wrote ten poems, nine essays, and four stories for her gift-book alone, countless letters, Right and Wrong in Massachusetts (1839), an anti-slavery novel, Pindar, a True Tale (1840), and “Memorials” (1877), her 460-page addendum to Harriet Martineau’s autobiography.⁷ Perhaps Chapman never surpassed the title “editor” to become “author” because, in a time when women writers were most known for their novels in the realm of literature, Chapman’s one novel received little attention and today no copies appear to be extant.⁸

Indeed, the political writing that Chapman and her Bell contributors produced for the annual gift-book should help us rethink the aesthetics of both historical and contemporary canons. Given the formidable and inescapable presence of slavery in people’s lives during the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that much of the literature of the time either broaches the topic subtly or makes it the main focus. Contemporary literary studies of abolitionist writing (specifically, those addressing literature that does *not* fall under the genre of the novel) usually attempt to locate in the antislavery literature features of “acceptable” literary conventions and styles of the time. I, too, have attempted to demonstrate how, to cite one example, the abolitionist literature of the Bell

called upon sentimental tropes. However, abolitionist literature's own discrete features have "literary" value too. The moving pathos, the emphatic calls-to-action, the timely allusions, and the harshness of tone form a style unto themselves, and the political agenda behind them need not detract from their ability to compel people to action, to stir their emotions, and to feel what, I believe, all literature is meant to evoke on some level or other—that is, the very real sense that the mind and heart of the human race make us all interconnected to and with each other.

Although The Liberty Bell saw its final volume in 1858 and new, more political and militant forms of action such as John Brown's 1859 raid on Harper's Ferry were beginning to dominate the American scene, the literary forces of the abolitionist movement—like the movement itself and the people it sought to save—gave the antislavery cause lasting symbolic relevance. Through the written word, abolitionists documented literary memorials to the martyrs of their age. Moreover, they made it possible for us today to reconcile the intersection of politics and literature, an intersection difficult to deny during the antebellum years and during any time, in fact, when a nation and its people are struggling. In this light, one might say that The Liberty Bell revolutionized the literary climate of its time simply by reflecting it.

Endnotes

Notes to Chapter 1

¹ I first heard this apt phrase during a keynote speech at the MELUS 2000 Conference in New Orleans.

² This term comes from Blanche Glassman Hersh's study, The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America (Urbana, Chicago & London: U of Illinois P, 1978).

³ Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem "A Curse for a Nation" first appeared in the 1856 edition (Thompson 164), and Lydia Maria Child's "The Quadroons" (1842) and "Slavery's Pleasant Homes, A Faithful Sketch" (1843) likewise made their debut appearance in the Bell.

⁴ Edmund Quincy, qtd. in Clare Taylor, Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement, p. 51.

⁵ Maria Weston Chapman to the editor of the [Boston] Courier, in Right and Wrong in Boston. Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society . . . 1835 (Boston, 1836), p. 24. Quoted in Yellin 1.

⁶ The 1828 volume of The Amulet, for instance, featured a piece entitled "Thoughts on British Colonial Slavery," by the Reverend Daniel Wilson, pp. 291-300.

⁷ The Star of Emancipation was published by the Mary Parker faction of Chapman's rival group, the Massachusetts Female Emancipation Society, after the BFASS split in 1840. The publication enjoyed only one volume, published in 1841.

⁸ The historical information on the Liberty Bell was attained from the Liberty Bell website at <http://www.ushistory.org/libertybell/>.

⁹ For a complete literary analysis of “The Bell-Tower” and slavery, see Carolyn L. Karcher’s “Darkening Shadows of Doom in ‘The Encantadas,’ ‘Benito Cereno,’ and ‘The Bell-Tower.’”

¹⁰ The masthead of the Liberator reads: “[M]an’s country [should be] the world, and his countrymen all mankind, no distinction of race or clime should bar the path of Justice or Freedom.”

¹¹ The anti-slavery fairs usually began around the Christmas holiday. Thompson explains that the 1839 fair was held several months earlier because “a serious disagreement had divided the abolitionists, and Mrs. Chapman’s group held their bazaar in October—apparently with the purpose of stealing a march on their rivals. The others are said to have opened a fair at the regular time in December—and to have failed” (f.n. 156).

Thompson also notes that only the first volume of the Bell is dated with the actual year of publication (1839); the rest “are dated with the year ‘for’ which they were intended.” In total, the Bell missed just four volumes: those prepared “for” the years 1850, 1853, 1854, and 1856. See Thompson, pp. 156-67.

¹² For more on gift-books and the gift-giving tradition, see David Cheal’s The Gift Economy (1988) and Annette B. Weiner’s Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving (1992).

¹³ Over a thousand literary annuals and gift-books were issued by American publishers between 1825 and 1865. Although generally of a popular literary kind, the gift-book tradition was capitalized upon by other groups to promote their causes, too.

Examples include the Masons, the Sons of Temperance, and the Know-Nothing Party. See Thompson, p. 154.

¹⁴ MS. Letter, Anne Warren Weston to Caroline Weston, March 6, 1849; MS. letter to Samuel May, October 24, 1871. See Thompson, p. 158 for more details about costs and expenses.

¹⁵ For more on Chapman's friendships with Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Pease, see Clare Taylor's Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement, pp. 43-54 and pp. 63-68, respectively.

¹⁶ Chapman's open letter directly precedes a letter written by the wife of a Russian noble and friend of freedom, N. Tourgueneff.

¹⁷ Papers of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. The Anti-Slavery Collection, Boston Public Library. All subsequent citations of the Address of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society to the Women of New England (1844?) derive from this source.

¹⁸ The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society "Preamble and Constitution." Boston, April 1834, BPL. Quoted in Hansen, p. 13.

¹⁹ Although the women of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society agreed that their role in the abolition movement was immense, disagreements about their specific "place" in activism eventually led to the 1840 split of the society, with more conservative evangelicals like Mary Parker and the Balls forming the Massachusetts Female Emancipation Society and the upper-class radicals like Chapman and Lydia Maria Child re-establishing the more liberal ideologies of the temporarily diffused Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. See Debra Gold Hansen's detailed account of the "woman

question” as it relates to the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society in Strained Sisterhood: (Amherst: The U of Massachusetts P, 1993).

²⁰ On the general precepts of “separate spheres,” see Barbara Welter’s groundbreaking study, “The Cult of True Womanhood” (1966) and Nancy F. Cott’s The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835 (1977).

Jane Tompkins applies sentimentalism and separate spheres in a re-evaluation of Uncle Tom’s Cabin in her study Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1760-1869 (1985), while Ann Douglas’s The Feminization of American Culture (1988) engages in the cultural study of the relationship between middle-class white women and ministers.

See, too, Linda K. Kerber’s 1988 article, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” which provides an assessment of the rhetoric of “spheres” and of the cultural circumstances from which the rhetoric derived:

The metaphor of the ‘sphere’ was the figure of speech, the trope, on which historians came to rely when they described women’s part in American culture. . . . the relationship between the name—sphere—and the perception of what it named was reciprocal; widespread usage in the nineteenth century directed the choices made by twentieth-century historians about what to study and how to tell the stories they reconstructed.” (Kerber 10-11)

²¹ Jefferson’s Notes on the State of Virginia. Ed. William Peden (New York and London: Norton, 1982), p. 163.

²² In the course of her career, Chapman spoke in an official capacity only once, at the 1838 Women's Anti-Slavery Convention in Philadelphia's Pennsylvania Hall, which was mobbed and burned to the ground (Pease 50). Although she "was lauded as a dynamic speaker" (Clinton 152), she suffered a breakdown on the train returning to Boston and was subsequently hospitalized in Stonington, Connecticut. Chapman recovered quickly, however, and returned to her abolition work soon after. For more on Chapman's illness, see William Lloyd Garrison to George W. Benson, 25 May, 1838, G-BPL; Maria Child to Louisa Loring, 3 June, 1838, L-SL; and Clare Taylor, Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement, p. 30.

²³ Chapman, National Anti-Slavery Standard, March 20, 1845. Qtd. in Hersh, p. 26.

²⁴ The paucity of novels by female African-American slaves is well known, though Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s recent acquisition of Hannah Crafts' 1857 manuscript, "The Bondswoman's Narrative," attests to the possibility that many slaves and African Americans of the nineteenth century may have been writing, though their work was not published. See The New York Times (Sunday, December 9, 2001): A1, A20.

Notes to Chapter 2

¹ Maria Weston Chapman, n.d., 1855, Weston Collection, Boston Public Library (BPL). Quoted in Clinton, p. 150.

² Richard D. Webb to Edmund Quincy, Oct. 27, 1848, W-BPL; Lewis Tappan to Gamaliel Bailey, Oct. 26, 1843, T-LC. Both cited in Pease, p. 29.

³ Whittier is quoted in Lutz, p. 191; Clinton, p. 158; Hersh, p. 11; Abby Kelley to Stephen Foster, March 28, 1843, F-AAS, qtd. in Pease 56; Hansen, p. 98; see, too, Dorothy Bass, “The Best Hopes of the Sexes: The Woman Question in Garrisonian Abolitionism,” Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1980, p. 131.

⁴ Constance W. Hassett notes that there is no modern edition of Chapman’s “Memorials.” See Hassett, fn 3, p. 374.

⁵ Pease, “The Boston Bluestocking,” p. 28; Taylor, Women, pp. xv, 2, 8-16. The six prominent Weston sisters included Maria (b. 1806), Caroline (b. 1808), Anne (b. 1912), Deborah (b. 1814), Lucia (b. 1822), and Emma (b. 1825). Captain Warren Weston married Ann(e?) Bates Weston after his first wife, Nancy, died. With Anne he fathered a son, Hervey Eliphaz. See The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison. Volume II. A House Dividing against Itself. Eds. Walter M. Merrill and Louis Ruchames (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1971), fn. 6, p. 57.

⁶ Clinton, p. 149. Clare Taylor notes that Joshua Bates was the brother of Warren Weston’s second wife, Ann Bates, *not* of his first wife (and mother of the Weston sisters), Nancy Bates. Joshua Bates became the family benefactor and “significantly changed the fortunes of the Westons.” See Taylor, Women, p. 3.

It is worthwhile to note that, at this time, no full-length biography of Maria Weston Chapman exists, leaving scholars to piece together her life through Boston Public Library’s collection of her letters (the Weston Collection) and political writings (the Anti-Slavery Collection) as well as through various biographical and historical studies to which I am indebted. These include Clare Taylor’s Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement (1995), Catherine Clinton’s biographical essay, “Maria Weston Chapman” in

Portraits of American Women (1991), Alma Lutz's Crusade for Freedom (1968), Jane H. and William H. Pease's Bound with Them in Chains (1972), Debra Gold Hansen's Strained Sisterhood (1993), Kathryn Kish Sklar's "'Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation': American and British Women at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, London, 1840" in The Abolitionist Sisterhood (1994), and Blanch Hersh's Slavery of Sex (1978).

⁷ Clinton observes that little is known of Maria and Henry's courtship, as no letters survive from this early period, p. 149.

⁸ Chapman's children included Elizabeth Bates (b. 1831), Henry Grafton II (b. 1833), Anne Grafton (b. 1837), and Gertrude (b. 1840). Gertrude died only a few months after her birth. See Taylor, Women, p. 4.

⁹ For a detailed history of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, see Debra Gold Hansen's invaluable study Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (Amherst: The U of Massachusetts P, 1993).

¹⁰ April 1834. As quoted in Hansen, p. 13.

¹¹ Some of the petitions were distributed by the BFASS numerous times. In total, 16,547 petitions were circulated. See the "List of Petitions that have 'passed through the hands of the committee of the Boston Female A.S.S.'" Ms.A.9.2.4, p. 41 BFASS-BPL.

¹² Only about half of the members, however, were active. See Hansen, pp. 17, 65. See also Sophia E. Thoreau to Maria Weston Chapman, 24 January (1839), BPL.

¹³ As quoted in Hansen, p. 105.

¹⁴ Maria Weston Chapman, Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society; with a Concise Statement of Events, Previous and Subsequent to the Annual Meeting of 1835 (Boston: Published by the Society, 1836), p. 34. As quoted in Hansen, p. 3.

¹⁵ For more on the incident, see Clare Taylor's Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement, p. 24.

¹⁶ Maria Weston Chapman. Right and Wrong in Massachusetts. Boston 1839 (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 37. All subsequent references to this text derive from this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁷ After leaving Channing's church, Chapman turned to Theodore Parker, a Transcendentalist pastor and abolitionist (Taylor, Women 53). Channing did eventually become more political in his sermons, though not in time to save his and Chapman's friendship. See Hansen, Strained, pp. 85-86. Nonetheless, as Lutz observes, Chapman published James Russell Lowell's "Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing" in the 1843 Bell despite "her frequent impatience and disappointment with Dr. Channing," p. 198.

¹⁸ Anne Warren Weston to Deborah Weston, Oct. 22, 1836, BPL. Quoted in Hansen, p. 88.

¹⁹ See Right and Wrong in Massachusetts, 1839, pp. 81-89.

²⁰ I have quoted Chapman's citation of Warwick verbatim, though other sources, such as Editor David Bevington's Fourth Edition of The Complete Works of Shakespeare (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), show minor discrepancies.

²¹ Judith Shipley, Liberator, Extra. As quoted in Hansen, Strained, p. 112.

²² Caroline Weston to Deborah Weston, letter frag. 1839, BPL. See Hansen, Strained, p. 107.

²³ BFASS, "Meeting Minutes," 1837, BPL.

²⁴ Hansen, pp. 104-05. See Garrison, Letters, 2: 408. For more information on nonresistance, see Lewis Perry, Radical Abolitionism, Anarchy, and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1973).

²⁵ For more on the dissolution of the BFASS, see The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison. (1971), fn. 1, pp. 716-17.

²⁶ Kathryn Kish Sklar uses the term “woman’s political culture” to embrace “values associated with women’s participation in the public domain as well as their actual behavior,” pp. 302-303. She defines three levels of activism and is especially interested in the third level in respect to white female activists—that is “group activity with the explicit goal of advancing the rights or interests of women.” I, however, am interested in the less explicitly “feminist” efforts of Chapman, who, though indeed advancing the rights and interests of women, never made it her primary goal.

²⁷ See Chapter 1, fn. 22.

²⁸ BPL A.9.2., v. 13, p. 49; qtd. in Sklar, fn., p. 304.

²⁹ Hansen, p. 124. Hansen’s chapter on “The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society Fair” in Strained Sisterhood was especially helpful for this portion of my study in its minute details about this significant annual event. See pp. 124-38. Also see her essay “The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and the Limits of Gender Politics” in The Abolitionist Sisterhood, pp. 45-65.

³⁰ As quoted in Thompson, pp. 157-58. See Lowell’s “Letter from Boston” in The Writings of James Russell Lowell (Boston and New York, 1896), VII, 306.

³¹ A discrepancy arises in critics' assessment of the location of the fairs. In contrast to Hansen, Alma Lutz states that the "first fairs were held in Faneuil Hall," p. 190.

³² Hansen, Strained, pp. 128-29. See Weston, Report of the Twenty-first Bazaar, p. 32; and Margaret Fuller to Mother, 24 December 1841, in Margaret Fuller, The Letters of Margaret Fuller, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1983), 2:261.

³³ Hansen, Strained Sisterhood, p. 129-30. See Maria Weston Chapman in the Liberator, 18 October 1839.

³⁴ Hansen, Strained Sisterhood, p. 138; see Benjamin Quarles, "Sources of Abolitionist Income," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 32 (June 1945): 74.

³⁵ Caleb Bingham, 1757-1817, was also the author of "The Columbian Orator," which first inspired Frederick Douglass to learn about the abolitionists and to gain literacy. See Douglass's Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave. 1845. Edited by Houston A. Baker, Jr. (New York: Penguin, 1982), p. 83.

³⁶ Some of the ten presidents did not even serve the full term. The "one-term" presidents include: Martin Van Buren (1837-1841); William H. Harrison (1841); John Tyler (1841-1845); James Polk (1845-1849); Zachary Taylor (1849-1850); Millard Fillmore (1850-1853); Franklin Pierce (1853-1857); James Buchanan (1857-1861); Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865); and Andrew Johnson (1865-1869).

³⁷ Mary Louise Kete, Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2000), p. 181.

³⁸ Thompson uses the example of the 1849 Bell, which appeared at the fair in four different coverings, one of white silk, p. 160. See MS. letter, G. W. Briggs to A. W. Weston, December 20, 1848.

³⁹ As quoted in MWC, Right and Wrong in Massachusetts, p. 72.

⁴⁰ Chapman, The Liberty Bell (1853), p. 210.

⁴¹ Chapman, The Liberty Bell (1847), p. 296.

⁴² Why Chapman's 1856 critique of Webster appears four years after his death is unknown, but it is quite possible that her concern with the position of other politicians coupled with her growing skepticism of the government and of law in general may have prompted Chapman to draw from her old enemy's example.

⁴³ Clare Taylor observes that European society was quite liberal at mid-century. See Women, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Tracing the changes in the gift-book's editorship is difficult to do since no editors' names appear on any of the title pages. See Thompson, p. 157.

⁴⁵ See The Liberty Bell (1843), p. 48.

⁴⁶ According to the BPL Index of The Liberty Bell, Anne Warren Weston sent the statuette and an accompanying Liberty Bell to Stowe along with an appeal for Stowe's participation. Stowe, however, "returned a pleasant, but lukewarm letter, thereby shunning the Garrison-Chapman overture to join their ranks. Miss Weston was infuriated!" See Rare Books Department, BPL, Index, p. 13.

Notes to Chapter 3

¹ Mary Louise Kete reformulates a similar theory of mourning in sentimental poetry of the nineteenth century by drawing upon Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The Poet." Kete notes that "the distinguishing function of the poetics of sentimentality is the same as that claimed by Emerson for the poet: to reattach symbolic connections that have been severed by the contingencies of human existence" (6).

² Papers of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. The Anti-Slavery Collection, Boston Public Library. All subsequent citations of the Address of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society to the Women of New England (1844?) derive from this source. For a fuller analysis of this landmark document, see my Introduction.

³ Shaw, p. 47; see Michel Foucault's The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (NY: Vintage 1973), p. 25.

⁴ Qtd. in Hawkins, p. 49.

⁵ The violence of antiabolitionists was severe and included such incidents as the 1835 attack on Garrison by an angry mob in Boston and the 1838 burning of Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia, where the second national antislavery convention was held. Moreover, as the Civil War drew near, this violence was followed by mob conflict over the return of fugitive slaves to the South, the return of Anthony Burns, and the stalking of the Crafts, to name a few examples. See Yellin and Van Horne, p. 8, and Carolyn Williams, pp. 159-77.

⁶ See Harper's "A Mother's Heroism" and Frances Smith Foster's subsequent notation in A Brighter Coming Day, p. 71. A full discussion of Harper's abolitionist writing and exclusion from The Liberty Bell appears in Chapter 5 of my study, "Black

Gaze/White Gaze: Racial Implications in the Antislavery Writings of Maria Weston Chapman, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Frances E. W. Harper.”

⁷ I disagree here with Eric Smith, who says that when the apotheosis of the beloved is “the final triumphant expression, human life is liable to be diminished,” p. 2. On the contrary, abolitionists used such strategies to enhance human life by the implicit suggestion that their lives have eternal value and purpose even if ungraspable in many ways.

⁸ Mellor and Matlak, pp. 126-27. Anne K. Mellor’s Romanticism and Gender, 1993, offers an unprecedented overview of Romanticism with a special focus on feminine Romanticism and the consequent distinctions between male and female conceptions of the sublime and the beautiful and of art and nature. See also Anne K. Mellor, English Romantic Irony, 1980.

⁹ Qtd in Wagenknecht, fn 43, p. 249.

¹⁰ Kete, p. 22. Here Kete draws upon the argument of Martha Pike and Janice Armstrong in the introduction to their collection of essays A Time to Mourn: Expressions of Grief in Nineteenth-Century America (NY: Museums at Stony Brook 1980).

¹¹ James Cropper was instrumental in the abolitionists’ indictment of the American Colonization Society. Before Garrison left London during his 1833 visit, Cropper and Zachary Macauley gave him a letter that protested the ACS’s principles and “denounced both its roots in prejudice and its unchristian widening of the breach between the races” (Mayer 164). The letter included the signatures of some of England’s most

influential British abolitionists, including Wilberforce's, and was given to Garrison as a farewell gift.

Notes to Chapter 4

¹ Karcher, from her Introduction to Hobomok, p. xxxiii. See also Karcher's essay "Lydia Maria Child's A Romance of the Republic: An Abolitionist Vision of America's Racial Identity."

² For more on "romantic racialism" (the exoticization or romanticization of the black race), see Chapter Four of George M. Frederickson's The Black Image in the White Mind (New York, 1971).

³ While many other scholars have written on sentimentalism and women's writing, I choose Dobson's article "Reclaiming Sentimental Literature" as a cornerstone of my own analyses because of the way she accommodates more "formal" ways of looking at sentimental literature. For more of the defining attributes of the sentimental genre, see Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977); Jane Tompkins, Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860 (New York: Oxford UP, 1985); and Mary Louise Kete, Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2000).

⁴ Wheatley's poem was first published in the Pennsylvania Magazine when Thomas Paine was editor. My reference to it comes from The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Third Edition, Volume 1 (New York and London: Norton, 1989), pp. 735-36.

⁵ The Oasis was published only once, in 1834. In The First Woman of the Republic, Karcher states that The Liberty Bell was modeled on The Oasis and became “the fund-raising abolitionist literary annual Child had hoped to launch. . . . Child had simply made the mistake of trying to publish and market The Oasis through commercial channels,” p. 209. For more on Child and The Oasis, see Thompson, pp. 165-66.

⁶ Seven of the ten pieces that Child contributed to the Bell, appeared in the 1839, 1841, 1842, and 1843 volumes. She did not contribute again until 1856, after a rift that grew between her and Chapman subsided. Child’s main gripe with Chapman was the pressure the latter placed upon Child to support, in writing, the Boston Anti-Slavery Society during the organization’s 1843 disputes with the New York abolitionists. In a letter to Ellis Gray Loring, dated March 6, 1843, Child explains her feeling of alienation from the Boston abolitionists: “It is the bad *spirit* which I see everywhere manifested, and the increasing tendency to *co-erce* individual freedom.” Edmund Quincy’s public attack upon Arthur Tappan, “made it manifest [to Child] that we care too much for our own particular *organization*.” Child, qtd. in Meltzer and Holland, pp. 194, 193.

⁷ The Collected Correspondence of Lydia Maria Child, 1817-1880, ed. Patricia G. Holland, Milton Meltzer, and Francine Karsno (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Microform, 1980), 12/292. Quoted in Karcher, “Lydia Maria Child’s A Romance of the Republic,” p. 84.

⁸ In her 1994 cultural biography of Child, Carolyn Karcher says that Child’s early works for the Bell—“The Black Saxons,” “The Quadroons,” and Slavery’s Pleasant Homes”—“speak for ‘others,’” pp. 329-30.

⁹ The First Woman of the Republic, p. 389.

¹⁰ Although Frederick Douglass's biographer William S. McFeely characterizes Quincy as one who made jokes about black people in order to "relate to" Northern whites who "were often less cognizant of their black neighbors in the North than of the distant existence of black slaves in the South, and who usually failed to see the connection between the two" (84), Quincy's fiction reveals, ideologically, a rather liberal view of both race and gender differences, a view that not only argues against slavery but also against the roots of racism as well. Quincy biographer Robert V. Sparks would most certainly dispute McFeely's claim, as, Sparks notes, Quincy "immediately had [Douglass] advanced to the position of official lecturer for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society" upon meeting the new abolitionist, p. 109. Moreover, years later, Douglass wrote in his 1881 The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, "I have known other good men to flinch when the color test was applied . . . but Edmund Quincy never flinched," pp. 109-41; quoted in Sparks, p. 109. Thus, there seems to be a discrepancy between the "supposedly genteel Edmund Quincy, who was fond of telling racist jokes" (McFeely 94) and the abolitionist whose antislavery writing and relationship with Douglass subvert the type of prejudice that he purportedly elicited.

¹¹ See Merrill and Ruchames, p. xxviii.

¹² See Robert Vincent Sparks' dissertation, Abolition in Silver Slippers: A Biography of Edmund Quincy. Sparks cites one other biography, an unpublished manuscript called "Edmund Quincy: Aristocrat Abolitionist," written by Robert Tolf at the University of Rochester in the early 1950s. He remarks, however, that Tolf's, though sensitive, biography is nonetheless mired in the "simplistic and stereotyped portrayal of abolitionists as disoriented persons in search of recognition and status" (Sparks iii).

¹³ I am thinking specifically of Hemans' play The Siege of Valencia, though some of her other sentimental works, including her poetry, are not limited by either sentimental tropes or settings.

¹⁴ The eroticization of blacks in antebellum antislavery writing is predated by similar erotic representations of the black male body. As John Saillant observes, "Th[e] sentimentalized 'poor Negro,' on American soil, became an eroticized 'friend,' echoing homoeroticism of classical martial virtue as well as gesturing toward nineteenth-century blackface and its interracial homoerotics," p. 89.

Notes to Chapter 5

¹ Quoted in Sidonie Smith, p. 77.

¹ Autographs for Freedom, created by Frederick Douglass's friend and assistant Julia Griffiths, had two issues (Boston, John P. Jewett and Company, 1853; Auburn, Alden, Beardsley, and Company, 1854). Its title mirrors its content: celebrities contributed antislavery comments, which were followed by facsimiles of their autographs. See McFeely, p. 173 and Thompson, pp. 167-68.

² For more on Douglass's independence from Garrison, see William S. McFeely, Frederick Douglass (New York: Norton, 1991); Eric Sundquist, To Wake the Nations: Race and the Making of American Literature (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1993); T. Gregory Garvey, "Frederick Douglass's Change of Opinion on the U.S. Constitution: Abolitionism and the 'Elements of Moral Power,'" ATQ 9.3 (1995): 229-43; and Gregg D. Crane, "Douglass's Natural Rights Constitution," in Approaches to Teaching the

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, ed. James C. Hall (New York: MLA, 1999): 73-80.

³ In a provocative study on scopophilia (pleasure in looking) and on the male and female gaze in cinema, Laura Mulvey explains why and how women are “still caught within the language of the patriarchy.” As perpetuated by certain standards of film, woman, Mulvey contends, “stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning” (15). Analogously, much of what Mulvey says about women’s status in cinema holds true for African American slaves in their implicit relation to their masters and, as the case may be, to their white antislavery colleagues.

Michel Foucault’s Discipline and Punish, an account of the use and means of power in penal systems, schools, hospitals, and military camps, attests to the power of the gaze in its analysis of surveillance as a means of coercion. He maintains, “In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be the seen. Their visibility assures the hold of power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (Foucault 187).

Indeed, in antebellum culture whites often used the gaze as subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—means of gaining control over blacks, whether they be enslaved or free. As psychologists Michael Argyle and Mark Cook point out, the gaze often functions as a sign of dominance, and “feeling observed [is] a function of a role (e.g. being interviewed), being younger, being female. . . .” (92-93; 85), or being a slave.

Further, in an ideal military camp, like on an “ideal” plantation, “[E]ach gaze would form a part of the overall functioning of power[,]” and “[t]he perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly” (Foucault 171, 173).

⁴ For an analysis of the colonial trope that compares immigrants and colonized peoples to children, see Ann Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s “History of Sexuality” and the Colonial Order of Things (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1995), 137-64; and Karen Sánchez-Eppler, “Raising Empires like Children: Race, Nation, and Religious Education,” American Literary History 8 (Fall 1996): 399-425.

⁵ For some of the more recent views on the ways in which the American landscape and peoples have been conceived and represented historically and in literature, see Anne Kolodny, Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1975) and The Land before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860 (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984); Roy Harvey Pearce, Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988); Frederick Jackson Turner, Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit against the Wilderness (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990); Vera Norwood, Made from This Earth: American Women and Nature (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1993); and Rachel Stein, Shifting the Ground: American Women Writers’ Revisions of Nature, Gender, and Race, (Charlottesville and London: UP of Virginia, 1997).

⁶ MWC, n.d., 1852, BPL, as qtd. in Clinton, p. 150.

⁷ For more on this controversy, see McFeely, pp. 107-08, and Jane H. and William H. Pease's They Who Would Be Free, pp. 75-76.

⁸ Maria Weston Chapman to Sydney H. Gay, August 22, 1843, G-CU. Quoted in Pease and Pease, They Who Would be Free, p. 76.

⁹ MWC to Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1845, Stowe Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliff College. As quoted in Clinton, p. 156.

¹⁰ Jane Jennings to MWC, November 26, 1846?, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library. See also McFeely, pp. 119-20; 126.

¹¹ Elizabeth (Pease) Nicholson to MWC?, April 12, 1847, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

¹² See Pease and Pease, They Who Would Be Free, p. 78.

¹³ Richard D. Webb to MWC, qtd. in McFeely, pp. 121-22.

¹⁴ For more on Douglass and Griffiths, see Maria Deidrich's Love across Color Lines.

¹⁵ Chapman, n.d., 1855, Weston Collection, BPL. Quoted in Clinton, p. 157.

¹⁶ William Nell, qtd. in McFeely, p. 176

¹⁷ See the BPL Index to The Liberty Bell, p. 21.

¹⁸ My use of the words "taking" and "taking back" is an adaptation of bell hooks' concept of "talking back," which she uses in discussing how the oppressed re-appropriate language when they move from object to subject. See her Talking Back (Boston: South End Press, 1989).

¹⁹ Douglass, qtd. in John W. Blassingame, p. 362.

²⁰ From BPL Index of The Liberty Bell, p. 21.

²¹ Douglass, Frederick, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave. 1845 (New York: Penguin, 1982). All citations of Douglass's autobiography are derived from this source.

²² For more on the "juridical metaphor" in Stowe, Douglass, and Jacobs, see Jeannine Marie Delombard's "'Eye-Witness to the Cruelty': Literary Abolitionism and the Antebellum Culture of Testimony." Diss. U of Pennsylvania, 1998. DAI 59-07A: 2499.

²³ William Wells Brown, A Description of William Wells Brown's Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave . . . (London, 1849). For excerpts, see C. Peter Ripley, ed. Witness for Freedom: African American Voices on Race, Slavery, and Emancipation (Chapel Hill and London: U of North Carolina P, 1993), pp. 74-78.

²⁴ Jane Tompkins' ground-breaking study, Sensational Designs, explores the role of tears and sentimentality in Stowe's novel.

²⁵ This observation comes from an email conversation, dated November 2, 2001, forwarded to me by a colleague, in which Foster states, "I have no information about whether they met – not unlikely though, given that Harper met most active abolitionists – I suspect the information would have to come from Chapman's notes since Harper's papers (apparently) have all been destroyed (lost/strayed/ stolen?)."

²⁶ From Still's The Underground Rail Road (1871), p. 783; qtd. in Frances Smith Foster, ed. A Brighter Coming Day, p. 5.

²⁷ A detail all the more ironic because Chapman "gave her unfailing support to black abolitionist Charles Remond" (Clinton 165).

²⁸ Harper, qtd. in Foster's A Brighter Coming Day, p. 71. All subsequent citations of Harper derive from this source.

Notes to Chapter 6

¹ See Clare Taylor, Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement, pp. 72-73.

¹ So successful was the British abolitionist movement, and, in particular, Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce's parliamentary campaign, that in 1807 England officially banned the slave trade, in 1808 America followed suit, and in 1833 Parliament passed the Emancipation Bill in England.

² Based upon an 1819 incident in which a contagious disease broke out upon the French slave ship Le Rodeur, "The Slave-Ships" fictionalizes the atrocity of thirty-six of the slaves, having become blind by the disease, being thrown overboard. According to a speech by M. Benjamin Constant in the French Chamber of Deputies, given on June 17, 1820, Le Rodeur sailed from Bonny, Africa in April 1819 with twenty-two slavers and one hundred and sixty slaves. The disease which broke out caused blindness and was so contagious that the "poor wretches, locking themselves in each other's arms, leaped overboard, in the hope . . . of being swiftly transported to their own homes in Africa." The captain punished such action by hanging or shooting any unsuccessful escapees. Further, "to save the expense of supporting slaves rendered unsalable [sic], . . . thirty-six of the negroes, having become blind, were thrown into the sea and drowned!" Many of the crew also lost their vision, but the cruelty of throwing the blind overboard was reserved for the slaves alone. See Whittier, p. 403.

³ See Mellor and Matlock, p. 54.

⁴ For years critics have argued that Emerson's antislavery activism was negligible. George Kateb, Stephen Whicher, and John Carlos Rowe, like many of Emerson's early biographers, find "Emersonianism" to be "incompatible with social activism" (Stryck 140). In contrast, recent critics such as Michael Stryck and Len Gougeon maintain that Emerson's activism was "an *extension* of self-reliance" (Stryck 141). Their work presents Emerson as "very much a 'connected critic' of American society" (Gougeon 171). I agree with Amy Earhart, however, who argues that Gougeon and others "[tend] to overstate Emerson's position, especially by portraying Emerson as resolving with his 1844 address all reservations regarding participation in active reform" (287). Like Earhart, I believe that the address "is not a signal of [Emerson's] full acceptance of active reform" (287). Nevertheless, the purpose of my study is not to place Emerson within (or without) a movement so much as to show his effect upon it.

⁵ Emerson quoted in Stryck, pp. 149-50.

⁶ Chapman in introduction to Essays: Second Series [*CW* 3:xxv]; qtd in Gougeon, "Emerson's Abolition Conversion," p. 176.

⁷ Emerson, in fact, translated approximately seven hundred lines of Persian poetry (Yohannan, "Emerson's Translations. . ." 405). For more on Emerson's interest in Eastern culture, see Frederic Carpenter's Emerson and Asia and Emerson Handbook as well as the essays of J. D. Yohannan, which chart the Persian phase of Emerson's interest in Orientalism and how it influenced Emerson's way of thinking.

⁸ Emerson, from The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. IV:52. Editor Edward W. Emerson (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904); qtd. in Al-Da'mi, p. 10.

⁹ For more on the struggle between Austria and Hungary, see John H. Komlos's Louis Kossuth in America, 1851-1852 (Buffalo, 1973) and Donald S. Spencer's Louis Kossuth and Young America (Columbia, 1977).

¹⁰ Qtd. in Gould, p. 9.

¹¹ Qtd. in the Index to The Liberty Bell. Rare Books Department. Boston Public Library, p. 8.

¹² Sarah Brophy posits "that existing commentary on the poem ['The Runaway Slave'] . . . may grant Barrett Browning too much in suggesting that the poem formulates a critique corresponding to twentieth-century feminist analyses of racist and sexist oppression" (280). For those critiques of Barrett Browning's poem that would categorize it as radically feminist, see Zonana, Leighton, Battles, Parry, and Armstrong.

¹³ See Joseph Bistrow's discussion of Barrett Browning's 1844 poem "L. E. L.'s Last Question," p. 5.

¹⁴ Barrett Browning to Mary Russell Mitford, 20 January, 1842. Quoted in Garrett, p. 15.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point," The Liberty Bell, 1848, pp. 29-44. All subsequent citations of the poem derive from this source.

¹⁶ See Leighton's essay, "'Because men made the laws': The Fallen Woman and Woman Poet," p. 242.

¹⁷ Barrett Browning is freed from the restraints of representation, at least, in the world of the poem. As Tricia Lootens has observed, "A Curse for a Nation" was "once

notorious”; critics and contemporaries of Barrett Browning called the volume “uncharacteristic” and an “aberration” of her usual fare, pp.127-128.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “A Curse for a Nation,” The Liberty Bell, 1856, pp. 1-9. All subsequent citations of the poem derive from this source.

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of the speaker’s voice in “A Curse of a Nation,” see Marjorie Stone’s “Cursing As One of the Fine Arts,” especially pp. 185 and 192.

²⁰ Arinshtein, p. 34. Leonid M. Arinshtein’s article, “‘A Curse for a Nation’: A Controversial Episode in Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s Political Poetry” (1969) articulates well the complex readings and contexts that Barrett Browning’s poem occasioned. See also Sandra Donaldson’s “‘For Nothing Was Simply One Thing’: The Reception of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s ‘A Curse for a Nation’” (1993).

Notes to Chapter 7

¹ For more on the “cult of influence” and Chapman’s participation in feminist concerns, see Catherine Clinton, pp. 161-63. See also my own discussions of Chapman’s brand of feminism in the Introduction and in Chapter 2 of this study.

² Weston Papers, vol. 31, no. 65, June 1863; qtd. in Taylor, Women, p. 114.

³ Chapman, n.d., 1863, William Lloyd Garrison Collection, Boston Public Library. Qtd. in Clinton, p. 159.

⁴ Weston Papers, vol. 38, no. 8, 1864; qtd. in Taylor, Women, p. 115.

⁵ Quoted in Lutz, p. 191. See “G,” “In Memoriam, Maria Weston Chapman,” Woman’s Journal, July 18, 1885, and Pease, p. 28.

⁶ MWC, n.d., 1855, Weston Collection, Boston Public Library. Qtd. in Clinton, p. 150.

⁷ For more on Chapman's relationship with Harriet Martineau and the biography she wrote of her friend, see Constance W. Hassett's article, "Siblings and Antislavery: The Literary and Political Relations of Harriet Martineau, James Martineau, and Maria Weston Chapman." Signs (Winter 1996): 374-409.

⁸ See Clare Taylor, Women, p. 91.

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