CHAPTER 1

From sentimental sympathy to activist self-judgment

Defining sympathy

When immediate abolitionists started fighting against slavery in the 1820s, sympathy was regarded as a "natural" human practice, but scholars debated its nature. Physiologists and pathologists regarded sympathy as an involuntary correspondence among body parts or people, a communications system hardwired into human bodies. For them and for the abolitionists who read their work, sympathy meant "a relation between two bodily organs or parts (or between two persons) such that disorder, or any condition, of the one induces a corresponding condition in the other."[1] Neurologist Thomas Willis (1621–1675) had explained this phenomenon within individual bodies as early as 1664, in *Cerebri anatome*: according to him, a "sympathetic trunk" provided the core of each human body, with its roots in the brain and its tendrils sent into every nook and cranny of the body through a massive nerve-distribution system. This sympathetic trunk provided a means of communication or "sympathy of the parts," without necessarily involving the brain or consciousness at all. As late as 1836, physicians still spoke of "the powerful sympathy that exists between [the stomach] and other organs" and referred to the "sympathy" between the digestive organs and the skin.

By the early nineteenth century, however, this physiological notion of sympathetic correspondences had drifted from the internal bodily sphere into the interpersonal sphere. Individuals were understood to be "similarly or correspondingly affected by the same influence," or prone to "affect or influence one another." Many abolitionists, then, viewed the performance of "fellow feeling," wherein one person was "affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other," as an involuntary aspect of being human. Most argued that sympathy produces only "*corresponding*" emotions, rather than a "*conformity* of feelings, inclinations, or temperament."

Distinguishing among these competing nineteenth-century ideas about sympathy, especially as they circulated within specific performance settings, is crucial. So is refusing to elide nineteenth-century sympathy with empathy or the present-day idea of sympathy as "being thus affected by the suffering or sorrow of another": for nineteenth-century practitioners of sympathy, pain was not necessarily a prerequisite.

Although early nineteenth-century female abolitionists regarded each other as engaged in disparate types of performances of sympathy, contemporary scholarship on them routinely collapses or erases these contradictory experiences and viewpoints. This is particularly true of black women's performances of sympathy with the slave, because oftentimes early abolitionists are implicitly or explicitly figured as white. This chapter illuminates sympathetic abolitionist performances by differentiating among varied performances of sympathy, by distinguishing sympathy from empathy, and by historicizing specific, dialogic performances between black and white Garrisonian women as well as debates among black activists.

Lauren Wispe and Marjorie Garber have usefully offered brief histories of empathy, but without an interest in examining its roots in sympathy or discovering the ways in which sympathy haunts or might productively critique empathy and inter-subjectivity.[2] Susan Leigh Foster has published an illuminating critique of sympathy and empathy as they anchor colonial expansion and alter notions of kinesthesia in the world of dance. But performance practices can be put to various, contradictory, and competing ends, and a number of women within Garrison's wing of the anti-slavery movement deployed sympathy *against* the colonialist impulses it was meant to anchor.

As they gathered in homes, churches, and town halls to form literary and anti-slavery societies, these women rehearsed activist "conversations," engaged in abolitionist "dialogues," recited poems, gave speeches, and shared narratives. As they performed, they altered public sentiment, drew followers to the cause, collected signatures for anti-slavery petitions, disseminated testimonies to legislators, and attacked religious and political institutions. They calibrated their performance strategies as they practiced their conversations and dialogues and as they learned from predecessors like Frances Wright, whose anti-slavery scheme, grounded in the mathematical calculations of capitalism, failed quite publically in the late 1820s. Black and white Garrisonian women learned from each other, too, debating how to take advantage of and transform the mainstream practice of sympathy into the more efficacious performance of "metempsychosis" – a practice rooted in collective dedication to self-judgment and practical action rather than individual evangelical Christian suffering and redemption. Drawing on the liberal traditions of Quakerism and Unitarianism as well as the East Indian notions of transmigration or "metempsychosis" which surfaced in critiques of British imperialism, Elizabeth Chandler and Sarah Forten publically debated and refined one another's approaches to performing anti-slavery through an exchange of poetry that was recited in abolitionist homes across the Northeast and Midwest in the early 1830s.

These women revised the sympathetic practice outlined in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Smith followed fellow scholars Frances Hutcheson (1694–1746) and David Hume (1711–1776) in focusing on sympathy, reason, imagination, and spectatorship as the keys to ethical action. These men all considered themselves empiricists: they rejected the idea that morality could be defined from a transcendent position. In fact, their contemporaries attacked them for their relativity, because they refused to establish universal rules for ethical behavior and focused instead on the embodied processes of everyday life, the relationships among participants within a set of given circumstances.[3]

Modeling their understanding of sympathy on the involuntary "sympathetic trunk" that united body parts within the human body, Smith and his contemporaries viewed sympathy as the primary link among humans. Initially, they argued that sympathy was God-given: Francis Hutcheson, under whose guidance Adam Smith studied at the University of Glasgow, transferred the neurological idea of a sympathetic trunk into the sphere of the soul, contending that humans had a "sympathetick sense" in their souls that caused a "contagious" sympathy and naturally proved God's goodness.[4] This idea of the "contagion" of sympathy, if not its God-given status, lasted into the mid-nineteenth century – and traces of this idea still surface.

Intriguingly, the periperformative "contagion," this outcropping from sympathy, suggests the anxiety that the elite associated with sympathetic practice: sympathy could quickly spread throughout a community, endangering the status quo instead of achieving its initial intent to place groups of people in hierarchical relation to one another. Alexander Gerard (1728–1795) argued that sensibility moved a reader to feel "as by infection" the passions of a literary work: embodied performance was particularly combustible. Hume agreed that moral actions were "more properly felt than judg'd of," and thought "a mutual dependence on, and connexion with each other" led individuals to respond sympathetically to one other. This sympathetic response, in turn, precipitated "a reciprocal relation of cause and effect in all [our] actions." Strikingly, this term "reciprocal" surfaces early and often within abolitionist coverage of interracial efforts: for instance, when the black and white women of the free produce societies in Philadelphia began to visit back and forth in 1830 and 1831, "reciprocal good feeling" emerged.[5] This was not the "infectious" emotion of hysterical or contagious women, but the shared sense of usefulness among activists dedicated to a common goal. This was a radical "contagion" that threatened the state.

Enlightenment scholars posited that three interlocking qualities – sympathy, a love of oneself, and reason – enabled humans to "act suitably" in relationships with others. Present-day scholars often focus on only the first of these three practices within abolitionism, but to immediate abolitionists who performed resistance to state violence, they were interlocked and of equal importance. For them, sympathy was a public action with the potential to cause a "conjunction of Interest" and right an imbalance in a given community.[6] Furthermore, sympathy, in their view, led individuals to act reasonably, to redress grievances. Like Hutcheson, they viewed humans as happy only if they responded in sympathy to one another, and only if they felt independently of their own self-interest, desiring both the general good and their own happiness.[7] Another philosopher, Edmund Burke (1729/30–1797), viewed sympathy as a God-given, involuntary passion that united humans, but Garrisonians differed from Burke on many crucial issues: they did not embrace his notion that humans take pleasure in others' pain or his idea that contemplating the painful effects of "blackness" led to the sublime. Contemporary scholar Marcus Wood has usefully critiqued the silent white consumers of sentimental British literature, excited to "sublime" terror through their imaginings of slaves' pain: their voyeuristic excitement substitutes for a genuine political engagement. Garrisonian women ridiculed such consumers of sentiment and tied their sympathetic practice to economic and political acts.

They were more interested in Burke's telling corollary: the idea that people want to bear witness only to suffering that they want to redress. Increasing the desire for redress was the key goal for these women. It was not enough to enter anti-slavery circles with a desire for "transient excitement, or for a display of benevolent feeling, or the indulgence of an amiable humanity," but required an "exertion" to remedy the situation, despite the impossibility of "avoiding a participation in guilt." Elizabeth Chandler's 1829 essay "Indifference" reveals how American activists faced a different challenge than their British counterparts, whose reading public devoured romantic representations of the slave in Wood's account: audiences in the United States did not want to think about slaves at all. Chandler recounts, with astonishment, that after she tells neighbors and friends "harrowing" stories of the wrongs against free blacks and the sufferings of slaves, they "turn coldly away and answer, 'All this may be very true – but why do you tell it to us? The fault is not ours, nor the remedy in our power.'" And yet, Chandler continues, these auditors view slavery as "criminal" and wish for its abolition. The problem was that their desire for redress was insufficient to overcome their sense of indifference or helplessness.[8]

Metempsychosis, which involved self-judgment, was designed to intensify and activate that desire for redress through daily abolitionist engagement: initially through "conversation, not only in your stated meetings for its discussion, but while you are engaged in your daily occupations, or when you have gathered into a friendly circle around the evening hearth." When Chandler's listeners asked what more they could do than offer best wishes to abolitionists, she pressed them: "You can do a great deal more – you can give it your *active exertions* – and you must do so . . . form yourselves into societies . . . *prevail upon your friends to do likewise* . . . let the general attention be but thoroughly excited, let men be forced into the necessity of acting, and efficient remedial measures will soon be devised and adopted." It was woman's duty to respond sympathetically to the slave because that was the means of activating public sentiment for redress. Sympathy without action was unacceptable.[9]

To be fully human, Enlightenment theorists contended, was to be able to suffer. Suffering and sympathizing with one another, however imperfectly and with restraint, created community. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), in *An Introduction to the Principles* of 1789, cast sympathy as a "bias to feel for individuals, subordinated groups, nations, humankind, creatures in general." This "natural" sensibility for the downtrodden was tied to a desire to redress injustices. As Wood, Foster, and others have demonstrated, Bentham justified racial, gender, and class exclusions: in fact, he listed thirty-two different levels of sensibility or intensities of feeling, concluding that elite northern European men "naturally" possessed more of this precious commodity. He believed that a person's "race or lineage" affected his ability to feel as well as his "moral, religious, sympathetic, and antipathetic biases": this necessitated a strong government to order citizens' sensibilities.[10] His cartography of sensibility posits that the slave and Native American cannot feel as their "natural" superiors can, thereby justifying the colonizing projects of the British Empire.

And yet, in his footnotes, Bentham did break new ground in the thorny terrain of human rights discourse. He pointed to the French, who, through Louis XIV's *code noir*, embraced the idea that "the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor."[11] This staked a claim – a puny claim, but an important one – for the bodily integrity of the enslaved. Building upon this idea of the "humane" treatment of slaves, Bentham also lobbied for animal rights. He justified rights for animals by arguing that an ability to suffer, rather than to reason or speak, should be the barometer of how one sentient being treats another.

To be ethical, for Bentham, meant to treat sentient beings – that is, beings like oneself, that suffer – with restraint. In attempting to prove both slaves' and animals' rights, he asked, "The question is not, Can they *reason*? Nor, Can they *talk*? But, Can they *suffer*?" Acknowledging fully the deeply problematic nature of this specific move – the way it likens slaves to animals, leads to testimonial demonstrations of torment, and fails to recognize the violence embedded in the law – one can simultaneously note its efficacy in spurring protections against bodily harm.[12]

Despite ranking all human beings into various categories of sensibility, then, Bentham established the grounds on which bodily integrity would be argued in the courts, and he also linked anti-slavery, animal rights, and (implicitly Christian) suffering with Hinduism in ways that permeated female abolitionists' performances. He noted that Hinduism, unlike Christianity, fostered the ethical treatment of non-human subjects such as animals.[13]

Abolitionists took advantage of this aspect of Bentham's thought: they renamed Smith's sympathy "metempsychosis" to remind themselves and their audiences of the precariousness of their own situations, the fluidity of interconnectedness, the fleeting nature of a fragmented identity, and the fact that one's treatment of others could boomerang to oneself.

In a devastating move, Dugald Stewart (1753–1828) in 1793 built upon Bentham's assumptions about rank to transform fellow feeling from a physiological, soul-based, or more reasonable "sympathetic" responsiveness into the class-bound, passive practice of "benevolence."[14] The more neutral performance of sympathy among parts is fully transformed in Stewart into a hierarchical system in which well-situated individuals, "naturally" aware of right and wrong, feel morally obligated to offer "pity to the distressed."[15] But in Stewart's philosophy, unlike Smith's, humans are not born with a corresponding impulse toward self-judgment or justice; in fact, their reason prompts them to "withdraw . . . from the sight of those distresses which stronger claims forbid us to relieve" and "to deny ourselves that exquisite luxury which arises from the exercise of humanity."[16]

An involuntary correspondence among humans that leads to a desire to redress grievances is transformed in Stewart into a sympathetic practice that the well-to-do quite reasonably and routinely ignore, despite a feeling of obligation. Bentham and Stewart recast the emotional practices of the earlier eighteenth century in ways that the most radical of the abolitionists abhorred. Activists fought against Bentham's and Stewart's theories in part by recuperating and redirecting some – but importantly not all – of the elements of the practice of sympathy outlined by Adam Smith earlier in the eighteenth century.

In the mainstream press that many female Garrisonians detested, early nineteenth-century political theorists built upon Smith's theories of moral sentiment and Stewart's concept of benevolence to argue that democracies depended upon a particular kind of sympathy. Each United States subject was responsible for identifying with others' suffering, so that a union among diverse subjects could be forged. Born-again Christianity became central to this process, providing a model for suffering: citizens sympathized with the tortured body of Christ, and the greater the imaginary suffering, the greater the Christian redemption and the stronger the nation.

A particular concept of freedom is embedded within this anti-Garrisonian notion of Christian suffering and redemption: in fact, the Latin *redemptio* signifies being purchased out of slavery, being freed. This freedom meant, as Orlando Patterson explains, "the valorization of liberation or release from the power or control of another agent," "the power to do what one wants," and the power to share "in the public or communal power of one's society."[17] In Patterson's view, this unique linkage of religion and freedom through "redemption" drifted into Enlightenment rationales of governance and through them into the present-day arrangements of the state. This model of suffering and redemption also emerged as an aesthetic model: Edmund Burke argued that watching torture was a source of the *sublime* because it evoked the strongest possible emotions.

Evangelical and mainstream Christians held that women were particularly gifted at sympathetic identification, and that through their embodied, imaginative suffering a diverse nation could be forged into a unified one. As Cornelia Wells Walter (1813?–1898), a Bostonian newspaper editor and cultural commentator, explained, woman "was a solvent powerful to reconcile all heterogeneous persons into one society: like air or water, an element of such a great range of affinities that it combines readily with a thousand substances." Through their suffering, sympathy, and fluid sense of themselves, women could negotiate difference and aggression within the budding nation and encourage sympathetic desire in its place. Their suffering bodies could create an evangelical Christian nation. This national project was so important that men were encouraged to become more like women in terms of sympathy; men's fashion wardrobes even began to include corsets, so that their very bodies would more closely resemble women's. Free black publications fostered this idea of womanhood as much as white ones, though the mainstream idea of the nation was implicitly white.[18]

Within this evangelical sympathetic nation-building, agency and subordination were dangerously intertwined: "'benevolent' caretaking" and "'willing' dependency" were often linked in a web sustaining capitalist democracy. Full citizens sympathized with and governed willing but *partial* citizens. These partial citizens tried to perform their humanity and their right to inclusion in body politic by sympathizing with those enduring greater suffering. Becoming a civilized citizen, then, meant embracing sympathetic desire instead of exercising a direct and aggressive power over others. Women's bodies were poised to create this sympathetic, loving sameness that would establish American unity through what Lori Merish calls "sentimental ownership." This practice habituated national subjects to various forms of ownership, including slavery and coverture, and it fueled capitalism by encouraging women to create their identities through consumerism at annual fundraising fairs.[19]

And yet, economists were beginning to discuss the financial drawbacks of a forced labor system embedded in slavery. As Steven Mintz explains, in *Wealth of Nations* (1776) Smith had argued that slavery was "economically inefficient" and "instilled a contempt for labor, a love of luxury, and a lust for domination."[20] This rationale for ending slavery and instituting wage labor in its place received widespread attention as abolitionist societies emerged. Between 1832 and 1834 abolitionist Harriet Martineau, to name just one anti-slavery advocate who heeded Smith's logic, published thirty-four stories illustrating various contexts for "free" labor. These stories were widely read and admired, especially by those who styled themselves educated women. For instance, in her journal Louisa Lee Waterhouse (baptized 1772, d. 1863), wife of Harvard physician Benjamin Waterhouse (1754–1846), recorded a scene in which she taught her husband about wage labor and political economy through Martineau. She identifies her husband as "Dr." and herself as "Mrs." in the recreated dialogue, which closely resembles the anti-slavery "conversations" published a few years earlier in *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* and the *Liberator*. When Dr. Waterhouse admits in the course of an after-dinner conversation that he "could not explain Political Economy" despite reading Martineau, his wife gently corrects his idea that "money is the root of all evil" and teaches him instead that it is "a species of wealth, with which you may purchase even other species of wealth." "Its aim," she continues in her dramatic dialogue, "is to find out the best means of preserving & augmenting the nation's wealth" by considering "the arrangements betwe(e)n Operatives & Capitalists." Mrs. Waterhouse concludes by sharing a professorial overview with her husband: "Adam Smith wrote on the subject, under the head of Wealth of Nations. I(t) is now discussed under the head of Political Economy, & [has] become in a degree fashionable & interesting from Miss Martineau [*sic*] happy illustrations."[21] In this little domestic scene, the wife teaches the husband that carefully managed capitalism is the path toward a nation's brightest future, and free enterprise, predicated upon individual wages and "freedom," is a key to its success.

Performing free labor

Free labor's purported glories, in fact, had already launched disparate anti-slavery initiatives, including a free produce movement within Wilmington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia's Quaker communities and a capitalist farming scheme devised by gradual abolitionist and transplanted Scotswoman Frances Wright. These early initiatives signaled the serious limits of performing anti-slavery through reworkings of capitalism: slave produce boycotts had a limited effect, and Fanny Wright's experiment in creating free laborers out of enslaved farm laborers in Tennessee failed utterly. However, the free produce movement did make Northerners aware of their complicity in Southern slavery, launch consumer activism in the United States, and teach leadership skills to women who later spearheaded female anti-slavery societies.[22] It also enabled women to collaborate interracially. And Fanny Wright's effort to merge gradual abolitionism with capitalist goals, disastrous as it was, provided women with a cautionary tale and catapulted them onto the anti-slavery stage with a keen awareness of the pitfalls of public performance.

Imagining a populace as much dedicated to austerity and conscience as themselves, early free produce advocates boycotted slave goods such as cotton, tobacco, and sugar and instead purchased only agricultural products grown through free labor. Their goal was to force slaveholders to realize that, as Adam Smith had argued, slavery was economically impractical. Elizabeth Chandler compared "slave produce" boycotts, which educated townsfolk about the "enormities of the slave system," with colonial women's tea boycotts, which warned patriots about British imperialism.[23] Philadelphia often led the way in the boycotts, partly because of its large Quaker and free black populations. Not only was Philadelphia's free black community larger than that of any other northern city in 1830, numbering around 15,000 people (a little less than 10 percent of the population), but it also boasted an "aggregate wealth of . . . $977,500," most of it attached to the top 1,000 earners: this translated into an upwardly mobile, visible, and visibly growing group of "Afro-Americans who seemed to differ from upper-class whites only in the incidental aspect of color."[24] In 1829, just two years after men organized free produce associations in Philadelphia, Lucretia Mott and Mary Grew formed the first Female Association for Promoting the Manufacture and Use of Free Cotton. Within a year black and white Friends – Mott, Grew, Chandler, and Sarah Douglass among them – met and shopped together at Lydia White's free produce store at 86 North Fifth Street. Women across the Northeast and Midwest gained important administrative as well as business skills in this consumer boycott: for instance, the Secretary of the Colored Female Free Produce Society sent detailed formal minutes to *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, whose editor published them "partly to inform our white friends of the regular manner in which they transact their business." Although free produce societies were typically segregated, as early as May 1831 Philadelphian women began to visit one another's free cotton meetings, networking across racial lines and evincing "manifestations of reciprocal good feeling" that spilled over into the antislavery movement.[25]

By altering consumers' habits in the North, free produce advocates tried to prove that Southern slavery was not profitable, but Frances Wright took a different tack. Starting in 1825, Wright, a Scotswoman steeped in Enlightenment moral philosophy, tried to demonstrate how to end slavery gradually through a free enterprise scheme. Well educated, idealistic, and in full possession of her estate, Wright fell in love with the idea of the American republic. During her first visit to the United States, she produced a play extolling republics. She traveled widely, writing celebratory letters that she later published as *Views of Society and Manners in America* (1821).[26] Garrisonians regarded this book as naïve at best and dangerous at worst, because it lauded American democracy without qualification.

On a return visit to the United States in 1824, however, Wright witnessed slavery firsthand and quickly joined abolitionist ranks – albeit as a gradualist, colonizationist, and global capitalist. She developed her *Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States without Danger or Loss to the Citizens of the South* (1825) from the margins of the utopian culture of New Harmony, Indiana. Hoping to demonstrate how plantation owners could move toward a free labor that would perfect America and compete successfully with free labor in the East Indies and South America, Wright purchased slaves and settled them on "Nashoba," a Tennessee farm. There, "all colors" were to be "equal in rank" and slaves could, within a prescribed number of years, earn their own freedom while attending school and preparing themselves for an independent future in a foreign country.[27] Wright incorporated colonization as a "necessary" concession to political expediency, but argued that race prejudice was not natural: in fact, she viewed gradual "amalgamation" as the solution to slavery. Her Nashoba experiment was a financial, social, and moral disaster. Wright's illness and subsequent absence, her sister's public disavowal of the institution of marriage, her Scottish overseer's openly defended cohabitation with a "quadroon" – and her horrifying failure to protect female slaves from sexual abuse and hunger – sealed Nashoba's fate. She freed Nashoba's thirty slaves, resettling them in Haiti. Thereafter, Fanny Wright was associated with blackness, amalgamation, and free love, but that did not deter her. After observing the frenzied backlash following Nashoba and the feverish revivals of the Second Great Awakening, Wright decided that "American negro slavery is but one form of the same evils which pervade the whole frame of human society . . . it has its source in ignorance."[28] Only a rational education, Wright concluded, could eradicate the ignorance at the root of America's ills, including slavery.

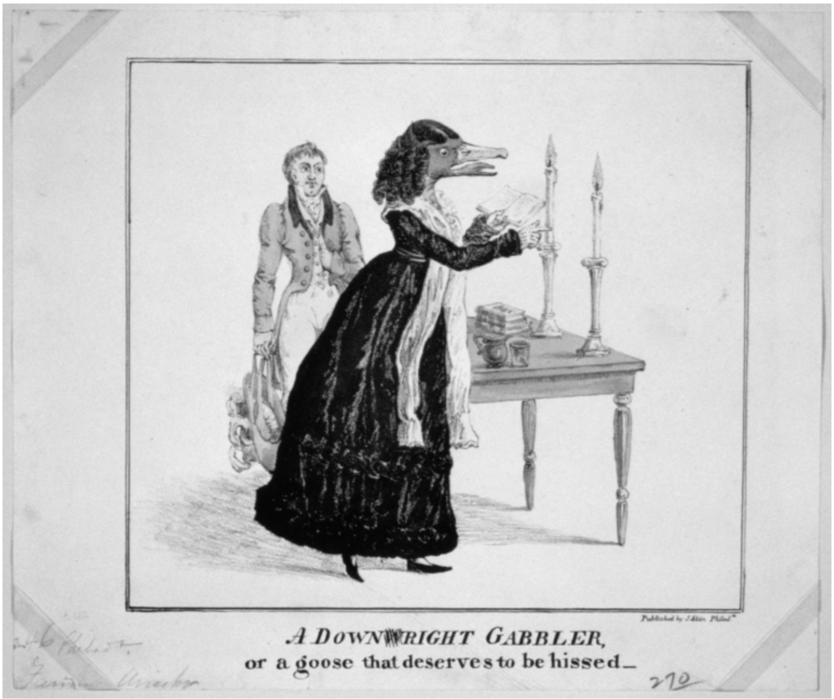
Accordingly, starting in 1828 in Cincinnati, Wright delivered a series of public lectures on reason, to mixed audiences of men and women, blacks and whites. Everywhere she traveled, audiences associated her with abolition and "amalgamation," even when she did not speak of either. Through her lectures, she advocated freedom writ large: freedom for slaves and women, free public education, a free press, and freedom from religion. She presented herself as a rational alternative to evangelical "ravings of zeal without knowledge," charging that "the victims of this odious experiment on human credulity and nervous weakness, were invariably women." Excoriating the "ineptness" of the press, she championed workers' rights and envisioned an equal citizenry shaped through public schools that would be run as boardinghouse orphanages.[29]

At the very moment when individual white men began to test the possibilities of blackface minstrelsy in American theatres, then, Fanny Wright took on the "blackened" body that the press had given her, stood on the stages of many of the same theatres, and lectured. When churches, town halls, courthouses, and theatres closed to her, she spoke with "uncommon powers" in the streets, often to the working-class male audiences of minstrelsy as well as the respectable classes, including women.[30] By January 1829 she drew crowds of two thousand spectators in New York's Masonic Hall and in the upscale Park Theatre, which housed her lectures as well as a revival of her play *Altorf*. Her decision to appear as a public speaker shocked audiences and stoked their curiosity.

This was an important step for women, because if they could lambast slavery in front of a live audience, they could manipulate the performance situation in various ways: they could adjust to disparate audiences by gauging the house's response to them, moment by moment. They could draw on the emotional excitement created by a large crowd, building a reform movement. And within abolitionist-only gatherings, they could engage in effective self-judgment by listening to diverse activists' appraisals of their statements.

Wright's first lectures, however, did not provide a useful performance model. Speaking in her own "masculine" person without a sponsoring host to protect her, Wright stood curiously alone, despite the twelve to forty male and female friends who typically ushered her onto the stage and the crowds that flocked to hear her speak. While she was "eloquent, bold and enthusiastic," she was haunted by her brush with slaves: her hands struck some as "neither very white, nor well-turned, nor lady-like." In these lectures and in those that followed across the East, Midwest, and South over subsequent years, Wright demonstrated the dangers of not adapting mainstream practices such as sympathy. Rejecting not only the Constitution and all forms of Christianity but also any notion of sympathy, Wright appealed to audiences through a call toward observable truths, in "the utter absence" of any "womanly sensibility." Sometimes opening with a performance of the Declaration of Independence as her "Bible," she warned audiences: "I am no Christian . . . I am but a member of the human family, and would accept of truth by whomsoever offered."[31] In an effort "to turn our churches into halls of science," she transformed a Bowery church into a lecture hall. By linking abolition, woman's rights, and labor issues together as she spoke, Wright imagined a broader coalition than later activists. Her newspaper, the *Free Enquirer*, edited with Robert Dale Owen (1801–1877), attracted the Working Men's Party, which became known, derisively in many circles, as the "Fanny Wright ticket."

Wright tried to perform as a rational American, outside of the realm of evangelical sympathy, but her experiment failed in part because Americans did not associate a woman's body with rationality and in part because they were wedded to sympathy. Even a balanced journalist such as the reporter for *The New-England Galaxy and United States Literary Advertiser*, who admitted that detractors who had not yet heard Wright speak would be "disappointed at first . . . in finding them of a higher style and less offensive and shocking in the language and more exterior manner, than they had expected," dismissed her lectures as "mere flummery, too shallow and frothy to deserve or need refutation." Less sanguine journalists read Wright through a pornographic lens, dismissed her as a "harlot," or blackened her as a silly goose (see Figure 1). Her working-class followers, and even commentators like Walt Whitman, who genuinely admired her critique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A DOWNWRIGHT GABBLER,
or a goose that deserves to be hissed_
270

1 J[ames] Akin, “A Downright Gabbler, or a Goose that Deserves to be Hissed.” Caricature of Frances Wright, Philadelphia, 1829.

of labor conditions, could not stem the attacks on her character or the (often physical) attempts to silence her.[32]

A single example of these attacks must suffice here, to suggest the cultural anxiety that her abolitionist performances generated. William Leete Stone, editor of the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, covered her New York lectures in 1829, at first applauding her oratorical and acting skills, but quickly dismissing “her pestilent doctrines, and her deluded followers, who are as much to be pitied, as their priestess is to be despised.” Stone called her “a bold blasphemer, and a voluptuous preacher of licentiousness,” who, “casting off all restraint,” wanted to “reduce the world to one grand theatre of vice and sensuality.”[33] By the time Wright delivered her fifth lecture in this series, she was physically attacked: a detractor burned a barrel of turpentine at the entrance to the hall, creating havoc and jeopardizing the lives of all those who dared to attend her talk.

Nonetheless, Wright's early public lectures to racially diverse audiences of men and women inspired abolitionists and workers across the country.[34] She provided a model of tenacity if not ideology or strategy for Garrisonian speakers, who learned from her reception that however much they might agree with her critique of evangelical suffering as the path toward citizenship or her critique of labor practices, they could not ignore the power of mainstream sympathy. They needed to organize sponsoring agencies within which they could radically revise and redirect fellow feeling as well as reason. But how could they revise the performance of sympathy to their own ends? That is where Adam Smith reentered the scene.

Adam Smith's sympathy

In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith argued that reason alone is insufficient to prompt ethical action; moral judgment – particularly moral *action* – also requires emotional engagement.[35] Smith explained how the multi-step performance of sympathy could lead to ethical behavior as well as nation-building. Anti-slavery women could see the limits of both Smith's sympathy and his concept of nation-building, though they did not initially perceive the extent to which "free labor" led to the excesses of free-market capitalism.

While Hume examined the ways in which individuals respond sympathetically to others' *emotions*, Adam Smith, quite usefully in the Garrisonian abolitionists' estimation, focused instead on how humans respond sympathetically to each others' *circumstances* in order to initiate ethical behavior. This shift from a mechanistic, passion-based focus on the emotions (so comfortable for evangelicals in the Tappanite wing of the anti-slavery movement) to a reason-based consideration of the "cause and context" of the situation (more likely to surface among Garrisonians) is key to understanding what the latter were trying to perform as they shared activist conversations, dramatic dialogues, poems, songs, and plays. Focused on the circumstances causing the slaves' pain, anger, or joy, they hoped to prompt a corresponding critical feeling and self-judgment in their spectators. Importantly, in Smith's view and in theirs, that emotion might not resemble the feelings of the slaves themselves.

No one can directly inhabit someone else's body, Smith recognized, and so he argued that what one feels as a result of sympathy is one's own emotion. In Smith's scenario, "I consider what *I* should suffer *if* I was really you, and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change persons and characters" with you.[36] The spectator's feelings are not those of the sufferer but of the spectatorial "*I*," and the self never encompasses the other, but only acts *as if* she has exchanged "circumstances" with the person in pain. Garrisonians did not think it possible to grasp fully each other's feelings, let alone the slave's. They did, however, see the task of many actors – performing *as if* one finds oneself in someone else's material circumstances – as a key to anti-racist, anti-slavery activism. This meant finding out exactly what the material circumstances of slaves and free blacks across the South and North were – without reducing blacks to that materiality.

The first step in Smith's performance of sympathy, central to Garrisonian practice, entailed the spectator's trying to imagine herself in the other's circumstances, though "our senses . . . never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form *any* conception of what are his sensations." By emphasizing the imaginative effort to grasp "*any*" idea at all of others' feelings, Smith and his followers emphasized the difficulty and limited success of that effort. Without an "immediate experience of what other men feel," Smith cautioned, "we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what *we ourselves* should feel in the like situation."[37] The feelings one experiences are one's own.

Smith continues, still emphasizing the limits of sympathetic practice: "By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter *as it were* into his body, and become *in some measure* the same person with him, and thence form *some* idea of his sensations, and even feel *something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them.*" Again, in this passage Smith stresses the imaginative effort to recreate not the other's feeling but the other's "situation." He focuses on the individual's effort to undergo the conditions, "as it were," of the sufferer, but he emphasizes that that happens only "in some measure" and is "weaker in degree." And the emotion felt is one's own.[38]

Smith is keenly aware of the cultural differences in how individuals perform emotions, and though he calls non-Europeans "savages and barbarians" and represents their stoicism as nearly incomprehensible to Westerners, as Foster notes, he also clearly regards it as admirable: "there is not a negro from the coast of Africa who does not, in this respect, possess a degree of magnanimity which the soul of his sordid master is too often scarce capable of conceiving."[39] To possess magnanimity meant to have a "well-founded high regard for oneself manifesting as generosity of spirit and equanimity in the face of trouble," as well as "greatness of thought or purpose; grandeur or nobility of designs, ambition, or spirit." Smith contrasts this admirable magnanimity of "those nations of heroes" with the "brutality and baseness" of their European jailers, "wretches" who possessed no virtues at all.[40]

Others' "agonies, when they are thus brought home to ourselves, when we have thus adopted and made them our own," Smith continues in his analysis of sympathetic practice, "begin at last to affect us, and we then tremble and shudder at the thought of what he feels." However, even when one's body responds physically to the sympathetic tug, one feels only to a certain extent, for to imagine another's pain "excites *some degree* of the same emotion, in proportion to the vivacity or dul[l]ness of the conception."[41] Smith's delimiting words and phrases emphasize the difficulty, not the ease, of sensing someone else's circumstances. This stress on the disjunction of feelings between abolitionists and imagined or real slaves deserves further attention.

Smith usefully limited the claims of this first step in the practice of sympathy. He did not see pain as "an experience which cannot be recovered by the victim but only by the spectator."[42] In fact, he viewed the spectator's engagement as limited in a host of ways, and abolitionists like Sarah Forten acknowledged those limits in poems like "Past Joys": black abolitionists in Philadelphia read her poem aloud to one another, publically acknowledging that the slave's suffering "is a sorrow deeper far, / Than all that we can show."[43]

In fact, Smith compares a sympathetic witness to another's pain to a man's witnessing a woman give birth: the man imagines the woman's pain "though it is impossible that he should conceive himself as suffering her pains in his own proper person and character." He cannot himself give birth, but must do his best to imagine what he would feel if he were in her circumstances. He cannot presume that he knows her feelings, because his feelings will, of necessity, be his own, and they will differ from hers, but they will be real, embodied feelings and they will activate him to alleviate her pain as best he can. Jeremy Bentham, who ranked people on the grid of sensibility, claimed that elite men felt more exquisitely than, say, women or slaves, and, focusing on this scene of human *difference*, he justified the act of colonizing them, but female Garrisonians revised this first step of sympathy, to try to derail its use within the processes of colonization.[44] They focused audiences instead on the *man-made* "cause and context" of the slave's injury or his resistance to that injury, enabling others to see the *similarities as well as differences* among persons inhabiting disparate circumstances.

As Elizabeth B. Clark demonstrates, radicals usefully redefined pain as stemming from a human breach rather than a divine act, thereby establishing a cultural basis for legal reasoning by analogy.[45] There are limits to this accomplishment, as Berlant and Allen Feldman and others have shown: establishing a violent scene as the prompt for redressing human rights abuses curiously instates the legal, medical, and governmental apparatus as "post-violent," presuming it to be benign, even protective, and then publically displayed suffering becomes necessary to authenticate abuse.[46] But Garrisonian women revealed how this process worked: they refused to recognize the state as "post-violent." They unveiled the mechanisms of legal power, named their own complicity, and worked to dismantle the laws that upheld slavery. The question of abolitionists' culpability for forging a "free" but encumbered citizenry often surfaces in abolitionist scholarship: Spelman, Merish, and Sanchez-Eppler, for example, argue that sentimental attachments to the slave's pain "reinforce the very patterns of economic and political subordination responsible for such suffering," and Hartman explains how slaves came to be held responsible for their own rehabilitation through the "blameworthiness" of American individualism.[47] Since Christianity anchors this notion of individual freedom, there is no space outside of complicity in this interwoven network.

One cannot ignore, however, the ways in which certain abolitionist performances, despite their coercive power, simultaneously and *necessarily* also created new, resistant, and even institutionally productive pathways through state-sponsored violence. Blending a radically revised Christian sympathy with Hindu metempsychosis, black and white Garrisonian women moved past Frances Wright's individualism to create a real sense of emergency and hold the state responsible for the depredations of slavery – even as they collectively championed their outlier status.

After abolitionists imagined themselves in slaves' circumstances, they tackled Smith's second step to performing sympathy. In this step, the spectator and the one witnessed adjust to one another: the spectator raises her level of concern and the individual who feels joy or pain lowers her passion to the spectator's pitch.[48] Slaves were not physically present within early female anti-slavery society gatherings, but the same principle pertained: black and white women tried to "excite" themselves to a higher level of engagement and simultaneously tempered their imaginings of the slaves' circumstances. This meant, of course, that when fugitive slaves escaped North, they had to negotiate through abolitionists' muddled images of their material circumstances. Similarly, though, it meant that women had to keep raising their level of activism to reach the expectations of the newly freed.

The final step in Smith's sympathetic practice is that the sympathizer imagines how an "impartial spectator" would evaluate his or her behavioral response to the person in distress or pleasure. In Smith's view, we cannot judge our actions "unless we remove ourselves, as it were, from our own natural station, and endeavour to view them as at a certain distance from us." We regard our behaviors as others of a different "station" or class "are likely to view them."[49] Although the well-educated Unitarian and Quaker women in the free produce and anti-slavery movements may have encountered Smith's views in Dugald Stewart's widely circulated 1822 edition of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, they rejected Stewart's effort to transform an active sympathy into a passive benevolence, partly by rejecting his gloss of this critical passage in Smith. Stewart refers to the impartial spectator as "mankind in general," but for immediate abolitionists the spectator who judged their actions was a specific someone of a different "station": a slave. Over and over again, Garrisonian women imagined slaves' passing judgment on them. For them, the passage "we endeavour to examine our own conduct as we imagine any other fair and impartial spectator would examine it" meant judging one's own behavior through the eyes of slaves, or, sometimes, through the eyes of a fiercer, more radical version of themselves.[50] Their spectator, in fact, was a partisan rather than an impartial onlooker.

In Smith, spectators find fellow feeling "most accurate" when the sympathizer, in this case the abolitionist, "is conscious of the possibility of mistakes." This consciousness of mistakes emerges as "inappropriate moral judgments are corrected by the community in conjunction with the moral actor him or herself."[51] As women performed their sympathy with the slave, then, they became conscious of missteps and corrected their judgments about proper moral actions in response to more radical members' assessments. As they reached outside the abolitionist community through their "conversations" and dramatic dialogues, they extended the reach of this readjustment process, encouraging neighbors and townsfolk to correct their own mistaken judgments about how to act with regard to slavery.

This critical aspect of sympathy became more important to Smith over the years: in his fourth edition, he added to his title (*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*) the subtitle *or An Essay towards an Analysis of the Principles by which Men Naturally Judge Concerning the Conduct and Character, First of Their Neighbours [sic], and Afterwards of Themselves*. Only when the impartial spectator (in abolitionists' adaptation of Smith, the partisan spectator, the slave) validates the sympathizer's actions can he or she feel virtuous, according to Smith, so this self-judgment through the eyes of the slave paves the way to a sense of virtue and, eventually, a more expansive love of oneself, which deepens into a love of others. The trick for abolitionists was to avoid an inflated sense of virtue.

Garrisonians still had to contend with the fact that humans tend to feel the most for themselves or for those with whom they already share a connection, so that "the misery of one who is merely their fellow creature is of so little importance to them in comparison even of a small conveniency of their own."[52] However, over time and with practice, Smith contended and abolitionists hoped, most people gain enough information about the varied *circumstances* in which people live that they improve at sympathizing with others and recognizing their full humanity.

Yet, there are some people – and Adam Smith counted slave-owners among them – who are "insensible to all appeals of humanity" and who "fall outside the sphere of ethical conversation"; the state must intervene to thwart their immoral actions, Smith argued, or – if they are themselves the lawmakers – a rebellion must be launched.[53] Garrisonian abolitionists imagined themselves in the throes of such a rebellion. They understood that the violence was embedded within Constitutional law and that slaveholders, at least those who held out against anti-slavery practices, were so "insensible" that a civil war might be necessary.

Sympathy is not empathy

The cluster of practices that comprise "empathy" were unknown to early nineteenth-century black and white abolitionists, but they have, rightfully, created uneasiness among present-day scholars about any circulation of affect. Exorcizing the confusion about the disparate genealogies moving from sympathy to empathy may aid in formulating new practices as well as clarify why sympathy cannot simply be collapsed into empathy in scholarly investigations of abolitionism. Though English psychologist Edward Titchener first translated *Einfühlung* as "empathy" in 1909, this German term, *Einfühlung*, had surfaced earlier, in 1873, when art historian Robert Vischer (1847–1933) had used it to describe the way in which viewers projected themselves into art objects.[54] Beauty was not inherent in the art object, Vischer argued, but rather an effect of the museum-goers' projections of themselves into the object. Here the relationship between the spectator and the other is reduced to a projection of the self onto an object, and the value of the interaction is not political action but the resignification of the viewer (instead of the artist) as the one who creates beauty. English critic Violet Paget (1856–1935), known by her pseudonym Vernon Lee, created havoc when she translated *Einfühlung* into English as "sympathy" in 1895, associating it with Titchener's idea of a spectator's projection onto an object and the lively sense we have "when our feelings enter, and are absorbed into, the form we perceive."[55] Lee not only moved a radically altered notion of sympathy into the artistic arena, but also introduced the idea of motor mimicry. She explained that museum-goers responded physically as well as emotionally to art objects, standing tall in response to Greek columns, for instance. German philosopher Theodor Lipps (1851–1914) then transferred *Einfühlung* from aesthetic to psychological discourse in 1903, arguing that viewers who see someone engage in an angry gesture, for example, not only mirror that gesture but also project themselves into the gesture. In these rewritings of sympathy into empathy, viewers project their very "selves" into art objects or isolated gestures and thereby gain access to beauty or self-knowledge.

In other words, sympathy, in Smith's hands an effort to grasp someone else's circumstances in order to build a responsive if hierarchical community, and in female abolitionists' hands an imperfect effort to grasp the material circumstances of the slave in order to judge oneself through the slave's eyes and build a responsive and more democratic community, transforms from a two-way street into a one-way process as it morphs into empathy.

The attendant dangers within this one-way empathetic practice – the dangers of projecting the self onto the other, of appropriating the other's pain as if one has mastered it fully, and of subjecting the other to that mastery and voyeurism – are serious. Theorists immediately began to forge pathways through these dangers, even as they created others more worrisome. In 1909, Titchener built on Lipps's theory, translating *Einfühlung* as "empathy" and describing it as an involuntary kinesthetic response, built upon real or remembered sensations. This usefully restored some of the two-way sensibility present in earlier theories of sympathy, and granted more power to the sufferer by defining empathy as an imitative and motor response to the one in pain. Titchener's approach, however, dismantled Smith's useful limits on fellow feeling by arguing that empathy enabled one to access another person's consciousness.[56] And he returned to Bentham's earlier hierarchical system of sensibility, envisioning that empathy created a community of discriminating judgment, a "freemasonry among all men and women who have at any time really judged": his theory thereby echoed Bentham's earlier claim that "sensibility appears to be greater in the higher ranks of men than in the lower."[57] As Titchener's empathy drifts into the twenty-first century, it is likely to be attached not to upper-class sensibility, but rather to individual personality and context: "the effect and degree of empathy varies according to individual predilection and personal interaction."[58] The route to this focus on individualism was circuitous.

In 1917 Edith Stein (1891–1942), a student of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), usefully transferred the concept of empathy into the arena of phenomenology, grounding it in experiential knowledge and offering useful corollaries to Enlightenment notions of sympathy and antidotes to some of Titchener's excesses. Like her mentor, Stein did not argue that the self merged with the other. Rejecting Titchener's and Lipps's lead, Husserl had contended, as Krasner explains, that "we are individuals encased in our own consciousness," but that "in communicating and living in the world with others[,] we experience . . . 'intersubjectivity' . . . mediated through empathy."[59] Merleau-Ponty and Emmanuel Levinas circumvented Husserl's "self-enclosed ego" by articulating an "embodied approach to intersubjectivity" that has received widespread attention, while the lesser-known Stein forged her own understanding of how empathy surfaced.

Stein defined empathy as both the comprehension and "experience of foreign consciousness," but, like Smith and the abolitionists, contended that the "self" did not merge with the other. In fact, the self was aware of the other as someone with his or her own phenomenological experience of the world.[60] Furthermore, empathy for Stein could only be the "non-primordial" or second-hand experience of the spectator which "announces" a "primordial" or firsthand experience through which the other person has lived.[61] Gone is Adam Smith's clarifying two-way awareness and adjustment; this is an emotional exchange which is viewed only from the point of view of the spectator, but, as in Smith and in abolitionist practice, there is a recognition that the one who witnesses suffering or joy does not experience the exact emotion that the sufferer or celebrant does. Stein's witness, even in a situation of strong empathy, was always aware of what she called the "foreign psychic I," but was also capable of creating a fluid, temporary "we" that retained individual mystery and difference.[62] Stein, then, with Husserl as her foundation, solved some of the thorny problems of empathy that Bertolt Brecht, famously, later tried to solve through his "alienation effect," a defamiliarization of the structures of power solidified through empathy.

Performing metempsychosis disparately

Female abolitionists did not perform this twentieth-century empathy, nor did they perform eighteenth-century sympathy: in fact, they ridiculed ladies and gentlemen who merely read sentimental tales of slaves' suffering or Romantic-era poems about the slaves. In the abolitionist newspaper *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, a satirist mocked a certain sentimental lady of this sort, comparing her sympathizing to the self-indulgent pastime of bowling: "Down Clara's cheek the precious globules hop; / How beautiful, the precious fluid rolls; / There goes a tear, there starts another drop, / As if her sympathy would play at bowls." Even mainstream critics lambasted this self-indulgent type: "the morbidness of her sensibility is a bar to the real exercise ... [she] shuts her eyes and closes her ears to genuine distress."[63] Abolitionists themselves were made of much sterner stuff.

In her February 1831 column for *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, a young white Quaker named Elizabeth Chandler coined the phrase "mental metempsychosis" to describe the emerging sympathetic practice of abolitionists.[64] She advised her female readers to imagine themselves, in detail, in slaves' material circumstances rather than their feelings, to spur themselves and others into action. As she penned her column, the mainstream press was representing the slaveholder as the most visible "body in pain," suffering from the weight of an inherited institution. Chandler replaced that figure with the slave, an equally feeling – and judging – figure, thereby contesting the slave's place as the lowest entrant in Bentham's list of sentient beings. Instead of representing blacks as savages, she represented American slaveholders as brutes. But first, Chandler and her black and white friends within the Garrisonian movement had to separate themselves from the evangelicals.

Within mainstream Calvinist thought and evangelical Tappanite abolitionism, pain results from divine will and echoes the crucifixion, thereby modeling Christian forbearance. The slaves are figured as the children of Ham, destined to suffer for their ancestors' sins but free to stretch out their hands to their deliverer, God. In liberal religious terms, however, that pain is reframed: Garrisonian Unitarians and Hicksite Quakers created mental metempsychosis to revise the role of pain in the cultural imaginary. Pain, for them, was no longer the result of divine Providence, but the result of human actions.[65]

In fact, Garrisonians viewed suffering as a *breach* in God's law, the result of a man-made Constitution that encoded violence against all but the controlling elite. The slave body in pain, then, figured human error. Through metempsychosis, these abolitionists established the legal rights of slaves by analogy, as Clark notes: the slave, like oneself, is fully human and deserves the same rights as other individuals, including the right to his or her own body.[66] This meant lobbying for slaves' freedom of movement, right to marry, right to refuse sex, right to be free of physical abuse. The practice of metempsychosis also usefully enabled practitioners to imagine across racial, gendered, sexual boundaries, to envision a "common blood." By focusing on bodies as well as souls, anti-slavery advocates tried to combat the abstract personhood underpinning the privileges of white male property-owners and to dislodge morality from specious Biblical arguments so that all could return to rational judgment and individual feelings corrected by those once on the margins.

Even when they were imagining themselves as slaves, anti-slavery women were fueled by wildly disparate objectives, so they generated different effects. The working-class and middle-class mill girls of Lowell, Massachusetts, sympathized with the slaves for entirely different reasons than the urban elite of Boston: the former helped create an incipient labor movement and the latter a Unitarian stronghold of reason. In Boston, women's disparate religious affiliations led to friction and distinct differences in how women understood what actually happened during public enactments of metempsychosis. Unitarians, for instance, chafed at any mention of a "triune God" and brusquely viewed their anti-slavery performances as the rational path toward a logical equality crafted by human beings, while Presbyterians, who balked at any mention of the free will so dear to Unitarians, valued the Trinity and joined Congregationalists to decry non-conformity in general and Unitarians in particular. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists simply wanted to save slaves' souls in an orderly fashion while keeping women and others in place.

Then, as now, the performance customs of women from different religious denominations signaled disparate investments. The 1827 rift in the Quaker community meant that even Friends experienced metempsychosis disparately, with the Orthodox Friends anxious about the more radical Hicksites. Joining Unitarians, Hicksite Quakers rejected the crucifixion and the divinity of Christ (as well as the clergy) altogether: they wanted to sideline suffering within abolitionism. For Hicksites, sympathy with the slave was simply a reasonable, conscientious response to a man-made problem. Wary of the limits of one's childhood traditions and focused on the practical duties of the "inner light," Hicksites practiced anti-slavery as a rational act. In fact, both Quakers and Unitarians were wary of emotional excess. Because of their emphasis on religious "enthusiasm" or warmth, Methodists and Baptists connected most directly with the emotional component of performing sympathy with the slaves' suffering. However, as they were often working-class or lower-middle-class, they were also very likely to be as interested in the material conditions of the slaves as they were in the status of their souls.

Even when black and white women collectively imagined themselves as slaves, then, they were embodying disparate investments through those performances. And spectators were experiencing different reactions even if they were applauding the same abolitionist speech, listening to the same poetry recitation, or acting in the same anti-slavery play. They were perceiving the "stickiness" of emotions as they impressed upon bodies, slid and moved bodies, differently. As Maria Weston Chapman explained of female abolitionists, their "common cause" surfaced in "different vesture[s]": "One is striving to unbind a slave's manacles, – another to secure to all human souls their inalienable rights." Some wanted to convert slaves to their own denominations, while others labored so that "the bondman may have light and liberty to form a system for himself." Some wanted slaves "to hallow the Sabbath day," while others wanted them to "receive wages for the labor of the other six."[67]

Anti-slavery conversations

Early free produce "conversations," published in the abolitionist press and performed in homes, churches, and society meetings, set the stage for performances of metempsychosis. Instead of performing as slaves, however, the black and white women of the free produce movement initially cast themselves as inexperienced but eager abolitionists. They created a variety of characters, always judged by a partisan spectator figured as a more engaged, well-informed activist. In the ladies' or juvenile departments of abolitionist newspapers, they published these "conversations" to prompt certain kinds of speech acts among black and white families fighting against slavery. Sometimes borrowed from British journals, these descriptions of a thoughtful family's abolitionist conversations reveal that activists' evenings were dedicated to political discussions engaging not only the young adults but also the youngest members of the family.

While the conversations modeled free produce and abolitionism, the slaves in these columns always lived in the West Indies or in the South rather than the North. There was no acknowledgment that many slave women were still fighting to gain their freedom in the 1820s in the Northeast.[68] There was, instead, an attempt to foster family-based performances, to critique privilege through these performances, and to transform privileged black and white middle-class American families and boardinghouse tenants into abolitionist activists. Both *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* and the *Liberator* served black as well as white readers, so it is instructive to consider black families' readings of these dialogues. Black leaders, Sarah Forten's father among them, helped fund the *Liberator* at its inception, and by 1834, fully three-fourths of its readers were drawn from the black community.[69] Many of the homes in which these performances took place were well appointed: among black Philadelphians, for instance, parlors were "'carpeted and furnished with sofas, sideboards, cardtables, mirrors . . . and in many instances, . . . a piano forte,' where, in prearranged formal visits, black women trained in 'painting, instrumental music, singing . . . and . . . ornamental needlework' visited," and "their men – home from concerts, lectures, or meetings of literary, debating, and library association gatherings at their meeting halls – sometimes joined their women."[70]

In 1831, Elizabeth Chandler published a column specifically titled "Conversation," outlining how she hoped these family dialogues would not only energize participants but also prompt them to extend their efforts outside their homes, churches, and boardinghouses. Her column and those like it were read aloud at gatherings of different kinds, not just at literary society meetings but also in family homes, taverns, and lodges. To legitimize her column, Chandler prefaced it with John Milton's warning that "Man over man, He made not lord." She then touted the virtues of "frequent conversation" about anti-slavery: converts might "find their feelings still more deeply engaged," while the uninitiated or recalcitrant would discover that anti-slavery conversations "open the door to an instructive discourse, awaken the dormant sensibilities, and perhaps arouse into action."[71]

Noting that William Cowper (1731–1800) renamed his indictment of slavery "A Subject for Conversation [and Reflection] at the Tea-Table," Chandler highlighted improvisational dialogue in mobile social settings. Each theatrically modeled dialogue prepares the listener "to receive, with attention, any future information relative to the system." As Chandler advised, "it is better to risk the mortification of being listened to with repulsive coldness, than to fail of using every proper exertion." In fact, Chandler argued that abstaining from slave produce was crucial because it fostered ever-changing conversations about anti-slavery.

Through these "conversations," parents transformed their children and neighbors into activists, all the while entertaining them. In a typical *Liberator* "Conversation" published on September 24, 1831, parents taught their young daughter Emma that West Indian planters had no right to enslave Africans.[72] Imagine a black family gathered in a rural Pennsylvania parlor, reading an abolitionist "Conversation" aloud, in keeping with nineteenth-century customs. The mother assumes the role of Mother, a reasonable abolitionist who believes that West Indian blacks, as "'fellow subjects . . . ought to share in all our privileges.'" Perhaps her husband passes the newspaper around, inviting the older children to read the youthful roles, with distinct voices for different parts. In this "Conversation," the fictional parents calmly request that their son avoid castigating his younger sister for her ignorance about abolitionism. Instead, they counsel him to inform her gently about the importance of anti-slavery, for then she will come more willingly into the abolitionist fold.[73] The author of this "Conversation" offers a performance model that works not only within the family, but by extension with neighbors and townspeople. This is not a performance of sympathetic suffering with the slave, but a reasonable transformation of uninitiated citizens into activists.

In the fourth installment of this same "Conversation" series, reading the newspaper aloud is directly incorporated into theatrical representation as the family educates itself and its neighbors about the economics of slavery. Perhaps a white teenage sister and brother, joined by a visiting neighbor, performed this conversation for extended family on a breezy September evening in Salem, Massachusetts, circa 1831. The fictional older sister, Helen (played by the actual sister), tells her family that in buying West Indian sugar "we *bribe* the Planters . . . and make it worth their while to keep the Negroes in slavery."[74] Her father (played by the brother) concurs, reading statistics from the newspaper to prove that governmental bounties support the price of slave-produced sugar. As a result, free labor sugar cannot successfully compete with slave products. Sugar, the girlish Helen replies, is also taxed to pay the press for its pro-slavery coverage, "so that," her fictional father continues, "when we buy West Indian sugar, we actually assist in stifling the cry of the oppressed."

Having mapped out labor issues and the press's complicity with business interests, the actress playing Helen recites for the family, as if from memory, an anti-slavery poem warning the English to end slavery in their own colonies before asking other Europeans nations to follow suit. At that moment her boyfriend George (played by the visiting neighbor, let's say) enters and discloses that he and his father both own Jamaican plantations with hundreds of slaves. He tries to enlist Helen's family to protest the anti-slavery meeting planned for the following evening, but the young white abolitionist girl portraying Helen in this "Conversation" models the appropriate response for those gathered around the parlor. She judges herself as a partisan spectator, a more radical abolitionist, might, and as a result rejects her beloved suitor George because of his bloody ties to West Indian plantations. And the rest of the family (played perhaps by parents and siblings) teaches the clueless neighbor–suitor George that inheriting slaves is no better than kidnapping them. George and his father will be, they promise, treated with respect at the anti-slavery meeting, but they do not deserve that respect, because they themselves are directly responsible for the horrors of slavery, including, Helen calmly and directly tells George before she flees from him, "scourging women." Instead of imagining herself as one of the "scourged" slave women, Helen exemplifies an ever more committed anti-slavery advocate: she breaks off her engagement because of her anti-slavery views.

Anti-slavery dialogues

Eventually, these conversations about slavery transmogrified into longer dialogues, ready-made for performing within diverse family circles and neighborly social gatherings. Envision two middle-aged women, black or white, performing Chandler's "Tea-Table Talk" dialogue in their family's parlor after dinner on a wintry night in 1832. The dialogue stars two cousins, "Helen" and "Maria." Spectators watch Maria, perched in her upholstered chair by a side table, complain about the silliness of Helen's free produce activism, her "disagreeable" and "singular" practice of declining to eat "almost anything" offered to her.[75] Helen tries to reason with Maria, adjusting her posture and patiently offering the political, spiritual, and ethical reasons for her free produce actions. In fact, as the rational Helen explains, "it is wonderful to me how any female, who has even a partial knowledge of the horrors, can be willing to support such a system, or can receive the least enjoyment from the indulgence in comforts and luxuries which are purchased by the sacrifice of so many lives." The scene closes with the mature Helen's unflappable economic analysis: "allowing the labor of a slave for six or twelve years to produce all the various slave grown products which you may use during the course of your life, would not he who was so occupied be in effect *your slave*, during the time he was thus employed?" By the curtain, the newly initiated Maria has just consumed a cup of tea without sugar and found that "it was not so very disagreeable" – though she is still not quite convinced that she must give up sugar every day. Helen has convinced Maria to move, gradually, toward anti-slavery activism. These polite but straightforward dialogues modeled how to alter others' behavior gently but firmly. And the focus was upon the potential abolitionist, not the suffering slave.

As the free produce and immediate abolitionist movement gained ground and as American women read more about Englishwomen's accomplishments, abolitionist dialogues championed British strategies. Months before female anti-slavery societies organized in the United States, female literary societies could read aloud "Edna's" playlet in which American women, guided by the reports of the "Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society in England," embraced activism and "private benevolence" instead of relying on Congress to end slavery.[76] Encouraged to act by their "transatlantic coadjutants" in England

and Scotland, "Aunt Mary" and her abolitionist friends suggest that American women follow British women's leadership and divide "the laity" into districts, so that they can go door to door, petitioning others to join them in organizing anti-slavery societies. This is exactly what women did within their female anti-slavery societies in the 1830s.

Sometimes the objectives of abolitionist dialogues morphed as they unfolded. "A Dialogue between a Mother and Her Children," for instance, opens as an anti-slavery tract and closes as a call for a college for free black youth. Picture a free black family in, say, Trenton, New Jersey, performing this playlet aloud on their porch on a Sunday afternoon just before school begins in the fall of 1832. The children perch on either side of their mother on the sofa. Signed "Zillah" and likely penned by free black Sarah Douglass from nearby Philadelphia, this drama depicts a mother as she teaches her son Henry and her daughter Matilda not to waste bread, a precious commodity among older slaves "freed" and forced to earn a living on their own. Upon hearing a sad story about an older slave, the youthful Henry decides to send his gift money to this slave, but his mother replies that the slave is no longer alive; Henry had best save his money and send it to those "now preparing to build a College for our youth."[77] In this instance, the black abolitionist mother embodies not only anti-slavery activism but also free black philanthropy, in this case placing the free black community's needs ahead of the slave's. This performance of what Sarah Douglass later called a "compassion for the self" became central to women's abolitionism.

In the August and September 1833 issues of *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Chandler reprinted question-and-answer dialogues tailor made for the new abolitionist-run Sunday schools springing up around urban areas. Written by Lucy Jesse Townsend (1781–1847), a leading English abolitionist, these dialogues taught, in a sort of abolitionist catechism, all the relevant Biblical passages lambasting slavery.[78]

Children's plays appeared in the anti-slavery newspapers, too, ready-made for evening parlor performances. For example, "Aunt Margery" starred in a series of little dramas in the April and May 1832 issues of the *Genius*. This dramatic character, perhaps embodied by a mother or grandmother, taught children the importance of using maple sugar instead of slave-produced sugar, revealing how slaves were affected by American habits of consumption.

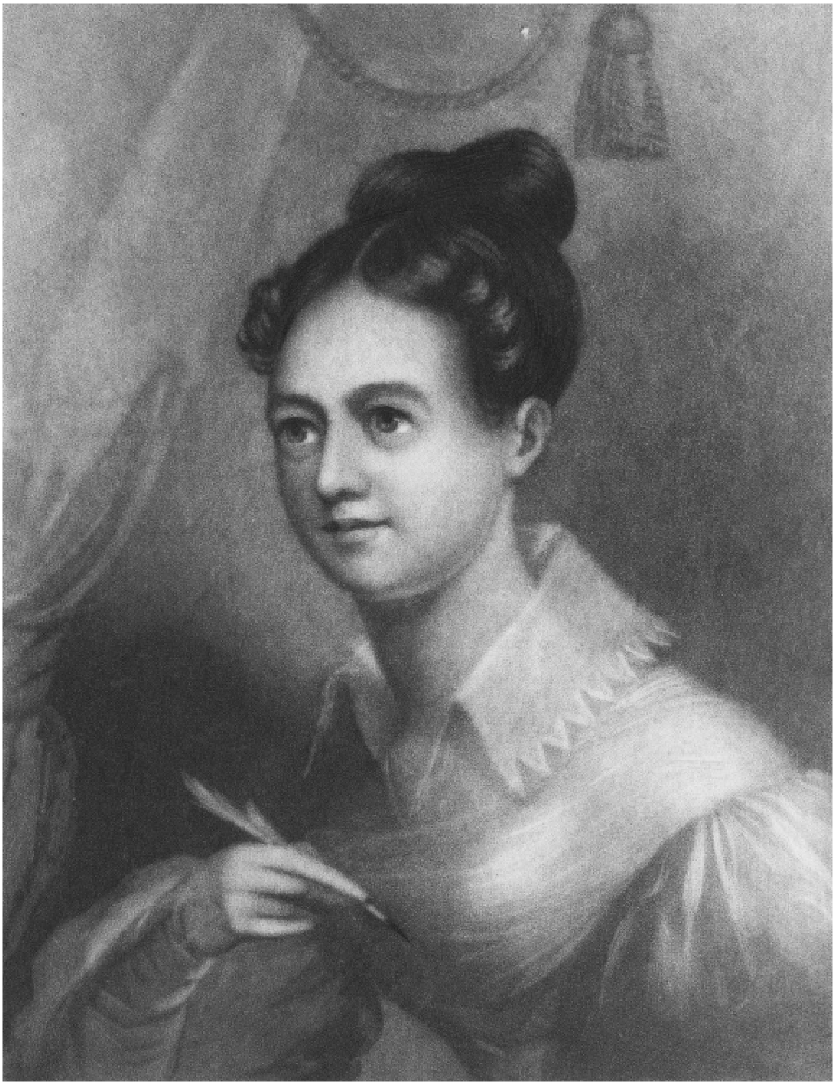
In October 1833, Chandler published an important dialogue that would have fit nicely into the programs of literary societies. In this "Dialogue on Slavery," Rachel convinces Mary, a colonizationist, of the ease, safety, and justice of immediate abolition. She asks Mary to trust her own reason against the arguments of the anti-abolitionists and asks a series of deftly phrased rhetorical questions. For instance, imagine an abolitionist in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the winter of 1833, playing "Rachel" to her neighbor's "Mary." Mary voices concern over whether or not slaves will be able to survive within a free labor system, to which Rachel replies, "Will they who toil patiently for others, not labor for themselves?"[79] Through this rhetorical question, Rachel refutes the argument that slaves would not be able to make the transition to a free labor market. When Mary, ever cautious, asks the more radical Rachel if she has heard "Dr. Porter's opinion" on the matter, Rachel models womanly independence for young abolitionists by responding, "I have; but it has had no influence over my own." She reminds Mary that even though slaveholders seem intransigent about slavery, their "sentiments may be changed." She argues that women may as well work toward immediate abolition, since Southerners do not seem any more likely to embrace gradual abolition and "they must yield something to the public feeling." By the end of the dialogue, the "actress" playing Rachel has convinced her neighbor Mary to join the ranks of immediate abolitionists, thereby providing a model of action for Chandler's readers: the *Genius* itself was a latecomer to immediate abolition.

Metempsychosis in a state of emergency

In addition to publishing conversations and dialogues, the *Genius* editor Benjamin Lundy (1789–1839), like Garrison, printed women's poems, playlets, and speeches, ready for performances at home and in literary, free produce, and anti-slavery societies. As early as 1828, Chandler's "elocutionists" recited her poem "The Recaptured Slave": the central figure is an articulate man who dismisses his master as a "mistaken fool" for imagining that he has no feelings, that "no kindly glow / Could warm my heart to joy or woe."[80] Even though he is recaptured, he refuses his enslavement with a taunt: "Art thou my master? – then come ask the wave, / To give thee back thy slave!" Chandler imagined the slave's freedom only in death, but it is a triumphant, not a painful, death: her speakers, reciting this poem aloud, performed the slave's full humanity. After three years of such pseudonymous contributions, Chandler launched her 1829 "Ladies' Repository" column in Lundy's *Genius*. Described years later in terms of her "earnest affection, her genial social qualities," her "exalted intellect" and "her shrinking dislike of notoriety," Chandler printed hundreds of poems and essays in her column over the course of the next five years.[81] She defined a performance practice that abolitionists revised for decades to come, as musicians set her poems as hymns and local societies sold her posthumously published essays and poems at anti-slavery bazaars and anniversary celebrations.

Acknowledging the novelty of her position as a female editor, Chandler – like many of her eighteenth-century predecessors – sometimes adopted a female pseudonym as a host body in her "Repository."[82] She signed only her middle name, Margaret, one of the pseudonyms Emily, Agnes, Gertrude, Bertha, and Ela, or simply the initial "E" to her work. Through these disparate bodies, Chandler performed in print as if she were a community of well-meaning, engaged abolitionist women. She opened her new column with a disclosure of her gender and, implicitly, her class: "It may perhaps be not uninteresting to the readers of the 'Genius,' to learn that the columns under the above heading will be in future superintended by a lady." Although Chandler occupied the tenuous status of a single woman with no estate and only a restive brother and aunts to lean on, she claimed the class status of a "lady." She tried to grant women a feeling of solidarity by letting them know that the column was just for them, and that it was directly addressed from pen and her heart to their highest mental aspirations (see Figure 2). "It is hoped," she wrote, "that by devoting a portion of this paper expressly to themselves, the minds of our females, in general, may be awakened to a more lively interest in the important subject under discussion in its pages."[83]

Chandler introduced abolitionists to the phrase "mental metempsychosis" in 1831. The term "metempsychosis" has a long history, being rooted in ancient Hinduism and surfacing over thousands of years in various strands of religious and philosophical thought.[84] Nineteenth-century abolitionists encountered it through critiques of the British colonization of India and missionary reports from the broader Asian arena. They read muddled descriptions of East Indians who believed in metempsychosis, the idea that human souls at death merged into what they understood as a sort of "amalgamated" collective soul. Fragments of this all-soul, they learned, eventually split off to enter new bodies, in accordance with the status they had earned in previous lives. This muddled Hinduism invited a radical if confused rethinking of the relationship between bodies and souls. Metempsychosis certainly was antithetical to the individualistic American and Christian notion that a soul is born within a particular body and lives on *intact* – without mingling with others' souls or bodies – when that body dies. In practicing Chandler's metempsychosis, therefore, female anti-slavery activists dramatized an inchoate critique of individualism and Christianity. They dramatized the possibility that their souls were connected to the fate of other souls and other bodies, that their souls were not attached to an eternal and individualistic Christian freedom. Through metempsychosis, abolitionists imagined that their selves were splintered, linked to others in



2 Elizabeth Margaret Chandler. *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, with a Memoir of Her Life and Character by Benjamin Lundy* (Philadelphia: Lemuel Howell, 1836), frontispiece.

unpredictable and ungovernable ways, and that suffering and joy were not attached to an isolated body but to a network of bodies. They performed their connectedness to slaves, not simply by imagining their circumstances or by sympathizing with them but by envisioning a non-Christian concept of the soul that emphasized a fluid connectivity and a splintered self rather than democratic individualism and the eternal separation of the soul from the body. In Hinduism, furthermore, mistreating sentient beings meant the possibility of mistreating a body which in its previous life might have housed the soul of a loved one. This cloudy mess of cultural confusions surrounded abolitionists as they tried to revise sympathy.

The practice of metempsychosis did not spring full-blown from Chandler's pen, nor was it unalloyed Hinduism. Instead, it emerged in an amorphous fashion as Chandler experimented, initially merging it not only with Smith's focus on imagining the minute circumstances of the other's pain but also, problematically, with evangelical rhythms and masochism. Despite her Quaker disregard for revivalism, Chandler echoed the preachers of the Second Great Awakening in her initial column on metempsychosis: in one breathless sentence, ending with an exclamation similar to the "universal groans" that ended conversion fits, she depicted slaves as mainstream evangelicals often did, as sufferers torn from their families, ridiculed and cursed, shackled, whipped, and driven to market, bereft of affection and faith. She merged this evangelical suffering to Adam Smith's dictate that a spectator "endeavor, as much as he can, to put himself in the situation of the other, and to bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer."[85] She started with the mainstream practice of sympathy, merging revivalism with Smith's conception of sympathy. But she named this attempt to grasp "every little circumstance" of the slave's pain "metempsychosis," gesturing toward the integrated all-soul that haunted Hindu practitioners, which placed a wedge in this mainstream practice. And unlike her evangelical sisters, Chandler framed her practice with a view of pain as a breach in man's law rather than a natural part of Christian suffering and redemption, so her goal differed: she hoped to generate a real sense of emergency about systemic violence. That transforms the final "oh!" from an orgasmic revelation of suffering and redemption into an angry shout against man's barbarism.

Perhaps a twenty-something abolitionist, a Methodist in a small town in Michigan Territory, reads Chandler's dramatic passage aloud to friends and family gathered in a timber church on a snowy Sunday afternoon. Chandler divides her directive about transmigration into stages. First, abolitionists imagine the slaves' separation from loved ones and homeland, making an effort to "feel the heart-brokenness of being separated from all they love." Then they envision the bodily sensations of that parting, when "the brain is reeling, the hot brow throbbing with agony," and they picture bystanders' callousness in "the heartless jest, or the brutal curse." They picture the violent transport to auction, imagining the weight of fetters and "the successive strokes of the keen thong"; they envision the "unceasing and hopeless toil" of slavery while "exposed to all the pitiless beating of the elements." They momentarily open up "to the gentle influences of affection, till they feel almost as if there was yet something like to happiness in their lot," only to lose all faith, as their loved ones are torn away from them. Chandler advises listeners to linger in this bleak moment: "let them enter into the desolateness of that moment; stand alone and forsaken in the world; without religion, without a friend in earth or heaven, to whom they may turn for consolation in their hour of trial; with no kind accents to soothe, no hope to cheer them – oh!"[86] In the description of metempsychosis, then, Chandler guides listeners from the slaves' circumstances in Africa to America to no man's land; from social pain to physical pain and back; from the soul to the body and back. With the customary "oh!" that echoes through evangelicals' abolitionist pleas, she signals multiple valences, however. For those sentimental readers outside the movement, those who merely peep into the world of slavery as voyeurs appropriating slave bodies to cast themselves as capable of keener sensibilities, this "oh" is pornographic, orgasmic. For evangelical abolitionists, it is a Christian cry of redemptive hope for suffering humankind.

For Garrisonians, though, this "oh!" is an indignant shout. It is an attack on the structural violence occasioned by the very Constitution purportedly meant to protect citizens. After this protest, Chandler issues a judgment: if Americans would "but endeavor to realize the bitterness of such a lot, surely, surely, they would rush to the rescue" of slaves. This is not a challenge, not a plea, but a third-person, angry judgment about the necessary human response. If abolitionists suspended momentarily their sense of an individual self and separate soul, if they traveled imaginatively into a slave's material circumstances, toward the "amalgamated" all-soul, they would act. This is a transmigratory "endeavor," not an accomplishment. And it is a problematic endeavor that Chandler eventually revised: the danger here is precisely the risk of appropriation and voyeurism. Abby Kelley Foster transformed this problematic practice from a third-person to a first-person exercise, thereby deepening the possibility of the abolitionists' appropriating the slave body, but she also, usefully, added a periperformative corollary: a challenge mandating direct and immediate audience involvement in the cause. Speaking of the slave's pain, she demanded, "when I see you and others standing by to witness it, what do I hear from your lips?"[87] This aspect of performing metempsychosis had traction. This was the step that eventually prompted activists to judge themselves from the standpoint of the slave.

To prove their sympathy, white and free black anti-slavery activists initially performed a type of sadomasochism. They sadistically imagined the slave's body in pain, and they turned that pain on themselves. As Michel Foucault explained in his *History of Sexuality*, in modern culture the operations of power are eroticized: national subjects must submit to discipline but they must also make others submit. This is difficult for some to assimilate, so they parody social violence through masochistic fantasies, identifying both as passive liberal *subjects* of the state and as *perpetrators* of the violence served on those subjects by the state.[88] This is part of what was happening in the anti-slavery performance practice of mental metempsychosis.

Deleuze, however, explains that a masochist's *apparent* obedience conceals a criticism and a provocation: it demonstrates the presence of a certain kind of unacceptable servitude in the culture, in this case, slavery, racial discrimination, and gender oppression.[89] Especially when this provocation is performed live, over and over again, in public gatherings, as the impetus toward politicized activity, it creates the sense of a real public emergency. As Chandler's black and white followers sympathized with the slave, then, they signaled that something was unspeakably wrong in the culture: violence was being done to bodies that mattered and an emergency intervention was necessary. But this initial attempt at metempsychosis required serious and ongoing revision.

Transforming metempsychosis

In a series of poetic publications between 1831 and 1834, Philadelphians Elizabeth Chandler and Sarah Forten debated the most efficacious way to revise the performance of anti-slavery metempsychosis, and their public "dialogue" serves here as a comparative investigation of early white and black approaches to abolitionist practice. Together Chandler and Forten, along with others like Sarah Douglass and Maria W. Stewart, offered their audiences poetry, speeches, essays, and dialogues, proposing and revising each other's notions of how to practice metempsychosis and embody abolitionism.[90] Their poems and dialogues were routinely recited at family dinners, in neighborly social gatherings, within literary gatherings, at free produce meetings, at church prayer concerts, and eventually at female anti-slavery society meetings. They were set to music and sung at juvenile anti-slavery society sewing circles and at abolitionist meetings. Their speeches and essays provided grist for countless conversations about abolition. By contemplating how Chandler and Forten, and later Douglass and Stewart, directed women to perform anti-racism and anti-slavery through their poems, speeches, and dialogues – and by examining their exchange of views itself as a public performance – we can gain a better understanding of how they schooled each other in sympathy and spectatorship, at first drawing generic slaves in pain to prove that they in fact felt pain and deserved release, then creating more three-dimensional slave characters with their own independent agency – throughout critiquing their own privilege and the economic system that tarnished the flag and thwarted true democracy. Both Chandler and Forten performed metempsychosis, encouraging those who recited their poems for live audiences to imagine themselves in the slaves' circumstances and to respond in sympathy with the slaves' pain or fury or relief. Forten, however, routinely deflected attention away from the pain of the slave, even as she articulated it, and Chandler learned from her critical revision.

Both Chandler and Forten grew up within church communities that regarded slavery as immoral. Chandler was an adventuresome twenty-four-year-old white Quaker who in August of 1830 left the ferment of Lucretia Mott's house of worship – the restive Hicksite Quaker community newly established in the Cherry Street Meeting House in downtown Philadelphia – to resettle in Michigan Territory with her younger brother and aunt. Sarah Forten was seven years younger than Chandler, a lively seventeen-year-old free black member of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, located on the outskirts of Philadelphia.[91] Her family, the Forten-Purvises, had for years been prominent within the black community, tracing their ancestry to Africa, to Delaware Valley Native Americans, and to Holland. When anti-black riots swept through Philadelphia in August 1834, Sarah Forten's brother emerged as a target because of his comfortable income, respectable position, country estate, carriage – and rental properties occupied by whites.[92]

Both Chandler and Forten adopted pseudonymous host bodies to protect themselves, give voice to different aspects of their identities, and make it appear that abolitionist ranks were expanding rapidly. Forten appeared as Ada or Magawisca, and Chandler dramatized herself under a cluster of feminine pseudonyms as she edited and contributed to the Ladies' Repository. While abolitionist sentiment surfaced across the Northeast and Midwest in this period before the emergence of anti-slavery societies, Philadelphia and Boston served as the initial hubs of anti-slavery activity, sometimes competing for transatlantic resources. Chandler and Forten represented Philadelphia's anti-slavery movement vigorously. Their "virtual" exchanges in early 1831 served as a rehearsal for actual interracial gatherings of women in Philadelphia's free produce societies later that same year.

At first glance, Chandler and Forten appeared to be championing opposing ideologies, since Lundy's *Genius*, sponsor of Chandler's column, originally supported gradual abolition, while Garrison's *Liberator*, which published Forten's poems, demanded immediate abolition. Indeed, as late as December 1830, a month before Garrison launched his paper, Lundy defended "*every effort* that is made to exhibit to public view the deplorable condition of the colored race" as it "must have a *tendency* to mitigate it." He swept the American Colonization Society into his wide net of inclusion, though he called its efforts to move free blacks to Africa "monstrous."[93]

Elizabeth Chandler herself, however, was more radical than her editor or relatives: she was an avid immediatist, and used her "Ladies' Repository" column to advocate actively *against* gradualism. After Chandler left for Michigan in August 1830, Lundy distributed editorial tasks to others, traveling through Texas, Mexico, Haiti, and Canada to purchase land for refugees. In his absence, Chandler followed her own editorial desires. Having published her first poem in 1826, she launched her editing career on September 2, 1829. Within three months she was unequivocally championing immediate emancipation, following the lead of fellow Quaker Elizabeth Heyrick. While Lundy had published Heyrick's pamphlet on immediate abolition alongside the minutes of the American Colonization Society (which refuted Heyrick), Chandler introduced Heyrick's subsequent "Letters on the Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery, To Which are added, Thoughts on Compensation" with much fanfare and praise.[94] She published these "Letters," extract by extract, in her column, accompanied by reports from other British women promulgating immediate abolition. Following Heyrick's lead, Chandler championed free produce societies, reporting enthusiastically on the interracial networking undergirding consumer boycotts in Philadelphia in May 1831. Through her columns, Chandler helped create a transatlantic network of women performing anti-slavery.

While Chandler published in the established *Genius*, Sarah Forten, Sarah Douglass, and Maria W. Stewart all published in Garrison's upstart *Liberator*, which unequivocally advocated immediate abolitionism. Garrison came to see Lundy's projects, free produce efforts as well as resettlement plans, as misguided and unproductive, and, after being jailed for libel, left his initial stint on Lundy's paper in September 1829. With funding from Sarah Forten's father James as well as others, Garrison established the *Liberator* on January 1, 1831, and it soon became the major clearinghouse of radical abolitionism, with Forten, Douglass, and Stewart chief among the women contributing to the paper in the early 1830s. Garrison sent the *Liberator* free of charge to Chandler after her move to Michigan. The Forten family, like Chandler, read both the *Genius* and the *Liberator*, as did most Northern abolitionists, including, very likely, Sarah Douglass and Maria Stewart.[95]

All four of these female abolitionists, then, believed in immediate abolition, but they performed their sympathy with the slave disparately, inviting different kinds of performances among those who read, recited, and sang their poems and dialogues, and discussed their columns and speeches. While they may not have meant for their publications to be responses to one another, the women who recited Chandler's and Forten's poems at various kinds of gatherings likely perceived them as such.

The first dialogue between Chandler and Forten reveals a difference of opinion on how sympathy with the slave should be performed within the family circle. As Chandler packed her bags for Michigan Territory in August 1830, she published two poems, "The Grave of the Unfortunate" and "Think of Our Country's Glory," inviting abolitionists to imagine the female slave's painful circumstances, legitimize the male slave's anger, indict America's sham freedom, and speak out against slavery as "sisters" and "friends."

Forten, in her maiden appearance as Ada in January 1831, focused less upon the slave's pain and anger than Chandler did, and less on the abolitionist as rescuer. She asked her audiences to imagine the slave as protected by God rather than the abolitionist. Forten's slave thereby was sheltered *beyond pain* in the poems "Grave of the Slave" and "The Slave Girl's Address to Her Mother." Forten, like Chandler, indicted America's mock democracy, but placed her hopes not in abolitionists but in God.

These poems were among those recited after dinner within private homes, by liberal black and white families eager to pass the long evenings in a companionable way, to model the art of reading aloud for their families, and to act upon their abolitionist and anti-racist sentiments in the presence of family and friends. Both gradualists and immediatists read the abolitionist press, and poetry recitations took place in rural towns and villages as well as cities across the Midwest and Northeast. Recitations surfaced in evangelical homes touched by revivalism, in liberal religious gatherings of rationalist Unitarians and Quakers, and in the meeting-places of the politically restive.

Most of those who recited Chandler and Forten's poems did not know the poets' identities, but within two months of her first publication Garrison identified Forten's "Ada" as "a young colored lady of Philadelphia."[96] James Forten, Sr. (1766–1842), investor in the *Liberator*, which published his daughter's poems, may have encouraged Sarah to read aloud to guests from time to time: the Forten and Purvis women routinely acted as hostesses for anti-slavery gatherings in their homes.[97] Figures such as the elderly Richard Allen (1760–1831), the youthful William Whipper (1804–1876), and old friends Grace Bustill Douglass and Robert Douglass, Sr. (1776–1849), with their daughter Sarah, might have been favored with a reading. Elizabeth Chandler's relatives did not welcome her activism as much, but in Michigan Territory she established her own abolitionist group, so she, too, recited her work for a ready audience, just like her counterparts in northeastern and midwestern cities and towns.

As black and white women seated themselves in their parlors to listen to neighbors or friends read aloud Elizabeth Chandler's column on a humid August evening in 1830, they may have first listened to her laudatory comments on Africa "from whence arose the bright day star of science – the birth-place of intellectual glory."[98] Africans, Chandler's reader explained, had not only invented science but had also sheltered the Christ child from Herod. Early Christians had repaid them "by making their children a prey to unholy avarice and cruelty." Following this scathing indictment of (white American) Christianity, perhaps a different reader, the young man of the house, moved closer to the fire to perform Chandler's poem "The Grave of the Unfortunate." He asked "the silent lute" to "breathe out . . . a tearful melody," and confided, "I'll tell thee" how at twilight on a midsummer's evening long ago, a slave died in a Texas desert. Chandler's poetic speaker tells the tale of a husband returning to his cabin to discover his wife, clutching their children behind her, trying unsuccessfully to avoid their master's whip. Without hesitating, the husband strikes the master, who runs away "in rage and shame." It is "the Afric chieftain," however, rather than the savage master, who dies "a felon's death." The young abolitionist reading Chandler's poem aloud thus asked listeners to sympathize not only with the wife's fear but also with the chieftain's anger – legitimized by the master's "shame" and cowardly escape. The poem's speaker closes by commemorating the enslaved husband's unjust death through a heartfelt appreciation of the fragrant Cereus cactus flower which blooms in the Texas desert on midsummer's eve to celebrate this slave's resistance. In "The Grave of the Unfortunate," then, Chandler and her reader asked audiences to balance sympathy for the slave's pain with approval of the slave's angry resistance, kept alive through the reader's commemorative action.

In “Think of Our Country’s Glory,” Chandler’s speaker focuses more on sham democracy than on the slave’s pain or resistance. She urges spectators to “think of the frantic mother, / Lamenting for her child,” but she links that sympathetic scene to a critique of ersatz democracy. She describes “our country’s glory” as “all dimmed with Afric’s tears – / Her broad flag stain’d and gory / With the hoarded guilt of years!” Here the bloodied flag reveals how freedom is inextricable from slavery. Abolitionists put this poem to music and routinely sang it at anti-colonizationist and anti-slavery gatherings, performing as outliers to the state. As abolitionist Samuel Joseph May (1797–1871) explained of Chandler’s hymn, “the singing of such hymns and songs as these was like the bugle’s blast to an army ready for battle.”[99] After excoriating the United States, these singers exhorted one another to continue their activism past their meetings: “Think of the words we’ve spoken, / When I am far from thee.” In the final stanzas, singers specifically validated female abolitionists’ role: “When woman’s heart is bleeding, / Shall woman’s voice be hush’d? . . . Remember their oppression, / Forget not, sister, friend.” On November 19, 1835, when the interracial Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society finally managed to hold its annual meeting despite the fear engendered just a month earlier by an anti-abolitionist mob of perhaps 5,000 “gentlemen of property and standing” openly attacking them, the first order of business for them was to sing this hymn.[100]

Sarah Forten’s “The Grave of the Slave,” however, offered these women a different way to perform metempsychosis: while Chandler’s slave’s heart is exhumed for further torture, Forten’s is sung to rest. Forten asks performers to imagine the slave, this time a male slave, not at the moment when the master is inflicting pain, but much later, when he is beyond human reach, at rest in the great leveler, the grave “where the rich and the poor find a permanent home.”[101] Forten’s “Grave” was transformed into a hymn in 1836, so at literary and anti-slavery society meetings across the Northeast abolitionists sang that “He knows not, he hears not” his master’s “cruel demand,” because he “is safe in his last home.” Like Chandler’s lonely Texan slave, Forten’s slave remains unlamented in an unmarked gravesite – but for Forten the captive finds in death both “freedom and rest.”

As if to intensify her message of safe passage for the slave, Forten, again as Ada, published “The Slave Girl’s Address to Her Mother” a week later, and instead of lingering on the pain, anger, or death of the slave and the abolitionist’s rescue, Forten revised Chandler’s approach by focusing on God’s protectiveness. Maybe a free black schoolteacher like Susan Paul read Forten’s poem at a Sunday school gathering in 1831. Forten’s slave girl, twice, tells her mother *not* to weep, to reject the role of the sufferer.

"Oh! mother," Forten asked her interpreters to call out, "Weep not, though our lot be hard," because "God will be our guard." With God as her protector, Forten's speaker refuses the pain of the slave, then castigates Americans, asking them, "Do ye not blush to see our galling chains?" In this moment, Forten's performer represents the slave girl as a partisan spectator judging her audiences: slavery stains "your land," she tells her white and black listeners, transforming freedom into "nothing but a name."

Having critiqued sham democracy, abolitionists reciting Forten's poem then placed the responsibility for deliverance firmly in God's hands. Forten's speaker calls out to her Maker: "Oh God, this cannot be; / Thou to thy children's aid wilt surely flee." Eager to avoid depicting slaves or herself as incendiary, Forten represents God as rescuer. But the article immediately underneath Forten's poem in the *Liberator* – and likely to be read aloud afterwards – focuses on a different, less conciliatory message. It draws on David Walker's incendiary anti-slavery pamphlet to state that "human beings were never made to submit to absolute and unconditional despotism."[102]

In the late winter and early spring of 1831, Chandler and Forten continued their dialogue on how to perform anti-slavery: both still advocated sympathy with slaves, but they started to focus on other figures, too, notably slaveholders and Northern ladies. They started to critique white privilege. Chandler stressed Northern women's awful complicity in a slave-labor economy as she articulated her theory of metempsychosis. Forten embraced this practice of sympathizing with the slave and engaging in self-judgment, but she cautioned against representing the most violent imaginings of physical torture. And even as Forten explored the slaves' imagined circumstances, she raised questions about the limits of metempsychosis.

In a single February 1831 column, Chandler defined metempsychosis, offered a poem that exemplified it, and explained how a consumer boycott of slave produce linked it to the real world. She argued that women must practice "Mental Metempsychosis" to realize the slave's bitter circumstances, understand their own complicity in those circumstances, judge their behavior accordingly, and act to end slavery. She asked women to "Think of the Slave." This poem, like her own "Think of Our Country's Glory" and Forten's "The Grave of the Slave," was eventually set to music and sung in family circles and abolitionist gatherings. Singers asked one another to think of the slave in their hours of glee, woe, and prayer, and to "pray for a brighter lot for him." The abject slave in Chandler's poem faces nothing but "rankling thorns" and a "wintry day." In her accompanying essay, Chandler holds consumers of slave produce responsible, warning that "a heart undisciplined by self-control" cannot find happiness.[103] For Chandler, then, performing metempsychosis led directly to self-judgment and consumer activism.

Sarah Forten, however, recalibrated Chandler's practice by revealing its limits. Immediately after Chandler's column on metempsychosis appeared, Forten as Ada published her poem "Past Joys." In it, Forten forced those who recited her poems to acknowledge the incommensurateness of their sympathy: as her speaker announced, the slave's "is a sorrow deeper far, / Than all that we can show."[104] Forten's abolitionist can only "show," while the slave actually feels. By emphasizing the depth of the slave's pain in comparison with what abolitionists can only "show" of it, Forten forces those who practice metempsychosis to notice its bounds: her readers may shed tears reflecting on "the friends we've loved, the home we've left," but the emotions of "Afric's son" were his own.

Forten then widens the performance of metempsychosis: in a cross-racial performance honoring her Native American as well as her African ancestors, Forten lobbied not only against slavery and racism but implicitly against the mistreatment of Native Americans. Borrowing the pseudonym Magawisca from Catharine Maria Sedgwick's heroine in the popular novel *Hope Leslie*, Forten published a pseudonymous essay in which she lambasted a nation that "offers to every white man the right to enjoy life, liberty, and happiness," but robs God-given rights from "those who cannot shew a fair exterior, (no matter what be the noble qualities of their mind)." Protected by her performance as a virtuous Indian maiden, Forten lashes out: "is it because their skins are black" that slaves and Native Americans – and freemen – are to "enrich the soil of the pale faces?"[105] Particularly through the phrase "pale faces," Forten links slavery to the mistreatment of Native Americans. She warns audiences to "awake from your lethargy . . . cast off the yoke from the oppressed" to avoid provoking the "Great Spirit, who created all men free and equal." Abolitionists recited Forten's lines, which warned that the spirit's "anger will not always slumber," but will "shake the tree of liberty and its blossoms shall spread over the earth." A righteous Native American "Great Spirit," through a Christian jeremiad, will create a true global democracy. This same righteous God, in the spring of 1831, heard Ada's poetic "Prayer": slaves in this poem find "sweet communion" and "rest" as well as hope by exercising the "sacred right" to spiritual freedom.[106] A prayerful slave, Forten hinted, was not a docile one. Chandler, meantime, reassured her readers in the *Genius* that she would not "forget the Afric's woe."[107]

By the summer of 1831, Chandler built on Forten's warnings, demanding that abolitionists engage in community organizing. She sought to awaken "the powerful voice of public sentiment," to rouse audiences "from their torpid insensibility," so that they would establish female anti-slavery societies.[108] It was woman's task, she argued, "to instill juster [sic] sentiments into . . . her statesmen and her counselors . . . but to effect this . . . there must be a unison of purpose and sentiment, which cannot be attained but by means of associations." Within the Quaker community, black and white women started networking with one another through free produce institutions, and such "manifestations of reciprocal good feeling" promised much. Indeed, the Colored Female Free Produce Society's work was, Chandler chastised, "a reproach to the inactive carelessness of so many of their white sisters."[109]

Chandler and Forten continually adapted metempsychosis, then, trying out disparate tactics in response to one another's experiments. Chandler eventually, in her poem "Juan de Paresa, the Painter's Slave," represented a slave as a world-class artist. De Paresa mixed pigments for the renowned Spanish Golden Age artist Diego Velásquez (1599–1660), who was valued most for his innovative treatment of this pigment and his spectatorial consciousness. His 1656–57 masterpiece, *Las meninas* (*Maids of Honor*), remains as a testament not only to the artist's formal prowess but also to the importance of the artist's palette, being visibly covered with de Paresa's pigment at the center of the frame. In Chandler's poem, de Paresa outshines his brilliant master, positioning the spectator to admire not only his talent but also his full humanity. In "earnest thought," de Paresa surveys the Spanish landscape through Velásquez's studio window, "his mind . . . full of nice perceptions; and a love, / Deep and intense, for what was beautiful." Emboldened by this vision, he mixes his own pigments and creates a painting that the king pronounces "beautiful!" De Paresa proves that he observes, thinks, feels, and, through rebellion, creates, thereby winning his freedom.[110]

Chandler returns, then, to her earlier resistant slave figure, even as she continues to demand an activist response to slavery, and Forten continues to emphasize God's protective power as well as his righteousness. Sympathetic practice, filtered through metempsychosis and under constant revision, helped Chandler and Forten move women into dramatic conversations, dialogues, and poetic performances, establishing networks across racial and cultural divides as women fine-tuned their activist strategies. Their performances heightened public awareness of slavery, articulated their own complicity in its violence, and prompted self-judgment and active engagement in the anti-slavery movement. Together, they sidestepped some of the dangers that Frances Wright faced in her direct attacks on slavery, even as they fell prey to others.

While antebellum abolitionists all performed sympathy with the slave, then, their performances varied from one another in telling and important ways, even within the Garrisonian wing of the movement. Revisiting their public dialogues about how to perform anti-slavery reveals how they transformed Adam Smith's performances of sympathy into group performances that undermined imperialism. They acknowledged the limits of the practice of sympathy; they believed that they could not experience the slaves' circumstances except through their own bodies and perceptions, and this prompted them to imagine the slave as a partisan spectator judging their responses to slavery. This partisan figure, in turn, occasioned self-judgment as well as a provocation and demand for immediate action. Through their conversations, dramatic dialogues, poetry recitations, and songs, black and white women began the long process of changing public sentiment and altering their own heretofore relatively comfortable lives. As they strove to strengthen sympathy for the slaves, however, they slowly realized that they also needed to exercise a compassion for themselves.

Notes

1. "Sympathy, n.," in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, www.oed.com (accessed Nov. 4, 2013). All subsequent formal definitions are from the same source. For an example of this usage of sympathy, see William Beaumont, *Experiments and Observations on Gastric Juice, and the Physiology of Digestion, with Notes by Andrew Combe, M.D*, reprint (Edinburgh: Maclachlan & Stewart; London: South Bridge and Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1838), 40, LC. Also see the *OED* example in Andrew Combe, *The Physiology of Digestion, Considered with Relation to the Principles of Dietetics* (Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon, 1836), 152, LC. For a useful introduction to the history of emotion, see Peter N. Stearnes and Jan Lewis, eds., *An Emotional History of the United States* (New York University Press, 1998), 1–29. Information on Willis from Edwin Clarke and L. S. Jacyna, *Nineteenth-Century Origins of Neuroscientific Concepts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 313.
2. See Wispe, "History"; Marjorie Garber, "Compassion," in Lauren Berlant, ed., *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 15–28; Foster, *Choreographing*.
3. On ethical action, see Andrew Stewart Skinner, *A System of Social Science: Papers Relating to Adam Smith*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 55. On empiricism, see Michael Shapiro, *Reading "Adam Smith": Desire, History, and Value*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), xxvi.
4. Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755), vol. 1, 19–23, in *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, facsimile, ed. Bernhard Fabian, vol. v (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969); Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728), 15, in

Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson, vol. II (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971).

5. On defining periperformatives, see Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Introduction," in Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds., *Performativity and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 18 n. 14. Ahmed traces the related concept of "contagion" in "Gibbs 2001, Sedgwick 2003, Brennan 2004, Probyn 2005," all of them rooted in Silvan S. Tomkins's work (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, 36). For "as by infection," see Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste, to which is Now Added Part Fourth: Of the Standard of Taste with Observations Concerning the Imitative Nature of Poetry*, 1759, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: printed for J. Bell, and W. Creech; London: T. Cadell, 1780), 79–80. For "a reciprocal relation . . . ," see David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, 3 vols. (London: printed for John Noon, at the White-Hart, near Mercer's Chapel, in Cheapside, 1739–40), vol. I, book I, section VI, 447, and book III, section II, 470–71, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://gdc.gale.com/products/eighteenth-century-collections-online/, doc. no. CW3318260482 (accessed Oct. 14, 2013). For "reciprocal good feeling," see "Colored Females' [sic] Free Produce Society," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 2, no. 1 (May 1831): 12, APSO.
6. For "act suitably," see Dugald Stewart, "Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith, L.L.D., 1793, Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Read by Mr. Stewart January 21 and March 18, 1793," in *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, vol. X, 1–98, Adam Smith Institute, www.adamsmith.org/sites/default/files/resources/dugald-stewart-bio.pdf (accessed Oct. 8, 2013). For "conjunction of Interest," see Hutcheson, *An Essay*, 14.
7. Hutcheson, *System*, vol. I, 49–51. On "sublime terror," see Wood, *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography*, 137.
8. On redress, see Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1757, 2nd ed. (London: R. and J. Dodsley. 1759; reprint Menston, England: Scolar Press Limited, 1970), 77. For "transient excitement . . ." and guilt, see Elizabeth Chandler, "Opposition to Slavery," in *Essays, Philanthropic and Moral, Principally Relating to the Abolition of Slavery in America* (Philadelphia: T. E. Chapman, 1845), 27. For "indifference," see [Elizabeth Margaret Chandler], "Indifference," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 4, no. 8 (Oct. 30, 1829): 60, APSO.
9. Chandler, "Indifference."
10. See Bentham, *An Introduction*: on "bias," see 57; on levels of sensibility, 52, 65; on "biases," 67–68.
11. Ibid., cccix.
12. For "The question is not . . . ," see ibid., 32. Elaine Scarry contended that "the relative ease or difficulty with which any given phenomenon can be *verbally represented* also influences the ease or difficulty with which that phenomenon comes to be *politically represented*"; artists and writers can offer "compelling" and "usable" forms of resistance in the face of this "real-life crisis of silence."

Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 12, 10.

13. Bentham, *An Introduction*, 282.
14. See Dugald Stewart, *Outlines of Moral Philosophy: For the Use of Students in the University of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1793), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://gdc.gale.com/products/eighteenth-century-collections-online/, doc. no. CW3319672250 (accessed Oct. 14, 2013), reprint (New York: Garland, 1976); for "benevolence," see 95. See Sheila C. Moeschen, *Acts of Conspicuous Compassion: Performance Culture and American Charity Practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), on how benevolence, transformed into performing charity, operates in United States culture.
15. Stewart, *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, 94.
16. Ibid., 245–46.
17. Orlando Patterson, "The Ancient and Medieval Origins of Modern Freedom," in Mintz and Stauffer, eds., *The Problem of Evil*, 31–66, at 32. On "sublime," see Edmund Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. Paul Langford, 9 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981–97), vol. 1, 216.
18. Cornelia Wells Walter, "Affectation of Manner," *Daily Evening Transcript* 15, no. 4414 (Dec. 14, 1844): 2. On corsets, see Cornelia Wells Walter, "Willis," *Daily Evening Transcript* 14, no. 3886 (Mar. 24, 1843): 2.
19. See Merish, *Sentimental Materialism*: on "benevolent caretaking," 3; on "consumerism," 5.
20. Steven Mintz, "Introduction to Part II," in Mintz and Stauffer, eds., *The Problem of Evil*, 127–37, at 128.
21. Louisa Lee Waterhouse, journal, 111–13, undated entry, Dec. 1839 (the entry follows "Dec." and precedes "1840"); Harriet Martineau, *Illustrations of Political Economy* (London: Charles Fox, 1834), LC.
22. On Northerners, see Carol Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil: Free Produce and Radical Antislavery, 1820–1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 27, no. 3 (2007): 377–405, at 383–84. On consumer activism, see Lawrence B. Glickman, "'Buy for the Sake of the Slave': Abolitionism and the Origins of American Consumer Activism," *American Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (Dec. 2004): 889–912.
23. [Elizabeth Chandler], "Free Labor," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 4, no. 2 (Sept. 2, 1829): 4, APSO.
24. Emma Jones Lapsansky, "'Since They Got Them Separate Churches': Afro-Americans and Racism in Jacksonian Philadelphia," in Rael, ed., *African-American Activism before the Civil War*, 100–18, at 102. The neighborhood around 6th and Lombard Streets, near the historic Bethel Church, anchored this community, though free blacks settled throughout the city and suburbs.
25. "Colored Females' [sic] Free Produce Society," 12. On "manifestations," see "Coloured [sic] Female Free Produce Society," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 2, no. 4 (Aug. 1831): 57, APSO. On free produce's spurring immediate abolition, see Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 377–405.
26. Orphaned at age nine, she considered herself "a resident and a citizen" of the United States despite her Scottish roots. See Frances Wright, *Course of Popular*

Lectures by Frances Wright, in New-York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Louisville, and Other Cities, Towns, and Districts of the United States with Three Addresses, on Various Public Occasions. And a Reply to the Charges against the French Reformers of 1789, 2nd ed. (New York: Free Enquirers, 1829), 8. Wright's play *Altorf* (1819) focused on Swiss independence.

27. On global capitalism, see Frances Wright, *A Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States without Danger or Loss to the Citizens of the South* (Baltimore: Benjamin Lundy, 1825), 4. For "all colors," see Frances Wright's Establishment," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 1, no. 4 (July 28, 1827): 29, APSO. On amalgamation, see Frances Wright, "Nashoba," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 2, 8 (Mar. 8, 1828): 61, APSO.
28. On Nashoba's devolution, see "Frances Wright's Establishment." On free love, see Celia Morris Eckhardt, *Fanny Wright: Rebel in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984; rev. ed. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 104–05, 143. For "... source in ignorance," see Wright, *Course*, 8.
29. Wright, *Course*, 8–9. Wright publicly advocated women's right to birth control, property, and divorce, but she did not develop a feminist critique of gender so much as a utilitarian and socialist critique of democracy. See Elizabeth Ann Bartlett, *Liberty, Equality, Sorority: The Origins and Interpretation of American Feminist Thought. Frances Wright, Sarah Grimke, and Margaret Fuller* (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1994), 38.
30. A typical report, on a Walnut Street Theatre appearance, reads: "The audience was large, filling the pit and two tiers of boxes, one of which was occupied almost entirely by ladies." Often Wright asked the audience to hold their applause to show respect to those Quakers present. "Frances Wright's Lectures in Philadelphia," *The Free Enquirer* 1, no. 30 (May 20, 1829): 238, APSO. On theatres closing to her, see ["Article 9 – No Title"], *Saturday Evening Post* 8, no. 425 (Sept. 19, 1829): 3, APSO. For "uncommon powers," see R.D.O., "Miss Frances Wright: Frances Wright. Prove All Things [sic]," *The Free Enquirer* 1, no. 42 (Aug. 12, 1829): 330, APSO. In Providence, men were charged 12 cents, and women admitted free: see "From Providence," *The Free Enquirer* 1, no. 51 (Oct. 14, 1829: 407, APSO. On women's anxious attendance, see "France [sic] Wright's: [sic] First Appearance as a Public Lecturer," *The Free Enquirer* 4, no. 41 (Aug. 4, 1832): 323, APSO.
31. On her eloquence, see ["Article 6 – No Title"], *Philadelphia Album and Ladies Literary Gazette* 4, no. 27 (July 3, 1830): 213, APSO. On her hand, ushers, lack of "sensibility," and "Declaration," see N.N. [sic], "Miss Frances Wright," *The Souvenir* 2, no. 32 (Feb. 4, 1829): 251, APSO; and "The Philadelphia Album: Miss Wright's Oration," *The Free Enquirer* 1, no. 39 (July 22, 1829): 310, APSO. For "I am no Christian . . . ," see Wright, *Course*, 100–01.
32. "Friday Evening, August 7, 1829," *The New-England Galaxy and United States Literary Advertiser* 12, no. 617 (Aug. 7, 1829): 2, APSO. For "harlot," see "Frances Wright," *Western Recorder* 7, no. 32 (Aug. 10, 1830): 1, APSO.
33. Quoted in Eckhardt, *Fanny Wright*, 186.

34. Eighteenth-century young ladies' academies had also sponsored public programs in which girls practiced oratory. See Gay Gibson Cima, *Early American Women Critics: Performance, Religion, Race* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 157–59.
35. For a recent overview of Smith's philosophy, see D. D. Raphael, *The Impartial Spectator: Adam Smith's Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).
36. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3, 74.
37. Ibid., 11.
38. Ibid., 12.
39. Ibid, 240–42. On stoicism, see Foster, *Choreographing*, 145.
40. "Magnanimity, n.," in *OED Online*, www.oed.com (accessed Nov. 4, 2013). For "those nations . . . ," see Smith, *Theory*, 242.
41. Ibid., 12 (italics mine).
42. Wood, *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography*, 101.
43. Ada, "Past Joys," *Liberator* 1, no. 12 (Mar. 19, 1831): 1, APSO; Magawisca [Sarah Louisa Forten], "Communications: The Abuse of Liberty," *Liberator* 1, no. 13 (Mar. 26, 1831): 50, APSO.
44. Foster, *Choreographing*, 145; Jack Russell Weinstein, *On Adam Smith* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001), 43.
45. Elizabeth B. Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (Sept. 1995): 463–93.
46. This, in turn, leads to the "repressive authentication [of pain] by various expert knowledge practices, truth-claiming procedures, and mass media circuits." Allen Feldman, "Memory Theaters, Virtual Witnessing, and the Trauma-Aesthetic," *Biography* 27, no. 1 (2004): 163–202, at 167. On representing violence, see Carolyn Sorisio, "The Spectacle of the Body: Torture in the Antislavery Writing of Lydia Maria Child and Frances E. W. Harper," *Modern Language Studies* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 45–66, at 49.
47. On "patterns," see Spelman, *Fruits*, 7; on "blameworthiness," see Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 9. Also see Merish, *Sentimental Materialism*, 5; Sanchez-Eppler, *Touching Liberty*, 21–22.
48. Smith, *Theory*, 27.
49. Ibid., 128.
50. Ibid., 29.
51. Weinstein, *On Adam Smith*, 46.
52. Smith, *Theory*, 101. (This was the aspect of Smith's theory that Stewart later amplified.)
53. Charles L. Griswold, Jr., *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 201; Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, quoted in Weinstein, *On Adam Smith*, 48.
54. For an English translation of Vischer's essay, see Robert Vischer, "On the Optical Sense of Form," in Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, ed. and trans., *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873–1893* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center, 1994), 89–123. See also Edward Bradford Titchener,

Lectures on the Experimental Psychology of the Thought-Processes (New York: Macmillan Co., 1909), 185, 21–24.

55. Quoted in Wispe, "History," 18. In this section I draw in part upon Wispe's history of the term "empathy."
56. Titchener, *Lectures*, 185, 21–24. As Wispe explains, Titchener's "interest in etymology led him to translate *Einfühlung* as 'empathy' via the Greek *empatheia*, which means literally 'in' (*en*) 'suffering or passion' (*pathos*)" (Wispe, "History," 21).
57. Edward Bradford Titchener, *A Beginner's Psychology*, 1915, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 293; Bentham, *An Introduction*, 65.
58. For example, see David Krasner, "Empathy and Theater," in David Krasner and David Z. Saltz, eds., *Staging Philosophy: Intersections of Theater, Performance, and Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 255–76, at 258.
59. Ibid., 267. On Merleau-Ponty, see ibid., 270.
60. Through empathy, Stein argued, we become aware that the individual before us is "a sensitive, living body belonging to an 'I,' an 'I' that senses, thinks, feels, and wills. The living body of this 'I' not only fits into my phenomenal world but is itself the center of orientation of such a phenomenal world. It faces this world and communicates with me." Edith Stein, *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, vol. III: *On the Problem of Empathy*, 1917, 3rd rev. ed., trans. Waltraut Stein (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1989), 5–6, 14, 6.
61. Ibid., 14.
62. Stein contends that "empathy is not a feeling of oneness"; "the 'I' is always conscious of the other as separate" (ibid., 17). However, a "we" emerges: "'We' now feel a different joy from 'I,' 'you,' and 'he' in isolation. But 'I,' 'you,' and 'he' are retained in 'we'" (ibid., 18).
63. "Muses Bower: To a Lady Shedding Tears," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation and Baltimore Courier* 1, no. 3 (Sept. 12, 1825): 23, APSO. For "the morbidness . . . ," see "Female Sentimentalists," *Lady's Book* (June 1832): 296, APSO.
64. [Elizabeth Margaret Chandler], "Mental Metempsychosis," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, 1, no. 11 (Feb. 1831): 171, APSO, reprinted in Chandler, *Essays*, 117–18.
65. Clark, "'Sacred Rights,'" 463–93.
66. Ibid.
67. Chapman, *Right and Wrong in Boston*, 80–81. On "stickiness," see Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, 4–14.
68. As Nudelmann notes, a key question facing Northern abolitionists was: "How can one feel the pain of a suffering body when the body itself is absent?" But was the body of the slave truly absent? That depended upon where one lived north of the Mason–Dixon line. Northern slavery ended abruptly in a handful of states: in 1777 in Vermont, in 1780 in Massachusetts and Maine, and in 1784 in New Hampshire, but in most Northern states, including New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey, gradual abolition extended enslavement into the late 1820s. In New York, slavery did not end

entirely until July 5, 1827. In Pennsylvania, slavery officially ended in 1848. Southern slaves routinely accompanied their masters North, serving them in public conveyances, inns, taverns, halls, and emerging restaurants. In addition, many Quakers and other activists aided fugitives fleeing North. Female abolitionists' performances – recitations of poetry, fiery public speeches, theatrical melodramas and satires – were complex acts of forgetting as well as remembering the slave. Franny Nudelmann, "'The Blood of Millions': John Brown's Body, Public Violence, and Political Community," *American Literary History* 13, no. 4 (2001): 639–70, at 644. On slavery's demise in New York, see Douglas C. Stange, *Patterns of Antislavery among American Unitarians, 1831–1860* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977), 21; and Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England 1780–1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

69. Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 105. Sarah Forten's great-grandfather "obtained his own freedom"; her grandfather was born free. Her great-aunt, a free black, owned a slave. Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 11–15. Sarah Forten married Joseph Purvis in 1838.
70. Lapansky, "'Since They Got,'" 109.
71. [Elizabeth Margaret Chandler], "Conversation," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 2, no. 7 (Dec. 1831): 108, APSO. Quotations in the next paragraph are from this same source.
72. "An Evening at Home, No. 1," *Liberator* 1, no. 39 (Sept. 24, 1831): 155, APSO.
73. Ibid.
74. "An Evening at Home, No. 4," *Liberator* 1, no. 45 (Nov. 5, 1831): 178, APSO.
75. Agnes [Elizabeth Margaret Chandler], "Tea-Table Talk," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 3, no. 1 (Nov. 1832): 12–15, APSO.
76. Edna, "Familiar Conversations – an Extract," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 3, no. 6 (Apr. 1833): 93, APSO. Lundy identifies Edna as Alice E. Betts of Philadelphia. Benjamin Lundy, letter to Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, Mar. 30, 1833, Elizabeth Margaret Chandler Collection, box 1, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.
77. Zillah [Sarah Mapps Douglass], "A Dialogue between a Mother and Her Children" *Liberator* 2, no. 35 (Sept. 1, 1832): 138, APSO. This "Juvenile Department" column is "By a young lady of color."
78. In 1825, Townsend had joined immediatist Elizabeth Coltman Heyrick, pottery heiress Sarah Wedgwood (1776–1856), and Quakers Mary Honeychurch Lloyd (1795–1865) and Sophia Sturge (1795–1845) to launch the Birmingham Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves.
79. Ela, "A Dialogue on Slavery," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 3, no. 12 (Oct. 1833): 190, APSO. James Birney's abolitionist newspaper, *The Philanthropist*, sparked anti-abolitionist riots in Cincinnati in 1836, damaging buildings in which cross-racial gatherings had been held.
80. Emily, "Literary Department: The Recaptured Slave," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 2, no. 4 (Feb. 2, 1828): 32, APSO.

81. G. B. Stebbins, "Tribute to Elizabeth M. Chandler," *Liberator* 22, no. 49 (Dec. 3, 1852): 195.
82. On "host bodies," see Cima, *Early American Women Critics*, 5–8.
83. [Elizabeth Margaret Chandler], 'Ladies' Repository: Address," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 4, no. 1 (Sept. 2, 1829): 4, APSO.
84. Pythagoras, for instance, drew upon the Hindu tradition of metempsychosis, but limited the concept of eternal return to human bodies. Plato described metempsychosis as a process through which immortal souls worked toward purity, moving from body to body over time to reach perfection. Transmigrating souls, Plato contended in *Phaedrus*, traveled bodiless through the realm of ideas, which upon occasion humans recollect as ideals.
85. Smith, *Theory*, 26.
86. [Chandler], "Mental Metempsychosis."
87. Quoted in Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time*, 32–3.
88. See Marianne Noble, *The Masochistic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 15. Noble is building on insights in John Noyes, *The Mastery of Submission*: *Inventions of Masochism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
89. Again, I am indebted to Noble, *The Masochistic Pleasures*, 9, as well as Gilles Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty," in *Masochism* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 15–142, at 87–88.
90. Gray, *Race and Time*, 74–75, compares the rhetorical strategies of Chandler's "The Kneeling Slave" to Forten's "An Appeal to Woman," but here I envision a public dialogue.
91. The Cherry Street Meeting House was replaced with a larger dwelling and renamed the Race Street Meeting, still located at 1515 Cherry Street in downtown Philadelphia. On the lively meetings there, see Anna Coe, letter to Elizabeth Chandler (Philadelphia), Aug. 30, 1830, in Marcia J. Heringa Mason, ed., *Remember the Distance that Divides Us: The Family Letters of Philadelphia Quaker Abolitionist and Michigan Pioneer Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, 1830–1842* (Ann Arbor: Michigan State University Press, 2004), 11–17, at 12. The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas is still located at 6361 Lancaster Avenue in the Philadelphia suburbs. The Arch Street Meeting House of abolitionists Grace and Sarah Douglass, as well as Sarah and Angelina Grimké, is still located at 320 Arch Street, just two miles away from Cherry Street Meeting and seven miles away from the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. In 1831, Sarah Grimké was thirty-nine and Angelina twenty-six. Lucretia Mott was thirty-eight. On the Forten-Purvis families, see Julie Winch, "Sarah Forten's Anti-Slavery Networks," in Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart, eds., *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 143–57, at 144. In 1790, 2,000 of the 4,000 blacks in Boston had Native American ancestry, according to Adelaide M. Cromwell, *The Other Brahmins: Boston's Black Upper Class, 1750–1950* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press,

1994), 32. Susan Paul, another young abolitionist, traced her ancestry to multiple sources: her mother, a white British woman, returned to England after the death of her (black American) father. See "Mrs. Paul," *Liberator* 11, no. 42 (Oct. 15, 1841): 167, APSO.

92. Lapsansky, "'Since They Got,'" 106.
93. "William Garrison's Lectures," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 1, no. 9 (Dec. 1830): 129, APSO. Lundy traveled thousands of miles to find suitable land for refugees. He delighted in traveling incognito, living hand to mouth for thousands of miles among multilingual fugitive slaves, Louisiana Creoles, Native Americans, Mexicans, Frenchmen. See Thomas Earle, ed., *The Life, Travels and Opinions of Benjamin Lundy: Including His Journeys to Texas and Mexico, with a Sketch of Contemporary Events, and a Notice of the Revolution in Hayti* (Philadelphia: W. D. Parrish, 1847; reprint 1971), 48–49, 54. He traveled around Texas Territory and Mexico (1830–31, 1833–35), twice visited Haiti, and once trekked to Upper Canada. Chandler's relatives were Orthodox Quakers; they supported Liberia as a resettlement site, a plan even Lundy maligned: Jane Howell, letter to Elizabeth Chandler, Philadelphia, June 13, 1831, in Mason, ed., *Remember the Distance*, 67–71, at 70.
94. Elizabeth Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition, or, An Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest, and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of West Indian Slavery* (London: sold by Hatchard and Sons, 1824; New York: James V. Seaman, 1825), LC RBSCD; published in *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Nov. 26, 1825 to Jan. 21, 1826. See "Colonization Society," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 1, no. 21 (Jan. 21, 1826): 163, APSO.
95. On Chandler's reading the *Liberator*, see Ruth Evans, letter to Jane Howell, Hazelbank, May 30, 1831, and Elizabeth Chandler, letter to Jane Howell, Hazelbank, February 12, 1832, in Mason, ed., *Remember the Distance*, 66–67 and 99.On Forten's reading the *Genius*, see Winch, *A Gentleman of Color*, 241. Chandler was active in the Philadelphia Free Produce Association, and according to Winch, Sarah Forten's sister Harriet and her husband were active in the Colored Free Produce Association (organized in 1831) (ibid., 95). Sarah Forten may have met Elizabeth Chandler at a joint free produce gathering.
96. "Our correspondent 'Ada' and 'Magawisca,' we are proud to learn, is a young colored lady of Philadelphia." Ada, "Prayer," *Liberator* 1, no. 13 (Mar. 26, 1831): 50, APSO. This was Forten's fifth contribution.
97. Janice Sumler-Lewis, "The Forten-Purvis Women of Philadelphia and the American Anti-Slavery Crusade," *The Journal of Negro History* 66, no. 4 (Winter 1981–82): 281–88, at 282. James Forten, Sr., was a central figure at the first national convention of black men, held in Philadelphia in September 1830. Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, "Negro Conventions and the Problem of Black Leadership," *Journal of Black Studies* 2 (Sept. 1971): 29–44; Howard Holman Bell, *A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement, 1830–1861* (1953; reprint New York: Arno Press, 1969), 7–17; C. Peter Ripley, *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, vol. III: *The United States, 1830–1846* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 146. Forten, Sr., contributed $54

to the *Liberator* before Garrison had lined up even one subscriber. Crawford Bernard Lindsay, "The Cornell University Special Collection on Slavery: American Publications through 1840" (thesis, Cornell University, 1949).

98. "The Map," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 1, no. 5 (Aug. 11, 1830): 73, APSO; Margaret [Elizabeth Margaret Chandler], "The Grave of the Unfortunate," and Agnes [Elizabeth Margaret Chandler], "Think," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 1, no. 5 (Aug. 1830): 73, APSO.
99. Samuel Joseph May, *Some Recollections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co., 1869), 261.
100. Maria W. Chapman, *Right and Wrong in Boston*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Boston: Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, Isaac Knapp, printer, 1836), 56, 73.
101. Ada, "Grave of the Slave," *Liberator* 1, no. 4 (Jan. 22, 1831): 14, APSO. On Frank Johnson's musical setting for this poem, see Winch, "Sarah Forten's Anti-Slavery Networks," 148. The noted black composer Francis Johnson put Forten's poem to music: see Charles K. Jones, *Francis Johnson (1792–1844): Chronicle of a Black Musician in Early Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2006), 152, 126–27.
102. Ada, "The Slave Girl's Address to Her Mother," *Liberator* 1, no. 5 (Jan. 29, 1831): 18, APSO; "Walker's Pamphlet," *Liberator* 1, no. 5 (Jan. 29, 1831): 18, APSO.
103. "Consumers," "Influence of Slavery on the Female Character," and [Chandler], "Mental Metempsychosis," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 1, no. 11 (Feb. 1831): 169–71, APSO. Agnes, "Think of the Slave," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 1, no. 11 (Feb. 1831): 169, APSO.
104. Ada, "Past Joys"; Magawisca, "Communications: The Abuse of Liberty."
105. Magawisca, "Communications: The Abuse of Liberty."
106. Ada, "Prayer." On a righteous God, see Magawisca, "Communications: The Abuse of Liberty."
107. "O Tell Me Not I Shall Forget," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 2, no. 1 (May 1831): 9, APSO. Chandler was responding to a friend who had warned her not to forget about the slave amid the beauty of Michigan.
108. "Associations," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 2, no. 2 (June 1831): 28, APSO.
109. "Coloured [sic] Female Free Produce Society," *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* 2, no. 4 (Aug. 1831): 57–58, APSO.
110. E.M.C. [Elizabeth Margaret Chandler], "Literary: Juan de Paresa, the Painter's Slave." *Liberator* 4, no. 20 (May 17, 1834): 80, APSO.