“To Change the Hearts of a Whole People”: Abolitionist Women’s Activism at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1834-1858

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Abstract

Harriet Beecher Stowe once described the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, held annually in Boston, as “decidedly the most fashionable shopping resort of the holidays.” Organized and managed by Maria Weston Chapman, her sisters, and many other Garrisonian women, the event was timed to coincide with the holiday gift-giving season. Crucial to the success of the National Bazaar were rich transatlantic connections with British women’s anti-slavery societies, which sent “beautiful,” “rare,” and “exquisite” objects of taste and art to be sold at the Bazaar. Indeed, Stowe was correct, the Bazaar was *the* fashionable, unmissable event of Boston’s social calendar, but it was also a site of great tension and contradiction.

My dissertation tells the story of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, via emotion, material culture, domesticity, and the power of objects and place—all tools used by the organizers to create a captivating, unforgettable, spectacular annual exhibition. I will touch on the storied history of charity bazaars, which played a key role in the nineteenth-century Anglo-American philanthropic landscape. Charity bazaars capitalized on the Victorian fascination with the Orient, using orientalist tropes and aesthetics to entice consumers. In doing so, women’s bazaars were often lampooned as sites of inappropriate sexuality, exhibitionism, and rampant consumerism. Many works of literature satirized the charity bazaar; perhaps most (in)famously, William Makepeace Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*. No charity bazaar was spared the comparison—not even the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. As such, the story of the National Bazaar has been overlooked, and dismissed in both its own time and within the historiography of Anglo-American abolition. My dissertation seeks to reclaim the National Bazaar as an important, vital moment in not only women’s anti-slavery activism, but within the broader historical narrative of Anglo-American abolition. Each chapter focuses on a different facet of the National Bazaar. I implicitly argue that women’s work should be acknowledged as such. In the case of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, my dissertation argues that it is a topic infinitely worthy of study and should be dismissed no longer in the collective and historical memory of abolition.

Resumé

Harriet Beecher Stowe a décrit le National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, tenu chaque année à Boston, comme “le lieu de shopping le plus en vogue des vacances.” Organisé et géré par Maria Weston Chapman, ses sœurs et de nombreuses autres femmes anti esclavagistes, l'événement a eu lieu durant la saison traditionnelle d'échange de cadeaux. De riches relations transatlantiques avec les sociétés de femmes britanniques anti esclavagistes ont été essentielles au succès du bazar. Ces sociétés envoyaient des objets “beaux”, “rares” et “exquis” pour être vendus au bazar. En fait, Stowe avait raison que le bazar était l’événement incontournable du calendrier social à Boston, mais c’était aussi un lieu de grandes tensions et contradictions.

Ma thèse raconte l'histoire du National Anti-Slavery Bazaar à travers l'émotion, la culture matérielle, la domesticité et le pouvoir des objets et du lieu. Ces outils ont été utilisés par les organisateurs pour créer des expositions inoubliables et spectaculaires. J’aborde la riche histoire des bazars de charité, un élément crucial du paysage philanthropique anglo-américain du XIXe siècle. Ces bazars ont profité de la fascination victorienne pour l’Orient, en utilisant des tropes et une esthétique orientalistes pour attirer les consommateurs. Les bazars de femmes étaient souvent ridiculisés comme des lieux de sexualité inappropriée, d’exhibitionnisme et de consumérisme effréné. Les bazars de charité ont été satirisés dans de nombreux ouvrages

littéraires, notamment Vanity Fair par William Makepeace Thackeray. Aucun bazar de charité n'a été épargné par la comparaison, pas même le National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. L'histoire de ce bazar a donc été négligée et écartée – à la fois en son temps et dans l'historiographie du mouvement abolitionniste anglo-américain. Ma thèse cherche à reconquérir le National Anti-Slavery Bazaar comme un moment important non seulement dans l'activisme des femmes contre l'esclavage, mais aussi dans le contexte du mouvement abolitionniste. Chaque chapitre se concentre sur une facette différente du bazar. Je soutiens implicitement que le travail des femmes doit être reconnu comme tel. Quant au National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, ma thèse soutient qu'il s'agit d'un sujet digne d'étude qui ne devrait plus être écarté dans la mémoire collective et historique de l'abolition.

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Who knew a dissertation could be so well-travelled? Over the course of 8 years, I have worked on my thesis in five different countries — Canada, the US, the UK, Italy, and France — and in 17 cities, ending in Montreal, right where I began. Except, as I write these acknowledgments at the end of everything, sitting on our comfortable red couch in our Plateau apartment, I am keenly aware I am no longer the same person who once studied for her comprehensive exams on her black futon in her NDG studio, circa 2016. I have always felt that working towards a PhD meant working towards something more than just a degree, a fancy piece of paper, or more letters behind a name. Working towards my PhD has been the journey of working towards *myself*. I believe strongly that the purpose of a PhD does not merely encompass the education of the mind, but also the education of the soul. A rich, vibrant, curious, ancient soul. Sounds corny, I know, but you'll have to take my word for it.

A dissertation is at the best of times an isolating, solo endeavour. At the worst of times, i.e. during the global COVID-19 pandemic, it is a crushingly lonely, burdensome, Sisyphean task. There was great darkness, but there was also light, and even the light of all lights. I could not have completed this dissertation without my community firmly and resolutely in my corner. As such, there are many people I would like to thank for their contributions and support over the last 8 years. To begin with, I want to thank my supervisors, Elizabeth Elbourne and Jason Opal for their support, feedback, and sage advice. This dissertation would not have been possible without them. Elizabeth, I cannot express to you how grateful I am for your continued support. You took me in, believed in me, said kind, reassuring things to me while I sobbed seemingly without end in your office. You gave me your time, your wisdom, your curiosity, your attention, and your trust. For all those reasons and for many more too great to list here, I am truly grateful. Thank you for your tremendous care and grace. Jason, whenever you spoke to me, my hyper-anxious mind relented, dare I say even relaxed, into a state of well-being. During our many conversations over the years, I felt taken care of and reassured by your kind, positive attitude, your enthusiasm for my ideas, and your willingness to talk said ideas through *ad infinitum*. I thank you for your warmth, your patience, your advocacy for me over the years, and your continued belief in my abilities.

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her outspokenness, generosity of spirit, and her commitment to speak truth to power in order to achieve a more inclusive, just world. Thank you for your spirit and your laughter, dear friend. I also want to thank the many brilliant, wonderful peers and friends I have had the pleasure of knowing and learning from over the years. Thank you for your conversations, your support, and your willingness to commiserate over a coffee (or several) and/or over drinks (or several). Alex Ketchum, Cynthia Tang, Vincenza (Vinny) Mazzeo, Ian Beattie, Hannah Sparwasser Soroka, Courtney Krolikoski, Mike Davis, Nathan Ince, Jeremy Fradkin, Matt-Wyman McCarthy and Jeannette Greven, I am looking at you.

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Felicia F. Gabriele
Rue Fabre, Montreal
2023.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is the result of original scholarship, and I am the sole author.

Felicia F. Gabriele
September 2023

Figures and Abbreviations

Figures

Abbreviations

AASS	American Anti-Slavery Society
AFASS	American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society
BCLASS	Bristol and Clifton Ladies Anti-Slavery Society
BFASS	Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society
BPL	Boston Public Library

Introduction

> **"Among the attractions of Boston during Christmas week, none, perhaps, has excited more attention or drawn more visitors than the Anti-Slavery Fair on Winter Street...It commenced its existence years back, under the ban of all the fashion and so-called respectability of the city, and it has held on, from year to year, increasing in its attractions and its popularity, til now it is decidedly the most fashionable shopping resort of the holidays. It is a singular feature of this Fair, that the majority of its contributions are from Europe—free-will offerings from foreign nations to the great cause of human freedom in America. This year, the foreign contributions have been so varied and brilliant as to make the Fair a perfect museum of the most récherché articles of taste and fancy from the old world."[1]**
> -Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (1855)

> **"In the following Recollections I have not attempted to recall any of the most prominent or important events of the anti-slavery cause. They have been related by other and better writers. I have only attempted to narrate the small and personal incidents about which no one but myself would probably know."[2]**
> -Sarah H. Southwick, *Reminiscences of the Early Anti-Slavery Days* (1893)

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The National Anti-Slavery Bazaar was the crowning jewel of abolitionist fundraisers. Held annually in Boston, and organized and managed by Maria Weston Chapman, her sisters, and many other Garrisonian women, the event was timed to coincide with the holiday gift-giving season. From the years 1834 to 1844, it was known as the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, and was organized by the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS).[3] From 1845 to 1858, during the period when abolitionist fundraising was at its pinnacle, it became the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. The contrast between the first Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair in 1834 to the final National Anti-Slavery Bazaar in 1858 could not be starker. William Lloyd Garrison, in an 1846 top of the year issue of *The Liberator*, reflected on how far the Fair had come from its early days to its most recent Bazaar format in Boston's Faneuil Hall: "[t]he Fair was held in *a private parlor*, at the residence of the estimable HENRY CHAPMAN, in Chauncy Place. The visits of its

[1] Harriet Beecher Stowe for *The Independent* included in Anne Warren Weston, "Report of the Twenty-First Anti-Slavery Bazaar," (January 10, 1855), 32.
[2] Sarah Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days* (1893), 1.
[3] Hereafter the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society will be referred to as the BFASS.

patrons, like those of angels, were 'few and far between.' The articles were neither numerous, nor especially attractive; and the receipts amounted only to a little more than three hundred dollars."[4] Flash forward approximately a decade:

> The private parlor has given place to FANEUIL HALL; the number of admiring and sympathizing visitors has increased from scores to thousands; the proceeds have reached a sum but a little short of FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS; the contributions have come from all parts of the country, –-from Hayti,–-from England, Scotland, and Ireland,–-from Europe; and the popular sentiment has almost entirely changed.[5]

During the 1850s, the National Bazaar was so lucrative that it was the main source of income for its parent organization, the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS)[6]—the most active society for abolition in America. All in all, from 1834 until the eve of the Civil War, the anti-slavery fairs and bazaars raised approximately $65,000, which financed the abolitionist movement in the United States.[7] Money earned at the National Bazaar provided necessary funding to the American abolitionist press; the printing and proliferation of abolitionist pamphlets, tracts, and literature; sponsoring anti-slavery lecture tours throughout the US and Great Britain; and remunerating traveling anti-slavery lecturers.

Although slavery was officially abolished in the British Empire in 1834, and the apprenticeship system was abolished in 1838, slavery was very much alive in the American south, and slave owners wanted to further expand slavery's reach.[8] After the events of 1838, Great Britain saw itself as a great 'liberator' and began a campaign for universal abolition, which included the United States. In 1840, the World Anti-Slavery Convention was held in London, and hosted by the British national organization, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, comprising of key male figures. In the American delegation was William Lloyd Garrison and important women delegates. Conflict arose when the women were prevented from officially participating in the convention. Garrison protested this slight and sat with the women in the viewing area. It was Garrison's commitment to women's rights that was seen by many as too fanatical and radical, distracting from the overall objective of anti-slavery which divided the

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[4] "The Faneuil Hall Bazaar," *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[5] "The Faneuil Hall Bazaar," *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[6] American Anti-Slavery Society will hereafter be referred to as AASS.
[7] See Benjamin Quarles, "Sources of Abolitionist Income," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 32 (June 1945): 63-76.
[8] See Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton* Kingdom (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013).

American abolition movement into two main factions. While at the Convention, relationships formed between the "Garrisonians" and British women abolitionist delegates, which helped foster transatlantic ties between them. British women too saw themselves as "liberators" and wanted to abolish slavery in the United States. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, however, their interest in the movement sometimes waned, and they needed frequent revival by transatlantic lecturers, many of whom who had been formerly enslaved. It was these powerful appeals by the transatlantic lecturers that spurred many anti-slavery societies throughout Great Britain to donate to the National Bazaar.[9]

Beyond fundraising, the National Bazaar was incredibly significant in bringing abolitionists of different classes, races, and genders together to socialize, exchange ideas, and to *feel* together as a community. Abolitionists in Great Britain sent "beautiful," "rare," and "exquisite" objects of taste and art to furnish the Bazaar, alongside monetary donations, and affirmations of anti-slavery fellowship to support their American counterparts, pointing to a vital transatlantic culture of consumption and reform. The National Bazaar was characterized by the regenerative and affective impact of objects and a spirit of ethical consumption. It promoted free produce; artisanal, hand-crafted products; and donations, cultivated and produced by free labour, wherever possible. The National Bazaar was, indeed, "decidedly the most fashionable shopping resort of the holidays," in the words of Harriet Beecher Stowe. It was a simply unmissable event in Boston's social calendar, presenting a "varied, brilliant, and a perfect museum of the most recherché articles of taste and fancy," according to Stowe, a frequent attendee of the National Bazaar, putting her considerable celebrity to use for the benefit of the Bazaar.[10] At the National Bazaar, ideas of taste, consumption, and activism worked hand-in-hand to move hearts and

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[9] For more information, see: Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); J. R., Oldfield, *The Ties That Bind: Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Reform, 1820-1865* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021); Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart, *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne. *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Ronald G. Walters, *The Antislavery Appeal: American Abolitionism After1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Clare Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1974);
[10] Harriet Beecher Stowe for *The Independent* included in Anne Warren Weston, "Report of the Twenty-First Anti-Slavery Bazaar," (January 10, 1855), 32.

minds, with the laudable goal to "disseminate the moral principles and awaken the feelings which alone can affect the abolition of slavery."[11]

However, it is important to note that the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar was also a site of great tension, contradiction, and prevailing, essentializing attitudes regarding gender, race, and class. As we will see, although abolitionists truly believed slavery was immoral and advocated for its immediate, irrevocable demise, many held deeply racist beliefs rooted in the white supremacy at the core of the burgeoning field of scientific racism.[12]

Given everything I outlined thus far, the reader of this dissertation likely expects the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar to have a notable, or at the very least, a passing mention in the history of the anti-slavery movement and the transatlantic abolitionism of the mid nineteenth century. Interestingly, this is not necessarily the case. F.K. Prochaska (1980) and Lori D. Ginzburg (1990) have examined bazaars within the context of women's philanthropy and benevolence work more generally, arguing that the charity bazaar was an important fundraising source to be reckoned with. They both note that women were more than capable of raising and generating profit for their causes. Although they both mention anti-slavery fairs, this is not the focus of their analysis.[13] In her work examining the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), Debra Gold Hansen (1993) discusses the early anti-slavery fairs alongside the politics of the BFASS, noting the split that occurred between the group's two main factions and the subsequent fairs that resulted from this split, as well as the main personalities involved. However, the bazaar only features in one chapter, while the book's focus is on the different facets of this society.[14] Lee Chambers-Schiller (1994) provides an overview of the political culture and nature of the anti-slavery fairs and later bazaars. She provides a detailed account of the Bazaar and uses a critical lens, pointing out the tensions and nuances. While she provides an important

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[11] This phrase was repeated constantly in the early anti-slavery fair reports and in the later National Anti-Slavery Bazaar reports and Gazette.

[12] For instance, see Kyla Schuller, *The Biopolitics of Feeling: Race, Sex, and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

[13] F.K Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); and Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[14] Debra Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery* Society (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).

political perspective of the bazaars, they only feature in a chapter of her work.[15] Likewise, in her chronological work on women and anti-slavery movements, Julie Roy Jeffrey (1998) provides an overview of several anti-slavery fairs from different cities. However, the focus of her work is women's anti-slavery activism more generally, rather than just the bazaars, and Boston more specifically.[16]

The reader may now be wondering, why is it that such a significant annual fundraising event—one esteemed for its fashionable wares, its importance in reaffirming abolitionist solidarity, providing an annual space for being in community, and in large part financing the American abolition movement—is not more visible in the mainstream history and historiography of abolition? The answer is frustratingly simple: the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar was run largely *for* and largely *by* women. The National Bazaar, along with Victorian charity bazaars more broadly, were women-centred spaces, where women were solely in charge. They expressed, demonstrated, and more often than not, flawlessly executed their vision, priorities, and their considerable leadership, organizational, entrepreneurial, and creative abilities. Historian Beverly Gordon, in her excellent book, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies: The History of the American Fundraising Fair* (1998), argues that the charity bazaar was a major nineteenth-century institution that has remained "largely invisible in American cultural history, even though it collectively has involved millions of people and raised many millions of dollars."[17]

Despite their success, women's fundraising fairs and charity bazaars were historically often forgotten or readily dismissed. As Gordon notes, "[t]heir theatricality and purposefully amusing and lighthearted tone was a successful mask, a kind of trope, that even though people acknowledged them as the single most powerful instrument for making money in the fundraising arena, they could rarely be discussed in serious or respectful terms."[18] Charity bazaars, including the National Bazaar, fall into the all too familiar vein of women's work not being considered or acknowledged as "real work." As we will see, the charity bazaar, fundraising fair, and fancy fair

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[15] Lee Chambers-Schiller, '"A Good Work among the People": The Political Culture of the Boston Antislavery Fair,' in Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 249-274.
[16] Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement (*Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
[17] Beverly Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies: The History of the American Fundraising Fair* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), introduction xix.
[18] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, xix-xxi.

were primarily associated with women and vice versa. As Gordon notes, "the fundraising fair was so identified with women (the woman was the fair; the fair was the woman)."[19] As such the immense work that went into organizing and putting on a fancy fair was considered to be "women's work"; that is, work that is supposedly natural to women (domestic labour, household management, caregiving, mothering, emotional labour, etc.). In other words, work that is often devalued, invisibilised, and seldom celebrated.

Beverly Gordon and Deborah Van Broekhoven both provide powerful reflections on what we lose by dismissing and devaluing women's anti-slavery fairs and bazaars. Gordon takes a macro view, arguing that without an understanding of women's fairs and bazaars, there exists a major gap in American cultural history, the history of women's philanthropy, and the larger historical fabric of women's lives. She argues, "[t]he more contemporary associations with triviality and the edge of defensiveness that surrounds any discussion of fairs have blinded scholars as well as the general public to the deeper cultural meanings of the institution."[20] Such indifference only serves to obscure the full picture of "women's issues, concerns, and interests over the last 175 years," along with access to "a kind of self-contained microcosm of social, cultural, and aesthetic change, considered from a woman's point of view."[21]

Unlike Gordon's generalist perspective, Van Broekhoven (1998) focuses solely on how the omission of anti-slavery bazaars and their organizers from the historical record, led many anti-slavery scholars to hastily conclude that "the fair work of women was secondary to other aspects of anti-slavery organization," in the more active realm of lecturing, petitioning, public speaking, etc. What is more, the glaring omission of anti-slavery fairs and bazaars from much modern scholarship on abolition, "is part of a larger omission of women from studies of anti-slavery activism."[22] Van Broekhoven decries how anti-slavery fairs and bazaars have been "doubly ignored" by historians—those who consider the organizers and participants of these fundraising events as marginal figures, compared to their celebrated male counterparts; and those

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[19] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, xix-xxi.
[20] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, xx.
[21] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, xx.
[22] Deborah Van Broekhoven, "'Better than a clay club': The Organization of Anti-Slavery Fairs, 1835-1860," *Slavery and Abolition*, 19, vol. 1 (1998): 25.

historians who see far less importance in women's anti-slavery bazaars or sewing circles, than their more overtly political activities.

Following these landmark works on women's anti-slavery activism, including bazaars more generally, literary scholar Michael Bennett (2005) takes the reader on a tour of the National Bazaar in his work on radical abolitionism. He views the National Bazaar and the radical abolitionists populating it as a "counter public," existing outside and in opposition to the dominant political culture. In his work, the National Bazaar is used as a main vehicle for this radical movement.[23] Alice Taylor (2010) looks at the bazaar through the lens of Anglo-American transatlantic relations, centering on fashion's personal *and* political usages.[24] Teresa A. Goddu's (2020) work on the abolition movement and its harnessing of mass media provides a new perspective on the bazaars, one that explicitly focuses on material culture. She also importantly provides a class analysis perspective.[25] Literary scholar Leslee Thorne-Murphy (2022) has examined the bazaar within the context of Victorian literature and themes of women's philanthropy; however, her focus is more general and is not trained solely on anti-slavery fairs and bazaars.[26]

Looking at the anti-slavery movement more broadly, feminist scholars of Anglo-American anti-slavery and abolition have produced exceptional scholarship rewriting women into the larger narrative of the abolition movement, thereby ensuring they figure prominently in the historical record and historiography of anti-slavery activism. Charlotte Sussman, author of *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833*, states, "[t]o write now about Britain's involvement with the slave trade is to stand on the shoulders of giants."[27] Extending and slightly extrapolating Sussman's words, I posit that to write now about the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth-century Anglo-American world, is to stand on the

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[23] Michael Bennett, *Democratic Discourses: The Radical Abolition Movement and Antebellum American Literature* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005).
[24] Alice Taylor, "'Fashion has extended her influence to the Cause of humanity': The Transatlantic Female Economy of the Boston Antislavery Bazaar," in Beverly Lemire, ed., *The Force of Fashion in Politics and Society: Global Perspectives From Early Modern to Contemporary Times* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2010).
[25] Teresa A. Goddu, *Selling Antislavery: Abolition and Mass Media in Antebellum America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).
[26] Leslee Thorne-Murphy, *Bazaar Literature: Charity, Advocacy, and Parody in Victorian Social Reform Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).
[27] Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 5.

shoulders of innumerable giants. The foremost is Clare Midgley. I first encountered her work while pursuing my Master of Arts degree. Her 1992 monograph, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* first set me on the path culminating in this dissertation. Memorably, Midgley begins *Women Against Slavery* observing the shortage of public monuments in Britain honouring women anti-slavery activists that come anywhere near, least of all rivals, those monuments of abolitionist (male) superstardom: William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, Thomas Fowell Buxton, David Livingstone, and others. In the countless histories and memoirs of these famous men, Midgley notes that women rarely make an appearance. If they appear at all, they are typically typecast as the docile, inspirational helpmeet and/or the dutiful wife/mother/daughter.[28] Midgley's project involved a complete inversion in perspective: she placed the women languishing in the shadowy background margins, to the foreground. Centre stage, to be exact, where her audience could not help but pay attention.[29] Midgley believed strongly in bringing anti-slavery women in greater focus so historians, students of history, and laypeople might have access to a fuller, more accurate depiction of the abolition movement: "[a]nd when historians dismiss women's contributions as merely supportive of men's, the fundamental ways in which gender divisions and roles structured the organisation, activities, ideology and policies of the movement as a whole go unnoticed."[30]

Midgley's project mirrors the concerns of Gordon and Van Broekhoven. All essentially argue that there is much to be lost, and absolutely nothing to be gained, by omitting women's anti-slavery activism, including anti-slavery fairs and bazaars from the historical narrative of Anglo-American abolition. While for me, Midgley's work was the historical lodestar, the work of *many* other feminist historians of abolition continues to be influential in my thinking and research on women's anti-slavery bazaars.[31]

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[28] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (London: Routledge, 1992), 2.
[29] Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 3.
[30] Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 4. See also from Midgley: *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790-1865* (London: Routledge, 2007); "British Abolition and Feminism in Transatlantic Perspective," in Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart, eds., *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); "Anti-Slavery and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Gender & Sexuality*, vol. 5, no.3 (1993): 343-362.
[31] See Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1992); Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Elizabeth Clapp and Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Women, Dissent, and Anti-Slavery in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011);

Traditionally, white women abolitionists have been at the centre of the historiography. However, important recent scholarship seeks to include Black activists and their agency within the movement. For example, work by scholars Christine Kinealy (2020), Hannah-Rose Murray (2020), Stephanie J. Richmond (2019), Sirpa Salenius (2017), and Barbara McCaskill (2015), focus on the vital importance of Black transatlantic lecturers to the overall success of the American abolition movement.[32] Respectively, these works delve into the transatlantic activism of Frederick Douglass, Sarah Parker Remond, Charles Lenox Remond, Henry "Box" Brown, William Wells Brown, and William and Ellen Craft, among others. Another important strand in this more recent historiography highlights the strategic *performance* and seemingly endless recalibrations many Black abolitionist lecturers employed on the lecture circuit in order to appeal to majority white British, Irish, and Scottish audiences. Elisa Tamarkin (2008), Robert Nowatzki (2010), Amanda Adams (2014), and Hannah-Rose Murray (2020) argue that learned rhetorical strategies and forms of "adaptive resistance," such as flattery and deference to 'civilized, freedom-loving' Britian were often used to win over audiences and for the purpose of rhetorically juxtaposing abolitionist Britain with slave-holding America. These works all underscore the performative, deeply embodied, *authorship* Black lecturers enacted on the transatlantic lecture stage night after night as they packaged and re-packaged their stories as they saw fit.[33] Frederick Douglass features prominently in all these works. Perhaps the greatest, most

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Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart, eds., *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); Jean Fagan Yellin and John C Van Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood : Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018); Nancy A. Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984); Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Debra Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); Sánchez-Eppler Karen, *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Blanche Glassman Hersh, *The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); and Gilda Lerner, "The Political Activities of Antislavery Women," in *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[32] Christine Kinealy, *Black Abolitionists in Ireland* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020); Hannah-Rose Murray, *Advocates of Freedom: African American Transatlantic Abolitionism in the British Isles* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020); Sirpa Salenius, *An Abolitionist Abroad: Sarah Parker Remond in Cosmopolitan Europe* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017); Barbara McCaskill, *Love, Liberation, and Escaping Slavery: William and Ellen Craft in Cultural Memory* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015).

[33] Elisa Tamarkin, *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Robert Nowatzki, *Representing African Americans in Transatlantic Abolitionism and Blackface Minstrelsy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010); and Amanda Adams, *Performing Authorship in the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Lecture Tour* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014); Murray, *Advocates of Freedom,* (2020).

compelling, profound orators of the nineteenth-century, Douglass was also the most photographed American of the nineteenth century. John Stauffer, Zoe Trodd, and Celeste-Marie Bernier (2015) highlight the importance of photography to the creation of Douglass' public persona—one that was highly curated, circulated, promoted and continually on display.[34]

Building on this historiography, my dissertation will provide a full length, focused study of the Boston National Anti-Slavery Bazaar from 1834-1858. My work combines an analysis of material culture with the history of emotions. Using a combination of archival sources and digital collections, from repositories such as the Boston Public Library's Anti-Slavery Collection of Distinction, the American Antiquarian Society, John Rylands Library, British Archives Online, and more, this dissertation provides a new perspective on the National Bazaar through an analysis of correspondence, reports, minute books, newspapers, pamphlets, and literary sources. Rather than focusing on the big, political events of the time period and the anti-slavery movement more generally, my work aims to give the National Bazaar the kind of focused, sustained attention it has not received in previous historiography and the general history of abolition. Although there were many other anti-slavery fairs happening in other American cities, the National Bazaar was the most important, popular and fashionable, and was acknowledged as *the* bazaar worth attending.

In her *Reminiscences of Former Anti-Slavery Days* (1893), lifelong abolitionist Sarah Southwick reflected on a life well-spent advocating for an immediate end to slavery and finding meaningful anti-slavery community along the way. Her words, included in the epigraph, struck me immediately upon reading them as being the perfect metaphor for women's bazaars, specifically the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Southwick registers her disinterest in expounding on "the most prominent" or widely agreed upon "important events" of the anti-slavery movement. Instead, her narrative is concerned with "the small and personal incidents" of the anti-slavery movement that only herself was likely to know.[35] Likewise, my dissertation will focus on the "small" and "personal." In the overall history of the Anglo-American abolition movement, the National Bazaar, although important, has often been made "small." By focusing on emotional connections and domesticity, my work highlights the importance of the "personal."

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[34] John Stauffer, Zoe Trodd, Celeste-Marie Bernier, *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century's Most Photographed American* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015).
[35] Sarah Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days* (1893), 1.

My dissertation underscores that these big movements are made up of "small and personal incidents." It is the small and the personal where women are most often found, and these incidents are just as important as the "most prominent or important events of the anti-slavery cause."[36] Using material culture, emotions, and domesticity, this dissertation argues for the importance of the National Bazaar, not only for the anti-slavery movement and its history, but also as an example of the broader cultural institution of charity bazaars, which permeated Anglo-American society as a whole.

Theory: Space, Place, Objects, Emotions, and the Victorian New Way of "Seeing"

> If one of the most basic premises of the study of emotions in the past is that emotional experience is constructed in context, then not only the people, but the *things* of that context, and the spaces themselves, become important. What we feel is often inextricably bound up with the things we feel *about*, and those things—animate and inanimate—derive their meanings and importance from the cultural web in which they are produced and found.[37]
> -Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (2018)

Things, spaces, feelings, and the cultural web in which these feelings are produced in and located—my dissertation will touch on all of these elements. As Rob Boddice writes in the passage above, things and spaces are important in understanding the emotional experience in each historical context. Things and spaces (material culture) and emotional experience (history of emotions) are central in my discussion of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Both theoretical lenses are compatible, complementing the other in compelling, and fascinating ways.

Noted material culture scholar, Jules David Prown, defined material culture as "the study through artifacts of the beliefs—values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time."[38] He explains the elemental basis of the discipline: "[t]he

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[36] Southwick, *Reminiscences*, 1.
[37] Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 38.
[38] Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (1982): 2. For more key theoretical texts on the discipline on material culture, see Leora Auslander et al.," AHR Conversation: Historians and the Study of Material Culture," American Historical Review 114, no.5 (December 2009: 1355-1404); Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Prown, Jules David, and Kenneth Haltma, *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000); Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher, Ivan Gaskell, Sara Schechner, Sarah Anne Carter, and Samantha van Gerbig, *Tangible Things: Making History through Objects*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). For a gorgeous implementation of material culture theory in a historical monograph, see: Zara Anishanslin, *Portrait of a Woman in Silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

underlying premise is that objects made or modified by man reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged."[39] Extending this idea, we can posit that the material culture of the anti-slavery fairs and bazaars can tell us much about the cultural web, values, and beliefs of the transatlantic abolitionist community. In fact, in her work on American fundraising fairs, Gordon writes that material objects from the past contain a wealth of information about the people and cultures that once made and used them: "they are nonverbal messengers about other times and places."[40]

Though they may be nonverbal (and non-textual), material objects can be of tremendous value to historians—especially those interested in histories of emotion, experience, and the senses. As Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello state, "[m]aterial culture allows us to immerse ourselves in the intimate world of beds, in the social relationships embodied by the sound of a bell, in the sensorial experience of light before electricity or the emotional world of tokens used to identify abandoned children."[41] With such intimate, commonplace, seemingly quotidian items of daily life, it is important to remember that objects from the past are not "simple props of history," but instead are much richer, complex "tools through which people shape their lives."[42] Gerritsen and Riello, stress this last portion—'material culture' does not simply refer to the study of objects alone, but instead to the *meanings* the objects hold for people of the past: "[i]t is therefore the relationship between object, meaning and people that creates what we call 'material culture.'"[43] It is this relationship I am most interested in exploring in this dissertation.

Crucial to my discussion of the materiality of the anti-slavery fairs and bazaars is the history of emotions theory combined with a material culture analysis. According to Boddice, "[w]e can extend this analysis to the physical spaces and places in which emotions take place, and the types and functions of buildings, as well as the architecture itself. All suggest something about emotional style or emotional prescription."[44] The physical space of the National Bazaar

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[39] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 2-3.
[40] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, xxiv.
[41] Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, "Material culture history: Methods, practices and disciplines," in Gerritsen and Riello, *Writing Material Culture History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 13.
[42] Gerritsen and Riello, "Material culture history," 5.
[43] Gerritsen and Riello, "Material culture history," 3.
[44] Boddice, *The History of Emotions*, 38. The history of emotions is a rich and varied field that has developed rather rapidly, with many key scholars being extremely prolific. Recently, important scholars in the field have published

was tremendously significant and impacted the emotional response and overall affective experience people had at the bazaar and remembered long after. Conversely, at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, commonplace, domestic objects inscribed with anti-slavery mottoes, as well fancy and decorative articles, took on a new, important meaning. Such a process does not happen all the time. As Boddice explains, certain factors must be in place: "[t]here is nothing intrinsically meaningful in any object, but the way in which an object is constructed in a space, placed into a narrative, associated with something beyond itself, and with past experiences, all endow said object with meaning."[45] As we will see, at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, objects were constructed and displayed in a highly auspicious and symbolic space, they were placed into the narrative of the abolition movement with its goal of changing hearts and minds—thus the objects were associated with something beyond the basic reality of their material selves.

As I will argue, the objects for sale at the bazaar were indeed endowed with a deeper meaning that transcended their utilitarian or aesthetic functions. Crucial to this process was how these objects were understood and experienced by the community the bazaar created and brought together. As Boddice notes, "[t]he way in which an object is associated with a value across a community is confirmed in ritual, in discourse, and in collective action and practice with the object."[46] Ritual, discourse, and collective action and practice were all elements of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar and as we shall see, these elements all played an important role in creating a shared community of feeling. As Boddice explains, "people who share those feelings tend, in the abstract, to associate the objects in question with the feeling itself, as if to put the sources of emotion in those objects."[47] People did indeed experience a shared sense of community, purpose, and fellowship, and they did associate the objects sold at the bazaar with the warm feeling of fellowship and the strong emotions of conviction in the cause reinforced during the ten days of the bazaar via banners, posters, powerful speeches by the abolitionist luminaries of the day, and performances of anti-slavery song and verse. However, it is important to keep in mind the *how*—

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helpful guides to the study of history of emotions. Boddice's *The History of Emotions* and *The History of Feelings*, (London: Reaktion Books,2019) are wonderful examples. See also, Katie Barclay, *The History of Emotions: A Student Guide to Methods and Sources*, (London: Macmillan Education Limited, 2020).

[45] Boddice, *The History of Emotions*, 179.

[46] Boddice, *The History of Emotions*, 179.

[47] Boddice, *The History of Emotions*, 179.

the singular alchemy responsible for generating this collective wellspring of emotion and good-feeling.

I argue that this singular alchemy was achieved through the *affective atmosphere* of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. In order to explain this defining feature of the bazaar, I rely on scholarship that has sought to understand the relationship between emotions and space.[48] To begin, it is fruitful to reflect on what we mean when we speak of an 'atmosphere.' Typically, in everyday speech, 'atmosphere' is synonymous with the words, 'mood,' 'feeling,' 'ambience,' 'tone,' and 'aura,' among others.[49] Regardless of which word is used, Ben Anderson explains that there has always been great ambiguity surrounding what exactly constitutes 'atmosphere.' He explains, "[p]erplexingly the term atmosphere seems to express something vague. Something, an ill-defined indefinite something, that exceeds rational explanation and clear figuration. Something that hesitates at the edge of the unsayable."[50] However, it is precisely this vague, indeterminate, and *ineffable* quality that is crucial in producing affect in those enveloped in the atmosphere. As he further notes, "[y]et, at one and the same time, the affective qualities that are given to this *something* by those who feel it are remarkable for their singularity."[51] Crucial to understanding the potential singularity of an affective atmosphere is the spatiality of atmosphere.[52] Citing Böhme's work, Anderson dwells on the materialist roots of the word 'atmosphere': "*atmos* to indicate a tendency for qualities of feeling to fill spaces like a gas [or haze], and *sphere* to indicate a particular form of spatial organization based on the circle. Together they enable us to consider how atmospheres surround people, things, and environments."[53] Together both components *atmos* and *sphere* create an atmosphere that can

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[48] The two principal scholars on affective atmospheres I have focused on are Ben Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres," *Emotion, Space, and Society*, 2 (2009): 77-81 and Andreas Reckwitz, "Affective spaces: a praxeological outlook," *Rethinking History*, 16 (2012): 241-258. Crucial to my discussion of affective atmospheres is the difference between the words, "emotion" and "affect." Reckwitz refers to the term 'affect' because "it represents a broader and more general concept" (250). 'Affect' is dynamic and interactive, whereas 'emotion' is static, and contained deep inside. Moreover, Reckwitz maintains that "Affects are always embedded in practices which are, in turn, embedded in tacit schemes of interpretation. Affects…constitute an integral part of the practical activities within which human bodies relate to other objects and subjects" (251).
[49] Ben Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres," *Emotion, Space, and Society*, 2 (2009): 78-79.
[50] Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres," 78.
[51] Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres," 78.
[52] It is important to note that both Anderson and Reckwitz heavily rely on the work of German scholar, Gernot Böhme in his several publications (all in German).
[53] Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres," 80.

surround, envelop, and permeate a space—which is crucial to our understanding of the affective atmosphere of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar.

Where Anderson leaves off, Andreas Reckwitz pushes the theory of affective atmosphere one step further—closer to be where we need it to be to situate the affective atmosphere of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Reckwitz's approach is what he terms a "praxeological perspective," or social practice theory (whereby he focuses on social practices). According to Reckwitz, such an approach "offers a framework for analysing emotions and affects that simultaneously pays attention to artefacts and to space."[54] Similar to Böhme, Reckwitz is very interested in spatialization and he argues that space depends on human bodies and their movements in conjunction with the production, interpretation, and the use of objects: "[s]patialisation always involves a process of 'positioning,' of 'placing' things and bodies which then constitute a specific space. At the same time, it always implies tacit knowledge and schemes of interpretation by means of which spaces are understood and interpreted."[55] The last part of this passage is key. Reckwitz's theory is based on the importance of social practices, and as we will see later, since Faneuil Hall was so embedded in the social and cultural life of Boston, it was a space that was tacitly known and understood. Using Reckwitz's praxeological perspective allows us to "pulls the strings of affects, senses, objects, and spaces together."[56] He explains that affects are typically directed at objects (as we will see, this will be the case with the bazaar) and that these affects are structured by the spaces these objects occupy (we will also see this in the next section on Faneuil Hall).[57] However, Reckwitz warns that "objects do not simply 'produce' affects in subjects,"[58] nor are "spaces mere producers of affects."[59] Objects and spaces alone cannot generate an affective responses, but must be engrained in social practices and "embedded in cultural schemes that inform the agents' ways of thinking about and handling the things concerned."[60] These theories of affective atmosphere would be put into practice (social practice) at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar.

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[54] Andreas Reckwitz, "Affective spaces: a praxeological outlook," Rethinking History, 16 (2012): 241. In his piece, he leaves "artefacts' synonymous with "objects". They are typically listed together with a forward slash: 'artefacts/objects.'
[55] Reckwitz, "Affective spaces," 252.
[56] Reckwitz, "Affective spaces," 252.
[57] Reckwitz, "Affective spaces," 252.
[58] Reckwitz, "Affective spaces," 254.
[59] Reckwitz, "Affective spaces," 255.
[60] Reckwitz, "Affective spaces," 254.

In addition to the above theoretical discussion of material culture, history of emotions, and affective atmosphere, my work exists within the framework of what I term, the new Victorian ways of 'seeing'. Many scholars before me have written beautifully about these new ways of seeing that were unique to the Victorian era. Asa Briggs (1988) outlines the new 'Philosophy of the Eye' that was crucial to the deeply entwined connections between Victorians and their "things." Thomas Richards (1990) highlights the foremost importance of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in ushering in a new sublime era of 'spectacle.' As he explains, "[t]he Great Exhibition of Things made it possible to talk expressively and excessively about commodities."[61] The Great Exhibition of 1851 was indeed a watershed moment in the creation of new Victorian ways of seeing, interacting with, and *feeling* about objects. Paul Greenhalgh (1988) similarly writes on the importance of the Great Exhibition and the Victorian propensity to 'exhibit' more generally. Erika Rappaport (2000) writes on the development of shopping in London's West End, touching on many aspects of 'spectacle', the nature of 'exhibition' deeply woven into Victorian society and culture, and the new, diverse interactions occurring between commodities and consumers. Similarly, Deborah Cohen (2006) writes on the new, intensely profound and personal connections Victorians imbued their objects with, especially their domestic, 'household gods.' Finally, Sadiah Qureshi (2011) discusses the darker side of the Victorian mania for exhibition. In this case, Qureshi focuses on human exhibitions in the context of empire, race, and the development of scientific racism in nineteenth-century Britain.[62] These perspectives are essential to consider when examining the National Bazaar in context, as the 'Bazaar' itself was part of the new Victorian ways of 'seeing.'

Contents of Dissertation

Chapter One lays an important foundation for the dissertation, through an analysis of the 'bazaar' in the Victorian imagination. I discuss the lineage behind the 'Fantastical Orient' of early European travel and adventure narratives. I chart the later explosion of interest in travel literature and how this nascent genre painted the 'Near and Far East' with descriptions of

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[61]Thomas Richards. *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990).

[62] Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions, and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (UK: Manchester University Press, 1988); Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade : Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011)

bustling, sumptuous, hedonistic bazaars, which became part of the public imagination. Key to this discussion is Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which I will draw from extensively. I will then speak to the rise of Western charity bazaars and their employment of Orientalist aesthetics, which is a throughline I will carry throughout the dissertation, especially as it plays out at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. I then discuss many examples of charity bazaars, from the Soho Square Bazaar, the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar, to the conflation of the charity bazaar and the European market fair. I will also discuss the Bakhtinian theory of the Carnivalesque. I then grapple with the tensions and dualities intrinsic to the charity bazaar, by performing a close reading of many Victorian literary and periodical texts that employ the trope of 'Vanity Fair.' I round out my discussion of criticism and conclude with William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and its memorable anti-heroine, Becky Sharp. The goal of this first chapter is to lay the theoretical and contextual groundwork of the charity bazaar in the transatlantic Victorian cultural imagination.

Chapter Two engages in a focused discussion of the incredibly close, unique transatlantic relationship that existed between the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti Slavery Society (BCLASS) and the organizers of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. This chapter also discusses transatlantic lecturers — William Lylod Garrison and Frederick Douglass, in particular — and how they were crucial to the success of the National Bazaar. It should be noted that racism, jealousy by white abolitionists, and fetishism were also features of these tours. Indeed, a problematic of the bazaar that exists in the same realm as nineteenth century racial prejudice, white supremacy, and scientific racism is a major theme of the dissertation. The chapter closes with a discussion on the exhibition of items before they were shipped to America for the National Bazaar, thereby tying this history into new ways of seeing in the Victorian era — of encountering objects, browsing, window-shopping.

Chapter Three takes the reader on a tour of the Bazaar, emphasizing ideas surrounding material culture, space and emotions, and domesticity; and focusing on how these elements came together to create feelings of community, well-being, feeling part of something bigger, of existing outside of the mundanity of life, and working towards something greater than yourself. I take the reader on a tour of the Bazaar, considering how the abolitionists wanted their Bazaar to be seen and behind the scenes, where their labour was invisibilized and the unified narrative of the Bazaar was complicated. Throughout this chapter, I will reflect on how the anti-slavery

women were wont to distinguish their events from other charity bazaars at the time. They portrayed the National Bazaar as serious, having a noble purpose, unlike those other 'vanity fairs.' This call to see the National Bazaar as different from the other charity bazaars of the time is an important thread in the dissertation, which I will significantly unravel in this chapter.

In Chapter Four, I will argue that anti-slavery gift books mirror the dynamics of the National Bazaar in many ways. The treatment of the women who edited these books mirrored that of women fair organizers. They were in charge and naturally, some people did not like that (Thackeray makes his presence known, as always). I discuss activist literary annuals and their activist editors. The first example I give is Mary Anne Rawson and her anti-slavery annual, *The Bow in the Cloud*. I will then examine Maria Weston Chapman's anti-slavery annual, *The Liberty Bell*, which was sold at the National Bazaar and published for each bazaar. Like the bazaar, these gift books were portrayed as being more serious than the frivolous gift books of the time. *The Liberty Bell* was not as ornate or elaborate, reflecting the seriousness of its subject.

In Chapter Five, I will show how the 1852 publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe changed everything for the National Bazaar. A profound outpouring of sympathy and imagined identification with the enslaved, in conjunction with a deep disgust and moral outrage over America's "peculiar institution," were deeply felt by hundreds of thousands of people nationally and internationally. Such feelings led to the renewal of interest and commitment to the National Bazaar and to anti-slavery principles. Stowe, who had attained celebrity status, attended every National Bazaar post Uncle Tom publication, and was given great pride of place. While there is much scholarship written on *Uncle's Tom Cabin* in a variety of other contexts, this chapter will focus on the display and sale of Uncle Tom in print, visual and primarily material culture at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Beginning with Uncle Tom's transatlantic and eventually global reach, I explain why the novel resonated with so many people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. I then set my discussion on the ground at the Boston Bazaar, where I remain until the end of the chapter.

Chapter One:

A Bazaar Tale: The Charity Bazaar in the Transatlantic Victorian Imagination

> "Shopping is one of the dearest pleasures of the human heart."
>
> "Upon these principles of human nature, Sir, is based the theory of the Charity Bazaar. People were doubtless charitably disposed. The problem was to make the exercise of charity entertaining in itself...and in the Charity Bazaar a satisfactory solution was attained. The act of giving away money for charitable purposes is, by this admirable invention, transformed into an amusement, and puts on the externals of profitable commerce. You play at shopping awhile; and in order to keep up the illusion, sham goods do actually change hands."[1]
> -Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Charity Bazaar: An Allegorical Dialogue* (1868)

> "Ah! *Vanitas Vanitatum*! Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? Or, having had it, is satisfied? – Come children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out."[2]
> - William Makepeace Thackery, *Vanity Fair* (1848)

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A Bazaar Tale

The word 'bazaar' is an evocative one. It conjures up rich, vivid, and deeply *orientalist* imagery. A mere utterance of the word 'bazaar' speaks into being visions of the 'Fantastical Orient'—faraway exotic lands, mystery, luxury, sensuality, seduction. By the end of the nineteenth century, imagery of the exotic 'Middle and Far East' had long been a staple of Western literature and thought. As Heyward Ehrlich argues, "[s]uch dreams of the East had long flourished in Western literature, beginning with sometimes fabulous medieval travelers' accounts of wealth, power, and spices."[3] From the seventeenth century onwards, European adventurers had used the word 'bazaar' to describe an eastern public market–a place where "reality and

[1] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Charity Bazaar: An Allegorical Dialogue* (1868), 2.
[2] William Makepeace Thackery, *Vanity Fair* (1848), 809.
[3] Heyward Ehrlich, "'Araby' in Context: The 'Splendid Bazaar,' Irish Orientalism, and James Clarence Mangan," *James Joyce Quarterly* (Winter-Spring, 1998): 309-331.

dream become one."[4] As we will see, such contradiction and duality are intrinsic to the Oriental bazaar, as they later will be to the Victorian charity bazaar. In this chapter, I will lay out an important theoretical and contextual foundation for the dissertation through my analysis of the 'bazaar' in the transatlantic Victorian cultural imagination. I begin by discussing the lineage behind the 'Fantastical Orient' of early European travel and adventure narratives, whereby I chart the explosion of interest in travel literature and how this nascent genre painted the 'Near and Far East' as a bustling, ancient, tyrannical, sumptuous, hedonistic place. Indeed, English and French writers of the nineteenth century, portrayed the world of the Eastern bazaar, situated in an imagined 'fantastical Orient,' as in Ehrlich's words, "an exotic, sensual, or utopian alternative to the West, an epitome of difference."[5] While there is a lot to unpack here, I want to focus on the 'utopian alternative' portion. Utopia, as coined by Sir Thomas More, is a clever pun on the Greek words: *eutopos* ('good place') and *outopos* ('no place'). Like More's imaginary island with its perfect social, legal, and political system, such an idealized Orient existed 'no place' but the imagination.[6]

Literary scholar Edward Said maintains that both Orient and Occident are 'no place'—they are entirely constructed. "The Orient is not an inert fact of nature," Said writes. "It is not merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either […] 'Orient' and 'Occident' are man-made. Therefore, as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other."[7] At the same time, Orient and Occident exist in opposition to each other; with the Orient acting as a foil to the West. What is more, Said points out "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."[8]

While dreams of the 'Fantastical Orient' were just that—dreams, flights of fancy, invention, castles in the sky belonging to 'no place'—it is too intellectually incomplete and

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[4] F.K Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1980); Dorothy Metlitski, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 240, quoted in Ehrlich, ""Araby" in Context," 320. The *OED* defines 'bazaar' as, "an Oriental marketplace or permanent market, usually consisting of ranges of shops or stalls, where all kinds of merchandise are offered for sale."
[5] Ehrlich, ""Araby" in Context," 320.
[6] 'Utopia' *OED* definition.
[7] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (25th Anniversary Edition), (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 5.
[8] Said, *Orientalism*, 1-2.

historically facile to think of the Orient as being a "merely imaginative" entity: "it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was essentially an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality."[9] Said elucidates that the only true reality was rooted in power; particularly, the variety of all-encompassing, definitive power *over:* "[t]he relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony."[10] Such a relationship, predicated upon the strong ruling the weak, demanded expression, assertion, and reinforcement *ad infinitum*. It took the following form: "[t]he Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'" — European enlightenment and rationality contrasted with Oriental primitivism and backwardness.[11] Crucially Said argues, "the Oriental is *contained* and *represented* by dominating frameworks."[12]

Orientalism was inextricably linked to Western imperialism and dominion over the non-Western subaltern subject. In fact, colonial rule and its attendant power *over* was justified antecedently by orientalism. Convinced that non-Westerners were primitive, child-like and therefore incapable of taking care of themselves, orientalism justified Western occupation and its attendant seizure and expropriation of foreign land, property, natural resources, and labour.[13] Or as Said elegantly summarizes, "[t]he Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it *could be*—that is, submitted to being—*made* Oriental."[14]

Central to this project was the large-scale knowledge creation in Europe on the Orient, as appropriated by the emerging academic disciplines of anthropology, ethnology, philology, and history. Such systematized knowledge was further developed by the vast, ever-increasing production of orientalist literature: novels, poems, translations, travel and adventure narratives.[15] Crucially, according to Said, "[a] certain freedom of intercourse was always the Westerner's privilege; because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he

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[9] Said, *Orientalism*, 2, 5.
[10] Said, *Orientalism*, 5.
[11] Said, *Orientalism*, 40.
[12] Said, Orientalism, 40.
[13] William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 104-105; Said, *Orientalism*, 39.
[14] Said, *Orientalism*, 5-6.
[15] Said, *Orientalism*, 39-40.

could give shape and meaning to the great Asiatic mystery."[16] Certainly, he did all these things– utilizing the many tools at his disposal, most importantly, his pen.

Popular travelogues and travel literature were consumed voraciously by newly literate audiences eager to be swept away by fantastical tales of the Near and Far East. In America, for instance, travel narratives of the Middle East and the Holy Land were extremely popular from the 1830s onwards. As Naomi Rosenblatt points out, Americans were themselves participating in the new Victorian ways of seeing: "Americans expressed a fascination with travel in their enthusiasm for museum and world's fair exhibits, postal cards, magic lantern slides, stereographs, panoramas, and dioramas."[17] In *Orientalism*, Said notes that "even the most innocuous travel book […] contributed to the density of public awareness of the Orient."[18] He identifies different modes or typologies employed in travel writings about the Orient: "the delights (1), miscellaneous exploits (2), and testimonial portentousness of individual pilgrims in the East (3)," which included "authoritative reports of scholarly travelers, missionaries, governmental functionaries, and other expert witnesses."[19] As we will see, all three elements are more or less present in the following examples, especially the "testimonial portentousness" piece.

It was a matter of great importance that the writer of Oriental travel literature was a credible and reliable source, recording a complete factual accounting of all they saw and experienced in the Orient. For example, in *The Romance of the Harem* (1873), British author Anna Harrietta Crawford Leonowens takes great pains in her preface to ensure readers of her narrative's veracity:

> "Truth is often stranger than fiction," but so strange will some of the occurrences related in the following pages appear to Western readers, that I deem it necessary to state that they are also true. Most of the stories, incidents, and characters are known to me personally to be real, while of such narratives as I received from others I can say that, "I tell the tale as it was told to me," and written down by me at the time. In some cases I

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[16] Said, *Orientalism*, 44.
[17] Naomi Rosenblatt, "Orientalism in American Popular Culture," *Penn History Review*, vol. 16, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 54-55. Quoted originally in Sumiko Higashi, *Cecil B. DeMille and American Culture: The Silent Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 90.
[18] Said, *Orientalism*, 192. Said spends a great deal of time discussing the forms, discursive patterns, and ideologically-laden agendas embedded in popular nineteenth-century travel literature.
[19] Said, *Orientalism*, 192. He notes that Americans Mark Twain and Herman Melville very much fit this bill.

> have substituted fictitious for real names, in order to shield from what might be undesired publicity persons still living.[20]

In addition to her prefatory note, Leonowens structures her narrative to appear as scholarly as possible. She includes a Table of Contents with an extensive list of chapter titles, the aforementioned Preface, a Dedication, and even a List of Illustrations.[21] Leonowens' work is merely one example of what Said sees as the Orientalist's self-appointed role: "[t]he Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says."[22] In speaking for and on behalf of the Oriental subalternity, the Westerner flattens, misrepresents, and ultimately *domesticates* the Orient, making it more palatable for insatiable Western consumption.[23] As this dissertation will demonstrate, the theme of employing domesticity in service of softening the novel, the foreign, and the unsettling is a major throughline in the history of the charity bazaar, and is of course, on display at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar.

In Orientalist travel literature, we are given great description and visual signifiers of the Oriental bazaar–the confusion of people, sights, sounds; crowds; heaps, piles of objects; complete and utter sensory overload—which will in turn serve as visual signifiers and tropes of the Western charity bazaar and will later be employed by the first department stores in Western Europe and America. In Caroline Paine's *Tent and Harem: Notes of an Oriental Trip* (1859), the American author nearly beats her readers to death with description of heaps upon heaps of objects, dense crowds, and imagery of sensory overload–all stand-in features of the Oriental bazaar and its Western counterpart, the ladies' charity bazaar. According to Paine's description, at the Bazaar is "the counter, where all articles are confounded in a heap" and it is "under cover at all times, and protected from wind, rain, and sun, this Bazaar is the resort of crowds every day and all day long."[24] Paine continues to describe the dense crowds at all times of the day: "[i]t then resembles a subterranean city, crowded with a busy population of many thousand persons, bustling, buying, and selling, in the cool and dim twilight. But the fair sex form by far the majority."[25] Here Paine discursively associates the Eastern Bazaar with the fairer sex, a trope we

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[20] Anna Harrietta Crawford Leonowens, *The Romance of the Harem* (Boston: J. R. Osgood and Company, 1873), 4.
[21] Leonowens, *The Romance of the Harem*, frontmatter.
[22] Said, *Orientalism*, 20-21.
[23] Said, *Orientalism*, 59; Rosenblatt, "Orientalism in American Popular Culture," 53.
[24] Caroline Paine, *Tent and Harem: Notes of an Oriental Trip* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1859), 40.
[25] Paine, *Tent and Harem*, 41.

will see time and time again at the Victorian charity bazaar. She also describes all sorts of people from different castes, classes, ethnicities, who "all mix and chat and bargain together without restraint."[26] This was another characterization to be emulated at the charity bazaar—the (indecent, according to many) inter-mixing of classes.

Notably, Paine's text captures the sumptuous, dizzying excitement and abundance of the Oriental bazaar: "[i]t is in the streets of Stamboul and its bazaars that the most bewildering variety of picturesque costumes, and the drollest and most amusing adventures are to be met with" where "[s]talls on every side present an attractive and perplexing confusion of wares."[27] But her captivating description also comes with a warning, one that is at heart of every representation of the Oriental bazaar and that echoes throughout the history of Victorian charity bazaars: "[o]ne must have a head and nerves of iron to withstand the fascinating charm of the novelty, or endure the exhausting effects of images that crowd upon the sight, and the din of voices that reverberate through the arched roof of the bazaars."[28] The Western traveler must display the supposed traits of his race: discipline, restraint, and control. One must continually have their wits about oneself, maintaining "a head and nerves of iron," so as not to lose oneself, succumbing to the vastness, the mysteries, and temptations of the East. Paine cautions, "[b]ut the places that offer the greatest temptation to extravagance are the bazaars where attar of roses, amber beads, pastilles, and a variety of knick-knackeries, purely Oriental, are alluringly spread out."[29]

Such cautionary tales were standard thematic fare in Oriental literature. "[e]very European traveler or resident in the Orient has had to protect himself from its unsettling influences," writes Said.[30] Such influences insidiously erode all semblance of "European discreteness and rationality of time, space, and personal identity. In the Orient one suddenly confronted unimaginable antiquity, inhuman beauty, boundless distance."[31] We see these themes represented in periodicals, literary annuals, and in all manner of Victorian popular print or visual culture. For example, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems* (1854), an American gift annual for young girls contained several stories set in the Orient, with the following titles, "Arrival at a

[26] Paine, 41
[27] Paine, 42.
[28] Paine, 42.
[29] Paine, 44.
[30] Said, *Orientalism*, 166.
[31] Said, *Orientalism*, 167.

Turkish City"; "A Turkish Lady"; "Interview With a Turkish Pasha"; "Sketch of a Harem"; and "Journeying in the Desert." In "Arrival at a Turkish City," the reader experiences that feared moment of truth, that split second when the European traveler looks back towards the direction of everything he has ever known, not dissimilar to Orpheus turning to look back at Eurydice, one fleeting moment before he plunges himself into the unknown, swallowed whole by this Eastern world of wonders and barbarism: "he could scarcely avoid turning round to cast one affectionate look towards Christendom–but quickly again he marched on with the steps of a man not frightened exactly, but sternly prepared for death, or the Koran, or even for plural wives."[32]

Such an example is indicative of what Said describes as "the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in–or fear of–novelty."[33] A complicated mixture of emotions included contempt for the staid and familiar, alongside the brimming curiosity and fear of the transgressive and the firmly forbidden. Historian William Leach notes that this great fascination with the Orient occurred in tandem with widespread malaise and disaffection in an increasingly industrialized, atomized society. In particular, Leach focuses on this sense of dissatisfaction that became prevalent in America around mid-century, when the first wave of wealthy American tourists traveled to the Near and Far East, and wrote home describing the sights, sounds, vibrant colours, and distinct designs they witnessed. In fact, many would go on to publish romanticized travel tales similar to the examples mentioned earlier, contributing to an already vast repository of the Orientalist canon.[34]

Interestingly, here we return to *eutopos* and *outopos*. The Orient provided an alternative to the stuffy, often rigid, cultural and societal mores and notions of propriety deeply embedded in Christian, "civilized" Europe and America. As Leach notes, "Orientalism hinted at something else, something perhaps not so urbane and genteel, even at something slightly impermissible—luxurious, to be sure, but also with touches of life's underside."[35] For the Orientalist, the exotic East was *eutopo*s ('good place')–where one could fulfill one's wildest fantasies, and one's deepest yearnings. It was a place where one could remake oneself anew.

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[32] Virginia De Forrest, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems: A Choice Collection of Pieces in Poetry and Prose* (Boston: Kelley & Brother, 1854), 81.
[33] Said, *Orientalism*, 59.
[34] Leach, *Land of Desire*, 105.
[35] Leach, *Land of Desire*, 104.

In such a place, so far removed from Western mores, values, and sensibilities, temptation was aplenty–tantalizingly beckoning to those travelers, "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall."[36] Fall, in fact, many of them did. The 'Fantastical Orient' was lapsarian: a place of escapist sexual fantasy, freedom, and libertinism.[37] Said notes that no self-respecting European writer-cum-adventurer who traveled to the Orient in the nineteenth century refrained from partaking in the pleasures of the flesh—much less writing about said pleasures for an eager, prurient audience back home.[38] However, as more and more lurid tales of the East were being published and consumed, the more inextricable the association became between the Orient and a heightened, transgressive sexuality. So much so, that "Oriental sex" became a commodity like any other, mass-produced, and available for consumers to purchase.[39]

Even the youthful readers of *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems* were exposed to Oriental sex. In the story, "A Turkish Lady," by Eothen, we see a perfect distillation of the trope of the exotic, sexually available, preternaturally beautiful Oriental woman. At first, she is described as wearing "coffin-shaped bundles of white linen which implies an Ottoman lady," and although she is covered up, our narrator still detects her "womanly consciousness," while only being able to see her "dark luminous eyes," and "the tips of the painted fingers depending like rose-buds from out the blank bastions of the fortress."[40] Suddenly, she glances around her, making sure no one no one is near as she withdraws her *yashmak* (veil). Enraptured, our narrator describes the white-hot shock of her beauty: "she shines upon your heart and soul with all the pomp and might of her beauty. And this, which so dizzies your brain, is not the light changeful grace which leaves you to doubt whether you have fallen in love with a body or only a soul…"[41] In this story, the narrator deeply impresses upon the reader the profound, startling beauty of the Oriental woman.

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[36] Reference to John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book Three (1674 version).
[37] Said, *Orientalism*, 190. Though intimated as such in my discussion, Said writes, "We may as well recognize that for nineteenth-century Europe, with its increasing embourgeoisement, sex had been institutionalized to a very considerable degree. On the one hand, there was no such thing as "free" sex, and on the other, sex in society entailed a web of legal, moral, even political and economic obligations of a detailed and certainly encumbering sort" (190).
[38] Said, *Orientalism*, 190. Said lists: Gustave Flaubert, Nerval, Richard "Dirty Dick" Burton, and Lane, as the most notable. In the 20th century, Gide, Conrad, Somerset Maugham, etc. "What they looked for often—correctly, I think—was a different type of sexuality perhaps more libertine and less guilt-ridden" (190).
[39] Said, *Orientalism*, 190.
[40] De Forrest, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems*, 84.
[41] De Forrest, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems*, 85.

Her beauty so entrancing, it "dizzies your brain," both unmooring and intoxicating, capable of driving the most rational, disciplined European adventurer mad with lust.

At the bazaar depicted in Paine's *Tent and Harem*, we are given a similar description of great, terrible beauty and casual luxury surrounding the Oriental seductress: "[h]ere too, one sees a great display of beauty through muslin veils, of so delicate texture that they seem chosen in a spirit of coquetry to heighten the charms very imperfectly concealed. The damsels who wear them are usually reclining on cushions in luxurious *taalikas*, with a train of attendants."[42] This "spirit of coquetry" employed to "heighten the charms" of the alluring temptress is an important trope we will see invoked by both critics and supporters of the ladies' charity bazaars of the Victorian period. Historian Beverly Gordon notes that "[i]n the Western (male) stereotype, a bazaar is seen as a foreign, simultaneously alluring and frightening place…filled with luxurious, tantalizing goods and sensual pleasures. It is associated with intoxicants, with mystery, and self-transformation, and with indulgence and the loss of self-control."[43] In the Victorian popular imagination, charity bazaars were therefore associated with the aforementioned tropes and stereotypes of the Orient, along with a creeping suspicion that not only goods were for sale, but people (particularly women), as well. As we shall see, this underlying suspicion never quite goes away.

East meets West

However, the term 'bazaar' was not limited, geographically, to the East. In the nineteenth century, the term also applied to Western commercial and charitable bazaars selling luxury goods and imitating the same sense of allure, excitement, and sensationalism as Eastern bazaars.[44] "From the first, English bazaars were sites of conflict among cultural and moral values," argues Gary Dyer.[45] Similar to the Oriental bazaar, charity bazaars were painted in the same tantalizing, seductive, morally problematic ways. The example of London's Soho Square Bazaar is illuminating. In 1816, John Trotter (who made his fortune supplying the army during the Napoleonic Wars) turned his warehouse in Soho Square into a bazaar, likely the first in Britain, to name itself after the Eastern market featured in the lurid tales and travel stories of the Orient.[46]

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[42] Caroline Paine, *Tent and Harem*, 42.
[43] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair* Ladies, 2.
[44] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 2.
[45] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 196.
[46] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 197.

In choosing the name "bazaar," Trotter quite intentionally appealed to popular preconceptions of the Turkish and Arab world, which as previously discussed, were deeply enmeshed in the cultural imagination of nineteenth-century Britons.[47]

Women—particularly widows and orphans of army officers—could rent counter space and sell their handiwork and other articles.[48] Trotter's scheme, ostensibly, intended to help war widows and orphans (the very Napoleonic Wars in which he enriched himself by supplying arms) support themselves by honourable means, thereby not falling into destitution, or worse, prostitution.[49] However, such was a very risky endeavour: "[g]athering women together in a public place, however, seemed to risk promoting the most immoral kind of trade."[50] By the standards of upper and middle-class English observers, the Soho Bazaar was destined to become a breeding ground for prostitution; in fact, it already recalled the deep-seated fears and anxieties of the age: Eastern exoticism (in the word "bazaar"), the encroaching powers of the market, and middle-class women entering the world of the market in such a public manner.[51]

Despite Trotter's seemingly altruistic intentions—his assurances of the respectability, morality, and good reputation of the women involved; the strict rules of decorum he mandated; and business hours suggesting no impropriety, ten in the morning until five in the afternoon—in the popular imagination, the Soho Bazaar was stamped with the same sense of allure, excess, and moral dangers present in the stereotype of the Eastern bazaar.[52] One can easily interpolate the plausible connection. The Soho Bazaar warehouse consisted of many rooms, containing two-hundred stalls, and decorated with plush red cloth and mahogany; hence, the environs of the bazaar evoked sensuality, just like its eastern antecedent. The items for sale at the Soho Bazaar were mostly 'fancywork': decorative needlework and a variety of decorative and ornamental

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[47] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 201. Prochaska explains the difference in the spatial arrangement of the oriental bazaar versus the English bazaar: the oriental bazaar encompassed several streets and sometimes took up a whole quarter of the city; whereas, the English bazaar was often confined to a single building, where stalls were rented by women in order to sell their wares. Hence the Soho Square 'bazaar warehouse' Trotter created. See Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 49.

[48] Renting counter space went for three pence per foot daily. Gary R. Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England: Commerce, Women, and the East in the Ladies' Bazaar" *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, vol. 46, no. 42 (Sep. 1991), 196.

[49] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 198.

[50] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 199.

[51] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 197.

[52] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 199. Dyer also notes that the Soho Bazaar did not admit "persons meanly or dirtily dressed, or otherwise calculated to lessen the respectability of the place" (204).

articles—frivolous luxury goods.[53] But perhaps the biggest criticism of the Soho Square Bazaar was that women were effectively *on display* (some critics would go as far to say *on sale*). At this time, respectable, middle-class women were not supposed to work in public, trading and transacting. Women belonged in the domestic realm, and their presence hawking goods at the Soho Square bazaar was a shock and an affront to the status quo. As Gordon notes, "[w]omen's very presence in the bazaar thus seemed to outweigh the moral and charitable purpose of the institution."[54]

Trotter tried (unsuccessfully) to rebrand his bazaar. He did not want it to be associated with the East, as much as he wanted to forge a new association between his bazaar and "virtuous English womanhood." However, this new and improved association only served to "assimilate, to *domesticate* that foreign presence and all it suggests, making it chaste, respectable, English."[55] Again, we see the theme of flattening, demeaning, neutralizing the threat of the foreign 'Other,' just as Western travelers did when writing about the Orient. Domesticity and its signifiers–in the case of the Soho Square Bazaar, respectable English women vendors–were wielded as tools to allay and mitigate concerns about noxious Eastern influences and prostitution. As Dyer points out, "[t]he term 'bazaar,' along with Trotter's project as a whole, was intended to evoke what was alien while rendering it powerless."[56] However, such a contrived association could not only never work, but could not be any further from the truth. As discussed previously, the Orient and female sensuality were not only traditionally linked, but both the Orient *and* women were lusted after by rapacious men desiring of total domination.[57] Moreover, regardless of assurances of

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[53] 'Fancywork' was originally meant to mark the difference between plain sewing and decorative needlework. Its meaning, while broadly staying the same, changed over time. In the mid-eighteenth century, fancy practices combined traditional embroidery with new materials such as rice, feathers, and human hair. At this time, it was primarily practiced by the leisured classes. By the 1840s, fancywork was a mania of the middle classes: "During this period fancywork sprang out of its traditional, two-dimensional setting and began appearing on tables, mantles, and under glass domes…Instead of lying flat, feathers and hair were fleshed out and turned into vibrant floral wreaths." See Nancy Bercaw, "Solid Objects/Mutable Meanings: Fancywork and the Construction of Bourgeois Culture, 1840-1180," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, no.4 (1991), 233-234. See also, Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1990) on how fancywork was embedded in an ideology of femininity embodied by service and selflessness—women had to work for others, not for themselves to be considered 'respectable'.

[54] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 3.

[55] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 201.

[56] Dyer, 203.

[57] Dyer, 203.

respectability and propriety, the English women of the Soho Square Bazaar raised the spectre of women's rising social and economic power –a truly dangerous outcome, indeed.

The Soho Square Bazaar, whether considered a success or a failure, certainly made its mark and paved the way for the proliferation of charity bazaars throughout the rest of the century. As I will discuss throughout this dissertation, women, fair organizers, and those abolitionists who put on the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar used domesticity and its signifiers to create a welcome, appealing, and non-threatening environment; but in so doing, they also affirmed and acknowledged the power of domesticity–and therefore, in extension, their own power.

Charity Bazaars, Fancy Fairs, Ladies' Sales

"The bazaar was perhaps the most quintessentially Victorian of all fundraising efforts," writes Victorianist literary scholar, Leslee Thorne-Murphy.[58] Moreover, in his landmark, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*, F.K. Prochaska admits in his preface that *even he* was shocked to learn just how important charity bazaars were to Victorian philanthropy: "[n]or had I realized just how important the charity bazaar was to the philanthropic enterprise."[59] Indeed, his research would show just how substantially charity bazaars contributed to nineteenth century philanthropic and charitable giving. In Greater London alone, Prochaska approximated that charity bazaars brought in several million pounds. Most staggeringly, he concluded: "the grand total for all nineteenth century charity bazaars must have been in the tens of millions of pounds."[60]

Accounting for the rise, exponential growth, and incredible success of the charity bazaar in nineteenth-century England, was the profound need for charities and philanthropic giving in a time of immense societal upheaval, resulting from industrialization and the insidious encroachment of modern capitalism in the lives of the working poor. All sorts of causes for all sorts of social travails were in need of funding, ranging from orphanages, hospitals, missionary societies, to temperance groups, juvenile penal reform, the abolition movement, among others. As Prochaska points out, "[v]irtually every charity had an insatiable appetite for funds, which

[58] Thorne-Murphy, "The Charity Bazaar," 886.
[59] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, preface.
[60] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 55.

required new methods for fund-raising."[61] Women, especially those of the increasingly affluent middle-class, stepped in: "[t]he more closely we look at charitable fundraising, whether organized or informal, the more we detect women at work behind the scenes. In managing committees, subcommittees, auxiliaries, or as casual helpers, they were full of ingenious schemes."[62] The charity bazaar, as Prochaska notes, was a key fundraising vehicle, with women very much at the helm, or dare I say, in the driver's seat: "[t]he bazaar, like so many of these new methods, was pre-eminently a female affair."[63] So much so that the word 'bazaar' was synonymous with 'ladies' sale.' "In short, where women played a role in charity, bazaars were likely to follow."[64] Indeed, they certainly did. The image of woman as temptress at the Oriental bazaar, so deeply embedded in the Victorian imagination, was to be further entrenched and solidified by the explicit association of women with charity bazaars.

"The charity bazaar was a realm where women could raise money unabashedly," Thorne-Murphy writes.[65] However, charity bazaars did not become the popular, preferred fundraising mainstay they would become until the 1820s.[66] Early in the decade, the number of advertisements for charity bazaars increased steadily in London and cities such as Brighton, Bristol, and Leeds. By the 1830s, the number of bazaars was on a steady and sustained rise. Crucially, by the early 1830s the fancy fair was popular among the fashionable elite, virtually ensuring its eventual imitation and syncretization among upper and middle classes.[67] As Prochaska explains, "[w]ithin two decades the bazaar had taken on the forms which it was to retain, with only minor modifications, for the rest of the century."[68] As we will see, the Victorian

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[61] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 57.
[62] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 44-45.
[63] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 57.
[64] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 57. Prochaska also writes: "No evidence has been found that men ever took the management and operation of a nineteenth century bazaar into their own hands" (57). While this may have been true at time of publication, I have some doubts about placing such an absolute statement within my discussion. Prochaska was, admittingly, writing about charity bazaars in England, but in the US, there was more cooperation between men and women. Although the Weston sisters were managers on the ground and at large, while away from the US, they relied on the help of Samuel May to run the National Bazaar.
[65] Leslee Thorne-Murphy, "The Charity Bazaar and Women's Professionalization in Charlotte Mary's Yonge's "The Daisy Chain"," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 47, no.4 (Autumn, 2007): 881.
[66] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 50.
[67] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 51.
[68] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 51.

charity bazaar aligned itself with the tradition of the annual fair, which was instrumental to its success.[69]

The word 'fair' originates from the Latin, *feriae*, which means holiday, festival, or holy day. Gordon describes how "[t]his word in turn implies a day that is out of the ordinary, a day associated with leisure, plentiful food, and drink, and even pageantry and entertainment."[70] Gordon further explains how the fundraising fair, so prevalent in the nineteenth century, derives from the medieval European fair, often carrying over many of its basic features. Usually held in conjunction with a particular religious holiday or saint day, European fairs were characterized by celebration, merriment, and pleasurable diversion–oftentimes at the expense of their moral and religious themes. Such contradictory duality on display at the medieval fair–the tension between the seriousness of purpose and the pleasurable diversions and merrymaking–was passed on, reproduced, and firmly established as the dominant trait of the nineteenth-century charity bazaar. As Gordon points out, "[*a*]*ll* fairs represent duality, a play between opposites, or a point of intersection between forces that usually remain separate […] The fairs constantly expressed ritual reversal, the turning upside-down of normal expectations."[71] In this respect, the charity bazaar reflects the Carnivalesque[72]—embodying the topsy-turvy, 'ritual reversal,' 'turning upside-down,' overturning of traditional power structures, all expressed in the irreverent spirit of the carnival. Prochaska tells us as much in his discussion of the charity bazaar as an important form of nineteenth-century entertainment: "[t]he fancy fair was pleasure usefully channeled, and as far as the organizers were concerned, the greater the pleasure the greater the usefulness."[73] Organizers of charity bazaars were well aware of the potentially enormous boon pleasurable incentives could bring to their causes, notes Prochaska. "They spent every effort devising new attractions and entertainments as part of the bazaar, and by the 1840s, some of them resembled a

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[69] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 51; Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 208.
[70] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies,* 17.
[71] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 2.
[72] Carnivalesque is a term advanced by Russian literary critic Mikhail Baktin, who "used this term to characterize writing that depicts the de-stabilization or reversal of power structures, albeit temporarily, as happens in traditional forms of carnival. For Baktin, it was important that the work itself should come to embody the spirit of the carnival too." While the first definition (*Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory)* focuses on carnivalesque as a purely literary form, I take an expansive view of the term and complicate the former definition with one from the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*: as a term used "to describe various manifestations of popular humour and cultural resistance to the restraints of official hierarchies." Key to this latter definition is 'manifestations'--I advance that the charity bazaar is very much a manifestation of the Carnivalesque.
[73] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 60.

carnival more than a market. It could be argued that no other entertainment, not even a carnival, offered such variety."[74]

Crucial to the Carnivalesque, is that it offered, what theorist Samuel Kinser described as, "a second world and a second life outside officialdom," one in which "there is no other life outside it."[75] Here we see the carnival and the charity bazaar simultaneously embodying *eutopos* ('good place') and *outopos* ('no place'). As we saw with the bazaar of the 'Fantastical Orient,' the charity bazaar too existed in its own 'second world and second life'–contained within the logics of its own time and space, while also existing resolutely outside the accepted logic of its particular time and space. Accordingly, Thorne-Murphy writes of the Victorian bazaar, "the charity bazaar created a site where classes could intermix; a site where men and women, boys and girls, interacted outside the bounds of chaperoned homes; and a site where a slightly carnivalesque milieu allowed the rules of polite society to fluctuate."[76] However, as we will see, not everyone relished in the authentic Carnivalesque spirit, and many actively criticized and downright opposed the inversion of traditional hierarchies and established forms of power and authority. But before we turn to the reactionary backlash, I will discuss just how popular the charity bazaar became in the nineteenth-century, permeating all aspects of Victorian consumer and material culture.

The Expansion of the Charity Bazaar

No discussion of the Victorian charity bazaar would be complete without discussing the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar, perhaps one of the most successful and well-known bazaars of the nineteenth century, raising over £25,000 in only seventeen days for its 1845 bazaar in Covent Garden Theatre.[77] Indeed, the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar was so successful that it was considered to be a direct forerunner of the Great Exhibition in 1851.[78] However, as historian

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[74] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 60.
[75] Samuel Kinser, *Rabelais's Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
[76] Leslee Thorne-Murphy, "The Charity Bazaar and Women's Professionalization in Charlotte Mary's Yonge's "The Daisy Chain,"" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 47, no.4 (Autumn, 2007): 886.
[77] For more on the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar, see: Archibald Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, Volumes I & II (London: W. & F.G. Cash,1853); Paul Pickering and Alex Tyrell, *The People's Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000); Norman Longmate, *The Breadstealers: The Fight Against the Corn Laws, 1838-1846* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994); Simon Morgan, "Domestic Economy and Political Agitation: Women and the Anti-Corn Law League, 1839-46," in Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson, eds., *Women in British Politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); and Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 846-1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
[78] According to Prochaska, the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar, "ennobled the bazaar as an institution" (63).

Peter Gurney argues, understandably, much scholarly attention is lavished on the Great Exhibition. However, without the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar, the Great Exhibition, subsequent national and international exhibitions, and the proliferation of the charity bazaar as a fundraising institution, simply would not have occurred. The Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar expressed the epitome of Victorian commodity culture and the making of modern consumerism.[79] As Gurney explains "[t]he bazaar should still command our attention for it simultaneously celebrated and mobilized the changing consumption practices of an increasingly self-confident metropolitan middle-class."[80]

Figure 1.1: *"Cathedral of consumption," Illustrated London News, 10 May 1845*

As we will see in Chapter Three, the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar had much in common with the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar—a connection that was referenced on both sides of the Atlantic. Both bazaars "collapsed consumption and politics together" and created an atmosphere of a "deliberately theatrical nature.'[81] Gurney notes that "no expense had been spared on the interior." Strikingly, "the transparent roof and "immense" stained glass window," served

[79] Peter J. Gurney, ""The Sublime of the Bazaar": A Moment in the Making of a Consumer Culture in Mid-Nineteenth Century England," *Journal of Social History* (Winter 2006): 385.
[80] Gurney, "The Sublime of the Bazaar," 385.
[81] Gurney, "The Sublime of the Bazaar," 387.

to "create a particularly luminous and romantic space."[82] Most extraordinarily was the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar designed, executed, and realized. Granted, it utilized the power of Orientalist aesthetics to create such a *'luminous and romantic space.'* To illustrate, consider the following description: "[t]he wondrous view had all the effect of enchantment; it seemed as if Aladdin's palace had been called into existence by the spell of the magician…long vistas of pillars extending to a distance which imagination more than doubled."[83] Invoking the wonders of Aladdin's palace, sorcery, incomprehensible vastness, and imagery of far-off exotic places were strategic uses of Oriental aesthetics employed to encourage consumer spending.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, travel literature set in the 'Fantastical Orient' was immensely popular and widely consumed in the West. Through a close reading of the primary texts, *The Romance of the Harem* (1873), *Tent and Harem: Notes of an Oriental Trip* (1859), and *The Young Ladies' Cabinet of Gems* (1854), I identified several tropes and stereotypes of the Oriental bazaar, including the imagery of abundance and the sheer accumulation of goods (counters filled with heaps of objects, a confusion of wares, etc.); dense, ever-present crowds of frenzied shoppers; complete and utter sensory overload (the vast confusion of sights, sounds, textures, smells, crowding, stimulation overdrive); and the alluring, enticing aura of temptation, lust, and seduction emanating from the other-worldly beauty and heightened sexuality of Oriental women of the bazaar. Such were the touchstones of the Oriental bazaar, reproduced at the Western charity bazaar–as we saw with the Soho Square Bazaar, the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar, and as we will see later at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar–in the Victorian cultural imagination. "An Orientalist aesthetic highlighted the mystery and alluring sensuality of the Orient, through the use of deep, warm colors, exotic patterns, and depictions of oases, harems, mosques, and bazaars," writes historian Naomi Rosenblatt.[84] "The fantastical Orient was thus displayed in all its romanticized splendor for the titillation and viewing pleasure of the Victorian public."[85]

Orientalist aesthetics were deeply embedded in the consumer and material culture of the West in the nineteenth century. Focusing on the American case, historian William Leach notes:

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[82] Gurney, "The Sublime of the Bazaar," 387.
[83] *The Art Union*, 1 July 1845, 211 quoted in Gurney, "The Sublime of the Bazaar," 387.
[84] Rosenblatt, "Orientalism in American Popular Culture," 58.
[85] Rosenblatt, "Orientalism in American Popular Culture," 58

> Orientalism, then, was an extremely popular trope, entering into every kind of cultural activity. But the main cause for its spread lay in the nearly overnight efflorescence of America's new consumer industries […] American business purveyed the orientalist message, and seeing an opportunity, began to praise the very things—luxury, impulse, desire, primitivism, immediate self-gratification—that only decades before they had been disparaging as dangerous to economic productivity.[86]

To this end, we can trace a clear connection between the use of orientalist aesthetics and the rise of modern consumer capitalism that occurred in the nineteenth century and would eventually shape both material and consumer culture to come.

Expanding rapidly throughout the British empire, and eventually making its way to America in the 1830s, the charity bazaar ushered in a wholly new, prolific era of fundraising. Beverly Gordon described the American fundraising fair as a "major institution," a "phenomenon" which "collectively involved millions of people and raised many millions of dollars."[87] By mid-century, fundraising fairs were flourishing and simultaneously inching into ubiquity. By the 1850s, fundraising fairs were so common that satires and commentaries about fairs appeared in popular periodicals. *Godey's Lady's Book*, the most popular American women's magazine of the time, featured a regular column, "Articles [To Make] for Fancy Fairs."[88] Nineteenth-century ladies' magazines and periodicals helped to uphold the identification between bazaars and women, by associating women's products with the imagery of the Oriental bazaar. An illustrative example is none other than *Harper's Bazaar*, one of the most widely read, popular, and longest-running American women's fashion magazines. First published on November 2, 1867, its premiere issue features an editorial column, "Our Bazar," introducing readers to the publication and explaining its connection to the evocative imagery of the Eastern bazaar:

> A Bazar, in Oriental parlance, is not a vulgar market-place for the sale of fish, flesh, and fowl, but a vast repository for all the rare and costly things of earth—silks, velvets, cashmeres, spices, perfumes, and glittering gems; in a word, whatever can comfort the heart and delight the eye is found heaped up there in bewildering profusion.
> Such a repository we wish *Harper's Bazar* to be, combining the useful with the beautiful…Being intended largely for ladies, it will devote a considerable space to the matters which fall particularly under their jurisdiction, such as dress, and household affairs.[89]

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[86] Leach, *Land of Desire*, 107.
[87] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, xix.
[88] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 10.
[89] "Our Bazar," *Harper's Bazar* (2 November 1867).

The bazaar is a place where one visits to "comfort the heart and delight the eye." It is a place where one *feels*, *experiences*, and *takes pleasure* in the stimulating, sumptuous, and tantalizing atmosphere. The bazaar conjures up imagery of abundance and plenty: objects are "heaped up there in bewildering profusion."[90] Importantly, not just any objects, but those clearly coded as Eastern treasures— "silks, velvets, cashmeres, spices, perfumes, and glittering gems."[91] Containing elements of *eutopos* and *outopos*, *Harper's Bazar* strived to be a place where both the useful and the beautiful are sold. A place created largely for and largely by women. As it published, "[b]eing intended largely for ladies, it will devote a considerable space to the matters which fall particularly under their jurisdiction, such as dress, and household affairs. In this connection the fashions are naturally an important subject […]"[92]


HARPER'S BAZAR.
A Repository of Fashion, Pleasure, and Instruction.
Vol. I.—No. 1.] NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1867.

Figure 1.2*: Harper's Bazar, "Repository of Fashion, Pleasure, and Instruction," November 2, 1867*

Figure 1.3: *Colour illustration by Héloïse Leloir, November 2, 1867, both Courtesy of Harper's Bazaar*

[90] "Our Bazar," *Harper's Bazar* (2 November 1867).
[91] "Our Bazar," *Harper's Bazar* (2 November 1867).
[92] "Our Bazar," *Harper's Bazar* (2 November 1867).

Crucial to the success of charity bazaars was their ability to be *alluring*—to emphasize sensuousness and to create an atmosphere of well-being and excitement: "by its very nature, a fundraising fair had to evoke something unusual or extra-ordinary. Like any other fair, it was set apart from daily life, but as a fundraising event, its very success was dependent on the creation of an environment where people could forget themselves and act with abandon."[93] But it was exactly the qualities that made the bazaars so successful that also drew the most criticism. Ladies' charity bazaars were sites of constant tension and duality—paradoxes were inherent in their nature. As previously discussed, this paradoxical nature was rooted in the Victorian orientalist cultural imagination and in the history of European market fairs and the spirit of the Carnivalesque.

As I will argue in this dissertation, these paradoxes, tensions, and inherent dualities could never meaningfully be addressed, least of all resolved. Ladies' charity bazaars, in Gordon's words, "created a confusion between the consumer and the consumed, between charity and materialism, and between work and play."[94] They precariously straddled the boundary between private and public, which as we will see, was fraught and hotly contested. Conversely, it was also porous. Charity bazaars, with their domestic organizing logic, brought formerly private, domestic values into the public realm, thereby *domesticating* many facets of the public realm.[95] Similarly, charity bazaar organizers played with domesticity, simultaneously deploying domestic aesthetics and rhetoric, while distancing their "serious" events from the supposedly saccharine domesticity and triviality of rival fancy fairs. The following section will begin to outline the many tensions, fault lines, and criticisms of the ladies' charity bazaar, which will appear again in Chapter Three during our tour of the Boston Bazaar.

A Booth in Vanity Fair: Criticisms of the Charity Bazaar

"Even charity work could carry the implications of moral taint when it overlapped with the world of commerce," according to Thorne-Murphy.[96] This consequence of moral taint is also taken up by Dyer: "the commercialism could be seen to degrade women, directly or indirectly."[97] In this section, I will review the direct and indirect ways in which women could never quite wash

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[93] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 5.
[94] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 1-2.
[95] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 1-2.
[96] Thorne-Murphy, "The Charity Bazaar," 893.
[97] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 208.

away the stain of commerce. I will draw on primary sources, mainly literature and periodicals that use the trope of vanity fair to make a larger commentary on societal, economic, and cultural changes of the period. As Gordon notes, "[a]s the woman's fair became more ubiquitous and successful, popular rhetoric about it took on a somewhat different tone. By mid-century there was less of a bemused tolerance expressed in the press and more instances of biting, even hostile criticism."[98] We can see the discomfort with women's charity bazaars in many classic texts of nineteenth century English literature. In terms of direct moral taint, the opprobrium charity bazaar organizers and volunteers experienced was rooted in the stereotype of the Oriental bazaar: bazaars as places of sexual impropriety with women as the *real* merchandise for sale.

An amusing scene in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* is illustrative: "[f]ortunately she remembered about her father and the bazaar. He had gone to a fashionable bazaar where all the most beautiful ladies in London were on view for half a crown the second day."[99] A charity bazaar was widely seen as a site of flirtation, sexual impropriety, and inappropriate advances from young men to unchaperoned unmarried young ladies, who likely used the bazaar "as a means to display themselves" and earn the admiration and notice of gentlemen present.[100]

In *The Mill on the Floss*, in the aptly titled chapter, "Charity in Full Dress," George Eliot satirizes such "charitable gallantries."[101] At the bazaar, Stephan Guest is very attentive to Lucy Deane, publicly flirting and displaying his affection: "[i]t is true, she was looking very charming herself and Stephan was paying her the utmost attention on this public occasion; jealousy buying up the articles he had seen under her fingers in the process of making, and gaily helping her to cajole the male customers into the purchase of the most effeminate futilities."[102] In this passage, not only are we privy to the young people's flirtation, but we are told Stephan is helping Lucy "cajole the male customers," suggesting Lucy is no stranger to using flirtation and her own youthful sexuality to entice male customers. Further, with the help of Stephan, she is enticing them to purchase "the most effeminate futilities," signifying women's fancywork and hand-made

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[98] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 41.
[99] J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), Chapter V: The Little House.
[100] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 208-209.
[101] George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, (1860), 380.
[102] George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, 378-379.

articles, widely considered by critics of ladies' sales to be useless frivolities.[103] The sensitive ingenue, Maggie Tulliver, on the other hand, is bewildered by how fast the gentlemen buy the sale items at her booth, presumably flirting with the pretty Maggie unbeknownst to her: "O, I have done nothing: the gentlemen came very fast to buy the dressing-gowns and embroidered waistcoats […]"[104]

In *Sketches by Boz*, Charles Dickens pokes fun at, "[a]spiring young ladies, who read flaming accounts of some 'fancy fair in high life' suddenly grow desperately charitable; visions of admiration and matrimony float before their eyes."[105] Dickens satirizes not only respectable, foolish middle-class young ladies, but also the lower classes reading about fancy fairs in popular periodicals, then attempting to imitate their social betters. Charity bazaars did allow for mixing together of the classes—which also drew much criticism and was considered an indirect moral stain upper and middle-class women could not remove, as a consequence of participating in and attending charity bazaars.

Charity bazaars also encouraged idleness. "A charity bazaar…was excellent value, especially for those in that listless state of mind who are looking for something, but nothing in particular," writes Prochaska.[106] Eliot cut much more to the point, describing the hall in which the charity bazaar was held as, "an agreeable resort for gentlemen, disposed to loiter."[107] Perhaps the most perfect encapsulation of the pernicious idleness associated with the fancy fair was expressed by the Episcopalian priest, Nathaniel Wheaton, who was horrified by his visit to "this great vanity-fair," with its "fashionable lounge" frequented by "all who have nothing to do except to see and be seen."[108]

Lastly, the entrenchment of charity bazaars as the dominant form of charitable giving, was upsetting to many who did not consider such giving to be moral or ethical, and who did not consent to the changing nature of philanthropy occurring during the Victorian period. Many objected to the transactional nature of exchange central to the charity bazaar. Thorne-Murphy

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[103] George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, 378-379.
[104] George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, 382.
[105] Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, (1835) quoted in Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 208-209.
[106] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 60. The values Prochaska lists are, "For admission price of one shilling or two shillings and sixpence, children half-price or free."
[107] George Elliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, 378.
[108] Quoted in Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 205.

writes that "under certain circumstances the market mentality of the bazaar diminishes its potential for good."[109] Combining idleness and setting up an unnecessary pretext for charitable giving, the charity bazaar was seen as encroaching upon older, more effective methods of charity, less tainted by the values of the market and commodity culture.

In a letter to the editors of *The Watchman*, an anonymous commenter, J.B.W, reflected on these unsavory changes: "[s]ince that period […] we have found out many benevolent schemes, and discovered new channels for charity; but alas! have left the old-fashioned courses of private alms deeds well high dry…"[110] J.B.W. considered private alms and more direct forms of giving to be preferable to what he saw as a dangerous vogue in the philanthropic landscape of his time: "[t]he love of ostentation distinguishes modern from ancient charity, and marks it as counterfeit. We must be bribed to assist in a charitable purpose, by the frivolities of a Bazaar, the farce of a Charity Ball or Concert, or at least the vanity of Subscription Lists."[111] Modern charity, J.B.W., wrote, is "counterfeit" rooted in a "love of ostentation" instead of a genuine willingness to aid our fellow man. Instead, "we must be bribed" to give to charity and the act of giving must stoke our vanity and our ego.[112] We also see this criticism in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Charity Bazaar: An Allegorical Dialogue* (1868). Stevenson, through his satirical, trickster-like figure of the Tout, explained that the charity bazaar makes, "the exercise of charity entertaining in itself."[113] What is more, "in the course of these illusory manoeuvres, a great deal of money is given in charity, and that in a picturesque, bustling, and agreeable manner. If you have to travel somewhere on business, you would choose the prettiest route, and desire pleasant companions by the way. And why not show the same spirit in giving alms?"[114]

This criticism and overall sense of malaise surrounding the changing (and not for the better) nature of philanthropy was widely commented on. Even in 1881, one critic noted the negative influence of charity bazaars still very much permeating (and polluting) philanthropic giving of her time: "[i]t is because the atmosphere of the charity bazaar, to their great detriment, still hangs round the societies, and the general public think of them not as places where–at to

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[109] Thorne-Murphy, "The Charity Bazaar," 885, 897.
[110] J. B. W. "Correspondence." *The Watchman*, December 1, 1841, 383.
[111] J. B. W. "Correspondence." *The Watchman*, December 1, 1841, 383.
[112] J. B. W. "Correspondence." *The Watchman*, December 1, 1841, 383.
[113] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Charity Bazaar: An Allegorical Dialogue* (1868), 2.
[114] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Charity Bazaar: An Allegorical Dialogue* (1868), 3.

purchase what one requires, but as places where one has to seek something one can purchase."[115] Such commentary cuts to the heart of one of the most pervasive criticisms of charity bazaars: their rampant consumerism, the much-ado-about-nothing regarding frivolous trinkets, fancy articles and luxury goods that one does not require, but must wander idly among the heaps of objects, the crush of the crowd, and the many temptations just waiting to be indulged all in order "to seek something one can purchase" for a charitable cause.[116]

The charity bazaar was not only disingenuous and materialistic but was a place where nothing was ever as it seemed. The bazaar, even for charity, was still a marketplace, with all its connotations of amorality, avarice, exchange, and the stain of commerce. As Dyer writes, "[t]his market breeds deception, customers pretending to be what they are not, as though they themselves are for sale."[117] One cannot trust one's own eyes, least of all detect the aura of authenticity–the ultimate accessory–to complete their look. Once again, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems* proves useful, particularly the story "Gold-Seeking," by author Mrs. Abdy.

The story begins with a young Miss Otley getting ready to attend a charity bazaar "for the benefit of the Distressed Needlewomen."[118] Right away, by stating the bazaar is to aid "Distressed Needlewomen," the text offers humourous commentary on the sheer number of charity bazaars held for just about any reason and/or season. Miss Otley, whom we are told adores fancy dresses, dresses with "unusual plainness."[119] We are also told, "Miss Otley did not care for charity-bazaars; nor for any bazaars, but the Soho and Pantheon. She did not care for Distressed Needlewomen. She was one of the ladies who contributed to keep them in distress, by means of unreasonable requisitions and scanty payments, but she cared very much for a gentleman whom she expected on that occasion to meet."[120] Such a passage serves to convey Miss Otley's selfish, stingy character, her love of shopping at the Soho and Pantheon, and her intention of carrying out a secret flirtation at the bazaar. We also see that she is capable of deceit–

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[115] E. Genne, *Irresponsible Philanthropists: Being Some Chapters on the Employment of Gentlewomen*, (1881), 98-99.
[116] E. Genne, *Irresponsible Philanthropists*, 98-99.
[117] Dyer, "The "Vanity Fair" of Nineteenth-Century England," 206-207.
[118] De Forrest, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems*, 329.
[119] De Forrest, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems*, 329.
[120] De Forrest, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems*, 330

pretending to be in support of Distressed Needlewomen and deliberately dressing plainly when it is more her inclination to dress fancifully.

Once she reaches the bazaar, we see her conniving plan unfold: "[c]onsequently, Miss Otley only laid out sixpence of the five shillings which she intended to expend; and this sixpence she invested in an emery pincushion, which, she observed, "made needles last twice as long as they would otherwise do"–-a remark which met with a decided approval from Mr. Witherton," the gentleman she is trying to ensnare with her false display of domesticity and economy. Witherton—occupying the trope of the daft male, easily-led-astray, helpless-in-the-face of the manipulative charms of the bazaar seductress— "looked complacently on Miss Otley's chocolate Muslin dress, brown gloves, and close straw bonnet. He ascertained that she disliked public places, was fond of plain work, took great pleasure in accounts, and was of the opinion that all servants required perpetual looking after."[121] In order words, her deception and feigned virtues of thrift, domesticity, and modesty worked like a charm. So much so, that our narrator comments, "[t]he result of her ingenious scheme of captivation was that Mr. Witherton formally requested permission to pay a visit to her aunt on the succeeding day."[122] Clearly, Miss Otley proves very adept in the art of "Gold-Seeking."

However, Miss Otley does not come remotely close to holding a candle to the brilliantly raging inferno that is Becky Sharp, protagonist of William Makepeace Thackeray's satirical masterpiece, *Vanity Fair*.[123] All of the criticisms, whether direct or indirect, of women's charity bazaars were encapsulated and evoked in one term: 'Vanity Fair.' But it is important to keep in mind that this term did not originate with Thackeray. It originated in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and went through several life-cycles of its own before being employed by Thackeray in the mid-nineteenth century. Kirsty Milne's scholarship demonstrates the *longue-durée* of 'Vanity Fair,' beginning from the eighteenth century, "'Vanity Fair' is used to characterise some novel and potentially troubling social developments: the mixing of sexes in places of public leisure and pleasure; the growing visibility of female consumers; the growth of a market that is also an audience. It becomes an evaluative term – on a spectrum from outraged to

[121] De Forrest, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems*, 330.
[122] De Forrest, *The Young Lady's Cabinet of Gems*, 330.
[123] First published in 1848 serially.

amused – but also a fiercely contested one."[124] That being said, it is Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and his most delightful anti-heroine, Becky Sharp, this dissertation is most concerned with.

As Milne notes, "[f]rom the earliest reviews, readers and critics have admired Becky's ingenuity and sangfroid, her restlessness and sense of fun, while decrying her amorality and exploitation of others."[125] According to Milne, she embodies the theatrical, performative artifice at the heart of *Vanity Fair*: "[t]he idea of social life as performance is explored through the figure of Becky Sharp, daughter of an artist and an opera-girl, who survives by role-playing – grateful orphan, ingénue, wronged wife – but finds those roles restricting."[126] Milne comments on the prevalence of "acting and illusion" throughout her life, but at the same reminds us that Becky Sharp exists "in a social and economic system that rests on illusion."[127] At Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, "[s]ocial life is imagined as a vibrant performance, but one incompatible with authenticity and candour, which are located somewhere off stage."[128]

Figure 1.4:*'Virtue rewarded: A booth in Vanity Fair,' (c. 1861), William Makepeace Thackeray*

[124] Kirsty Milne, *At Vanity Fair: From Bunyan to Thackery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 17.
[125] Milne, *At Vanity Fair*, 112.
[126] Milne, *At Vanity Fair*, 116-118.
[127] Milne, *At Vanity Fair*, 118.
[128] Milne, *At Vanity Fair*, 118.

In a memorable scene, illustrated with a plate ironically entitled, 'Virtue rewarded: A booth in Vanity Fair,' Dobbin, Amelia, a young, strapping George Osborne, Jr., and little Janey are surprised to see Becky Sharp, now styling herself as Lady Crawley, working at a London charity bazaar. Thackeray is unequivocal in his meaning here; he wants to show that although Lady Crawley styles herself in a position of respectability—modestly clothed, working for charity—the whole fancy fair conceals great corruption, greed, and moral bankruptcy.

> She has her enemies. Who has not? Her life is her answer to them. She busies herself in works of piety. She goes to church, and never without a footman. Her name is in all the Charity Lists. The Destitute Orange-girl, the Neglected Washer-woman, the Distressed Muffin-man, find in her a fast and generous friend. She is always having stalls at Fancy Fairs for the benefit of these hapless beings. Emmy, her children, and the Colonel, coming to London some time back, found themselves suddenly before her at one of these fairs. She cast down her eyes demurely and smiled as they started away from her…[129]

Like in "Gold-Seeking," Thackeray humourously skewers the sheer ubiquity of charity bazaars organized for the likes of the "Destitute Orange-girl, the Neglected Washer-woman, the Distressed Muffin-man." In so doing, he gestures to the meaningless and empty generosity of Becky Sharp, who fundraises for such insubstantial, sham purposes. She may wear the guise of respectability and the demure demeanor of a virtuous woman, but only until the next costume change is required at Vanity Fair.

Conclusion

As we will see, the concept of 'Vanity Fair' became so entrenched by the mid nineteenth century, that no charity bazaar, not even one put on for the worthiest of causes, like the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, was exempt from the pejorative epithet, 'Vanity Fair.' Although Becky Sharp will perform again in Chapter Four, I ask that the reader of this dissertation be constantly on the lookout for her, as she plays a starring role in my scholarly work. Becky Sharp, herself a foreign 'Other,' a figure of great seduction, fashion, and transgression embodies the many overarching themes discussed in this chapter. If there is anyone who can "comfort the heart, a delight the eye,"[130] it is the inimitable Lady Crawley. Alongside his creation, Becky Sharp, William Thackeray himself will be a main character in this dissertation.

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[129] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 808-809.
[130] *Harper's Bazar*, 2, November 1867.

Chapter Two:

The Transatlantic Ties that Un-Bind: the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and the Boston Bazaar

> "They [British abolitionists] have done more than merely to send a contribution, however beautiful, to a Bazaar. They are witnesses to America, that the pleading of the abolitionist, unheeded in his own land though it be, finds an echo in the land he loves to call his fatherland — his mother country — a land whose religious principles and whose moral teachings are in this respect like his own, that they condemn the system and practice of slavery, which his birth-place helps to justify."[1]
> –Maria Weston Chapman, 'The Twelfth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar,' *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846

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This chapter engages in a focused discussion on the incredibly close, unique transatlantic relationship that existed between the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti Slavery Society (BCLASS) and the organizers of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Instead of attempting to tread where many have before by broadly discussing the Anglo-American transatlantic sisterhood, this chapter focuses on the transatlantic networks and relationships that developed between members of the BCLASS and influential American abolitionists.[2] An examination of the BCLASS *Minute Book* and the *Special Report* (1852) shows that the women of the BCLASS constructed their own narratives and told their own story–one replete with narrative arcs, rising action, propelling plot points, climax, and denouement.

In fact, in the *Special Report* (1852), the society recounted its origin story, reflecting on its founding and early years, acquainting the reader with, "a brief sketch of its previous history, sufficient for its past inaction and present vitality."[3] The *Special Report*, along with the BCLASS *Minute Book* give us great insight in the trajectory, timeline, and temerity of the BCLASS—a resolutely independent, transatlantic women's anti-slavery society.

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[1] Maria Weston Chapman, 'The Twelfth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar,' *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846
[2] These letters are found in the BPL Anti-Slavery Collection of Distinction, in the Chapman-Weston Correspondence; the Estlin Papers from Dr Williams Library in London (accessed online through the British Online Archives, in the collection, Anti-Slavery Papers, 1833-1892); and Clare Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*: *An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1974).
[3] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 8.

The case study of Bristol underscores the importance of visits from transatlantic lecturers, notably William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, in awakening a dormant movement. The language used by the BCLASS to describe the lecture tours was emotive, and oriented to feeling and sensation. When Douglass visited a town to lecture, the town was far more likely to contribute to the National Bazaar. This chapter explores the impacts of these transatlantic lecturers and how they were crucial to the success of the National Bazaar. It should also be noted that racism, jealousy by white abolitionists, and fetishism were also features of the transatlantic lecture tours. Here is another major thread of the dissertation: while meaning to be a force for good, there was an ugliness, showing that the bazaar existed in the same realm as nineteenth century racial prejudice, white supremacy, and scientific racism.

The chapter ends with a discussion on the exhibition of items before they were shipped to America for the National Bazaar, thereby tying this history into new ways of seeing in the Victorian era, in terms of encountering objects, browsing, and window-shopping. Objects were often exhibited with names of the donors appended, so there was a sense that these objects were not just regular objects. There was something special about how they were identified with their donors and makers. It was a new way of thinking about objects, of interacting with objects and imbuing the objects with meaning, fusing a piece of the individual spirit with a material object.

Brief Sketch of Transatlantic Ties

> Through the 1840s and 1850s formal contacts between female societies in Britain and America and between the women organisers of American anti-slavery bazaars and their British networks of collectors were cemented by the development of personal friendships between leading individual activists who exchanged information and views not only on anti-slavery, but also on a wide range of other philanthropic issues.[4]
> -Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*

Bolstered by the connections they made with the Garrisonians at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention, the strongest, most enduring transatlantic relationships developed among British and American women who supported William Lloyd Garrison. In contrast, the Tappanite women of the "New Organization" lacked extensive transatlantic networks and primarily corresponded with the male leadership of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.[5] A

[4] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (London: Routledge, 1992), 127.
[5] Midgley, *Women Against* Slavery, 132.

'transatlantic sisterhood' of women abolitionists was crucial to this story. Without these rich transatlantic networks, the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar would not have been the absolutely *vital* fundraising vehicle that it was, ensuring the sustainability and longevity of the American abolition movement. Women's robust transatlantic networks were the lifeblood of the movement—ensuring its continued survival, growth, and its smooth functioning.

The 'transatlantic sisterhood' was at its peak throughout the 1840s-1850s; however, there were important precursors that ensured the success of these later flourishing transatlantic connections.[6] It is also important to note, these transatlantic connections did not solely centre anti-slavery, but a plethora of other social reform causes of the day. As William McGovern notes in his work on transatlantic child reform, "[d]uring the middle decades of the nineteenth century, growing numbers of social reformers with wide-ranging interests constructed rich personal and professional networks spanning the Atlantic."[7] There was a seemingly endless roster of reform causes championed in the nineteenth-century Anglo-American world: juvenile delinquency reform, temperance, prison reform, women's rights, animal cruelty, relief for the poor, and more. However, the abolition movement was the connecting block where all these causes intersected. Indeed, many ardent abolitionists were important crossover figures in other reform causes. Mary Carpenter is one such key crossover figures, and one highly esteemed for her life-long dedication to social reform causes. Carpenter, not uncoincidentally from Bristol, was a dedicated abolitionist and a "penal and juvenile delinquency reform expert"; she was, however, not just any expert, but during the1850s-1870s, she was "among the most well-known juvenile reformers on the earth."[8] Evidently, the age of reform was one of profound imbrication—social reformers of all stripes crisscrossing, traversing, permeating multiple realms of reform—only to intersect in the big tent of abolition.

Oftentimes, such imbrication was a family affair. The reform impulse, in several instances, was an inherited one, deeply enmeshed within familial and kinship networks.[9] As we will see, this was very much the case in Bristol, where prominent Unitarian community leaders,

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[6] Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 127-129; William McGovern, "On Distant Shores: the Transatlantic Foundations of Child Reform in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol.17 (2019): 507.
[7] McGovern, "On Distant Shores," 507.
[8] William McGovern, "On Distant Shores: the Transatlantic Foundations of Child Reform in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol.17 (2019): 506, 507, 518.
[9] For more information on the Buxton women, see Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender and Political Culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2009).

their wives, and their daughters dominated Bristol's reform and anti-slavery movements, including in the Bristol and Clifton Ladies Anti-Slavery Society.[10] John Bishop Estlin, an ophthalmic surgeon and prominent Unitarian would eventually become the central leader and financial supporter of the Garrison party in England. His daughter, Mary Anne Estlin, would become one of the most fervent and active of the British Garrisonites, and she would push the BCLASS into increasingly radical directions in her commitment to Garrisonian abolition.[11] Frances Armstrong was the wife of dedicated abolitionist and Unitarian minister, Reverend George Armstrong. Finally, Mary Carpenter, was the daughter of the famous Unitarian divine, Lant Carpenter. The Bristol set (husbands, fathers, wives, and daughters) were already well-connected with several prominent figures in the American abolition movement: William Lloyd Garrison, Samuel May, and Maria Weston Chapman, to name a few. These pre-existing transatlantic relations between key Bristol women and leading American abolitionists made all the difference in cementing perhaps one of the most interdependent, distinct transatlantic partnerships.

What Garrisonian Women Want

Historian Clare Midgley points to the predominance of single, unmarried women within the transatlantic anti-slavery sisterhood—particularly those in leadership positions. Midgley notes that although the single, unmarried demographic was quite common in the earlier period (1823-38), in the subsequent period of abolition (1840s-1850s) this demographic was far more conspicuous. For many reasons, it was possible for single women to give more of their time, energy, and commitment to the cause. They were able to dedicate themselves much more. Their work not only filled their time and kept them occupied, but it also suffused their ordinary lives with purpose, meaning, connection, and enrichment. They forged intense bonds, deep connections, and enduring friendships with other anti-slavery women. Letters were important in forging this transatlantic sisterhood of radical Garrisonian abolitionists. Midgley emphasizes the sheer volume of correspondence between radical abolitionists in the US and their British and Irish counterparts.[12] Being part of this active, activist transatlantic sisterhood did much for women. Anti-slavery activism gave them a "channel for their energies" by way of collecting,

[10] Hereafter the Bristol and Clifton Ladies Anti-Slavery Society will be referred to as the BCLASS.
[11] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 134.
[12] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 132.

organizing, and overseeing the business of the Bazaar.[13] These activities heightened and sharpened their organizational and leadership acumen, giving them a hard-won expertise and an unshakeable confidence in their abilities.

For instance, Mary Estlin, a powerhouse of the BCLASS, was unafraid to express her uneasiness in the prospective creation of a Garrisonian-aligned Manchester Anti-Slavery League. She had very little confidence the League would succeed, foreseeing that it would "crumble through poor management" by blundering, incompetent British men. We see her articulate a profound confidence in her own abilities and in the promise and potency of women's leadership, more broadly, when she wrote that she herself and Eliza Wigham of Edinburgh were the only two in the country possessing "combined knowledge of what is wanted and faculty or means of *taking steps* in accordance with the demands of the occasion."[14] Estlin, like many other anti-slavery women, knew their worth and their vital importance to the success of the movement. It always helps, though, when your worth is acknowledged by others. Such was the case throughout Estlin's abolitionist career. Her advice was continually solicited by leading male abolitionists and campaigners.[15] Estlin, and many other transatlantic women abolitionists and reformers like her, had many opportunities to distinguish themselves and to develop a reputation for excellence.

Women's membership in the transatlantic abolition movement also allowed them to accrue a certain degree of status they otherwise would not have attained. As previously mentioned, Mary Carpenter was lauded and respected on both sides of the Atlantic for her significant expertise in child reform. Her reputation was that of an expert, an innovator in the field whose methods were worthy of study and debate.[16] As McGovern notes, "Carpenter's reputation as a leading light in reform and social science organisations afforded her a greater status than many women of her time enjoyed."[17]

Shortly after the World AS Convention, during the 1840s-1850s, there was a significant decline of local men's antislavery societies and participation in the movement. Women eagerly

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[13] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 134.
[14] Mary Estlin quoted in Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 135.
[15] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 135.
[16] William McGovern, "On Distant Shores: the Transatlantic Foundations of Child Reform in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol.17 (2019): 519-521.
[17] McGovern, "On Distant Shores," 519.

stepped in to fill this void. British women effectively kept the abolition movement going in the period after 1838.[18] The abolitionist men at the helm of the national parent society, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, were more than happy to accept women taking on greater responsibilities, pursuing leadership roles, and spearheading initiatives within their local/auxiliary societies. As we will see, the BFASS's support for women's anti-slavery societies was solely contingent upon women's auxiliaries remaining in a subservient position to the (male) leadership of the national parent society. However, the BCLASS chafed against such restrictions, refused a position of subservience, and rebelled against their parent society.

The Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society

> CIRCUMSTANCES having arisen in the course of the last two years, which have brought this Society more under public notice than was at first contemplated, it is considered desirable that a Report of its proceedings during the last eighteen months should be published; giving, at the same time, a brief sketch of its previous history, sufficient to account for its past inaction and present vitality.[19]
> -*Special Report* of the BCLASS, June 24th, 1852

The preceding passage is deceptively simple. Quite ordinary; in fact, one could be forgiven for mistaking it with any other interchangeable prefatory note in any other interchangeable anti-slavery annual report. It reflected a type of abolitionist print culture, that by 1852, was relentlessly standardized and consistently formulaic. But reader, do not be deceived—this prefatory passage was far more complex than meets the eye. First, it should be noted that it was from a report entitled: *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society; During Eighteen Months, From January 1851 to June 1852; With a Statement of the Reasons of Its Separation from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society*.[20] Returning to the prefatory note, we can infer that the circumstances alluded to, "which have brought this Society more under public notice than was at first contemplated," referred to the circumstances which prompted the BCLASS to take an unprecedented, radical step—to sever ties with its parent society, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

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[18] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (London: Routledge, 1992), 132-133. For more on female friendship, see Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).
[19] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies'Anti-Slavery Society*, prefatory note.
[20] Hereafter referred to as *Special Report* in the text.

Founded in 1840 as an auxiliary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the Bristol ladies' society voted on 13 November 1851 to officially separate from the national anti-slavery body in the UK at the time. The BCLASS became the first and the *only* auxiliary anti-slavery society to part ways with the national organization, thereby becoming an independent society, free to control its own funds, associate with whomever it pleased, and set its own activist agenda without seeking input or permission from the predominantly (male) British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society leadership.

The BCLASS was the only one of its kind to become an independent society. As such, the Bristol anti-slavery women were fiercely protective of their hard-fought independence, guarding it by remaining formally independent of the competing wings of the American anti-slavery movement and setting their own policy agenda, rather than looking to America for instruction. As Clare Midgley notes, "[t]he transatlantic abolitionist sisterhood always involved the active exchange of information and ideas rather than the passive following by British women of instructions from their American co-workers."[21] The BCLASS relationship with the AASS provides an illustrative example of a dynamic, active transatlantic partnership, one which acted as a portal into this larger transatlantic world of talented, capable, driven anti-slavery women.

In the *Special Report* (1852), we begin with the society recounting its origin story, reflecting on its founding and early years, and acquainting the reader with, "a brief sketch of its previous history, sufficient for its past inaction and present vitality."[22] The *Special Report*, along with the BCLASS Minute Book give us great insight into the trajectory, timeline, and temerity of the BCLASS—a resolutely independent, transatlantic women's anti-slavery society.

The first entry in the Minute Book is from 17 September 1840, the inaugural meeting of the BCLASS. During the first meeting, the principles and resolutions of the new society were set forth, beginning with the declaration of its status as an Auxiliary to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the parent society to which it would contribute to each month, as well as subscribe to its main publication, the *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*. Additionally, the basic operating procedures were affirmed, and the names of the Treasurer, Secretaries, and committee members were listed.[23] In further meetings, we see more detailed, articulate

[21] Midgley, *Women Against* Slavery, 133 & 135.
[22] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 8.
[23] Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 17 September 1840 (p. 9)

statements regarding the specific aims of the society, aligning with the spirit of Universal Abolition, which stated "[t]hat the object be to collect and circulate information relating to slavery throughout the world and in every possible way to aid in its extinction."[24] The Ladies immediately made due on the collecting and circulating of information to subscribe to the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, ordering three copies for circulation among the members of the committee.[25] After the copies were read by the committee members, they were instructed to bring them to the public reading room, to be read and shared by members of the community.[26]

In explaining the formation of their society, they credit their male patron, Captain Charles Stuart.[27] On 27 October 1841, Stuart attended an open BCASS meeting at which he spoke on the state of slavery in America, having recently returned. Among his travel objectives had been "to try to ascertain the cause of divisions existing there."[28] In explaining to the Bristol ladies the divisions of the anti-slavery movement in America, Stuart firmly came out on the side of the AFASS, blaming the division on "the other branch of the society," the AASS, and its intrusion of "new and injurious views."[29] These views were seen as radical, outlandish, and distracting from the AS cause—most notably, women's rights and their full participation in the public sphere. In his estimation, the AASS was comprised, "chiefly of persons who were infidel in their sentiments, opposed to all that is deemed Christian, and unfaithful to the cause of the slave."[30] These divisions were created by "mistaken zeal on the part of individuals obnoxiously intruding extraneous and distracting questions."[31] While the AASS kept its original name, Stuart stressed to the Bristol ladies that it "has adopted a fundamentally different character," and such a character should be avoided at all costs.[32] Since the Bristol society was an auxiliary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, Stuart advised co-operation with its American ideological

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[24] Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 21 October 1840 (p. 10)
[25] Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 21 October 1840 (p. 10)
[26] Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 4 November 1841 (p. 26)
[27] For more on Captain Stuart, see Anthony J. Barker, *Captain Charles Stuart, Anglo-American Abolitionist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).
[28] Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 27 October 1841 (pp. 21-23)
[29] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 6; Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 27 October 1841 (p. 24).
[30] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 6
[31] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 6; Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 27 October 1841 (p. 23)
[32] Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 27 October 1841 (p. 24); *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 6.

counterpart, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS)—a society uninterested in advocating for women's rights and other radical causes.[33]

In the *Special Report*, the Ladies recount, "[f]ully relying on this information, we carefully avoided any intercourse with the members of the American Anti-Slavery Society."[34] Instead, they heeded Captain Stuart's advice to correspond with Miss Martha V. Ball, Secretary of the newly christened Massachusetts Abolition Society. This was the very society that broke away from the original American Anti-Slavery Society and aligned with the "New Org," or the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

As outlined in the *Special Report*, the Bristol ladies acted on the recommendation of Stuart, and struck up a correspondence with Ball, "requesting to be informed of any way in which we could aid the cause we had so much at heart."[35] At their eighth committee meeting on 13 May 1841, a letter was read out loud from Ball asking the society to contribute to a bazaar, to be held in Boston, for the benefit of the Massachusetts Abolition Society.[36] During the next meeting on 1 June 1841, it was resolved by the Committee that "a box of useful fancy and ornamental articles should be sent to Boston to be sold at the Annual Fair held at that city in the 12th month." The resolution continued, requesting that a copy of this meeting resolution "with a list of the articles most suitable for America to be sent to each member of the Committee with a request that she will use her influence in obtaining contributions amongst her friends."[37]

In this resolution, we see the blueprint for all other future American requests for Bazaar contributions. Requests were to be read out loud at the British meeting and agreed upon. After, they would vote on a resolution to contribute to the Boston Bazaar. There were then calls for women of the Committee to use their influence, networks, and connections to bring as many contributions as possible. Such was indicative of the well-oiled machinery of the transatlantic sisterhood, powered by connections of the local, kinship, and community variety.[38]

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[33] For more information on the differing positions on suffrage, as well as the split in the British movement, see: Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); and David Turley, *The Culture of English Antislavery, 1780-1860* (London: Routledge, 1991).
[34] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, .6.
[35] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 6.
[36] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 6; Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 13 May 1841 (p. 18).
[37] Minute Book, entry for 1 June 1841 (p.19).
[38] Minute Book, entry for 1 June 1841 (p.19).

Although we see this same pattern repeating the following year, 1842, there was an important difference. Alongside the familiar proposal of sending a box of "useful and fancy articles" for the Boston fair, with the request to the ladies of the committee "to endeavour to obtain contributions amongst their friends," the Bristol ladies began to look outside their community to broaden their philanthropic impact, and "[i]t was concluded that it would be better to unite with others rather than attempt furnishing a box alone."[39] The others in mind were ladies' anti-slavery societies in Birmingham, Evesham, and Bath. The Bristol secretary would contact her counterparts in each of the three ladies' anti-societies and would bring their replies to the next meeting.[40] As we will see, this would not be the last time.

Consulting the entry for the next meeting, 9 May 1842, we learn that Birmingham and Evesham indeed answered the call. The Birmingham Committee "will be pleased to unite with us in preparing a box for the coming fair" and the Evesham Committee "will be pleased to avail themselves of the proposal we have made them and will send us their contributions."[41] We also learn of a lady in Cheltenham who wished to send "fancy articles" to Boston.[42] In this entry, we see an extensive discussion of logistics, crucial to the well-oiled machinery of the transatlantic bazaar. Concerning distribution, as above, the Bristol committee secretary would write a note to each member of the committee requesting their assistance collecting for the bazaar and "informing them of the kind of articles saleable in America." In terms of receiving, the Minutes noted that all contributions would be received by three members of the Committee at their homes: Anna Fry (Charlotte Street), Caroline Doyle (Kingsdown Parade), and/or Ann Tribe (Portland Street, Kingsdown). Finally, on shipping: "[w]e are informed that the duties on goods are much greater at New York than at Boston and that the cases should be directed to M. V. Ball, 12 Street, Boston."[43] Shipping duties, sending contributions out in time, worries of boxes and their contents being damaged en route: these were the many unglamorous, mundane details the BCLASS, and many other British women's anti-slavery societies discussed and recorded in their meeting minutes and wrote extensively about in their correspondence with American organizers.

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[39] Minute Book, entries 3 March 1842 and 5 May 1842 (pp. 28, 30).
[40] Minute Book, entry for 5 May 1842 (p.31).
[41] Minute Book, entry 9 May 1842 (pp. 34-35).
[42] Minute Book, entry for 9 May 1842 (p. 34).
[43] Minute Book, entry 9 May 1842 (pp. 34-36).

The responsible management of logistical matters was integral to the success of the transatlantic anti-slavery bazaar.

We also see in these early meeting minutes a pattern of exhibiting the items during an open meeting before they are shipped to Boston: "[i]t is fixed that our next meeting shall be an open one and held the early part of the tenth month (October) by which time it is hoped all the articles having been received may be placed for exhibition on the table at Bridge Street Vestry."[44] Furthermore, as evident in in the early minute meetings the gratification the BCLASS expresses upon receiving an account from Miss Ball "containing satisfying particulars" of the Bazaar and which Bristol contributions were the most popular, beautiful, or commanded the most attention.[45] Later, we will see a repeat pattern when members of the BCLASS wrote to Chapman requesting the same kind of account, which showed they continued to have more of a stake in a successful Bazaar outcomes as time went by. The reading of this letter doubtless raised morale, making the BCLASS feel their exertions and contributions to the Bazaar were of crucial importance and in their own small way, doing their part in bringing an end to slavery.

However, the BCLASS support for Ball would prove to be short-lived. In their *Special Report*, the BCLASS noted that they contributed to the Boston bazaar for two successive years, and in acknowledgement, they received the second annual report of the Massachusetts Abolition Society. "After a time, however, we found that the bazaar was discontinued; in consequence, as we understood, of the death of its chief manager; and no succeeding report of the Massachusetts Abolition Society was sent to Bristol."[46] Although Martha Ball was very much alive, her silence on behalf of the Massachusetts Abolition Society may as well be described as dead silence.[47] Not only did the BCLASS never hear from her again, but their subscription to the *American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter* and other papers recommended by Ball "were discontinued one after another." While the BCLASS were sometimes forwarded letters of American abolitionists associated with the MAS and the AFASS–Nathaniel Colver, Lewis Tappan, and Joshua Leavitt–these soon dropped off, as well. "But gradually all these sources of information ceased, and we could not learn that much effort was being made in America on behalf of emancipation, or that

[44] Minute Book, entry for 9 May 1842 (p. 36).
[45] Minute Book, (pp. 29, 31, 34)
[46] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 6-7.
[47] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 6.

any way existed for us to aid in promoting it."[48] The women of the BCLASS eventually lost contact, literally and figuratively, with what was happening in America.

After an encouraging start, the women of the BCLASS entered their first period of dormancy. It was as if a soporific miasma descended upon the women of Bristol, draining them of their activist energies and interests. Using the Minute Book and the *Special Report* we can see exactly when and in which ways the BCLASS gradually lost momentum. As early as 6 February 1845, the meeting minutes point to the waning enthusiasm in the cause: "[s]o little interest having been expressed lately in the Anti-Slavery Reporter it has been thought best to have *one* in circulation instead of three."[49] In the *Special Report*, we see the Bristol ladies explain why the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (and the direction of the movement at large), failed to captivate the hearts and minds of its once avid supporters: "[t]he British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter was regularly circulated amongst our members; but it failed to keep alive our interests, or to point out modes of action."[50] Key to note here is the precise *animating* language the women use—"failed to keep alive our interests"—implying there was a quality of *alive-ness*, a vitality to their anti-slavery interests. We will see later the importance of animating language, and the *keeping alive* of anti-slavery sentiments and interests. At this point, the BCLASS was looking for decisive action and direction from its parent society and its organ, the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*. On both counts the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was found wanting.

In the *Special Report*, the Bristol women explain they repeatedly contacted their parent society, asking what they could do to help the cause. The women wanted to take decisive action, and they did not want to wait passively on the sidelines of this important movement.[51] In response to the ladies' eager requests to suggest more meaningful anti-slavery occupations, the national society responded with resounding inadequacy: "the suggestions were so vague and unsatisfactory, that with the exception of occasionally contributing to the support of schools and institutions for the emancipated negroes and free coloured people, (which objects, though philanthropic, are not *anti-slavery*) we could find no occupation beyond that of collecting funds for the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society."[52] The BCLASS women did not feel adequately

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[48] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 7.
[49] Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 6 February 1845 (pp.59-60).
[50] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 7.
[51] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 7.
[52] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 7.

employed or engaged in their anti-slavery activism; instead, they felt their charitable efforts towards free Blacks were inconsequential and irrelevant to the movement. As will be discussed in a later chapter, the BCLASS women were not the only ones to think in this binary: charitable, philanthropic works were clearly demarcated from anti-slavery work. This will be a theme we return to time and time again: anti-slavery activists see their work as serious, separate, and superior to other philanthropic causes. While the former made a measurable difference in people's lives, it was considered to be secondary (sometimes even tertiary) to the abstract vision of a world without slavery. Some women's anti-slavery societies went so far as to criticize abolitionists who aided fugitive slaves, whether by participating in vigilance committees, taking in and provisioning fugitives, collecting donations, or participating in the Underground Railroad. They viewed such work as a distraction (however well-intentioned) from the larger, laudable goal of eradicating slavery for all.[53]

From the perspective of the BCLASS, not only did their work fall under that of the distraction variety, but they were told the most useful work they could do was to collect money for the parent society—certainly insufficient for a group of energetic, passionate women dedicated to the cause of eradicating slavery. According to the leadership of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, collecting funds for its coffers and sending donations to the occasional school for emancipated and free blacks was the very extent of the useful contributions the Bristol women could offer to the cause. What was more, they reminded the enterprising Bristol women that as an auxiliary society, they did not have the right to independently control their funds. In other words, the independent-minded BCLASS were reminded of their subordinate position. As we will see later, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society vastly underestimated the temerity and resolve of the Bristol women.

However, not all hope was lost. Although formally the BCLASS was disconnected from what was happening in the US, informally (and especially in regard to the Garrisonians), communication channels remained open in the form of a visit to Bristol from Samuel May, an anti-slavery leader who helped run the National Bazaar when Chapman was in France. May visited Bristol in 1843 on business regarding the British Unitarian Address. During his travels, he

[53] For more on this, see: Julie Roy Jeffrey. *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

met and formed fast friendships with Bristol's leading Unitarian figures: Rev. George Armstrong, Rev. Lant Carpenter, and John Bishop Estlin. Not uncoincidentally, the Bristol women most active in leadership roles within the BCLASS and other reform causes were the wives and daughters of these prominent Unitarian men. May certainly left his mark on Bristol, educating prominent fathers and daughters on what was *really* happening with the abolition movement in America, particularly the Garrisonian portion of the movement, which was the one they were once expressly warned against co-operating with.

However, at this particular juncture, the BCLASS was rapidly losing momentum. One of its more active members, Mrs. Frances Armstrong, declared of the BCLASS, "since the emancipation in our own West Indian islands, had been rather a nominal than an active body," in a letter to Samuel May.[54] In this same letter, she described her efforts to re-ignite the spark of anti-slavery interest within her fellow Bristol women by "putting in circulation among the ladies of the committee one or two books on American slavery, to increase their interest in your present position…"[55] One of her strategies was to circulate among the women the latest anti-slavery books and pamphlets, including Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*.[56] Armstrong clearly chose a winning strategy.

The Lecture Tour

The *Narrative* and its commanding, charismatic narrator, would come to breathe new life into the moribund BCLASS and many other anti-slavery societies throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland. Douglass' tour began in Ireland because a Dublin abolitionist-radical printer, Richard Davis Webb, offered to publish an Irish edition of the *Narrative* as a way to provide funding, via book sales, to Douglass during his stay. Webb was a close friend of Garrison and acted as the Irish liaison for transatlantic lecture tours, often hosting the lecturer. This is exactly what he and his wife Hannah did, hosting Douglass and James Buffam. Douglass remained in Ireland to be involved with the Irish publication process of his *Narrative*.[57] As evidenced by

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[54] Letter from Frances Armstrong to Samuel May, 16 February 1846, printed as item [195] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 251-2.
[55] Letter from Frances Armstrong to Samuel May, 16 February 1846, printed as item [195] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 251-2.
[56] Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 5 February 1846: "Mrs. F. Armstrong kindly bought a copy of Frederick Douglass' *Narrative* for inculcation among the Ladies on the Committee."
[57] Frederick Douglass. *Frederick Douglass in Ireland: In His Own Words*. Edited by Christine Kinealy. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 4-5.

Frances Armstrong's reading recommendations, the anti-slavery powers-that-be in Bristol were well aware of the power of Douglass' *Narrative* to take Bristol by storm. "I cannot doubt a ready sale for Douglass's Narrative if copies were sent hither. There is a strong anti-slavery feeling here when it can [be] made to show itself," J.B. Estlin wrote to R.D. Webb. By way of proof, he added, "[w]hen N. Keep was here raising money for the Oberlin Institute, 500 guineas were subscribed in Bristol."[58] In a subsequent letter to Webb, Estlin took his support of Douglass even further—not only is the *Narrative* useful, but a visit from Douglass to Bristol: "[t]his brings me to the subject of F. Douglass's visiting Bristol…I think his being here would do much good in making zealous abolitionists."[59] Estlin did not yet realize how prophetic his words were to become.

Similar to her father, Mary Estlin also expressed great faith in the *Narrative* and its author to win over hearts and minds. Writing to Maria Weston Chapman, Estlin stated which anti-slavery books and tracts were preferred by those in Bristol: "The Life of Frederick Douglass will do much in this way; it has deeply interested all who have yet been able to obtain access to it, and we are impatient to see and hear him."[60] In both father and daughter's correspondence, we see the tremendous promise, excitement, and curiosity only a visit from Frederick Douglass could inspire.

In a letter to Samuel May, Frances Armstrong echoes the Estlin's eager curiosity, writing excitedly about the prospect of seeing Douglass during his stay in Bristol. "We are looking forward with great interest to a visit from Frederick Douglass next month; he seems to be exciting a great sensation wherever he appears."[61] As we will see, Armstrong's anticipatory letter illustrated the growing frenzy surrounding the sensational Frederick Douglass. Mary Estlin similarly expressed her excitement at the prospect of Douglass' Bristol visit: "[w]e are hoping much from the visit of F. Douglass, of whose "Narrative" we have disposed of upwards of 150 copies which will…ensure him a welcome & a numerous audience in this place."[62] Armstrong

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[58] By way of proof, Estlin adds, "When N. Keep was here raising money for the Oberlin Institute, 500 guineas were subscribed in Bristol." Letter from John Estlin to [R.D. Webb?], 5 November 1845, printed as item [180] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 240

[59] Letter from John Estlin to R.D. Webb, 13 November 1845, printed as item [182] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 241.

[60] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, November 14, 1845 (BPL)

[61] Emphasis given is my own. Letter from Frances Armstrong to Samuel May, 16 February 1846, printed as item [195] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 251-2.

[62] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 1 March 1846, (BPL).

hit on two issues here which were central to the success of this lecture tour: the sensational Frederick Douglass and "the interest his colour excites."[63] Importantly, Armstrong emphasized the word "sensation," which points to the animating quality of language the Bristol women used to describe both their anti-slavery dormancy and awakening.

Garrison and Douglass' transatlantic lecture tour was of great importance in establishing and cementing anti-slavery connections and relationships with several leading British abolitionists and ladies' anti-slavery societies, often times vastly unaware of the realpolitik of anti-slavery politics in America and under the impression that Garrison was a radical firebrand at best, a dangerous fanatic at worst. This tour worked to dispel these negative assumptions and to give the English, Scottish, and Irish people a true accounting or a setting-of-the-record straight about the fraught anti-slavery politics in the US and where Garrisonians stood in that milieu.

Garrison and Douglas went to Ireland, Scotland, and England on their tour. Many women involved in anti-slavery societies saw them and communicated their impressions to Chapman. For instance, Mary Welsh, an Edinburgh abolitionist, described a set of "glorious meetings" with George Thompson, Frederick Douglass, James Buffum, and H.C. Wright, in which these speakers did "wonders in opening the eyes of the public" and ends by writing that "never was there such excitement created as at present & there is no doubt but great good will be the result."[64] Of the speakers Welsh lists, James Buffam, the one who first came over with Douglass and accompanied him on his tour also expressed his sense of pride and accomplishment in the good work their lecture tour was doing to further the anti-slavery cause. In letters to both Weston sisters, he proudly recounted the warm treatment and the great respect and approbation the people show them. "Douglass has had great applause in all the places where he has been, and I think great good has been done," he wrote to Caroline Weston. More confidently, he wrote to Chapman, "You can count upon more help from the country than you have heretofore." Buffam described how "the people are aroused" by Douglass' lectures, and he had "done much good to

[63] Letter from Frances Armstrong to Samuel May, 16 February 1846, printed as item [195] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 251-2.
[64] Letter from Mary Welsh to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 May 1846, printed as item [201] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 261.

enlighten the people."[65] The almost embodied experience it was to hear Douglass speak–aroused, enlightened–mind and soul.

We see the same embodied language in Lucy Browne's account: "I feel sure that the visits which some American friends of freedom (Messrs. Garrison, Douglass, Burritt and Clapp) have made to our country have had a good effect here, in awakening much kind feeling; in spreading a good deal of information respecting the state of your country; in rousing a warm interest in your reforms."[66] Key here is the animating language she uses: awakening, kind feeling, rousing, warm interest. There is an alive-ness, a vitality, an animating force associated with the words she used. No where was this vitality more on display than in Bristol.

From Slumber to Sensation

Mary Carpenter wrote to Chapman on the value of transatlantic tours in getting the people of Bristol on side: "I believe that the visit of Mr. Garrison to England will have been of great importance; -- he has formed strong personal friendships, I may at any rate say in Bristol, which will enable us to cooperate with him more than he could have done without knowing him personally. I had long desired to see him, & now I feel it a great privilege to be reckoned among his friends."[67] John Estlin, the ophthalmologist and paterfamilias of one of Bristol's prominent Unitarian families, also formed a strong personal friendship and working rapport with Garrison. Of their first meeting, he recounted how, "Mr. Garrison's very cordial meeting, and friendly expressions, made me feel at once with an old friend."[68] He describes hosting Garrison and Douglass, while also attending anti-slavery gatherings with Bristol's American guests and his British abolitionist colleagues, R.D. Webb, H.C. Wright, James Haughton, and George Thompson. While in Bristol, Garrison and Douglass met, conversed, and broke bread with some of Bristol's most prominent Unitarian/abolitionist families: the Carpenter's, the Estlin's, and the

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[65] Letter from J. Buffam to Caroline Weston, 25 June 1846, printed as item [210] & Letter from J.N. Buffam to Maria Weston Chapman, 26 June 1846, printed as item [211] printed as item [201] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 270-1.
[66] Letter from Lucy Browne to [Maria Weston Chapman?], 17 November 1846, printed as item [242] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 299./ Tricia's email (first seen)
[67] Letter from Mary Carpenter to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 October 1846, printed as item [234] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 293.
[68] Letter from J.B. Estlin to Samuel May, 1 September 1846, printed as item [222] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 280-281.

Armstrong's.[69] As previously mentioned, the Bristol women most active in leadership roles within the BCLASS and other reform causes were the wives and daughters of these prominent Unitarian men. Writing to Garrison, Frances Armstrong congratulated him on the success of his and Douglass' visit to Bristol: "though our hearts were with you in your labours before, we shall feel an additional interest in them for the future."[70] As we have seen, the three powerhouse BCLASS women, Mary Carpenter, Frances Armstrong, and Mary Estlin already had a basic understanding of the anti-slavery schism in America and were already leaning towards Garrisonian abolitionism and chafing against the confines of their parent organization, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (aligned with the Tappanite American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society). The transatlantic lecture tour Garrison and Douglass embarked upon was, therefore, vital in reaffirming and redoubling transatlantic support.

Mary Estlin, arguably the most influential member of the BCLASS, writes in similar glowing tones about the value of Garrison and Douglass' transatlantic lecture tour and their visit to Bristol. In a letter to Maria Weston Chapman, she writes that in her estimation, "most of our friends – *all* I believe I may say," who attended Garrison and Douglass' lectures, left with a "stronger & clearer point of view, have had some intricate parts made straight, & some difficulties solved & have been inspired with fresh zeal in your cause."[71] In this letter, she referred to the negative things the British have heard about Garrison and his followers, but she now understood more of what they stood for, which was immediate emancipation, women's rights, and no Union with slaveholders. "He [W.L.G.] has I trust done much good here & dispelled many prejudices by his visit, for great numbers listened to him; & many had private conversation with him; & to be in his atmosphere *must* soften bigotry & disarm unkindly feeling when it existed before," Estlin wrote on Garrison's successful rebranding campaign.[72] A few months later, in a November letter to her friend, Estlin employed stronger language to convey how absolutely essential Garrison and Douglass' lecture tours are to the furthering of the great

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[69] Letter from J.B. Estlin to Samuel May, 1 September 1846, pp.280-281. Although Estlin focuses on his time hosting and conversing with Garrison and Douglass, he also mentions that the esteemed guests breakfasted with Mr. Armstrong–another leading Unitarian figure in Bristol and the father of Frances Armstrong, longtime abolitionist and member of the BCLASS.

[70] Letter from Frances Armstrong to William Lloyd Garrison, 3 September 1846, printed as item [225] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 284.

[71] Letter from Mary Estlin to M.W. Chapman, September 1846, printed as item [223] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 282.

[72] Letter from Mary Estlin to M.W. Chapman, September 1846, p. 282.

cause at hand. “It makes really all the difference between zeal and indifference in the towns where Frederick Douglass and William Llyod Garrison have lectured.”[73] All the difference– perhaps a bit of hyperbole, a dramatic flourish to impress upon her friend and colleague, but taken in conjunction with other evidence and reports of people being deeply moved and affected by these lectures, particularly the ones delivered by Douglass, we may be inclined to take Mary Estlin at her word. Certainly, she felt strongly about this… “so I trust Frederick Douglass will be here long enough to visit many more of our large towns.”[74]

Such sentiments are expressed in the BCLASS *Special Report*, where an entire section is dedicated to the importance of the ‘Visit of Messrs. Garrison and Douglass to Bristol.’ “Their eloquent and touching appeals rekindled, in the minds of some of our committee as listened to them, the anti-slavery feeling which for want of exercise had declined or was lying dormant.”[75] Without the galvanizing Garrisonian transatlantic lecturers, specifically the brilliant, striking Douglass, many anti-slavery societies in England, Scotland, and Ireland would likely have remained dormant or faded away entirely. It is important to note the powerful emotionality in this passage. The reader of this Report can almost picture the transformative event that was hearing these two compelling, fiery speakers, and can almost picture the scales falling from the eyes of the once dormant Bristol women, reinvigorating to the tune of a fever pitch.

The Bristol women were certainly not the only women to describe, in vivid animating language, their anti-slavery awakening in the presence of Frederick Douglass. “There never was a person who made a greater sensation in Cork…he has gained friends everywhere he has been– he is indeed a wonderful man,” wrote Isabel Jennings, daughter of prominent Irish abolitionist,, of her impressions on Douglass.[76] Mary Ireland, of Belfast, echoed Jennings’ vivid description of the deep, boundless interest Douglass’ lectures inspired: “[a]n intense interest has been excited by the oratory of Frederick Douglass during his late visit to this town,” so much so that his visit

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[73] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, November 2, 1846 (BPL)
[74] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, November 2, 1846 (BPL)
[75] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies’Anti-Slavery Society*, 7-8.
[76] Letter from Isabel Jennings to Maria Weston Chapman, n.d. (but likely 1845), printed as item [184] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 243. It is simply impossible to list all the names and quote from all the letters of the men and women who wrote to the Weston sisters to praise the great e(a)ffect of Douglass’ transatlantic lectures. Alongside those in the text, some notable examples are: Catherine Clarkson (wife of famed abolitionist Thomas Clarkson), who wrote to M.W. Chapman, “Mr. Douglass is making a great impression in this country.” (2 August 1846, item [215] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 275).

inspired the creation of a Belfast ladies anti-slavery society.[77] Ireland emphasizes that all who listen to Douglass "are warm in the cause of the slave" and very "earnest and energetic." She maintained, "if a fair development of these impulses were permitted I am convinced there is scarcely a lady in Belfast who would not be anxious to join in any means calculated to promote the enfranchisement of the deeply injured Africans."[78] Ireland was quite prophetic—a fair development of these impulses would indeed be permitted, if not downright encouraged, in the form of contributing goods, donations, money, and considerable time and effort for the benefit of the Boston Bazaar.

There existed a direct connection between the transatlantic lecturer's skill to awaken and excite audiences in proportion to the Bazaar's popularity and success. No one was more skilled than Frederick Douglass. *He was sensational*. He blew crowds away and was met with enthusiastic applause wherever he went. Mary Estlin wrote on the unanimous opinion of Douglass: "[w]herever he goes he arouses sympathy in your cause & love for himself. He is affecting a great work here, & the longer you can spare him to us the better it will be for us & I believe for you too in the end."[79] Estlin understood the value of the work Douglass was doing to win over hearts and minds to the cause. We can see her keen, strategic mind at work here conflating an extended duration of Douglass' visit in the UK with a growth of interest in the cause and in the overall success of the Bazaar. Quite directly, she wrote: "[p]eople are looking forward with great anxiety to his second visit, & there seems quite an anti-slavery ferment, who I hope will result in considerable additions to the Bazaar collections…"[80] Additionally, R.D. Webb wrote, "[t]here can be no doubt that much of the sweep of the Bazaar this year may be attributed to him–for from all I can learn the contributions from this side of the Atlantic will be finer than ever."[81] And then, of course, there was what Douglass said himself how he advertised to benefit of the Boston Bazaar: "I think you may safely calculate seeing some proof of this at your next Bazaar. At the suggestion of Mr. R.D.Webb I have inserted an appeal on behalf of the Bazaar in

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[77] Letter from Mary Ireland to Maria Weston Chapman, 24 January 1846, printed as item [189] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 247.
[78] Letter from Mary Ireland to Maria Weston Chapman, 24 January 1846, printed as item [189] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 247.
[79] Letter from Mary Estlin to M.W. Chapman, September 1846, p. 282.
[80] Letter from Mary Estlin to M.W. Chapman, September 1846, p. 282.
[81] Letter from R.D. Webb to [Maria Weston Chapman], 31 October 1846, printed as item [235] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 294.

my narrative, so that wherever the narrative goes – there also goes an appeal on behalf of the old organized AntiSlavery Bazaar." He continued, "[o]ne of the first objects in my lectures has been to make that Bazaar prominent and increase its [success] by increasing its means."[82] Later, he reported, "I recently got a little circle to work for the Bazaar at Boston consisting a few influential young ladies in 'Carlile' (Eng.). They will send a box this autumn."[83] He also met with a man who agreed to send a "valuable contribution" to the Bazaar refreshment table–a rather substantial box of fancy biscuits.[84]

Douglass' striking figure and profound oratory certainly made its mark. Perhaps R.D. Webb best captures, aside from the colour of his skin, what set Douglass apart from Garrison, "Frederick Douglass who looks stately & majestic–with an air that makes Garrison a mere baby beside him."[85] In many instances, the Bristol women and their coadjutors spoke of him using problematic language that was racially charged, if not overtly racist. But "the interest his colour excites" was a major reason for his popularity, that is, the white, voyeuristic gaze that fixated on him. For example, Frances Armstrong wrote, "I should think he will hardly be able to return to America with any comfort, as the perfect absence of prejudice against colour here, indeed the interest his colour has excited, would make the return even to New England, painful to him […]"[86] In addition, Estlin commented, "[o]ur expectations were highly roused by his narrative, his printed speeches, & the eulogisms of the friends with whom he has been staying," however, she adds "he far exceeds the picture we had formed both in outward graces, intellectual power & culture, & eloquence."[87] One could imagine how shocked the Bristol ladies were when "the picture we had formed" of Douglass, likely one that was extremely patronizing, was vastly underestimated. William Wells Brown and William and Ellen Craft would later visit Bristol, on behalf on the AASS and the National Bazaar.[88] Black transatlantic lecturers such as Douglass,

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[82] Letter from Frederick Douglass to Maria Weston Chapman, 29 March 1846, printed as item [199] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 258.
[83] Letter from Frederick Douglass to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 August 1846, printed as item [218] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 278.
[84] Letter from Frederick Douglass to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 August 1846, printed as item [218] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 278.
[85] Letter from R.D. Webb to [Maria Weston Chapman], 31 October 1846, printed as item [235] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 294.
[86] Letter from Frances Armstrong to Samuel May, 16 February 1846, printed as item [195] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 251-2.
[87] Letter from Mary Estlin to M.W. Chapman, September 1846, p. 282.
[88] *Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*, 10-23.

Brown, and the Crafts, would use "the interest [their] colour excites" for the benefit of the Bazaar and more importantly, for their own anti-slavery agendas.

From Bristol Exhibition to Boston Bazaar

Before even stepping foot in the National Bazaar, hundreds and hundreds of people would attend annual exhibitions at the homes of key BCLASS members, to marvel at the array of objects soon to be packed up and shipped to America for the National Bazaar. Many who attended beamed with pride at their own contributions exhibited for all to behold. Others, out of sheer curiosity and anti-slavery fellow feeling, wished to see what others contributed and came to share in the camaraderie of the evening. Most, if not all who attended, wished to browse, and revel in the vast repository of objects, thereby training their eyes in the new ways of seeing. While describing an early exhibition, Estlin wrote, "[w]e laid out all the things in our drawing room for three days previous to packing them, & they were inspected by upwards of 120 visitors & much interest has been excited in the object, & many inquiries made respecting it."[89]

Right from the start, immense invisible labour went on behind the scenes, exhibiting articles before they were to be packed up and sent to America. Leading women of the BCLASS, notably Mary Estlin and Mary Carpenter, took on the arduous task of collecting articles, arranging them, laying them out for exhibition, and packing them up to be sent to America.[90] J.B. Estlin acknowledged the sheer work involved in such an undertaking: "[o]ur [Bristol] box went off yesterday: it was a very large one, & contained between 6 & 700 separate articles for sale. It was no small labour, though to the Ladies of my family (my daughter & sister in law) a very interesting one, to collect, exhibit and pack up these numerous articles."[91] Although such a job was certainly unenviable in its entirety; it is, nevertheless, important to recognize that many component parts contributed to the exhibitionary whole. For example, Elizabeth J. Massie shared with Mary Estlin that her group was not only "getting on nicely with our Box," but that she intended to host a "working party" and expects around fifteen young ladies to attend–all working together to furnish the box for the Boston bazaar.[92] Such collective action such as working

[89] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 28 October 1844 (BPL)
[90] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, October 28, 1844 (BPL)
[91] Letter from J.B. Estlin to R.D. Webb, November 13, 1845, printed as item [182] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 241-2.
[92] Letter from Elizabeth J. Massie Upper Clapton [England], to Mary Anne Estlin, September 24, [date unknown], BPL.

parties, sewing circles, and community groups worked together on both sides of the Atlantic to provide original contributions to the Boston Bazaar.[93]

Although as early as 1842, the BCLASS exhibited articles before shipping to America, fuelled by the popularity of the transatlantic lecturers, later exhibitions surpassed anything that preceded them. For example, in a letter to Chapman, Mary Estlin wrote that the Bristol box, which included a greater variety of donations than ever before, was en route to Boston via Liverpool—not uncoincidentally traveling on the same steamer as Garrison returning home from his successful lecture tour: "[y]ou will find it a much more numerous one than those of preceding years & at the same time a more heterogeneous assemblage."[94] Crucially, Estlin was connecting the greater multitude and variety of contributions for the Boston Bazaar to the phenomenal success of the transatlantic lecture tours. This was a frequent, astute observation she (correctly) expressed many times. Perhaps to further illustrate, we should let the numbers speak for themselves. "During the 4 days that our collection was exhibited it was visited by 535 people exclusive of four schools," she wrote.[95] Unfortunately, on account of unfavourable weather conditions, certain wealthy individuals "whom we had hoped to interest & who would have increased the profits of our collection box," did not attend. Instead, the majority of visitors were "chiefly contributors & their friends."[96] Despite the poor weather, the exhibition had an incredible showing, with Estlin assuring her American friend, "the interest in the object is spreading & fresh attention is being directed to it & we will do our best to keep it alive when the effusion of zeal caused by the lectures we heard so recently from Mr. Garrison, Thompson & Douglas[s] has subsided."[97] Once again, we see animating language being used to describe the maintenance of anti-slavery zeal, as something that must be *kept alive*, a living, breathing organism that must not be snuffed out before its time. Estlin was correct to draw attention (and to praise) the symbiosis that occurred between the lecturer and bazaar. In fact, in the Thirteenth National Anti-Slavery Gazette, the bazaar managers corroborated, speaking to the greater volume and variety of articles sent from Britain: "[m]ay this year be expected of a very much greater

[93] For more examples, see the section 'Working Parties' in *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette*, December 1846, 4.
[94] Letter from Mary Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 October 1846 (BPL)
[95] Letter from Mary Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 October 1846 (BPL)
[96] Letter from Mary Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 October 1846 (BPL)
[97] Letter from Mary Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 October 1846 (BPL)

beauty than have ever before been exhibited. The interest of our English Contributors has been greatly stimulated, and their number increased."[98]

No detail, no matter how small, was unimportant. For example, the BCLASS women were very eager to please their American counterparts and wished to provide them with saleable items. In the correspondence, there is countless back and forth between parties regarding which articles are favoured at the Bazaar and which articles were the most popular and sold the best.[99] What was very important to many foreign contributors was securing a constant feedback loop. They wanted to be kept informed on whether boxes arrived intact; whether certain articles were packed well, or if they were damaged along the journey; which items sold best; and most importantly, they wanted to receive encouragement and acknowledgment of their contribution and to feel as if they played a part, no matter how small, in the eradication of slavery. Estlin explained this need to feel valued, virtuous, and kept abreast of one's investment, whether that be of time, money, labour, or a deeper fidelity to the cause. She wrote, "[o]ur only reason for attending to these minutiae is the desire of keeping up the interest of those who have been roused, but may become apathetic again if there is not some such means of proving to them that their efforts are appreciated."[100] Ever practical, Estlin understood the importance of gratitude, encouragement, and recognition.

On this last point, Estlin asked for special recognition for exceptional donors—in this case, for the young pupils of the Blind Asylum. She wrote, "[y]ou will see the result of the Meeting I described to you held by the Pupils of the Blind Asylum. They made all the articles in the hours allotted them for recreation & no offerings will reach you from more hearty donors. Any notice you may take of them will afford them much gratification, I know."[101]

The exhibition at the Estlin home, and later at the National Bazaar, was far from impersonal. Whenever possible, objects contributed to the Bazaar included the contributors' names: "[w]e have affixed the name & residence of each contributor to the various articles thinking it would be gratifying to you to see the number of friends who are interested in the great

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[98] "Thirteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, Faneuil Hall" (1846).
[99] For examples, see the following BPL groupings: Letters from Mary Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman: 14 November 1845; 1 March 1846; 17 October 1846; 2 November 1846. Letters from Maria Weston Chapman to Mary Estlin: 27 January 1846; 20 January 1847.
[100] Letter from Mary Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 2 November 1846. (BPL)
[101] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 October 1846 (BPL)

cause you have so deeply at heart."[102] The next year, the number of visitors increased to 220 over the course of three days; regardless, the identification of the object with the donor/maker continued, "principally because we imagined you would be interested in seeing how many different hands had been working for the cause…and the different classes who have in this way given expression to that sympathy which must be far more prized by you than the intrinsic worth of the offerings."[103] The reverence and respect for the *personal*, the authentic connection between the labour of "many different hands" making for the Bazaar and the resultant objects themselves is closer to Walter Benjamin's idea of the 'aura', than to our contemporary mass-produced objects devoid of any personal connection with their makers.[104] We see Benjamin's aura at play in an 1846 correspondence between Estlin and Chapman: "[f]rom your account it seems the best way of securing you to contribute Stationery instead of [fancy]work, but we like to do both, if possible that our hands may be engaged in the same cause as yours, & that we may feel we have made some sacrifice of time which has very many home claims, for the work to which you devote all yours."[105]

It is important to note that sometimes, such best practices could not always be fully realized, particularly at times of high donation volume. Estlin wrote, "[t]he labelling is much less perfect than heretofore, for things came in too promiscuously to enable us to affix the donors names with accuracy, in some cases, & to ascertain them in others."[106] Likewise, Fanny Tribe, another overworked and overtaxed member of the BCLASS, who kept the articles she collected for the National Bazaar quite late, wrote "hoping to receive some more that were promised me. Some articles have been sent with the name of the maker attached, but I have not been able to put the names, from want of time & from ignorance of some of them."[107]

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[102] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 28 October 1844 (BPL)
[103] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 14 November 1845 (BPL)
[104] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* (London: Penguin, 2008).
[105] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 1 March 1846 (BPL).
[106] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 October 1846 (BPL). In this case, Estlin declares in her letter, "By a later steamer you shall have a full list of names and donors," along with a summary of the totals from each district.
[107] Letter from Fanny Tribe to Mary Anne Estlin, [date unknown] (BPL)

Conclusion

In an 1847 letter to Chapman, Estlin answered her friend's query as to whether she could host the National Bazaar in Bristol, as her exhibitions have been so successful. In response, Estlin revealed much:

> People wd [would] not *work* so readily, nor wd [would] purchasers be found; for Bazaars are things with wh. [which] people here are nearly satiated; & only attend them when some prefacing home object invites, in sufficient numbers to render it profitable. *Seeing* a collection of things about to be transmitted to America has more attractions, & and some particular articles might be wished for by the spectators, but generally speaking <u>those wd</u> [would] be the most productive among you.[108]

In this passage, Estlin confirms the ubiquity and oversaturation of charity bazaars at this time in Britain, as covered in Chapter One. Only in America would such an annual anti-slavery bazaar be a true novelty, drawing people far and wide to exercise and train their gaze on the heaping profusion of objects on exhibition, while also helping the 'poor slave.'

[108] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 2 April 1847 (BPL)

Chapter Three:

"Exhibition of all the pretty things:" the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1834-1858

> "The Bazaar furnishes an occasion, on which Anti-Slavery people of all shades of opinion, the pro-slavery world and the *Poco curante*, all meet together, and from the conflict of sentiment and exchange of ideas that ensure, it cannot be but that good is evolved. Much social enjoyment and much serious business are compressed into the ten days through which the Bazaar continues, and many friends from a distance make their annual visit to Boston at this Season. Opportunities are also given for the direct inculcation of Anti-Slavery truth."[1]
> -Anne Warren Weston, *Report of the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (1854)

> "Much has heretofore been said against Ladies' Fairs, by those who are justly displeased at the manner in which they are sometimes conducted. All the objections we have heard, respect improprieties of management, and therefore may be obviated. Surely if merchants and traders may buy and sell for their own benefit, we may buy and sell for the benefit of the slave. A Fair is not a *malum in se*, unless the same can be proved of the acts of sale and purchase. We propose, during Christmas week, again to have recourse to this means of raising money, as it is the most effectual means we can command. We do so the more readily, as it has been at the same time, a means of exciting and increasing a general interest in the minds of our friends."[2]
> -*Fourth Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society*, 1837

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The above passages capture the National Bazaar as it really was, in all its vivid complexity, painted in a manner that complicates and refuses the simplistic narratives projected onto it. The National Bazaar was certainly an event to celebrate, but it also merits critique and interrogation. Abolitionists, being the extraordinary propagandists that they were, often spoke of the Boston Bazaar in terms of a unified, and perfect whole, as in the first epigraph. In these passages, we see the many different layers, textures and techniques employed to create a work of a seeming whole, but if we look closer, we see the mark of artifice. This chapter takes the reader on a tour of the Bazaar, emphasizing ideas surrounding material culture, space, emotions, and domesticity. It focuses on how these elements came together to create feelings of community and

[1] Anne Warren Weston, *Report of the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (J.B. Yerrington and Son, Printers, Boston, Mass: 1854), pp. 19-20.
[2] *Fourth Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society*, 1837.

well-being. By looking both behind and in front of the curtain, this chapter shows the unglamorous aspects of the National Bazaar, as well as its life cycle.

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In her *Reminiscences*, Sarah Southwick described Maria Weston Chapman's impressive marketing acumen: "[t]hen, too, she understood the art of bringing customers, having the most elegant little circulars printed for private circulation among the aristocratic families of Boston."[3] Chapman was well-versed, indeed, in *the art of bringing customers*. Whether publishing elegant circulars meant for Boston's smart-set, or widely distributing fair broadsides and gazettes, she knew how to effectively market her event. One of the most common strategies she relied on was emphasizing the unmatched quality, novelty, and rarity of objects expected at the upcoming Bazaar. For example, the broadside advertising the Twelfth National Bazaar, notes, "[t]he managers and their friends in all parts of the world have taken pains, during the year, to select the rarest and most beautiful articles of use and ornament for this occasion."[4] It is worthwhile to note how *the rarest and most beautiful articles* are advertised in the broadside, so as to lure potential customers by highlighting, "materials *not yet obtained here*"; "almost impalpable fineness"; "every variety of the most elegant writing materials, of kinds *not usually imported*"; "the rare Staffordshire China, *never imported, on account of its fragility*; with white gilded porcelain door-handles and plates."[5] The novelty, never-before-seen and/or imported factor was heavily emphasized.

In the broadside advertising the Thirteenth National Bazaar, we see a similar style, except instead of novelty, scarcity was the primary enticement. As the broadside noted, "[a] very great proportion of this unusually large collection of beautiful articles from all parts of the world, are such as cannot be elsewhere procured on this side of the Atlantic, and may properly be classed as works of genius and art."[6] For example, there will be a "*first edition* of Milton's Poems (1643)"; "a medallion…extremely rare and valuable—indeed, *not to be obtained but in this single instance*"[7]; "[s]pecimens of most beautiful styles of ladies' work, from France; *novelties, even in*

[3] Sarah Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days*, (1893): p. 38.
[4] "National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, Faneuil Hall," broadside (1845)
[5] [Italics my own to emphasize novelty] "National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, Faneuil Hall," broadside (1845).
[6] "Thirteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, Faneuil Hall" (1846)
[7] The medallion is of Henry Gratton, by Mossop, described as "the eminent Irish medallist."

Paris"; knitted scarfs and shawls of a peculiar kind, *nowhere else to be found*"; "De La Rue's Parisian writing materials, ordered expressly from the manufacturers, *of kinds never imported by the trade*."[8]

Not only were the above objects incredibly scarce and one-of-a-kind, but it is made clear that those who did not visit the Bazaar early, would miss out on purchasing them altogether: "[p]ersons who do not visit the Bazaar on the opening day, early, *(doors open at ten o'clock, A.M.)*, will probably lose the opportunity of inspecting the most beautiful objects, as all such are eagerly sought for, and it is our rule not to retain articles on the tables for exhibition, after they have been purchased."[9] In other words, a polite, nineteenth-century way of saying, "if you snooze, you lose." Even worse though, as once these incredibly special and rare items were purchased, they would no longer be on display. Meaning, *just the opportunity* to take in the sublime beauty and rarity of these objects, would be lost, perhaps forever. This was a clever marketing ploy, indeed. To emphasize the scarcity of the objects themselves, *and* the scarcity of opportunity to participate in the visual spectacle of the objects, ensured early and eager customers, ready to purchase and participate in the new ways of looking—exclusively exhibited at the National Bazaar.[10]

Another method to bring in more customers was to offer novelty events or experiences. To attract the greatest number of visitors, art works, historic documents, and rare books were exhibited. Some examples include, a china set belonging to Louis Phillipe; a reproduction Venus de Milo; a "picture gallery" showcasing works from "several old masters, of attraction sufficient to induce, and repay a long journey only to look upon them"; elaborate tapestries; "rare Staffordshire china; and Thomas Cranmer's black-letter bible from 1587.[11] Autographs and remembrances from abolitionist luminaries and celebrities also enticed people to attend the Bazaar. For example, autographs from the following famed British abolitionists sold well: James

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[8] [Italics my own to emphasize scarcity] "Thirteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, Faneuil Hall" (1846).
[9] *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette*, December 1846, p. 4.
[10] For other examples, see: Letter from Anne Warren Weston to Maria Weston Chapman, December 1852 (BPL). This letter is written on the back of a circular advertising the Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, to be held in the Horticultural Hall. Weston comments on the effectiveness of such advertising: "We sent out about 1000 of these to the Boston Ladies. I think they do more for us than any species of advertisement."
[11] "National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, Faneuil Hall," broadside (1845); Lee Chambers-Schiller, '"A Good Work among the People": The Political Culture of the Boston Antislavery Fair,' in Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 251.

Montgomery, George Thompson, Thomas Clarkson, and William Wilberforce. The Wedgewood family donated a box of its famous anti-slavery cameos. Several beautiful ottomans and stools were also donated by Dowager Lady Buxton and Mrs. Gurney. At the National Bazaar, the earlier generation of British abolitionists affirmed their support and solidarity with their American counterparts of the next generation. For example, in the Report of the Twenty-Fourth National Bazaar, Maria Weston Chapman included an excerpt of a letter from Thomas Clarkson to Garrison: "I beg you would present my affectionate regards to Mr. Garrison. Our great cause is deeply indebted to him, for there was a time when it slept, and could not have been recovered, unless he had kept the flame alive."[12]

Another novelty event dreamed up by Chapman to bring in more customers was the 1840 soirée. In a letter to Samuel May recounting the history of the anti-slavery fairs and bazaars, Caroline Weston recollects the1840 Fair as a turning point: "[n]ow the Fair assumed something of the aspect that distinguished its later years."[13] Here she is referring to the theatricality, the glittering spectacle and feast for the eyes that would later be the National Bazaar. "I will not dwell upon the pains we took to make this occasion agreeable & interesting or upon the thoughtful generosity when the part of our friends landed our town with all the luxurys of all seasons."[14] Women fairgivers and volunteers took great pains indeed to create an atmosphere that sparked the imagination and allowed for revelry and enjoyment. According to Weston, their thoughtful efforts and exertions paid off in a big way:

> The scene was beautiful. The tables were arranged by Mr Prom - & there was no end of beautiful porcelain & silver – a wealth of candelabras & lamps which flashed on the beautiful flowers & fruits…The Soiree was a most successful occasion. After the banquet – addresses from some of our most eloquent speakers were heard & cheered to the echo. The Happiness of our guests was delightful to witness.[15]

The Soiree was the special event that closed the 1840 Fair. Thereby ensuring there was a steady build up of excitement and suspense surrounding the special event, which translated into ticket sales. "We had issued cards of invitation to a soiree to be held the last evening of the fair at a

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[12] 1845 letter from Thomas Clarkson included in, Maria Weston Chapman, *Report of the Twenty-Fourth National Anti-Slavery Festival*, (1858): p. 5.
[13] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 21 October 1871, (BPL)
[14] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 21 October 1871, (BPL)
[15] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 21 October 1871, (BPL)

dollar each - & I suppose 300 tickets were sold."[16] Clearly, Chapman and her sisters were skilled in the art of bringing in crowds—something that would continue throughout the Boston Bazaar's history.

Perhaps one of the most clever and obvious way to bring in crowds and generate interest for the bazaar was to play up its associations with Christmas, and the relatively recent popularity of the Christmas tree. "We were always furnished by the cause – by friends with beautiful trees & evergreens for our Christmas decorations."[17] Oftentimes, as in the 'Wanted' section of *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette for 1845*, the bazaar organizers would solicit donations of greenery for decorating the hall: "[f]or the Anti-Slavery Fair in Faneuil Hall, as early as the 18th of December, great quantities of running made into wreaths, and young evergreen trees, to form part of the decoration of the Hall for the occasion."[18] The next year, the call took on a greater urgency, as the *Thirteenth National Anti-Slavery Gazette for 1846* shows: "[t]he friends of the cause who live in towns where pine and red-cedar trees can be had for the cutting, or through the generosity of the owners of woodland, are informed that in no way could their aid be more effectual than in sending to Boston, *on Friday the 18th December*, Evergreen trees of a size suited to stand against the pillars , and hide the unsightly spaces in the hall."[19] Many answered the call, as the historical record demonstrates.[20]

Such verdant greenery reminiscent of the holiday season was key to creating a festive environment. It was also used to generate excitement and draw in crowds, as it did for those who curiously flocked to see one of Boston's very first Christmas trees. At this point, during the early 1840s, the Christmas tree was still quite a novelty, as was the act of picking presents from its branches.[21] For such an unveiling to be successful, it had to be kept top secret until the right moment. Writing in a clandestine, conspiratorial tone, Samuel Cabot described to Emma Forbes

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[16] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 21 October 1871, (BPL)
[17] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 21 October 1871, (BPL)
[18] *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette*, 1 December 1845, p. 5.
[19] *The National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette,* vol I, no. II (December 1846), pp. 1-2.
[20] In particular, see the Chapman-Weston Correspondence in the BPL's Anti-Slavery Collection of Distinction. Some examples include: Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 1 December 1845, in which Drake writes, "I send you such greenery as I have been able to procure…I dont know as the greens which I have wound will answer my purpose, they may do to wind round a post in some obscure corner." Also see the Thirteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette for more wreath and greenery requests.
[21] For more on the Victorian Christmas tree, see: Eric Leigh Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: The Buying & Selling of American Holidays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995)

Weston: "I have written to different towns to see what they would do about furnishing evergreen for the decoration of our Christmas Tree, but not telling them what it was for except that it was for the Fair."[22] Cabot, understanding the covert assignment, assured Weston of his discretion. "We mean to make the Christmas tree most magnificent…You need not mention this tree business publicly, but any little things that you can pick up for it will be gratefully received."[23] As a result of the secrecy and suspense surrounding this Evergreen endeavour, on Saturday Dec. 28, 1843, a Christmas tree shut down the annual Boston Anti-Slavery Fair. But not just any Christmas tree, as described in *The Liberator*:

> A young pine-tree of the exact height of the Hall was brought triumphantly in, and hung with gilded apples, glittering strings of nuts and almonds, tissue paper purses of the gayest dyes, filled with glittering egg baskets and crystals of many colored sugar-with every possible needle book, pincushion, bag, basket, cornucopia, pen-wiper, book-mark, box and doll, that could be afforded for ninepence, with a number affixed to each.[24]

By sunset, the tree was "*completely loaded* with its Christmas gifts, brilliant with sparking cones and gilded butterflies, so arranged by invisible supporters as to seem about to light *among its treasures* and *every branch bristling* with wax candles, while the trunk was *thickly studded* with colored lamps."[25] The language used to describe this magnificent tree is that of abundance, allure, and excess — all hallmarks of Orientalist aesthetics rooted in the cultural imagination of the Oriental bazaar.

[22] Letter from Samuel Cabot to Emma Forbes Weston, September 1843, (BPL).
[23] Letter from Samuel Cabot to Emma Forbes Weston, September 1843, (BPL).
[24] "Sketches of the Fair—No. II The Christmas Tree," *The Liberator*, 23 January 1843.
[25] "Sketches of the Fair—No. II The Christmas Tree," *The Liberator*, 23 January 1843. Emphasis my own.

Figure 3.1: *"Victoria and Albert Decorate the Christmas Tree," Godey's Lady Book (c. December 1850), Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society*[26]

Furthermore, like the Oriental bazaar with its mass chaos and intensely dense crowds, as the tree was being set up, throngs and throngs of people waited outside the Hall ready to rush in at a moment's notice. People crowded the stairs and completely filled the lobby, all jostling to get inside. According to *The Liberator*, the whole city came pouring into the hall, which only held 800 people. Once the doors opened, people pushed, shoved, and craned their necks, trying to get a glimpse of the tree and buy tickets to pick the gifts off its branches. But the hall was so packed and overcrowded, that for safety reasons, the fair managers had to close everything down and re-open on Monday morning when the gifts could be removed from the tree and laid out on the tables.[27] Clearly, the fair organizers knew how to wield and create spectacle in order to bring in the greatest number of people to their event.

[26] The *Godey's Lady's Book* illustration was an Americanized reprint. It appeared two years earlier in Great Britain in the *Illustrated London News* (December 1848) and was originally entitled "Christmas Tree at Windsor Castle." (via the British Library).
[27] "Sketches of the Fair—No. II The Christmas Tree," *The Liberator*, 23 January 1843.

Another means of creating an atmosphere of abundance and spectacle was the set up and decoration of the Hall. A great deal of work went into this in order to create an atmosphere of comfort, contentedness, play, and dynamism. What was not seen, however, was what went into setting up the Hall: unpacking boxes, laying everything out, and so on. In regard to the earlier period of decorating, Caroline Weston recounted: "I well remember going with Mrs. D.L. Child & Miss Ann Chapman on the 22nd of Dec.1836 to open the Hall in order that we might have time to have the boxes & articles which had been received…opened & arranged, before the time for opening the fair."[28] Weston does a great job of capturing the frenetic energy and flurry of activity involved in setting up the Boston Bazaar. The next year, in 1837, at the Fourth Anti-Slavery Fair Weston wrote, "[t]his was the first use to which the hall had been put – it was still unfinished when we arrived to take possession for the sale on the evening preceding & we were busy in unpacking and methodizing our goods and putting up our decorations," all while carpenters were still laying down flooring.[29] While setting-up, unpacking boxes, and arranging the tables could be significantly time-consuming, it also sparked great joy, excitement, and, in Irish abolitionist Hannah Webb's case, regret: "I should like well to be with you in this busy time of preparation; opening, arranging, admiring, &c.--and to see your hall, & yourselves, & your visitors."[30] In her *Reminiscences*, Sarah Southwick fondly remembered the palpable excitement in the air as boxes were, as Webb enumerated, opened, arranged, and widely admired: "[h]ow much we young people enjoyed when we were…asked among the select few to meet in an anteroom at Faneuil Hall to open the foreign boxes, and to assist in marking the articles (for this was no small undertaking) for sale!"[31]

Southwick's description alongside reports and correspondence, regarding setting-up and decorating for the Boston Bazaar met the expectations of the prescriptive literature of the day, advising on how best to organize a ladies' charity sale. Laura Smith's "The Practical Points in Organizing a Bazaar," is illustrative: "[t]he decoration committee supplies the materials, puts up the booths and the decorations. It may include the committee on lighting and heating…Here is a fine chance to work in the men and the high-school boys and girls. They will delight in putting up the booths and decorations in the evenings, thus saving the backs, time and tempers of the

[28] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 21 October 1871, (BPL)
[29] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 21 October 1871, (BPL)
[30] Letter from Hannah Webb to Maria Weston Chapman, 17 November 1845, (BPL).
[31] Sarah Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days*, (1893): p. 36.

women who are unused to hammering, sawing and climbing ladders."[32] Smith, almost completely accurate, describes the decoration, the unboxing, the lighting and heating logistics, and the use of young men and women in setting up the Hall.[33] Again, we see Southwick's unbridled joy as a young person involved in these proceedings: "[w]hat good times we had, too, in decorating the halls, when Hervey Weston, William White, Sydney Howard Gay, and other young men would assist!"[34]

Faneuil Hall and The Power of Place

> "The world is like the sea-anemone: any part of it, however small, has the capacity of becoming a complete model of the whole; and truly and well does this little world in Faneuil Hall show forth a larger one, affording a perfect illustration of the whole anti-slavery cause, that in its turn typifies the great moral movement of this age, of which it is the vanguard."[35]
> -Maria Weston Chapman for *The Liberator,* 23 January 1846

Arguably one of Boston's most renowned public spaces and sites of civic memory, Faneuil Hall, the "Old Cradle of Liberty," was to be a hugely important symbol for the abolitionists. In highlighting such a significant space, it is important to remember the materiality of space and how it "appears as the pre-set stage for human action."[36] If we understand Faneuil Hall as a pre-set stage ready to house a performance, we can also understand it as a script, as per Boddice's assertion that architecture and buildings can have scripts.[37] However, as we will see, like any performance, although the stage and the script are important elements, it is how the actors *interpret* the script and *command* the stage that creates a truly memorable performance. The same can be said about the affective atmosphere located in the hall. Faneuil Hall was indeed its own pre-set stage that was built in with its own script, but in the end, it was the people who organized and attended the bazaar and their interactions with and feelings about the objects that made the atmosphere what it was. It is important to remember that spaces alone cannot produce

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[32] Laura A. Smith, "The Practical Points in Organizing a Bazaar," in *The Designer and the Woman's Magazine*, vol. 33, no. 6 (April 1911), p. 436.
[33] See Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Caroline Weston, 7 December 1843 & Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 21 October 1871. Both from BPL.
[34] Sarah Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days*, (1893): pp. 36-37.
[35] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[36] Reckwitz, "Affective spaces," 245. Also important to this discussion of the materiality of space, and influential in Reckwitz's thinking is Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1974)
[37] Boddice, *The History of Emotions*, 169.

affect: as Reckwitz explains, "affects only form when a space is practically appropriated by its users, which always activates these users' implicit cultural schemes and routines."[38] As we will see, Faneuil Hall was indeed practically appropriated by its users, who relied on its script and pre-set stage to give their movement greater meaning.

At this time, Faneuil Hall was Boston's foremost civic institution and stood as a monument to free speech, public assembly, and "provided the means for the self-representation of Boston's townspeople as an autonomous citizenry."[39] During the American Revolution, Faneuil Hall was the site of town meetings and public protests, most notably protests against the Stamp Act of 1765—earning Faneuil Hall the honorific, "Cradle of Liberty."[40] It served as a public space for Bostonians to come together and engage in public discussion and democratic assembly. As Fanuzzi explains, "Faneuil Hall was a public space where the voice of the people could be heard, but more importantly remembered, and as such it gave nineteenth-century Bostonians a fitting symbol of their self-proclaimed republican ancestry."[41] The republican ancestry symbolized by Faneuil Hall was further reinforced with a visual vocabulary, when in 1800 the Boston architect, Charles Bulfinch, was commissioned to replace Faneuil Hall's Georgian façade with the neoclassical ornamentation befitting a republican institution—the truest architectural expression of Faneuil Hall's status as the "Cradle of Liberty."[42]

The spectacle of Faneuil Hall was powerfully rooted in the collective consciousness. It would forever be associated with the events of the revolutionary era, the Boston Massacre commemoration, the tea tax protest, and the famous patronyms of Boston's leading patriarchs: Samuel Adams, James Otis, and many other "Sons of Liberty." It served as a cenotaph for those who lost their lives in the revolution and as a living memorial to the ideals of the founding fathers. Faneuil Hall was the local address of a "national fantasy" where "the family romance of patrilinear citizenship was lived out as a reverence for the founding fathers."[43] It was the site of formal state dinners honouring George Washington, Marquis de Lafayette, and John Hancock. During these auspicious state dinners, the name Faneuil Hall reverberated through the hallowed

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[38] Reckwitz, "Affective spaces," 245.
[39] Robert Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp.132, 150.
[40] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 132 &150
[41] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 132.
[42] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 133 & 154.
[43] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 130.

halls in speeches, encomiums, and toasts celebrating the building as a cherished symbol of liberty and democracy. As Fanuzzi notes, "[i]n its new identity as the 'Cradle of Liberty,' Faneuil Hall could be invoked in the same breath as the names of the venerated patriarchs and thereby serve as a trope for the ancestral home of democracy."[44] As a trope and visual signifier, Faneuil Hall was extremely effective. Robert Fanuzzi uses the term "power of place" to convey the symbolic magnitude of Faneuil Hall.[45] As we will see, the abolitionists were keenly aware of Faneuil Hall's power of place and sought to use its symbolic vocabulary to legitimize their movement, equating it with past struggles of liberty. However, it must be noted that just like the National Bazaar itself, Faneuil Hall was a place of historical tension, and contradiction, and it did not always possess the august, auspicious aura of mythology the abolitionists publicly attributed to it. For example, the man who was its namesake, Peter Faneuil, was a former merchant whose wealth derived significantly, directly and indirectly, from enslavement of Africans. The Hall was renovated in the 1820s and reorganized by the popular Boston Mayor, Joseph Quincy. Quincy adapted to the age and redesigned the Hall accordingly for it to serve a revolutionary beacon.[46] These complicated mythologies surrounding Faneuil Hall mirrored the historical tensions taking place within the National Bazaar.

Before the abolitionists occupied Faneuil Hall for the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, they were barred from using it for their meetings and anti-slavery fairs. From their very first meeting on 1 January 1832, the New England Anti-Slavery Society faced official opposition from the anti-abolitionist majority Protestant establishment that governed Boston's municipal affairs. Since the Society could not meet in Faneuil Hall, they met in the African Meeting House, but William Lloyd Garrison vowed that one day, "Faneuil Hall shall ere long echo with principles we have here set forth."[47] According to Fanuzzi, during this inaugural meeting of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, "Garrison made clear that this new organization of abolitionists deserved a public space that befit its historical comparison with the people of revolutionary legend."[48]

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[44] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 153.
[45] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 132. Fanuzzi borrows the term "power of place" from urban sociologist, Dolores Hayden. See Hayden's, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscape as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 46.
[46] For more on this, see Matthew H. Crocker, *The Magic of the Many: Josiah Quincy and the Rise of Mass Politics in Boston, 1800-1830*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).
[47] William Lloyd Garrison quoted in Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere.*
[48] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846; Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 134-135.

However, the road to Faneuil Hall was an arduous one. In his account of the Twelfth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar in *The Liberator*, Garrison reminds readers of the unpopularity, persecution, and violence abolitionists were met with in the 1830s: "For one to avow himself to be an abolitionist, at that time, was to subject himself to popular scorn and persecution. The name was held in detestation, as indicative of mental weakness or stark lunacy, or mischievous intent. 'I am no abolitionist,' was the disclaimer made by almost every person in the community."[49] Perceived as radical, dangerous, and downright fanatical, Garrisonian abolitionists tried many times, but failed to secure the use of Faneuil Hall for their meetings and events.[50] Garrison then decided to change tactics—he would arm himself with "the nomenclature of civic tradition."[51]

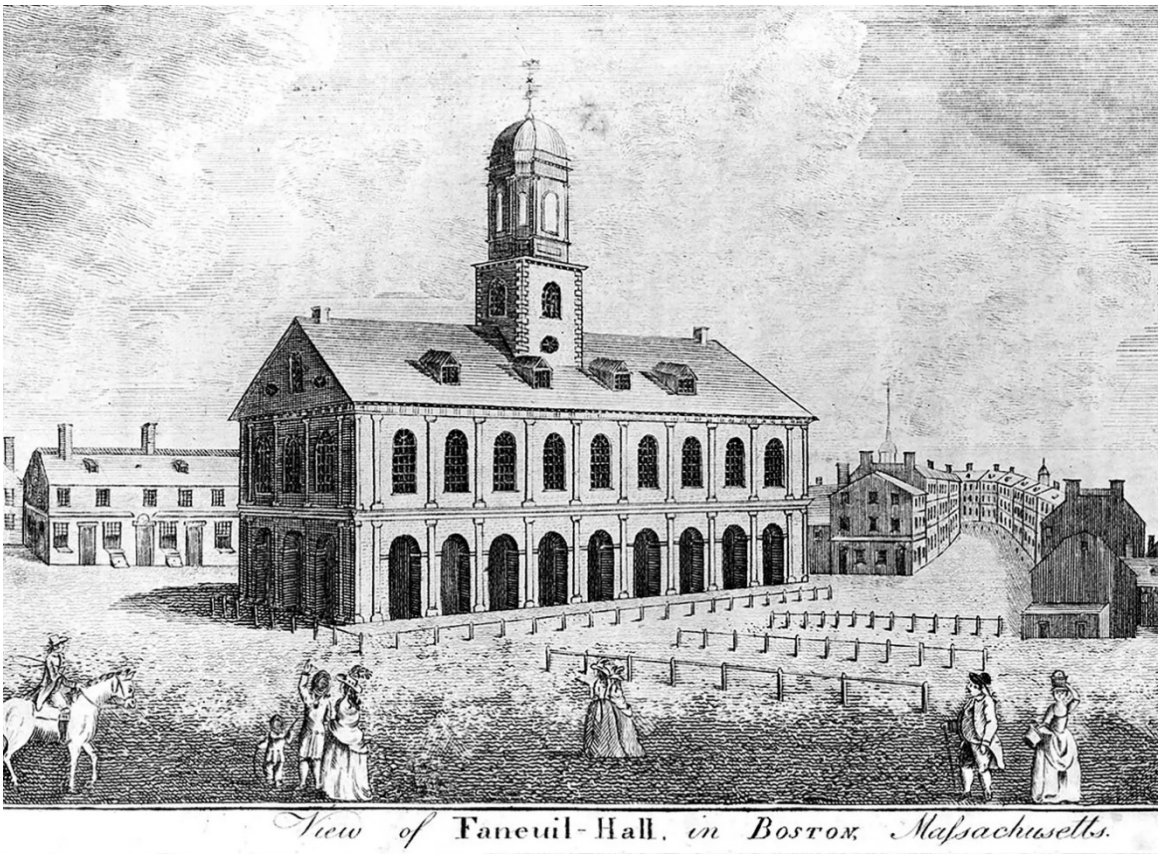

Figure 3.2: *"View of Faneuil Hall, in Boston Massachusetts," Courtesy of Faneuil Hall Marketplace*

Garrison planned to use the symbolic vocabulary (the script) of Faneuil Hall and its language of triumphalist historical narrative to establish a home for the abolitionists in the public

[49] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[50] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 136.
[51] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 160.

sphere of Boston. By associating the unpopular, marginalized abolition movement with the legend of the "Cradle of Liberty"—with its tradition of public assembly, free speech, popular dissent, and the revolutionary era—Garrison hoped the abolitionists would obtain a "public space for their movement that situated them in a historic struggle for liberty but that existed solely in the iteration of the name Faneuil Hall."[52] According to Fanuzzi, the "civic ritual of reiteration" was absolutely essential, because it was through this ritual that Garrison claimed Faneuil Hall as the symbolic home of the abolitionists.[53] By claiming Faneuil Hall as their symbolic home and by using its symbolic vocabulary at every opportunity, the abolitionists sought to forge an irrefutable connection between their movement to end slavery and its stain on the nation and the heroism and ideals of the American Revolution — heroism and ideals that birthed the nation.

We see this connection alluded to most clearly (and earnestly) in the report of the Twelfth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, printed in *The Liberator*. A great deal of the report waxes poetically on the historical significance of Faneuil Hall. The author of the report, Maria Weston Chapman, listed all the historical events of the Revolutionary era that occurred in Faneuil Hall's hallowed halls and concluded that although the odds seemed doubtful "the men of those days never feared."[54] She went on to say, "[t]here was a period in American history,--that immediately preceding and during the revolution,--when principle was paramount in men's minds, and they thought not of their miserable selves, but of their grand responsibilities and imperative duties."[55] Chapman employed symbolically rich rhetoric hearkening back to the revolutionary era to set up a comparison between the past generation of brave, principled men and their "grand responsibilities and imperatives duties" with the present generation of abolitionists who share these attributes of their forefathers.[56] She weaved a symbolic lineage: "[a]nd here we, their children, have come in our time, to fulfill for freedom a nobler duty, by a holier means;-to bind again the broken bonds of union with our ancestral land: and woe be to us if, 'being so fathered,' we neglect the sacred trust, of which every memory of this spot warns us to be faithful."[57] We see in this passage abolitionists directly identifying themselves as the "children" of the American Revolution and its revered revolutionary heroes. Similar to their forefathers, they too must

[52] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 133 & 159.
[53] Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, 135.
[54] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[55] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[56] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[57] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.

"fulfill for freedom a nobler duty"—they must abolish the stain of slavery from the nation and repair "the broken bonds of union," all while remembering the "sacred trust" Faneuil Hall confers on them and their mission.[58]

The abolitionists fully considered themselves the rightful, true heirs of Faneuil Hall and referred to themselves as such: "[f]or the benefit of the future, men should remember the past; but surely, the great change of public feeling in Boston…the one which, in 1845, found the abolitionists fully reinstated in their rightful heirship to Faneuil Hall, should plead the cause of the present."[59] As the rightful heirs to Faneuil Hall, the abolitionists lost no time in pleading the cause of the present. In the first issue of the *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette*, the following passage reads as a proclamation of a new era—with the inaugural 1845 National Anti-Slavery Bazaar in Faneuil Hall representing a truly *national effort*, one steeped in the symbolically rich imagery of the founding of the American nation:

> The granting of Faneuil Hall, by the City Authorities, for the use of the next Anti-Slavery Bazaar in Boston, is another pleasing indication of the change which has taken place in public sentiment in this region within the last ten years, in regard to the cause of impartial freedom…that the spirit of the Pilgrims is not wholly extinct; that the flame which burnt so brightly in 1776 is still living; and that the old Bay State is rousing for the conflict! Faneuil Hall belongs to the nation; and let the Bazaar be a national effort.[60]

Faneuil Hall gave the National Anti-Slavery Bazaars great power of place, and the abolitionists never failed to use the evocative imagery of national myth, alongside the symbolic vocabulary of Faneuil Hall to highlight auspicious nature of the bazaars. For example, reflecting on the Twelfth National Bazaar, Garrison wrote, "[n]ever was the Old Cradle of Liberty occupied for a higher or holier purpose."[61] Similarly, in her report of the Twelfth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, Chapman wrote, "[t]he spot where the Fair is held is the most fitting one-the one with whose past history its object harmonises best; one associated with every memory of Freedom."[62] The abolitionists fully incorporated the symbolism of Faneuil Hall in their representation of the National Bazaar. In both editions of the *National Anti-Slavery Gazette*, a pictorial representation of Faneuil Hall appears on the cover page, and right below the graphic is the phrase, "The Old Cradle of

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[58] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[59] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[60] *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette*, 1 December 1845.
[61] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[62] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.

Liberty." Even in their most ephemeral print culture, the abolitionists did not hesitate to employ the visual and symbolic vocabulary of Faneuil Hall.

NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY BAZAAR

VOL. I. NO. II.

THE OLD CRADLE OF LIBERTY.

GAZETTE.

ANTI-SLAVERY FAIR,

TO BE HELD IN

FANEUIL HALL,

AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

The committee of the thirteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, have the pleasure of announcing that it will open IN FANEUIL HALL, on Tuesday morning, December 22nd, the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers of New-England. Our principles are identical with theirs: our enterprise is but the continuation of their grand undertaking. The place which they took in their age, we still agree all their antecedents to unite with us in taking at the present time. We entreat all who love their country to aid us in delivering it from the curse and shame of slavery. This is only to be done by convincing each individual who oppresses the nation, that it is a sin and ought immediately to be abandoned. To this end, books and newspapers must be published, lectures sustained, and a multitude of incidental expenses incurred in the prosecution of the work. We therefore entreat every lover of Freedom and of Man whose this page meets, to ask himself—What can I do to further this noble undertaking?' Perhaps there is scarcely an individual who cannot by enquiry and co-operation with others, effect much in his vicinity. Surely no friend of right and justice, whether man or woman, will refuse to listen to a few

HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

In the first place, It is an arduous undertaking to decorate Faneuil Hall for the occasion, attractively, and at the same time without expense. As we have but half the time to give to that purpose which we had last year, it is of great consequence to have the materials in *complete readiness*, and ON THE SPOT SEASONABLY. Ten wreaths of running-pine *(about hundred yards* would be advantageously used in the operation of the plan already drawn,) ought all to be in Boston on the preceding Friday, the 18th, in order to allow Saturday and Monday for the work of preparation, and that will be the least *possible* time in which it can, under the circumstances, be accomplished.

The friends of the cause who live in towns where pine and red-cedar trees can be had for the cutting, or through the generosity of the owners of woodland, are informed that in no way could their aid be more effectual than in sending to Boston, *on Friday the 18th December*, Evergreen trees of a size suited to stand against the pillars, and hide the unsightly spaces in the Hall. Barrel-hoops, trimmed tightly, (but not over carefully,) with the running-pine, are also needed in great numbers. N. B. *The wreaths and hoops should be sent in ready for use, as there will be hardly time to put them up.*

☞ Friends desirous to co-operate, are intreated to write to us immediately on receiving this, informing us exactly what *we may depend on from them*, that by comparing and replying to their letters, we may save time, TROUBLE and MONEY, while we

Figure 3.3: *National Anti-Savery Bazaar Gazette, Vol. II, no. I (December 1846), Courtesy of Library of Congress*

In addition to pictorial representations of Faneuil Hall, the abolitionists used captivating narrative imagery to further cement their movement and its National Bazaar with the ideals and spirit of the "Old Cradle of Liberty." A powerful example is the image of Faneuil Hall as sanctuary. Such imagery arose out of "one of those singular coincidences" that occurred at the inaugural National Anti-Slavery Bazaar (not uncoincidentally the first year the abolitionists used Faneuil Hall for the bazaar.)[63] As Chapman explained in her account of the bazaar in *The Liberator*, "[o]ne of the speakers had previously alluded to the labors of the abolitionists in the lustration of Faneuil Hall after the temporary profanation of slavery, so that the bondman can

[63] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846. MWC continues to write that in the case of this singular coincidence, the "common saying 'Truth is stranger than fiction'" most certainly applied. We see her really setting up the fantastical narrative about to take place.

now take shelter within its walls, and laying hold on the altar of freedom, set the claims of his master at defiance."[64] Here Chapman styled Faneuil Hall as, "the altar of freedom, " a place of sanctuary—where the enslaved can "take shelter within its walls" and be granted refuge and eventual freedom.[65] In Chapman's telling, the rhetorical becomes the real. She reported:

> A stir was visible near the door, and an agitated movement in the dense crowd from thence to the left of the platform, showed that passage was being made for some visitor. We saw him as he leaned against one of the pillars near the platform, beneath the left gallery, nearly fainting with the fatigue and the excitement of the strong emotion of his sudden introduction to the brilliant and unwanted scene before him. It was a fugitive slave.[66]

According to Chapman, the fugitive first found refuge in a cellar nearby, and some sympathetic Bostonians took pity on him and told him to go to Faneuil Hall and look for a Mr. Marjoram—"friendly to your people" they said, continuing, "run in *there* and you will be safe."[67] The implication being that in *there* this fugitive slave would be granted sanctuary and would find freedom with the help of Mr. Marjoram and an entire hall full of abolitionists. This story of the fugitive slave bursting into Faneuil Hall seeking sanctuary carries profound symbolic and rhetorical implications. It serves to further cement the abolitionists as heirs to Faneuil Hall. A civic institution linked so inextricably with freedom and liberty, that of course, a fugitive slave would seek refuge there, and especially during the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Although it seems like a contrived incident for publicity, Chapman insisted on the story's veracity in her published account of the Twelfth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. She responded to questions asking her to confirm that this man is indeed a fugitive slave: "[h]is master has not left that matter doubtful. The slaveholder's sign-manual was cut deep upon his shoulders." She further announced that at the present moment, the fugitive is "rapidly learning to read, and the friend who has given him shelter and protection, finds him capable as a cook, waiter, or coachman; and is trying to find a situation for him, where he may be free from anxiety of mind as to be recaptured."[68] She concluded that any family needing these services should contact the anti-

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[64] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[65] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[66] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846. Chapman is cognizant of identifying or saying too much about the details of a fugitive's escape: "To tell from whence, or by what means escaped, would only close up the way to those who may wish to follow him to a land of freedom."
[67] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[68] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846. She continues describing the fugitive's wounds inflicted by his enslaver but stops herself from saying anymore in case her description will identify the fugitive and lead to his pursuit.

slavery office.[69] Regardless of the veracity of the tale or not, it served a powerful public relations purpose. It positioned Faneuil Hall as not just a symbol or a monument of the heroic past, but as an actual beacon of freedom and place of sanctuary for those seeking freedom from existing enslavement and oppression. The story also seemingly confirmed the abolitionists as heirs to Faneuil Hall—custodians of its venerable past and keepers of its enduring legacy.

Faneuil Hall indeed had great power of place and the abolitionists never missed a moment to promote their association with the "Cradle of Liberty." They saw Faneuil Hall as their spiritual and symbolic home but were also attuned to its atmospheric qualities. The physical space of Faneuil Hall, the actual space where the National Anti-Bazaar was held, was one that emboldened them, inspired them, and brought them together as a community. The evenings of the Bazaar provided for an opportunity for "contagious enthusiasm of high and right feeling."[70] During the evenings of the bazaar, eloquent speakers gave stirring speeches in support of the cause, and "the most distinguished advocates of the cause in the Union [would] speak from the platform of Faneuil Hall."[71] Faneuil Hall was no longer just a place, it was much more, it was its own platform from which to speak and to be heard by one's community.

In Faneuil Hall, abolitionists came together as community to *feel* together. After the speeches, the evenings of the bazaar were usually reserved for singing, with volunteer choirs and singing groups performing anti-slavery songs and hymns. In the following passage we can see the affective atmosphere of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar at work:

> The evenings owed much of their interest to the volunteer choir. The words they sung, expressive of the feelings of the devoted friends of Freedom, would have had, with all their beauty, but little significance from other lips; but when song burst up at the close of our last day,-- the first of the year 1846,--while the floor of the Hall was filled with a deeply moved audience, and the amphitheatre behind the tables and beneath the galleries thronged with the families of the Abolitionists,--every face beneath the brilliant light glowing with the added brightness of high feeling…the soul could not ask a happier augury for freedom than the tone of feeling of that hour.[72]

[69] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[70] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[71] *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* Gazette 1845
[72] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.

This passage is charged with feeling and emotion—from the "deeply moved audience" to the description of "every face…glowing with the added brightness of high feeling."[73] As readers, we are confronted with the highly evocative imagery of hundreds of abolitionists—faces shining and luminous with a great intensity of feeling—all gathered together in song and celebration. Through the alchemy of strong collective emotion, celebration, powerful feelings of unity, and a setting with an undeniable power of place, we as readers can begin to understand why "the soul could not ask a happier augury for freedom than the tone of feeling of that hour."[74] Therefore, in the case of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, the actual space it was held in was a transformative space.

Faneuil Hall was of great importance for the abolitionist movement and the abolitionists used the cachet and prestige of Faneuil Hall to give the National Anti-Slavery Bazaars themselves great power of place. It is then no surprise that Faneuil Hall appeared in the lyrics to the song, a song which Chapman maintained, "expresses the feeling not of that hour only, but of an abolitionist's life!"[75]The song was a poem written by Eliza Lee Follen for the *Liberty Bell*:

Listen to our solemn call,
Sounding from old Faneuil Hall,
Consecrate yourselves, your all,
To God and Liberty!
On your spirit's bended knee,
Swear your country shall be free,
Be free! Be free! Be free![76]

Faneuil Hall was a spiritual home, symbol, sanctuary, platform, and transformative space. There was great pride in holding the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar in Faneuil Hall, and this pride did not evaporate after the first bazaar (the 12th) held in its hallowed halls. In a letter written on 25 December 1847 from Faneuil Hall, the American abolitionist Samuel May wrote to British abolitionist Elizabeth Pease: "Dear Friend—I well know the interest you feel in the American Anti-Slavery Bazaar, and the pleasure which you and many others in Britain and Ireland will feel, in hearing direct from Faneuil Hall on Christmas Day. Faneuil Hall! There is a charm in the

[73] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[74] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[75] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[76] Eliza Lee Follen, "Song, for the Friends of Freedom," in *The Liberty Bell* (1846).

sound to an American ear."[77] May too, made the link between the storied past and the present purpose: "[h]ere began the Revolutionary War, that severed these then colonies from the parent country. A higher and mightier revolution is now being carried on in it…"[78] It is no wonder the abolitionists were greatly disappointed when Faneuil Hall was unavailable to them in 1852 for the Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar.

Figure 3.4: *Henry Nichols, "Interior View of Faneuil Hall," (Oct 1848)*
Courtesy of Boston Public Library

Horticultural Hall was instead chosen as an alternative location. In *The Liberator*, Chapman wrote "Faneuil Hall! We felt it a great declension of dignity when we turned from its ample walls, and vaulted arches, and pictures of old heroes and associations of struggle and revolt and stormy revolution, and found shelter in little Horticultural Hall, suggestive of nothing but fruits and flowers." Clearly, the abolitionists displayed an insecurity in regard to their new location: Horticultural Hall with its light, airiness, flowers, and overall *feminine* atmosphere, simply could not compare to the quiet, reverent, *masculine* dignity of Faneuil Hall.

Anticipating their perceived critics and detractors, their Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Report is addressed to, "[t]hat class of asceticcritics…who regard Fancy Fairs and

[77] *The Liberator*, 31 December 1847.
[78] *The Liberator*, 31 December 1847.

Bazaars, in themselves considered, with a suspicious and doubtful eye, might, apart from the spirit in which we labor, and the end to which our toil is devoted, feel that the latter instead of the former were our proper place."[79] Clearly the lines "apart from the spirit in which we labor" and "the end to which our toil is devoted" were being used to distinguish their National Bazaar, with all its careful planning and preparation in service of a noble, worthwhile cause, from mere fancy fairs and ladies' bazaars.[80] Implicit in these lines was their belief in the superfluousness of ladies' sales and fancy fairs—unlike their auspicious event, these mere trifles do not require as much sacrifice and commitment, nor were they in service of an important moral cause.

The following year, the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar was again held in Horticultural Hall and there was an even stronger attempt to distance themselves from, in their estimation, the superficial ladies' bazaars of their day: "[t]o the minds of most persons, the mention of a Ladies' Bazaar suggests ideas of a purely gay and festal character; of an occasion, where it is well if the gaiety and festivity do not degenerate into mere thoughtlessness and frivolity," writes Anne Warren Weston.[81] The pairing of "purely gay and festal" suggesting a benign superfluity with "degenerate into mere thoughtlessness and frivolity" speaks volumes. On the one hand, ladies' charity bazaars were light, simple fare; on the other hand, they were pernicious and could degenerate the individual and societal character. As Weston wrote, "[h]ow it may be in Bazaars designed for the support of popular charities, we are unable to say; but, when we are speaking of one whose funds are devoted to the sustentation of the American Anti-Slavery Society, we assure all who are willing to listen, that *ours is grave work*, *performed in any but a thoughtless and irresponsible spirit*."[82]

While trying to distinguish their "grave work performed in any but a thoughtless and irresponsible spirit" from the "popular charities" (in which Weston absolutely implies *do* perform with a thoughtless, irresponsible spirit), abolitionist women, (perhaps unknowingly) echoed and added their voices to the virulent misogyny undergirding the epithet, "Vanity Fair." In so doing,

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[79] Anne Warren Weston, "Report of the Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," in *The Liberator*, 28 January 1853.
[80] Weston, "Report of the Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," in *The Liberator*, 28 January 1853.
[81] Weston, "Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," (Boston, 1855), pp. 29-30.
[82] Weston, "Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," pp. 29-30. Emphasis is my own.

they contributed to the erasure, diminishment, and invisibilization of their own anti-slavery labour.

"When pincushions are periodicals, and needle-books are tracts": Domesticity on Display

> "The Bazaar is, in itself, an instrumentality that arrests the attention of the careless, and opens the heart of the selfish…This spectacle speaks louder than words, and we know that it is by this means that the first interest of many now active friends has been awakened."[83]
> -Anne Warren Weston, "Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," 1855

The above passage evocatively encapsulates the powerful visual medium of the bazaar. Indeed, it was a spectacle—a striking, dazzling scene with the power to "arrest the attention of the careless" and "open the heart of the selfish." We are told that this wondrous display awakened the many who beheld it and brought them into the fold of the abolitionist cause. We are further informed that the singular nature of this spectacle "speaks louder than words"—suggesting an atmosphere so stimulating, so inspiring, and so *affective*.[84] The bazaars were indeed all these things; however, contrary to this passage, words were in fact a central feature of the bazaar and were relied greatly upon to speak in order to "awaken—to inform—to inspire the American people."[85] The bazaar organizers aimed to educate, convert, and rally those who visited the bazaar to the anti-slavery cause. They fundamentally understood the importance of the fairs and bazaars as visual mediums to expose the public to anti-slavery ideas. Consequently, they used the visual medium of anti-slavery slogans and mottoes in their decoration of Faneuil Hall and other venues where the fairs and bazaars were held over the years to educate, reinforce, and surround the bazaar visitors with anti-slavery precepts and principles. As Lee-Chambers Schiller writes, "posters and banners offered abolitionist ideology in stirring aphorisms."[86]

Over the doors of entrance to Faneuil Hall were placed hanging banners, proclaiming in large lettering the mottoes of the *Liberator* and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard.* The motto of the *Liberator* was placed above the right entrance to the Hall: "My country is the world—my countrymen are all mankind." The motto of the *Standard*, "Without compromise—without

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[83] Weston, "Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," pp. 29-30.
[84] Weston, "Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," pp. 29-30.
[85] *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette*, 1 December 1845.
[86] Lee Chambers-Schiller, '"A Good Work among the People": The Political Culture of the Boston Antislavery Fair,' in Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 260.

concealment" was placed above the left entrance. Additionally, the terms of subscription for *The Liberator* were conspicuously displayed throughout the Hall.[87] Flags and pennants were also visibly displayed throughout the Hall. Significantly, the abolitionists made great efforts to distance themselves from the American flag: "all felt the inconsistency of acting under the stripes and stars that float over the slave-auction, and the Capitol that sanctions the slave-auction."[88] In lieu of the American flag hung the white flags of the anti-slavery societies and the standard of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which in big block letters read, "NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS" displayed beneath the American Eagle, one of the beloved fixtures of Faneuil Hall.[89] Also covering the walls and décor were anti-slavery messages and signs. For example, a flag with the message, "Stripes on the banner, none on the back" or a sign pinned to an evergreen shrub that made the following request, "Persons are requested not to handle the articles, which, like slavery, are too *"delicate"* to be touched."[90] Classic anti-slavery phrases, "Proclaim liberty throughout ALL the land, and unto ALL the inhabitants thereof," or "Let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke," and the much-refrained, "The truth shall make us free" covered the walls, alongside the admonishment to "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them."[91]The organizers of the fairs and bazaars clearly understood the power of the visual and utilized that power via posters, banners, flags, and pithy slogans.

However, such messaging did not stop there. When speaking of the benefits of holding an annual fair, Lydia Maria Child wrote, "[t]he main object is to keep the subject before the public eye, and by every innocent expedient to promote perpetual discussion."[92] As we will see, the organizers of the fairs and bazaars took this dictum very much to heart. In addition to anti-slavery messaging being displayed throughout the hall, anti-slavery slogans and mottoes were inscribed on many objects for sale, often using a clever and humourous play on words in relation

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[87] *The Liberator*, 12 January 1844 & *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846. At both fairs, 1844 and 1846, the abolitionists also honoured the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. We see them again associating themselves with the faithful elect, with the historical narrative and symbols of the nation. During the 10th Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, they had a banner celebrating the 'Landing of the Pilgrims.' The banner read, "This day is the 223d anniversary of their landing, the 22d of December." (*The Liberator*, 12 January 1844).
[88] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846 To further illustrate Garrison's character, at the 10th Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, one of his quotes was featured on a banner: "I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard!" (*The Liberator*, 12 January 1844).
[89] *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846.
[90] *The Liberator,* 20 December 1836.
[91] *The Liberator,* 20 December 1836
[92] *The Liberator*, 2 January 1837

to the function of the item. The objects inscribed were everyday, domestic objects, and this choice was no coincidence. To give some illustrative examples, quills were sold in bunches and labelled "Twenty-five Weapons for Abolitionists'"; printed on wafer boxes (wafers were used to seal letters) was the phrase "The doom of slavery is *sealed*"; pen-wipers were embellished on one side with "Wipe out the blot of slavery" and on the other side, "Plead the cause with thy Pen"; stitched onto needle-books was the phrase "May the use of our needles prick the consciences of slaveholders"; and iron-holders were marked as "Anti-Slave *Holders*."[93] Commonplace, quotidian objects were also inscribed with anti-slavery mottoes (this too, was no coincidence). For example, on the soles of shoes was written "Trample not on the Oppressed"; inscribed on watch-cases, "The political economist counts time by *years*, the suffering slave reckons it by *minutes*"; printed on bookmarks the phrases "Speak the Truth in Love" and "Remember those in Bonds"; and sewn onto cushions was the simple, yet powerful, word "Liberty."[94] In addition to objects inscribed with anti-slavery mottoes, fair organizers craftily slipped in anti-slavery speeches and pamphlets with packages of sold pies, cakes, sugar bowls, cutlery, fine lace, and clothing items. As Van Broekhoven notes, "[c]learly organizers intended that fairs should entice customers not only to purchase goods, but also to buy some part of the message of immediate emancipation."[95]

Fair organizers did, therefore, take Lydia Maria Child's dictum to heart: they used every "innocent expedient," including the most seemingly innocent, banal objects such as pen-wipers, needle-books, iron-holders, and more to "keep the subject before the public eye" and "to promote perpetual discussion."[96] Maria Weston Chapman with her keen sense of who her primary customers were, the majority being women, was deeply aware of the power these inscribed

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[93] *The Liberator*, 2 January 1837

[94] *The Liberator*, 2 January 1837 & *The Liberator*, 23 January 1846. Although most of the objects inscribed were domestic, commonplace objects, there were some decorative objects that were also inscribed with anti-slavery mottoes. For instance, "ornamental stands for alumets, to light candles" were engraved with the motto, "LIGHT, whether material or moral, is the best of all Reformers"; small wooden hearts cut from a knot of white oak were given the name, "Hearts of Oak for Abolitionists." See "Ladies Fair," *The Liberator*, 2 January 1837 for more examples. Even dolls were used to make a pointed commentary! From the 10th Massachusetts Fair report in *The Liberator*, 12 January 1844, there is doll sent from Scotland holding a piece of paper with the following inscription: "Buy me if you will;--there is no sin in it;--I am not your fellow creature" and "Sell me, as they do women and children in your country. It will be no sin in my case." Another example of a decorative object inscribed with a motto was the Patent Globe Bell.

[95] Deborah Van Broekhoven, "'Better than a clay club': The Organization of Anti-Slavery Fairs, 1835-1860," *Slavery and Abolition*, 19, vol. 1 (1998): 25.

[96] *The Liberator*, 2 January 1837.

domestic objects held. She wrote in the 1838 Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair report in *The Liberator*: "[m]ost of the little implements of housewifery were covered with appropriate mottoes and devices. When pincushions are periodicals, and needle-books are tracts, discussion can hardly be stifled, or slavery perpetuated."[97] Her words in this passage are loaded with meaning—she is effectively putting forth the idea that domestic objects, "little implements of housewifery," are just as important, and just as *powerful*, as anti-slavery periodicals and tracts. Not only were they as powerful, but they too, had the potential of impressing the visual object lesson of the fair upon those who witness and purchase them, and thus, these seemingly unimportant objects had the power "to disseminate the moral principles and awaken the feelings which alone can effect the abolition of slavery."[98]

Scholarship on the fairs and bazaars also support the idea that these commonplace, domestic objects were more than they appear to be. Van Broekhoven argues that objects made and donated for the bazaar were not merely ordinary, domestic objects, but political ones imbued with a message and a purpose—"to remind the owner and any other viewer of the need for immediate emancipation."[99] Alternatively, Lee Chambers-Schiller focuses on the staying power of these domestic objects inscribed with anti-slavery mottoes: "[t]hese mottoes worked by intruding on everyday activities, and forcing individuals to see the familiar in a new way by contrasting the situation of the slaves with their own."[100] Others have argued that by virtue of the mottoes inscribed on these objects, the objects themselves "brought a public and political issue into the home" thereby acknowledging "that the home was a political space."[101] While I broadly agree with all these arguments put forth—that these seemingly mundane, domestic objects were, in fact, political objects with a clear political purpose and capability to politicize subjects and domestic environments—I want to go a step further and argue that these objects were more than just political. I argue that these domestic objects were *affective* objects that inspired emotion and forged connection and loyalty to a cause and a community.

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[97] *The Liberator*, 12 January 1838.
[98] *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette*, 1 December 1845.
[99] Van Broekhoven, "'Better than a clay club,'" 28.
[100] Lee Chambers-Schiller, "A Good Work among the People," 254.
[101] Andrea M. Atkin, '"When Pen Cushions Are Periodicals": Women's Work, Race, and Material Objects in Female Abolitionism', in 'Converting America: The Rhetoric of Abolitionist Literature' (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1995), 82.

Crucially, their power lies in their domestic nature. The domestic was a very important feature of the anti-slavery fairs and bazaars. Gordon explains in her detailed study of the American fundraising fair: "[d]omesticity was the given of the women's fair, for it was what women had to work with. In one sense, it was for sale."[102]Just as Van Broekhoven argued that the anti-slavery message of immediate emancipation was on sale at the bazaar, domesticity was also on display and ready for purchase: "[f]airgivers offered mouth-watering meals and beautiful hand-stitched products; they transformed cooking and sewing into salable products."[103] Refreshments, delicious food, exquisite embroidery, hand-stitched mottoes on "little implements of housewifery"—these were all under the domestic provenance of women. Women transformed their private, domesticated skills and expertise into a proudly public display where their domestic labours were commoditized. However, apart from the items for sale, domesticity permeated many other aspects of the fairs and bazaars—thereby, I argue, it was a key feature of the affective atmosphere of these events. The light, festive, quality of the events was a key skill women acquired in the home—the ability to entertain and to be a generous hostess or mistress of the house. Also, the extravagant decorations of the Hall and the beautifully aesthetically-pleasing dresses the organizers adorned themselves in—all originating from the realm of the domestic.[104] In fact, Gordon writes, "[a]lmost everything that made the fairs appealing, from flowers to perfume to music, was part of what women dealt with daily. Fairgivers dramatized the elements of their everyday experience…transforming them into something with seemingly greater import and deeper meaning."[105] This sense of deeper meaning that the domesticity on display at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar brought out is very important to understanding how the domesticity of the bazaar helped to create an affective atmosphere where domestic objects were also endowed with a deeper meaning.

In order to understand why this was, it is crucial to understand the context of the domestic in antebellum/Victorian America. For this, I look to the work of literary scholar Lori Merish who writes on sentimental consumption and sentimental ownership in Harriet Beecher Stowe's fiction (as we will see, Harriet Beecher Stowe is a key actor of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar). Merish establishes the home, the "inside," as the main site of emotional fulfillment and

[102] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 5.
[103] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 5.
[104] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 5.
[105] Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, 5.

warmth, whereas the "outside" represents the total absence of warmth and care—the outside symbolizes neglect and exclusion from domestic happiness. In Stowe's sentimental narratives, "liberal and Protestant discourses intersected to define the private sphere of the family as that of fulfillment and shelter, a Christian community of care where needs are attended to and human relations mediated by love."[106] Quite literally, Merish writes, that sentimental novels of the period represented home as "where the heart is."[107] Following along with this logic of the "inside" and "outside", it follows that whatever entered the inside realm (including objects) was forever transformed or altered in some way: "it is precisely when objects cross the threshold from outside to inside, entering the humanizing realm of the home, that they are represented as having feelings rather than as inanimate things."[108] Domesticity, therefore, is a "spiritually animating place" where objects come to life, speak, and possess "a sort of human vitality in them."[109] These objects "imbued with the animation of social contact" (like in the affective atmosphere of the bazaar), should not be merely used or displayed, but treasured and loved.[110] If we apply this narrative of sentimental ownership to the objects at the bazaar, we can conclude that these objects, with their inscribed mottoes, really do speak and are endowed with deeper meaning, and are imbued with the animation of the social contact and social practice of the bazaar. When these objects are purchased and brought home, they gain an even greater sense of vitality, as "such objects are fully incorporated into a sentimental economy of feeling."[111]

Further, as Nancy Dunlap Bercaw notes, "[f]ancywork popularized the intimate relationship between maker and object. As a creator, the woman's spirit was caught and reflected in her fancywork. By consciously endowing each object with a message, fancywork makers created a bond between the object and the self. Fancywork came to represent not only an individual's social position but the very individual herself."[112] The objects women made for the National Bazaar (and purchased at the Bazaar) were similarly invested with personal meaning and created a bond between the object, the creator, and the consumer.

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[106] Lori Merish, "Sentimental Consumption: Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Aesthetics of Middle-Class Ownership," *American Literary History*, 8, no.1 (January 1996): 7.
[107] Merish, "Sentimental Consumption," 8.
[108] Merish, "Sentimental Consumption," 9.
[109] Merish, "Sentimental Consumption," 9 & 15.
[110] Merish, "Sentimental Consumption," 14 &15.
[111] Merish, "Sentimental Consumption," 15.
[112] Bercaw, Nancy Dunlap Bercaw, "Solid Objects/Mutable Meanings: Fancywork and the Construction of Bourgeois Culture, 1840-1880." *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, no. 4 (December 1991): 243.

Importantly, the "visual object lesson" of the fairs and bazaars, coupled with their affective atmospheres, had the power to reach a new audience.[113] The abolitionists spoke to this in the abolitionist press:

> the fairs excite an interest where none before existed, in the minds of the surrounding community. Many an individual, who would never read an Anti-Slavery publication, or entered a lecture room, has been induced by curiosity, or the demands of the Christmas or New Year's holiday, to visit this annual scene…and has left it with a juster appreciation of the motives, and a clearer comprehension of the measures, of those whom misrepresentation has led him to misunderstand.[114]

Another means (by way of the domestic) of keeping the cause before the public eye and in the minds of women was anti-slavery sewing circles: "[s]ewing Circles are among the best means for agitating and keeping alive the question of anti-slavery. Not only do they continually fan the interest of those who personally engage in them, but their frequent meetings, their labor, and the products of their industry all exert an excellent influence in keeping the wrongs and the sufferings of the slave before the people."[115] In anti-slavery sewing circles, anti-slavery texts were read aloud and discussed while women worked on their articles (many inscribed with mottoes) for the next fair or bazaar: "[s]ome one of the members generally reads an anti-slavery book or paper to the others during the meeting and thus some who don't get a great deal of anti-slavery at home have an opportunity of hearing it at the circle."[116] Similar to the visual object lesson of the fair, sewing circles were good places to learn antislavery doctrine—they were places women could learn socially, in the company of peers, instead of reading an anti-slavery text or publication in isolation. As we will see, this social quality of sewing circles, and the products they yielded, were tremendously valuable.

As Chambers-Schiller argues, "[s]ewing circles were a captive audience for antislavery education."[117] She continues,"[t]he moral suasionists who managed the Boston fair used them to expand women's intellectual horizons, augment their knowledge of slavery, and inform their

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[113] "Visual object lesson" is a term used by Van Broekhoven, "'Better than a clay club,'" 30
[114] *The Liberator*, 12 January 1838.
[115] *The Liberator*, 3 December 1847.
[116] *The Liberator*, 3 December 1847.
[117] Lee Chambers-Schiller, '"A Good Work among the People": The Political Culture of the Boston Antislavery Fair', in Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 254.

understanding of antislavery doctrine and strategy."[118] This is in fact, exactly what happened. Thanks to the outreach work of Maria Weston Chapman and the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, women realized they could do a great deal for the cause and in their reports, the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) constantly referred to the power women had to affect change. In fact, in their report from 1836, the BFASS included a letter from Abby Ann Cox, the Recording Secretary of the Ladies' New York City Anti-Slavery Society. Broadly, the letter congratulated them on their important work and was a reciprocation of sentiments and solidarity. Cox wrote how the BFASS was inspiring her organization: "we have accomplished so little as to feel reproved by the details of your energetic career. While you have kindly instructed and stimulated us, by an account of what you have *done*, we can only, for the most part, tell you what we *hope* to do in the coming season."[119] Many of these hopes were contingent on one premise: that women can accomplish much for the cause of anti-slavery. Cox wrote a captivating passage expressing this belief, "[w]e are sure of the response of your hearts, when we say that never was any subject more calculated to awaken the sympathies, to arouse the strongest energies—in a word, to fill the whole heart of woman, than the cause of abolition."[120] What Cox expressed with this passage, an entire historiography supports. Many key works have argued that abolition was a crucial training ground for women's political activism and agitation for greater rights and reforms.[121]

Women themselves credited abolition with awakening, organizing, and mobilizing them to meaningful action: "[t]o the Anti-Slavery Cause we owe an enlargement of heart, a training of intellect, and a flow of general sympathy, which we never knew before we made that cause our own, and which is fitting us for all the other labors and duties of life."[122] Women found purpose

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[118] Lee Chambers-Schiller, "A Good Work among the People," 254.
[119] BFASS Report "Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society: with a concise statement of events, previous and subsequent to the annual meeting of 1835" (Boston, 1836): 88.
[120] BFASS Report "Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society," (Boston, 1836): 9.
[121] For example, see from Midgley, *Women Against Slavery; Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790-1865* (London: Routledge, 2007); "British Abolition and Feminism in Transatlantic Perspective," in Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart, eds., *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); "Anti-Slavery and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Gender & Sexuality*, vol. 5, no.3 (1993): 343-362. Also see the work of: Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart, eds., *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); Sánchez-Eppler, Karen, *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Blanche Glassman Hersh, *The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).
[122] BFASS Eighth Annual Report (Boston, 1841): 7.

and community in abolition and their anti-slavery work. Ladies' anti-slavery societies and their accompanying sewing circles were places to solidify and reaffirm community and fellowship, as well as places to learn more about anti-slavery doctrine and ideology. The example of the Ladies' New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society is illustrative. Not only did this society widely distribute anti-slavery books, pamphlets, and newspapers to members of their communities, but they devoted a portion of their monthly meeting to anti-slavery needlework in order to aid the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair—here we see a combination of activism through the dissemination of anti-slavery texts and taking up the needle in anti-slavery sewing circles.[123]

During the 1830s and early 1840s, sewing circles became more and more popular and were mobilized to provide fancywork and embroidery for the increasingly popular Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair *(the precursor to the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar in Boston)* The Eleventh Annual BFASS Report took note of these changes: "[i]n Worcester County alone, we hear of thirteen Anti-Slavery sewing circles in operation for the Fair…we hail each as the little central flame of Liberty which is to warm and fertilize a whole region."[124] Sewing circles became so popular, that male commenters condescendingly referred to them as "abolition clubs."[125] These criticisms reflected an anxiety at the time that women were becoming too visible and spending too much time outside the home—the home being woman's natural sphere and her proper, rightful place.[126] However, Rozsika Parker, the notable feminist British historian of art, argues: "[e]mbroidery has provided a source of pleasure and power for women, while being indissolubly linked to their powerlessness. Paradoxically, while embroidery was employed to inculcate femininity in women, it also enabled them to negotiate the constraints of femininity."[127] Negotiate they certainly did. In sewing circles, women could acceptably be outside their homes and immediate domestic spheres, since they would still be engaged in a genteel, domestic

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[123] *The Liberator* August 15, 1835

[124] Eleventh Annual Report of the BFASS (1844), p. 39.

[125] *The Liberator*, September 5, 1835, as cited in Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, xxv. At this time, many prominent Bostonians were scandalized by women abolitionists and their audacity to appear, speak, and carry out their activism in public. Some, like Harrison Gray Otis, whose words are attributed here, believed that these women posed a "seditious threat to the integrity of the Union." In referencing sewing circles, Otis is referring to how something once so seemingly tame and demure has now become radicalized.

[126]Amy Boyce Osaki, "'A Truly Feminine Employment": Sewing and the Early Nineteenth-Century Woman," *Winterthur Portfolio* 23, no.4 (December 1988): 225; Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 2. Both Osaki and Parker write that the mass publication of etiquette books and prescriptive literature for women in the 1830s reinforced these notions.

[127] Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 11.

occupation in service of others, embodying the true feminine ideal of their time. Once outside the home, sewing circles enabled women to cultivate friendships and community with other women in the sewing circle. Participating in a sewing circle could therefore expand women's social networks and connections and widen their spheres of activity and horizons beyond their immediate family and daily domestic drudgery.[128] Sewing circles gave women outlets not only for their creative expression, but for enriching and enlivening their social lives: "sewing allowed women to sit together without feeling they were neglecting their families, wasting time or betraying their husbands by maintaining independent social bonds."[129] In addition to allowing women to be outside the home and to experience community and fellowship, sewing circles were opportunities to learn anti-slavery teachings and to read aloud and exchange anti-slavery texts, as well as the latest anti-slavery news and gossip. To participate in an antislavery sewing circle was to be part of *something*—to be part of perhaps the most important reform movement of the day. Anti-slavery sewing circles gave women a greater sense of purpose, and as we will see, a greater sense of power.

Needlework and embroidery were linked to a rigid understanding of femininity, but needlework and embroidery taken up in sewing circles fell outside of that rigidity and was, in fact, subversive and even radical. Van Broekhoven maintains that sewing circles may have been as radical, if not more radical, than the act of petitioning. In the context of the sewing circle, abolitionist women "transformed the tiresome, mundane and normally private activity of needlework into the radical and public work of anti-slavery fairs."[130] Sewing circles brought women into the public sphere and empowered them to achieve for themselves greater public and political space for their activism.[131] Moreover, the act of sewing itself, one inextricably linked to femininity and its perceived softness, delicateness, and powerlessness, was recast and portrayed in marshal (active) and masculine (bellicose) tones. Women began to recognize and assert their own collective power: "[w]e have not forgotten that the needle may be used in the cause of the

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[128] Osaki, "A Truly Feminine Employment," 225-226; Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 14-15

[129] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 14-15.

[130] Van Broekhoven, "'Better than a clay club," 38. Also see this page for a full explanation of Van Broekhoven's argument that anti-slavery sewing circles were more important and just as radical, if not more radical, than signing petitions. Essentially, her argument boils down to the fact that sewing circles had more staying power and direct impact on women's lives.

[131] Osaki, "A Truly Feminine Employment," 226. See also Pat Ferrero, Elaine Hedges, and Julie Silber, *Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women and Quilts on American Society* (San Francisco: Quilt Digest Press, 1987).

oppressed in our own land, as well as for suffering Greece, and the benighted millions of India."[132] Needles were similarly recast—no longer as delicate, feminine objects, but as *weapons* women marshalled in the great moral battle to end slavery. Maria Weston Chapman used this characterization of needles as weapons in the Tenth Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair report: "[t]his year's edition of anti-slavery needle-books can show many *pointed* things; and under their influence may all the needles in the country become anti-slavery weapons. This is one of them, 'Abolish Slavery, or dissolve the Union.'"[133] As we saw earlier, needle-books were one of the many domestic objects inscribed by women with anti-slavery mottoes. It was women who imbued these ordinary, domestic objects like needles and needle-books with a greater import and potency. As we see, needles and women's anti-slavery needlework are described in bellicose terms. In fact, women's sewing circles, like the Ladies' New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society, are even described to be engaging in warfare, and should be memorialized as such for their bravery and sacrifice: "[t]he Ladies of New Hampshire deserve to be remembered with expressions of high commendation. With the energy and firmness of Judith, when she stood in the tent of Holofernes, but a mild and chastened temper which asks not for blood, but for justice and mercy, they have engaged in the warfare against passion and legalized villainy."[134]

[132] BFASS Report "Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society: with a concise statement of events, previous and subsequent to the annual meeting of 1835" (1836): 77. The BFASS women, like many reform-minded philanthropic women of this time, were deeply imbricated in notions of white supremacy and empire. Their maternalist thinking, or what we would term today, "white feminism" was central to their discourse.
[133] *The Liberator*, 15 August 1835.
[134] *The Liberator*, 15 August 1835.

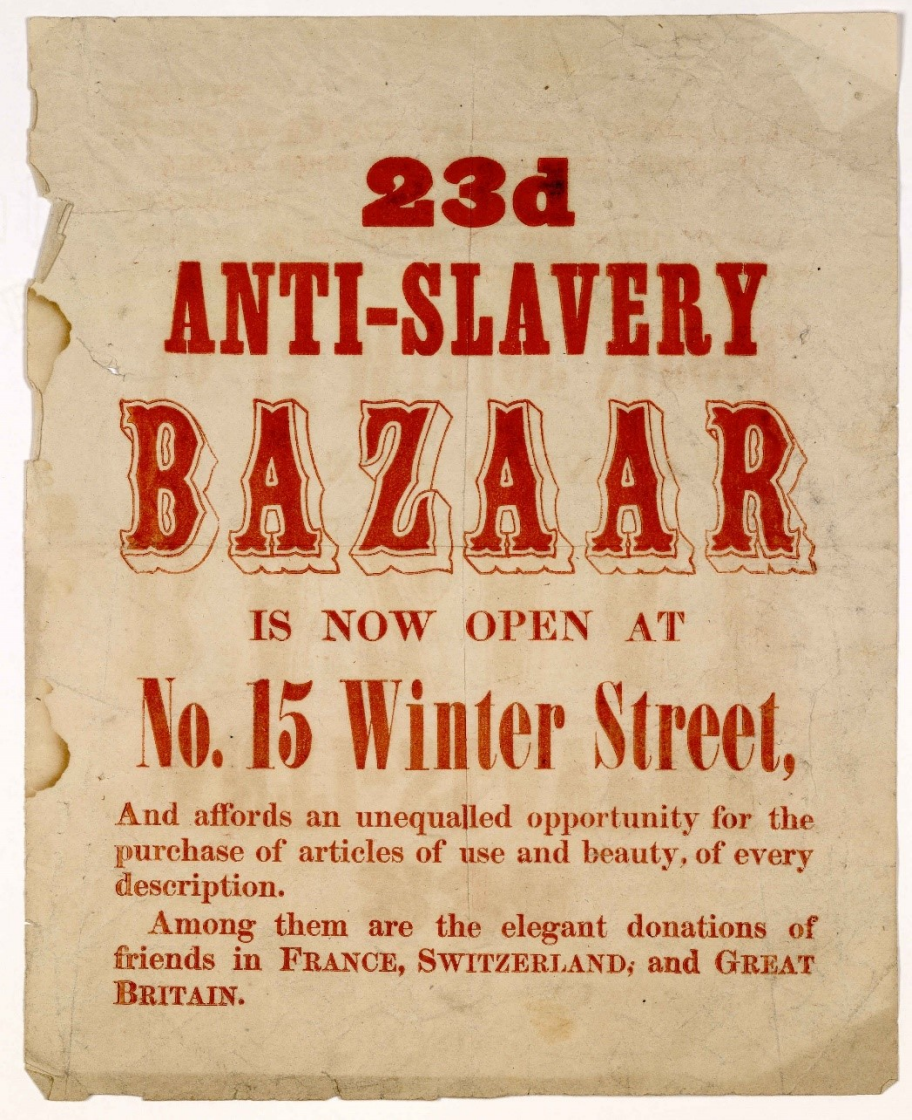

Figure 3.5: *"23rd anti-slavery bazaar is now open at No. 15 Winter Street," (c. December 1856) Boston, Mass., Courtesy of the Livrary of Congress*

Concluding Hyprocrises

> It is not a mere ladies' fancy fair that we are describing to them; --it is not a tradesale –as so many have found out who come hoping to have obtained, in the anti-slavery ladies, merely factors furnished with the skill and taste to procure the pendant to some European object of *virtu*, which it would cost them much time and money to select in some foreign capital for themselves. But we are describing an influence of power so deeply to stir a careless heart as to unite it at once to the cause of freedom and humanity.[135]
>
> -Maria Weston Chapman, *Report of the Twenty-Fourth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (1858)

[135] Maria Weston Chapman, *Report of the Twenty-Fourth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (1858), pp. 3-4.

Perhaps most glaringly, as we saw above with Faneuil Hall, abolitionist women displayed a large inconsistency and hypocrisy in their thinking when comparing their Bazaar to "a mere ladies' fair." For their National Anti-Slavery Bazaar to be successful fundraising event, it was imperative to "comfort the heart and delight the eye." And they did exactly that. Fair managers used Orientalist aesthetics to conjure up a visually enticing atmosphere—to create a treat for the senses, an atmosphere of abundance, splendor, sensuality, and spectacle. The objects sold at the bazaar were displayed on tables placed either in the center of the room or against the walls. They were purposely arranged to give the impression of plenty. In reports and advertisements for the bazaar, tables were described as being covered with a "profusion of objects" or "heaped with goods." The hall was described as being "filled," "thronged," or "bustling." We can see this in the description of the 19th National Anti-Slavery Bazaar report, when describing the contents of the Paris box: "all of this sparkling medley was heaped upon the book table in a sort of confused, or orderly confusion, whichever phrase shall appear the least paradoxical, and was of course, the table that never lacked purchasers."[136] Just like the Oriental bazaar, with its trope of the sheer accumulation of goods, fair organizers used the imagery of abundance to overwhelm and ensnare the senses.

In a similar vein, the National Bazaar capitalized on the strong connection between bazaars and women's uninhibited sexuality, embedded in the Victorian popular imagination. The Bazaar presented plenty of opportunities for flirting and playing up the youth and sexual availability of young, unmarried women working at the fairs. Whereas the primary managers of the fairs, and the matrons of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, were charged with managing individual tables, it was the young, unmarried women who were public-facing and in charge of selling the items. The trope of "alluring young ladies" as the commodities for sale at the bazaar was deftly crafted to entice and encourage male customers to lighten their pockets.[137]

Another device the fair organizers used to overwhelm and enthrall the senses was crowding and the psychology of crowds. The National Bazaar became such an attraction and unmissable event, that people flocked to it in large numbers. As we saw with the episode of the

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[136] Anne Warren Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," *The Liberator*, 28 January 1853.
[137] Sarah Southwick, *Reminiscences*, 39.

Christmas tree, the organizers knew how to bring in large crowds. They wisely scheduled the bazaar in December to attract buyers for Christmas and New Year's presents. They also emphasized a welcoming, domestic environment wherever possible. For example, Southwick writes that Chapman "was always present to act as hostess to strangers and friends who came to buy […] She always appeared in an elegant new dress, as also did her sisters."[138]

Casting back to the second epigraph, the Boston women were careful to point out that a fair was not a *malum in se*; "surely if merchants and traders may buy and sell for their own benefit, we may fore the benefit of the slave."[139] However, without the atmosphere of the 'vanity fair' and all its connotations, the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar would not benefit the slave, nor be the most popular, unmissable event of the season. The trope of the bazaar is one steeped in duality and tension, and as the abolitionist women show through their rhetoric, they were not immune to the tensions the bazaar brings.

[138] Sarah Southwick, *Reminiscences*, 39.
[139] *Fourth Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society*, 1837.

Chapter Four:

Anti-Slavery Gift Books: Women's Reading, Writing, and Editing

> "Have I not forsworn all annuals provincial or metropolitan? I have been so beGemmed and beAmuletted and be-forget-me-not-ted that I have given all these things up[...]"[1]
> -Alfred Tennyson, The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson

> "It was one of the "cakes" of literature, not the bread. And even cakes become distasteful, when they provide only two or three currants each, notwithstanding that the surface is liberally endowed with sugar."[2]
> -Chas Tallent-Bateman, "The 'Forget Me Not'" (1902)

> "A Parcel of the little gilded books, which generally make their appearance at this season, now lies before us[...] nothing can be more trumpery than the whole collection--as works of art, we mean. They tend to encourage bad taste in the public, bad engraving, and worse painting. As to their literary pretensions, they are such as they have been in former years. There have been, as we take it, since the first fashion for Annuals came up, some hundred and fifty volumes of the kind; and such a display of miserable mediocrity, such a collection of feeble verse, such a gathering of small wit, is hardly to be found in any other series."[3]
> -William Makepeace Thackeray, "A Word on the Annuals," Fraser's Magazine (1837)

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The charity bazaar and literary annual shared important similarities. Both were undeniable cultural forces in the Victorian era. While annuals were first popularized in Britain, they quickly gained traction in America, becoming a dominant cultural force and an important precursor to a distinctly American literature and literary marketplace. Thus, both charity bazaars and literary annuals were transatlantic, originating in Great Britain and taking root in America. Bazaars opened in time for the Christmas season and gift books were published annually with Christmas and New Year's gift giving in mind. Both bazaars and gift books reveled in their immersive, tactile materiality, captivating their beholders, and providing an exquisite treat for the senses, while also often involving Orientalist aesthetics and iconography. Both were designed to imbue their surroundings with beauty, vibrancy, and well-being. However, both charity bazaars and literary annuals were criticized in their own time as being superficial, frivolous, lacking in

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[1] Alfred Tennyson quoted in Kathryn Ledbetter, "'BeGemmed and beAmuletted': Tennyson and Those 'Vapid' Gift Books," *Victorian Poetry*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 239.
[2] Chas Tallent-Bateman quoted in Katharine D. Harris, *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual, 1823-1835* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2015), 15.
[3] William Makepeace Thackeray, "A Word on the Annuals," *Fraser's Magazine* (December 1837).

any substance or merit, and damaging to the morals of individuals and the body politic. Naturally, it then followed that both bazaars and annuals were largely made *for* and *by* middle-class women, igniting fears and moral panic surrounding the changing roles of middle-class women entering public life. Both Bazaars and annuals are worth studying together to tease out the larger themes this dissertation tackles, such as how both were dismissed and under-valued in their own time, while also being minimized and overlooked in the historiography of nineteenth-century anti-slavery activism, philanthropy, and the role of women. All the while, both remained in plain sight as major cultural forces and touchstones of the Victorian age in Britain and in America.

Literary annuals (also called gift books or gift annuals) were ornate, beautifully bound books, whose contents included poetry, short fiction, travel writing, epistolary exchanges, and gorgeous steel-plate engravings of portraits, landscapes, and fine art. The first British gift annual was published in 1822. By 1826, there were nine annuals in circulation; by 1829, the number had increased significantly to forty-three. During the 1820s to the 1830s, the public appetite for annuals was insatiable. As Katharine Harris writes, "[l]iterary annuals fed a popular frenzy that drove authors, publishers, and editors alike."[4] As their name suggests, they were published annually, typically in November and December, in time for Christmas and New Year's gift-giving. By design, gift annuals—elegant, sumptuously bound, brimming with exquisite engravings, accompanied by the words of the leading luminaries of contemporary *belles-lettres*—made perfect gifts and they were highly coveted by middle-class readers, particularly middle-class women. In fact, most annuals were owned by such women. They were often the primary recipients of gift books, most often gifted by male relatives or family members. However, literary scholar Paula Feldman argues that it was tremendously significant that, "more than a quarter of these annuals were given by females—a surprisingly high ratio."[5] Women were not simply "passive recipients" of literary annuals. On the contrary, they were active participants in an ever-changing literary marketplace, one in which they wielded considerable power as authors and editors of gift annuals.[6]

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[4] Katharine D. Harris, *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual, 1823-1835* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2015).
[5] Paula Feldman quoted in Rappaport, *Giving Women*, 19-20.
[6] Rappoport, *Giving Women*, 20.

Perhaps this is why literary annuals, like charity bazaars, have been doubly ignored and dismissed—both in their own time and in modern scholarship. As Harris argues, "because literary annuals were sites of women's writing, they were largely dismissed as intellectually inferior, popular, sentimental publications during the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, as is the fate of popular literature, the genre suffered a dismissal from literary studies."[7] Compared to what we would term today as the "canon" of Romantic and Victorian poetry, women's annual poetry was considered "aesthetically inferior."[8] Just like charity bazaars, gift books were primarily written for and by middle-class women; as such, they were associated with femininity and "unserious" writing. Referred to as "gorgeous inanities"; "ostentatious trumpery"; "vapid books"; and "picture-books for grown children," annuals were intensely derided during their nineteenth-century heyday.[9]

In an 1829 letter to a fellow writer, Charles Lamb was unequivocal in his disdain for the annuals: "[…] but I hate the paper, the type, the gloss, the dandy plates, the names of contributors poked up into your eyes in 1st page, … the barefaced sort of emulation, the unmodest candidateship … in short, I detest to appear in an Annual."[10] Yet, appear he did, alongside several other celebrated and emerging male writers at the time who relied on the annuals for secure income, and greater exposure to an ever-growing audience of middle-class readers.[11] As Reiner notes,"[n]early everybody who was anybody, and many who were nobody contributed to the annuals. Any author whose name was likely to be known to the reading public was pursued by eager editors, and men as eminent as Walter Scott or Robert Southey were offered large sums for any trifle they cared to supply."[12] Even Thackeray, who despised literary annuals, contributed to many in his day. In addition to Scott, Southey, and Thackeray, many other notable British literary luminaries contributed to the annuals, as well: William Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, Alfred Tennyson, John

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[7] Harris, *Forget Me Not*, 20.
[8] Harris, *Forget Me Not*, 20.
[9] Charles Lamb and Robert Southey quoted in Anne Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 9, 13, 21-22.
[10] Charles Lamb quoted in Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 9-10.
[11] For a detailed look on Tennyson's aversion, yet reliance, on the annuals as a vehicle to expand his audience and retain literary relevance, see: Kathryn Ledbetter, "'BeGemmed and beAmuletted': Tennyson and Those 'Vapid' Gift Books," *Victorian Poetry*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 235-245.
[12] Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 13.

Ruskin, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Felicia Hemans, and Letitia Elizabeth Landon.[13]

As Margaret Linely notes, "[l]iterary history, until recently, has reinforced the association of literary annuals with convention, transience, triviality, and of course, femininity. But this is not the whole story."[14] Indeed, this is not the whole story at all. Similar to the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, the dismissal and neglect of such an important (and popular) site of women's reading and writing, only serves to obscure our greater understanding of nineteenth century culture and the changing face of women's roles and preoccupations within the larger culture.

Forgotten Not: A History of the Gift Annual

In November 1822, Rudolph Ackermann introduced the first gift annual to the British public: the *Forget Me Not, a Christmas and New Year's Present for 1823*. The publication of the *Forget Me Not* was one of those rare publishing events that "changed the face of nineteenth-century publishing."[15] Ackermann, born in Saxony in 1764, eventually settled in England, opening a print-shop, and drawing school. Known to have championed lithography as a legitimate fine art, he placed his principles in print. From 1809 to 1828, he published the monthly *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics*.[16] Clearly enterprising, adept, and possessing tremendous knowledge of the literary marketplace, Ackermann was alert to potential publishing opportunities. His latest venture, would, in his own words, "attempt to rival the numerous and elegant publications of the Continent, expressly designed to serve as tokens of remembrance, friendship, or affection, at that season of the year which ancient custom has particularly consecrated to the interchange of such memorials."[17] Speaking of custom and, "elegant publications of the Continent," literary annuals themselves derived from two main traditions: the Franco-German pocketbook/almanac and the commonplace book. The *Forget Me Not* for 1823 was a blend of these different forms: part

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[13] Harris, *Forget Me Not*, 3.
[14] Linley, "The Early Victorian Annual," 13.
[15] Jill Rappoport, *Giving Women: Alliance and Exchange in Victorian Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 19.
[16] Anne Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 5. For more on Ackermann's career before *Forget Me Not*, specifically the *Repository of Arts*, see Serena Dyer, "Fashioning Consumers: Ackermann's *Repository of Arts* and the Cultivation of the Female Consumer," in Jennie Batchelor and Manushag N. Powell, *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1690-1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018): 474-487.
[17] Rudolph Ackermann quoted in Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 5.

pocketbook, English almanac and German *Das Taschenbuch* (a small almanac of poems, prose, and engravings for each month with blank pages for writing).[18] Similar to their forerunners, in particular, the commonplace book, the contents and organizing principle of the literary annual had much to reveal about both giver and receiver. As Feldman notes, "[a]nnuals, too, gathered seemingly disconnected works of visual and verbal art in a cultural artifact that articulates the sensibility or aspirations of both giver and recipient."[19] As with *The Liberty Bell,* this was very much the case. Both the giver and receiver possessed varying degrees of abolitionist sentiment, and therefore valued anti-slavery literature and reading itself as an abolitionist aesthetic.

Figure 4.1: *Paper-covered boards, Forget Me Not for 1823, Courtesy of the Katharine D. Harris Collection*

Following the publication of the *Forget Me Not* in November 1822, came the first wave of (hugely successful) imitators: *Friendship's Offering: A Literary Album* (1824); *The Literary Souvenir, or Cabinet of Poetry and Romance* (1825); and the *Keepsake* (1828). Naturally, several other titles were added to the roster, and by 1832 there were sixty-three different annuals of

[18] Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 10-11; and Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 5-9.
[19] Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 12-13.

record. Competition was fierce, and publishers were always looking to differentiate themselves from their competitors; yet, across the board every literary annual followed the same formula, consisting of poetry, prose, and lavish illustrations.[20] The latter part of the formula was of particular note. Not only did Ackermann introduce the first English gift book, but with the 1825 *Forget Me Not*, he became the first to introduce steel-plate engraving. A process that had been recently invented by the American, Jacob Perkins, steel-plate engraving was truly a watershed moment. The new steel-plate engraving process allowed for the mass production of illustrations on a much greater scale than ever before.[21] Literary scholar Eleanor Jamieson writes on the significance of this new engraving technology: "[s]teel engraving meant that for the first time, the finest art of the country could be reproduced at a reasonable price, and when such reproductions were diffused through the huge circulation of the annuals, they fostered in the general public an appreciation of painting never hitherto known."[22] Fine art at this time was either privately owned or completely inaccessible to those who could not afford to travel abroad to see works displayed in galleries. Gift books were therefore essential in introducing middle class audiences to works of fine art, previously only accessible to the aristocracy—the landowning elite who populated manors and vast country estates with works of art. Gift books, with their fine new steel-cut engravings, reproduced the great artworks, thereby allowing middle-class consumers to "own" works of art and accrue the status and cultural capital attached to such ownership.[23]

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[20] Harriet Devine Jump, "'The False Prudery of Public Taste': Scandalous Women and the Annuals, 1820-1850" in Emma Liggins and Daniel Duffy, eds., *Feminist Readings of Victorian Popular Texts: Divergent Femininities* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), 2. Some examples of attempts at differentiation were: "the *Gem* and the *Bijou* were very tiny, the *Keepsake* was always bound in red silk while the *Literary Souvenir* appeared at various times clad in blue velvet, red silk and green Morocco leather, the *Amulet* specialized in Christian stories and the *Book of Beauty* in portraits of society women" (2).

[21] Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 13. For more on how steel-engraving was far more efficient and game-changing for annuals, see Ian Bain, "Gift Book and Annual Illustrations: Some Notes on their Production" in Frederick W. Faxon, *Literary Annuals and Gift Books: A Bibliography 1823-1903* (Ravelston: Private Libraries Association, 1973), 23.

[22] Eleanor Jamieson quoted in Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 14.

[23] Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing*, 4. Kooistra notes that the ability to accrue cultural capital is classed (and also gendered) but is a status indicator. In a compelling passage, she writes, "Connoisseurship of art and poetry thus becomes a means of upward mobility through the display of refinement and cultivation" (4). See also Warne, "Thackeray among the Annuals," 163.

Figure 4.2: *"Maria" (Artist: J. Hayter, Engraver: W.H. Mote) in The Wreath of Beauty (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1864), Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society*

Figure 4.3: *"The Intended Surprise" in The Iris (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., 1853), Courtesy of the University of South Carolina, Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*

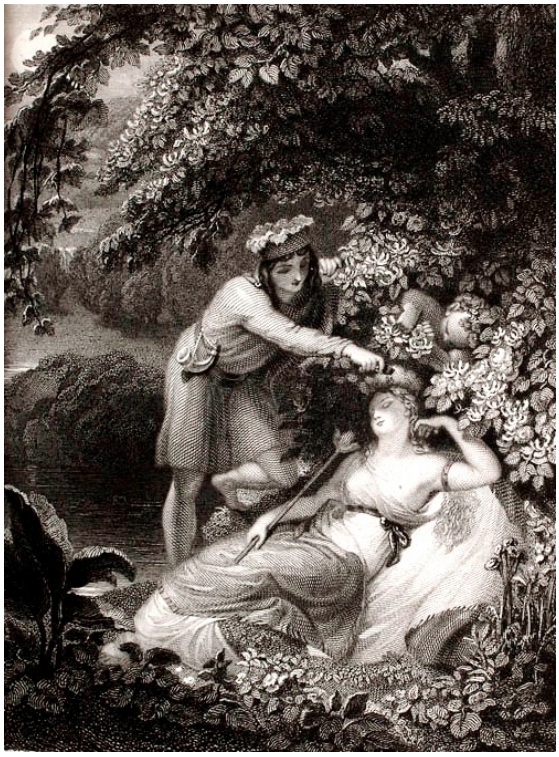

Figure 4.4: *"Oberon & Titania" (Painted by H. Howard, Engraved by J.C. Edwards) in The Literary Souvenir (Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, 1830) Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society*

Similar to the institution of the charity bazaar, although literary annuals originated in Great Britain, they eventually made their way across the Atlantic to the American market. The first American gift annual was *The Atlantic Souvenir*, first published in December 1825. Although modelled on the British *Forget Me Not*, American gift books were important vehicles for the development of uniquely American literary voices and sensibilities. Contributors to the American literary annuals included, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendall Holmes, John Greenleaf Whittier, Catharine Beecher, James Russell Lowell, Lydia Maria Child, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Maria Weston Chapman, Edgar Allan Poe, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, among others.[24]

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[24] Kevin MacDonnell, "The American Gift Book," *The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America,* https://www.abaa.org/member-articles/the-american-gift-book. See also, Ralph Thompson, "American Literary Annuals & Gift Books, 1825-1865.," Dissertation, H.W. Wilson, 1936; Frederick W Faxon, Eleanore Jamieson, and Iain Bain, *Literary Annuals and Gift Books: A Bibliography, 1823-1903*. (1st ed. reprinted /ed. Pinner, England: Private Libraries Association, 1973); and Bryn Mawr College Library, and Willman Spawn, *Bookbinding in America, 1680-1910: From the Collection of Frederick E. Maser* (Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Bryn Mawr College Library, 1983).

Gift-Giving

Right from Ackermann's own letter to readers in the *Forget Me Not* for 1823, we see gift annuals tied to "that season of the year which ancient custom has particularly consecrated to the interchange of such memorials," or in other words, Christmas and New Year's.[25] Paula Feldman notes that by modern-day standards, gift annuals were "extraordinarily expensive," and were therefore only given on special occasions like Christmas and New Year's.[26] The publishing industry, in fact, conspired to make gift annuals highly desirable, absolutely must-have items. Annuals were published each Fall, typically during November and early December, specifically for the holiday gift-giving season. However, while originally intended as Christmas and New Year's presents, gift annuals were soon "gifted" for a myriad of special occasions, reasons, and seasons: birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, courtship etc.[27] In fact, their titles often announced their function as gifts: *The Gift of Love*, *The Token of Friendship*, *The Talisman, Friendship's Offering*, *Affection's Gift*, to name a few.[28] They were also named to evoke their tremendous value and beauty: *The Gem*, *The Amulet*, *The Opal*, *The Hyacinth*, *The Amethyst*, *The Pearl*, or to encourage remembrance, devotion, and memorial: *Remember Me, Forget Me Not, The Keepsake, The Tribute, The Literary Souvenir.*[29] Moreover, it was quite common for gift books to have ornately engraved presentation plates and a dedicated space for personalized inscription, from giver to receiver—thereby imbuing the gift annual with sentimental value and meaning.[30] It is worth repeating that Ackermann, in the preface to his first *Forget Me Not*, expressed his intention for the annual to specifically serve as "tokens of remembrance, friendship, and affection."[31]

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[25] Rudolph Ackermann quoted in Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 5.
[26] Paula Feldman, *The Keepsake*, p. 8
[27] Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 11; Paula Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 8.
[28] Eleanor Boba, "For All Time: The Victorian Gift Book," American Bookbinders Museum (7 December 2015), https://bookbindersmuseum.org/for-all-time-the-victorian-gift-book/; Paula Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 8; Harris, *Forget Me Not*, 3.
[29] Paula Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 8; Harris, *Forget Me Not*, 3.
[30] Paula Feldman, The Keepsake, 8. For more on the importance of inscriptions, see: Cindy Dickinson. "Creating a World of Books, Friends, and Flowers: Gift Books and Inscriptions, 1825-60." *Winterthur Portfolio* 31, no. 1 (1996): 53–66.
[31] Quoted in Anne Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 5.

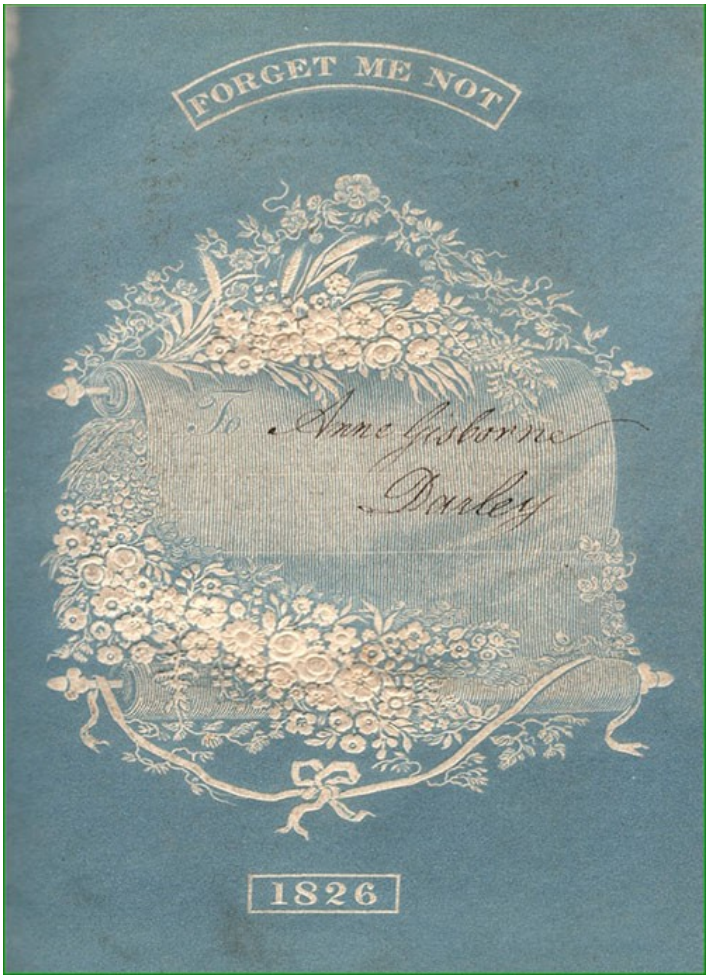

Figure 4.5: *Inscription page, Forget Me Not for 1826, Courtesy of the Katharine D. Harris Collection*

As Feldman notes, "[l]iterary annuals became treasured objects not only for the attachment they communicated but also as status symbols."[32] Not just anybody could purchase a sumptuously bound, ornately tooled/gilt edged copy of *The Keepsake*, for example. Only those individuals with considerable means and disposable income could afford to purchase a gift annual, as the average annual price was somewhere between twelve shillings and three pounds.[33] After the previous year's annual was acquired, leafed through, lovingly thumbed, passed around, and left to accumulate dust, consumers would eagerly await the publication of the latest and greatest gift annual of their choice. Published *annually*, the novelty of obtaining the latest edition

[32] Paula Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 10.
[33] Paula Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 10; Harris, *Forget Me Not*, 2; Jill Rappoport, *Giving Women: Alliance and Exchange in Victorian Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 19.

was paramount to re-asserting one's status, prestige, and their secure footing in the upwardly mobile middle class. As Feldman states, "the annuals became a concrete embodiment of social aspiration."[34]As such, the primary audience and consumers of literary annuals were the middle-classes; gift books were indeed a middlebrow cultural artifact.

But what were they aspiring to? Aristocracy. Anne Reiner speaks of a discernable shift in the 1830s, the transitional years from Georgian to Victorian England, when a pervasive, mimetic, interest in aristocratic culture held great sway. Reiner speaks of the new "silver-fork" literature and its great appeal to middle-class readers, and how "[t]hese novels of fashionable life, describe[ed] the manners and frivolities of high society and the efforts of the middle classes to emulate them and gain entry into even higher social circles…"[35] In fact, during this period, annuals featured highly stylized portraits of prestigious peers, steel engravings of aristocratic mansions and fashionable country estates, and even included poetry and prose written by members of the aristocracy, naturally edited by "a lady of fashion, preferably with a title."[36] Attributing middle-class interest in all things aristocratic, Edward Bulwer-Lytton focuses on the proximity factor. The middle-classes were closer than ever before to the power and prestige formerly afforded to their social betters, as the times "allowed the members of the more mediocre classes a hope to outstep the boundaries of fortune, and be quasi-aristocrats themselves, people eagerly sought for representations of the manners which they aspired to imitate, and the circles to which it was not impossible to belong."[37] Everything they wanted was in reach, for a price of course. A price many were willing to pay. Canny publishers, with their proverbial fingers on the proverbial pulse, responded to (and attempted to monetize) middle-class aspirations of becoming "quasi-aristocrats." The result was a "the production of a new type of annual, one not intended for the pocket but to grace the drawing-room or boudoir table."[38]

Crucially, gift books were meant to be *seen*. Key for our purposes is the drawing-room—a space with tremendous significance in the middle-class Victorian home. The drawing room, according to Lorraine Kooistra, was the "physical and spiritual center of the Victorian home."[39]

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[34] Paula Feldman, *The Keepsake*, 10
[35] Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 20
[36] Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 20; Vanessa Warne, "Thackeray among the Annuals,"160.
[37] Edward Bulwer-Lytton, quoted in Vanessa Warne, "Thackeray among the Annuals," 160.
[38] Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 20.
[39] Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture, 1855-1875* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2011), 5.

Furthermore, the drawing room was the domain of the middle-class Victorian woman. The drawing room was a powerful symbol of an idealized Victorian middle-class domesticity, where women were the masters. As Reiner argues, "[t]he drawing-room had become a cherished institution which had its own conventions, its code of manners, its particular mode of dress, its particular style of conversation."[40] Gift books were designed for the drawing room. In fact, Kathryn Ledbetter refers to gift annuals as "ornamental drawing-room attractions."[41] No longer duodecimo pocket-size, the new gift books were a large quarto size. Their size, in addition to their exquisite covers and engravings, as well as their ornately gilded bindings, evidently pointed to their principal function as drawing-room attractions—ornamental baubles, meant to be exhibited face-up on the surface of the drawing-room table. Indeed, they were quite similar to the "coffee-table books" of our modern-day age.

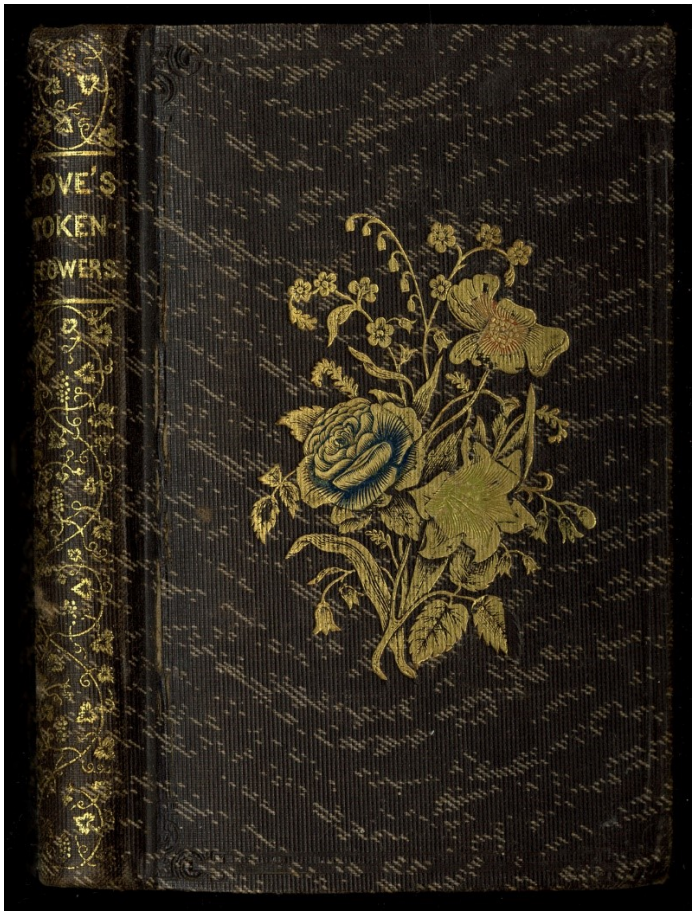
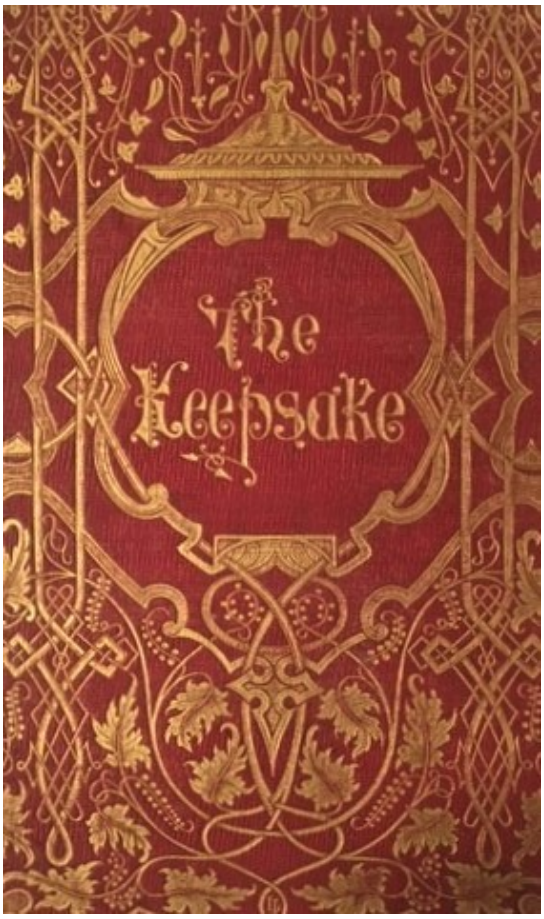


Figure 4.6: *Love's Token Flowers (New York: J.C. Riker, 1848), Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia*

[40] Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 20. Also see Warne, "Thackeray among the Annuals," 160.
[41] Ledbetter, "BeGemmed and beAmuletted," 235-236



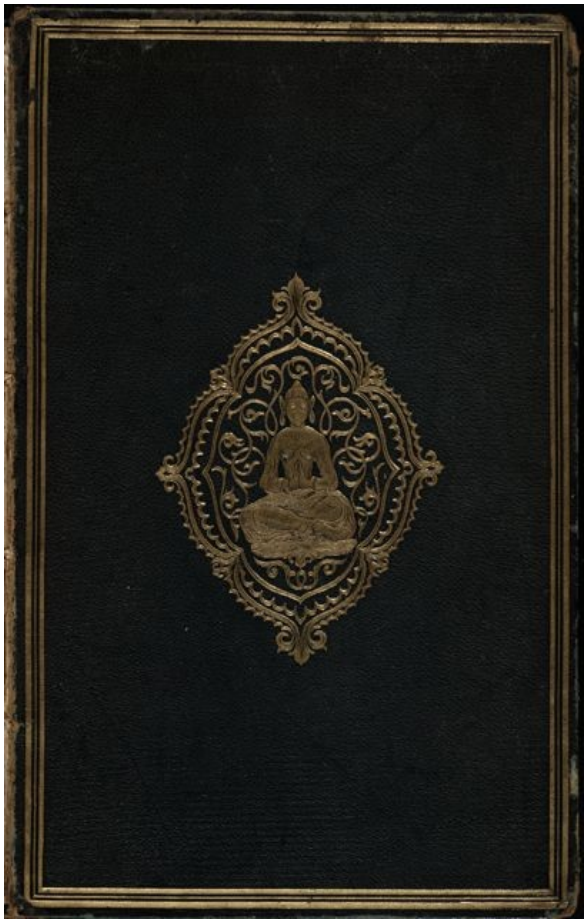


Figure 4.7: *The Keepsake for 1856, Courtesy of the University of Southampton Special Collections*

Figure 4.8*: Caunter's and Daniell's Oriental Annual, 1839: Eastern Legends (London: Whittaker & Co., 1839), Courtesy of the University of Toronto Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library*

Everyone's a Critic (Especially Thackeray)

From Thackerary's epigraph at the top of the chapter, wherein he described gift annuals as "a display of miserable mediocrity," "a collection of feeble verse," and "a gathering of small wit," Thackeray's hatred of the annuals, just like his hatred of charity bazaars, was made abundantly clear, by way of his literary criticism and his literary fiction. In *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray positions both charity bazaars and literary annuals as being superficial, lacking in *any* modicum of substance, and as shorthand for extreme avarice attempting to put on the face of virtue. In the novel, annuals are briefly, but meaningfully referenced. The reader is told that

Becky Sharp owns a collection of beautiful, gilt-edged gift annuals that her French maid, Mademoiselle Fifine, covets and eventually steals:

> Fifine went off in a cab, as we have known more exalted persons of her nation to do under similar circumstances: but, more provident or lucky than these, she secured not only her own property, but some of her mistress's (if indeed that lady could be said to have any property at all) – and not only carried off the trinkets before alluded to, and some favorite dresses on which she had long kept her eye, but four richly gilt Louis Quatorize candlesticks, **six gilt Albums, Keepsakes and Books of Beauty,** a gold enamelled snuff-box which had once belonged to Madame du Berri, and the sweetest little inkstand and **mother-of-pearl blotting book**, which Becky used when she composed her **charming little pick notes**, had vanished from the premises in Curzon Street together with Mademoiselle Fifine, and all the silver laid out on the table for the little *festin* which Rawdon interrupted.[42]

The passage (emphasis my own) confirms that Becky owned six notable gift annuals titles, and she placed her annuals with "a gold enamelled snuff box" once belonging to a Madame du Berri, presumably a member of the aristocratic class Becky tries so hard to break-in to. It also references her "mother-of-pearl blotting book" and her "charming little pink notes."[43] All these descriptions mirror the hyper-femininity of gift annuals and their sumptuous, mother-of-pearl inlays, their delicate silk covers or colourful endpapers, and of course, their liberal use of gilt edges. According to Warne, Thackeray's listing of Becky's annuals beside a gold snuff box, once owned by Madame du Berri, "links annuals with Becky's social ambition and aristocratic aspirations."[44] In Thackeray's estimation, annuals were devoid of any genuine literary or artistic merit. Like the charity bazaar, the gift book exterior is alluring, captivating, and appeals to the most acquisitive amongst us; however, its attractive exterior conceals the pulsating greed and the roiling, pernicious amorality, and aristocratic ambition just beneath the surface. Indeed, Thackeray further wrote how "the publishers of these prints allow that the taste is execrable, which renders such abominations popular, but the public will buy nothing else, and the public must be fed."[45] He thought the engravings in the annuals were of poor quality and they were inculcating the public with ideas of poor taste. Thackeray's vitriol knew no bounds, and his critiques were far reaching, influencing how the Boston women advertised the National Anti-

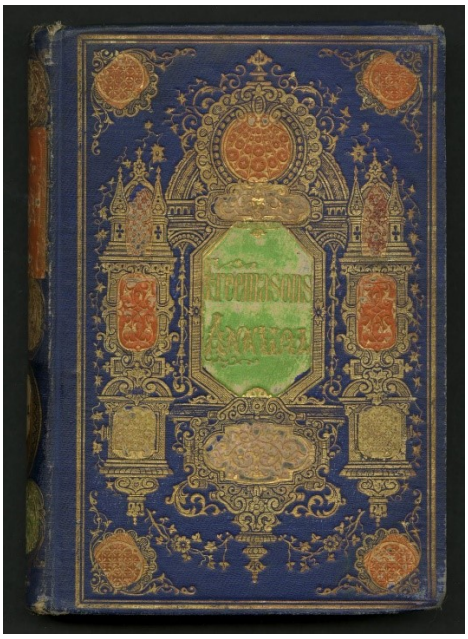
[42] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 636-637.
[43] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 636-637.
[44] Warne, "Thackeray among the Annuals," 161.
[45] Thackeray, "A Word on the Annuals," *Fraser's Magazine* (December 1837).

Slavery Bazaar's gift annual, *The Liberty Bell*. They wanted to ensure that no one thought their bazaar was a Vanity Fair, nor was their annual a gilded, frivolity owned by Becky Sharp.

Activist Annuals

"Every Abolitionist should be a propagandist; the object of every society should be to imbue the community in which it is formed with right sentiments," reads an extract of a report from the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society reprinted in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*.[46] The extract ends with the following dictum: "The great object is, to reform public sentiment."[47] The abolitionists took this dictum quite seriously. Exceptional propagandists, abolitionists were early adopters of the gift book form and were often the most active in publishing a series of titles meant to "reform public sentiment" and to "imbue the community with right sentiments."[48] Overall, the American abolitionists issued seven titles spanning from 1834 to 1858: the *Oasis*, *Freedom's Gift*, *North Star*, *Star of Emancipation*, *Liberty Chimes*, *Autographs of Freedom*, and the *Liberty Bell*. Among them, the *Bell* was the most popular and the longest running, first appearing for the opening of the Sixth Anti-Slavery Fair, on October 29, 1839, and published for its final run on December 17, 1857.[49] Though abolitionists were the most prolific, there were many other social reform organizations that similarly used gift annuals to raise funds and build awareness. For example, the figures below showcase the freemason and temperance annuals, two amid a wide range of social activist gift books.

[46] *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 25 June 1840.
[47] *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 25 June 1840.
[48] *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 25 June 1840.
[49] See Thompson, "The Liberty Bell," 165-168 for a short summary of each of the seven anti-slavery titles. See also "Tokens of Affection: Art, Literature, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century American Gift Books," *Publisher's Bindings Online*, http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/gallery/giftbooks.htm.



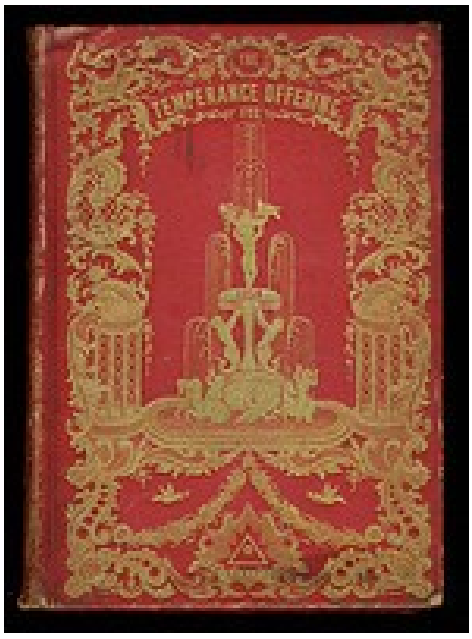


Figure 4.9*: The Freemason's Annual: A Gift for all Seasons with new and elegant illustration, (c. 1854), Courtesy of the University Wisconsin-Madison*

Figure 4.10: *Sons of Temperance Offering: for 1850, (C. 1849), Courtesy of Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Columbia University*

Whether freemasonry, temperance, child reform, abolitionism, or the many reform causes of the nineteenth century, the gift book form and genre were utilized by individual writers, social reform organizations and by gift book editors and publishers to shape the public discussion, collective awareness, and (if all went well) the favourable reader response towards their reform cause.[50] Crucial was the reader response. As we will see, this was not a significant issue the abolitionists had to face since reading was very much wrapped up in their identity as abolitionists.

Reading as an Abolitionist Aesthetic

In her *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days*, Sarah H. Southwick reflects on her lifelong love of reading, and those who first inspired it:

> The Weston family was a family of marked genius…To me she [Maria Weston Chapman] and her sisters were authorities in literature and morals, and I should never have dared

[50] Meaghan M. Fritz and Frank E. Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom: Gift Books and the War on Slavery," *American Periodicals*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2013): 62-63.

> dispute her opinions in either. As I look back to my youth, I can see how much my love of reading and knowledge of standard literature were stimulated by them.[51]

While her love of reading anti-slavery literature may have been stimulated by the Weston sisters, the seeds of this lifelong love were sown much earlier. Southwick belonged to a prominent abolitionist family—her father, Joseph Southwick, was an original member of the AASS in 1833 and her mother's anti-slavery activism was a "lifelong interest," inherited from her father, a dry goods grocer who imported goods from England and who forged business and anti-slavery connections with English abolitionist James Cropper. As Southwick wrote, "I have heard my mother say that when he sent boxes of goods to my grandfather, he was in the habit of putting on the top of the goods the pamphlets which they issued on the subject; so that all my grandfather's family were naturally interested and ready to espouse the anti-slavery cause in this country without hesitation."[52] Clearly, during her formative childhood years, a young Sarah was steeped in abolitionist visual and print culture. A precocious young child, she remembered beholding the inaugural issue of *The Liberator*: "[m]y father subscribed for it from the beginning, and I very well remember seeing one of the early copies, with the slave auction as the heading, and my mother's explaining it to my sisters and myself."[53]

Exposure to anti-slavery texts and ideas came naturally to the young Southwick, who was always encouraged to read by the generations of abolitionists in her family. While describing attending the first Anti-Slavery Fair in 1834, Southwick recalled how excited she was to meet Lydia Maria Child, a favourite anti-slavery author of hers: "I was very much interested to see Mrs. Lydia Maria Child. I had been in the habit, at my grandfather's…of reading the "Juvenile Miscellany," a little magazine for children, published by Mrs. Child, and had always been much entertained by it, so I wanted to see her."[54] At a young age, Southwick already described herself as "being in the habit" of reading anti-slavery texts and enriching her experience of the text by attending the Anti-Slavery Fair to meet the author and bask in the abolitionist milieu. She also recalled purchasing an anti-slavery giftbook at the first fair in 1834: "[i]t was for this first fair that Mrs. Child published 'The Oasis,' of which I still own a copy, bought there."[55] From its

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[51] Sarah H. Southwick, *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days*, (The Riverside Press, 1893): 37-38.
[52] Southwick, *Reminiscences*, 5-6.
[53] Southwick, *Reminiscences*, 5; *The Liberator* was first published under the editorship of William Lloyd Garrison in 1831, when a young Sarah Southwick was ten years old.
[54] Southwick, *Reminiscences*, 7.
[55] Southwick, *Reminiscences*, 8.

purchase in 1834 to the time of writing her *Reminiscences* in 1893, Southwick kept her copy of *The Oasis* all her life, demonstrating how gift books and their palimpsest of sentimental memory were truly keepsakes, treasured throughout one's life.

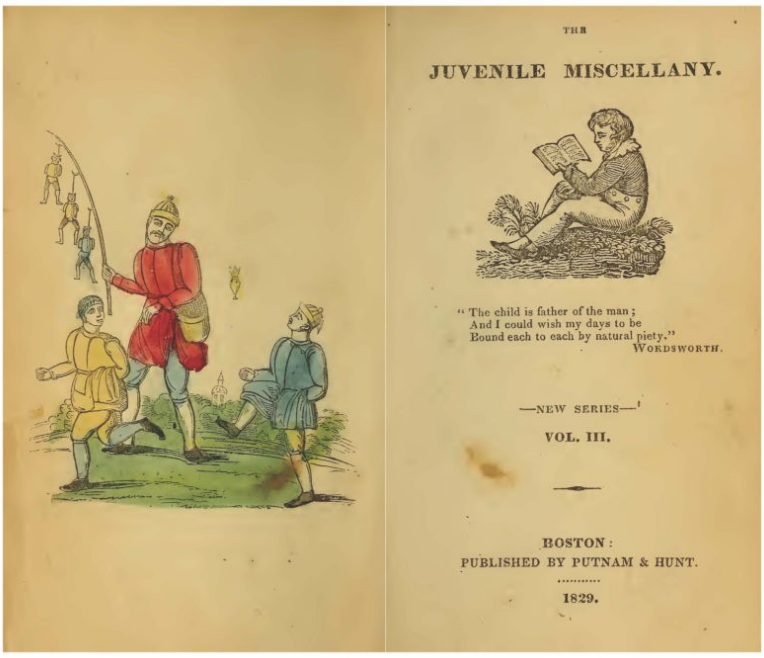

Figure 4.11: *The Juvenile Miscellany, Vol. 3, (c. 1829), Courtesy of the David Ruggles Center*

As with Sarah Southwick, reading was very much part of an abolitionist aesthetic and was imparted at an early age. The abolitionists were strong believers in the power of education to change hearts and minds. From a piece appearing in the 1841 *Liberty Bell*, we are given the poignant declaration, "education must still remain the great instrument for improving mankind."[56] In particular, the abolitionist education of children and youth was encouraged wherever possible. As the *Liberty Bell* published, "[i]f the understanding and feelings of youth can be impressed and guided, as is generally acknowledged, in regard to other questions, why not also on this?"[57] Evidently, the piece argued that the impressibility of youth could be harnessed to create a better world, one without slavery: "[o]ccasions might easily be found, in which even the schoolboy's mite would contribute towards the spread of emancipation. Shall he be taught to sympathize with the bondage in Egypt, and not with the more cruel bondage of his own times?"[58]

[56] "The London Convention," in *The Liberty Bell* (1841), p. 89.
[57] "The London Convention," in *The Liberty Bell* (1841), p. 93.
[58] "The London Convention," in *The Liberty Bell* (1841), p. 96.

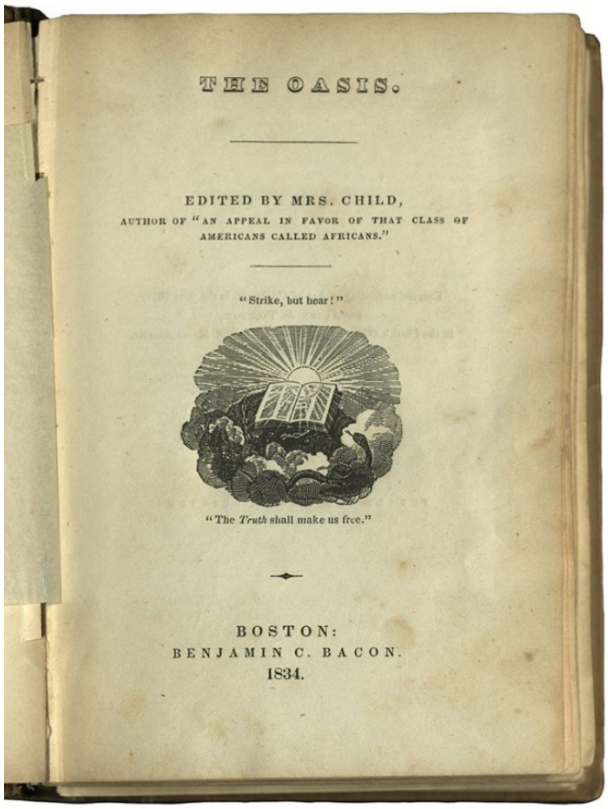

Figure 4.12: *The Oasis, edited by Lydia Maria Child, (c. 1834), Courtesy of University of Utah Rare Books*

Reading was crucial to the entire abolitionist project, in fact, it was "the practical equivalent of abolition itself," according to Robert Fanuzzi. As he notes, "[t]he creation of a reading public [was] the principle goal of antislavery agitation."[59] Perhaps no one said it better than Maria Weston Chapman herself: "[t]hose who can be induced to Read, will most assuredly be abolitionized, and THOROUGHLY converted."[60] In this context, to 'abolitionize' meant to turn people into readers.[61] Without reading and exposure to abolitionist print culture, the abolitionist is entirely ineffectual, as argued in an impassioned 1840 column in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*: "[t]he abolitionist who never reads—at what should he feel indignant? With

[59] Robert Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, xii.
[60] Maria Weston Chapman quoted in Robert Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, xii.
[61]Robert Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, xii.

whom should he sympathize? What is there to awaken his shame, or abhorrence, or sense of duty, or selfishness?"[62]

Activist Editors

Perhaps the first example of an anti-slavery annual I found during my archival research was the 1833 *The Bow in the Cloud* by Sheffield abolitionist, Mary Anne Rawson. I was first drawn to the many editorial decisions Rawson was confronted with—for example, which type of paper; gilt-edges or no gilt-edges; the usual back and forth between her publisher; concerns about the name (her publisher preferred "Negro's Memorial"); cost estimates, number of pages, and seeking contributors.[63] Particularly interesting was a letter Rawson wrote at her family residence, Wincobank Hall, dated 6 March 1826, addressed no nobody. It was a one in a series of solicitation drafts she practiced composing. In her draft, she worried that there had been so much anti-slavery literature published that inundated and overwhelmed people. Especially to those who would not initially gravitate towards abolitionist literature, with a such vast quantity already published, they simply would not even know how to begin. However, with her publication, *The Bow in the Cloud*, she saw a clear solution:

> Something new is occasionally necessary to arouse and stimulate; and it has been thought that a small volume, elegant in its form and diversified in its contents (something on the plan of "Literary Souvenir" and "Amulet") might attract attention and be the means of doing good particularly among young people; if in any way, persons can be induced to read and think it is not to be believed that they will speak with so little feeling and act with so little decision. For this purpose, I am now making a collection of poems, tales, and short … on the subject of Slavery, calculated to enlighten the judgement and affect the feelings, and I have already received several elegant and appropriate contributions. It is almost needless to add that my motive in addressing you is respectfully to solicit your assistance. I have simply stated my plan, and I cannot possibly have any influence over you. I will not attempt to urge my request, but only confess my earnest hope that the importance of the subject may induce you to write a few lines, and (assure?) you that whatever you may be pleased to favour me with be considered a very valuable addition, and received with gratitude.[64]

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[62] *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 25 June 1840.
[63] Mary Anne Rawson and Henry Joseph Wilson, Letters and Papers, [1820s-1865]. Rawson / Wilson Anti-Slavery Papers. John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. GB 133 ENG MS 742: (items 3-33).
[64] Mary Anne Rawson and Henry Joseph Wilson, Letters and Papers, [1820s-1865]. Rawson / Wilson Anti-Slavery Papers. GB 133 ENG MS 742: (item 33).

Many of the themes Rawson touched on in this description mirror how Chapman would approach the *Liberty Bell* many years later and gives insight to the temerity and thoughtfulness of anti-slavery women editors. Like Rawson, they would learn to assert themselves and their editorial vision. Interestingly, in a letter from Mary Estlin to Chapman on 19 April 1847, we see Mary Anne Rawson enter our story again. Estlin had a *Liberty Bell* to give to Rawson, as the latter evidently contributed to the Boston Bazaar, but Estlin did not know this abolitionist of almost two decades earlier, nor of her anti-slavery, editorial past: "I must evince my ignorance of Geography in being totally unacquainted with any such place as 'Wincobank,' nor can I discover it by reference to Gazeteers or to friends whom I deem good authorities. I have made enquiries in other places, particularly in the North of England but without success; no one has heard of Mrs. Rawson or of Wincobank, so her book is still on hand."[65] This detail, although minor, carried great significance. Rawson, very active in her anti-slavery heyday, clearly supported the next generation of transatlantic women abolitionists, and it was fitting that she would be rewarded with a gift-book of this new generation.

The Liberty Bell

> The Fair Committee published a Christmas Annual of between 2 and 300 pages. It is called the *Liberty Bell*, and edited by Mrs. Maria W. Chapman, of whom, to say that she is a great woman, would but tamely express our thought. She has been very properly termed the *Napolean of the Anti-Slavery* movement. This annual contains contributions from the true-hearted, from farmer Burleigh, of Connecticut, all the way up to my Lord Morpeth.[66]
> -The *Liberator*, 16 January 1846

Similar to the organization and management of the National Bazaar, the *Liberty Bell* was the sole provenance of Maria Weston Chapman and her sisters, namely Anne Warren Weston and Caroline Weston. In a letter to Samuel May, dated 24 October 1871, Caroline Weston recounted the history of the *Liberty Bell*: "It occurred to Mrs. Chapman while we were preparing for the fair of 39 that we might publish some sort of book to illustrate the Fair by obtaining literary contributions from Friends of the cause."[67] Weston's language here is striking—*to illustrate the Fair*—signifying her keen awareness of the opportunity to 'abolitionize' through the gaze. Chapman and her sisters expertly employed visual, print, and material culture in service of the

[65] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 19 April 1847 (BPL)
[66] The *Liberator*, 16 January 1846.
[67] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 24 October 1871 (BPL)

National Bazaar. The *Liberty Bell* was no exception. In fact, Ralph Thompson, a foundational historian of American literary annuals, refers to the *Liberty Bell* as a "literary adjunct to the fairs."[68] In this section, I compare the *Liberty Bell* to the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. My discussion focuses on the key parallels between the anti-slavery gift annual and the charity bazaar. Both were unfairly maligned and dismissed in their own time and in literary and cultural history; both were managed/edited by women, and mainly targeted women as their ideal consumer base and literary audience; both used arresting aesthetics; and both emphasized the profound emotional resonances objects can bring about.

Weston explained that it was Ann Greene Chapman (Chapman's sister-in-law) who first had the idea of filling an album with anti-slavery themed literary contributions. Before her death in 1837, she began assembling the album, with several of her early articles included in the first edition. "It, the book, was called the "Liberty Bell" recalling the Philadelphia Bell with its motto "Proclaim Liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof."[69]

Figure 4.13. :"The Liberty Bell", 1844 cover image, Courtesy of Boston Public Library

In fact, Chapman wrote in a letter to her sister, Anne Warren Weston, of her excitement to behold the new cover displaying the *Liberty Bell*: "I am sending a beautiful sketch of a bell which I have

[68] Thompson, "The Liberty Bell," 157.
[69] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 24 October 1871 (BPL)

just made, to Philadelphia, to have it cut in Brass for the cover."[70] As we will see, the cover image was simply one of the many aesthetic and substantive details Chapman oversaw as the editor of the *Liberty Bell*.

Chapman's Editorship

The *Liberty Bell* was very much under the sole editorial care of editor, Maria Weston Chapman (at times with her sisters filling in). As Thompson notes, "[i]t was no light undertaking to gather annually a sufficient number of unpublished essays, stories, and poems to fill a sizeable volume, and no doubt it was even more difficult to raise the money needed for the paper, printing, and binding. But Mrs. Chapman succeeded in doing so time and again."[71] Certainly not the first, Chapman joined a cadre of American women anti-slavery editors including Lydia-Maria Child, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Julia Griffiths, and for a brief time, her old rival, Martha Ball. As can be imagined, these women all had different editing and activist styles, but at the core, the form they chose to express their activism spoke volumes. According to Fritz and Fee Jr., "[t]he women's shared appropriation of the sentimental, domestic gift book genre for activist ends emphasizes and troubles the gender dynamics not only of the literary genre itself, but also of the abolitionist movement."[72] Crucially, although the movement appeared to be mostly male dominated, due to their more public-facing politics and activism, without the fundraising, editorial, and literary acumen of activist women like Chapman, there would be no movement.[73]

As to be expected, Chapman had her own way of doing things. Her editorial vision was distinct among the other anti-slavery gift books (clearly, she did something right, as The *Liberty Bell* was the longest running, most popular abolitionist gift book). It should be noted that Chapman contributed a large amount of her own personal writing to the *Bell*. Not only did her writing appear in eleven out of fifteen *Bell* volumes, but many of these volumes contain multiple pieces written by Chapman. In contrast, Julia Griffiths, editor of *Autographs for Freedom*, only wrote introductory prefaces for each volume of *Autographs* (of which there were only two).[74]

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[70] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Anne Warren Weston, 1842 (BPL)
[71] Thompson, "The Liberty Bell," 157-158.
[72] Meaghan M. Fritz and Frank E. Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom: Gift Books and the War on Slavery," *American Periodicals*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2013): 62-63.
[73] Fritz and Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 60.
[74] Fritz and Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 68. For more on Antebellum women's editorial work as self-expression and vocation, see Sharon M. Harris, and Ellen Gruber Garvey, *Blue Pencils & Hidden Hands: Women Editing Periodicals, 1830-1910* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004); and Patricia Okker, *Our Sister*

However, like her British counterpart, Mary Anne Rawson, Chapman did not label herself in print as the editor of the *Liberty Bell*. Instead, she attributed the authorship of the *Bell* to all the contributors, the "Friends of Freedom," of the particular volume. According to Fritz and Fee Jr., by appending her name to her own individual contributions, "Chapman merged more wholly into the volume, aligning her work seamlessly with that of other abolitionists in place of claiming individual editorship."[75] But this gesture was not solely one of modesty. "Chapman's avoidance of the title of editor in place of group authorship suggests a desire to promote unity not only within the gift book but within the Garrisonian American Anti-Slavery Society, as well, not to mention British benefactors," write Fritz and Fee Jr.[76]

Editorial Style and Vision

One of Chapman's early solicitations for pieces in her new annual was to her abolitionist and transatlantic colleague, Elizabeth Pease (Nichol): "We are preparing a little book to be called the Liberty Bell for our fair in October—an annual it will be if it takes [place] this year. To make it attractive we want pieces (either grave or gay—lively or severe as their muse dictates) from those whose names are dear to the abolitionists. You will not refuse us yours? Ever so short an article (indeed our limits will not admit of long ones) will be a *very* great favour."[77] From this passage, we can infer elements of her editorial modus operandi, as well as her overall editorial vision and style. Chapman was truly exceptional at cultivating anti-slavery networks of women, particularly throughout the United Kingdom and in France. As such, she had a rich, vast network she could call upon to contribute to the *Bell*. Not just any network—the transatlantic sisterhood. The name implies a familial, informal bond (brothers and sisters in the cause). In the passage, we see Chapman unafraid to take on this more familiar, relational tone to obtain contributions for her annual: "You will not refuse us yours? Ever so short an article…will be a *very* great favour."[78] Her strength as a Bazaar organizer and anti-slavery editor went hand in hand with her astute grasp on the immense value of relationships and abolitionist community; alongside the

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*Editors: Sarah J. Hale and the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century American Women Editors (*Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995).

[75] Fritz and Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 70.

[76] Fritz and Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 70.

[77] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Elizabeth Pease, 20 August 1839, printed as item [53] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 82-3.

[78] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Elizabeth Pease, 20 August 1839, printed as item [53] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 82-3.

visual and material symbolism required to unite, inspire, and reaffirm community loyalty and shared abolitionist values. In other words, Chapman understood how to employ the language of relationships, embedded within domesticity, to achieve her desired outcomes in both roles as Bazaar manager and gift book editor.

Moreover, in the above passage, we see her preference for, "those whose names are dear to the abolitionists."[79] As Historian Debra Hansen writes,"[s]ince prominence and celebrity were central to Chapman's reform agenda, she used her influence, connections, and sheer boldness to procure original pieces from some of America's premier literary and intellectual figures."[80] Without doubt, Chapman knew how to deliver. Celebrated writers—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Harriet Beecher Stowe, James Russell Lowe, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whitter, among others—joined their pens ("Weapons for Abolitionists") with leading abolitionists, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, David and Lydia Maria Child, Samuel May, Charles Lenox Remond, Wendell Phillips, Lucretia Mott, Theodore Parker, William Wells Brown, and Edmund Quincy, to name a few.[81] Hansen notes Chapman's propensity to be "fearless and unrelenting" while pursuing "this type of contributor" for her volumes.[82] To that end, Chapman's ideal contributor confers undeniable prestige, esteem, and cachet. No where is this more visible than in her cultivation of foreign contributors.

The *Liberty Bell* was decidedly international in character. As Hansen notes, "Chapman also used the *Liberty Bell* to introduce Americans to prominent European writers and intellectuals, thereby connecting Boston activists to an international radical community."[83] If there was anyone to provide such an introduction, it was Chapman. She was the consummate collector: cultivating relationships and correspondence with leading literary luminaries of her day. Writing to Samuel May while in Paris, Caroline Weston described her sister's uncanny

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[79] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Elizabeth Pease, 20 August 1839, printed as item [53] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 82-3.
[80] Debra Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 134.
[81] Debra Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 134; Meaghan Fritz and Frank Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 68. It is also important to note that the *Liberty Bell*, a publication comprised of 15 volumes and published the work of approximately 200 writers of those writers, less than one-third were women. The number of Black contributors was even more abysmal. In contrast, *Autographs for Freedom*, edited by Julia Griffiths and associated with Frederick Douglass, which comprised of only two volumes, published more Black writers than all the *Liberty Bell*'s 15 volumes combined. See Ralph Thompson, "The Liberty Bell," 160 & Meaghan Fritz and Frank Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 68.
[82] Debra Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 134.
[83] Debra Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 134.

ability to secure distinguished foreign contributors: "Mrs. Chapman has been able to obtain several articles for the next Liberty Bell from distinguished persons here."[84] But that is not all she conveyed in her missive to May. She managed to represent the cosmopolitan vision she and her sisters so strongly believed in, as she described those distinguished individuals, "who seem to feel the deepest interest in the cause. I hope the language will be no objection—for it seems to me that the testimony of intelligent foreigners is very valuable."[85] The two sisters saw immense value in having international contributors, but such cosmopolitanism, characteristic of the *Bell*, certainly was not the norm for American gift annuals of this period.

American annuals were "aggressively nationalistic," proud in their parochialism.[86] According to Thompson, the *Liberty Bell* concerned itself with "pointing out that all was not well in the United States and that certain matters were ordered better in other countries."[87] Historians Meaghan Fritz and Frank Fee Jr., see in Chapman's editorial vision for the *Bell* a propensity to contrast European progress and enlightenment with antiquated American prejudice and ignorance.[88] The *Liberty Bell* boasted nearly seventy-five foreign contributors with the highest concentration of contributions came from Great Britain. Among them were famed abolitionists and celebrated literary figures: Thomas Clarkson, Lady Byron, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Thompson, and Maria Weston Chapman's dear friend Harriet Martineau, who was a regular contributor, as well as the poet Bernard Barton (a former contributor to *The Bow in Cloud*), diplomat and linguist Sir John Bowring, Mary and William Howitt, author-reformer Richard M. Milnes, among others. In a nod to their close transatlantic relationship, Bristol abolitionists also feature prominently among contributors such as Mary Carpenter and Frances Armstrong.[89] As we saw in Caroline Weston's letter above, Chapman was skilled in securing contributions from high-profile, eminent Europeans— from France Alexis de Tocqueville; Victor

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[84] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 3 July 1850, (BPL).
[85] Letter from Caroline Weston to Samuel May, 3 July 1850, (BPL).
[86] Ralph Thompson, "The Liberty Bell and Other Anti-Slavery Gift-Books," *The New England Quarterly*, vol.7, no.1 (March 1934): 161.
[87] Ralph Thompson, "The Liberty Bell," 161.
[88] Meaghan M. Fritz and Frank E. Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom: Gift Books and the War on Slavery," *American Periodicals*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2013): 69-70.
[89] The *Bell* for 1847 featured Frances Armstrong's, "An English Child's Notion" and Mary Carpenter's "Voices from the Old World to the New." See Letter from Mary Carpenter to Maria Weston Chapman 31 October 1847, in which Carpenter hopes "the enclosed lines from myself may be worthy of obtaining a place in the Liberty Bell; they cannot boast much poetic merit, but they attempt to show…& assert the right of woman to raise her voice against these enormities." (BPL).

Hugo; historians Jules Michelet and Jean Jacques Ampère; writer-politician Charles de Rémusat; and dramatist-education reformer Ernest Legouvé; Swedish novelist Fredrika Bremer; Russian reformer Nikolai Turgenev; and the Italian nationalist and politician Giuseppe Mazzini.[90] According to Thompson, sixteen contributions were published in French and one in German.[91]

Perhaps one of the more satisfying elements of delving into Chapman's tenure as editor was happening upon correspondence in which she was not only referred to as Editor, but there was material evidence of would-be contributors or established contributors deferring to her editorial expertise. I find this mode of "writing to one's editor" or "pitching an editor" quite fascinating, especially when in the case of the Bell, many prominent men wrote to Chapman acknowledging and confirming her authority. For example, in an 1844 letter, Edmund Quincy wrote to his editor: "[i]f you do not like it or think it could be materially cut down, let me know it."[92] Anxious about space, he continued, "[b]ut I fear that I shall consume at least thirty of your poor pages. But do not hesitate to leave me out bodily if you are not satisfied."[93] Finally, Qunicy deferred to her keen editorial eye and literary cultivation: "[b]e pleased to read it with a lynx's eye for Americanisms & inelegancies."[94] Also in 1844, Frederick Douglass wrote to his editor: "I send you the enclosed written in great haste, you will confer a favor on me by correcting any mistakes which may occur in it. I take it kindly of you, to give me a place in the Liberty Bell, and hope ever to be worthy of such a place."[95] Finally, Garrison, attempting to be helpful, wrote to his editor: "My dear Mrs. Chapman-You asked me for a Sonnet for the Liberty Bell. I send you two. Take one, or both, or neither, as you shall deem best. If you should happen to want a page or two of prose to fill up a gap…let me know, and I will write the article instanter."[96] Quincy, Douglass, and Garrison — major abolitionist figures all wrote in common to their editor, Maria Weston Chapman.

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[90] Ralph Thompson, "The Liberty Bell," 161; Debra Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 135; Meaghan Fritz and Frank Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 67.
[91] Ralph Thompson, "The Liberty Bell," 161. The *Liberty Bell* also featured translated work, particularly if the anti-slavery sentiment was potent in both languages. For example, in a letter from John Parkman of Dover, New Hampshire to Maria Weston Chapman, 25 November 1844, he writes that he came across some German verse and it struck him that "it might possibly if translated, do tolerably well for the Liberty Bell" and that the principal merit of the translation "(apart from its being quite literal) lies in its sentiments." (BPL)
[92] Letter from Edmund Quincy to Maria Weston Chapman, 30 November 1844 (BPL)
[93] Letter from Edmund Quincy to Maria Weston Chapman, 30 November 1844 (BPL)
[94] Letter from Edmund Quincy to Maria Weston Chapman, 30 November 1844 (BPL)
[95] Letter from Frederick Douglass to Maria Weston Chapman, 27 October 1844 (BPL)
[96] Letter from William Lloyd Garrison to Maria Weston Chapman, November 1845 (BPL)

'Gilty' as Charged: The Liberty Bell and the Gift Book Genre

> It is but a small instrumentality, yet far too useful a one to admit of our relinquishing it. It doubles the money invested in it, at the time of the Fair. It gives us all the pleasure of a little **Anti-Slavery Souvenir**, **at a season when we need it as a tasteful present**, by means of which to excite **a flow of good feeling to the cause**, for our sakes. It is **a bond of union** among ourselves, as well as between the eastern and western sides of the Atlantic, and it enables us to acknowledge, in a suitable manner, the aid we receive from friends abroad, besides **bearing a knowledge of our principles**, where no other Anti-Slavery publication is tolerated.[97]
> -Eleventh Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (1844)

The above passage from the *Eleventh Annual Report of the BFASS* (particularly the bolded portions) perfectly encapsulates the *Liberty Bell*'s *raison d'être* and situates it within the larger context of nineteenth-century gift annuals. Calling to mind contemporary annual titles, such as *Atlantic Souvenir*, *The Literary Souvenir*, *The Keepsake*, and *Forget Me Not*, the *Bell*, too, was referred to as a "souvenir," but of the anti-slavery variety. From the French, *souviens*, a souvenir is a memento one keeps as a reminder of a person, place, or event.[98] In this way, the *Liberty Bell* beame a souvenir of one's attendance at, contribution to, and/or participation in the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Such a souvenir or remembrance comes "at a season when we need it as a tasteful present"[99]—otherwise colloquially known as Christmas and New Year's. Timed for publication and purchase at the opening of the Boston Bazaar, the *Bell* was meant to be gifted to friends of the cause, new and old alike, essentially mirroring Ackermann who expressly designed them to serve as "tokens of remembrance, friendship, or affection, at that season of the year which ancient custom has particularly consecrated to the interchange of such memorials."[100] Indeed, the *Liberty Bell* acted as a souvenir, a token of remembrance, gratitude, and fellow-feeling.

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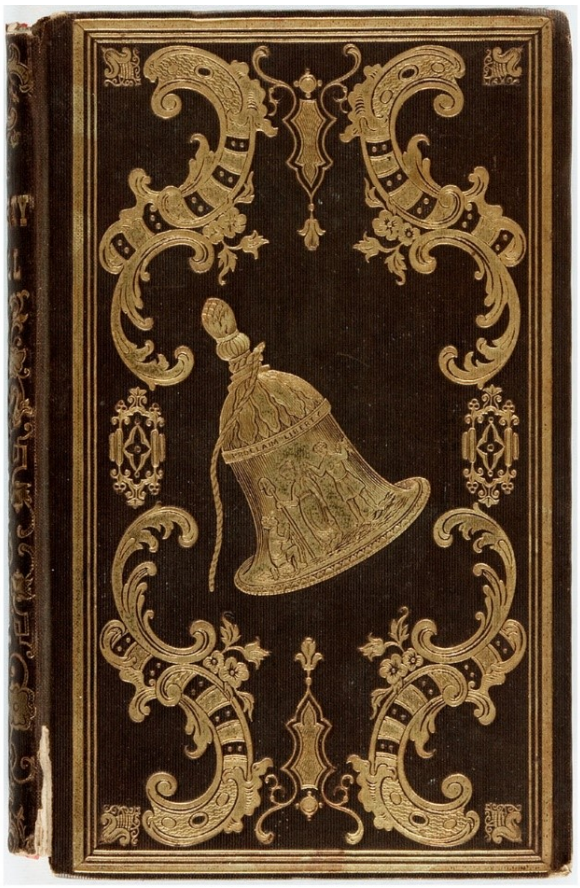
[97] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (1844): pp. 40-41. All emphasis given is my own. While the passage boasts that the Bell doubles the money invested in it, such a claim is dubious. Regardless, the profit value piece is not my concern. For more on profit, see:
[98] OED entry for 'souvenir.'
[99] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (1844): pp. 40-41.
[100] Quoted in Anne Reiner, "Friendship's Offering," 5.



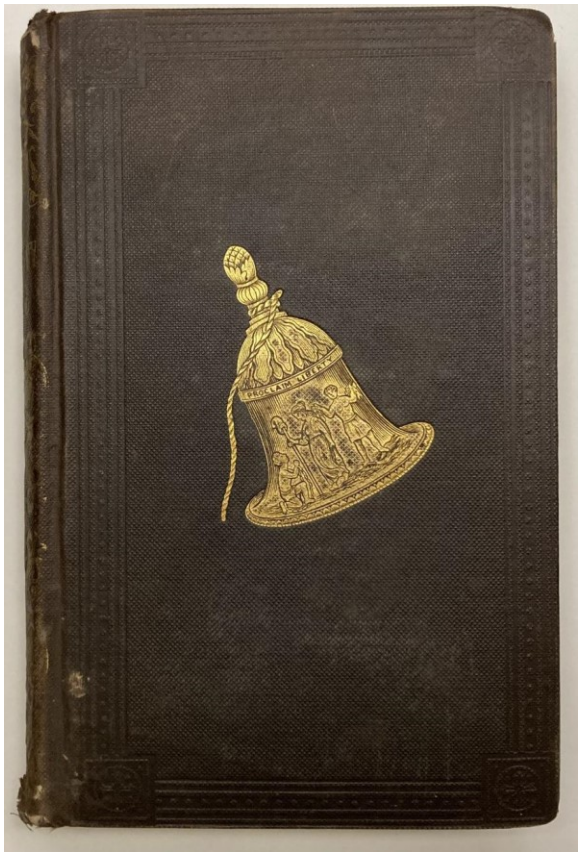


Figure 4.14: *The Liberty Bell for 1848, Courtesy of Heritage Auctions*

Figure 4.15: *The Liberty Bell. By Friends of Freedom. (Boston: Mass. Anti-Slavery Society, 1853), Courtesy of the New York Public Library*

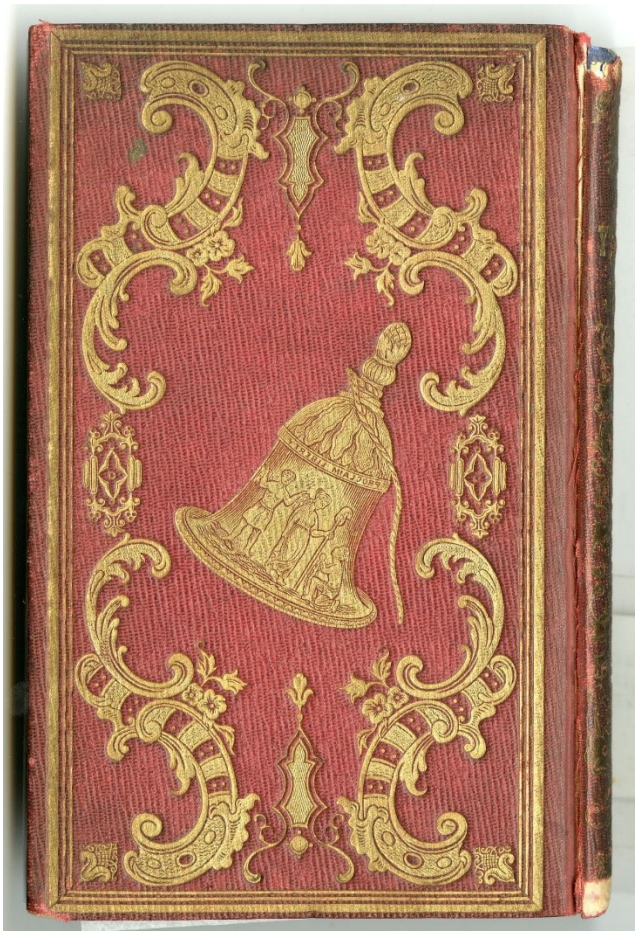


Figure 4.16: *A Title Page for The Liberty Bell (Boston: AASS, 1856), Courtesy of Baylor University*
Figure 4.17: *The Liberty Bell Cover, (Boston: AASS, 1856), Courtesy of Baylor University*

Available to purchase as a National Bazaar customer or given free of charge to those who worked the Bazaar, being in possession of a *Liberty Bell* served as "an acknowledgment of one's contribution to the cause and a memento of the occasion."[101] The *Bell* was a literal and metaphorical symbol of membership and belonging to the shared community of abolition—a powerful talisman conjuring bonds of union "among ourselves, as well as between the eastern and western sides of the Atlantic."[102] Such was its importance that to go without constituted a potential injustice that required immediate attention. To illustrate, take the example of a one Miss Richardson, a contributor and volunteer for the Boston Bazaar[103]—despite her tremendous

[101] Lee Chambers Schiller, "A Good Work Among the People," 258.
[102] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (1844): pp. 40-41.
[103] Richardson would have worked the Twelfth Annual National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, which ran December 1845 to early January 1846 and was located for the first time in Faneuil Hall.

involvement and labour on its behalf—she was not given a *Liberty Bell* in recognition of her service. Her friend, Frances H. Drake, takes it upon herself to write Maria Weston Chapman, hoping something can be done to rectify this upsetting oversight: "an incident occurred at the Fair which is so really so painful to my sense of justice that I cannot longer forbear laying the particulars before you for your special consideration."[104] Drake then proceeded to explain that of her two friends, Miss Blodgett and Miss Richardson, the former received two copies of the *Bell* (one from Chapman and one from Anne Warren Weston), while the latter received none. "I feel confident that there must have been some mistake," Drake declared indignantly. "Allowing me to be the judge, if the books were bestowed on the score of merit, there was a sad misapplication made of them," she wrote before, in a somewhat awkward vein, beginning to weigh the merits of her two friends. While not wanting "to detract one particle of merit" from her friend Miss Blodgett, "a very fine girl," Drake instead commented on her lackluster performance at the Bazaar: "I trust I may be pardoned for saying she is not a <u>labourer</u>,-not one cents worth of labor or means does she furnish for the fair."[105]

Conversely, Drake lauded Miss Richardson as "one of the most faithful labourers in the field," extolling her virtuous work ethic and steadfast faithfulness to the cause. "She toils by the midnight lamp to accomplish that which she would other-wise be unable to do. She is even at her post at our sewing circles…& in fact is my sole dependence in point of labour, when making up the box."[106] Having compared the work ethic and commitment of her two friends, "to prove good my assertion, that the books were misapplied, if true merit was made the test," she most certainly did not stop there.

She wanted to convey that Miss Richardson was indeed meritorious; thus, deserving of her own *Liberty Bell*. But if merit was not the sole deciding factor, Richardson *still* had a right to her free copy of the *Bell*—a right that her friend was prepared to fight for: "I have been informed that the committee wished to present a 'Bell' to all those who took a table & if so Miss R. was entitled to one, for what few things, we did send were left with her to dispose of."[107] Drake, having mounted a passionate defense of her friend's dedication and commitment to the cause,

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[104] Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 January 1846 (BPL).
[105] Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 January 1846 (BPL).
[106] Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 January 1846 (BPL).
[107] Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 January 1846 (BPL).

now changed tack. Irrespective of her friend's (considerable) merit, the mere fact of her working for the Bazaar should have entitled Richardson to the recognition, gratitude, and the esteem of her peers that only a copy of the annual *Liberty Bell* accorded.

What is striking in this episode are the lengths Drake felt she must go through to make things right for her wronged friend. A seemingly minor oversight became a matter of grave injustice. Such was the symbolic importance of the *Liberty Bell*—it signified recognition of good work for the cause and acted as a token of remembrance and anti-slavery friendship. One can begin to see why Miss Richardson would feel jilted and hurt, and why Drake would use the strong language of 'injustice' to describe the unfortunate event. Richardson did much work for the Bazaar and received no *Bell*, while her peer, Miss Blodgett allegedly did less and received two *Bell*s. She began her letter stating that this incident so profoundly affected her "sense of justice," that she felt compelled to write. Subsequently, the reader learns that she is writing without Richardson's knowledge or consent, and that her friend would be "very much pained" if she knew.[108] Drake once again uses the language of justice: "…but I have done it solely upon my own responsibility in justice to you as well as her."[109] Here Drake gestures that if all Bazaar workers were promised a copy of the *Bell*, she was merely reminding Chapman of her own dictum, that the *Bell* served to create "a bond of union among ourselves" and "to excite a flow of good feeling to the cause."[110] Excluding a steadfast, faithful Richardson accomplished neither, while also devaluing Chapman's integrity.

In addition to writing to Chapman, Drake took the matter to Miss Blodgett, the other party in this story who allegedly did less work yet received two *Bell*s: "I ventured to say to Miss B. that I could not account for the slight Maria [Richardson] had received in this matter, she said she could not, & I should insist on Maria's having one of hers."[111] However, upon offering the extra *Bell* to Richardson, "Maria refused to accept it, as it was presented to Miss B. She felt it would be very wrong for her to take it, much as she would have liked it."[112] Although Blodgett

[108] Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 January 1846 (BPL).
[109] Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 January 1846 (BPL).
[110] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (1844): 40-41.
[111] Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 January 1846 (BPL).
[112] Letter from Frances H. Drake to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 January 1846 (BPL).

was kind to offer Richardson her extra volume, Richardson could not in good conscience accept, as the letter infers that the *Bell*s were especially inscribed and personalized for Miss Blodgett.

Such personalization and inscription were central to the "economy of sentiment" surrounding the experience of giving and/or receiving a gift annual, argues literary scholar Isabelle Lehuu.[113] As she notes, "[r]eading or contemplating a giftbook was an emotional experience. Hence the act of offering giftbooks was part of an economy of sentiment, an exchange of beautiful luxury goods for memory and love."[114] Unfortunately for Miss Richardson, the extra *Bell* was inscribed for Miss Blodgett, and such inscription was sacrosanct. Lehuu writes, "[o]nce given as present and personalized through the inscription in the presentation plate, the giftbook was made the possession of one person and served as a pretext for personal bonds between the donor and the recipient."[115]

The above episode demonstrates the immense sentimental value and emotional connection a *Liberty Bell* symbolized and conferred. The *Bell* was far more than a material object, it was a token of gratitude, fellow-feeling, and membership into the anti-slavery fold. One of the primary purposes of the *Liberty Bell* was to express gratitude to all those contributors to the National Bazaar, but also to their fellow peers in leadership, cementing bonds of union "among ourselves, as well as between the eastern and western sides of the Atlantic."[116] Once again, the strong transatlantic relationship between Chapman, her sisters, and the Bristol anti-slavery women is instructive. In a letter dated 27 January 1846, Chapman wrote to Estlin that the *Liberty Bell*s she sent to her friend in Bristol were, "simply in grateful token of our feeling."[117] Such gratitude multiplied each year and is visible within the archival record.[118] For example, in a April 1847 letter, Estlin thanked her dear friend for "the beautiful editions of the *Liberty Bell* presented to my Father & everybody/shall be made of good use of; accept our best thanks for them."[119] Additionally, in letter dated 15 January 1848, Chapman implored her friend, "[w]ill

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[113] Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 78.
[114] Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page*, 78.
[115] Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page*, 81.
[116] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (1844): pp. 40-41.
[117] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Mary Anne Estlin, 27 January 1846, (BPL).
[118] It would be impractical to list every letter thanking Maria Weston Chapman or her sisters for gifting Liberty Bells over a timespan of 15 volumes, so I will cite here the letters I found most helpful. See the BPL Anti-Slavery Collection/Chapman-Weston Correspondence for a more comprehensive look.
[119] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 2 April 1847 (BPL).

you receive, in token of our dear sense of all our Cause owes you & all the grateful regard we owe you as its advocates, a copy of the *Liberty Bell* herewith sent?"[120]

Once the Bazaar closed, receipts were settled, and any remaining merchandise dealt with, the American women would take stock and send a list of contributors to their British counterparts, along with a big box containing enough *Liberty Bells* and Reports of the Bazaar of the given year, to be distributed to those contributors. In some cases, the American or British women before distributing would personalize a *Liberty Bell* and write an inscription for the receiver—this act of inscription was key to meaning-making and the culture of gift-annuals. For example, in an 1858 letter to Chapman, Mary H. Watson thanked her for her inscribed *Bell*. She wrote, "gratefully do I acknowledge, through your kindness, the reception of 'The Liberty Bell'; - a gem of physical, intellectual, moral, & true religious beauty & excellence. While the thought & devotion that prompted the gift, fill me with grateful emmotions [sic], its chimeing will ever awaken responsive echoes within me, & serve to incorporate & strengthen the fires of liberty & humanity enkindled upon the alter of my being."[121]

While not waxing as poetic as Mary Watson, the British women distributing the *Bell*s, such as Mary Estlin, were aware of the importance acts of gratitude towards contributors truly were. In an 1847 letter to Chapman, Estlin summarized who she was sending the *Bell* to, including:

> Mrs. Rowland thro' whose instrumentality we received the Contributions from South Wales, which were some of the most elegant, & very numerous. That locality is rather shut out from active participation in what is interesting <u>our</u> world, & I thought the book would keep alive their zeal, which really has been considerable. Of course I have sent the Bazaar Report with each, & directed one to every contributor in the Town to which the book was forwarded; & I have also enclosed several copies of it with the Liberty Bells for Carlisle, Rockdale &c.[122]

She later wrote that she would distribute a copy to every Bristol contributor. Estlin and her American counterparts understood the importance of "keeping alive their zeal."[123]

Further, we can see how the circulation of the *Liberty Bell* led to greater sociability and shared anti-slavery feeling. For example, in an 1839 letter to Caroline Weston, Evelina Smith

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[120] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Mary Anne Estlin, 15 January 1848 (BPL).
[121] Letter from Mary H. Watson to Maria Weston Chapman, 3 February 1858 (BPL).
[122] Letter from Mary Ann Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 April 1847 (BPL).
[123] Letter from Mary Ann Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 18 April 1847 (BPL).

wrote, “I was delighted by The Liberty Bell! [...] I lent the book immediately (Maria said it was wrong to lend such a beautiful book, but I could not help it I wanted to gather all Hingham together & read every piece to them), and so I do not remember every piece but I well remember yours and thank you for it.”[124] Similarly, Eliza Frances Jackson Meriam wrote to Weston,

> It was with much pleasure, that I yesterday received a beautiful copy of the "Liberty Bell," and a note accompanying it, expressing your kind wishes, & friendly interest in our welfare; for both of which, please accept my warmest thanks. As a gift from you, and so pretty too, I am tempted to put it carefully by with my other valuables; but it has rung so many touching appeals, (not to pass by the strong pull given it by good old Mr Socrates,) that I think I must circulate it, among the good people of Framingham. peradventure, some of its tones may awaken their sympathy, and interest, for the poor Slave.[125]

Both passages acknowledged that the *Liberty Bell* was a luxury item that should be placed “carefully by with my other valuables.”[126] Or, they were instead admonished for their desire to share their copy, “Maria said it was wrong to lend such a beautiful book.”[127] But in both instances, the women involved felt moved and compelled to share their Bells with others, underscoring the *Bell* as a symbol of belonging and being part of a shared anti-slavery community.

Concluding Domesticities

Similar to the National Bazaar, the organizers tried to distinguish their gift annual from the ostentation, frippery, and superficiality of other annuals. The *Liberty Bell* had a much more modest aesthetic than other gift annuals. It was purposely less ornate, with fewer engravings, meant to reflect the “serious” nature of its aim and purpose.[128] However, Thompson notes, “[t]he bindings are not all alike; some are of humble glazed paper or of muslin, while others, in approved gift-book style, are of tooled leather or of silk. Very likely a variety was furnished so that purchasers might buy according to their abilities.”[129] While there might have been some image control happening in the background with the Liberty Bell, in the foreground, some abolitionists found it hard to challenge their internalized misogyny of the annual genre. For example, in a letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson (another great critic of gift annuals), Julia Griffiths,

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[124] Letter from Evelina Smith to Caroline Weston, 8 December 1839 (BPL)
[125] Letter from Eliza Frances Jackson Meriam to Caroline Weston, 16 January 1843 (BPL)
[126] Letter from Eliza Frances Jackson Meriam to Caroline Weston, 16 January 1843 (BPL)
[127] Letter from Evelina Smith to Caroline Weston, 8 December 1839 (BPL)
[128] Thompson, “The Liberty Bell,” 159.
[129] Thompson, “The Liberty Bell,” 160.

editor of *Autographs for Freedom*, wrote, "[t]he beauty of its exterior will commend it as a suitable Christmas, or New Year's gift while its contents, we hope, will abound with earnest and truthful appeals to the humane sentiments and Christian principles of the reader unalloyed with the trifling matter which too often fills the pages of Christmas books."[130] Griffiths specifically noted that although the annual would be packaged as a Christmas annual, it would not be filled with "trifling matter," but instead "truthful appeals" and "humane sentiments."[131]

We see this dynamic play out again in an interesting exchange between Mary Estlin of Bristol and Maria Weston Chapman. In a letter outlining the particulars of her successful, well-attended exhibition of articles meant for Boston Bazaar, Mary Estlin asked her American friend to send more anti-slavery literature—but of the practicable variety. "We shall still be grateful for any small publications giving general information respecting Slavery & the progress of the Abolitionists. Those like 'Ten Years Experience' are I think of more service here than the 'Liberty Bell,'" wrote Estlin, stating her (and her community's) preference for political tracts and volumes such as "Ten Years Experience" and "The Life of Frederick Douglass." She was quick to add about the *Liberty Bell*, "tho' that always contains <u>some</u> beautiful pieces. But people here want something which throws light on the subject more than appeals to their feelings."[132] In this brief passage, Estlin echoed the oft cited criticisms of gift-annuals so prevalent in her own time. Her assertion that anti-slavery tracts containing overtly political, intellectually weighty content were "of more service" to the people of Bristol, than the *Liberty Bell* and its "beautiful pieces," reproduces the idea that gift annuals were fundamentally unserious texts, containing little intellectual or literary merit. Her words almost immediately recall Robert Southey: "these Annuals are picture-books for grown children."[133] By invoking the *beauty* of the *Liberty Bell*—alluding to its artful, florid prose—and foregrounding its design to "appeal to their feelings," Estlin placed the *Liberty Bell* in the same category as the sentimental, *feminine* literature of the day. (Read: superficial, lacking in intellectual rigour, decidedly un-*masculine*, therefore

[130] Julia Griffiths quoted in Fritz and Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 72.
[131] Julia Griffiths quoted in Fritz and Fee Jr., "To Give the Gift of Freedom," 72.
[132] Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 14 November 1845, (BPL)
[133] Southey, quoted in Anne Reiner

unserious, "gorgeous inanities."[134]) Her words, whether knowingly or not, confirmed her bias (and internalized misogyny) against the annuals.

In her response, Chapman echoed Ackermann's words on the purpose of gift annuals: "to serve as tokens of remembrance, friendship, or affection."[135] She wrote, "I send some *Liberty Bell*s for Bristol, not because they are most useful <u>there</u>, but simply in grateful token of our feelings."[136] The *Liberty Bell* was a token of gratitude, friendship, and fellow feeling among abolitionists. What is even more interesting is that Chapman does not stop there; she exceeded Ackermann's original vision: "[o]ur reason for publishing them is, that the opposition to the abolition of slavery is so great here, that we could not get a publication like the "ten years of experience" which you mention or 'Slavery as it is,' into the hands of a large class, & those most influential."[137] Unlike Estlin's request for more serious, fact-based, intellectually rigorous works and periodical literature on slavery in America, Chapman was essentially saying such overtly abolitionist works were wholly useless in the American context, as prejudice against abolitionism was so great. In order to get their anti-slavery message out to as many people as possible, it was simply not enough to rely on anti-slavery pamphlets and periodicals. Instead, Chapman argued, "[t]hey must be treated like children, to whom a medicine is made as pleasant as its nature admits. A childish mind receives a small measure of truth in gilt-edges where it would reject it in 'whity-brown.'"[138] Chapman, with her equal propensity for cleverness and cynicism, acknowledged that her fellow Americans must be coaxed into engaging with anti-slavery ideas, as a child is coaxed into taking her medicine. For it is far easier to lure potential readers with a beautifully bound, attractive gift annual than with a hefty anti-slavery tome or dense polemical writing. Chapman's sister, Anne Warren Weston, argued along the same lines as her sister, remarking that the Liberty Bell was "an instrumentality by which the truth can be conveyed to classes among whom our periodical Anti-Slavery literature finds a very imperfect circulation."[139]

Chapman (and her sisters) were experts at embedding anti-slavery messages or truths in either "gilt-edges" and/or quotidian domestic objects sold at the National Bazaar. As Chapman

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[134]Letter from Mary Anne Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, 14 November 1845, (BPL) ; "Gorgeous inanities" quoted in Anne Reiner, p. 5.
[135] Quoted in Anne Reiner, p. 5.
[136] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Mary Anne Estlin, 27 January 1846, (BPL).
[137] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Mary Anne Estlin, 27 January 1846, (BPL).
[138] Letter from Maria Weston Chapman to Mary Anne Estlin, 27 January 1846, (BPL).
[139] *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette*, 29 January 1850.

described the "little implements of housewifery" emblazoned with anti-slavery mottoes as being equal to, if not better than, anti-slavery periodicals for promulgating the abolitionist message, so too"[w]hen pincushions are periodicals, and needle-books are tracts, discussion can hardly be stifled, or slavery perpetuated."[140] Similar to the more straightforward domestic objects sold at the National Bazaar, the *Liberty Bell*, a gift annual, was also for sale, and would also take its place in the domestic realm. Chapman did not discount the power of domesticity; instead, she wielded and reproduced it within the entire apparatus of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar. What is more, she understood that women exercised immense power as the keepers of the domestic realm, and as such, she catered to them and encouraged their consumption of anti-slavery truth in "gilt-edges" or otherwise.

[140] *The Liberator*, 12 January 1838.

Chapter Five:

Uncle Tom at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar

> "All anti-slavery papers & tracts have left a void in me. I know "all that" —but what is to be *done*?...Uncle Tom is doing your work effectually; but I want to turn the tears that are shed over it, to *pearls* of value & enduring workmanship [...]"[1]
> -S.F Dawson to Mary Anne Estlin, 6 October 1852

> "How does literary utterance arrange itself when it tries to imagine an Africanist other? What are the signs, the codes, the literary strategies designed to accommodate this encounter? What does the inclusion of Africans or African-Americans do to and for the work? As a reader, my assumption had always been that nothing "happens": Africans and their descendants were not, in any sense that matters, *there*; and when they were there, they were decorative—displays of the agile writer's technical expertise. I assumed that since the author was not black, the appearance of Africanist characters or narrative idiom in a work could never be *about* anything other than the "normal," unracialized, illusory white world that provided the fictional backdrop. Certainly no American text of the sort I am discussing was ever written *for* black people—no more than *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was written for Uncle Tom to read or be persuaded by. As a writer reading, I came to realize the obvious: the subject of the dream is the dreamer."[2]
> -Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*

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The publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852 changed everything for the National Bazaar. A profound outpouring of sympathy and imagined identification with the enslaved, in conjunction with a deep disgust and moral outrage over America's "peculiar institution," were deeply felt by hundreds of thousands of people nationally and internationally. Such feelings led to the renewal of interest, engagement, and commitment to the National Bazaar and to anti-slavery principles in general. Stowe attained international celebrity status. As Denise Kohn et al. note, "[h]er book was translated into more than sixty-three languages and entered the canon of world literature. Adapted and replied to in many forms—theatrical, novelistic, and musical—*Uncle Tom's Cabin* has from the time of its publication

[1] Letter from S.F. Dawson to Mary Anne Estlin, 6 October 1852, printed as item [331] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 389.
[2] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 16-17.

traveled the globe."[3] Particularly, Stowe attended every National Bazaar following her novel's publication, and she was given great pride of place, often presiding over an important table or being recognized for her great contribution to the abolition movement and to universal human rights.

Before it was published as a novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was serialized in the *National Era*, a weekly abolitionist newspaper edited by Gamaliel Bailey in Washington, D.C. Its serialized title was *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, the Man That was a Thing*, and it ran from June 5, 1851 to April 1, 1852. Serialized at the same time as news was spreading on the enforcement of the fugitive slave laws, the weekly installments reached an ever-increasing audience each week, profoundly shaping, shifting, and galvanizing public opinion against slavery and the abomination that was the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act.[4] A federal law, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act mandated the "aid and assist" of northerners and other bystanders to capture and return fugitives slaves back to slavery in the South or face fines up to $1,000 and up to six months in jail. Further, once caught, the escaped slave could not testify on their own behalf or present evidence to prove their innocence, nor could they employ legal counsel. As if the system was not entirely against them already, the federal commissioner or local magistrate presiding over the case was paid $5 for an acquittal and $10 for a conviction—thereby incentivizing judges to deliver African-Americans, whether enslaved or free, into slavery.[5]

By compelling northerners to aid in returning (or sending) an escaped slave or free Black into slavery, the Fugitive Slave Act, "brought the ugliness of slavery out into the open nationwide."[6] Jo-Ann Morgan writes, "[r]esidents in border cities such as Cinninnati, where

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[3] Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B Todd, eds., *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), vii.
[4] Cheryl Thompson, *Uncle: Race, Nostalgia, and the Politics of Loyalty*, (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2021), 6; Jo-Ann Morgan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin As Visual Culture*. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 1-2; Ronald D. Patkus and Mary C. Schlosser, "Aspects of the Publishing History of Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1851-1900," Archives & Special Collections Library, Vassar College.
[5] *"Fugitive Slave Act 1850," The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy.* For more on the Fugitive Slave Law 1850, see: Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); David S. Reynolds, *Mightier Than the Sword: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Battle for America*, (New York: W.W. Norton), 2011; Jesse Olsavsky, *The Most Absolute Abolition: Runaways, Vigilance Committees, and the Rise of Revolutionary Abolitionism, 1835-1861*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 2022; Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 2013.
[6] Morgan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin As Visual Culture*, introduction.

author Harriet Beecher Stowe lived from 1832 to 1850, were becoming habituated to the sight of pitiful runaways being led off in chains on their sorry trek back to the South."[7] Stowe, who came from a profoundly abolitionist family, was incensed by the injustice of the new law, and began writing what would eventually become the bestselling novel and the publishing sensation of the nineteenth century, being the second best selling book of the century after the Bible."[8] Not only was *Uncle Tom* an international bestseller in its own time, but as Thompson argues, "its publication marked the beginning of a cultural, commercial, ideological, and theatrical phenomenon that would endure for generations."[9]

Transatlantic & Transnational Tom

The astounding impact of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was almost immediately seen in the abolitionist press, most especially abroad. In the *Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Report*, Anne Warren Weston writes, "the vivid pages of Uncle Tom's Cabin have shown the whole world what slavery really is."[10] *The Liberator* announced, "translations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in all the principal languages of Europe."[11] Even the 1853 edition of the *Liberty Bell* reflected Uncle Tom's global reach, with its report on "Russia and the Russians," written by an exiled Russian nobleman. The author recognized the plight of the serfs in the story of Uncle Tom, specifically recognizing a certain type of Russian noble meant to stand in for one of Stowe's fictional slaveholders:

> I will add, Madame, for your information in what concerns Russia, that, in reading Uncle Tom's Cabin, I have been often and sadly impressed by the applicability of the sketches of Madame Stowe to what I <u>have known of similar</u> horrors…Many scenes depicted in this book seem the exact counterpart of events equally frightful, which occurred in Russia. Even in the comic features of this romance, there is hardly one in which I did not recognize something similar in Russian comedy. That delicate lady, (the wife of the *niais* St. Clair) who regrets that the feeble-ness of her health prevents her using the cowskin upon her slaves as she could wish recalls to my mind the heroine of a Russian comedy, who rails at her femme de chambre, because she herself has suffered in inflicting a blow

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[7] Morgan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin As Visual Culture*, introduction. For more on Stowe's family background, see: Milton Rugoff, *The Beechers: An American Family in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*, (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1973).
[8] Thompson, *Uncle*, 15.
[9] Thompson, *Uncle*, 8.
[10] Anne Warren Weston, "Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Report," (January 1855), p. 14.
[11] *The Liberator*, 7 January 1853.

> upon the servant's face. Man is everywhere the same:--remove the restraint of law, and he becomes worse than the beast of prey.[12]

From the Nineteenth Annual Bazaar onward, Harriet Beecher Stowe became a mainstay presence. She attended each successive Bazaar, until they ceased operations in late 1857 and early 1858. Stowe often presided over an important table or was featured quite prominently in the Bazaar reports. In the "Twenty-Second National Bazaar Report," Weston remarked on Mrs. Stowe, "who was often present with us on this occasion," and the next year in the Twenty-Third National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Report, she writes of Stowe, "our beloved friend Mrs. Stowe."[13]

Statues of Profound Limitations

Immediately upon entering Horticultural Hall, one could not help but notice the statute, artfully placed in the very centre of the room, so as to command the attention of all who were present. It was described in *The Liberator* as, "the most beautiful and striking object of attention that the Bazaar afforded,"[14] which was quite something for a Bazaar well-known for its fashionable, rare, and beautiful items. As Weston reported, it was "[p]laced near the centre of the room, on a small white marble table, the first object that caught the eye upon entering was a statuette in bronze, by Cumberworth, 'The African Woman at the Fountain.' From every visitor it received deserved admiration."[15] Charles Cumberworth was a French sculptor and Maria Weston Chapman happened upon his works in Paris. She noted, "[t]he statuette was presented to the Bazaar by a number of the friends of the slave in Paris…It was purchased for the sum of $125, by the managers of the Bazaar, and others sympathizing with them in their admiration of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and by them presented to Mrs. Stowe."[16] Her description concluded with, "[a]ll will agree that it [the statuette] could not have had a more fitting destination" than in Stowe's possession.[17]

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[12] Nikolai Turgenev, "Russia and the Russians," *in The Liberty Bell* (1853) and Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," 28 January 1853. For more on comparisons and resonances between Russian serfdom and chattel slavery, see John MacKay, *True Songs of Freedom: Uncle Tom's Cabin in Russian Culture and Society* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013) & Monika Elbert, "The First Years of Uncle Tom's Cabin in Russia," in Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B.Todd, eds., *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press), 2006.

[13] Anne Warren Weston,"Twenty-Second Annual National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," in *The Liberator* 25 January 1856) & Twenty-Third National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Report (January 1857).

[14] Anne Warren Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," *The Liberator*, 28 January 1853.

[15] Anne Warren Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," *The Liberator*, 28 January 1853.

[16] Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," 28 January 1853.

[17] Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," 28 January 1853.

Figure 5.1: *Charles Cumberworth, "The African Woman at the Fountain" (c. 1846). Bronze. Courtesy of the Louvre Museum*

Where did this statue come from though? In the *Liberty Bell* for 1853, Maria Weston Chapman wrote a piece, "The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone," about her initial encounter with Cumberworth's work. Notably, she first gazed upon his work at the Great Exhibition of 1851. She wrote, "I was so much struck, at the exhibition of 1851, with the beauty and grace of a statuette of bronze in the French department, that I prevailed on many persons to visit it for the sake of witnessing their surprise and admiration."[18] The way Chapman described the sculpture would today be considered essentializing, as well as problematic, but her language gives us important insights into how progressive white abolitionists thought about African-Americans.

> It was a woman carrying water; her beautiful arm drawn downward, and displayed at its full length by the weight of the vase, and her dress and attitude chosen so as to show to the best advantage the fine African features, where nothing was exaggerated or extenuated. The sculptor had denied her no advantage of drapery or position, which a European subject might claim; and the result was such that a single glance could not fail

[18] Maria Weston Chapman, "The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone," in *The Liberty Bell* (December 1853), p. 246.

> to break the associations of ugliness and repulsiveness which slavery has connected with the name of Africa.[19]

Chapman explained what compelled her to track down the artist: "that I might suggest to him the idea of sending some of his beautiful works to the Northern States; where the majority of the inhabitants so seldom see a negro, out of whom they have not trampled the beauty and the grace of life, that they forget how differently the very same being would appear to them under different circumstances."[20] This emphasis on the "idealized African," still retaining her *"beauty and the grace of life,"* not yet marred by the *"ugliness and repulsiveness"* of slavery, was an ideologically charged, visual trope abolitionists would return to time and time again.

In her piece, Chapman envisioned an idealized African in a state of nature, an idyllic Africa before European slave traders arrived. Interestingly, Chapman wrote that the artist, Cumberworth, "had passed three years within the tropics, in studying the races and the plants that those regions include; his Negro Woman at the fountain, his Indian Mother and her infant, with a multitude of similar subjects, attest with what admirable results."[21] Cumberworth, evidently a French orientalist, was "studying the races and the plants," of the 'torrid zone' for the purpose of returning to Europe to incorporate these elements into his own artistic practice.[22] Orientalism, sentimental projection and objectification of Black bodies all united at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar.

As the recipient of the Cumberworth statue, Stowe herself described Africans as "an exotic race, whose ancestors, born beneath a tropic sun, brought with them, and perpetuated to their descendants, a character so essentially unlike the hard and dominant Anglo-Saxon race."[23] Even the way Stowe thanked the organizers for the gift of the statue reflects and refracts problematic notions about how African-Americans are represented in Western art and American life. As she stated, "[t]he chief value of such a gift is always that which it possesses as a token of

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[19] Chapman, "The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone," pp. 246-7.
[20] Chapman, "The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone," p. 248.
[21] Chapman, "The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone," p. 251.
[22] Chapman, "The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone," p. 251. According to the OED, 'torrid' may refer to a colour, specifically black, or blackened through burning and being exposed to great heat. 'Torrid zone' refers to the region of the earth between tropics (Latin, *torrida zona* or *zona torrida*)
[23] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Preface to Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly* (1852; rpt. New York: New American Library, 1966), p. V, quoted in Richard Yarborough, "Strategies of Black Characterization in Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Early Afro-American Novel," in Eric J. Sundquist, ed., *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 65.

regard and approbation; but the present gift has a high additional value from it being a beautiful specimen of the noblest form of art, and standing mute but expressive and powerful pleader in behalf of human brotherhood."[24] To Stowe, Africans are *"specimens"* made magisterial by the *"noblest form of art"*— in this case, Western sculpture and its idealized aesthetic forms.[25] Stowe suggests that Africans are at their most powerful when they are *"mute"* and acting as a *"pleader."*

What is more, in an 1863 essay for *The Atlantic Monthly* entitled, "Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl," Stowe made uncomfortable comparisons between a living, breathing, *free* Truth, and the Cumberworth statuette she owned. In the following passage, Stowe described her first meeting with Truth:

> When I went to the room, **a tall, spare form** arose to meet me. She was evidently a full-blooded African, and though now aged and worn with many hardships, still gave the impression of a physical development which in early youth must have been as fine a **specimen of the torrid zone** as **Cumberworth's celebrated statuette** of the Negro Woman at the Fountain. Indeed, she so strongly reminded me of that **figure**, that, when I recall the events of her life as she narrated them to me, **I imagine her as a living, breathing impersonation** of that work of art.[26]

Note the emphasized language, in which she described Truth as a statuesque *"specimen."* With her *"tall, spare form"* and her robust *"figure"* that Stowe imagined as a copy of the original, *"as a living breathing impersonation of that work of art."*[27] Commenting on her form, carriage, self-possession, and natural ease, Stowe employed language that likens Truth to a silent, mute statue. She wrote, "I do not recollect ever to have been conversant with only one who had more of that silent and subtle power which we call personal presence than this woman."[28] Stowe would have been very aware that, as Heidi Morse points out, "readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* were the same audiences who flocked to exhibitions and galleries, Stowe [set] up an impression of Truth that [drew] on idealized sculptural form as means of communicating physical charisma and ideal womanhood."[29] Combining new ways of looking at Victorian exhibitions, and representations of

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[24] Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," 28 January 1853.
[25] See Rebecca Wade, *Domenico Brucciani and the Formatori of 19th-Century Britain*, (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018).
[26] Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl," in *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 1863). Emphasis is my own.
[27] Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl."
[28] Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl."
[29] Heidi Morse, "Minding "Our Cicero": Nineteenth-Century African American Women's Rhetoric and the

classical artworks engraved in gift books newly accessible to the middle class, Stowe used the imagery of the classical aesthetic "idealized forms."[30]

She then echoed Maria Weston Chapman in "The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone," reflecting on how the institution of slavery degrades crumples, and forever marks the once noble, idealized race. Stowe wrote:

> It is with a sad feeling that one contemplates noble minds and bodies, nobly and grandly formed human beings, that have come to us cramped, scarred, maimed, out of the prison-house of bondage. One longs to know what such beings might have become, if suffered to unfold and expand under the kindly developing influences of education.
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> The African seems to seize on the tropical fervor…he appears to feel himself to be of the same blood with those old burning, simple souls, the patriarchs, prophets, and seers, whose impassioned words seem only grafted as foreign plants on the cooler stock of the Occidental mind.[31]

Not only is Stowe's depiction of these "old burning, simple souls, the patriarchs, prophets, and seers," incredibly Orientalist, it places the African, in this case Sojourner Truth, outside of history. Like the Cumberworth statue, Truth is frozen, quite literally, in sculpture and in time—a mythic, ancient past, once noble, but now decayed, yet still admired for its once former glory. Stowe mapped an Orientalist vision (the archaic, once powerful East as opposed to the progressive, modern, dominant West) onto the body of Truth. Instead of seeing her in her human complexity and fullness, she cannot imagine her as anything more than a likeness of Cumberworth's statuette she was gifted several years prior. Most egregiously, Stowe still *owned* her Cumberworth statuette. That she so rapturously described Truth as *"a living breathing impersonation of that work of art*,*"* implies ownership over Truth—the transfiguration of Truth from an embodied subject to a mute, fetishized object owned, prized, and forever on exhibit to the appraising gaze of a sympathetic abolitionist white woman.[32]

Classical Tradition," PhD Dissertation, (UC Santa Cruz: 2014), p. 176. See also, Carla L. Peterson, *Doers of the Word: African-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830-1880)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995)

[30] Morse, "Minding "Our Cicero"," p. 176.

[31] Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl."

[32] Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl"; For more on the use of neoclassical sculpture to convey a classical aesthetic "ideal," see: Morse, "Minding "Our Cicero"," pp. 166-190; Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), especially Chapter Four: "Beyond the Cover: Uncle Tom's Cabin and Slavery as Global Entertainment"; Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women & Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), especially Chapter Five: "Hiram Powers's The Greek Slave."

At the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, another Cumberworth statue representing classical "ideal forms" was presented to Wendell Phillips. The sculpture was described as depicting a woman of colour with two white children on her lap. Weston reported "[i]ts price was one hundred dollars. Various friends, visiting the Bazaar, combined in its purchase, and presented it as 'a mark of their respect and esteem' to Wendell Phillips…highly appreciating his personal character and entire devotion to the service of that race, which Cumberworth has so charmingly idealized."[33] Once again, attention is drawn to *"that race,"* so *"charmingly idealized."*[34]

Lastly, at the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, no Cumberworth statues were given out, but another artwork was described in the same tenor as the previous two statuettes. From Stuttgart, there was a watercolour drawing "of great merit," according to Anne Warren Weston, in the Twenty-First National Bazaar Report.[35] Weston described it as a "reduced copy, in miniature style, of a painting" by the artist Eberhard von Wächter. The painting was titled "Humanitas" and Weston described it thus: "[t]he painting represents a lovely female figure, with two children on her lap, one black, the other white…but there seems to me a beseeching look in the black child, that contrasts sweetly and painfully with the triumphant claim, by right, that is expressed in the white child; and that the *ensemble* contains volumes on the sad and vexed question of the complexional rights."[36] Like the Cumberworth statue given to Wendell Phillips at the previous National Bazaar (with an almost identical artistic premise), abolitionist art was extremely unsubtle and quite literal, relying on facile, trite tropes, such as Black and white children sitting on the lap of a racially ambiguous woman and the *"charmingly idealized"* depictions of the African pre-enslavement. Weston wrote on her regard for the artist and his chosen theme, stating "he [von Wächter] is much appreciated for the conception and feeling of his compositions. It is interesting for our cause that a German artist should have symbolized HUMANITY in the contending claims of the black and white infants."[37]

These examples show how white abolitionists saw, thought, and *felt* about the Black bodies rendered in sculpture or on canvas at the National Bazaar and how their perspectives shaped or contributed to the representations of Black folk in art, literature, and in the public

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[33] Anne Warren Weston, "Report of the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," (1854), p. 21.
[34] Weston, "Report of the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," (1854), p. 21.
[35] Weston, "Report of the Twenty First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," (1855), pp. 18-19.
[36] Weston, "Report of the Twenty First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," (1855), pp. 18-19.
[37] Weston, "Report of the Twenty First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," (1855), pp. 18-19.

collective consciousness. As Jane Fagan Yellin so aptly writes, emblems and material representations of Black women create a paradigm, "in which the activity of the white female emancipator renders the black woman passive."[38] At the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, the Black woman, whether free or enslaved, was rendered passive, silent as a statue, in service of the white abolitionist gaze.

Uncle Tomitudes

At the Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, the phenomenal popularity and success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was simply inescapable. Anne Warren Weston commented on the correlation between increased interest shown toward the Bazaar and the recent publication of *Uncle Tom*: "the publication […]in Great Britain has been attended with an immediate and practical result. The increased value and elegance of almost every box received from that country has been imputed to the interest thus awakened, or the flagging zeal thus freshly stimulated."[39] As discussed in Chapter Two, Frederick Douglass and other transatlantic lecturers had previously *'awakened,'* and *'stimulated'* Bristol women to anti-slavery action, while this time it was a sentimental novel about slavery and the injustices such an iniquitous system inflicted on the Black characters in the novel that did so. Characters, it must be noted, that Stowe created for her audiences to empathize with. Each "awakening" relied on Black bodies and Black characters to "perform" and render their humanity legible to white audiences. Commenting on the unprecedented commercial response to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stephen Hirsch explains how "passionately embraced" Uncle Tom was by the antebellum public. So much so, that Hirsch memorably notes, "[h]e became, in his various forms, the most frequently sold slave in American history."[40] While the National Bazaar was meant to be the very antithesis of a slave market, it too trafficked in the display and sale of Black bodies. Along with the Cumberworth statues, there were innumerable 'Tomitudes' on display and for sale at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar.

It is important to establish where the term 'Tomitudes' came from and what exactly was meant by it. Book reviews of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* from the 1850s help us decipher the term. In the January 1853 issue of *Putnam's Monthly*, there was a book review entitled "Uncle Tomitudes."

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[38] Yellin, *Women & Sisters*, 95.
[39] Anne Warren Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," The Liberator, 28 January 1853.
[40] Stephen A. Hirsch, "Uncle Tomitudes: The Popular Reaction to 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,'" *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1978): 311.

Published by 'Anonymous,' (later identified as Charles Briggs),[41] the review spoke of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its enormous popularity using humourous language; however, such language did not mask the reviewer's obvious anti-Stowe, pro-slavery sentiment.[42] In this instance, 'Tomitudes' were spoken of in a derisive, almost mocking tone. Commenting on Uncle Tom's global reach, the reviewer's derisive, trenchant commentary was laid beneath the humourous wordplay employed. The reviewer wrote:

> What progress *Uncle Tom* has made in the other northern nations of Europe, in Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Poland and Lapland, we have not been informed; but it is undoubtedly drawing its tears from the eyes of the hyperboreans, as well as from the inhabitants of the mild south. India and Mexico, and South America, have yet to be **Uncle Tomitized,** for we have not heard of any editions of Mrs. Stowe's great romance among the descendants of the Aztecs, the Gauchos, or the Brazilians. It must spread over the whole earth, like the cholera, only reversing its origin and the order of its progress. One of our newspaper critics compares the **Uncle Tomific**, which the reading world is now suffering from, to the yellow fever, which does not strike us as a very apt comparison, because the yellow fever is confined wholly to tropical climes, while *Uncle Tom*, like the cholera, knows no distinction of climate or race. He is bound to go; and future generations of Terra-del Fuegians and Esquimaux will be making Christmas presents at this season of the year, or Uncle Tom's Cabin in holiday bindings.[43]

Likening Uncle Tom's Cabin to a cholera epidemic that that will never stop spreading, certainly situates the reviewer in the opposition to Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Using humourous wordplay and the clever creations 'Uncle Tomitized', 'Uncle Tomific', and 'Uncle Tomitudes,' the reviewer attempted to mock, demean, and undermine a text that he was threatened by, as he knew it held great power to disrupt the status quo.[44]

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[41] Ammons notes that 'Anonymous' was identified as Charles Briggs by Margaret A. Browne in "Southern Reactions to 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Duke University, 1941). The review essay was reprinted from Putnam's Monthly, 1 (January 1853), 97-102.

[42] Briggs notes that it was the anti-slavery sentiment of the novel that was the most offensive, and it will be the reason Stowe's work will not be shelved with the great nineteenth-century novelists: "The anti-slavery sentiment obtruded by the author in her own person, upon the notice of the reader, must be felt by everyone, to be the great blemish of the book[…] If Mrs. Stowe would permit some judicious friend to run his pen through these excrescences…*Uncle Tom's Cabin* would be a nearly perfect work of art, and would deserve to be placed by the side of the greatest romances the world has known" (39-40).

[43] 'Anoymous', "Uncle Tomitudes," (1853) in Elizabeth Ammons, ed., *Critical Essays on Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), 38.

[44] For more on this, see: Audrey A. Fisch, *American Slaves in Victorian England: Abolitionist Politics in Popular Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 32 and Chapter 1.

Quickly, commercial artists and craftsmen realized there was great profit to be made from 'Tomism.'[45] A veritable 'Uncle Tom Industrial Complex' flooded and dominated the market, becoming a "massive cultural industry, spawning a dizzying explosion of Tom-themed merchandise in every imaginable form."[46] Termed 'Tomitudes,' these myriad consumer goods encompassed everything from Uncle Tom soap; almanacs; porcelain figurines; Uncle Tom-themed songbooks; 'Tom songs'; Uncle Tom wallpaper; commemorative plates; lampshades; handkerchiefs and clothing depicting key scenes from the novel.[47] As Hirsch and Meyer note, "Bisque china busts of Tom and Eva, and gold and silver spoons stamped with a supposed portrait of Mrs. Stowe on the handle and the famous cabin itself on the bowl,"[48] were sold alongside "cute Topsy dolls for little English and American Evas to comfort and cherish."[49]

Uncle Tom also inspired new fashion crazes in the nineteenth century, such as the 'St. Clare hat' that became popular with New York gentlemen. While fashionable ladies bought 'Uncle Tom Tippets' and scarves printed with scenes from the novel, and donned the 'Eliza dress,' which was purportedly all the rage in Paris.[50] Children were also marketed to. As Hirsch points out, "[f]or Christmas, mother and father could buy them the "Uncle Tom and Little Eva," card game, which was first advertised in the New York Tribune on 23 October 1852, and concerned the separation and reunification of families."[51] Children could also opt to read *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabi*n, published for a younger demographic by an enterprising Jewett in 1853. As the following passage from *The Liberator* shows, Tom-mania was truly all the rage:

> It should be noted, among the favorable signs of the times, that artists, of all grades, now find it not only congenial, but a remunerative work, to represent the creations of Mrs. Stowe's genius in pictures and statues. The people of Boston, and of large towns

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[45] Hirsch, "Uncle Tomitudes," 316.
[46] Adrienne Meyer, "Tomitudes," Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, (October 16, 2014). https://www.cooperhewitt.org/2014/10/16/tomitudes/
[47] Hirsch, "Uncle Tomitudes," 316; Thompson, *Uncle*, 21.
[48] Hirsch, "Uncle Tomitudes," 316.
[49] Cheryl Thompson, *Uncle: Race, Nostalgia, and the Politics of Loyalty*, (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2021), 21. Privileged, benevolent Eva and enslaved, 'pickaninny' Topsy comprise the 'black-white logic' of the American historical depiction of childhood and American girlhood, wherein delicate, white girls like Eva are associated with a childhood of happy innocence, and girls like Topsy are deprived of any sense of 'childhood,' and the innocence associated with it. See Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*, (New York: New York University Press, 2011) and "Children's Books, Dolls, and the Performance of Race; or, The Possibility of Children's Literature,' *PMLA* 126. 1 (January 2011): 160-69.
[50] Hirsch, "Uncle Tomitudes," 316; Thompson, *Uncle*, 21.
[51] Hirsch, "Uncle Tomitudes," 318.

> generally, have been accustomed to see Uncle Toms, Evas, and Topsys without number, in engravings of various degrees of merit and price. Lately they have been represented in beautiful and spirited engravings printed in oil colors, by Baxter, or some of his imitators; and now I find not only large, engraved heads in the finest style of Parisian mezzotint, one of Uncle Tom, life size, and another of Eva and Topsy, but a group in real bronze, showing Eva putting the wealth of jessa-mines around Tom's neck, and separate statuettes of George Harris, and Eliza and her child.[52]

Similar to an item purchased at the National Bazaar, with an anti-slavery motto emblazoned upon it–for instance, a pair of shoes with the soles reading "Trample not on the Oppressed,"or a purchase of the year's *The Liberty Bell*, Tomitudes were meant to recapture those same feelings one experienced at the Bazaar: anti-slavery fervor, sympathy, collective feeling, and belonging to a vast anti-slavery community. Crucially, these anti-slavery objects sold at the Bazaar, Tomitudes included, were meant to elicit and perpetuate an emotional experience *beyond* the Bazaar, *beyond* the final page of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As Meyer argues, "[t]hese 'Tomitudes' were commodities that transformed the drama of the novel into goods that could be part of the reader's daily lives."[53] Tomitudes ensured, through consumerism, that the novel and its deeply profound affective resonance with an individual reader would not be extinguished, only *extended* through the purchase of all manner of Tomitudes. Notably, many of these Tomitudes extended into the domestic realm–just like the "pincushion periodicals, and needle-books tracts" from Chapter Three and the *Liberty Bell* gracing the parlor or drawing room table from Chapter Four.

[52] *The Liberator*, 23 December 1853. Also quoted in Hirsch, "Uncle Tomitudes," 316.
[53] Meyer, "Tomitudes," Cooper Hewitt.

Figure 5.2: *"Topsy and Eva" (1852-1860), Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum Collections*

Figure 5.3: *"Eliza's Escape", ca. 1855, Courtesy of Archives & Special Collections Vassar College*

Figure 5.4: *"Handkerchief, Uncle Tom's Cabin (ca. 1870), Courtesy of the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum*

Cheryl Thompson argues, "[t]here has never been a time when *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has existed only as a novel […] its multiple and associated images have always coexisted with the book."[54] After its release as a novel catapulted it to publishing *wunderkind* status, Stowe's publisher began selling Uncle Tom merchandise, which Thompson likens to, "cross-marketing product tie-ins," that we see accompanying massive popular cultural franchises today. Such product tie-ins worked to "extend the story well beyond the printed page."[55] That is exactly what Tomitudes accomplished at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar.

Uncle Tom was on sale at the Nineteenth Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Anne Warren Weston described, "the beautiful oil painting from Leeds, of 'Uncle Tom and Eva,' which we had much pleasure in selling to a good abolitionist of Worcester County."[56] While Weston's report did not include any other information or pictorial rendering of the oil painting on sale, we can surmise what the scene portrayed. According to art historian Jo-Ann Morgan, "the most influential

[54] Thompson, *Uncle*, 8.
[55] Thompson, *Uncle*, 8.
[56] Anne Warren Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," in *The Liberator*, 28 January 1853

picture ever made" connected to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the engraving, *"Little Eva reading the Bible to Uncle Tom in the arbor,"* by original illustrator Hammatt Billings.[57] Morgan describes "a grown black man in the prime of life" huddled with a "tiny white girl" in a garden. Their relationship as expressed in scores of pictures went on to enjoy unprecedented longevity across several arts."[58]

Figure 5.5: *"Little Eva reading the Bible to Uncle Tom in the arbor," Hammatt Billings, 1852*

Figure 5.6: *"Uncle Tom and Eva", (ca. 1852-1860), Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum Collections*

One could begin to understand why such an oil painting depicting 'Uncle Tom and Eva' originated from Leeds, and made its way to the National Bazaar, purchased by a "good

[57] Morgan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin As Visual Culture*, 11.
[58] Morgan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin As Visual Culture*. 11.

abolitionist of Worcester County." Scenes of Uncle Tom and Eva were their own elite Tomitude tier, often being the main illustration or imagery reproduced in all manner of household items, games, and advertisements. As Thompson notes, "[r]epresentations of Tom with his Bible and runaway George Harris reading challenged the notion that African Americans were capable only of being enslaved." She further notes, "[i]mages were pivotal to Tom-mania; it simply would not have happened without the illustrations, which circulated as evidence of racial difference."[59]

Weston's 1853 report thanked Stowe's publisher J.P. Jewett for donating "several copies of the elegantly illustrated edition of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,'" to grace the book table, which according to Weston, was "the most elegant and valuable book table that any Bazaar has exhibited."[60] The very book itself was a Tomitude, a product placed on display for the majority white consumers to train their new gaze, to purchase, and eventually own. According to Hirsch, Jewett originally published *Uncle Tom* in three different types of binding, with a three dollar top price, but by the end of the year, he was advertising a thirty-seven-and-a-half cent paperbound "edition for the millions," and a lavish, gorgeously bound, profusely illustrated Christmas gift edition at the overwhelming price of five dollars."[61] In the wake of *Uncle Tom*'s extraordinary success a mere few months after publication, Jewett engaged Billings to create a second set of illustrations for a gilt-embossed Christmas giftbook edition for the year of 1853. As Morgan notes, "[w]ithin the 127 new cuts, there is almost no aspect of the story these illustrations do not address, making them an interesting partnership of words and pictures."[62] The front and back covers of the gift book were a dark red, with gold-embossed imprints of Christ, along with gilt-edged pages and decorative lettering beginning each chapter. Jewett understood that his elegant, richly illustrated *Uncle Tom* Christmas editions were highly valued commodities belonging to a world of goods and the burgeoning literary marketplace.

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[59] Thompson, *Uncle*, 25. See also Louise Stevenson, "Virtue Displayed: The Tie-Ins of Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Uncle Tom's Cabin & American Culture: A Multi-Media Archive* (2007) http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/interpret/exhibits/stevenson/stevenson.html.
[60] Anne Warren Weston, "Nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar," in *The Liberator*, 28 January 1853
[61] Hirsch, "Uncle Tomitudes," 316.
[62] Morgan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin As Visual Culture*, 3 & 12.

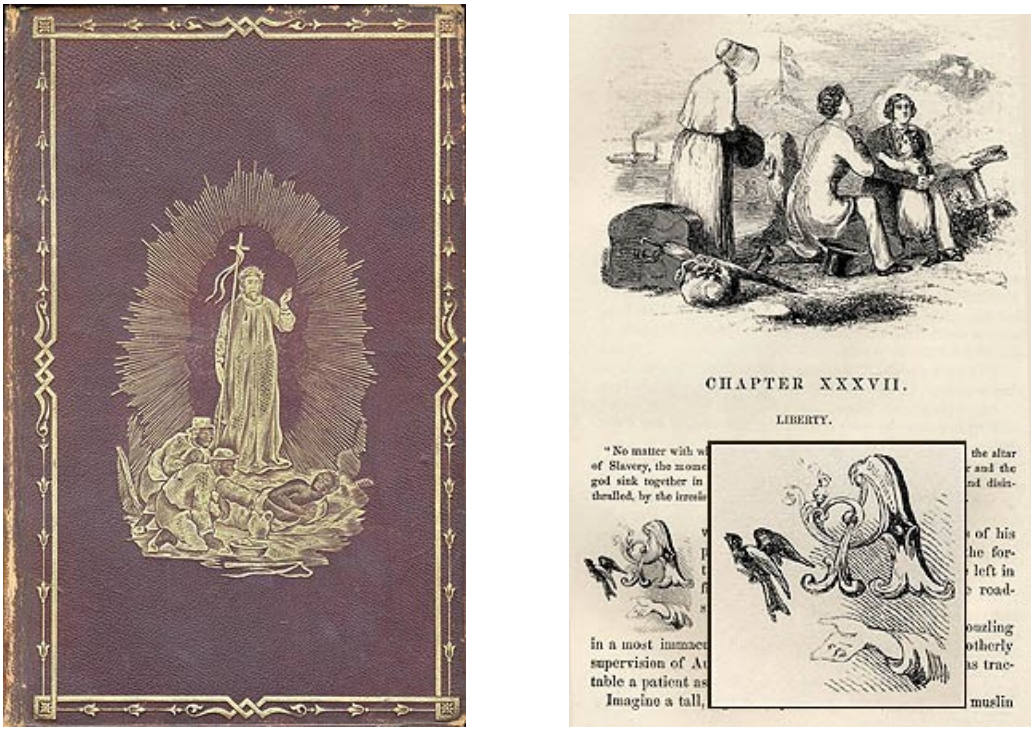


Figure 5.7: *"Uncle Tom's Cabin | Illustrated Edition", Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1853*
Courtesy of Barrett Collection, Univ. of Virginia

Also, at the Nineteenth National Bazaar, visitors could commemorate their visit to the Bazaar by purchasing, "Topsy," or The Slave Girl's Appeal: To the Visitors and Patrons of the Anti-Slavery Bazaar.". As a paratextual Tomitude, Topsy here was directly addressing her white viewers and readers, appealing to their emotions and fine sensibilities.

In the work, Topsy begins in the regional dialect characteristic of an illiterate enslaved girl deprived of the education, religion, and "goodness" of her lily-white interlocutor, Eva:

Come, and list to little Topsy
  Hear a little slave-girl's tale,
Sure I am, her simple story
  Oft will make thy cheek turn pale

She then begins telling her story, explaining how she never knew her mother or father or siblings. She also recounts her time with her cruel mistress, who always reminded her how wicked she was. But it was only, "When first Miss Eva touched me/With her soft and pretty hand" that she was extended grace and possible redemption and salvation:

Full of tricks, as thieving, lying,
Hating all with wicked hate;

Getting punish'd, roaring, crying,
That was my most wicked state

Then, Miss Eva looked so loving,
Spoke so sweetly in my ear,
Told me I was worth improving,
Said, I nothing had to fear

Topsy doubts the delicate little Eva, convinced of her own wickedness, but Eva exclaims:

Topsy, Topsy! Eva loves you,
And she wants you to be good
What! Miss Eva love poor Topsy,
Wicked Topsy, wild and rude?

Then the speaker shifts again as Topsy states:

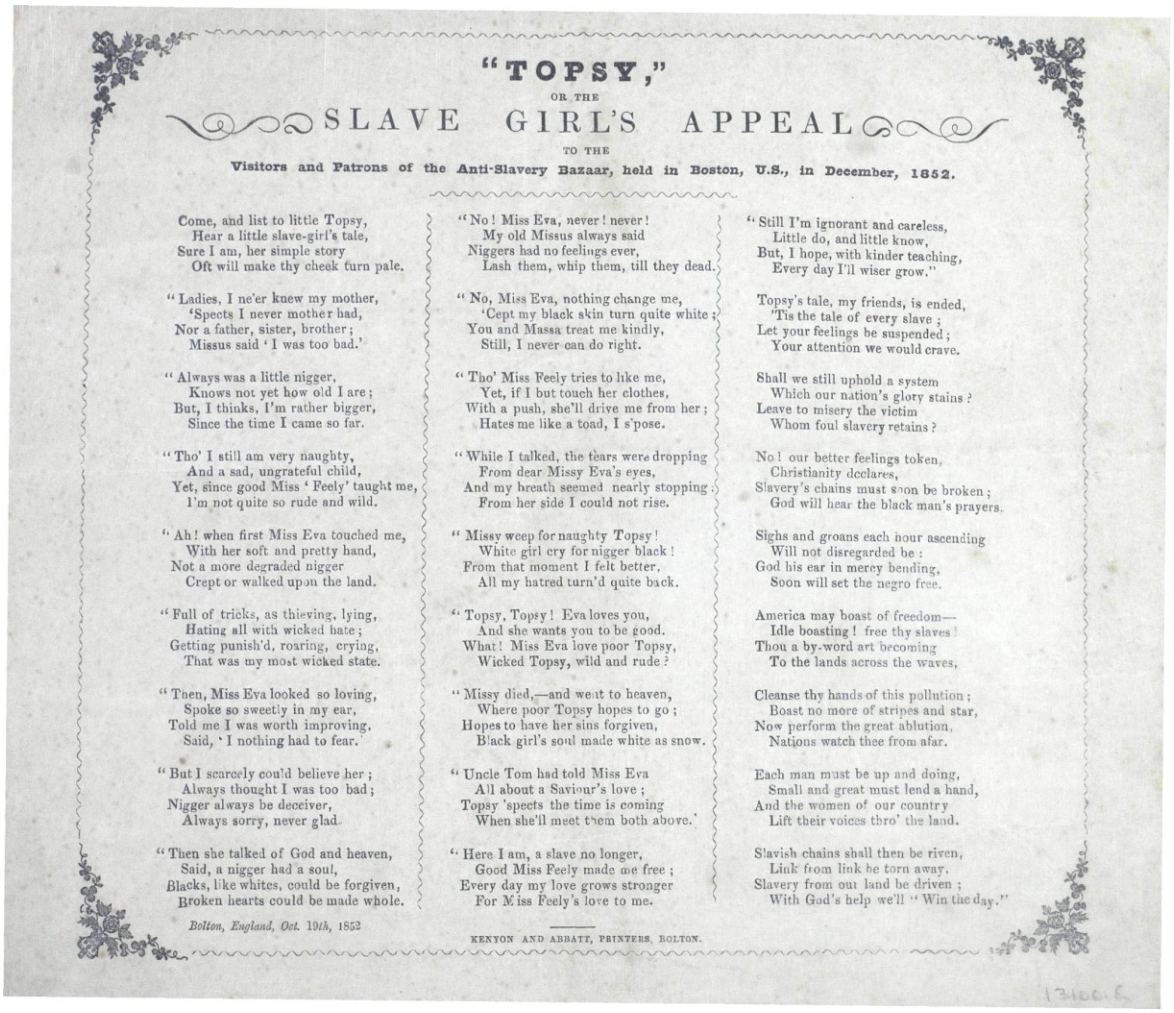
Missy died,--and went to heaven

Where poor Topsy hopes to go;
Hopes to have her sins forgiven,

Black girl's soul made white as snow.[63]

As Yellin writes, many anti-slavery images, "suggested the superiority of the liberator and the inferiority of the slave."[64] Surely, we can extrapolate to anti-slavery visual and print culture of the Tomitude variety. As Yellin asks, "[d]id the freeborn white abolitionist feminists see their task as speaking for the "voiceless" slave? Did they see it as enabling the slave to sound her own voice on the platform and in print?"[65] For a price, one could purchase "Topsy's Appeal," a feel-good story about a marginalized, *"voiceless"* slave girl's redemption, and feel they used their voice to cry out against injustice, the spotlight entirely shifting to their own redemptive arc, where the sole interest lies in redeeming themselves.

[63] "Topsy," or The Slave Girl's Appeal: To the Visitors and Patrons of the Anti-Slavery Bazaar, held in Boston, U.S., in December, 1852, Kenyon and Abbatt Printers, (Bolton, England, 1852) obtained at the Library Company of Philadelphia.
[64] Yellin, *Women & Sisters*, pp. 24-25.
[65] Yellin, *Women & Sisters*, pp. 24-25.



"TOPSY,"
OR THE
SLAVE GIRL'S APPEAL
TO THE
Visitors and Patrons of the Anti-Slavery Bazaar, held in Boston, U.S., in December, 1852.

Come, and list to little Topsy,
Hear a little slave-girl's tale,
Sure I am, her simple story
Oft will make thy cheek turn pale.

"Ladies, I ne'er knew my mother,
'Spects I never mother had,
Nor a father, sister, brother;
Missus said 'I was too bad.'

"Always was a little nigger,
Knows not yet how old I are;
But, I thinks, I'm rather bigger,
Since the time I came so far.

"Tho' I still am very naughty,
And a sad, ungrateful child,
Yet, since good Miss 'Feely' taught me,
I'm not quite so rude and wild.

"Ah! when first Miss Eva touched me,
With her soft and pretty hand,
Not a more degraded nigger
Crept or walked upon the land.

"Full of tricks, as thieving, lying,
Hating all with wicked hate;
Getting punish'd, roaring, crying,
That was my most wicked state.

"Then, Miss Eva looked so loving,
Spoke so sweetly in my ear,
Told me I was worth improving,
Said, 'I nothing had to fear.

"But I scarcely could believe her;
Always thought I was too bad;
Nigger always be deceiver,
Always sorry, never glad.

"Then she talked of God and heaven,
Said, a nigger had a soul,
Blacks, like whites, could be forgiven,
Broken hearts could be made whole.

"No! Miss Eva, never! never!
My old Missus always said
Niggers had no feelings ever,
Lash them, whip them, till they dead.

"No, Miss Eva, nothing change me,
'Cept my black skin turn quite white;
You and Massa treat me kindly,
Still, I never can do right.

"Tho' Miss Feely tries to like me,
Yet, if I but touch her clothes,
With a push, she'll drive me from her;
Hates me like a toad, I s'pose.

"While I talked, the tears were dropping
From dear Missy Eva's eyes,
And my breath seemed nearly stopping
From her side I could not rise.

"Missy weep for naughty Topsy!
White girl cry for nigger black!
From that moment I felt better,
All my hatred turn'd quite back.

"Topsy, Topsy! Eva loves you,
And she wants you to be good.
What! Miss Eva love poor Topsy,
Wicked Topsy, wild and rude?

"Missy died,—and went to heaven,
Where poor Topsy hopes to go;
Hopes to have her sins forgiven,
Black girl's soul made white as snow.

"Uncle Tom had told Miss Eva
All about a Saviour's love;
Topsy 'spects the time is coming
When she'll meet them both above.'

"Here I am, a slave no longer,
Good Miss Feely made me free;
Every day my love grows stronger
For Miss Feely's love to me.

"Still I'm ignorant and careless,
Little do, and little know,
But, I hope, with kinder teaching,
Every day I'll wiser grow."

Topsy's tale, my friends, is ended,
'Tis the tale of every slave;
Let your feelings be suspended;
Your attention we would crave.

Shall we still uphold a system
Which our nation's glory stains?
Leave to misery the victim
Whom foul slavery retains?

No! our better feelings token,
Christianity declares,
Slavery's chains must soon be broken;
God will hear the black man's prayers.

Sighs and groans each hour ascending
Will not disregarded be:
God his ear in mercy bending,
Soon will set the negro free.

America may boast of freedom—
Idle boasting! free thy slaves!
Thou a by-word art becoming
To the lands across the waves,

Cleanse thy hands of this pollution;
Boast no more of stripes and star,
Now perform the great ablution,
Nations watch thee from afar.

Each man must be up and doing,
Small and great must lend a hand,
And the women of our country
Lift their voices thro' the land.

Slavish chains shall then be riven,
Link from link be torn away,
Slavery from out land be driven;
With God's help we'll "Win the day."

Bolton, England, Oct. 19th, 1852

KENYON AND ABBATT, PRINTERS, BOLTON.

Figure 5.8: *'"Topsy," or The Slave Girl's Appeal: To the Visitors and Patrons of the Anti-Slavery Bazaar, held in Boston, U.S., in December 1852, Library Company of Philadelphia*

At the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, there were more 'Tomitudes.' *The Liberator* ran an item teasing special and rare items for sale at the Bazaar, noting it opened only two days ago. Among these items, under the heading, 'Porcelain,' was another Tomitude. It advertised "[o]ne Lilliputian set of the Characters of Uncle Tom's Cabin, in Dresden China."[66] Finally, at the Twenty-Third National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, the discerning abolitionist parent could purchase for their child a new 'Alphabet of Slavery', of course, featuring Uncle Tom, from letters V-Z:

[66] *The Liberator*, 23 December 1853.

V- Is Virginia where Uncle Tom's wife
With children and home were the joy of his life.

Y- Is for Youth, and wherever you be
Z- ealously labor to set the slaves free[67]

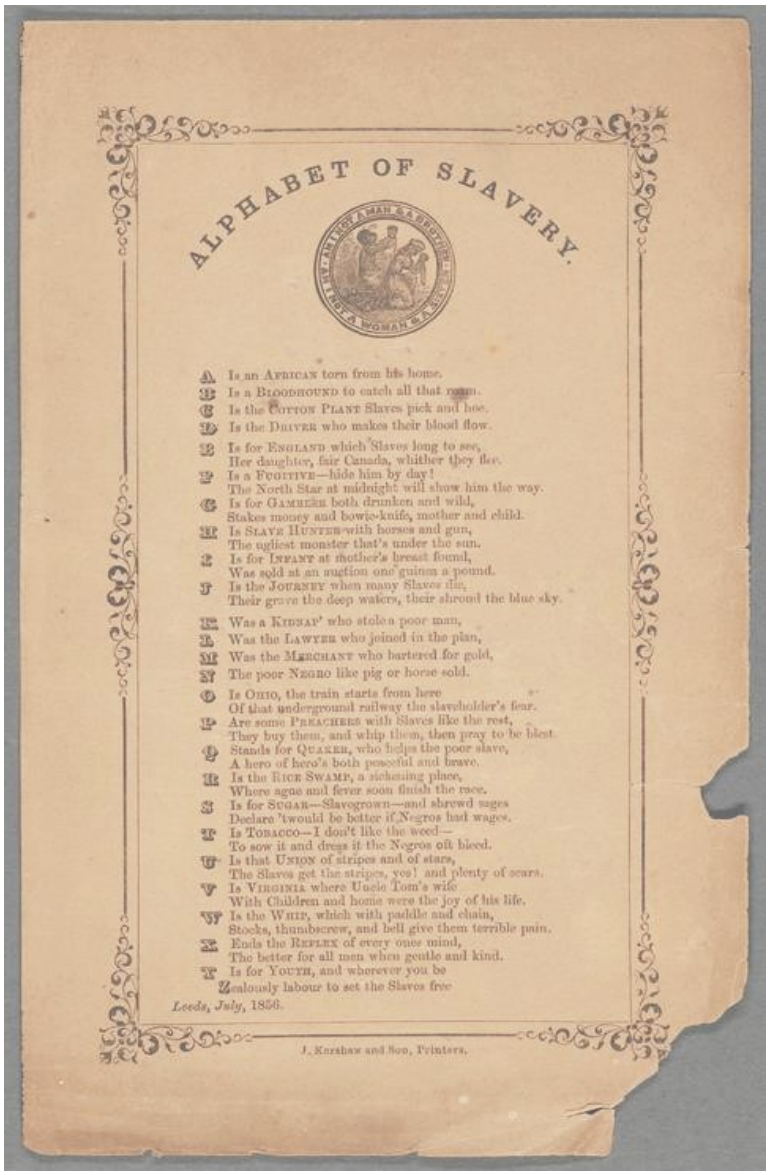
Evidently, Tomitudes had a role to play in inculcating an abolitionist aesthetic of reading.

Sentimental Limitations

However, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in the genre of sentimental literature, arguably did more harm than purported good. Sentimental literature aimed to inspire pity, sympathy, and empathy within those who would normally disengage, to fix their gaze on a suffering character and the social issue he or she represents instead of turning away. But in order to inspire this response, as a necessity, sentimental literature flattened the very people it purported to help, in order to be acceptable for white audiences, thereby removing all possibilities of a just, radical transformation. Critics of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, notably James Baldwin, argued that the novel was less concerned about radical social change and immediate emancipation, but more with allowing white people to feel better about themselves. In his 1955, "Everybody's Protest Novel," he writes a startling passage:

> The "protest" novel, so far from being disturbing, is an accepted and comforting aspect of the American scene…Whatever unsettling questions are raised are evanescent, titillating; remote, for this has nothing to do with us, it is safely ensconced in the social arena, where, indeed, it has nothing to do with anyone, so that finally **we receive a very definite thrill of virtue** from the fact that we are reading such a book at all. This report from the pit **reassures us** of its reality and its darkness and **of our own salvation**.[68]

[67] "Report of the Twenty-Third National Anti-Slavery Bazaar" (January 1857), pp. 16-17.
[68] James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel," in *Notes of a Native Son*, Edward P. Jones, ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014) Emphasis on my own.



ALPHABET OF SLAVERY.

A Is an African torn from his home.
B Is a Bloodhound to catch all that roam.
C Is the Cotton Plant Slaves pick and hoe.
D Is the Driver who makes their blood flow.
E Is for England which Slaves long to see,
Her daughter, fair Canada, whither they flee.
F Is a Fugitive—hide him by day!
The North Star at midnight will show him the way.
G Is for Gamblers both drunken and wild,
Stakes money and bowie-knife, mother and child.
H Is Slave Hunter-with horses and gun,
The ugliest monster that's under the sun.
I Is for Infant at mother's breast found,
Was sold at an auction one guinea a pound.
J Is the Journey when many Slaves die,
Their grave the deep waters, their shroud the blue sky.
K Was a Kidnap' who stole a poor man,
L Was the Lawyer who joined in the plan,
M Was the Merchant who bartered for gold,
N The poor Negro like pig or horse sold.
O Is Ohio, the train starts from here
Of that underground railway the slaveholder's fear.
P Are some Preachers with Slaves like the rest,
They buy them, and whip them, then pray to be blest.
Q Stands for Quaker, who helps the poor slave,
A hero of hero's both peaceful and brave.
R Is the Rice Swamp, a sickening place,
Where agne and fever soon finish the race.
S Is for Sugar—Slavegrown—and shrewd sages
Declare 'twould be better if Negros had wages.
T Is Tobacco—I don't like the weed—
To sow it and dress it the Negros oft bleed.
U Is that Union of stripes and of stars,
The Slaves get the stripes, you! and plenty of scars.
V Is Virginia where Uncle Tom's wife
With Children and home were the joy of his life.
W Is the Whip, which with paddle and chain,
Stocks, thumbscrew, and bell give them terrible pain.
X Ends the Reflex of every ones mind,
The better for all men when gentle and kind.
Y Is for Youth, and wherever you be
Zealously labour to set the Slaves free

Leeds, July, 1856.

J. Kershaw and Son, Printers.

Figure 5.9: *"Alphabet of Slavery Poster," Printed by J. Kershaw & Son, 1856*
Courtesy of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NYPL

Gazing upon the "idealized" aesthetic forms of the Cumberworth statues and purchasing 'Tomitudes' at the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar were engineered to give its participants "a very definite thrill of virtue."[69] Were the primarily white consumers who frequented the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar merely trying to reassure themselves of their own salvation, while holding a morbid interest in occasionally peering into the pit? Perhaps so.

[69] James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel," 1955.

As our 'Anonymous' critic wrote about *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "[t]his is the secret of the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; it is a live book, and it talks to his readers as if it were alive. It first awakens their attention, arrests their thoughts, touches their sympathies, rouses their curiosity, and creates such an interest in the story it is telling, that they cannot let it drop until the whole story is told."[70] But once the story is told, the readers, comfortable in their own homes and lives, at a great distance from the suffering described by this living book, let the book drop away from the immediate concerns of their hearts and minds. As S.F. Dawson wrote in the first epigraph to this chapter, many tears are shed over *Uncle Tom*, but she wishes to turn the spilled tears, "to *pearls* of value and enduring workmanship."[71] While the National Bazaar sold many rare, exquisite, fashionable articles, I do not believe it ever carried such a thing as Dawson requested.

[70] 'Anoymous', "Uncle Tomitudes," (1853) in Elizabeth Ammons, ed., *Critical Essays on Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), 38.
[71] Letter from S.F. Dawson to Mary Anne Estlin, 6 October 1852, printed as item [331] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 39.

Conclusion

When it comes to the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, the adage "you never know what you've got till it's gone" surprisingly applies. In a series of letters between R.D. Webb and Samuel May Jr. discussing Chapman's seemingly abrupt decision to end the National Bazaar and replace it with a much lower-maintenance subscription list, we see them enacting the adage in real time. Webb, trying to come to terms with this potential loss, hedged his remarks at first: "I know how much rubbish was collected – how much was wasted in freight & in duty how shocking & lamentable the loss of time & health & effort to raise the Bazaar money. So much so that probably less money got with less pain might do more real good."[1] But with all his complaints, he concluded, "[s]till I fear the falling off in receipts will be very great […] But if the Bazaar contributions be no longer collected, the dropping off of interest connected with such offerings will be a great loss to the cause, so far as anything we landed here can help you […]"[2]

May took a loftier, more philosophical direction, likening the National Bazaar to the purest essence of anti-slavery truth:

> In our cause, of all others, we cannot afford to dispense with any means of getting this truth before even a *limited* audience. No one can calculate how fast or how widely a great truth will spread, although at first told to but two or three. — This is the entire secret of the progress of the AntiSlavery Cause in this Country. It was indeed but as a grain of mustard seed. It now moves the entire mass. … It is like a terrible Doom or Destiny hovering over Presidents and Administrations, and ever will be, until Justice takes the place of all Injustice, and this monster Wrong is righted.[3]

He then reached a state of almost indignation, as he tried to secure his hold on what he was about to lose: "I am sure, this valuable instrumentality ought not to be abandoned suddenly or lightly. Its value to the cause — 1. Pecuniarily — 2. Morally & socially — has been very great. I firmly believe its power & value have not gone."[4]

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[1] Letter from R.D. Webb to Samuel May Jr., 26 February 1858, printed as item [377] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 429-430.
[2] Letter from R.D. Webb to Samuel May Jr., 26 February 1858, printed as item [377] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 429-430.
[3] Letter from Samuel May Jr. to R.D. Webb, 30 March 1858, printed as item [378] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 430-432.
[4] Letter from Samuel May Jr. to R.D. Webb, 30 March 1858, printed as item [378] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 430-432.

Most interestingly is the mentioning of Chapman and her sisters. In their indignant laments, these two prominent anti-slavery men, perhaps unknowingly, gave the National Bazaar and its organizers the praise and recognition they likely did not receive at the time and certainly did not receive in posterity. May wrote:

> I know that, to take away Mrs. Chapman and her sisters, would be like cutting off its [the National Bazaar's] right arm. But the maimed and mutilated body might yet be instinct with life, and do much with its remaining limbs, while its *will* and *spirit* would be as good as ever. I ask myself, *why should it die?* Mrs. C. has some great plans to supercede, & wholly eclipse, the Bazaar. But what it is she does not tell us, — or gives such indistinct and uncertain glimpses, as are of little satisfaction.[5]

Using powerful, graphic imagery, May likened the National Bazaar without Chapman and her sisters to a "maimed and mutilated body." The graphic violence of this imagery, in describing what he earlier termed, "a valuable instrumentality," is viscerally incohesive.[6] Additionally, May's language flies in the face of the abolitionist fixation on the "idealized" African body, unbent, unbroken, and untouched by the brutal violence of the enslaver's lash. Did not the National Bazaar champion, extol, and *exhibit* this idealized African form free of the marks of bondage and subjugation? May's gruesome language complicates and contradicts the pedestal himself and other leading abolitionists placed the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar on. Clearly, the pedestal's structural integrity weakened and eroded over the course of the National Bazaar's long run.

May, hopeful yet obstinate, could not accept this grave loss: "I ask myself, *why should it die?*"[7] For his part, Webb coped with the loss by lashing out, referring to Chapman as "entitled" and "high-handed" and comparing her to a European despot. Regardless, both reactions spoke volumes. They positioned women's anti-slavery labour as not only a given, but as a perpetual, indefatigable resource that can be called upon. When, as we see, these senior anti-slavery male leaders realized women's time and labour were not givens or bottomless resources, they cast aspersions on the organizers they had once valued and relied upon.

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[5] Letter from Samuel May Jr. to R.D. Webb, 30 March 1858, printed as item [378] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 430-432.
[6] Letter from Samuel May Jr. to R.D. Webb, 30 March 1858, printed as item [378] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 430-432.
[7] Letter from Samuel May Jr. to R.D. Webb, 30 March 1858, printed as item [378] in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, pp. 430-432.

As I have shown throughout this dissertation, both the National Bazaar and its women organizers were always seen as too much – too excessive, too materialistic, too frivolous – yet they were never seen as substantial or serious enough to warrant meaningful notice, least of all respect. Each chapter of my dissertation has sought to show otherwise, through an examination of the rich material culture and powerful affective responses to the objects and atmosphere of the Boston Bazaar. Indeed, as discussed, the National Bazaar was a significant force in the Anglo-American abolition movement.

I hope my dissertation has taken steps to course correct the troubling neglect, trivialization, and relegation of the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar and the immense, highly skilled, creative work of its women organizers to the dustbin of history.

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