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Collective Degradation: Slavery and the Construction of Race

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In the Shadow of a Dream: White Abolitionists and Race

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> *"And in the last days it shall be, God declares,*
>
> *that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh,*
>
> *and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,*
>
> *and your young men shall see visions,*
>
> *and your old men shall dream dreams."*
>
> Acts 2:17

In 1698 the Pennsylvania Quaker Robert Pyle had a dream. He had been debating whether or not to "buy a negro, or negroes," and was unsure what to do. He recalled Christ's message of the Golden Rule, and realized that he would not willingly become a slave for life. He considered that Christ had "die[d] for all mankind"; yet blacks were a

part of mankind, "though not yet gathered," or Christianized. There was also the matter

of safety. The slaves "might rise in rebellion and do us much mischief," unless "we keep

a malisha [militia], which is against our principles." If the slaves did revolt, Pyle

wondered, will "our blood . . . cry innocent?" But he had also heard that Africans made

war on each other in their own country, "and sold one another for slaves."[1]

As Pyle contemplated what to do, he fell asleep and dreamed that he and a friend

were walking down a road. They came across a "black pot." Pyle picked it up, and as

soon as he did, he "saw a great ladder standing exact upright, reaching up to heaven." He

began climbing, pot in hand, but did not get far. The ladder was standing "so upright,"

with no one holding it, that Pyle thought it "would fall upon me." Not only that, he found

he needed both hands to climb. And so he put the pot down. Then he saw a man, and

asked him "what this ladder was." It is the "light of Christ," the man said, "and whoever

it bee that his faith bee strong in [the] lord, God will uphold that it shall not fall."

Suddenly Pyle woke up, and decided "to lett black negroes or pots alone."[2]

Pyle's dream points to a number of themes that were a central component of white

abolitionist thought from the beginning of the abolition movement until the Civil War.

He penned it just ten years after the famous antislavery petition (in 1688) at Germantown,

Pennsylvania, by a group of German Friends. And he probably intended it for

consideration at Friends' Meeting for Business. It would require another eighty-six years

before the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, in 1774, adopted rules

forbidding Quakers to buy or sell slaves. But even at this early date, Pyle's dream

contains a number of familiar abolitionist tropes: the emphasis on the doctrine of the

Golden Rule; the fear of an insurrection and the tacit acknowledgment that slavery

represents a state of war; the attempt to purify the world; the sin of both slavery and blacks; black uplift as a precursor to freedom; and characterizing blacks in symbolic terms.[3]

Although these tropes inspired white abolitionists in their efforts to reform society, they also often became obstacles in their interactions with blacks. The Golden Rule, a central tenet of abolitionist thought, led Pyle to sympathize with the plight of slaves[4]. But it also fueled his fear of black violence, for he realized that if he were "a slave for life," he would be inclined to rise up in rebellion.[5] His attempt to cleanse himself from sin necessarily involved the abandonment both of blacks and slavery. The black pot symbolized "black negroes" and slavery, and he could not get to heaven with either one. Blacks, "the victims of the great sin of slavery," also became "the embodiment of sin," to borrow from David Davis.[6] In one sense, Pyle exorcised his guilt associated with slavery by repudiating both slavery and blacks. His rich symbolism also prevents him from portraying blacks as individuals and humans. The white men in his dream are characterized as men, while blacks take the form of a pot. Finally, Pyle advocates an early form of moral black uplift and respectability. After he wakes from his dream, he wonders "what shall be done" with the slaves that Quakers own. They cannot read and are not Christian. If they could learn the ways of the Lord, then "why should not" their masters set "them free," provided that they could bear the financial loss? For Pyle, a black's right to liberty depended upon his education and piety.[7]

Pyle's was not the only dream to highlight millennial visions; fears of insurrection; white guilt; black uplift; and the symbolic association of slavery and blacks with sin.[8] Dream narratives are a rich but relatively unexplored aspect of the abolition

movement from its beginnings until the Civil War.[9] They contain themes quite similar to

those of Pyle's. They reveal how abolitionists, in their efforts to end slavery, could

construct new barriers to racial equality. At the same time, they point to an inverse

relationship between race relations and black-white alliances; as racial barriers in

increased from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, black and white abolitionists were

better able to come together as equals.

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Some one hundred years after Pyle's dream, around 1780, the great physician and

abolitionist Benjamin Rush, also of Philadelphia, had a dream. He found himself

transported to a country that was the most beautiful, peaceful, and fertile he had ever

seen. It was "inhabited only by negroes," who "appeared cheerful and happy." He

approached a lovely grove, where a group of blacks had assembled for prayer. When

they saw him, they stopped praying and became noticeably alarmed. A "venerable-

looking man" came forward, and said to Rush: "Excuse the panic which you have spread

through this peaceful and happy company. We perceive that you are a white man. That

colour, which is the emblem of innocence in every other creature of God, is, to us, a sign

of guilt in man."[10]

"But in me you behold a friend," Rush protested. The venerable man suddenly

recognized Rush, ran to him to embrace him, and introduced him to the prayer group.

Rush discovered that he was in the "Paradise of Negro Slaves," a kind of Protestant

purgatory where slaves learned the doctrine of forgiveness. After the "general

judgment," or Second Coming, they hoped "to be admitted into higher and more perfect

degrees of happiness." In the meantime, they enjoyed "ample compensation" for "all the

miseries" they had "endured on earth." They learned, through prayer and religious education, that happiness was the child of misery. As a result, they continually "thanked God for all the afflictions our" former masters have "heaped upon us." One by one, the blacks told Rush of the horrors they had endured as slaves. But at the end of their gruesome tales, they emphasized that they harbored no anger or ill-will. Instead, they hoped their former masters would repent; they longed to bear their prayers "to the offended Majesty of Heaven," and worried about the fate awaiting the unrepentant.[11]

The dream ends as a "little white man" comes toward the Negroes, "his face grave, placid, and full of benignity." He is their white savior, and carries a pamphlet on the unlawfulness of the slave trade in one hand, and a letter on the unlawfulness of war in the other hand. As he approaches, Rush is awakened from his dream "by the noise of a loud and general acclamation of—'ANTHONY BENEZET!'"[12] He had fallen asleep at an abolition meeting.

Rush's dream restates in different form whites' fears of black retribution; white guilt; black uplift; millennial visions; and the symbolic treatment of slaves and blacks. That Rush set his dream in a segregated "Paradise of Negro Slaves" reflected his belief in black uplift before interracial equality, even in heaven, could be achieved. Before ascending to heaven, blacks needed to learn the ways of the lord, especially forgiveness. Rush also treats blacks, though not whites, as spirits (symbols) rather than men. The only characters who are literally men are Rush and Benezet; they have not yet died, are still alive and able to bridge the realms between "Negro Paradise" and earth.[13]

Rush's dream also reflects a hardening of racial lines. When blacks perceive that Rush is a white man, they immediately become alarmed. Whiteness connotes superiority:

a white man (Benezet) is the blacks' savior; he and Rush alone can bridge spiritual and material worlds; and while blacks hope to ascend to heaven from their half-way home, repentant whites presumably get there straightaway. As a symbol, whiteness is also superior; it is "the emblem of innocence in" all but one "creature of God." In man, it is "a sign of guilt." Here Rush attempts to invert traditional color symbolism, which depends upon rigid racial hierarchies.[14]

Rush's fantasy of a "Paradise of Slaves" as a stepping-stone to heaven is significant in another respect: it reflected Rush's belief that environment, or one's condition, trumped innate racial traits. In 1782 he wrote that slaves had acquired so many "habits of vice" that to free them now in the South "would be to injury them and society." But their present vices did not prevent them from ascending the human ladder. Rush's abolitionist mentor was Anthony Benezet (which helps explain Benezet's presence in the dream); and Benezet directly challenged assertions of innate black inferiority, stating that their "capacity is as good, and as capable of Improvement as that of Whites." Rush argued much the same thing; Africans' vices and "ignorance" were "the genuine offspring of slavery." Rush's approach to reform "drew from three late eighteenth-century intellectual currents," as Robert Abzug notes: "Republicanism; Scottish Enlightenment philosophical and medical thought; and millennial Christianity." He sought to resacralize everyday life, and his environmentalism was central to that program.[15]

Yet a new age in which blacks and whites came together as equals was, for Rush, a long way in the future. Blacks needed time to shed the disabling effects of slavery; and

whites needed time to repent. The very setting of the dream—a stepping-stone to heaven—suggests just how far in the future this interracial millennium was.

This is not to say that interracial harmony did not exist in Revolutionary Philadelphia. In 1793, black and white Philadelphians came together for a banquet to commemorate the construction of the African Church of Philadelphia, the first free black church in the northern states. Rush participated in the celebration along with scores of tradesmen and merchants. The whites feasted on an elaborate dinner, and were served by about fifty free blacks. Then they exchanged places, and six of the "most respectable" whites served dinner to the blacks. "Peace on earth and good will to men," Rush toasted. "May African churches everywhere soon succeed to African bondage." Yet it is significant that blacks and whites ate separately, and not together, much as in Rush's dream, paradise was segregated.[16]

Rush's dream and the banquet point to the limits of racial equality in Revolutionary-era Philadelphia. The career of James Forten highlights these limits as well. Forten was a student at the Society of Friends African School, which Benezet started and oversaw. He became the most prominent black Philadelphian of his day, owing in part to his close relationship to Robert Bridges. As a sailmaker, he apprenticed to Bridges and became his foreman in a shop that employed both whites and blacks. In 1792 Bridges purchased a home for Forten, and when he retired in 1798, Forten took over the business. But their relationship was less one of equals than of master-apprentice and then master-foreman—benign forms of paternalism.[17]

The example of Paul Cuffe similarly reveals the successes and limits of black-white alliances among early Republic elites. The Massachusetts-based Cuffe was a

Quaker shipowner and captain, a contemporary of Forten, and the wealthiest African American of his day.[18] In 1812 he returned to the United States from a mission to Sierra Leone, as part of his efforts to discourage slave trading and promote peaceful emigration. He brought with him some British goods, and owing largely to anti-British sentiments, his brig, the *Traveller*, was impounded and taken to Newport, Rhode Island, by customs officials, who threatened to confiscate Cuffe's entire cargo, despite a trading license that Cuffe had received from King George's Privy Council.[19]

Cuffe decided to take his case to President Madison. A number of prominent whites wrote letters on his behalf and helped him in legal matters. The U.S. District Attorney of Newport emphasized that Cuffe's efforts "to aid his unhappy brethren" by emigration should not be repaid by confiscation. Cuffe traveled from Westport, Massachusetts, to Washington with his white Quaker friend Samuel Hutchinson, and his fame helped assuage prejudice; he "perceived that the people seemed to have great knowledge of me," and traveled, mingled, and ate with whites. Cuffe and Hutchinson eventually met with Madison, a slaveholder and, like Cuffe, an advocate of colonization. Cuffe supposedly addressed him in the simple, unadorned language of his faith: "James, I have been put to much trouble, and have been abused. . . . I have come here for thy protection and have to ask thee to order thy Collector for the port of [Newport] to clear me out for New Bedford, Mass." Madison eventually complied with Cuffe's request, in part owing to their similar visions for African Americans.[20]

It was the first time an African American met with a U.S. President on terms other than those of servant or slave. Yet how different was Cuffe's interaction with the President than Frederick Douglass's some fifty years later. Although American race

relations had dramatically deteriorated, Douglass was <u>invited</u> to meet with Lincoln at the White House on three different occasions from 1863-65. Unlike Madison and Cuffe, who shared a vision of black uplift and equality that depended on colonization, Douglass and Lincoln came together to discuss how blacks could best remain in the Union and serve the cause of freedom. In all three meetings, Lincoln was "glad to see" Douglass. And by their third meeting, Lincoln referred to him as "my friend Douglass."[21]

In their second meeting, in August 1864, Lincoln wanted help with a plan that resembled John Brown's efforts to invade the South and liberate the slaves. He was despondent over northern opposition to the war and his gloomy prospects for reelection. "Everybody was thinking and dreaming of peace," Douglass wrote at the time; and most people felt that Lincoln's "antislavery policy was about the only thing which prevented a peaceful settlement with the Rebels." Yet abolitionists criticized him for ignoring their demands for black rights; they had nominated John C. Frémont for President, while Democrats had nominated George McClellan. Lincoln worried that "a peace might be forced upon him, which would leave still in slavery all who had not come within [Union] lines." And so he proposed to Douglass, "after the original plan of John Brown, to go into the rebel states, beyond the lines of our armies, and carry the news of emancipation, and urge the slaves to come within our boundaries." Such a strategy, both men knew, would greatly aid "the Loyal Cause." Douglass agreed to organize a band of black scouts, but the plan was rendered unnecessary by Union victories. The meeting revealed to him that Lincoln "showed a deeper moral conviction against slavery than I had ever seen before in anything spoken or written by him." A similar meeting, in which black

and white leaders came together in the cause of interracial Union, would have been unthinkable fifty years earlier.[22]

During the post-Revolutionary era, lower-class blacks and whites probably had greater success intermingling than black and white abolitionists, though not as much success fraternizing. Plebian blacks and whites often lived near or amid each other in squalor; and in their struggles to survive, they tolerated each other, often with hostility. They worked together in Bridges' and then Forten's sail loft; and they were on the sea together as whalers and mariners. But there is little documentation of friendship or fraternization. In New York City during the 1790s, poor blacks and whites intermingled at cheap oyster cellars, restaurants, and dance halls. In 1809, when a couple from New York City was accused of assaulting and horribly treating their black servants, the white servants in the household came to their aid. They were used to sharing their food with them, and now testified on their behalf.[23]

By contrast, when the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery was founded in 1775, and when it drafted its first congressional petitions in 1790, African Americans were not members. And despite Paul Cuffe's example, elite Quakers generally did not welcome free blacks into their churches and homes. Among the lower working classes, interracial friendships and fraternization flew in the face of whites' desire to preserve their "manly self-respect." But it was also a period in which the embrace of whiteness was still in flux. In a society based on Enlightenment beliefs in hierarchy, rationality, and social deference, it was comparatively easier for blacks and whites at the bottom of the social ladder "to form alliances based on shared conditions and common purposes."[24]

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In April 1831, some fifty years after Rush's dream, a pseudonymous "T.T." had two dreams.[25] He published them in William Lloyd Garrison's new newspaper devoted to "modern" abolitionism, as advocates sometimes called it. That T.T. had his dream in April is telling, for it was the spring of a new era: he had just planted a young tree in his garden; and white abolitionists had recently embraced immediatism, in part owing to the influence and example of black activists. Immediatism was both a shift in strategy, in which abolitionists repudiated gradualists' faith in colonization and boycotts; and a change in outlook, from a "detached, rationalistic perspective on history and progress, to a personal commitment to make no compromise with sin." It was an expression of "inner freedom" and triumph over worldly conventions, and thus an appropriate doctrine for a romantic age.[26]

At the opening of his narrative, T.T. is reading Samuel Johnson on the non-linear notion of time. The next thing he knows, his tree is "full grown," with its leaves casting "a venerable shade over the surrounding lawn." The dream is, of course, set in the future; but it also conveys the eschatological leap that was central to immediatists' worldviews. Both black and white abolitionists dispensed with temporal and worldly categories, and envisioned a sharp break with the past. T.T. projects himself into the future, and imagines what the fruits of this new "modern" abolition movement will look like.[27]

In the first dream, immediatism yields a glorious Jubilee of interracial harmony. T.T. attends a party, in which the two races "mingle with perfect ease in social intercourse." Whiteness is no longer a symbol of purity or virtue. "'*Fair* is not the word of compliment now in vogue,'" says a beautiful woman of "sable hue." Black freedom

and equality has been achieved swiftly and peacefully through moral suasion. And whites led the way: "'How fortunate is it,'" a black gentleman remarked, "'that this revolution was brought about more by the instrumentality of the whites than our own!" It is fortunate, because he doubts whether or not blacks would have been able to achieve freedom "without bloodshed." Only through white leadership "could the seeds of jealousy and ill-will" among blacks "have been so completely destroyed." Now, the only traces of slavery and racism that remain are "slight symptoms of shame on the part of the whites for their former misdoings."[28]

Vestiges of "African inferiority" have vanished, largely owing to black uplift and education, which resulted in the election of the nation's first black President. He was a man of "such distinguished talents, that no" self-respecting white "chose to risk" his "reputation for discernment by not acknowledging it." The rise of the black bourgeoisie helped defuse racism: "In this money loving world, cash sometimes balanced color . . . and proved a passport to gentility." The few blacks who married into "respectable white families" further broke down barriers. In the wake of such changes, the "national character" had greatly improved. Whites acquired "a certain ease and dignity"; their "pugnacious disposition" had been "softened by intercourse with a milder race." Blacks benefited too; they were now more active and enterprising.[29]

T.T.'s second dream is the apocalyptic counterpart of his utopia. The seeds of immediatism never took root, and American blacks, in alliance with Indians and Haitian troops, are in a race war against the whites. They achieve liberty and establish an independent empire in the southern part of the United States, with Charleston, South Carolina, as "the seat of the newly established government."[30]

At an "imperial council," T.T. disguises himself as a black man and listens to debates on how best to dispose of whites still residing in the new republic. "Some talked of death, and some of slavery for all, or for all above a certain age." The council rejects a treaty proposed by the United States, for the Cherokee, an ally, laughed at the idea of trusting such a treaty. A man who looks like a gospel minister urges peace and "magnanimity." Another orator agrees, but says it would be absurd to let whites remain in the new black nation:

> [T]o think of their remaining among us on any footing of equality is as preposterous as to propose to allow a race of tigers to range our cities with the freedom of domestic animals. We may talk of magnanimity and forgiveness, but it is absurd. The enmity between us is as eternal and deep rooted as that between the race of Eve and of the serpent.

The solution, he says, is to "colonize them" in Europe. It would restore whites to their native soil and ensure a peaceful resolution to racial warfare. But another orator dismisses such humanitarianism: "Let criminals be treated as criminals." As council members debate what to do, T.T. attempts to voice a plea for mercy, and then wakes up.[31]

T.T.'s dreams recast and amplify the hopes and fears of Rush and Pyle. They reflect the emergence of a new era, which was responding to massive urbanization, deracination, and massive alcohol consumption. The millennium is closer at hand. Rush's and Pyle's fears of black revolution are realized in the nightmare dream, and it is important to remember that Nat Turner's rebellion was still some four months away when T.T. published it. His fears of insurrection are embedded even in the utopian fantasy; whites pave the way to a post-millennial utopia, and thus prevent "the seeds of jealousy" flaming into apocalypse. And black uplift is a crucial component of T.T.'s integrated

utopia and his black nationalist dystopia. The characters in both dreams are educated, thoughtful, and have learned the ways of whites in order to gain power and status.[32]

But there is a moral certainty implicit in T.T.'s dreams, which is absent in the earlier two. The nation will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other, to paraphrase Lincoln, and so we better do the right thing right now. It is deeply ironic that T.T. invokes such moral certainty in his quest to create order out of the chaos that came with modernization. For as Louis Menand has noted, "moral certainty of any kind can lead" more easily to chaos and bloodshed than order. In the wake of the Revolution, reformers were willing to compromise with sin in order to achieve order. After the Civil War, and culminating with the emergence of pragmatism, many Americans concluded that "moral certainty" was something they "should sacrifice a little of in exchange for order."[33]

T.T.'s dreams also reflect a hardening of racial lines. Blacks are "the milder race" and have "a certain ease and dignity," while whites have "a more pugnacious disposition." T.T. romanticized race, construing blacks' differences as "flattering or laudatory." Significantly, though, he suggests that these traits are conditional rather than essential; each race, through <u>social</u> "intercourse" and not necessarily blood mixing, will improve and share in the other's strengths, resulting in an improved national character.[34]

Yet T.T. also "disguises" himself as a black man in his nightmare, which necessarily involves an essentializing of the other. And one of his black rebels inverts the color hierarchy to describe black-white relations: "The enmity between us is as eternal and deep rooted as that between the race of Eve and of the serpent." For the rebel, blacks resemble Eve, symbol of prelapsarian innocence, while whites are associated with "the serpent." In the white mind, of course, the symbolism is reversed, and blacks embody

original sin. In T.T.'s nightmare, the apocalypse has come; blacks are free and have formed their own black republic. But T.T. is horrified at these events, for black salvation has come at the expense of whites.[35]

Garrison responded enthusiastically to T.T.'s dreams. "We have a strong faith in the accomplishment of these events," he wrote of the utopian fantasy. "The time is assuredly hastening, even in our own country," when "the changes in society, which are described in the dream," will "be sober realities." Of T.T.'s dystopian nightmare, Garrison felt it contained a "home-thrust," or fatal blow, to colonizationists.[36]

That T.T.'s dreams were published in Boston point to the geographic evolution of the abolition movement. With the rise of white immediatism and the publication of *The Liberator*, the center of the movement shifted from Rush's Philadelphia to Garrison's Boston. Immediatism brought blacks and whites together as allies and friends in a way that hadn't occurred before, except among lower-class blacks and whites in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Unlike the Society of Friends and the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, blacks were actively involved in the New England Anti-Slavery Society and American Anti-Slavery Society. They were hired as lecturers and agents, wrote for their publications, and constituted the majority of subscribers to the *Liberator* in its early years. And Boston was a locus of black activism and "one of the most racially tolerant cities in the North," according to Jim Horton, even though it was more segregated than Philadelphia or New York.[37]

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In August 1859 Gerrit Smith published his hopes and fears of the abolition movement. Smith's public letter, like T.T.'s dream, took the form of prophesy. But it

was less a dream narrative than an attempt to realize his dream of liberation and racial

equality. He had already transformed his community of Peterboro, New York, into a

model interracial community. He had helped create a harmonious community at North

Elba, in the Adirondacks (which residents called "Timbucto") through his generous gift

of land to poor blacks and John Brown and his family.[38] And he had forged

extraordinary friendships with Frederick Douglass, James McCune Smith, and other

African Americans.[39] But these local successes did not satisfy him; he wanted nothing

less than an interracial utopia on the order of T.T.'s. The immediate end of all sin was

his most passionate desire, and he defined his millennium in national terms. Smith was

now warning the nation that if slavery did not end right now through peaceful means (and

he had little hope that it would), it would end in apocalypse very soon:

> For many years I have feared and published my fears that [slavery] must
> go out in blood. . . . These fears have grown into belief. So debauched are
> the white people by slavery, that there is not virtue enough left in them to
> put it down. If I do not misinterpret the words and the looks of the most
> intelligent and noble of the black men who fall in my way, they have come
> to despair of the accomplishment of this work by the white people. The
> feeling among the blacks that they must deliver themselves gains strength
> with fearful rapidity. . . . No wonder then is it that . . . intelligent black
> men in the States and Canada should see no hope for their race in the
> practice and policy of white men. No wonder they are brought to the
> conclusion that no resource is left to them but in God and insurrections.
> For insurrections then we may look any year, any month, any day. A
> terrible remedy for a terrible wrong! But come it must unless anticipated
> by repentance and the putting away of the terrible wrong.[40]

At one level, Smith's prophesy resembled T.T.'s nightmare dream. Both visions

embraced black uplift, acknowledged the need for white repentance, and feared slave

insurrections. But in tone and intent, Smith's vision was much different, for although he conceived of emancipation as apocalyptic and darkly romantic, as T.T. did, instead of running from those fears, Smith embraced them. He sought to realize his vision of apocalyptic freedom, and remove forever the oppressive burden of sin and its attendant racial hierarchies and dualities.[41]

Smith was the lead conspirator in John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, with a band of sixteen whites and five blacks. They hoped to incite a massive slave insurrection that would result in black liberty. Smith knew that any month, Brown and his men would invade the South. And he felt sure that the resulting insurrection would be successful. "Remember that telegraphs and railroads can be rendered useless in an hour," he warned in the same public letter. "Remember too that many, who would be glad to face the insurgents, would be busy in transporting their wives and daughters to places where they would be safe from that worst fate which husbands and fathers can imagine for their wives and daughters." The day of "calamity" and liberation was at hand, complete with "fire and rape and slaughter."[42]

Smith had experienced a psychological reversal relative to most other white abolitionists. He had internalized the racialized fears of black men raping white women; but instead of shunning those fears, he sought to realize them. In doing so he experienced an ecstasy of liberation and a sublime sense of terror and delight. He not only empathized with blacks and inverted color symbolism, as other white abolitionists did; he viewed the world through African-American eyes, and tried to see himself as black. And based on his friendships with blacks, he concluded that they despaired of their deliverance by whites. And so he advocated the same thing. As early as 1842 Smith had

encouraged slaves to engage in what he admirably called the "black-hearted" measures of running away and stealing. By the late 1840s, he endorsed violence and insurrections as a means to bring about the millennium if peaceful measures failed.[43]

For Smith (as well as John Brown), whiteness had become a fluid category because blackness held out the promise of a more authentic mode of being for a radical.[44] Yet this kind of racial transformation necessarily involved essentializing the "other" in order to achieve otherness. It became much more prominent in the twentieth century. Norman Mailer's thought experiment, "The White Negro" (1959) was a classic example of white-to-black identity shifting. Although Mailer was totally different from Smith and Brown, he found that his literary effort to embrace blackness led him to accept violence and an apocalyptic vision of a new age, even though the source of his vision was existentialism rather than Scripture.[45]

As a result of his identity transformation, Smith abandoned the practice of characterizing blacks in symbolic terms. He sought to become one with them, as it were. He continually tried "to make myself a colored man," as he put it, in actions as well as words, and so did John Brown.[46] Smith continued to embrace black uplift; "intelligent and noble" black men were more authentic radicals than ignorant or inebriated ones. Yet uplift no longer played as important a role in the program for racial equality as it had for abolitionists from the Revolution through the late 1830s.[47] "God and insurrections" were more important to the cause, as Smith noted in his letter. God was immanent or indwelling; He was an active and earthly force in helping radicals achieve their new age.[48] And insurrections were an extension of Smith's political actions; they were the "last resource," given the failure of peaceful means, for fulfilling the nation's

Revolutionary ideals.[49] Smith and Brown saw themselves as peacemakers; slavery

represented a state of war, which needed to be vanquished in order to preserve the peace.

Blacks had long known this to be the case. Although insurrections were rare, black

leaders from Toussaint through David Walker, Nat Turner, Henry Highland Garnet,

Douglass and McCune Smith had been comparatively tolerant or accepting of them as a

means to end slavery.[50]

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That Gerrit Smith was based in upstate New York points to another geographic

shift that had taken place in the abolition movement. By the mid-1840s blacks had

increasingly lost patience with the Garrisonian doctrine of nonresistance, and embraced

political abolitionism. African Americans were "especially attracted to the Liberty

party," and western New York, its home, was a hotbed of political action in general,

owing in part owing to suffrage restrictions on blacks in New York State. By contrast,

there were no restrictions on black suffrage in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont,

and Maine. When the Liberty party splintered, evolving into the Free-Soil party in 1848

(and eventually the Republican party), and the National Liberty party (and its successor,

the Radical Abolition party), political abolitionism became even more viable, for activists

had more choices; they could put their energies behind highly principled and often

militant candidates, or more powerful but conservative antislavery advocates. Political

action facilitated black-white alliances, for reformers were united in both means and

ends.[51]

Political action took root especially in rural communities, where abolitionists like

Gerrit Smith could wield considerable local influence, and in smaller cities like Rochester

and Syracuse.[52] Smith's county of Madison was the most abolitionist county in the

country in the 1850s (based on voting trends), and he was elected to Congress in 1852.

His village of Peterboro was so revered by blacks that Henry Highland Garnet, after

visiting Smith in 1848, declared: "There are yet two places where slaveholders cannot

live—Heaven and Peterboro." When Frederick Douglass moved to Rochester in 1847,

the city was already a center of political abolitionism; but when he turned his newspaper,

which became the longest-running black newspaper in the Civil War era, into a political

paper, Rochester became even more visible as a beacon of political action.[53] By the late

1840s, the Burned-Over District in upstate New York, so named for the spiritual fires that

had swept through the region after the completion of the Erie Canal, rivaled or surpassed

New England as a region where blacks and whites came together in the battle against

slavery and racial oppression.[54]

Political action meant an adherence to Revolutionary ideals; it also implied

intervention, with force if necessary, into those parts of the country that refused to end

slavery. This was in contrast to Garrison's doctrine of disunion, which in theory

separated the sacred and profane elements of the country. Radical Abolitionists

conceived the whole country as a heaven on Earth within its very platform, and through

its advocacy of violence, spelled out the means for ushering in the advent and achieving

their country.[55]

It was while Douglass lived in Rochester that he forged his closest interracial and

egalitarian friendships—with Gerrit Smith, John Brown, and a number of women,

including Ottilie Assing, Julia Griffiths, and Amy Post.[56] The differences between

Douglass's relationships with Garrison and Wendell Phillips, and his bond with Gerrit

Smith, can be attributed in part to setting and upbringing. Perhaps if Garrison or Phillips had been forced to work alongside their father's slaves until the age of sixteen, against their will, as Gerrit Smith did, they would have acknowledged, more forcefully than they did, New England's own slaveowning past. But as it was, most white New Englanders engaged in a kind of collective amnesia about slavery in their region, which led them to explain the degraded condition of free blacks in essentialist terms, as Joanne Melish has noted. In the absence of such amnesia, perhaps Garrisonians would have been less inclined to so demonize the South as to advocate disunion. Perhaps, too, they would have been more tolerant of national political action. Perhaps if Garrison had grown up wealthy, or if Wendell Phillips had, like Gerrit Smith, plunged from great wealth to near bankruptcy, both men would have acquired the kind of humility and generosity—emotional, spiritual, and material-that Smith was famous for. But owing to Phillips's "Beacon Hill superiority," Douglass found himself feeling inferior to him. And partly as a result of Garrison's hard-scrabble upbringing, he became a proud, competitive, self-made man, and felt threatened by Douglass's greater success at self-making.[57]

In the 1840s, as Douglass became more famous and increasingly asserted his independence, Garrison and his clique sought to control him. They treated him either as their symbol of black success, as Henry Mayer notes, or as a rebellious son. When Douglass moved to Rochester, Garrison got upset. When he embraced political action, and aligned his paper with Gerrit Smith's National Liberty party, Garrison was outraged, and attacked Douglass's character.[58]

By contrast, Gerrit Smith loved Douglass's independent nature; he neither felt threatened by him, nor treated Douglass's independence as an act of betrayal. In 1854,

when Smith resigned from Congress out of disgust and frustration, he suggested

Douglass as his replacement, felt his friend would be a more effective congressman, and

told him so. In 1856, when Douglass began endorsing the Republican nomination of

John C. Frémont, rather than Gerrit Smith's own candidacy for President as a Radical

Abolitionist, Smith understood, even though he was still funding Douglass's newspaper.

He realized that Douglass's shift in allegiance was based not on his frustration with the

Radical Abolition party, but on fears that he could not sustain his newspaper. In other

words, whereas Garrison had been a "father figure" to Douglass, Gerrit Smith became his

"mentor," as David Blight aptly noted.[59]

Yet by the 1850s a number of Garrisonians were also turning away from

nonresistance and endorsing some form of political action. With the spread of slavery

and the South's increasing belligerence, especially the draconian Fugitive Slave Law,

such prominent leaders as William Nell, Wendell Phillips, Edmund Quincy, and Samuel

Joseph May linked their struggles to the "spirit of 1776"; they treated the Bible, the

Declaration, and at least the Preamble of the Constitution as sacred texts in advocating

not only an end to slavery but racial justice. Such shifts led them to forge closer ties with

blacks, and to follow Smith and Brown in accepting violence and abandoning the very

foundation on which white abolitionism had originally been established.[60]

Perhaps the high point of race relations in the abolition movement occurred in

1855. It was a decade in which many black and white radicals had effectively abandoned

their hopes in a pluralist America, and instead accepted colonization (or emigration) as

the solution to America's dilemma. Yet in late June, Gerrit Smith, John Brown,

Frederick Douglass, and James McCune Smith, came together, along with about one

hundred other men and women, to found the Radical Abolition party. Members embraced immediate abolition, full suffrage for all Americans regardless of sex or skin color; the redistribution of land so that no one would be rich and no one poor; and violent intervention against the growing belligerence of the Slave Power. And they heeded "pentecostal visitations" (messages from God) to help them pave the way to a new world.[61] The black physician James McCune Smith chaired the party's inaugural convention. (The next time a black man chaired a national political convention was in 1988, when Ron Brown chaired the Democratic National Convention.)[62] Radical Abolitionists were considered extreme even by Garrison; he called them "madmen." But the party was a way for members to act on their utopian dreams and maintain a dynamic balance between their vision of a pluralist new world and the sinful present.[63]

Two months earlier, in April 1855, Massachusetts governor Henry Gardner signed a law prohibiting segregation based on religion and color in Massachusetts public schools. The desegregation law was a culmination of a fifteen-year struggle among black and white abolitionists led by William C. Nell, John T. Hilton, Benjamin Roberts, Charles Sumner, and Wendell Phillips. The struggle involved boycotts of black schools, petitions to the state legislature "praying for the abolition of separate schools for colored children," and legal cases. Although Massachusetts desegregation was a regional rather than national issue, it succeeded, whereas Radical Abolitionists failed to achieve any item in their platform. Yet both groups established a united biracial front against racial injustices, which was fueled by a prophetic and millennial impulse.[64]

The religious impulse behind the desegregation case has at times been downplayed. But William Cooper Nell, who led the movement, vowed that, "God

helping me, I [will] do my best to hasten the day when color of skin [will] be no barrier to equal school rights." Like Radical Abolitionists, he received instructions from God. And his vision of emancipation and equality was the language of a millennialist: he looked forward to the day when blacks, "redeemed from the long night of ignorance," would express their gratitude "that the stars, which shone in our horizon, have ushered in a most glorious dawn." Charles Sumner, who is often described as a secular humanist, delivered a speech one month after the desegregation law was passed, and declared that the "great change" in the North's willingness to fight for Revolutionary ideals was a "herald of the Transcendent Future." He referred to the sympathies of state legislatures, and then quoted a stanza from the late eighteenth-century English prophetess, seer, and poet Joanna Southcott:

> "Hark! A glad voice the lonely desert cheers:
>
> Prepare the way! A God, a God appears!
>
> A God! a God! the vocal hills reply,
>
> The rocks proclaim th' approaching Deity."

Such sentiments fueled Sumner's abolitionism.[65]

I have already suggested a few reasons why some black and white abolitionists were able to unite during a time of deteriorating race relations. The millennium seemed much imminent; and in varying degrees, blacks and whites came together based on their shared faith in prophesy and a pluralist new age. Additionally, while the emphasis on respectability often fueled white paternalism, the shift toward political action brought black and white radicals closer together, for they shared the same strategies and goals.

It is also significant that blacks and whites increasingly united in their quest to fight a common foe. As the South became more belligerant, and slavery more national in scope, both groups felt threatened by a slaveholding republic; and this threat made it easier to forge interracial alliances. Ira Berlin has recently characterized black northerners as maroons living in a slaveholding republic. But many white abolitionists thought *themselves* to be marooned as well. They felt isolated from the nation's laws: The Fugitive Slave Law required them to form a posse to round up suspected fugitives, and made them feel culpable in the sin of slaveholding. The Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri Compromise, opened northern territories to slavery, and threatened (in abolitionists' minds) to extend the evil into every state and enslave whites as well as blacks. The Dred Scott decision declared the Republican party to be unconstitutional, owing to its platform of nonextension. White abolitionists often felt isolated from their own countrymen, who, especially in the 1830s, had physically attacked them. As a result of these feelings, both black and white abolitionists defined themselves as outsiders; and they often lived like maroons, congregating in abolitionist communities.[66]

The sense of white alienation in a slave republic is perhaps best revealed by John Brown. After going bankrupt and losing his home and almost all of his worldly possessions, he entered a world of American desperation best understood by slaves. He attributed his financial straits to the Slave Power, and relied more and more on God, violence, and his vision of the new age to vanquish slavery. The slave republic, in other words, threatened the liberties of all Americans, prompting its enemies to fight it with force, to embrace the nation's founding ideals, and to transform corrupt laws into the laws of nature and of nature's God.[67]

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In June 1860 Gerrit Smith had a dream. It differed from those of Pyle, Rush, or T.T., for it was a living dream. "Much of the year 1859 is a black dream to me," he wrote Charles Sumner; "and much of it hazy and uncertain." His black dream was not a good thing, for blackness no longer held out the promise of a more authentic mode of being. It was now something to shun, to run away from.[68]

Smith's black dream, and his career, highlight the limits of interracial alliances. In the wake of John Brown's raid, Smith experienced a profound crisis of faith and identity. He suffered a mental collapse from which he never fully recovered. On November 7, 1859, a few days after Brown was sentenced to die, Smith's wife and family, fearing he would take his own life, committed him to the state asylum for the insane at Utica. He returned to Peterboro at the end of December, after being treated by John P. Gray, one of the nation's foremost psychiatrists. But he was never the same. He felt culpable for all the lives lost in the disaster, and blamed what he considered to be his transgression to violence on two factors: his faith and blacks. He abandoned his belief in a sacred and pluralist society and doubted that God could enter into and affect the affairs of the world. And he concluded that his black identification, his close interracial friendships, and his belief in prophesy represented the dark sources of his violent proclivities. In his mind, he had aligned himself with the wrong crowd by befriending blacks and viewing himself as one. He distanced himself from Douglass and McCune Smith as well as other blacks. And for the first time in his life he openly began to embrace the widespread beliefs in innate black inferiority and difference. He could not

forgive himself for his sins, and racism became a way for him to exorcise his feelings of guilt.[69]

The dreams of Pyle, Rush, T.T., and Smith highlight their struggles to collapse cultural dichotomies that had long served as a source of order and hierarchy and had posed obstacles to the new age: heaven and earth; sacred and profane; black and white; and civilization (or respectability) and barbarism. By attacking the Aristotelian belief that some men were born to rule, and others to do the basic work of society, some abolitionists were led to question other dichotomies—as opposed to more conservative reformers, who contained their assault and legitimated the status quo by separating slavery from other institutions.

It was in the antebellum era, and especially the 1840s and 1850s, that abolitionists went furthest in dismantling these dichotomies. They were at the center of an effort to literally "rebuild the structure of Heaven and Earth" and achieve a "broad sacralization of the world," to quote Robert Abzug. But in the absence of traditional boundaries and hierarchies, they constructed new ones. At times they elevated blackness over whiteness as a more authentic and virtuous mode of being. They distinguished virtuous individuals from the unrepentant defenders of slavery. Some of them separated the sacred from the profane regions of the country. And others embraced the doctrine of blood atonement to redeem the sins of the nation.

As Gerrit Smith came to realize, violence could be as much a barrier as a bridge in achieving a pluralist society. The dissolution of his interracial alliances in the wake of John Brown's raid points to the power of the surrounding white culture and its racist solution to America's paradox. For over a decade, Smith and a few others were more or

less able to burst free from white society. But after Harpers Ferry, he found refuge in

traditional racist answers to the American dilemma. In a way, his estrangement from

blacks after Harpers Ferry foreshadowed the North's abandonment of freedmen and

women after Reconstruction: the war itself became for the North what Brown's

bloodletting was for Smith. It destroyed many reformers' vision of a heaven on Earth,

justified racism as a way to atone for the bloodshed, and created a crisis of faith in their

hopes for reform. The apocalypse had come, but the new age was nowhere in sight.

(8,074 words)

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[1] Henry J. Cadbury, "An Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Statement," *The Journal of Negro History*, 22:4 (October 1937): 492. For another analysis of Pyle's dream, see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 311-312.

[2] Cadbury, "Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Statement," 492-493. In dreaming of a ladder going to heaven, Pyle was no doubt inspired by *Genesis* 28:12; Jacob "dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven."

[3] Cadbury, "Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Statement," pp. 488-490; Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, pp. 291-332; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 24, 213-254; Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 24-37;

Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), pp. 40-45; Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[4]   Pyle doesn't use the term "Golden Rule" in his dream narrative, but remembers "the command of Christ Jesus, Do unto all men as ye would have all man doe unto you." Cadbury, "Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Statement," p. 492.

[5]   As the color line hardened over the next 150 years, and beliefs in innate racial traits increased, the fear of slave insurrection would be accompanied by the belief that blacks were innately savage if free men, and prone to murderous rages.

[6]   David Brion Davis, *Challenging the Boundaries of Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 33.

[7]   Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 312. On black uplift see especially James Brewer Stewart, "The Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North 1790-1840," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 18:2 (Summer 1998): 181-217; Stewart, "Modernizing 'Difference': The Political Meanings of Color in the Free States, 1776-1840," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 19:4 (Winter 1999): 691-712; Stewart and George Price, eds., *To Heal the Scourge of Prejudice: The Life and Writings of Hosea Easton* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999); Frederick Cooper, "Elevating the Race: the Social Thought of Black Leaders, 1827-1850," *American Quarterly*, 24 (December 1972): 604-625; and Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 157-208.

[8]   For other dream narratives that I do not discuss, see Clark Moorman, *The Friend*, 74 (1900-01): 106-115; Grace Growden Galloway, in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 55 (1931): 63-65; John Hunt's Journal, in *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, 13 (1935), pp. 28-29; Henry J. Cadbury, "Negro Membership in the Society of Friends," *Journal of Negro History*, 21:2 (April 1936): 182; Mrs. Sturges to Theodore Dwight Weld, Putnam, Ohio, March 19, 1835, Weld-Grimké Manuscripts, Clements Library, University of Michigan. For an excellent

analysis of Sturges's dream, see Robert H. Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld and the Dilemma of Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 130-133; and Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 7-8.

[9] I was inspired to use dream narratives as a way to explore race relations among abolitionists by Jim Stewart's superb essay, "Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North 1790-1840," and Jim Horten's "Comment," in which he wonders how the dream narratives of rebels would have evolved over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Horton, "Comment," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 18:2 (Summer 1998): 223.

[10] Wilson Armistead, *Anthony Benezet. From the Original Memoir: Revised, with Additions* (Philadelphia: Lippincott and Co., 1859), p. 140. On Rush I have relied on the following works: Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, pp. 11-29; George W. Corner, ed., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush: His Travels Through Life, Together With His Commonplace Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948); Rush, *An Address on the Slavery of the Negroes in America* (1773; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969); Eric T. Carlson, Jeffrey L. Wollock, and Patricia S. Noel, eds., *Benjamin Rush's Lectures on the Mind* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981); L.H. Butterfield, ed., *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951); Dagobart D. Runes, ed., *The Selected Writings of Benjamin Rush* (New York: New York Philosophical Library, 1947); and David Freeman Hawke, *Benjamin Rush: Revolutionary Gadfly* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971).

[11] Armistead, *Anthony Benezet*, pp. 140-143.

[12] Armistead, *Anthony Benezet*, p. 144.

[13] My interpretation is consistent with Rush's writings in Corner, ed., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush*. See also Benjamin Rush, *Essays, Literary, Moral, Philosophical* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1806), pp. [???].

[14]   What Rush doesn't say is that the absence of repentence among slaveowners led to the growth of racism. Racism—the belief in innate black inferiority—was nourished by the spread of slavery. It received new nourishment as part of a defense against the rise of antislavery thought. And it was fueled by the bloodbath of war that was required to end slavery.

[15]   Rush, quoted from Nash, *Forging Freedom*, pp. 3, 40; Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, pp. 12-13, 20; Anthony Benezet, *A Short Account of That Part of Africa Inhabited by the Negroes* (Philadelphia: W. Dunlap, 1762), p. [????]. On Benezet see also Roger Bruns, "Anthony Benezet's Assertion of Negro Equality," *Journal of Negro History*, 56:3 (July 1971): 230-238; Carter G. Woodson, "Anthony Benezet," *The Journal of Negro History*, 2:1 (January 1917): 37-50; and "Letters of Anthony Benezet," *Journal of Negro History*, 2:1 (January 1917): 83-85.

[16]   Nash, *Forging Freedom*, p. 1; Butterfield, ed., *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, vol. 2, p. 639.

[17]   Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 5-6, 25, 53-76; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, pp. 32-33; Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, pp. 16-17.

[18]   Although Forten, who died in 1842, outlived Cuffe by twenty-five years, he was only seven years younger; he was born in 1766, Cuffe in 1759.

[19]   Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise to Be a People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 72-73; Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, ed., *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808-1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice From Within the Veil"* (Washington, D.D.: Howard University Press, 1996), pp. 59-61, 206-233.

[20]   Thomas, *Rise to Be a People*, pp. 73-74, quotation from Cuffe on p. 73, quotation from District Attorney on p. 74; Wiggins, ed., *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs*, pp. 211-213; Cuffe, quoted from Cadbury, "Negro Membership in the Society of Friends," p. 199. According to Cadbury, since Madison's wife, Dolley Payne, was raised as a Quaker, he would have been used Cuffe's plain Quaker speech. But in

1794 the Quakers disowned Dolley after her marriage to
Madison, an Episcopalian and slaveholder.

[21]   Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick
Douglass, Written By Himself* (1892; reprint, New York:
Collier Books, 1962), pp. 346-349, 357-359, 365-567,
quotations from pp. 347, 366.

[22]   Douglass, *Life and Times*, pp. 358-359; Douglass to
Theodore Tilton, October 15, 1864, and Douglass to Abraham
Lincoln, August 29, 1864, in Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Life
and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Volume III, The Civil
War, 1861-1865* (New York: International Publishers, 1952),
pp. 405-406, 422-424, quotations from pp. 405, 422. For an
excellent account of this important meeting, see David W.
Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in
Jubilee* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press,
1989), pp. 182-184.
        During this meeting, Lincoln also showed Douglass a
letter he had drafted, in which he sought to defuse
criticism and cries for peace. He denied that he stood in
the way of peace (there had been no proposals from the
Confederacy), and deflected the question of abolitionism by
saying it ultimately rested on Congress and the people.
"Shall I send forth this letter"? he asked, to which
Douglass responded, "Certainly not." Lincoln did not
publish it, though whether his decision had anything to do
with Douglass's urging is not known. See Douglass to
Tilton, October 15, 1864, in Foner, ed., *Life and Letters*,
Vol. III, p. 423; and Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil
War*, pp. 185-186.

[23]   W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American
Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University
Press, 1997), pp. 158-232; Kathryn Grover, *The Fugitive's
Gibralter: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New
Bedford, Massachusetts* (Amherst: University of
Massachusetts Press, 2001), pp. 13-36; Winch, *Gentleman of
Color*, pp. 52-106; Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of
Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863*
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 48-79,
104-108. Harris' comparison of class and race is superb.

[24]   Stewart, "Modernizing Difference, pp. 698-701,
quotation from p. 699; Horton, "Comment," pp. 222-226,
quotation from p. 224; Stewart, "Racial Modernity," pp.

188-193; Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 16-59; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, pp. 28-29; Davis, *Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, 213-342; James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and protest Among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 55-76, 101-124.

[25] I have not yet been able to identify T.T. He (or she) was well read, and quotes not only Samuel Johnson, the English poet, essayist, and moralist, but Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736). Another pseudonymous "T.T." authored an essay in *Freedom's Journal* in 1828, called "The Sailor," which matches the style and polish of T.T.'s two dreams. "The Sailor" is a paean to sailing, but also contrasts, as the dreams do, images of doom and destruction with those of peace and tranquility. "The Sailor" begins and ends with two sea-songs by the popular nineteenth-century Scottish poet Allan Cunningham. See T.T., "The Sailor," Freedom's Journal, September 12, 1828.

I am pursuing the possibility that "T.T." is Thomas Tracy, for he was sometimes characterized by his initials, "T.T."

Thomas Tracy (1781-1872) translated and wrote an introduction to the popular German fantasies, *Undine, and Sintram and His Companions* (1841). An ordained Congregational minister, he briefly had a parish in Biddeford, Maine, before leaving the ministry and moving to Concord, Massachusetts, where he got caught up with radical reform movements. He and his wife, Ann Bromfield Tracy, were friends with Mary Moody Emerson, Ralph Waldo's aunt, and Edmund Quincy. In a letter of 1847, Edmund Quincy referred to Tracy as "T.T." in a postcript. Nancy Craig Simmons, ed., *The Selected Letters of Mary Moody Emerson* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), pp. 36, 169, 170, 455, 499, 509, 562, 563, 577, 580; Edmund Quincy to [C. Weston?], July 30, 1847, Rare Book Room, Boston Public Library; Elizabeth Amelia Dwight, *Memorials of Mary Wilder White*, ed. Mary Wilder Tileston (Boston: The Everett Press, 1903), 99-100, 312-313.

[26]   T.T., "A Dream," *The Liberator*, April 2, 1831; T.T., "Another Dream," *The Liberator*, April 30, 1831. T.T.'s dreams have been discussed by Stewart, "Racial Modernity," pp. 181-189, 209-217; Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., *The Origins of African American Literature* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), pp. 208-210; and Bruce Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 168-169. On immediatism, see David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought," *From Homicide To Slavery: Studies in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 254-257, quotations from pp. 255, 257; Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery*, revised edition (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), pp. 35-50; Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, pp. 125-162; Newman, *Transformation of American Abolitionism*, pp. 86-130.

[27]   T.T., "A Dream." On the millennialism and eschatology of black abolitionists see Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*; Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, *They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861* (1974, reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); David E. Swift, *Black Prophets of Justice: Activist Clergy Before the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Werner Sollors, *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 188-219; Peter Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); John Stauffer, *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionism and the Transformation of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 2002). T.T.'s dreams coincide with the emergence of time travel in science fiction, which suggests a broader cultural shift (even outside of abolitionism) in which people envisioned a sharp break from linear chronology.

[28]   T.T., "A Dream."

[29]   T.T., "A Dream." At the party, T.T. meets the second, newly elected, black president.

[30]   T.T., "Another Dream," The Liberator, April 30, 1831.

[31]   T.T., "Another Dream."

[32]   T.T., "Another Dream."

[33]   Louis Menand, "John Brown's Body," *Raritan*, 22:2 (Fall 2002): 59. See also Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), pp. ix-xii, 3-72.

[34]   T.T., "Another Dream"; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (1971; reprint, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), pp. 97-129, quotation from p. 102. See Dain, *Hideous Monster of the Mind*, pp. 168-69 for a slightly different interpretation.

[35]   T.T., "Another Dream"; Bruce, *Origins of African American Literature*, p. 209.

[36]   *The Liberator*, April 2, 30, 1831.

[37]   James Oliver Horton, *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), pp. 25-39, 206, quotation from p. 206; James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggle in the Antebellum North* (1979; revised, New York: Holmes and Meier, 1999), p. 6; Newman, *Transformation of American Abolitionism*, chs. 4, 6-7; George R. Price and James Brewer Stewart, "The Roberts Case, the Easton Family, and the Dynamics of the Abolitionist Movement in Massachusetts, 1776-1870," *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, 4 (2000): 101-110.

[38]   Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 127-131, 134-144, quotation from p. 141.

[39]   Smith's friendships were so intimate that in 1855, McCune Smith, after having four children die in a seven-month period, sought out Gerrit in his grief: "My heart yearned to you in the midst of [my] deep affliction; and now, when the first sharp bitterness is past, there is no one I would rather commune with among men, than you." Frederick Douglass expressed similar emotional bonds; in 1852, as he was struggling to keep his newspaper afloat, he

wrote Gerrit Smith to thank him for his support and
friendship. "You not only keep life in my paper but keep
spirit in me," Douglass said. "I owe you much in every
way." See Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, chs. 5, 6, 8,
quotations from pp. 167, 199. See also C. Peter Ripley,
ed., *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, Vol. IV (Chapel Hill:
University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 274.

[40]   *Gerrit Smith to John Thomas, Esq., Peterboro, August
27, 1859* [broadside], Gerrit Smith Papers; Stauffer, *Black
Hearts of Men*, pp. 240-242.

[41]   Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 8-22, 34-35, 198-
207.

[42]   *Smith to John Thomas, August 27, 1859*; Stauffer, *Black
Hearts of Men*, pp. 236-245. In his prophesy, Smith
referred to Jefferson's famous warning: slaveholders had
even refused to listen to their own Jefferson, who had
"'trembled' when reflecting that 'God is just'," as Smith
noted, and had acknowledged that "'the Almighty has no
attribute which can take side with' her in a contest' with
her slaves."

[43]   *Smith to John Thomas, August 27, 1859*; Gerrit Smith,
"Address to the Slaves of the United States," *National
Anti-Slavery Standard*, February 24, 1842; Stauffer, *Black
Hearts of Men*, pp. 14-20, 95-110. Frederick Douglass and
James McCune Smith also argued that "if slavery and caste
are to be removed from the land, we must remove them, and
move them ourselves," as McCune Smith wrote; "others may
aid and assist if they will, but the moving power rests
with us." McCune Smith, quoted from Ripley, *Black
Abolitionist Papers*, IV, p. 291. On Douglass' assertion
that blacks must fight their own fight, see Philip S.
Foner, ed., *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*,
Vol. II (New York: International Publishers, 1950), pp.
360, 366. For an excellent analysis of the kind of
psychological reversal I'm referring to, though in a
different context, see Bryan Jay Wolf, *Romantic Re-Vision:
Culture and Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century American
Painting and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 1982), pp. 177-236.

[44]   For examples of Smith's and Brown's racial
transformation, see Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 18-

19, 62-63, 95-110, 162-164, 168-174. The words of a few other white abolitionists also hint at identity transformation. In the 1850s, Henry Clarke Wright declared: "I am a Negro. I feel that I am in heart and soul. The scorn and hate cast on him, are cast on me." In 1831 Garrison wrote: "The day is not far distant, I trust, when a black skin will not be merely endurable, but popular." But since neither Garrison nor Wright accepted insurrections or befriended blacks in the way that Gerrit Smith did (though Garrison came close with William Cooper Nell), these statements could also be examples of empathy. The difference between empathy and identity transformation is in the degree to which one acts on one's empathic statements. See Walter M. Merrill, ed., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Vol. 1: I Will Be Heard* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 128; Lawrence J. Friedman, *Gregarious Saints: Self and Community in American Abolitionism, 1830-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 184; Menand, "John Brown's Body," p. 60; Stewart, "Racial Modernity," p. 198.

[45] Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster" (1959), *The Time of Our Time* (New York: Random House, 1998), pp. 211-230; Menand, "John Brown's Body," p. 60. Mailer explored psychopathy, including rape and murder, as part of his apocalyptic vision and social revolution. He considered psychopathy, which he affirms as the *ne plus ultra* of "Hip," to be "most prevalent with the Negro" (p. 220).

[46] Gerrit Smith, quoted in *Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society* (New York: William S. Dorr, 1838), p. 35. African Americans lauded Smith's effort to become a black man. In 1846, Willis Hodges, the editor of the *Ram's Horn*, a New York City black militant newspaper, praised and "flattered" Smith by declaring: "Gerrit Smith is a colored man." See Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, p. 15, 18.

[47] *Smith to John Thomas, August 27, 1859*; Price and Stewart, "The Roberts Case," pp. 89-115; Stewart, "Racial Modernity," pp. 206-217; Stewart, "Modernizing Difference," pp. 707-712; David Brion Davis, "The Culmination of Racial Polarities and Prejudice," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 19:4 (Winter 1999): 770-771.

[48]   *Smith to John Thomas, August 27, 1859.* In *Black Hearts of Men*, I use the term "sacred self-sovereignty" to characterize the religious worldviews of Gerrit Smith, McCune Smith, Douglass, and Brown.

[49]   John Brown explicitly invoked Revolutionary ideals as his purpose for invading the South. In the opening of his "Provisional Constitution," which would govern those areas that he hoped to liberate from slavery (and which he wrote at Douglass's home), he declared his intention to realize "those eternal and self-evident truths" of the Declaration. See Richard J. Hinton, *John Brown and His Men* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1894), p. 619.

[50]   Ripley, *Black Abolitionist Papers*, III, 19-53, 403-12; Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren*, pp. 108-115; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, chs. 1, 6, 8; Horton, *Free People of Color*, pp. 80-97; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (1943; reprint, New York: International Publishers, 1993), pp. xi, 11-17.

[51]   Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, III, pp. 42-50; Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, IV, pp. 259-265; Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*, pp. 169, 240-253, quotation from p. 242; Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, pp. 168-196; Quarles, ed., "Letters From Negro Leaders to Gerrit Smith," *Journal of Negro History*, 27:4 (October 1942), pp. 432-436; Charles H. Wesley, "The Participation of Negroes in Anti-Slavery Political Parties," *Journal of Negro History*, 29 (January 1944): 69-71; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 24-25.
      It is important to note that a number of blacks remained with Garrison's party, even though they embraced political action and violent means. As Ripley notes, "the promise of politics became so pervasive after the 1830s that even most black Garrisonians voted where permitted" (vol. III, p. 42). And Horton points out that "Garrison's acceptance of others' acts of self-defense was important to many blacks who believed it was their manly duty to use violence if necessary to defend themselves" (*In Hope of Liberty*, p. 240).

[52]   Alan Kraut, "Forgotten Reformers: A Profile of Third Party Abolitionists in Antebellum New York," in Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, eds., *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana

State University Press, 1979), pp. 119-148; Vernon Volpe, *The Forlorn Hope of Freedom: The Liberty Party in the Old Northwest, 1838-1848* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990); Stewart, "Racial Modernity," p. 211.

[53]   Henry Highland Garnet, quoted from Joel Schor, *Henry Highland Garnet: A Voice of Black Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 100; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 127-133, 174-181; Milton C. Sernett, *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade For African American Freedom* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), pp. 104-161; Sernett, *Abolitionism's Axe: Beriah Green, Oneida Institute, and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

[54]   Sernett, *North Star Country*, pp. xiv, 104-161; Whitney Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), p. vii. Cross's book remains the best general study of the reform impulse in the Burned-Over District.

     It is important to note that while the Burned-Over District surpassed New England as a region that fostered black-white alliances, Boston remained the urban center of the abolition movement. Most black abolitionists considered Boston a more tolerant city than New York (which experienced a massive exodus of blacks in the 1850s) or Philadelphia. Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, IV, pp. 220-221; Horton, *Free People of Color*, pp. 28-30; Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, pp. 125-138; Albert Von Frank, *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); James Brewer Stewart, "Boston, Abolition, and the Atlantic World, 1820-1861," *Courage and Conscience: Black and White Abolitionists in Boston*, ed. Donald M. Jacobs (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 101-126. In terms of laws, Vermont was the most abolitionist state, which Gerrit Smith and other abolitionists recognized. Vermont adopted the first constitution in history "that prohibited slavery outright." See David Brion Davis, *In the Image of God: Religion, Moral Values, and Our Heritage of Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 269.

[55]   Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 19-20, 22-27. Radical Abolitionists justified their use of violence by drawing on John Quincy Adams' interpretation of the war power clause of the Constitution. As early as 1836, Adams had proposed that during a state of war, the President and Congress could end slavery as part of the war effort. Radical Abolitionists reinterpreted Adams by declaring that slavery was a state of war, and if the government shirked its duty, it was the obligation of the people of the free states to end slavery and preserve the peace.

[56]   Maria Diedrich, *Love Across Color Lines: Ottilie Assing and Frederick Douglass* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999); William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), pp. 132, 148, 163-170, 312; Philip S. Foner, ed., *Frederick Douglass on Women's Rights* (1976; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), pp. 3-48; Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. [???]. Douglass rarely talked about his female friendships, in order to avoid further gossip that his affection for women was sexual. He could openly declare his affections for men, since notions of homosexuality, which were often linked to male bonding in the twentieth century, did not then exist.
        Lawrence Friedman suggests that "women may have been less apprehensive than a number of their male colleagues that contact with blacks might tarnish their claims of devotion and civility." This was owing to women's "assurance of their inner moral worth," based on beliefs about the virtues of Woman's sphere. Yet these same beliefs could backfire: white women might avoid blacks for fear of tarnishing their purity. George Fredrickson brilliantly shows how Harriet Beecher Stowe, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, treated full-blooded blacks as natural Christians, and transformed the white domestic sphere into a subversive, frontier space that was open to blacks. My point is that it is extremely difficult to generalize, based on gender, about interracial alliances and friendships. See Friedman, *Gregarious Saints*, p. 176; Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, pp. 110-117; Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), pp. 64, 103-104, 126-128; *Jean Fagan Yellin, Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale

University Press, 1989), pp. 29-98; Elizabeth Ammons, "Stowe's Dream of the Mother-Savior: Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Writers Before the 1920s," in Eric J. Sundquist, ed., *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 155-195.

[57]   Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 76, 95-110, 152-168; Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 1-10; 221-237; Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, III, p. 42; James Brewer Stewart, *Wendell Phillips: Liberty's Hero* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), pp. 97-116, quotation from p. 102; Henry Mayer, *All On Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 3-70, 364-376.

[58]   Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, 158-168, 174-181, 198-204; Mayer, *All On Fire*, p. 374. See also John R. McKivigan, "The Frederick Douglass-Gerrit Smith Friendship and Political Abolitionism in the 1850s," *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 205-232; McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 146-170; Friedman, *Gregarious Saints*, pp. 187-195; Benjamin Quarles, "The Breach Between Douglass and Garrison," *The Journal of Negro History*, 23:2 (April 1938): 144-154; William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, "Boston Garrisonians and the Problem of Frederick Douglass," *Canadian Journal of History*, 2:2 (September 1967): 29-48; Tyrone Tillery, "The Inevitability of the Douglass-Garrison Conflict," *Phylon*, 37:2 (1976): 137-149; Philip S. Foner, *Frederick Douglass: A Biography* (New York: Citadel Press, 1964), pp. 75-83. One of the best sources on Douglass's break with Garrison is, of course, his own narrative at the time. See *My bondage and My Freedom*, ed. John Stauffer (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), pp. xxi-xxvii, 214-217, 236-244.

[59]   Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*, p. 30; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 20-22, 158-168, 176, 293n; Smith to Douglass, June 12, 1854, Douglass Papers, Library of Congress; Douglass to Smith, April 16, 1856, Gerrit Smith Papers; Foner, *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, vol. II, pp. 395-397, 402-403; McKivigan, "Frederick Douglass-Gerrit Smith Friendship," pp. 220-222; Benjamin

Quarles, *Frederick Douglass* (1948; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1997), pp. 161-163.

[60]   Price and Stewart, "The Roberts Case," pp. 89-115, quotation from p. 111; Stewart, "Boston, Abolition and the Atlantic World, 1820-1860," and James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, "Affirmation of Manhood: Black Garrisonians in Antebellum Boston," both in *Courage and Conscience*, pp. 101-155; Ripley, ed., Black Abolitionist Papers, IV, pp. 298-303; Pease and Pease, "Abolitionism and Confrontation in the 1850s," *Journal of American History*, 17 (1972): 117-128.

[61]   *Proceedings of the Convention of Radical Political Abolitionists, Held At Syracuse, New York, June 26th, 27th, and 28th, 1855* (New-York: Central Abolition Board, 1855), p. 45; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 8-27.

[62]   Peter J. Boyer, "Ron Brown's Secrets," *The New Yorker*, June 9, 1997, p. 67. Boyer mistakenly says that Ron Brown was the first black to chair a national political convention. In the late 1840s and 1850s a number of blacks were nominated for office. In 1848 the National Liberty party selected Samuel Ringgold for a New York state assembly seat. In 1854 it considered running Douglass for Congress, and in 1855 it nominated him for secretary of state of New York. In 1856 Radical Abolitionists considered Douglass for vice-president, and the next year it nominated McCune Smith for New York secretary of state. Although black office seekers achieved few successes, their candidacies were important markers in the movement, and they fostered enormous pride in the black community. See Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, p. 24; Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, III, p. 44.

[63]   *The Liberator*, September 7, 1855 (quoted); Richard H. Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom: Antislavery Politics in the United States, 1837-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 287; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 42-44.

[64]   Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, III, pp. 48-49, 446-449, quotation from p. 446; Price and Stewart, "The Roberts Case," pp. 89-115; Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, pp. 73-86; Carleton Mabee, *Black Freedom: The*

Nonviolent Abolitionists from 1830 Through the Civil War (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1970), pp. 159-181.

[65]   William Cooper Nell, quoted from Robert P. Smith, "William Cooper Nell: Crusading Black Abolitionist," *Journal of Negro History*, 55:3 (July 1970): 183, 185; Charles Sumner, quoted from C. Edwards Lester, *Life and Public Services of Charles Sumner* (New York: United States Publishing Company, 1874), p. 173. For other examples of Nell, see Earl Smith, "William Cooper Nell on the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850," *Journal of Negro History*, 66:1 (Spring 1981): 37-40. For other examples of Sumner, see Lester, *Life and Public Services of Charles Sumner*, pp. 159-180, which are his speeches of the mid-1850s. As a young man Sumner was much more skeptical of religion. In 1833 he declared: "I remained and still remain unconvinced that Christ was divinely commissioned to preach a revelation to men and that he was entrusted with the power of working miracles. . . . I am without religious feeling." Yet here he is attacking Christian doctrine rather than religious faith, for in the same letter he "glorif[ies] God—not because he sent his son into ye world to partake of its troubles & be ye Herald of glad tidings—but because he suffererd a man to be born, in whom ye world shld see but one of themselves, endowed with qualities calculated to elevate ye standard of attainable excellence." Sumner's speeches in the 1850s, which are literary masterpieces, are filled with prophetic and millennialist statements. See Sumner to Jonathan F. Stearns, January 12, 1833, in Beverly Wilson Palmer, ed., *The Selected Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. 1 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), p. 10. In his otherwise brilliant two-volume of Sumner, David Donald ignores the religious aspects of Sumner's reform. See Donald, *Charles Sumner* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996).

[66]   Ira Berlin, "North of Slavery: Black People in a Slaveholding Republic," Conference on Yale, New Haven, and American Slavery, Yale University, 27 September 2002; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Philip Klinkner with Rogers Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 1-71; David Brion Davis, *The Slave Power Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana

State University Press, 1969), pp. 14, 18; Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000); Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), pp. 338-354; Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom*, pp. 101-106.

[67]   Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 25, 114-123, 168-174.

[68]   Gerrit Smith to Charles Sumner, June 7, 1860, Gerrit Smith Papers; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 261-277.

[69]   Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, pp. 236-245, 261-281. Perhaps the act that marks Gerrit Smith's greatest plunge from militancy in the 1840s and 1850s occurred in 1867, when he alienated himself from most abolitionists and signed Jefferson Davis's bail bond—along with Horace Greeley and Cornelius Vanderbilt. His collaboration with these two racist leaders in a project to free and forgive the former Confederate president is telling: he could forgive Davis for leading a rebellion that was conceived in slavery; but he could not forgive himself for financing John Brown's rebel army that was conceived in equality.