

**Embroidering Emancipation:
Female Abolitionists and Material Culture in Britain and the
USA,
c.1780-1865**

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Naomi Gardner, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

This thesis examines material culture and female participation in the British and American anti-slavery campaigns from the 1780s to 1865. It explores the production, distribution and use of abolitionist material culture, within a female transatlantic framework. It considers the home as an overlooked site of political expression and explores how women's personal, social and political networks facilitated their relationships with political objects. This thesis brings together the separate disciplines of material culture and female abolitionists to enrich the current transatlantic anti-slavery narrative. Such an approach allows us to trace the ways material objects were used by abolitionists for political gain and as furnishings for the domestic interior.

This thesis incorporates a variety of surviving anti-slavery objects from numerous museum and archival collections and auction houses across Britain and the U.S. Beginning with an analysis of sewing circles we can see how British women were encouraged to employ their traditionally feminine skills to create items for sale at American bazaars. These items were then distributed by and marketed to female abolitionists, combining politics and consumerism. By exploring the household as a site for the display and use of political objects we can assess how women's increasing participation in the anti-slavery movement affected domestic space and the ways these objects were employed in the home for both decorative and practical purposes. By mapping the abolitionist interior, we can see how anti-slavery campaigns permeated transatlantic homes and incorporated all generations, especially girl abolitionists. Finally, the ways female abolitionist writers utilised material culture in narratives addressed to their juvenile abolitionist audience will be examined.

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Abbreviations

AAS – American Antiquarian Society, Abby Kelley Foster Papers

BFASS – Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society

BPL – Boston Public Library, Weston Anti-Slavery Papers

CHS – Chicago Historical Society collections

HNE – Historic New England collections

HBSCC – Harriet Beecher Stowe Centre Collections

JRL – John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, Wilson Anti-Slavery collections

LASD – Ladies Anti-Slavery Society of Dover

NCM – Norwich Castle Museum collections

NMMG – National Maritime Museum, Greenwich collections

NHHS – New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord

PFASS – Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society

WHM – Wilberforce House Museum, Hull collections

WMA – Wedgwood Museum Archive, Staffordshire

YCM – York Castle Museum collections

Introduction

Women's relationship with anti-slavery material culture was varied and innovative. In a letter to *The Times*, a pro-slavery sympathiser bemoaned the extent to which female abolitionists dominated households and society:

In this neighbourhood we have antislavery clubs, and antislavery needle parties, and antislavery tea parties and antislavery in so many shapes and ways that even if your enemies do not in the end destroy you by assault, those that side with you must give you up for the weariness of the subject and resentment of your supineness.¹

This thesis provides an in-depth and object-based analysis of the relationships between material culture and female abolitionists in Britain and the U.S between the 1780s and 1865. It explores the production, distribution and use of anti-slavery material objects within a female transatlantic framework. It considers the home as an often overlooked site of political expression and explores how women's personal, social and political networks facilitated their relationships with political objects. Such an approach allows us to trace the types of objects they used and examine the ways they were used by abolitionists across both the British and American campaigns.

Through an analysis of the minutes, reports and the transatlantic correspondence of the sewing circles and bazaars associated with female anti-slavery societies, we can see how British women were encouraged to use their traditionally female domestic skills to create handmade items for sale at American anti-slavery bazaars. These items were then distributed and marketed to female abolitionists as a means to combine politics, fashion and interior decorating. By exploring the 'abolitionist household' as a vessel for the display and use of political objects we can assess how women's increasing participation in the anti-slavery movement affected domestic space and the ways these objects were employed in the home for both decorative and practical purposes. By mapping the domestic interior room by room, we can see how the anti-slavery campaign permeated homes from all corners, affecting the family and servants alike. Through assessing material objects we can examine what influence they had on individual abolitionists, their households, and the British and American anti-slavery movements. Both textile and ceramic objects worked to create a distinctly feminine

¹ J. H. Flocks in *West Indian Sub-Committee Minutes, 1828-30* Quoted in Moira Ferguson, *Subject To Others, British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 261.

role for politically minded women within accepted contemporary gender norms. They afforded middle-class women visual statements of their participation, which could be worn on the body or displayed in the home. These objects held the ability to swiftly and efficiently spread abolitionist ideology and persuade others to support the cause. Material objects enabled and encouraged female abolitionists to utilise their traditionally feminine skills and attributes for political success. An analysis of women's relationships with commodities is crucial to understanding how consumption was gendered and how late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century consumer culture produced ideas about gender and ideal femininity. Through making, buying, selling and using ordinary household things, women were able to invest their material goods with political and personal meaning whilst creating a distinct political and consumer role for themselves in society.

In the absence of a surviving domestic interior belonging to an abolitionist on either side of the Atlantic, this thesis employs the concept of an 'imagined transatlantic abolitionist household' as a framework to analyse transatlantic anti-slavery material culture. This transatlantic abolitionist household is not a real space but an imagined one. It is not intended to be an accurate representation of the homes of individual or collective British or American abolitionists, nor does it suggest all households would have contained the items analysed in the discussion. Many homes would not have contained all, or even any, of the surviving objects examined in this thesis. Similarly, others might have owned a variety of anti-slavery objects in each room. By tracing these objects and analysing them in the rooms they furnished we can visualise how abolitionist households might have looked. This allows us to consider how political campaigns such as anti-slavery potentially permeated transatlantic domestic spaces through a variety of handmade, manufactured, practical and decorative objects. In doing so, this thesis focuses not only on the types of objects used to furnish abolitionist homes, but also the ways these objects might have been actually been used and the potential consequences of this upon the object's ability to convey anti-slavery sentiments.

Jasmine Nichole Cobb uses a similar framework in her analysis of the black transatlantic parlour where she 'mobilizes' her idea of an imagined parlour 'as a metaphor for thinking about projects of domesticity and domestication that took place through the visual cultures of this interior space...[underscoring] the spatial commitments of display.'² Although Cobb's

² Jasmine Nichole Cobb, *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 16-17.

metaphorical use of the imagined parlour is similar to the concept used in this thesis, her analysis is restricted in that she focuses on one room and only analyses visual source in the form of print culture. This thesis uses the idea of the transatlantic household to provide structure to an original discussion of anti-slavery domestic culture. Without it, we are left wandering aimlessly throughout the ‘household’ trying to discuss objects along the way.

Clare Midgley’s comparative study of British and American women abolitionists revealed the importance of transatlantic networks in sustaining the anti-slavery campaigns.³ This thesis focuses on ways women used material objects within these networks. It agrees with Betty Fladeland’s statement that ‘the struggles in Great Britain and the United States against slavery and the slave trade were so closely connected that they deserve to be studied together.’⁴ Similarly, Clare Taylor’s edited collection of letters between British and American abolitionists justifies a transatlantic approach in that they ‘worked so closely that it is impossible to discuss the organizations of one country without some reference to the societies of the other.’⁵ Although it is often difficult to determine whether surviving objects were owned by British or American women, material culture enriches a transatlantic approach by providing opportunity not only for comparison, but also for connecting female abolitionists within the Atlantic world. In *Empire and Globalisation*, Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson have explored how trade networks and material culture united the empire.⁶ Using a multi-disciplinary approach, they showed how finance and large scale movements such as emigration can be assessed across the empire. As campaigns that collaborated and shared material objects, this thesis assesses transatlantic anti-slavery material culture in respect to both the British and American movements. David Armitage distinguishes three approaches to the Atlantic world, defining ‘*Trans-Atlantic*’ history as ‘the international history of the Atlantic world’ told through comparisons concentrating ‘on the shores of the ocean, and assumes the existence of nations and states, as well as societies and economic formations.’⁷

³ Clare Midgley, *Women against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁴ Betty Fladeland, *Men and Brothers: Anglo American Antislavery Cooperation* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1972), ix.

⁵ Clare Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding* (Edinburgh: Aldine, 1974), 1. And Clare Taylor, *Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement: The Weston Sisters: Studies in Gender History*, (Hampshire: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

⁶ Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods, and capital in the British World, c.1850-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

⁷ David Armitage, ‘Three Concepts of Atlantic History’ in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 18.

This thesis examines female participation in political campaigns within a transatlantic framework. It demonstrates how material culture, female activists and abolitionist interiors were connected across political campaigns and geographical boundaries.

As Fladeland and Clare Taylor asserted, the strong networks between British and American female abolitionists mean a transnational or transatlantic approach is particularly suited to a discussion of material objects and their place in the household. Although the British and American anti-slavery campaigns differed in terms of their political context, they both created and used material culture. British and American households were both furnished with anti-slavery objects: an approach that examines the abolitionist interior, should therefore consider them both as ‘one household.’ The handmade items British women sent for sale at American bazaars can be viewed as a material form of correspondence, connecting two separate groups of female abolitionists through material culture. The use of a transatlantic approach to an analysis of anti-slavery objects in this thesis is not comparative, instead, it uses material objects to connect the experiences of female abolitionists in Britain with those in the U.S.

Bernard Porter argued there was no pervasive ‘imperial culture’ and that Britons were either ignorant of the empire’s existence or indifferent to it.⁸ However, many including those loosely described as the ‘new imperial historians’ have countered this claim.⁹ John Mackenzie stated that cultural expressions of empire were prevalent and illustrate the participation of different social classes in imperial political causes. He argues the visual impact of empire was difficult to ignore; homes were furnished with textiles and furniture from around the empire.¹⁰ The expanding nineteenth-century consumer society was reflected in the variety of empire-related goods. The surviving anti-slavery objects produced by British manufacturers used in this thesis suggest an awareness of events occurring in the U.S. as well

⁸ Bernard Porter, ‘Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness’ *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36, 1 (2008): 102.

⁹ Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, ‘Introduction: being at home with the Empire’, 1-31 and Joanna De Groot, ‘Metropolitan desires and colonial connections: reflections on consumption and empire’, 166-190 In Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire. Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-31.

¹⁰ John Mackenzie, ‘Empire and Metropolitan Cultures’ in Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 270-293.

as the empire. They reveal how households were influenced by political campaigns reflected in the abolitionist objects they contained. This thesis aims to contribute towards new imperial histories by providing an analysis of women's social and political connections and networks, on a local, national and transatlantic level. It also puts forward a way for scholars to think about histories of gender and material culture, how we can approach new source material that has been overlooked by traditional narratives of anti-slavery and gender, and analyse it within a transatlantic framework. This thesis contributes towards new imperial histories on the domestic and quotidian, focusing on the ordinary objects that contributed to the formation of the abolitionist household. It argues an object-based analysis of the material culture of daily life is important to our understanding of the lives of abolitionists and their relationships with everyday objects.

The Material Culture of Abolition

Placing material culture at the forefront of the discussion, as key sources, this thesis uses a wide variety of surviving anti-slavery objects that have not previously been analysed by scholars or have not been specifically discussed in terms of their use within abolitionist households. These objects have been sourced from museum and archival collections across Britain and the U.S. as well as private collections and auction houses. In 1989 Jean Fagan Yellin noted 'No systematic effort has been made to list antislavery artifacts in America.'¹¹ This is still true for both British and American anti-slavery objects. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe and catalogue every surviving item, but I have incorporated a wide selection of objects in my discussion. I have also included a non-exhaustive list of some of the surviving objects currently held in various museums and archival collections in my bibliography as a starting point for remedying Yellin's footnote.

This thesis incorporates surviving objects alongside traditional textual sources: periodicals, the records of female anti-slavery societies, sewing circles and bazaars, as well as diaries, letters and memoirs. It uses the information concerning individual objects in museum catalogues and auction house listings to help drawing conclusions about their origins and intended purpose. By using these sources to contextualise surviving objects, this thesis aims

¹¹ Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters. The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 181.

to address the historiographical gap by assessing women's actual interactions with anti-slavery material culture.

The surviving objects used in this thesis are the material things transatlantic female abolitionists produced, purchased and politicised. The term 'material culture' emphasises how inanimate household objects acted as vehicles for explicit and implicit political messages. Museum curator Adrienne Hood asserts 'Historians have not entirely overlooked material culture, but tend to use it to illustrate arguments derived from documents or to examine textual evidence such as household inventories, diaries and letters that contain information about objects.'¹² However, my research will use them alongside other textual sources to interpret their political and social meanings. Scholars rarely begin their research with objects or use them as the primary form of evidence because it is difficult to discern the meanings behind them. In his work on Victorian hall furnishings, Kenneth Ames concurs it is 'not easy to judge to meanings of objects in people's lives or how they felt about a certain artefact. Not only did those meanings and feelings go unrecorded but they often existed below the level of consciousness.'¹³ A scholarly assessment of material culture looks not only at the physical dimensions and appearance of an object, but crucially the context in which it was made, bought and used. My research attempts to decode these messages by analysing the images and texts used to decorate them and to trace the various ways they were used within the household for practical and political use.

Approaches: Material Culture

Jules David Prown defines material culture as the 'manifestations of culture through material productions.'¹⁴ Material culture provides historians with physical sources that permit an exploration of contemporary social and cultural attitudes and enrich traditional historical narratives. Analyses of the relationships between objects, consumption and social meanings of things by social anthropologists have provided a framework for understanding material

¹² Adrienne Hood 'Material Culture: the object' In Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Peniston-Bird, eds., *Beyond the Text: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, (London: Routledge, 2009), 176.

¹³ Kenneth L. Ames 'Meaning in Artefacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 9, 1 (1978): 26.

¹⁴ Jules David Prown, 'The Truth of Material Culture: History or Fiction?' In Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery, eds., *History From Things. Essays on Material Culture*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 1.

culture. Prown's approach where the researcher engages in description, deduction, speculation and 'creative-imagining' has helped to incorporate objects into my narrative.¹⁵

In his influential essay 'The Cultural Biography of Things' Igor Kopytoff argued objects have 'biographies' or life stories where the cultural meaning of consumer objects changes over time and space as they pass through their individual material life cycle.¹⁶ According to Rom Harre, these life stories give objects cultural meaning:

An object is transformed from a piece of stuff definable independently of any story-line into a social object by its embedment in a narrative...Material things have magic powers only in the contexts of the narratives in which they are embedded.¹⁷

Following Harre, this thesis situates surviving anti-slavery objects within and alongside the historical narratives in which they were produced. According to Kopytoff, scholars attempting to understand the 'biography' of an object should ask, and try to answer the following questions:

Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the recognized "ages" or periods of the thing's "life," and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?¹⁸

In chapters 3 and 4, I apply these questions to an analysis of surviving anti-slavery objects, focusing upon their 'biographies' within transatlantic households. However, these meanings are not always easily read. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton's claim that people assign meanings to material objects, and that these meanings are subject to change throughout the object and the person's lifetime has also influenced my discussion of anti-slavery material culture.¹⁹ Similarly, Arjun Appadurai states 'commodities, like persons,

¹⁵ Jules David Prown, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method', *The Winterthur Portfolio*, 17:1 (1982): 1-19.

¹⁶ Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986), 66-7.

¹⁷ Rom Harre, 'Material objects in social worlds' *Theory, Culture and Society* 19 5/6 (2002): 25.

¹⁸ Kopytoff, 'Cultural Biography' in Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 66-7.

¹⁹ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 17.

have social lives’,²⁰ they are ‘things in a certain situation’ that is, one phase in the object’s life cycle.²¹ As such he claimed commodities must be illuminated ‘in motion’ by examining the entire life cycle from production to distribution and consumption to avoid being ‘doomed to sterility.’²² Only then can we understand the values assigned to objects and their influence on culture. Carl Knappett has also argued that ‘we should not treat objects as individual, isolated items; attention must be devoted to both their spatial and temporal situatedness...an artefact’s location...and how that artefact is experienced by agents over the course of a life time.’²³ Using these works as a foundation for an analysis of the meanings ascribed to anti-slavery objects, this thesis attempts to reveal their biographies and social lives by tracing their life cycle within the domestic space.

In their seminal work, Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood defined consumption as ‘a system of reciprocal rituals’ that is ‘the very arena in which culture is fought over and licked into shape.’²⁴ Anthropologist Daniel Miller has shown how shopping for household items provides ‘opportunities for shoppers to think through aspects of their relationships with others.’²⁵ Applied to the consumer choices of female abolitionists, anti-slavery household objects strengthened and created personal and political networks, and provided an opportunity for women to reflect upon their political identity from within the domestic space.

The recent ‘material turn’ has meant historians are increasingly drawing upon these social anthropological literatures in their works in attempts to write multi-disciplinary approaches to traditional histories.²⁶ Karen Harvey argues history is ‘impoverished without attention to material culture.’²⁷ In terms of how to incorporate material culture, Ann Smart Martin criticised historians for not allowing ‘the objects themselves to be a critical part of the story’

²⁰ Arjun Appadurai, ‘Introduction: commodities and the politics of value’ In Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 3.

²¹ Ibid., 13.

²² Ibid., 16.

²³ Carl Knappett, *Thinking Through Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press, 2005), 62-3.

²⁴ Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), xxii and 37.

²⁵ Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987) discussed in Ian Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture* (London: Sage, 2007), 97.

²⁶ Karen Harvey, ‘Introduction: practical matters’ In Karen Harvey, ed., *History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, (London: Routledge, 2009), 1-23. Harvey outlines some of the ways historians can use material culture and what types of objects historians have used.

²⁷ Ibid., 1.

claiming they ‘have failed to take full advantage of theoretical tools to understand the complex texts of symbolism and cultural meaning.’²⁸ Chapters 1 and 2 provide the contextual basis for analysing surviving objects by looking at how they were made and sold using female transatlantic anti-slavery networks. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 respond to Smart Martin’s criticism and take an object-based and object-led approach placing surviving anti-slavery objects at the centre of the discussion, viewed alongside written text in an attempt to enrich the narrative.

Overview of the British and American Anti-Slavery Campaigns

Transatlantic abolitionist movements first arose in the late eighteenth century. As David Brion Davis has noted, this was remarkable, given that at that time, the slave trade was at its height and profits from slave-grown produce were growing ever higher.²⁹ From the late seventeenth century to 1807 the slave trade displaced 3.4 million West Africans, shipping them to the America and Britain’s West Indian colonies. At the height of the trade, in the 1790s, a total of 420,000 slaves a year were shipped across the Atlantic. In Britain and the U.S., the religious moral convictions of non-conformist groups such as the Quakers and Evangelicals led them to form early anti-slavery societies.

The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was founded in 1787 in Britain. Prominent members such as Granville Sharp and William Wilberforce have become well-known cornerstones of popular British history for their role in the abolition movement. The British abolition movement sustained its campaign over five decades, calling for Bills to be laid in Parliament. Wilberforce introduced the first Parliamentary Bill to abolish the slave trade in 1791, but he faced rich and powerful opponents and the Bill was defeated.³⁰ British abolitionists took direct action to build support for the cause. Wide-scale petitions and boycotts of slave-grown produce went hand in hand with textual, visual and oral rhetoric designed to convey the horrors of the slave trade to the British public. However, it was not until 1807 that an Act to abolish the slave trade was finally passed.

²⁸ Ann Smart Martin, ‘Makers, Buyers, and Users, Consumerism as a Material Culture Framework’ *Winterthur Portfolio*, 28, 2/3 (1993): 144.

²⁹ David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 576.

³⁰ Christopher Leslie Brown, *Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 496.

Britain relied upon naval power and its imperial influence in the world to enforce the ban on the slave trade. However, these measures were ultimately insufficient to defeat slavery in isolation; the industry of slavery persisted. In the early 1820s British abolitionists renewed their previous campaigning efforts towards emancipation, joined by an increasing female membership. Slave ownership was deeply woven into British society; members of the middling as well as the upper classes owned slaves. Indeed, many slave owners of modest income protested that their livelihoods were threatened by abolition, demanding compensation for their loss of property. British abolitionists therefore began to call for a complete end to slave ownership across Britain's Caribbean colonies. The Emancipation Act was passed in 1833 and came into force on August 1, 1834; a milestone that was commemorated across the Empire after fifty years of campaigning. However, this required a compromise and further campaigning was required to end the system of apprenticeship in 1838. British slave owners were compensated with vast sums of money for their loss of 'property' on Britain's eventual abolition of slavery.³¹

The narrative for American abolitionism follows a different chronology to the British, and played a role in the outbreak of the Civil War between Northern and Southern states. British abolitionist milestones played a role in catalysing early American efforts. The first U.S. state to abolish slavery was Pennsylvania in 1780. American approaches to the abolition of the slave trade were, however, often different to those in Britain. These included discussions of black migration back to Africa, as proposed by the American Colonisation Society, which gathered pace from the 1820s to the 1830s. The American Anti-Slavery Society was founded in 1833, the same year that Britain passed its Act to abolish slavery. Following the success of the British campaign, British abolitionists, particularly women, turned their efforts towards assisting their fellow abolitionists across the Atlantic.³²

Female Abolitionists

In her key study of British and American female abolitionists, Clare Midgley explored the ways in which women participated in 'the first large-scale political campaign by middle-class women, and the first movement in which women aroused the opinion of the female public in

³¹ James Walvin, 'The Slave Trade, Abolition and Public Memory' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Sixth Series*, 19, (2009): 139-149.

³² James M. McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy: From Reconstruction to the NAACP* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 438.

order to put pressure on parliament.’³³ In 1825, two years after the formation of the Anti-Slavery Society, the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves was formed in the house of Lucy Townsend. Later on, the Ladies Society became the influential Female Society for Birmingham. Its primary aim was to engender public outrage at the horrors of slavery through publications such as ‘Appeal from British Ladies to West India Planters’. It also funded charitable and educational work by missionaries among free black people in the West Indies.³⁴ This was followed by foundation of a network of other British female anti-slavery societies in the 1820s and 1830s. There were at least seventy-three active female associations between 1825-1833.³⁵ Indeed, the ratio of men’s groups to women’s narrowed to two to one by 1831.³⁶

British female anti-slavery societies were instrumental in raising funds for the cause. In 1829, twenty-one per cent of national Society funds were generated by ladies’ associations. Indeed, in 1826, the Female Society for Birmingham raised £908, almost a third of the national Society’s figure for that year.³⁷ Most of these funds were spent on the Female Society for Birmingham’s own propaganda, which in turn raised money for the society coffer.³⁸ As we will discuss in chapter 3, female abolitionists used their domestic skills to produce workbags filled with pamphlets that were sold to participating and potential abolitionists.

Alongside producing and disseminating pamphlets, petitioning was another popular tool for spreading support used by British female abolitionists. Hundreds of thousands of women signed petitions in the early 1830s, nearly one third of signatories in 1833 were female.³⁹ The other major tactic of British abolitionists was abstention from slave-produced goods. As we will see in chapter 4, women sold and purchased anti-slavery china to hold the East-Indian sugar they consumed due to their abstention efforts.

Following the success of 1834, British abolitionists turned their attentions to countries still campaigning against slavery, forming the British and Foreign Antislavery Society in 1839. Transatlantic links were cemented at the first World Antislavery Convention in London in

³³ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 201.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 43-4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 62-3 and 67.

1840, also famous for its debate regarding ‘the woman question.’ In the 1840s and 1850s British women were increasingly involved in campaigning on behalf of their American sisters. Discussed in chapters 1 and 2, female transatlantic anti-slavery networks were formed and strengthened between female societies across Britain and the U.S. British women raised funds by sending a variety of handmade and exotic wares to American anti-slavery bazaars. These were not just sites of consumerism; in 1847 female abolitionists from Glasgow and Edinburgh exhibited their collection of 55,337 petition signatures at the Boston bazaar.⁴⁰ In this thesis, I examine the transatlantic networks created by British women to end American slavery.

Julie Roy Jeffrey provides a chronological analysis of American women’s participation throughout the campaign but does not give much space to British abolitionists.⁴¹ Sandra Petrulionis’ work on American female abolitionists only explores the experiences of Concord women.⁴² Debra Gold Hansen has analysed the friendships and factions of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS).⁴³ Beth Salerno’s analysis of the records of over 200 female American anti-slavery societies fills the gaps left by regional works.⁴⁴ Salerno notes that ‘By the end of 1831 [American] women were engaged in most of the activities that would come to define their participation in the anti-slavery movement.’⁴⁵ Prior to the establishment of female anti-slavery societies, these tactics included ‘fund-raising, information distribution, petitioning and networking with English women.’⁴⁶ These avenues for American women to demonstrate their political activism were united with the formation of female anti-slavery societies in 1832 and provided a sphere for the establishment of anti-slavery sewing circles and bazaars from 1835 onwards.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 132.

⁴¹ Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism. Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998)

⁴² Sandra Petrulionis, *To Set This World Right: The Antislavery Movement in Thoreau's Concord*, (Cornell University Press, 2006)

⁴³ Debra Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993)

⁴⁴ Beth A. Salerno, *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005)

⁴⁵ Salerno, *Sister Societies*, 9.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Midgley has shown how British women demonstrated their power as domestic consumers by boycotting slave grown sugar.⁴⁷ Charlotte Sussman has examined the history of consumer protests and boycotts against colonialism from 1713 to 1833,⁴⁸ and Kate Davies has focused on the relationship between notions of feminine sympathy, humanity, commerce and consumption.⁴⁹ Beth Kowaleski-Wallace has also discussed women, china and consumer culture in eighteenth-century England. She suggests using textual sources alongside the material history of china reveals society's views towards women and consumer culture.⁵⁰ This thesis explores the relationship between the production and distribution of anti-slavery objects and contemporary constructions of 'appropriate' female consumerism.

The Material Culture of Anti-Slavery

Despite the extensive historiography on the British and American anti-slavery campaigns, scholars have only recently begun to address the relationship between gender, anti-slavery and material objects. Historians often mention the types of objects bearing imitations of Wedgwood's cameo and then move on to the rest of their discussion. In their work, Davies and Lynn Festa list a range of anti-slavery objects including bell-pulls, fire screens and cushion covers.⁵¹ Desiree Long claims Wedgwood's cameo was set into hatpins, buttons and rings.⁵² While it is plausible that slave motifs were used to decorate the items, Davies, Festa and Long do not reference their source of information. I have not been able to find any surviving anti-slavery bell-pulls, fire screens or cushion covers, and I understand the Wedgwood cameo was too big to be used as a button or a ring.

⁴⁷ Clare Midgley, 'Slave Sugar Boycotts, Female Activism, and the Domestic Base of British Anti-Slavery Culture' *Slavery & Abolition* 17, 3 (1996): 137-162.

⁴⁸ Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000)

⁴⁹ Kate Davies, 'A moral purchase: femininity, commerce and abolition, 1788-1792' In *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere 1700-1830*, edited by Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona O Gallchoir and Penny Warburton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

⁵¹ Davies, 'moral purchase' in Eger, *Women*, 135.; Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-century Britain and France* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 2006), 165.

⁵² Desiree Long, 'The Power of an Image: Wedgwood's Slave Cameo' *The Oakland Journal*, 13 (2007): 164.

In his work on anti-slavery visual culture, John Oldfield argued ‘cameos, tokens, medals and prints were all part of the growing commercialisation of politics during the eighteenth century...they made abolition immediate and accessible. They made it fashionable.’⁵³ Oldfield described how Quakers hung the iconic print of the slave ship the *Brooks* upon their walls, but he did not continue this analysis to the rest of the household and focused only on the British campaign. In their works on the visual iconography of the kneeling slave, Mary Guyatt, Desiree Long and Cynthia Hamilton all place Wedgwood’s cameo at the centre of their discussion and have situated it alongside other textual and anti-slavery objects.⁵⁴ However, they do not discuss how it was also used within the household as a decorative item. Guyatt includes an image of a framed cameo but uses it to discuss copies made by other manufacturers, instead of discussing the object itself.⁵⁵

Alice Taylor, Saadia Lawton, Sarah Parsons and Anna Vaughan Kett have all included anti-slavery material objects in their research. Taylor’s work on the Boston anti-slavery bazaar between 1834 and 1858 has been particularly influential upon this thesis. However, it examines a limited range of objects, which are discussed in terms of how they may have been made for or sold at bazaars.⁵⁶ Incorporating a wide range of surviving textiles into her narrative, Vaughan Kett’s thesis on Quaker women and free-produce cotton is an impressive contribution towards women’s relationships with fashion and free-produce and provided an example of how this thesis could situate textile objects alongside narratives of women and abolition.⁵⁷ Lawton examines how different Anglo-American audiences ‘responded’ to the Wedgwood slave medallion and some of its subsequent ‘permutations’ between 1787 and 1839.⁵⁸ She uses surviving objects as ‘case studies’ and contemporary accounts as ‘audiences’ reacting to the way the kneeling slave was reworked onto a variety of other

⁵³ John Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade, 1787-1807* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

⁵⁴ Mary Guyatt, ‘The Wedgwood Slave Medallion, Values in Eighteenth-century Design’ *Journal of Design History*, 13, 2 (2000): 93-105; Long, ‘Power of an Image’; Cynthia S. Hamilton, ‘Hercules Subdued: The Visual Rhetoric of the Kneeling Slave’ *Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 34, 4 (2012): 631-652.

⁵⁵ Guyatt, ‘Slave Medallion’: 97.

⁵⁶ Alice Taylor, ‘Selling Abolitionism: The Commercial, Material and Social World of the Boston Antislavery Fair, 1834-1858’, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1994.

⁵⁷ A. P. Vaughan Kett, ‘Quaker Women, the Free Produce Movement and British Anti-Slavery Campaigns: The Free Labour Cotton Depot in Street 1853-1858’, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Brighton, 2012.

⁵⁸ Saadia Nicoe Teresa Lawton, ‘Contested Meanings: Audience Responses to the Wedgewood Slave Medallion, 1787-1839,’ , Unpublished PhD thesis, University Of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009.

objects. Although offering an original approach, Lawton often assigns ‘responses’ to objects that were not necessarily used by the person specified. She uses a surviving patch box inlaid with a Wedgwood cameo to discuss a snuff box that might have been one owned by someone who ordered four cameos ‘made up’ into other objects despite there being no proof either way.⁵⁹ Parsons uses British anti-slavery visual culture between 1765 and 1807 to investigate how it affected the British Empire and racial stereotypes and concepts of blackness.⁶⁰ While my thesis discusses some of the same material objects used by Taylor, Lawton and Parsons, it incorporates these objects into an analysis of transatlantic domestic space, and ranges more widely in the variety of objects examined.

Sam Margolin used a variety of British and American anti-slavery ceramics from collector Rex Stark’s personal collection to illustrate his work on the iconography of the abolition movement. However, Margolin focused on the racial sentiments depicted through the anti-slavery images, not how those ceramics were used in abolitionist households.⁶¹ He distinguishes between the function of anti-slavery objects and its meaning, but he does not discuss this further in terms of how this translated to its actual use in the household. Jane Webster has recently decoded the meanings and possible origins of ceramics decorated with transfer patterns of slave ships, providing a comparison against abolitionist ceramics.⁶² Martha Hyman-Katz discusses the difficulties faced by scholars trying to trace the origins of anti-slavery ceramics, listing the questions that need to be asked and answered about their manufacturers and the decisions behind their manufacture.⁶³

Several historians have examined anti-slavery print culture. Jean Fagan Yellin traced the iconography of the anti-slavery movement to explore abolitionist feminism in terms of the American campaign’s culture and society.⁶⁴ Phillip Lapsansky has also analysed the anti-

⁵⁹ Ibid., 61-63.

⁶⁰ Sarah Parsons, ‘Imagining Empire: Slavery and British Visual Culture, 1765-1807’, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, 2000.

⁶¹ Sam Margolin, ‘And Freedom to the Slave: Anti-Slavery Ceramics, 1787-1865’ in Robert Hunter, ed., *Ceramics in America* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002), 80-109.

⁶² Jane Webster, ‘“Success to the Dobson”: Commemorative Artefacts Depicting 18th-century British Slave Ships’ *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 49, 1 (2015): 72-98.

⁶³ Martha Hyman-Katz, ‘Doing Good While Doing Well: The Decision to Manufacture Goods That Supported the Abolition of the Slave Trade and Slavery in Great Britain’ *Slavery and Abolition*, 29, 2 (2008): 219-231.

⁶⁴ Jean Fagan Yellin, and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women’s Political*

slavery images used to illustrate periodicals, newspapers and prints and their potential to possess hidden meanings.⁶⁵ While his discussion of meanings is useful for this thesis, Lapsansky only mentions the use of the slave motif on handmade items made by female abolitionists in terms of their contribution towards anti-slavery bazaars. Marcus Wood has made a significant historiographical contribution by linking the visual culture of slavery to memory.⁶⁶ Wood's transatlantic analysis fills the gap for a comparative approach to anti-slavery visual culture but his focus is on white sympathy and racial hierarchy, not the use of objects in the home. Recently, Cobb has examined the black transatlantic parlour in terms of the use of print culture and visual representations within the domestic space.⁶⁷ She provides an interesting comparison, but does not analyse physical objects or individual rooms in the household apart from the parlour.

As the key work on anti-slavery material culture, Lynne Walker and Vron Ware's exploration of the abolitionist interior provided the inspiration for this thesis by suggesting how surviving objects can be woven into historical narratives of anti-slavery.⁶⁸ Andrea Atkin and Alice Taylor have also contributed towards our understanding of the ways female abolitionists made items associated with their domestic skills such as pincushions, needle books and potholders, selling them at American anti-slavery bazaars.⁶⁹ Walker and Ware showed 'how women's increasing participation in the [anti-slavery] movement affected domestic space...the type of abolitionist artefacts produced and their arrangement in the home for decoration, use and propaganda.'⁷⁰ They drew upon tourism, art and literature to evoke 'a multi-dimensional construct of the historical home.'⁷¹ Although their contribution provided the first foray into the abolitionist interior, Walker and Ware focused primarily on the

Culture in Antebellum America (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

⁶⁵ Phillip Lapsansky, 'Graphic Discord: Abolitionist and Antiabolitionist Images' In *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

⁶⁷ Cobb, *Picture Freedom*.

⁶⁸ Lynne Walker and Vron Ware, 'Political Pincushions: Decorating the Abolitionist Interior 1787-1865' In *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*, edited by Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd, 58-83. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

⁶⁹ Andrea Atkin, "'When Pincushions are Periodicals': Women's Work, Race and Material Objects in Female Abolitionism" *American Transcendental Quarterly* 11, 2 (1997): 93-113; Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism'.

⁷⁰ Walker and Ware, 'Pincushions', 71.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

‘feminised space’ of the drawing-room or parlour, despite trying to argue against the separate spheres framework. They used a small sample of mostly British objects and did not discuss how these objects were used in homes: the difference between intent and domestic reality.

This thesis builds upon their work and takes a more in-depth tour through the abolitionist household moving between walls, bedrooms, parlours, drawing rooms, dining rooms and kitchens. It includes a wider range of surviving British and American anti-slavery objects than used by Atkin, Alice Taylor and Walker and Ware, and uses bazaar reports to describe items that have not survived but might be ‘found’ in our abolitionist interior. It acknowledges that many surviving items used in parlours and drawing rooms were gendered, but argues that the spaces themselves were not as gendered as those who support the separate spheres ideology claim. It also incorporates surviving objects that were not gender specific to supplement the variety of ones that were. This thesis looks into the ways women participated in and identified with the abolitionist movement through the decoration of their homes and bodies with anti-slavery emblems. Ultimately, it asks how women brought the subject of anti-slavery into the fabric of their homes and everyday lives.

In situating anti-slavery objects within the household, this thesis draws on literatures that have addressed nineteenth-century middle-class domestic interiors in Britain and the U.S. In her work on the material culture of English households between 1850 and 1910, Jane Hamlett considers ‘how middle-class families imagined, described and used rooms, furnishings and domestic ephemera and the role these objects played in family life.’⁷² She argues ‘acts of consumption need to be seen within the context of the household and the lifecycle.’⁷³ Deborah Cohen has also examined the relationship between household objects and the British middle-classes, using autobiographies and diaries to convey women’s attempts to balance shifting religious and moral values with consumerism.⁷⁴ Thad Logan and Katherine Grier have both focused specifically upon the middle-class Victorian parlour. Logan sees the British parlour ‘as a material artefact’ and categorises objects that could be found by function

⁷² Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations. Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850-1910*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁴ Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2006.

and the types of materials used.⁷⁵ Agreeing with Logan's view that parlours 'asserted a household's identity,'⁷⁶ Grier argues parlours 'were settings that allowed Victorian Americans to represent themselves as full participants in their world.'⁷⁷ Historians of material culture and the nineteenth-century domestic space have not specifically addressed anti-slavery, and this thesis uses their work as a framework for incorporating multiple disciplines and sources into the narrative.

Child Abolitionists and Material Culture: Games and Embroidered Samplers

Children's anti-slavery objects and child abolitionist's spaces in a transatlantic context have been largely ignored by scholars of abolition, children and material culture. This thesis uses my framework of the imagined transatlantic abolitionist household to examine the domestic spaces occupied by child abolitionists and the anti-slavery objects they used in them. Scholars have begun to focus on children's objects in their analyses of material culture, domestic interiors and ideological notions of childhood. Whilst they have used these to discuss nineteenth-century households and consumerism, my thesis provides an original analysis of juvenile anti-slavery material culture.

Mark Kelley, Ellen Goldner, Louise Stevenson and Alice Taylor have all discussed the American card game 'Uncle Tom and Little Eva' produced by Vilen. S.W. Parkhurst that turned *Uncle Tom's Cabin* into a 'New and Interesting Game.'⁷⁸ However, they focus upon the rules that required children to take on the role of slaveholders and re-enact Stowe's narrative of white liberal sympathy. Only Kelley acknowledges how the game might have been perceived by the children who owned it; the rest do not address its place within British and American households.

⁷⁵ Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour. A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xiii.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁷⁷ Katherine C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity 1850–1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), vii.

⁷⁸ Mark Kelley, 'Learning to Play the Game of Unhappy Families: Sympathetic Reading and Sentimental Ownership in "Uncle Tom and Little Eva," a Card Game Adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*', *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 45, 1, (2012); Ellen Goldner, 'Arguing with Pictures: Race, Class, and the Formation of Popular Abolitionism through Uncle Tom's Cabin.' *Journal of American & Comparative Cultures* 24, 1 (2001); Louise Stevenson, 'Virtue Displayed: The Tie-Ins of Uncle Tom's Cabin.' *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture: A Multimedia Archive*. Dir. Stephen Raillton, (University of Virginia, 2009).

Traditional works on children's jigsaw puzzles have produced useful catalogues of surviving items, but have not offered much in the way of historical analysis.⁷⁹ Building upon this, scholars have recently begun a thematic analysis of puzzles. Amongst others, Megan Norcia has focused on British dissected map puzzles and their role as educational tools, teaching children about geographical and imperial boundaries through play.⁸⁰ This thesis applies Norcia's arguments to describe surviving puzzles with slavery and anti-slavery sentiments produced to teach children about imperial boundaries. Romita Ray has used the British nineteenth century board game 'The Noble Game of Elephant and Castle' to convey how children's toys could be filled with imperial rhetoric.⁸¹ However, her analysis is limited to India and she does not discuss the game's use within the domestic space. This thesis contributes to Norcia's and Ray's work by unpicking the imperial and anti-slavery sentiments in a board game and several puzzles and situates them in their place within transatlantic households.

There is a rich historiography of British and American samplers using pieces from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth, thanks to textile historians and sampler enthusiasts. However, none have addressed surviving anti-slavery samplers in a scholarly capacity. Historians of transatlantic anti-slavery have briefly mentioned samplers as examples of abolitionist material culture without actually referencing specific examples. Taylor does discuss one of the samplers I have analysed, but she does not situate it within the domestic space or mention any of the other surviving British and American pieces.⁸² Quilt historian Barbara Brackman mentioned other surviving anti-slavery samplers in her blog post.⁸³ However, neither have specifically analysed the multiple surviving children's anti-slavery samplers included in this thesis or their role within abolitionist households. In doing so, this

⁷⁹ Key works on the history and importance of puzzles include Linda Hannas's *The English Jigsaw Puzzle, 1760-1890*, (London: Wayland Publishers, 1972), and *The Jigsaw Book: Celebrating two centuries of jigsaw-puzzling round the world*, (New York: The Dial, 1981) who was the first to carry out a full-length study on jigsaw puzzles. Also Jill Shefrin, *Neatly Dissected for the Instruction of Young Ladies and Gentlemen in the Knowledge of Geography: John Spilsbury and Early Dissected Puzzles*, (Los Angeles: Costznen Occasional Press, 1999).

⁸⁰ Megan A. Norcia, 'Puzzling Empire: Early Puzzles and Dissected Maps as Imperial Heuristics', *Children's Literature*, 37 (2009).

⁸¹ Romita Ray, 'The Beast in a Box: Playing with Empire in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain' *Visual Resources*, 22, 1, (2006).

⁸² Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 224-229.

⁸³ Barbara Brackman, 'Abolitionist Embroidery', *Material Culture, Quilts & Fabric: Past & Present Blog*, Wednesday, 24 November 2010. <http://barbarabrackman.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/abolitionist-embroidery.html> and 'Abolitionist Embroidery 2', Friday November 26, 2010. Last accessed January 2016. <http://barbarabrackman.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/abolitionist-embroidery-2.html>

thesis provides an original contribution to our understanding of girls' anti-slavery needlework in a transatlantic context.

Taylor mentions the Parkhurst card game alongside her discussion of a British anti-slavery sampler and an American children's anti-slavery handkerchief.⁸⁴ However, she uses these items to discuss items sold at the Boston anti-slavery bazaar, and she does not address their use within abolitionist households or children's domestic spaces, as this thesis will do. None of these scholars has incorporated more than one or two items in their work. Aside from Taylor, they have also only focused on one type of object. This thesis will remedy this historiographical gap by analysing a selection of different surviving items: board games, jigsaw puzzles, card games and samplers. It also aims to discuss how scholars can imagine the extent to which unmarked items bought at anti-slavery bazaars entered children's domestic spaces. Addressing this historiographical gap is important. It provides an analysis of an under-studied and overlooked aspect of material culture, anti-slavery and children. It also contributes towards a more nuanced understanding of the lives of child abolitionists. As the future generation of abolitionists, parents were keen to educate their children through juvenile anti-slavery literature and objects. Acknowledging the presence of these objects within transatlantic children's spaces sheds light not only on child abolitionists' role within the British and American campaigns, but on nineteenth-century concepts of childhood and material culture.

Children's Abolitionist Literature and Material Culture

This thesis examines the relationship between material culture and anti-slavery children's literature. In their introduction to Yellin's and Van Horne's *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, Ruth Bogin and Yellin argue female abolitionists wrote and published a wide variety of anti-slavery literatures such as speeches and pamphlets, but do not address the works of female abolitionists written exclusively for children.⁸⁵

Scholars working on American juvenile abolitionist literature have contributed analyses of race, childhood, animals and female writers. As such, they have revealed the extent to which such literature brought children into the anti-slavery debate and gave child abolitionists their own literary genre. Other scholars focusing on British children's anti-slavery literature have

⁸⁴ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 260.

⁸⁵ Yellin and Horne, *Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 1-19.

primarily used works published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, or in the late nineteenth century in an imperial context.⁸⁶ In 1989, John Oldfield assessed the history of British anti-slavery children's literature from 1750 to 1850. However, he focused on the thematic use of racial sentiment, Africa and references to slave children within his chosen narratives.⁸⁷ Paula Connolly has written the first comprehensive study of slavery and race in American children's literature.⁸⁸ She argues that children's literature about slavery has been a means of 'revealing and inscribing racial politics'.⁸⁹ Consequently her work is primarily intent on examining the racialised images used throughout children's anti-slavery literature in the U.S. Adding to this, Sarah Roth has also addressed the role and racial depiction of African-American children, focusing upon interracial friendship as key plotlines of abolitionist juvenile literature worthy of examination.⁹⁰ Spencer D. C. Keralis and Lesley Ginsburg have both examined the use of animals in the short-lived American children's periodical the *Slave's Friend*. Keralis addressed the use of animal images and imagery in their narratives, alongside 'pet-making' to discuss the bonds of slavery to a juvenile audience.⁹¹ Ginsburg discussed the relationship between girls and domestic animals in the *Slave's Friend* in terms of a rhetoric of citizenship.⁹² None of these scholars reference households or material objects.

Deborah De Rosa has scoured numerous archives across America in her quest to produce an anthology of children's abolitionist literature. This impressive collection is categorised by author; her research reveals the true identity of the female writers who often hid behind pseudonyms. Her work is an invaluable reference for historians trying to locate these

⁸⁶ F. R. Botkin, 'Questioning the "Necessary Order of Things": Maria Edgeworth's "The Grateful Negro"', *Plantation Slavery and the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 194-208 and J. M. Smith, 'Slavery, Abolition and the Nation in Priscilla Wakefield's Tour Books for Children', 175-193, In *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition*, ed., by Brycchan Carey, Markman Ellis and Sarah Salih, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 194-208; M. Daphne Kutzer, *Empire's Children: Empire and Imperialism in Classic British Children's Books*, (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁸⁷ J. R. Oldfield, 'Anti-Slavery Sentiment in Children's Literature, 1750-1850', *Slavery & Abolition*, 10, 1, (1989): 44-59.

⁸⁸ Paula Connolly, *Slavery in American Children's Literature, 1790-2010*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁰ Sarah N. Roth, 'The Mind of a Child: Images of African Americans in Early Juvenile Fiction', *Journal of the Early Republic*, 25, 1, (2005): 79-109.

⁹¹ Spencer D. C. Keralis, 'Feeling Animal: Pet-Making and Mastery in the Slave's Friend' *American Periodicals: A Journal of History & Criticism*, 22, 2, (2012): 121-138.

⁹² Lesley Ginsburg, 'Of Babies, Beasts, and Bondage: Slavery and the Question of Citizenship in Antebellum American Children's Literature,' In *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Caroline F. Levander and Carol J. Singley (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 85-105.

narratives and unmask the female abolitionists who wrote them.⁹³ In her *Domestic Abolitionism*, De Rosa focuses on the role of the mother as an ‘abolitionist-mother historian’ and the various ways in which the mother-child relationship is used by female writers of anti-slavery children’s literature to merge the domestic sphere with that of the slave narrative.⁹⁴ Whilst her work discusses some of the same pieces of children’s literature used in this thesis in chapter 5, De Rosa does not specifically address the use of material culture in its own right as a topic for scholarly attention.

Sara Lindey has looked at abolitionist children’s literature in terms of its representation of girls, education and science.⁹⁵ She discusses the poem *The Edinburgh Doll: And Other Tales for Children*, as does this thesis, but not in a relation to its depiction of material culture and domestic work produced in the household. Christopher Geist also addressed the *Slave’s Friend* as a key literary source used by abolitionists to teach children about slavery and their roles as child abolitionists.⁹⁶ However, his work is preoccupied with providing a summary of the journal’s history and the themes of morality, violence and justice that pervade each issue. Although this is a useful addition to the historiography of children’s anti-slavery periodicals, it means that he does not comment upon possible references to material culture or the household. In her work, Holly Keller situated children’s anti-slavery literature within the discourse of nineteenth-century childhood.⁹⁷ Her work helps to contextualise my own discussion with contemporary concepts of childhood and women’s increasingly important role as mothers and moral guardians. However, she does not mention the ways material culture or the household were worked into those narratives in her discussion.

In his extensive anthology of British and American anti-slavery poetry,⁹⁸ Wood has provided a much needed and highly useful resource for historians. Wood included several poems that refer to material objects, but he only includes a brief description alongside each poem; he

⁹³ Deborah C. De Rosa, *Into the Mouths of Babes: An Anthology of Children's Abolitionist Literature* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005)

⁹⁴ Deborah C. De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003)

⁹⁵ Sara Lindey, ‘Sympathy and Science: Representing Girls in Abolitionist Children’s Literature’ *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 45, 1, (2012): 59-73.

⁹⁶ Christopher D. Geist, ‘The “Slave’s Friend”: An Abolitionist Magazine for Children’ *American Periodicals*, 9 (1999): 27-35.

⁹⁷ Holly Keller, ‘Juvenile Antislavery Narrative and Notions of Childhood’ *Children's Literature*, 24, (1996): 86-100.

⁹⁸ Marcus Wood, ed., *The Poetry of Slavery An Anglo-American Anthology 1764-1866*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)

does not make any references to the use of material culture in them. He included Abel. C. Thomas' *The Gospel of Slavery: A Primer of Freedom* (1864) and the *Alphabet of Slavery* in his section on children's literatures, but offers little analysis. This thesis incorporates both these works alongside the alphabet primer *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet* that preceded them and considers them in terms of their references to material culture and the household.

Alice Taylor has examined the use of material culture in both *Gospel Fruits* and *The Edinburgh Doll*, and her observations have proven to be influential upon my own interpretation and discussion of these literatures in chapter 5.⁹⁹ However, Taylor's thesis focuses primarily on the Boston anti-slavery fair, so her analysis of the use of objects in these works is somewhat confined to viewing the literature within these boundaries. This thesis also assesses the way *Gospel Fruits* and *The Edinburgh Doll* made use of items bought at American anti-slavery bazaars in their narratives, but it also attempts to situate them within their place in the transatlantic abolitionist household, not just as items sold at bazaars. This thesis considers the objects incorporated into abolitionist narratives as a material address to the female child reader and as a fictional representation of the life cycle of material objects. Aside from Taylor, scholars have not specifically assessed the ways in which children's abolitionist literature used material objects found in the household and the meanings of home as a means to furnish its anti-slavery narrative. As items that were imbued with abolitionist sentiments, these objects were used to trigger discussion, to educate, to link the audiences' household items to the ones in the story and to provide a contrast with the slave's lack of objects and domestic comforts. This thesis aims to remedy this historiographical gap by providing an original analysis of the relationship between material culture and children's anti-slavery literature.

⁹⁹ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism.'

Chapter Outline

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a concise overview of the production and distribution of transatlantic anti-slavery material objects. Chapter 1 focuses on the sewing circles where women made items, Chapter 2 the bazaars where they were sold. These two chapters lay the foundations for facilitating an object-based discussion in chapters 3 and 4 that examine the use of these objects in the domestic space. Chapters 3 and 4 employ my framework of the imagined transatlantic abolitionist household to analyse surviving objects. Objects that were possibly made by sewing circles and sold at the bazaars described in chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 5 is not situated in the imagined interior concept, but continues the discussion of child abolitionists and material culture from chapter 4.

Chapter 1 analyses the production of handmade anti-slavery material objects by female abolitionists in Britain and the U.S. through women's lived experiences as the producers of political objects and as members of sewing circles. It examines the relationship between women's domestic needlework, their political participation through sewing circles and their negotiation of nineteenth-century constructions of ideal femininity and appropriate female behaviour. The chapter also explores the benefits of sewing circles as a domestic-based and female-led form of political recruitment, education and social activity, the realities of organising and attending a sewing circle and the lived experiences of female abolitionists as sewing circle members. These experiences work to provide a new insight into how British and American women felt about their role within the anti-slavery campaigns and as producers of handmade bazaar items. This permits a comparison of the similarities and differences between domestic production for anti-slavery bazaars and other forms of paid domestic needlework as well as petitioning and other forms of activism. Finally, chapter 1 explores women's own perceptions of their bazaar needlework as a craft, as something different to utilitarian household sewing and similar to paid work.

Chapter 2 builds upon the analysis of sewing circles as sites of domestic production to focus upon the distribution of these objects through rural and urban anti-slavery bazaars. Women's lived experiences as donors, organisers and consumers, contributed towards a social and political event. The chapter explores tensions between bazaar networks, considering how big and small bazaars influenced the type of items sold and requested. It shows that American female abolitionists competed for the best donations, vying for their bazaar to be the most

successful, and engaging in detailed negotiations with their British counterparts about the most appropriate and appealing contributions they could make. Over time, significant shifts occurred in the anti-slavery objects sold at bazaars, encompassing objects' purpose, decoration and degrees of utility. Bazaar organisers used innovative spectacle to maximise profits and draw in a wider consumer audience, transforming the bazaar into an event. Finally, chapter 2 explores how bazaars courted the spending patterns and consumer power of their customers with an increasing emphasis on the benefits of 'buying for the slave' through political consumerism.

Chapter 3 takes an in-depth tour through the household using a range of surviving anti-slavery objects to supplement textual sources like bazaar reports. This chapter deploys the concept of an imagined transatlantic abolitionist household as a framework for a discussion of transatlantic anti-slavery material culture. It 'moves' between the different rooms and describes surviving items in the places where they would have been used. Chapter 3 also considers how the bodies of abolitionists were 'decorated' with anti-slavery objects, including cameos, penny tokens, workbags and other accessories that, being worn or carried on the body, moved between the domestic space and the outside world. In bedrooms, patch boxes and cologne bottles, as well as the images printed onto bed curtains and the motifs and hand-in-inked inscriptions upon surviving quilts reveal both tacit and overt abolitionist sentiments. The rooms downstairs allow an analysis of the ways abolitionists used images to decorate their walls and how these changed over time. Surviving objects demonstrate how abolitionists repurposed abolitionist objects, such as Wedgwood cameos into household accessories by displaying them in frames upon their walls. Chapter 3 also explores writing desks and items that served both functional and decorative purposes such as manufactured door handles and handmade pincushions and chair covers. While these elements of the household allow the gendering of abolitionist material culture to be assessed, an analysis of objects associated with dining and the production of food allow questions of economics and class to be raised. How effectively was free-produce promoted by abolitionist slogans on teapots? And what message did domestic servants take from abolitionist pot-holders?

Again deploying the concept of the imagined abolitionist household, chapter 4 prioritises children's anti-slavery objects. It considers surviving anti-slavery board games, puzzles and card games, all of which were likely to be used by both girls and boys. Anti-slavery samplers, by contrast, were highly gendered, produced exclusively by British and American girls. The

chapter conveys the range of anti-slavery objects made by and for children, and explores how scholars can better integrate them into the history of transatlantic abolition.

Building on the theme of child abolitionists, chapter 5 analyses the relationship between material culture and children's anti-slavery literature. It examines both how women writers included references to material culture and the abolitionist household within their narratives and how publishers adapted children's anti-slavery literature to both their juvenile audience and the household as the intended site for their works to be read. Children's anti-slavery literature and narratives with references to material objects provided a 'safe space' for women to convey their political sentiments. Juvenile abolitionist literature ranged from alphabet primers and gift books to cautionary tales and poems. Each of these operated in different registers and provided readers with conceptualisations of the white abolitionist family and its relationship to the black slave.

While much of the transatlantic abolitionist household can only be imagined, this imagining is grounded in an extensive array of material culture and is important if we are to better understand the role played by women, particularly, in abolition. Placing material culture at the forefront, this thesis agrees with Ames' claim that 'The commonplace artifacts of everyday life mirror a society's values as accurately as its great monuments.'¹⁰⁰ As such, anti-slavery objects mirror the political beliefs of female abolitionists in Britain and the U.S. and reflect the transatlantic networks at work. This thesis considers and builds upon Walker and Ware's key aims to 'consider all the unnamed women in uncelebrated houses who made it their mission to free the slave' and the ways women:

participated in and identified with the anti-slavery movement through the decoration of their homes and bodies with emblems of slavery and slogans of emancipation.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ames, 'Hall Furnishings': 19.

¹⁰¹ Walker and Ware, 'Pincushions', 66

Chapter 1

Sewing the Slave: The Production of Handmade Anti-Slavery Objects Through the Sewing Circle

In the words of prominent American abolitionist Maria Chapman: ‘When pincushions are periodicals, and needlebooks are tracts, discussion can hardly be stifled or slavery perpetuated.’¹ Through their production of anti-slavery objects, sewing circles created a material culture of abolition that gave women a political voice.

In contrast to the mass-produced items branded with anti-slavery motifs made in factories, British and American women created a wide variety of household items and accessories for sale at American anti-slavery fairs and bazaars. These items were produced through the organised sewing circle, groups of abolitionist women who gathered to make and donate goods to raise funds for the cause. From both sides of the Atlantic, women merged domestic and political activities with their philanthropic interests.

Although sewing circles had existed prior to the abolitionist movement, they usually had a religious rather than a political capacity, raising money for local churches and causes supporting those in need of charitable assistance.² In this sense, anti-slavery circles were merely an extension of a Christian moral duty to help those members of society bound in chains. As the campaign quickly gathered momentum and fairs became the highlight of the abolitionist calendar, sewing circles multiplied as more women employed their needles for political goals.

Whilst numerous sewing circles and their efforts are mentioned in abolitionist newspapers and periodicals, very few formal records have survived.³ Those that have tend to be

¹ *The Liberator*, January 12, 1838.

² See F. K. Prochaska, ‘Women in English Philanthropy 1790-1830,’ *International Review of Social History* 19 3 (1974): 426-445.

³ According to Deborah Van Broekhoven, “‘Better than a Clay Club’: The Organisation of Anti-Slavery Fairs, 1835-60,” *Slavery and Abolition* 19, 1(1998): 45. The few exceptions are the manuscript records for the Tatnuck Sewing circle of the Worcester Female Anti-slavery society (Worcester Historical Museum Library); a Boston area ‘Juvenile Anti-Slavery Sewing Society’ (Massachusetts Historical Society) and a New York ‘Female Anti-Slavery Sewing Society’ (Quaker

connected to the larger American anti-slavery societies such as Boston, who published annual fair reports and advertised their meetings beyond word of mouth. Few records for British sewing circles remain, but surviving correspondence between societies provides an insight into the relationships between American and British female abolitionists. We need then to assess the structure, scale and production levels of abolitionist sewing circles through personal correspondence and trace the objects they produced through their sale at fairs and bazaars.

This chapter aims to analyse the production of handmade material objects through women's lived experiences as the producers of political objects and as members of sewing circles. To begin, we will observe the relationship between women's needlework, their political participation through sewing circles and their negotiation of nineteenth-century constructions of ideal femininity and appropriate female behaviour. Next, the benefits of sewing circles as a domestic based and female led form of political recruitment, education and socialisation will be explored. After which, we will look at the daily realities of sewing circles as a personalised system of political activism and object production marred by flaws that worked together to humanise the anti-slavery campaign. Then we will look at the similarities and differences between domestic production and other forms of paid work, especially the structure of sewing circle meetings and the relationship between circle organisers and their members. Finally, we shall explore women's perceptions of their needlework as a craft, as different to household sewing and similar to paid work.

Traditionally, scholars have excluded the role of the sewing circle or abolitionist needlework from their narratives of British and American anti-slavery.⁴ Howard Temperley's discussion of transatlantic networks in his work *British antislavery 1833-1870*, is completely devoid of any acknowledgement of women's participation unless they were the wives of prominent male abolitionists. As such, Temperley ignores women's political participation as a whole, as well as the sewing circle as a means of production and the bazaar as a transatlantic event. By revealing the extent to which women were active participants in the anti-slavery campaigns, Midgley's work on female abolitionists has provided an invaluable source for historians and

collection, Haverford College Library) Both the Boston group and a similarly obscure Kent County Female Anti-Slavery Society (Rhode Island Historical Society Manuscript Collection) kept records of articles read at meetings.

⁴ Howard Temperley, *British Antislavery 1833-1870* (London: Longman, 1972) for a chronological male-dominated account of the British campaign.

is still the key scholarly contribution.⁵ In recent years the works of Van Broekhoven, Petrulionis, Gold Hansen, Salerno, Lee Chambers-Schiller, Jeffrey, Atkin, and Alice Taylor have contributed towards the historiography of female abolitionists, examining anti-slavery sewing circles and bazaars in Britain and the U.S.⁶ This chapter aims to provide a basis for the object-based discussion in chapters 3 and 4 by revealing how the items that decorated abolitionist households were produced.

Femininity and Fancywork

In her 1837 conduct manual Eliza Farrar informed her female readers that: ‘A woman who does not know how to sew is as deficient in her education as a man who cannot write.’⁷ Needlework formed a woman’s education, her entertainment and often her livelihood, without it she was ‘deficient’. Women’s ‘work’ began in childhood; girls were schooled in the domestic art of sewing, whilst their brothers studied in the classroom. As such, female abolitionists were, on the whole, competent with plying a needle. By looking at domestic production through organised sewing circles, we can unpick the relationship between women’s needle ‘work’, their political participation and nineteenth-century constructions of femininity.

Sewing embodied nineteenth-century constructions of ideal womanhood and perfect domesticity: it encouraged neatness, attention to detail, diligence and patience. But for many women, sewing was a tool to demonstrate their political opinions while conforming to accepted, traditionally feminine norms. Pat Ferrero, Elaine Hedges and Julie Silber have argued that needlework served as a political medium where women ‘used their sewing skills to assert their agency in the world outside the home, to claim and secure for themselves more

⁵ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*.

⁶ Van Broekhoven, ‘Better than a Clay Club’; Chambers-Schiller, ‘A Good Work among the People’; Petrulionis, *To Set This World Right*; Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*; Salerno, *Sister Societies*; Jeffrey, *Great Silent Army*; Atkin, ‘Political Pincushions’; Alice Taylor, ‘Selling Abolitionism’ and “‘Fashion has extended her influence to the cause of humanity’”: The Transatlantic Female Economy of the Boston Antislavery Bazaar’, in *The Force of Fashion in Politics and Society. Global Perspectives from Early Modern to Contemporary Times*, ed., Beverly Lemire (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2010).

⁷ Eliza Ware Rotch Farrar, *The Young Lady’s Friend* (Boston: American Stationer’s Co., 1837), 122.

public and political space.’⁸ The long-standing relationship between women and needlework meant that it was considered ‘natural’ that they should use their domestic skills to demonstrate their support for the anti-slavery campaign. In a published letter to Samuel J. May, prominent African-American abolitionist William Wells Brown expressed his approval of sewing circles as suitable avenues of female political expression:

[I] am more and more convinced of the propriety of invoking the aid of females to the slave's cause. Their sewing circles will have a salutary effect upon all who attend them. Nothing looks more cheering to me than...a circle of women working with their own hands for the redemption of their enslaved countrymen.⁹

As a traditionally feminine pastime and occupation, abolitionist sewing was deemed an appropriate method of participation as it was within male constructions of suitable female behaviour. Sewing circles mobilised women’s traditional needlework skills, providing an outlet for expressing political opinions and challenging the prescriptions of their ‘innate’ femininity by using it as a weapon for change. Rather than seeking to remove themselves from the domestic sphere, embroidery’s relationship with femininity was one women used to their advantage.

In *The Subversive Stitch*, Rozsika Parker describes the colours, imagery and techniques used to create suffragette banners to demonstrate how some British middle-class women used needlework to express political affiliation whilst adhering to prescribed ideals of femininity.¹⁰ Similarly, female abolitionists used a wide range of crafting techniques to produce items for sale. As a general term used to describe types of decorative needlework, ‘fancywork’ encompassed a plethora of crafts beyond a needle and thread. Examples of nineteenth-century fancywork included but were not limited to: embroidery, knitting, crochet, cross-stitch, quilting, tatting, Berlin wool work, lacemaking, beading, rug making, shell-work, and papier-mâché; all ways to produce abolitionist items at home using their ‘feminine’ skills. Fancywork enabled women to create unique pieces to sell at the bazaar, raise money for the cause and adorn the household.

⁸ Pat Ferrero, Elaine Hedges and Julie Silber, *Hearts and Hands. Women, Quilts, and American Society* (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1987), 11.

⁹ *Liberator*, September 3, 1847.

¹⁰ Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: embroidery and the making of the feminine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010)

Through organised sewing circles, women used a variety of traditionally female skills to create typically feminine items for sale at bazaars. These items were usually in the categories of clothing, accessories or decorative household objects produced to meet contemporary tastes and consumer demands. In 1850, members of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society sent a variety of these handmade items to the Boston bazaar including doilies, embroidered aprons and table covers, flower mats, pin cushions and needle books, a knitted crib cover, drawing room pillows, knitted tray mats, and children's dolls dressed in highland costume.¹¹ Despite their non-political appearance these objects were made to raise funds for a political cause and contrasted with the circulation of 'non-feminine' political tracts and periodicals at sewing circle meetings and bazaars. Female abolitionists depicted a domestic and generally unthreatening femininity through their handmade anti-slavery merchandise. Although the objects they made were innocuous household accessories they were wrapped up with political meaning.

Sewing circle meetings were planned around female social networks; taking their structure from church circles and other similar philanthropic societies. The Boston Anti-Slavery sewing circle publicly advertised its meetings in *The Liberator* a week in advance,¹² noting the host's name and address, as in the spring of 1846: 'The next meeting of the Boston Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle will be on Thursday afternoon, May 21, at Mrs Chapman's, 53 Federal-street.'¹³ From these notices it seems that each Boston sewing circle meeting was held at the home of a different society member, perhaps rotating the hostess privilege. Two weeks prior to the meeting held at Maria Chapman's, the meeting was hosted at 'Miss [Henrietta] Sargeant's'[sic]¹⁴ house, and one month later the sewing circle met again 'at the residence of William Lloyd Garrison'; most likely hosted by Garrison's wife Helen.¹⁵ Although the Boston sewing circle may have been unique in its rotation of hostesses, such groups mimicked the structure of contemporary charitable societies and middle-class social conventions. Eliza Boyce of the Lynn Female Anti-Slavery Society utilised the established

¹¹ List of items accompanying a letter from Andrew Paton to Anne Warren Weston (AWW), 19 November 1850, Antislavery Papers, Boston Public Library (BPL). The Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society sent items totalling an estimated value of £148 3s 6d to the Boston bazaar.

¹² *The Liberator* (1831-1865) was a weekly abolitionist newspaper founded by William Lloyd Garrison. Maria Chapman and Anne Weston regularly wrote articles and published their articles, annual fair reports and sewing circle and female society news throughout the year.

¹³ *Liberator*, May 15, 1846.

¹⁴ *Liberator*, May 1, 1846.

¹⁵ *Liberator*, June 12, 1846.

networks of local churches to disseminate news: ‘we generally notify our meetings through the pulpits- ‘tis the best way we can reach the members.’¹⁶ By creating a political group with the same structure used by non-political groups, sewing circles established a base for producing political items whilst remaining within the boundaries of ‘suitable’ female activism.

The increasing popularity of sewing for bazaars throughout the nineteenth century allowed women to claim the public places where bazaars were held and the homes where sewing circles met as sites of political action, whilst maintaining their ‘feminine’ reputation in the eyes of male abolitionists.

Benefits of Sewing Circles: Education, Recruitment and Socialisation

Anti-slavery sewing circles transformed what might have been perceived as a passive pastime into a place for discussion and propaganda production. Sewing circles disseminated political information, brought in revenue and provided a platform for the sale of political objects. Although they continued to be influential throughout the American campaign, petitions and lectures were increasingly used alongside the production and sale of political objects to add weight and facts to domestic tactics. Sewing circles enabled a domestic orientated form of education, recruitment and persuasion using a variety of materials, styles, mottoes and symbols.

Sewing circles were an effective female-led means of recruitment: women were invited by friends to meetings where they could sew and share ideas about their own needlework in a relaxed atmosphere. They were then exposed to abolitionist conversation, literature and petitions which would reinforce their initial interests in the campaign. The Bangor Sewing Society in Maine understood that ‘by more frequent meeting together a deeper interest has been awakened and sustained...it has brought many in contact with anti-slavery principle who might not otherwise have become interested.’¹⁷ If successful, sewing circles benefitted the cause beyond making objects. In 1846, Boston fair organisers hoped their sewing circle

¹⁶ Eliza Boyce to Maria Chapman (hereafter MC) December 1, 1839. Weston Papers, BPL.

¹⁷ Incorrect reference given in Julie Roy Jeffrey, ‘Permeable Boundaries: Abolitionist Women and Separate Spheres’, *Journal of the Early Republic* 21 (2001): 83. Most likely quoted from Maine’s anti-slavery newspaper the *Advocate of Freedom*, 1840.

would appeal to a wider audience so that ‘numbers may thus be multiplied and their benefits increased.’¹⁸ New recruits added subscription money to society funds as well as increasing the potential revenue from the sale of items produced through sewing circles. Through their participation and production of saleable items, women financially supported the cause in ways that the more male-dominated forms of participation could not.

As groups whose meetings revolved around female networks, needlework and an interest in anti-slavery politics, sewing circles were instrumental in keeping the American campaign in the public eye as a national issue. Ohio’s abolitionist newspaper the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* considered sewing circles to be:

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.¹⁹

Regular meetings based on producing articles for a specific date helped to maintain a constant level of female participation and interest; members were regularly reminded of the political reasons behind their needlework. Fairs typically took place around the Christmas and New Year period, capitalising on festive gift-giving and consumerism. Although some sewing groups held meetings year round, the autumn and winter seasons were considered the best for peak of productivity. Coincidentally, the winter months afforded women more time for carrying out work for the fair at home compared to the summer, as the weather made it difficult to attend meetings. This seasonality in sewing for fairs created a routine for participation and production that was replicated year after year across states and societies. In contrast to petitions and other similar tactics, anti-slavery sewing circles marked a permanent space in the calendar and minds of their members for the production of abolitionist items.

The physical objects themselves proved to be just as effective at gaining supporters as the sewing circles they were made in. In her letter to Maria Chapman, English abolitionist Mary Estlin described the 120 people who visited her drawing room in Bristol to see the handmade objects laid out prior to their journey to the Boston bazaar.²⁰ The opportunity to peruse the

¹⁸ *Liberator*, December 4, 1846.

¹⁹ *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, November 19, 1847.

²⁰ Mary Estlin to MC, October 28, 1844. BPL.

items made by abolitionist women was so popular that the exhibition became an annual occurrence: the following year Mary reported that two hundred and twenty people visited over a three day period.²¹ Displaying the items as they would be when on sale in Boston transformed the items into saleable commodities and allowed British women to glimpse what their table in Boston might look like to American customers. The exhibition permitted the women to show off their finished work and compare their own efforts to the other donations whilst promoting the fair to those outside the sewing circle: 'It gives the opportunity of setting people thinking, telling them what the fair is, & what it is for & how it acts...others carried away the Report of last year's Bazaar & other pamphlets, promising to read and think about the subject.'²² Those who had not contributed towards the exhibition were free to browse without having to commit to anything, but 'many friends on seeing the present collection have expressed their willingness to work...another time.'²³ Using the drawing room for the exhibition allowed the articles to be seen in a domestic setting that was not aggressively abolitionist yet retained its political purpose. It was the ideal setting for educating and entertaining whilst persuading women to contribute towards next year's efforts.

Chambers-Schiller argues that sewing circles provided a 'captive audience for anti-slavery education', allowing organisers to 'expand women's intellectual horizons, [and] augment their knowledge of abolitionist ideology and strategy.'²⁴ Typically, one member would read abolitionist literature aloud while the other members made anti-slavery items reinforcing the political message from all corners. One abolitionist sewing group from Ohio credited these educational benefits as the key to their success: 'Our sewing circle...contributes very much to keep up the agitation of the subject. Some one...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 in the circle.'²⁵ This educational aspect of meetings mirrored the circulation of abolitionist literature through workbags that were made, used and distributed by members of the Birmingham Female Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves in

²¹ Ibid., November 14, 1845.

²² Ibid., October 4, 1850.

²³ Ibid., October 28, 1844.

²⁴ Chambers-Schiller, 'Good Work' in Yellin and Horne, *Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 254.

²⁵ *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, November 19, 1847.

the late 1820s.²⁶ These workbags were designed to carry needle ‘work’ to and from society meetings but were often filled with political pamphlets. Made from East India silk, satin or cotton and printed with emotive slave images and verses, the workbags were political objects that contained political information. For those women who were reluctant to attend lectures and actively canvass for petition signatures, they provided a means of disseminating anti-slavery texts and imagery in a female-dominated sphere. Material objects and sewing circles worked together to enlighten and educate women through sound, sight and sewing.

Deborah Palmer of Georgetown, Massachusetts, wrote to Maria Chapman requesting ‘facts, not fiction, dressed up in the form of interesting tales,’ that could be read aloud to members while they worked. Such literature ‘would augment our numbers and cause a more punctual attendance...the influence may be diffused into all the families where our members reside, and thus the whole community become Abolitionised.’²⁷ By making this activity a regular feature, women were motivated to attend future meetings so that they could hear the next instalment; meetings provided education as well as an evening’s entertainment. Listening to abolitionist literature allowed women to ‘abolitionise’ friends and family beyond the circle, such stories could be easily recounted at home. It is interesting that Deborah Palmer specifically requested abolitionist stories based on ‘facts’ for reading at sewing meetings rather than entertaining works of fiction as other non-abolitionist sewing groups might have done. Although the objects they were making were decorative and somewhat frivolous household accessories, women still wanted their evenings to be spent cultivating their political knowledge.

Sewing circles were ideal meeting grounds for the discussion and dissemination of recent political debates and activity. They utilised the discussion at anti-slavery lectures to their advantage by coinciding with society meetings: ‘wherever a sewing circle is now in operation, its numbers and efficiency may in all probability be greatly increased in this way.’²⁸ *The Liberator* urged sewing circle organisers to ‘let an effort of this kind follow every Anti-Slavery lecture’²⁹ as an effective way to gain new members and increase productivity. Sewing circles permitted the combination of traditionally ‘male’ dominated tactics such as petitioning with traditionally ‘female’ needlework. In 1845, *The Liberator*

²⁶ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 57.

²⁷ Deborah P. Palmer to MC, December 1, 1839.

²⁸ *Liberator*, December 10, 1847.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

suggested that those sewing circles at work for the upcoming anti-slavery fair ‘take the opportunity to sign the petitions and memorials on slavery when they meet, especially those against the admission of Texas as a slave State.’³⁰ This combination of signing petitions and sewing articles demonstrates that women did not see the two as belonging to separate political arenas; they could comfortably participate in both. By signing petitions at sewing meetings, women were using both needle and pen to display their political opinions.

The anti-slavery sewing circle in Fall River, Massachusetts was established because the ladies felt that petitions were not enough on their own: ‘we felt that we must become working women in the cause of those who toil without wages...we felt we could no longer enjoy our comfortable homes, or rest in peace upon our pillows, while we neglected to perform our *whole* duty toward these sufferers.’³¹ Sewing made their dutiful efforts ‘whole’ compared to other tactics. In contrast to their British sisters who focused their energies into gathering signatures for petitions and boycotting slave grown produce, American women considered it their female duty to ‘work’ unpaid like the slaves they hoped to emancipate. Although British women contributed towards the American campaign by sending their handmade items for sale, this type of political participation was noticeably absent from their own earlier campaign. Their contributions suggest that British women were not averse to such tactics, but perhaps they did not feel the need to resort to using them given the success of female-only petitions. In her *Signatures of Citizenship* Susan Zaeske traces the waning popularity of petitions as an American tactic from the 1840s onwards;³² American women needed to find a new way to express their political opinions within gendered constraints and sewing circles provided the answer. The sewing circle was the context in which American female abolitionists began thinking of themselves as political activists and their sewing as an important political activity with real ramifications for the campaign.

According to the Fall River women, sewing for the slave was a more effective means of activism than petitioning. Creating saleable objects relieved the burden of slavery guilt from their consciences and allowed them to enjoy their domestic comforts. These women made ‘pillow’ like cushions for other similarly minded women to purchase for use in their own

³⁰ *Liberator*, November 14, 1845.

³¹ *Liberator*, September 17, 1836.

³² Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, & Women's Political Identity: Petitioning, Antislavery and Women's Political Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003)

‘comfortable homes’, so that their creators might sleep soundly in theirs. Sewing eased abolitionist guilt and facilitated consumption.

Regardless of whether women attending sewing circles became petitioners or not, the objects they crafted carried political messages that were more durable than a single signature. Domestic production moved female abolitionists away from attending lectures and repeatedly took anti-slavery into the household; whereas petitions stayed with their petitioner. Organised sewing circles permitted a form of female socialising in a way that allowed them to be politically active whilst remaining within the boundary of acceptable female activism. Sewing brought like-minded women together under a common cause, sustained their commitment through production and created a regular forum for expressing their political views through the articles they produced.

Lived Experiences: Daily Realities of Sewing Circles

As domestic-based female-led organisations, sewing circles were formed to facilitate the production of abolitionist objects and encourage political activism across transatlantic boundaries. Sewing circles allow us to see a variety of women’s experiences within an individual political campaign and pinpoint the weaknesses of domestic production. As with other ‘male’ methods of political participation, sewing circles were hindered by the practicalities of depending upon the participation of ordinary people. Not all attempts to create a sewing circle, recruit members and produce items were a success. Many American women reported poor attendance levels, a lack of commitment to the cause, and differences in opinions as commonplace. Female abolitionists disappointed as much as they succeeded. By accepting these experiences rather than trying to gloss over them as unfortunate exceptions, we can see how women truly participated in political activism within everyday life and insert them into the abolitionist narrative.

Women’s everyday lives affected their ability to produce items; the success of a sewing circle was affected by the realities of nineteenth-century domestic life. The domestic nature of needlework allowed women to produce abolitionist articles in their spare time, as they could be completed in between daily chores and activities. However, because sewing was not immediately associated with political activism, more ‘important’ domestic or social commitments were often prioritised over ‘women’s work’. Massachusetts abolitionist Harriet

Minot complained to Congregationalist minister Reverend Amos Phelps that abolition was not the primary concern amongst their members: ‘our ladies are thinking much less of the wants of the famishing slaves, than of providing an abundance of pies for their households.’³³ Not all were prepared to put their duty towards the slave before their domestic duties, or had the time to do so even if they wanted to. With varying degrees of success, women attempted to balance political activism with the daily demands of running a household. Pennsylvanian abolitionist Rebecca S. Potts encouraged those women

who cannot conveniently meet with a sewing circle-that we labor at all times as much as practicable for the benefit of the Fair-but especially appropriate one afternoon of every week for that purpose, and not suffer household duties to interfere.³⁴

Although sewing was considered a gender-appropriate way for women to be political, this was so long as their political sewing did not prevent them from being able to carry out ordinary domestic sewing as part of the all-important ‘household duties.’ In the postscript to her letter to Maria Chapman, abolitionist Sarah Plummer admitted that family life reduced the amount of spare time she had to dedicate to the cause: ‘being surrounded by a little family, without the help of any domestic, I find my time quite limited.’³⁵ For practical reasons, those who were most prominent within sewing circles tended to be women who were not tied down by small children or household chores. Many women wearily described the apathy and disinterest towards abolition amongst their society members, friends and neighbours. In North Attleboro, Massachusetts, Sarah Rhoads considered local people ‘in great measure asleep in regard to slavery.’³⁶ Similarly, Eliza Boyce of the Lynn Female Anti-Slavery Society told Maria Chapman that her society was blighted by:

a spirit of indifference-an apathy-a long and deep slumber into which the members of our society have fallen. They wish well to the cause & here ends the whole matter. They need some excitement, some stimulus to spur them up to the work.³⁷

Women who wished to start an abolitionist sewing circle had to deal with members who became disheartened with the campaign and attempt to reinsert some enthusiasm into their

³³ Harriet Minot to Amos Phelps, November 22, 1838. BPL.

³⁴ *Pennsylvania Freeman*, 16 April 1846.

³⁵ Sarah Plummer to AWW, March 31, 1838. BPL.

³⁶ Sarah M. Rhoads to MC, October 11, 1840. BPL.

³⁷ Eliza Boyce to MC, December 1, 1839, BPL.

proceedings. Despairing at female society members who had given up the cause to attend ‘dancing parties’, Aroline Chase confided to Abby Kelly that she could ‘not contend much longer unless renewed...I feel as though I stand alone.’³⁸ Facing such resistance alone was a tiring prospect, especially if there was little possibility of change and no opportunity to join a more active society.

In 1839 Rhode Island agent Lucinda Wilmarth wrote to Maria Chapman about a lady who had pledged to donate \$5 towards the fair and then ‘declined paying it because she has become convinced that Fairs are wrong.’³⁹ Although Lucinda remained hopeful that the bill still might be paid, the letter demonstrates the difficulties they faced in convincing women that fairs were appropriate and effective ways to demonstrate political support. Even if members were subscribed to abolitionist aims, they could still let down and disappoint. In a letter to Abby Kelley, Lucinda complained about how the lack of commitment displayed by one of the main organisers, a Mrs Anna Fairbanks, had undermined their efforts:

we have (small, very small) weekly sewing circles at the office. She [Mrs Fairbanks] said when the arrangement was made her daughters would attend- neither of them could come-for the first few weeks I would mildly inquire the reason why. She would say, she meant they should come next week, that she could not spare them today.⁴⁰

For small sewing circles that depended upon the input of only a few local women for their success, empty excuses and broken promises hindered group productivity and confidence. The sisterly collaboration of the sewing circle soon deteriorated if fellow members could not be relied upon to turn up to meetings, or considered other lesser activities to be more worthwhile.

Not all women active in sewing circles were supported in their efforts. When J. W. Thomas sent her groups’ items from Kingston, Massachusetts to the 1841 Boston bazaar she mentioned the difficulties they had faced during their production: ‘some few among us have persevered under all discouragements from the lukewarm and the indifferent...and have

³⁸ Aroline Chase to Abby Kelley, May or June 1843, Kelley-Foster Papers, American Antiquarian Society (AAS).

³⁹ Lucinda Wilmarth to MC, 1839, BPL.

⁴⁰ Lucinda Wilmarth to Abby Kelley, July 11, 1842, AAS.

devoted an afternoon of each week for some time past in working for the fair.’⁴¹ This permits us to see political participation on a scale ranging from the dedicated to the lukewarm to the uninterested. Scholarly works have often ignored these various levels of political participation and interest, choosing to focus instead on prominent abolitionists and staunch slave-owners. By including the experiences of women who dealt with those who were uninterested or lacked the level of commitment required we can situate them within the historiography of female abolitionism.

Women defended their sewing circles against slavery supporters as well as other branches of the abolitionist campaign who did not consider their tactics to be worthwhile or suitable. Writing from Leominster, Massachusetts, Frances Drake told Maria Chapman ‘I fear we shall not be able to accomplish such fancy work as our own society numbers now only five working women [because] the sectarians have been advising some of our society not to work for the Mass[achusetts] Society.’⁴² Frances expressed her frustration that the Canada Mission advocates had been successful in persuading the less-committed members to help fugitive slaves instead of the upcoming fair: ‘All those who were not fully abolitionised, or were deficient in moral courage were so foolish as to be influenced by them and were so ungenerous as even to send in some work unfinished.’⁴³ Referring to the sectarian women as ‘poor deluded mortals’,⁴⁴ Frances considered her circle’s method of producing items for sale at fairs to be more effective than aiding fugitive slaves. Frances’ experience highlights the different ways women could support abolition and the consequences of disagreements arising between them. As a result of their success in converting members to the Canada Mission, Frances was left with a significantly smaller number of women producing articles, and the added burden of completing the unfinished items they had been so ‘ungenerous’ to leave behind.

As arenas for female discussion and production, sewing circles were vital in facilitating women’s participation in local, national and transatlantic abolitionism. When alternative methods of fund-raising were proposed to circle members in Portland, Maine, ‘Sarah S.’ insisted that ‘the sewing circle or something to bring people together frequently in a social

⁴¹ J. W. Thomas to MC, November 15, 1841, BPL.

⁴² Frances Drake to MC, October 31, 1843, BPL.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

way...[should] be continued, as the diffusion of our principle by this means is constantly going forward. The Portland circle...is useful mainly in this direction.’⁴⁵

Sewing circles were heavily dependent on local, national and transatlantic networks for initiating and sustaining domestic production. Women could share advice and swap tips on how best to complete and embellish their items and work towards the next fair as a unified group. The Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society fair committee considered the merits of both circle and individual production: ‘though it is pleasant for several to meet together to labor-yet a solitary worker may have the company of good and bright thoughts.’⁴⁶

Whilst working for both the Boston and Philadelphia bazaars at her home in rural Staten Island, Elizabeth Gay described her lack of ‘good and bright thoughts’: ‘All I can do here is to sit alone...and stitch, stitch hoping my little aid may do something for the cause.’⁴⁷ This lonely image was the reality for many rural women whose remote location prevented them from attending a sewing circle. Her isolation contrasts with the sisterly socialising at sewing circle meetings enjoyed by those women living in close proximity to other female abolitionists.

Although sewing circles forged friendships and provided a female support network for when they were struggling to complete items for an upcoming fair, not all women could rely upon the assistance of their sisters. In a weary letter to Maria Chapman, Frances Drake described the daunting task she faced trying to finish items by herself in time for the upcoming Boston fair:

But I cannot raise help for love or money...I now have to sit up till one o'clock at night to get them ready, this will account for my tardiness. Every one I have asked to assist (with one or two exceptions) has refused...I am at times almost disheartened, when I see what I have to do, with my poor feeble eyes, and my little ones to care for, I find it next to an impossibility for me to complete the work.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Abigail Kelly Foster to AWW, February 11, 1850, BPL.

⁴⁶ *Pennsylvania Freeman*, July 2, 1846.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Gay to AWW, January 12, 1848 Quoted in Jeffrey, *Great Silent Army*, 118.

⁴⁸ Frances Drake to MC, December 15, 1843. BPL.

Frances' despair at her situation and disappointment in her fellow members furnish us with humanising examples of women's experiences as members of sewing circles. Including both the successes and shortcomings in a discussion of domestic production allows us to see what being political with a needle really entailed for ordinary women. Sewing circles with their flaws, factions and fairs worked to humanise the anti-slavery campaign beyond grand impersonal speeches and highlight the level of participation required for smaller domestic-based tactics to succeed.

Domestic Production as 'Work'

Female abolitionists were reminded of their daily responsibility to sew for the slave: 'Not a moment should be allowed to pass without the hands executing what the head conceives, or the heart prompts.'⁴⁹ Considering sewing circles as voluntary organisations of female labour permits us to compare domestic production with other types of paid work. Fair organisers and sewing circle leaders embodied the role of employer, overseeing the productivity and dedication of their workers whilst recruiting new members. They chivvied, chastised and complained about current members' poor commitment and attendance levels, as well as praising those individuals who produced high quality items within the deadline. Urging women to 'form at once sewing circles and knitting societies'⁵⁰ and take up their needles for the cause, Rhode Island agent Amaraney Paine addressed her female readers thus:

I entreat you, for the sake of your enthralled sisters, for your *own* sake, to be up and doing. Gather around you immediately a little band of co-workers, and let the zeal and industry with which you labor tell on whose side you are enlisted... Let no person remain idle or unsolicited— no corner of the State unsearched for aid.⁵¹

In their production of objects women made a statement about their position in the broader abolitionist debate and ensured that they had fulfilled their moral duty to the slave. Although all female anti-slavery societies were working towards the same goal, there was a distinct hierarchy between the older, more successful societies such as in Philadelphia, and the newer, smaller or less active ones who looked to others for support and guidance.

⁴⁹ *Liberator*, October 31, 1845.

⁵⁰ *Liberator*, June 21, 1844.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Using its reputation as a successful society to influence the activities of younger abolitionists, the Philadelphia society sent a ‘gift’ of anti-slavery literature to the Providence Juvenile Anti-Slavery Society and requested that ‘those young ladies think of anti-slavery mottoes suitable for needlework, fair banners or other educational purposes.’⁵² The Providence women responded to these instructions with gusto, their secretary later forwarded a list of thirty-three abolitionist jingles as proof of their efforts.

Sewing circle organisers regularly reminded their members of the fast approaching deadlines for handing in completed items and the effort they would need to exert in order to finish them in time: ‘Less than eight weeks remain before the time designated for holding this Fair will have come round...uncommon activity will be needed in the preparation of the articles.’⁵³ In Ohio, female abolitionists who had neglected their efforts of late were told to resume work immediately so not to hinder their contributions towards the upcoming bazaar: ‘if the friends of the slave in any neighbourhood have suspended their gatherings for a little while, they have resumed them...if not we fear they are losing time.’⁵⁴ The necessity of these regular reminders and warnings not to waste valuable sewing time, suggest that not all women were as motivated or as active in producing items as circle organisers would have liked.

It is somewhat ironic that a society founded upon the belief that all men and women were equal in the eyes of God relied upon a class-based hierarchy amongst its members to achieve abolitionist aims. However, the different roles within the sewing circle merely replicated the organisational structure of a multitude of contemporary charitable, religious and political organisations where some members had higher levels of responsibility and authority than others. Such a hierarchy provided members with a sense of order and direction and lent credence to sewing circles as political framework.

With their organised itinerary, emphasis on members producing ‘work’ and scheduled refreshment breaks, sewing circle meetings were similar to factory production where employees produced abolitionist ceramics under workplace rules and regulations. Co-founder of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society Sarah Pugh described attending one of their Fair Circles:

⁵² Sarah R. Miller, Providence, to the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, May 9, 1835, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Quoted in Van Broekhoven, ‘Clay Club’: 36.

⁵³ *Liberator*, October 31, 1845.

⁵⁴ *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, November 19, 1847.

met James and Lucretia Mott's this evening,-about sixty to tea, after which our number increased...Quite a contrast, this brilliant scene, with our small number, eight or ten...each with her own supper of nuts and cakes brought in pocket, eaten at twilight while we walked in the yard,-then a few more hours' work by the glimmer of candles.⁵⁵

Sarah Pugh's account of this large active sewing circle contrasted against the 'small' meetings of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society held in her own home.⁵⁶ Her description of members bringing their own food to eat throughout the evening contrasts with meetings where refreshments were provided by the hostess. Akin to other types of paid work, the meeting was organised with an emphasis on achieving maximum levels of production with scheduled breaks for eating before resuming their task. Although Pugh's experience appears regimental in its structure, unlike paid factory workers, abolitionist women worked their needles voluntarily in their spare time.

Not all sewing meetings were as focused on production levels; some appear to have been more of a social gathering with an associated political purpose. African-American abolitionist Charlotte Forten regularly mentioned attending anti-slavery lectures, sewing circles and bazaars in her journal. In 1854 she wrote: 'This evening went to the anti-slavery sewing circle at Mrs Ives'. Nellie and I established ourselves at a pretty little table, and sewed and talked very pleasantly.'⁵⁷ In contrast to Pugh's meeting, the one held at 'Mrs Ives' seemed to have more of an equal balance between socialising and productivity.

Sewing circle members were often torn between the conflicting nature of the sociable sewing circle and the serious reality of slavery. This was evident in discussions concerning the propriety of refreshments at sewing circle meetings. On the one hand, refreshments revitalised members and encouraged industrious activity, but they also promoted gossip and

⁵⁵ Entry for October 17, 1853. *Memorial of Sarah Pugh, A Tribute of Respect from Her Cousins* (J.B. Lippincott company: Philadelphia, 1888), 86.

⁵⁶ The journal entry does not specify which societies the fair circle meetings belong to, but it can be assumed that the meeting with her fellow co-founder Lucretia Mott was for the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, and Pugh's 'own' meetings referred to those of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, which were held in her own home. Entry for Sarah Pugh in Edward T. James, Janet Wilson James and Paul S. Boyer, eds., *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary, Volume 2* (Harvard University Press, 1971), 104.

⁵⁷ Entry for Monday December 4, 1854. Ray Allen Billington, ed., *The Journal of Charlotte L. Forten. A young black woman's reactions to the white world of the Civil War era* (London: Norton, 1981), 65.

placed too much emphasis on the types of refreshments instead of on the task at hand. The Dover Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle was unable to reconcile both sociability and industrious efforts. In 1840 the society decided to ‘adhere strictly to the rules of plainness in the refreshments furnished’,⁵⁸ but the following year members chose to ‘retain the good old custom of having a social cup of tea’,⁵⁹ as an appropriate form of refreshment. By 1844, members voted on the issue and resolved to fine any member who supplied more than ‘one kind of cake’⁶⁰ and to ‘resign the old practice of taking Tea’,⁶¹ but both were reinstated several months later when the society finally agreed upon a suitable compromise.⁶² Similarly, the New York Female Anti-Slavery Sewing Society recorded its intention that ‘the suppers prepared for the Society should not exceed in variety, bread and butter or biscuit, one kind of cake and preserves.’⁶³ Some members argued refreshments were an essential part of the meeting as they provided sustenance to weary sewers, whilst others considered it an indulgence that required self-discipline and should only be permitted in small quantities. It is interesting that these women believed tea and cakes to be distasteful whilst slavery still existed but considered their production, sale and purchase of decorative household items (that slaves also lacked), an appropriate political activity.

Women’s Perceptions of their Political Needle ‘Work’

Sewing in its various forms featured prominently in the lives of most nineteenth-century women, yet historians have chosen to ignore or gloss over its significance in abolitionist narratives. Rosemary Mitchell criticises Parker for not fully exploring the ways Victorian middle-class women themselves perceived needlework within domestic ideology.⁶⁴ Through tracing their experiences of abolitionist sewing we can see how women felt about their needlework as part of daily life and their political identity.

⁵⁸ Ladies Anti-Slavery Society of Dover (LASD) records July 4, 1840. New Hampshire Historical Society (NHHS), Concord. Quoted in Jeffrey, *Great Silent Army*, 79.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, November 8, 1841.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, April 4, 1844.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, July 17, 1844.

⁶² *Ibid.*, December 1844.

⁶³ Minutes of a New York ‘Female Anti-Slavery Sewing Society’ 1852. Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library.

⁶⁴ Rosemary Mitchell, ‘A Stitch in Time?: Women, Needlework, and the Making of History in Victorian Britain.’ *Journal of Victorian Culture* 1 (1996): 185.

Although female abolitionists were not paid for their work, women wanted their efforts to be acknowledged, and to be thanked for their contributions by members of the fair committee. The Fair Reports published in *The Liberator* usually thanked a selection of societies and individuals for their donations and briefly described which items were most sought after. However, the lack of space to personally thank every donor meant that some women felt their items were not appreciated. Complaints amongst the Leominster sewing circle regarding the absence of such a mention drew a frustrated Frances Drake to ask Maria Chapman for a personalised thank you note she could read out at the next meeting:

Somehow our people can't understand an address unless it is directed especially at them...Some females have been so childlike as to say they did not think much of doing for people who did not so much as thank you for our efforts...because we did not receive a special acknowledgement for what we [did] for the fair last year...Therefore, when you write us I hope you will send us a very emphatick [sic] 'Thank you Ladies' for your efforts.⁶⁵

The six-month grudge that provoked Frances' request shows that the Leominster women felt their items were worthy of separate acknowledgment and felt slighted by being grouped in with the efforts of other societies. The strong emotions that attended the production abolitionist items suggest that women did not see their work as a household chore or a means to pass time. Because their objects held political meaning, women did not want their efforts to be associated with middle-class stereotypes of idle needlework or merged with the daily darning and mending that formed their domestic duties, and were sometimes aggrieved when their efforts went unacknowledged.

Parker argues that compared to other creative outlets such as painting, embroidery is 'seen not as art, but entirely as the expression of femininity...it is categorised as craft.'⁶⁶ In contrast to Parker who considers 'craft' as something utilitarian that lacked the creativity or status assigned to 'art', I would argue that sewing circles transformed domestic needlework from 'chore' to 'craft'. Abolitionist objects were functional, decorative and political commodities that required women to use their creative skills. Embroidery was not seen 'entirely' as an expression of prescribed femininity; objects held political meaning.

⁶⁵ Frances Drake to MC, June 11, 1843. BPL.

⁶⁶ Parker, *Subversive Stitch*, 5-6.

This 'cottage industry' production method gave women autonomy over their craft and political expression. Being able to choose the design, material, colour and finish of their objects allowed women to create unique personalised pieces. This individuality distinguishes domestically-produced abolitionist items that were imbued with the ideas and skill-set of their creators from the identical factory-made objects that were all made to the same specifications.

It can be argued that women wanted recognition for producing political commodities because they could not hallmark their 'crafts' like paid artisans or leave their name as evidence of their activism as with a petition signature. In a letter accompanying the Boston-bound items made by the women of Bristol, Mary Estlin mentioned that they had:

ticketed all the articles with the name of the donor, & given particulars respecting them principally because we imagined you would be interested in seeing how many different hands had been working for the cause you have at heart.⁶⁷

Whilst it is debatable how much Chapman wanted to know the names of women she would probably never meet or correspond with, labelling their items allowed British women to distinguish their efforts from the rest of the donations. Perhaps they hoped that providing their details would increase the likelihood that they would be selected for special mention in the forthcoming fair report.

Throughout both British and American campaigns, female abolitionists described their efforts as a combination of duty and pleasure. Women took pride in participating in a national campaign, yet their excitement was often tempered with somewhat weary descriptions of their frustrations and expenditure of effort. These descriptions were not limited to sewing and bazaar work, but applied to the earlier tactics of petitioning which were used to great effect by British women. In the midst of the British campaign, Priscilla Buxton described the lengths she had gone to in preparing petitions for presentation and listed her allocated tasks: 'we have taken infinite pains about our petitions...I have been like a queen bee over them, indorsing, folding, packing them in order and making out a grand list.'⁶⁸ Whilst staying with Andrew Paton and his sisters who were Secretary and Treasurer of the Glasgow Female Anti-

⁶⁷ Mary Estlin to MC, November 14, 1845. BPL.

⁶⁸ Priscilla Buxton to her Aunt Sarah Maria Buxton, May 7, 1833. *Extracts from Priscilla Johnston's journal; and letters*, ed., E. MacInnes (Carlisle, 1862), 60.

Slavery Society, Henry Wright commented upon the amount of time and effort they spent contributing to the upcoming Boston bazaar: ‘Catharine and Eliza have been entirely occupied two days and nights, sizing, labelling and packing the things...[they] were up most of the past night, working for the Bazaar.’⁶⁹ Their efforts extended beyond the months of gathering signatures and producing items for sale, preparing petitions for presentation and items for their journey to Boston was as equally time-consuming.

Whether working with their pens or needles, female abolitionists contrasted their cheerful optimism with the realities of working for a political campaign. In the months leading up to British emancipation, Priscilla Buxton described how her efforts had left her feeling exhausted:

After this letter, I think I must burn my paper and pen, and give my poor wrist, which is really worn out, and always aches, some rest. I am tired, most utterly tired, of writing, and of everything connected with work. As to petitions, I only wish that I might never see the face of another.⁷⁰

Signing off the letter with an amusing ‘Ever Yours (half dead), P.B.’ Priscilla’s letter demonstrates her desire to be praised for the hard work she had done which perhaps went unacknowledged by her male family members. Although Priscilla worked willingly, it is perhaps because she chose to do so that she sought sympathy for the aches and sufferings resulting from her ‘selfless’ efforts. In letters to her sister Deborah, Lucia Weston described her exhaustion from spending all day ‘working at the fair’ to produce saleable items. Similar to Priscilla’s aching wrist, Lucia excused herself from further letter writing with the explanation that ‘My fingers are nearly sewed off...I will write no more now.’⁷¹ Although it is likely that her fingers would have been sore from continuous sewing, her tone emphasises the lengths she had gone to sew for the slave. Both Priscilla’s and Lucia’s accounts show the practical impact on daily life of being an active abolitionist.

By reworking the meanings surrounding women’s work and political activity, Maria Chapman created an image of collective endeavour where women became slaves to their sewing in order to free American slaves. In her 1843 Fair Report she romanticises the

⁶⁹ *Liberator*, December 12, 1845.

⁷⁰ Priscilla Buxton to her Aunt Sarah Maria Buxton, May 16, 1833. *Extracts*, 60-1.

⁷¹ Lucia Weston to Deborah Weston, December 16, 1836. BPL.

sacrificial nature of abolitionist needlework by aligning their efforts with the hardship faced by seamstresses:

There is not a woman in our broad New England through, who has toiled at midnight by the feeble light of her well-saved lamp, to produce these exquisite works which you so much admire, who has not done it at a sacrifice of which you can form no idea, unless you have also been an abolitionist.⁷²

Despite the prevalence of sewing circles as an organised space for creating fair articles, Chapman chose to present the abolitionist needlewoman as a solitary figure toiling long into the night accompanied only by the light of her ‘well-saved lamp’. Here, Chapman applies the imagery often applied to the working-class seamstress, straining her eyes sewing late into the night so that she may earn a living, to her middle-class abolitionists. Of course, Chapman and her fellow abolitionists were not dependent upon their sewing skills for survival; it was the slave’s freedom that rested upon their production of abolitionist articles. In these women’s view, it was only their sacrifice that could bring an end to slavery and only abolitionists who had worked their needles in such a way that could empathise with the extent of their sacrifice.

Conclusion

In 1847, William Lloyd Garrison considered the political implications of women’s domestic production through organised sewing circles:

One living Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle is worth more to humanity, and will accomplish more for the salvation of the country than all the Clay Clubs, and Taylor Clubs and Democratic Clubs that ever have been or ever shall be.⁷³

Garrison’s support may have been a genuine tribute to the efforts of his female members, but his opinion was influenced somewhat by the fact that sewing circles contributed significantly towards the running of anti-slavery societies and abolitionist periodicals like *The Liberator*.

We have seen how sewing circles created a socially accepted form of political expression for women, within the boundaries of prescribed female activity, without shying away from real political activism. Women used and reworked nineteenth-century constructions of ideal domesticity and the ideal woman to disseminate their political opinions and claim a space for

⁷² *Liberator*, January 12, 1844.

⁷³ *Liberator*, December 3, 1847.

their political action inside and outside the home. Sewing circles enabled and encouraged women to use and show off their skills to create innocuous 'feminine' household objects that were saturated with political meaning and transformed a passive pastime into a place for propaganda and discussion. They disseminated political information amongst members, raised revenue for the cause and created a platform for the sale of political objects. Through their production of anti-slavery objects, sewing circles maintained a constant domestic-based level of participation and created a permanent weekly or monthly space for women to dedicate their energies to abolition, which had not been the case with tactics like petitioning. Sewing circles transformed the normally private activity of needlework into the radical and public act of producing saleable commodities for anti-slavery fairs. They established female networks as sites for the production of material propaganda, using their needles as weapons against slavery. As such, women's hands were vital in the creation of abolitionist material culture.

Chapter 2

Buying at the Bazaar: The Distribution of Handmade Political Objects through the Anti-Slavery Bazaar

‘To see the Ladies’ Fair I went, And pleasantly the time was spent; /And things for sale, both rich and rare, /The labor of their hands, were there/...And every freeman must respect, /The zeal of this devoted sect, /The profits of the Fair are meant...To wash away our country’s shame, / And purify her spotted name.’¹

As the poem explains, the anti-slavery fair or bazaar was an effective way for female abolitionists to sell their handmade objects at a profit whilst converting members of the public to a political cause. Bazaars built upon the existing framework of the charity fair to create a new form of political campaign that was organised and attended by female abolitionists. While anti-slavery bazaars were also held in Britain and Ireland, this chapter focuses on those held in the U.S. as an examination of women’s transatlantic anti-slavery networks.

Bazaars raised vital funds for local and national anti-slavery societies and supported the production of abolitionist publications such as *The Liberator*. They transformed a political campaign into a social event by providing an annual date in the secular calendar dedicated to political consumerism. Local, national and transatlantic networks were forged and strengthened through the constant planning and preparation required for the bazaar’s success. Anti-slavery fairs appealed to a wide audience: prospective customers were not limited to active abolitionists but included passers-by who were lured in by the variety of useful, beautiful and novel items available for sale. In an advertisement for their 1838 fair, Boston organisers explained that bazaars:

excite an interest where none before existed, in the minds of the surrounding community. Many an individual, who would never have read an anti-slavery publication or entered a lecture room has come to the fair and has left it with a juster appreciation of the motives and a clearer comprehension of the measures.²

¹ F.M. Adlington, Poem for the Weymouth, Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1842. *Liberator*, January 7, 1842.

² *Liberator*, January 12, 1838.

For those reluctant to read anti-slavery literature or attend a lecture or sewing circle, the bazaar created a social space where anti-slavery texts featured amongst and on handmade items for sale. As such, customers could be converted through the objects they purchased.

This chapter analyses the distribution of handmade anti-slavery material culture through women's lived experiences as donors, organisers and consumers of political objects. To begin, we shall see how fairs differed according to their location and witness the tensions between rural and urban fairs as they supported each other whilst simultaneously competing for donations. Next, the impact of the transatlantic network on the bazaar's success is considered alongside the ways British women adapted their objects to meet the styles and whims of the American consumer. After which, we will trace some of the large chronological shifts in the distribution of abolitionist objects. First we look at the changes in their desired purpose as objects moved away from a utilitarian role towards an emphasis on objects as decorative accessories. This will lead on to a discussion of the decrease in demand for marked items branded with political images and text. Then, we shall look at the innovative ways fair organisers used spectacle to reinvent the distribution of political objects whilst maximising profits. Finally, we shall explore the ways bazaars courted and respected the spending patterns of their customers with an increasing emphasis on the benefits of political consumerism.

In his seminal journal article 'Charity Bazaars in Nineteenth-Century England', F. K. Prochaska examined the charity bazaar within the context of transatlantic reform efforts, arguing that the bazaar was 'both cause and effect of the expanding influence of women in philanthropy. In short, where women played a role in a charity, bazaars were to follow.'³ More recently, Peter Gurney and Lawrence Glickman have focused on bazaars as part of nineteenth-century consumer culture.⁴ They do not look at the ways in which women used charitable causes to exercise their domestic skills or how women understood their 'work' in relation to its commodity or political value. This chapter aims to remedy this.

³ F. K. Prochaska 'Charity Bazaars in Nineteenth-Century England' *The Journal of British Studies* 16 2 (1977):71.

⁴ Peter Gurney, "'The Sublime of the Bazaar': A Moment in the Making of a Consumer Culture in Mid-Nineteenth century England' *Journal of Social History* 40 2 (2006) and Lawrence B. Glickman, "'Buy for the Sake of the Slave': Abolitionism and the Origins of American Consumer Activism' *American Quarterly* 56 (2004): 889-912.

Scholars who have addressed the role of the anti-slavery bazaar have done so in a restricted capacity; they only examine the bazaar within their chosen female society or regional district and do not look at the broad changes across the campaign with regards to the changing purpose and politicking of anti-slavery objects. Jeffrey analyses chronological analysis of American women's participation chronologically throughout the campaign but does not devote much space to British abolitionists.⁵ Petrulionis only explores the experiences of Concord women and Van Broekhoven provides an account of the experiences of Rhode Island women within the anti-slavery bazaar.⁶ Taylor, Gold Hansen and Chambers-Schiller all examine the experiences of and factions between female members of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society.⁷ Salerno has attempted to fill the gaps left by regional works by looking at the records of over 200 female anti-slavery societies.⁸ All have remarked on the variety of goods women produced but few have considered them to be more than an example of women's political participation. This chapter aims to address these historiographical deficiencies and provide the basis for the object-based analysis of the abolitionist household in chapters 3 and 4.

A Comparison of Rural and Urban Bazaars

The items available for purchase at anti-slavery bazaars differed according to their location and the perceived needs and desires of their customers. In the interest of attracting middle-class shoppers, urban bazaars like the ones held annually in Boston between 1834 and 1858,⁹ advertised the large quantity of 'fancy' or luxury goods for sale whilst the organisers of the smaller, rural fairs stressed the availability of plain, useful goods, and locally donated food. At the Boston fair of 1848, organisers were keen to assure rural customers that their tastes and purses had been catered for: 'At the Worcester, Lynn, Plymouth, and other tables may be found a great assortment of useful articles, knits, woollens and shoes. At the charity table from Leicester, the prices will be of the most reasonable character.'¹⁰ As rural fairgoers were less willing to fritter away money on decorative 'fancy' items that had little practical use, the

⁵ Jeffrey, *Great Silent Army*, 118.

⁶ Petrulionis, *To Set This World Right*; Deborah Van Broekhoven, *The Devotion of These Women: Rhode Island in the Antislavery Network* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

⁷ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism'; Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*; Chambers-Schiller, 'A Good Work among the People'.

⁸ Salerno, *Sister Societies*.

⁹ The Boston bazaar ran from 1834 to 1858, when it was replaced with a monetary subscription.

¹⁰ *Liberator*, December 15, 1848.

items available for purchase reflected the wealth of their intended buyers. Differences in taste between rural and urban fairs also influenced the types of items on sale. According to abolitionist Elizabeth Chapin, in rural Worcester ‘a very different set of persons’ attended the fair ‘from those that they have at Boston fairs...so of course the sale of really costly articles is rare.’¹¹ As rural customers were thought to be less fashion-conscious than their urban sisters and were never quite up to date with the latest styles, items that were unsalable to urban customers were deemed suitable for sale at rural fairs. Any leftover items from the larger urban bazaars were redistributed to smaller rural ones,¹² so that all could reap the benefits of the transatlantic sisterhood:

All that remains in the hands of the committee is always carefully appraised, packed and stored, to aid in other fairs, by means of which the anti-slavery feeling is kindled or kept alive in all parts of the country.¹³

Rural fairs were often grateful for these extra items as they boosted sales profits and provided variety for customers who were used to mostly locally produced articles. However, we should look closer at the ‘sisterly’ motives of urban abolitionists who sought to offload the items that remained unsold at their fairs onto their rural sisters. Writing from Staten Island, Elizabeth Gay told Maria Chapman ‘if you have articles that are too tasteful or expensive for the smaller Fairs, left over from your over-supplied tables, they would likely find a ready sale here.’¹⁴ The suggestion here is that customers at the smaller rural fairs had no need for ‘tasteful’ or ‘expensive’ leftovers, as they lacked both good taste and the means to purchase them, but that such items were in high demand at the larger fairs.

The differences between the types of customers who visited urban and rural bazaars influenced where British women sent their donations. In 1842 the female members of Dublin’s Hibernian Antislavery Society wrote to Maria Chapman to inform her that they intended to donate items to the American Bangor anti-slavery fair in addition to the Boston bazaar. Chapman responded by dismissing Bangor’s needs and emphasising the value of

¹¹ Letter from Elizabeth Chapin to Elizabeth Gay, October 3, 1853. Gay Family Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York. Quoted in Jeffrey, *Great Silent Army*, 119.

¹² In 1846 Boston sent their remaining items to other American fairs held in Weymouth, Plymouth, New Bedford, Rochester, West Winfield, Waterloo, Philadelphia and Salem, Ohio. See *The Liberator*, October 22, 1847 for more details.

¹³ *Liberator*, October 22, 1847.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Gay to MC, June 11, 1857. BPL.

donating items to Boston: ‘Bangor is a small place in comparison with Boston...and the market here is far surer and more extensive.’ She argued their items would have better prospects in Boston where their financial worth would be fully appreciated:

[T]here are more of the abolitionists in the first rank of society in Boston than elsewhere...[which] enables us to get up our bazaars with far more success than in any other place...if the articles are sent in any large quantity to Bangor, the probability is that they will not be disposed of.¹⁵

Although Chapman’s advice was influenced by her desire to receive all the goods for her own fair, she was correct in stating that items would fetch a higher price at larger fairs where customers had deeper purses than smaller fairs filled with Boston’s leftovers. She correlated Boston’s upper-class customers with their ability to appreciate items of good taste and high quality.

Chapman’s self-interested response hints at the rivalry between female societies who vied for the same donations. In contrast to the notion that all abolitionists worked together towards emancipation, a level of un-sisterly competition to receive the most exotic items emerged between not only the urban and rural fairs, but between the larger Philadelphia and Boston bazaars. In 1858 when Boston women decided against holding their annual bazaar in favour of direct subscriptions, Philadelphia seized its opportunity to receive the benefits that had been denied it by Boston’s monopolising of the British donations. Fed up with accepting Boston’s leftovers, the women of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Bazaar Committee asked their British sisters for:

some of the aid that you have so long generously given to Boston...there are many among you whose donations would be made more valuable by the time and labour you would gladly bestow upon them...for *twenty-two years* there has been held in Philadelphia an annual fair, of the same character as the Boston Bazaar, the proceeds of which have been devoted to the same end.¹⁶

Jealous of the ‘generous’ contributions enjoyed by Boston, and increasingly resentful at being left out of the distribution of British items for so long, the Philadelphia women were tired of

¹⁵ Hibernian Antislavery Society, (ed.) *Some Particulars of the late Boston anti-slavery Bazaar: with a sketch of the Antislavery Movement in the United States.* (Dublin, 1842), 10-11. Quoted in Taylor, ‘Fashion has extended’ in Lemire, *Force of Fashion*, 131.

¹⁶ *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, July 1, 1858, 167. Original emphasis.

consistently coming second place to Boston. Although the first Boston bazaar preceded Philadelphia's by two years, the women of Philadelphia stressed that they had worked just as hard as the women of Boston, and for the same political goals but without the much needed material support of their British sisters. Looking at the ways abolitionist objects were distributed through bazaar networks reveals the deep-seated tensions between individual societies who attempted to reconcile their selfish desire to receive the best items and raise the most money with an image of sisterly collaboration and shared donations.

The fact that Philadelphia resented Boston for always getting the first pick of the foreign donations reveals how popular British items were amongst American customers. Highly valued for their quality and financial worth, British handmade items became the yardstick against which all other contributions were measured. This was evident in fair organisers' lavish praise for the items received from their 'foreign' donors described in the fair reports. The perceived superiority of British goods meant that local donations to the Boston bazaar were rarely praised without comparison: 'We must especially refer to the Dorchester table, represented by Mrs Bramhall and Miss Carlton, which contained so many beautiful articles, that it might well compete with some of the foreign tables.'¹⁷

As preference for fancy British goods increased, many ordinary American women felt slighted by the indifference towards their 'useful' contributions. Seeking to reassure her American readers that their items were still valuable commodities, Boston organiser Anne Weston praised the Rochester donations for their winning combination of 'tasteful' utility and local production:

¹⁷ *Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (Boston, 1855), 26.

We wish, in particular, to refer to a very useful and tasteful donation from the Ladies, Sewing Circle in Rochester N.Y...Most of the articles were extremely well suited to the demand, and we wish all its friends would bear it in mind as effectively. The articles sent from abroad are so beautiful, in many instances so costly, that...an unfavorable impression prevails that it is hardly worthwhile for the American ladies to give much time to the manufacture of articles in which they will very probably find themselves excelled. But this is quite a mistaken view. Local fashions prevail everywhere. The demand that these occasion no foreign work can supply.¹⁸

By applauding the Rochester sewing circle on the suitability of their donations, Weston attempted to convince rural women that their items were worthy of praise which had recently been reserved only for British donations.

Nancy Hewitt's analysis of fairs in western New York shows that anti-slavery fairs differed in their purpose, practice and success. She claims rural fairs were mainly political in their aims; financial gain was not their key motive because they only sold plain everyday items.¹⁹ I would argue that given the opportunity, rural fairs were just as financially-driven as their urban counterparts, even though the small profits of rural fairs seemed paltry by comparison. However, those who visited urban fairs tended to have more money to spend and more demand for expensive items than their rural sisters. Urban fairs were still politically driven, but taste and style held greater prominence with organisers and customers.

The emphasis female donors and organisers placed on the estimated and final selling prices of abolitionist items highlights the financial motives behind their efforts and the bazaar itself. Items were made, displayed, sold and purchased to raise funds for the cause; women wanted to ensure the bazaar made a maximum profit. Women's donations to anti-slavery bazaars held different types of 'value' to the producer, the fair organiser and the consumer. British women were often asked to attach approximate prices to their items, so that fair organisers might compare how much donors thought their work was worth back in Britain against what American customers were willing to pay. Those who were unfamiliar with assigning their domestic work with financial worth or valuing their time struggled to provide suggested prices, not knowing how much they could be reasonably expected to fetch in the American market. Ellen Russell attempted to estimate suitable prices for her articles, but noted that she

¹⁸ *Liberator*, January 30, 1852.

¹⁹ Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Lexington, 1984), 235.

had ‘probably made many errors, over rating some things and undervaluing others.’²⁰ She considered a knitted cape to be ‘a very serviceable article’ but did not include a price as she had ‘no idea of its value.’²¹

Items were priced based on their quality, beauty, and desirability amongst American consumers. ‘We would here suggest, that when any specimen of ladies’ work, new either in respect to fashion or use, is contributed, it is well to affix a paper explaining the same, and giving the English price; otherwise, the value of a fashion or invention is in danger of passing unnoticed.’²² The fair organisers’ anxiety that they were out of touch with the latest fashions is reminiscent of British colonial emigrants’ attempts to remain up-to-date with Britain and fears regarding their ‘colonial’ style. Although the labels had a practical purpose, they suggest that British abolitionists could educate their American sisters on matters of taste whilst contributing towards emancipation.

Female donors wanted to know if their items sold for their estimated value and whether customers had considered them desirable objects worth paying for. Writing on behalf of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society, Catherine Paton requested that they be told ‘as early as possible how the articles sell.’²³ Maria Chapman apologised to Irish donors for being unable to record the selling prices of their articles because they were snatched up by a flood of eager customers:

I am sorry I cannot tell you the prices that all the beautiful contributions brought...it was important they should be got ready in an instant, to meet the tide of the purchasers. So we put high prices on them, and *got* high prices for them.²⁴

Chapman’s emphasis on getting the maximum profit from the items highlights the financial motives behind the bazaar and her understanding that the donors would be pleased that the items fetched ‘high’ prices.

²⁰ Ellen Russell to MC, October 15, 1839. BPL.

²¹ Ibid.

²² *Liberator*, January 28, 1853.

²³ Catherine Paton to MC, 1844. BPL.

²⁴ Hibernian Antislavery Society, (ed.) *Some Particulars*, 9. Quoted in Taylor, ‘Fashion’ in Lemire, 134.

Desired Donations and the Role of Transatlantic Networks

The survival and success of anti-slavery bazaars largely depended on the contents of the donation boxes received from British abolitionists. To ensure maximum profits, bazaar organisers provided advice on what items would and would not make appropriate donations. These differences between British and American tastes and pockets were acknowledged and catered for by British women who made items according to the specifications they received. However, being aware of these differences made donors anxious that their items were not 'suitable' or 'desired' by American customers. Consequently, American women were keen to thank their British sisters when their donations did meet their specifications, which also worked to ensure their support for the following year. Through the bazaar we can see the significance of women's transatlantic relationships in creating an abolitionist network centred on the distribution of material objects.

Although the objects made and sold at the bazaars were mostly household items and decorative accessories, suggestions for appropriate items were based around the practical realities of transporting goods across the Atlantic: 'Articles which are fragile, not easily packed or very bulky in proportion to their value are not desirable.'²⁵ Items' suitability was judged according to how well they sold in previous years, recent changes in tastes and styles and the item's function or lifespan. In her descriptions of items for the Boston bazaar, Anne Weston specified that due to their nature:

no Drawing Room Cushions, however beautiful, are as saleable with us as they have been. As we are able to furnish beautiful Tidies to accompany the Cushions, said Cushions last a most unreasonable time and hence our supply this year somewhat exceeded the demand.²⁶

Long-lasting items like cushions were not in high demand every year, unlike other items that would wear out, or cease to be fashionable in time to require a replacement at the next bazaar. A discussion of the anxieties surrounding whether donations were considered 'suitable' for the American market and the British desire to please their American sisters, provides depth to women's experiences as bazaar donors and organisers. Including these experiences works to humanise the bazaar as a site of distribution beyond any financial or political motives.

²⁵ *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, September 1, 1856, 214.

²⁶ *Liberator*, January 20, 1854.

British women wanted to know whether their time and effort making bazaar items had been well spent and whether it was worth repeating the following year. In her letter accompanying Glasgow's Female Anti-Slavery Society's donations to the 1844 Boston bazaar, Treasurer Catherine Paton was anxious to know:

what are most suitable and what are not so suitable, on account of taste or duties, that we may as early as possible be apprised of what to make for next year that our means and labours may be as productive as can be made.²⁷

Paton's awareness of 'suitable' items reveals that British women did not expect American women to have the same tastes, or assume that they would want items inspired by the latest British fashions. She also acknowledges the effort her members put into producing donations, validating her need to know which items were worth replicating.

Reflecting the leisurely pursuits of their middle-class customers, in Boston: 'Almost all kinds of ladies' work are appropriate. Materials used in fancy work- wools, sewing, silks, beads, [and] patterns meet a ready sale.'²⁸ Supplies of the materials and trimmings required for fancy work were popular as they could be used to produce a wide variety of crafts. Continuing this theme was the demand for completed items of fancy work made using a variety of unusual techniques and materials. In Rochester, customers admired the 'papier-mâché from Manchester, the splendid embroidery from Belfast and the novel horse-hair work and bracelet from Cork',²⁹ whilst the following year the 'bracelets of fish bone...brooches and bog-oak ornaments' donated by Dublin and Cork women were 'admired and readily disposed of.'³⁰ The wide variety of fancy work available for sale at bazaars shows that women's crafting abilities extended far beyond delicate embroidery to a whole realm of crafts made from unusual materials. In Boston, organisers remarked on the popularity of work using 'beautiful' sea mosses: 'Our Irish friends will be happy to learn, that not more than three or four Mosses remain unsold.'³¹ Fancy work was not restricted to needles and thread; nature provided a wealth of materials suitable for the creation of unique decorative items.

²⁷ Catherine Paton to MC, 1844. BPL.

²⁸ *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, September 1, 1856, 214.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, June 1, 1855, 142.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1856, 191.

³¹ *Liberator*, January 19, 1849.

Fair organisers educated British donors on the different tastes and preferences of American customers, and gave praise when their advice was heeded. In 1852 Boston women felt they ‘must congratulate our Dublin friends and ourselves on the exact coincidence of their own with the popular taste of Boston.’³² In 1848, fair organisers informed their British sisters of the ‘few items it is not desirable to send, not being suited to American taste’ which included fire screens, card racks and infant’s caps.³³ Perhaps British fire screens did not fit American fireplaces in size or style, or they were not wanted in high enough quantity to warrant the effort involved in their production. Several years later, Boston organisers deemed it necessary to repeat their guidelines that ‘babies’ caps are not in demand.’³⁴ In 1855, Boston organisers were compelled to ‘caution our kind contributors’ against sending items that would not fetch high enough prices to make their production financially viable:

We cannot sell children's dresses for anything like their real value. Send us the material unmade, and we can do well with it. The printed calico, sent in the Bridgwater box, sold immediately, and would have done so, had there been ten times the quantity. But as the dresses rarely fit, a deduction has to be made on that score; and...because of the difference in fashion.³⁵

Completed items of children’s clothing were not desirable items because they were difficult to adjust to the wearer and did not reflect the disparity between British and American fashions. If women sent only the unmade fabric then the size, style and decoration would be left up to the buyer not the donor. As contemporaries associated finished items of clothing with cheaply made ready-to-wear garments, their selling price did not reflect what a dressmaker would charge for producing the same item. Unworked fabric was a much more valuable commodity and thus sold well.

Donations varied according to their place of manufacture; items were influenced by regional skills and industries as well as personal tastes and crafting abilities. Although American specifications applied to all British abolitionists, Fair Reports often mentioned the popularity of regional specialities such as Irish lace and Sheffield cutlery as examples of sought-after items that guaranteed a ready sale. In 1855 the Rochester bazaar committee remarked that

³² *Liberator*, January 30, 1852.

³³ *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, August 2, 1847, 121.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, September 1, 1856, 214.

³⁵ *Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (Boston, 1855), 8.

printed fabrics from Manchester were very popular amongst their customers,³⁶ revealing Manchester's international reputation as a manufacturer of good quality, affordable fabric. Unable to purchase them outside the bazaar, American consumers prized regional items for their rare and novelty status.

In contrast with the decline in the popularity, production and purchase of marked abolitionist items throughout the campaign, articles decorated with national and local symbols were highly sought after by the women of Boston:

On the Edinburgh table, one beautiful Prize Plaid Shawl, with rose, thistle and shamrock worked upon it, and two Scarfs of the Murray pattern, were greatly admired. Scarfs of this description were in great request, and we could have sold many more than we did.³⁷

Scottish women were proud of their national heritage and wanted their contributions to represent the women who made them through patterns and embroidered motifs. American women wanted to own items that were clearly identifiable as products of British domestic manufacture; the use motifs and symbols was not restricted to political themes.

Through the bazaar, American women harnessed the labour and domestic skills of their British sisters to provide them with an annual supply of saleable items. Whilst British women assisted voluntarily, bazaar committees were known to request their services to donate specific items, as in the following Boston appeal to their Scottish contributors:

May we take the liberty of inserting here, that a handsome Highland Shawl, in which the colors are simply blue and white, would, at the next Bazaar, find a ready purchaser? Such a one has been inquired for with praise-worthy perseverance for several years, and we would gladly...be able to supply the demand.³⁸

Here, members of the committee used their position as bazaar organisers to influence the production of individual articles in order to satisfy consumer demands, specifying the type and style right down to colour preferences. Alongside the networks of American women receiving, sorting, displaying and selling donated objects, British donations relied upon an

³⁶ *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, June 1, 1855, 142.

³⁷ *Report of the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (Boston, 1854), 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

equally vast social network of women responsible for collecting, sorting, packing and sending local donations in time for their sale at American bazaars. In 1854 the Boston fair noted that ‘The Bristol Box included collections from Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bridgwater, Bath, Chatham, Southampton, [the] Isle of Wight, Yarmouth and Chudleigh.’³⁹ Notices in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* listed the names and addresses of the women who were responsible for receiving individual donations from within individual towns and cities.⁴⁰

Recognising the benefits to their transatlantic partnership, American women gave thanks to the selfless efforts and constant dedication of their British sisters. Donations literally propped up the bazaar; they provided maximum profit with virtually no financial input. Yet praise for their financial assistance paled in comparison to the emotional benefits of this sisterly support network:

The names of the friends in Great Britain, who have for the last few years stood by the Anti-Slavery Cause so nobly, have become to us indeed “household words.” We think of them as personal friends. When the prospect brightens, we know they are rejoicing with us; and when it is over-shadowed, we are sure of the comforting influence of their sympathy. So perfect has become their knowledge of our position and its discouragements, that we feel as if they were not merely helpers, but co-partners in the great work.⁴¹

In their reference to Charles Dickens’ weekly periodical *Household Words* that equally aspired ‘to be the comrade and friend of many thousands of people...whose faces we may never look’,⁴² American women acknowledged that although the majority of British and American female abolitionists would only ever correspond on paper, the vital support and encouragement their friendship provided strengthened transatlantic networks beyond their material donations.

Donating items to American bazaars allowed British women to remain active in the contemporary anti-slavery debate and provided a focus point for their political energies once British emancipation had been achieved. Similarly, for many rural American women their participation in the production, organisation and distribution of articles for the big national

³⁹ Ibid, 7.

⁴⁰ See the names and addresses listed in *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, October 2, 1848, 165.

⁴¹ *Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (Boston, 1855), 10.

⁴² *Household Words*, March 30, 1850, 1.

fairs represented a vital, and perhaps their only connection with the larger world of anti-slavery. As rural Massachusetts abolitionist Sarah Stearns explained, ‘since our socy [sic] in Greenfield has but a nominal existence and scarcely that, I rejoice in being connected with one so zealous, self-denying and efficient as the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Socy’.⁴³ For those abolitionists unable to attend meetings and debates, bazaars created a space for rural and non-American women to display their political efforts in a physical form.

Useful to Fanciful: Changes in Object Function

In 1836 the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society held their first anti-slavery ‘sale’. In line with Quaker simplicity it boasted only six tables and was ‘plain and simple...a “day of small things.”’⁴⁴ Although members had only intended the sale to be a modest attempt at fund raising, the sale’s ‘unexpected pecuniary benefit’ transformed the fair into an annual event. The fair’s success soon resulted in the substitution of ‘plain and simple’ items for fancier more expensive ones, so that the society would continue to reap the financial ‘benefits’ of fair work. Over time, as bazaars became a popular way to distribute handmade items, there was a change in the desired purpose and function of abolitionist objects towards higher quality items of good taste. In agreement with Beth Salerno’s argument that ‘the quality and novelty of the British goods helped the antislavery fairs...attract a wealthier and more powerful class of people’,⁴⁵ fair organisers utilised this shift for financial gain.

The types of objects sold at bazaars shifted from an initial emphasis on practicality and utility to frivolous accessories designed solely for decorative purposes. When the Boston fair committee of 1838 were asked to provide a list of articles they deemed ‘most saleable’, members considered anything would be suitable if ‘neatly and properly made’, however, they preferred practical items such as aprons, capes, collars, handkerchiefs, hoods, shoes, work bags, and pin cushions.⁴⁶ The following year, Boston advertised six styles of Parisian necklaces ‘for the promenade or drawing room’;⁴⁷ by the mid-1840s they had dispensed with

⁴³ Sarah Stearns to MC, November 10, 1840. BPL.

⁴⁴ Minutes of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, March 3, 1840, Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society Records. Quoted in Jeffrey, ‘Stranger, Buy’: 4.

⁴⁵ Salerno, *Sister Societies*, 42.

⁴⁶ *Liberator*, August 21, 1838.

⁴⁷ Fair Announcement, 1839, BPL.

earlier requests for practical items and boasted the sale of 'beautiful' Chinese fans, velvet note cases and marble and bronze paperweights.⁴⁸ The bazaar's increasing emphasis on the availability of numerous 'foreign' and 'rare' luxury goods was an attempt to lure in middle-class women with claims that their items could not be purchased outside Europe.

Not everyone welcomed the burgeoning trend for fancy objects. In 1837, New York abolitionist Julianna Tappan argued: 'It does not seem to me right to raise money for any benevolent society, or cause, by selling useless articles.'⁴⁹ Tappan had difficulty reconciling with the 'frivolous' impractical items that placed more emphasis on the latest fashions they represented than the political cause they were made for. Her comments reflect an anxiety about the means used to achieve emancipation. For a rare male perspective on the nature of abolitionist objects we should look no further than Joshua T. Everett's letter to William Garrison titled 'Hints for the National Bazaar' where he outlined some of his grievances with the types of goods currently sold at bazaars. Speaking for those in the country, Everett argued that:

There has seldom been enough useful articles in the Fair, in past years, to interest...[those] who would otherwise feel an interest in, and patronize it. Many friends from the country do not possess enough...to expend their means for fancy articles. They must purchase things really useful, or they cannot patroness the Fair. I have attended the Fairs in years past, and could find nothing that I really needed. If they will make good under garments, vests, boots and shoes, I will go to the Fair, and purchase them.⁵⁰

According to Everett, well-made, practical objects were of most interest to rural customers. If fair organisers wanted country folk to patronise the bazaar then the items available for sale should reflect their practical needs. However, not all rural men and women wanted plain utilitarian items. The organisers of the Worcester County Anti-Slavery Fair announced that 'Ladies will have a rare opportunity to gratify the taste for the beautiful in the thousand little articles of skill and refinement which will there be displayed for their examination.'⁵¹ They may have had more use for practical objects, but that did not mean that 'fancy' objects were not desired or coveted when they appeared at the bazaars.

⁴⁸ *Liberator*, December 12, 1845.

⁴⁹ Julianna Tappan to AWW, October 1837, BPL.

⁵⁰ *Liberator*, November 24, 1848.

⁵¹ *Liberator*, April 21, 1848.

Rural fairs continued to supply their customers with plain utilitarian items, but increasingly emulated urban fairs in their descriptions of available items. In 1847, the female abolitionists of Ohio hoped their first Western Anti-Slavery Fair ‘will be very attractive, useful, and profitable. It is anticipated there will be a fine display of useful articles, as well as of those which are both useful and fanciful.’⁵² Even amongst provincial fairs, it was necessary to arrange useful items to their best advantage. Although organisers of rural fairs could not compete with the luxury items and elaborate displays of their urban sisters, they stressed that their items were ‘both useful and fanciful’. This demand for affordable items that were simultaneously practical and attractive was addressed by the organisers of the nineteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, who described the Perth, Leeds and Manchester donations as ‘useful and elegant.’ The combination of these qualities was deemed to be ‘very important to the success of a Bazaar like ours, where a large class of customers are desirous of obtaining something pretty and useful, and yet are unable or unwilling to spend more than three or four dollars.’⁵³ Affordable items that combined good taste with utility allowed women of all social classes, location and income to participate in political consumerism.

The shift from simple practical items to decorative accessories extended beyond the types of articles to the techniques used to decorate them. As demand for expensive items grew, plain needlework was displaced in favour of intricate embroidery, so much so that it became a novelty. In 1855 the Boston fair organisers were ‘especially indebted’ by the contributions sent by a Mrs Jones of Troy:

We assure her that her very nice needle-work is entirely appreciated, and brings us reputation as well as profit. Amid the immense preponderance of elegant fancy work, it is well to show that the art of plain needle-work has not altogether fallen into disuse.⁵⁴

Mrs Jones’ contributions provided a novel contrast to the abundance of fancy decorative items with no practical purpose. Despite their reassurance that plain items were still profitable donations, fancier articles continued to rise in both popularity and price.

⁵² *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, July 20, 1847.

⁵³ *Liberator*, January 28, 1853.

⁵⁴ *Report of the Twenty-First National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (Boston, 1855), 27.

Marked Mottoes: From Norm to Novelty

In 1838, the Boston bazaar boasted that of its items for sale ‘most of the little implements of housewifery were covered with appropriate mottoes and devices’⁵⁵ providing both domestic function and political advertisement. Through tracing the bazaar as a vehicle for the distribution of domestic abolitionist objects, we can trace a chronological shift in the levels of politically-decorated items available for sale.

As the anti-slavery bazaar increased in popularity and sought more middle-class customers, objects marked with abolitionist images and texts were increasingly replaced with unmarked articles. Alongside the shift towards fancier more expensive items, as the bazaar became more financially driven and materialistic, objects were increasingly valued for their fashion and aesthetic beauty rather than their political importance. Using the marked items used by British abolitionists as a guideline of the ways everyday objects could become political commodities, American bazaars initially stressed the importance of objects bearing political symbols. In 1838, Boston’s fair committee stipulated that if ornamental or ‘fancy’ articles were to be sold at the fair that they ‘should have upon them appropriate devices or mottoes’⁵⁶ connecting the object to the political cause.

Images used to decorate objects primarily consisted of numerous variations on Josiah Wedgwood’s kneeling slave accompanied by the text ‘Am I not a man and a brother?’ Other popular images included a slave woman holding a sick infant, or a freed slave couple dancing together. Biblical quotations were used regularly to politicise objects, as well as witty mottoes and verses. Such images or mottoes would have been hand stitched or stamped onto articles, although Maria Chapman noted that ‘Some cradle quilts and other articles from friends in Reading, were finished with drawings and mottoes in indelible ink’⁵⁷ rendering the object’s political meaning permanent. In the early years of the bazaar, significant emphasis was placed on the ability to adorn objects with original mottoes instead of repeating the same ones over and over.⁵⁸ An advertisement for the 1838 Boston fair boasted that ‘Many of the mottos on the articles offered for sale were original...and strikingly appropriate.’⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Liberator*, January 12, 1838.

⁵⁶ *Liberator*, August 21, 1838.

⁵⁷ *Liberator*, January 12, 1838.

⁵⁸ In 1835 the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society instructed members of the Providence Juvenile Anti-Slavery Society to ‘think of anti-slavery mottoes suitable for needlework, fair banners

Despite the trend for inventing mottoes, it was possible to have too much of a good thing. In a letter to her sister Deborah, abolitionist Lucia Weston recalled ‘Mrs [Lydia Maria] Child said that Ellis Grey Loring laughs at her for putting mottoes on all her things’⁶⁰ suggesting that it was not the norm to decorate every object for sale, even when marked objects were at their most popular. It was not necessary for all objects to be overtly political; the money raised from their sale would benefit the cause regardless of the presence of abolitionist messages.

As the consumer demand for fancy items to decorate the home exceeded orders for practical homely objects with political sentiment, marked objects became scarce enough to become a novelty. Fair Reports singled out marked items for special mention from the long lists of clothes and accessories that had replaced them. In 1854 the Boston Bazaar described a ‘very beautiful Honiton Lace Pin Cushion, with the word Liberty formed in the work...[that] was greatly admired, and sold readily.’⁶¹ It is noteworthy that the pincushion was still considered to be ‘very beautiful’ even with the political text, or perhaps needed to be beautiful to counteract the political message. The ‘fancy’ quality of the needlework increased the cushion’s desirability as a household accessory; its beauty helped to domesticate the political aspect. Although the pincushion was only mildly political in its appearance, using the single word ‘Liberty’ compared to earlier items covered with kneeling slaves bound in chains, even slightly marked items were now worthy of mention. It was the unique combination of political text with an item of beauty that made the cushion a novelty.

The move away from marked objects represents a change in abolitionist tactics from political to financial motives. Instead of selling objects with emotive slave images designed to provoke pity and appeal to the consumers’ humanity, bazaars encouraged the mass-consumption of unmarked items. As unmarked items tended to be fancier than their marked equivalents, they fetched a higher selling price. Alongside the expansion of available objects in their various styles, colours and embellishments, customers were persuaded to part with

or other educational purposes.’ Sarah R. Miller, Providence, to the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 9 May 1835, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Quoted in Van Broekhoven, ‘Clay Club’: 36.

⁵⁹ *Liberator*, December 28, 1838.

⁶⁰ Lucia Weston to Deborah Weston, December 16, 1836. BPL.

⁶¹ *Report of the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (Boston, 1854), 7.

their money and buy numerous items, all at a higher cost. Unmarked objects were devoid of overt political meaning, but they generated pleasing profits.

By the 1850s, the majority of items described in the fair reports and *Liberator* articles do not appear to have been marked with anti-slavery images or texts. There are several likely explanations as to why references to marked objects declined whilst profits soared. It is possible that marked items were so numerous that they went unmentioned, as customers knew they were available to buy and their presence was no longer noteworthy. Perhaps marked objects were not as popular amongst American customers as they had been in Britain when associated with sugar boycotts during the 1820s, or they were too reminiscent of the British campaign. A likely explanation is that their earlier success had produced a glut of marked items; homes were now saturated with a plethora of slave-themed accessories and they had no need for any more. Their overuse as political items meant they were no longer considered original, witty or unusual purchases.

The lack of marked objects reflected a shift in strategy in an attempt to accommodate changes in consumer behaviour. Anti-slavery bazaars increasingly encouraged customers to buy Christmas and New Year's gifts for friends and relatives; unmarked objects were revealed to be the more inclusive option as their politically neutral status made them suitable presents for everyone. As consumer demand for fancy decorative objects replaced interest in their simpler counterparts, marked items struggled to find a place for themselves within a bazaar that catered to the latest styles and patterns. Anti-slavery images did not fit alongside 'elegant' and 'beautiful' articles on display, slave images were fit for political purposes, they were not considered beautiful or stylish.

Customers who purchased unmarked articles contributed towards society funds just as much as customers who purchased marked ones. However, unmarked items held significantly less political impact. Customers might initially remember buying their items at the bazaar, but if the item was intended as a present the intended owner might never make the connection between their decorative object and anti-slavery. In his influential essay 'The Cultural Biography of Things' American Anthropologist Igor Kopytoff put forward the idea that objects have 'biographies' or life stories whereby their cultural meaning changes over time as

objects pass through their individual life cycle.⁶² As everyday items of clothing or household accessories, there is nothing visible on unmarked items that refers to or reminds the owner of abolition. Over time, the object's political meaning is lost; the item is only a cushion, apron or bag.

Although the objects sold at bazaars were no longer printed or embroidered with political images, the social space objects were distributed in continued to be decorated with abolitionist banners. As large colourful objects embellished with images and verse that dazzled visitors upon entrance, banners remained a key feature of abolitionists' use of spectacle to encourage consumption throughout the campaign. Banners transformed the blank canvas of the town hall into a social site of political consumerism and socialisation. The overtly political banners' survival where marked objects have not can be attributed to the nature of the banners themselves. Banners could be easily moved and reused years after year without needing replacing or updating, they could be loaned for use at other bazaars and did not have a use beyond their decorative purpose. In contrast, marked items were produced solely to raise society funds and were bought as gifts or household accessories that would be repurchased the following year. Recalling the Worcester Anti-Slavery bazaar of 1848 in a letter to his sister Catharine Paton, Henry Wright described the banners that were draped along each wall. One featured a Liberty Bell and another very large banner celebrated the achievement of British emancipation some fourteen years previous. Henry noted that this banner was decorated with 'the figure of an emancipated slave standing on the whip...the chains snapped and falling...the man in a posture of exultation.'⁶³ Surrounding the figure, in large capitals were the words: 'This is the Lord's doings...Slavery abolished in the British West Indies, August 1st, 1834.'⁶⁴ The emancipated image used was a stark contrast to the bound kneeling slave so often seen in abolitionist objects, following the shift away from the emotive and pitiful slave imagery used earlier on in the campaign.

The shift over time from marked objects to unmarked objects tells us how female fair organisers and consumers saw political objects within constructions of feminine production, distribution and consumption. Slave imagery did not comply with their ideas of what constituted beautiful items. Bazaars might have gradually phased out the distribution of items

⁶² Kopytoff, 'Cultural Biography of Things' in Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 66-7.

⁶³ *Liberator*, May 5, 1848.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

that bore political messages, but banners continued to display their abolitionist images across the venue and throughout the duration of the bazaar.

Spectacular Spectacle

Through the use of spectacle, abolitionists created a vibrant visual politics that worked to maximise the distribution of anti-slavery items at the bazaar. In stark contrast to earlier fairs with their small tables and minimal decoration depicting the very model of Quaker simplicity, bazaars were as fancy as the objects they sold. Abolitionists used colourful banners and unusual eye-catching decorations to leave a lasting impression on every visitor and consumer.

James Vernon has argued that ‘we cannot underestimate the scale and intensity of the politics of sight, or the power these forms of communication afforded to those who used them.’⁶⁵ As spaces filled with all manner of eye-catching decorations, bazaars allowed female abolitionists to harness this ‘politics of sight’ to facilitate the distribution of abolitionist objects. In Cincinnati, Ohio, female abolitionists understood the bazaar’s ability to lure customers in with a treat for the senses: ‘Our tables must contain so large a variety of such articles as please the eye, adorn the body, or gratify the taste, that none can go away with their purses full, for want of what they wish to perchance.’⁶⁶

Similarly, Julie Roy Jeffrey argues that the ‘careful visual construction’ of the bazaar was ‘designed to impress visitors whether they were abolitionists or casual shoppers. The first image assaulted the emotions.’⁶⁷ Spectacle actively encouraged consumption and promoted an all-inclusive version of abolitionist politics. Spectacle ensured that even those visitors who were not politically minded could feasibly be won over by the colourful banners and tables of carefully arranged items.

Abolitionists aligned the feminine with the spectacular for their own aims. Bazaars reworked criticisms that they were too fancy, too frivolous and too feminine to have any real political

⁶⁵ James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, c.1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), 107-8.

⁶⁶ *Liberator*, September 23, 1853.

⁶⁷ Jeffrey, ‘Permeable Boundaries’: 83.

impact by appealing to the materialistic side of abolition and the consumer desires of female customers. *The Philadelphia Freeman* established the bazaar as the destination of choice for fashion-conscious readers: ‘if you like to see beautiful manufactures, beautifully displayed, go thither [to the fair] and you will be gratified.’⁶⁸ Bazaars used spectacle to create a shopping experience that both appealed to and exploited women’s material desires through a visual bombardment of desirable items and elaborate decorations.

Nature provided abolitionists with an unusual ornament with which to ensnare unsuspecting customers. Members collected vast quantities of plants and evergreens weeks in advance⁶⁹ which were then artistically arranged around the hall for maximum impact. Adding some colour and interest to a bare room, the evergreens made up for the lack of flowers available during the winter season. Describing the vast quantities used to decorate the 1847 Boston bazaar, *The Liberator* joked ‘it would seem that almost a young forest of evergreens had been stripped of its foliage. Bowers, arches, wreaths, and beautiful chains of it, were displayed in all directions.’⁷⁰ Not a spot was to be left uncovered; Frances Drake suggested Maria Chapman use the greenery she sent to ‘wind round a post in some obscure corner.’⁷¹ Even the female members responsible for assisting customers co-ordinated with the furnishings: ‘the ladies wore wreaths of evergreen about their heads, as if determined to be in unity with the natural and artificial beauty surrounding them.’⁷² Although the ‘green’ theme sounds almost overwhelming, the overall effect contrasted against the wintery scenes outside the hall and worked to immerse the customer in a space of natural beauty.

In 1843 the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair replaced its usual decorations of foliage and evergreens with a huge Christmas tree as tall as the hall itself. Still considered to be a novelty attraction, the Christmas tree was Maria Chapman’s masterpiece of abolitionist spectacle. Once visitors had made their way through the crowds of people clamouring to see the tree for themselves, they were dazzled by the sheer amount of decorations. Illuminated by wax candles and coloured lamps, the tree was covered with ‘gilded apples, glittering strings of

⁶⁸ *Philadelphia Freeman*, December 13, 1849.

⁶⁹ Frances Drake sent MC evergreens for decorating the bazaar with her letters on December 15, 1843 and December 1, 1845.

⁷⁰ *Liberator*, January 21, 1848.

⁷¹ Frances Drake to MC, December 1, 1845, BPL.

⁷² *Liberator*, January 21, 1848.

nuts, tissue paper purses filled with glittering egg baskets and crystals of many coloured sugar, with every possible needlebook, pincushion, bag, basket, cornucopia, penwiper and doll that could be afforded for ninepence.⁷³ The bazaar had successfully managed to combine both the festive season and the political campaign in this single, grand statement. Unfortunately the tree proved to be so popular that the room quickly exceeded its capacity of 800 people, the large crowds ‘pouring into the hall’ separated children from their parents and plans to distribute the prizes on the tree had to be postponed until the following evening.⁷⁴ Surprised by the mass turnout, the fair organisers claimed they ‘had expected but little more than giving the anti-slavery families a brilliant spectacle’. Chapman may have not been prepared for quite so many anti-slavery families to attend the bazaar, but she understood that harnessing spectacle and employing it to such a scale was an effective way to reach as many prospective customers as possible.

Just as spectacle transformed a plain hall into a dazzling shopping experience, a lack of decoration and display could undermine the effort that had gone into producing the items for sale. Writing to Elizabeth Gay, Sarah Fiske described the differences between the Boston fair of 1855 and those of previous years. She disliked the chosen venue as ‘the Hall is dark and did not show the articles to advantage.’⁷⁵ Bazaars relied upon creating an inviting space where customers would feel free to browse but ultimately be won over by the items on display; if items were not displayed attractively, customers would not be tempted to purchase.

Spectacle arose from the need to sustain distribution and interest levels years after year once the initial novelty of an anti-slavery fair had worn off. Each year bazaar committees strove to improve and outdo the previous year’s attempts by adding more evergreens and decorations to the hall and attempting to think up new ways to draw customers in off the street. Fair reports typically described their efforts as an improvement on all previous years: there were more items for sale, donations were more widespread in origin, the work produced was fancier, customers were more eager to purchase. The organisers of the Eleventh Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair believed their fair of 1845 was ‘never before so productive,

⁷³ ‘Sketches of The Fair: The Christmas Tree,’ *Liberator*, January 27, 1843, 7.

⁷⁴ Beverly Gordon, ‘Playing at Being Powerless: New England Ladies Fairs, 1830-1930’ *The Massachusetts Review* 27 (1986):150.

⁷⁵ Sarah Fiske to Elizabeth Gay, December 30, 1855. Gay Family Papers Butler Library, Columbia University, New York. Quoted in Jeffrey, ‘Stranger, Buy’: 5.

so attractive and beautiful'⁷⁶ Claims to be 'better, bigger and more beautiful' were attempts to sustain public interest in a political cause that showed no sign of nearing completion. Maria Chapman addressed this apathy amongst Boston bazaar supporters:

Do not say you are tired by former exertions of this kind. With us, the Fair has absorbed the leisure of nine successive years, and all the charm of novelty has worn off...While slavery exists, we dare not cease to labor; and while we find this instrumentality so successful, we dare not relinquish it, merely because it is not amusing to us. Do not say this effort is too trifling in its character; for more than any other, we find that it sows deep our principles in daily life.⁷⁷

Chapman admitted that after nine years the bazaar was no longer a unique experience, yet it continued to be an effective way to raise funds and distribute political objects. Although some abolitionists thought the moral purpose of the bazaar was undermined by unnecessary decorations, spectacle permitted the bazaar to continue as a successful tactic for over twenty years by luring in new customers with visual displays. Spectacle promoted the bazaar as an exciting alternative to the ordinary abolitionist tactics such as sermons, meetings, petitions and periodicals. By using spectacle for their own aims, abolitionists transformed ordinary spaces into sites of political consumption. The church hall moved away from being merely the vessel for the items on sale to a venue filled with things to see, touch and purchase.

Abolitionist Consumerism: Spending for the Slave

Glickman argues that anti-slavery bazaars 'promoted a consumer-powered form of abolition[ism]'⁷⁸ that relied upon the spending habits of both male and female customers. Bazaars permitted and actively encouraged participation in an organised political consumerism, where objects were admired, bought and distributed. Fair organisers understood consumerism was necessary to sustain their campaign; abolitionists were told to exercise their consumer duty and 'relieve the suffering of the slave.'⁷⁹

In the run up to the fair, organisers built anticipation surrounding anti-slavery objects by publishing weekly snippets of information in *The Liberator* and other abolitionist periodicals.

⁷⁶ *Liberator*, January 24, 1845.

⁷⁷ *Liberator*, July 22, 1842.

⁷⁸ Glickman, 'Buy': 901.

⁷⁹ *Liberator*, January 4, 1839.

As the fair date drew near, consumer appetites were whetted with tempting descriptions of the numerous boxes sent by donors and long lists of the types of objects customers could expect to find. These regular updates transformed the bazaar into an exciting political event where consumerism was actively encouraged as a leisurely activity and all types of material wants and ‘needs’ could be satisfied. These promotional notices were so effective at building up expectation that customers became frenzied in their determination to buy ‘for the slave’. Writing to the English donor and prominent abolitionist Elizabeth Pease in 1842, Maria Chapman described the eagerness amongst the Boston women to get their hands on one of the sought-after foreign items. The Boston fair organisers had been trying to display some of the English items that arrived at the last minute when the crowd of shoppers made ‘ready to snatch them out of the boxes, for the sake of securing them.’⁸⁰

Anti-slavery bazaars tapped into the increasing commercialisation of the holiday season to become a permanent fixture in the secular calendar, attended each year by abolitionists and non-abolitionists. Urged to indulge in the ‘luxuries of the season’, visitors were encouraged to purchase Christmas or New Year’s Eve presents for friends and family instead of looking elsewhere. The organisers of the sixteenth National Anti-Slavery bazaar reassured their readers not to purchase presents until they had seen what the bazaar had to offer:

it is with the utmost confidence that we ask our usual visitants to defer the purchase of their holiday gifts till the Bazaar opens, believing that it will be impossible to find elsewhere so large and unique a variety.⁸¹

As each Christmas present bought represented ‘a Christmas gift to the slave’,⁸² abolitionists felt they were fulfilling their moral duty whilst participating in seasonal shopping. Yet not everyone could afford to be so liberal with their purse strings. In a Christmas Eve note to her mother, Margaret Fuller described the temptations of the foreign items and her wish to buy presents for relatives:

⁸⁰ MC to Elizabeth Pease, January 13, 1842, BPL.

⁸¹ *Liberator*, December 21, 1849.

⁸² *Pennsylvania Freeman*, December 15, 1853.

Everybody is running to the Anti-Slavery fair, said to be full of beautiful things from England. I wish I could go and buy pretty new year's gifts for you and those I love, but I must not [,] so avoid temptation. I had myself a beautiful present from there yesterday.⁸³

Margaret used the beauty of the foreign items to justify her purchase and emphasised her self-restraint in the face of excessive consumerism. Lawrence Glickman compares the anti-slavery bazaar with the free-produce movement as consumer-driven tools that each encouraged members to 'buy for the sake of the slave' but for very different reasons. He argues that bazaars helped indirectly by sustaining the existence of anti-slavery societies with their profits, whereas the free produce movement actively supported alternatives to slave labour: 'Promoters of anti-slavery fairs advocated consumption in the service of political struggle [whereas] free producers advocated consumption *as* political struggle.'⁸⁴ Glickman sees bazaars and free produce as similar but distinctly separate forms of consumer activism, yet it was possible for abolitionists to support both free produce and bazaars. Although bazaars were drawn to fancy novelty objects and the creation of spectacle, Ohio abolitionists thanked their Green Plain Friends for their 'useful' contribution of free labour cotton shirts for their 1847 fair.⁸⁵

Bazaars reminded abolitionists of their moral duty to exercise their consumer spending power and asked them to prove their political commitment with their purchases: 'Take all the money you can conveniently spare-and a little more-with you, and expend it all as your testimony against slavery.'⁸⁶ Yet there were also members who doubted the appropriateness of fair organisers' endorsements of excessive consumption, even if it was for political benefit.

New York abolitionist Julianna Tappan was concerned that the religious aspect of abolition was lost amongst the bazaar's increasing emphasis on materialistic desires and its widespread promotion of excessive consumerism: 'There is so much time consumed, and so much consulting of fashion, and conformity to the world, that I doubt much whether fairs, *as they*

⁸³Margaret Fuller to Mother, December 24, 1841, in Margaret Fuller, *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) Volume 2, 261.

⁸⁴ Glickman, 'Buy': 901.

⁸⁵ *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, July 20, 1847.

⁸⁶ *Liberator*, December 16, 1853.

are conducted are pleasing to God.’⁸⁷ As a campaign that was rooted in simpler tastes, female members becoming ‘slaves’ to the latest fashions for the ‘benefit’ of the slave was the opposite of the self-denial associated with the free produce movement.

As with petitions and other public forms of political activism, fair work raised questions about the propriety of women’s participation. Questions were often raised about whether it was appropriate for middle-class women to staff the sales tables, although this concern was less to do with abolitionist politics and more with the class politics.

Bazaars were not exclusively female spaces of consumption. Men accompanied their female friends and relatives, and browsed the less overtly feminine items for sale. As bazaars became a regular feature in the abolitionist calendar, organisers realised the benefits to be gained through appealing specifically to men as consumers with considerable spending power. An article in *The Liberator* outlined men’s political duty to purchase the items female abolitionists had so dutifully produced:

That the woman, both at home and abroad, have done their part, it is needless to say. Have the men done theirs? A multitude of articles, both useful and ornamental, still remain to be told. Let every friend of freedom buy something-all that we can.⁸⁸

Although the majority of objects for sale were ‘little implements of housewifery,’⁸⁹ the 1856 Boston bazaar catered towards their male customers: ‘Gentlemen have been especially remembered by our contributors from abroad, and furnished with canes, razors, braces, soap, purses, carpet bags, lounging or night traveling-caps, shirts, cravats, [and] embroidered waistcoats.’⁹⁰ Whilst the advertisement described a variety of men’s clothes and accessories, their presence was still unusual enough to warrant special mention. Nevertheless, men and women were both sought out to consume practical and luxury items in the name of abolition.

⁸⁷ Julianna Tappan to Anne Weston, October 30, 1837, BPL. Original emphasis.

⁸⁸ *Liberator*, January 2, 1846.

⁸⁹ *Liberator*, January 12, 1838.

⁹⁰ *Liberator*, December 19, 1856.

Conclusion

Anti-slavery bazaars were a financial and political success because organisers constantly reworked contemporary constructions of abolition to present an all-inclusive and domesticated political campaign that embraced the latest fashions and promoted consumerism. For those reluctant to read anti-slavery literature, attend a lecture or sewing circle, the bazaar created a domestic space where anti-slavery texts featured amongst, through and on women's handmade items for sale.

Bazaars raised significant amounts of money for the cause and broadened the sphere of public and political activity open to American and British women. They extended abolitionist networks, crossing geographical barriers through object production and distribution. As annual events, bazaars united female abolitionists in a domestic activity that infiltrated homes and church halls across Britain and America. They transformed a political campaign into a social event by providing an annual date in the secular calendar dedicated to political consumerism. Bazaars commercialised domesticity not only through the sale of household objects, but also through the public trading of domestic skills for profit. By linking consumption with charity, women's bazaars created a space for domesticity as a marketable commodity. Anti-slavery bazaars demonstrate how women used needlework and organised social networks to political effect.

Chapter 3

The Abolitionist Home: Anti-Slavery Material Culture in the Transatlantic Domestic Space

T.S. Arthur's work *The Lady at Home* (1847) informed female readers of their ability and duty to reform 'the world' through their homes:

even if we cannot reform the world in a moment, we can begin the work by reforming ourselves and our households- It is woman's mission. Let her not look away from her own little family circle for the means of producing moral and social reforms, but begin at home.¹

Women's role as society's moral guardians was intertwined with the domestic interior. Although Arthur did not specifically refer to political campaigns such as anti-slavery or household objects, the passage can be applied to female abolitionists and rooms furnished with objects bearing anti-slavery images. By analysing the use of these objects within the abolitionist interior, this chapter reflects Vaughan Kett's assertion that 'women's anti-slavery activity was embedded in the fabric of their homes...into their daily lives and that of their families.'²

In their seminal work on the abolitionist interior Walker and Ware showed 'how women's increasing participation in the [anti-slavery] movement affected domestic space...the type of abolitionist artefacts produced and their arrangement in the home for decoration, use and propaganda.'³ This chapter builds upon their efforts, by taking a more in-depth tour through the household using a wider range of surviving anti-slavery objects and bazaar reports. In the absence of a surviving domestic interior belonging to an abolitionist, this chapter will use the idea of an imagined transatlantic abolitionist household as a framework to discuss transatlantic anti-slavery material culture. This imagined abolitionist household is not a real space; in reality, many homes would not have contained all, or even any, of the surviving objects described in this chapter. However, by tracing these objects and analysing them in the rooms they furnished we can visualise how abolitionist households might have looked. This

¹ T.S. Arthur, *The Lady at Home: or, Leaves from the Every-Day Book of an American Woman* (Philadelphia, 1847), 177-8.

² Vaughan Kett, 'Quaker Women', 92.

³ Walker and Ware, 'Pincushions', 71.

allows us to consider how political campaigns such as anti-slavery potentially permeated transatlantic domestic spaces through a variety of handmade, manufactured, practical and decorative objects. In doing so, this chapter focuses not only on the types of objects used to furnish abolitionist homes, but also the ways these objects might have been actually used and the potential consequences of this upon the object's ability to convey anti-slavery sentiments.

Abolitionist households were furnished as a result of the rising commercialisation of politics in the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century's increasing emphasis on the home as a site for domestic consumption, collection and display through decorative objects. This chapter shows how abolitionists decorated their homes by purchasing and producing anti-slavery items as well as how they reworked gendered spaces for political aims. Walker and Ware argue 'the decoration of the female body and home...and the elision of the private and public spheres challenged binary divisions of space and culture.'⁴ Similarly, Logan states 'decorating a domestic interior...asserted a household's social identity.'⁵ This chapter reveals the role anti-slavery accessories and household objects played in creating a domestic 'power base' for women's political activism. It also builds upon the work in chapters 1 and 2 to show how British female abolitionists directly furnished American homes through bazaars and indirectly through exports made by British manufacturers.

Knappett argues 'we should not treat objects as individual, isolated items; attention must be devoted to both their spatial and temporal situatedness.' Knappett defines these as 'the complex environment of human and non-human objects in which individual artefacts are enmeshed...[and] an artefact's location within the flow of time, and how that artefact is experienced by agents over the course of a life time.'⁶ Using Knappett's argument as a framework, this chapter uses surviving examples of anti-slavery objects to visualise how they might have furnished rooms, how objects were sometimes reworked to create other items and how objects might have been used over their life cycle.

Although Walker and Ware's work provided the first foray into the abolitionist interior, they focused primarily on the parlour, used a small sample of mostly British objects and did not discuss how these objects were used in homes (the difference between intent and domestic

⁴ Walker and Ware, 'Pincushions', 58.

⁵ Logan, *Parlour*, 76.

⁶ Knappett, *Thinking Through Material Culture*, 62-3.

reality). Oldfield specifically addressed the visual culture of abolition, but not in terms of its use in the household and focused only on the British campaign.⁷ Wood's analysis of the transatlantic visual culture of slavery fills this gap but his focus is upon white sympathy and racial hierarchy, not the use of objects in the home.⁸ Margolin used British and American anti-slavery ceramics to illustrate his work on the iconography of the abolition movement, but he also focuses on their racial sentiments, not how those ceramics were used.⁹ Cobb's recent work on the black transatlantic parlour provides an interesting comparison,¹⁰ but her focus is on print culture and visual representations, not physical objects or individual rooms without the household.

This chapter aims to address these historiographical gaps. It begins by looking at the abolitionist body, items such as cameos, tokens, workbags and other accessories that were worn and carried and items that moved between the domestic space and the outside world. Then we move into the bedroom and examine physical appearance as a site for abolitionist sentiment, and how the bed itself was furnished with fabrics decorated with images of slavery and anti-slavery. Next we move into the rooms downstairs: the parlour, the drawing room and the dining room and analyse the variety of anti-slavery objects to be found in transatlantic homes. Finally, we address the use of china in the kitchen and the dining room and the relationship between domestic servants and abolitionist family members.

The Abolitionist Body

Wearing the Fabric of Abolition: Clothing and Accessories

This chapter begins with an analysis of the items that were worn or carried on the body by British and American abolitionists. These items moved with their wearer from room to room within the household, but they also moved from the domestic interior to the streets and spaces of the world outside the transatlantic home. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, anti-slavery bazaars sold a plethora of items made by British and American female abolitionists that could be worn by all members of the family. These items were a combination of practical, everyday

⁷ Oldfield, *Popular Politics*.

⁸ Wood, *Blind Memory*.

⁹ Margolin, 'Freedom Slave'.

¹⁰ Cobb, *Picture Freedom*.

clothing and luxurious decorative accessories. The ‘inexhaustible variety’¹¹ of ‘Ladies aprons, cloaks, hoods, collars, neck-ties, spencers, polkas, cephalics, cuffs’¹² and ‘slippers, socks, caps, mitts, gloves, braces, frills &c’¹³ meant that American families could literally be dressed from head to toe in clothes and accessories bought to further the cause of abolition. Children’s wardrobes were equally provided for in the variety of ‘baby’s hoods, hats, bonnets, boots, gaiters, aprons, bibs, richly braided cloaks...frocks, flannels and shoes’¹⁴ available for purchase. In their lists of items sent to the Boston bazaar in 1845 and 1850, the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society lists numerous dresses for boys and girls, girls’ pinafores, baby’s bibs, bonnets, shawls, cloaks, hoods and stays.¹⁵ Men were not forgotten: an advertisement for the 1856 Boston bazaar was keen to point out that ‘Gentlemen have been especially remembered by our contributors from abroad, and furnished with canes, razors, braces, soap, portmonnaies, purses, carpet bags, lounging or night travelling-caps, shirts, cravats [and] embroidered waistcoats.’¹⁶ Men, women and children moved between domestic and public spaces draped in the fabric of transatlantic abolition.

Bazaars also extended their range of available items to ornamental jewellery. In 1839 the organisers of the Boston bazaar informed their female customers they would be able to purchase Parisian necklaces ‘for the promenade or drawing room’ that came in six different styles.¹⁷ In 1856, the female abolitionists of Dublin and Cork sent bracelets of fish bone and brooches to the Rochester bazaar, accessories that were ‘readily disposed of’ by their American sisters.¹⁸ Although the wardrobes of abolitionists were filled with their bazaar purchases year after year, we are unable to pinpoint surviving items in British or American museum collections that were bazaar purchases produced and worn by abolitionists. This is not unusual for textiles and clothing in general. Clothes and accessories were made to be worn; over time they were replaced by newer versions and disposed of. We have seen how bazaar reports were keen to inform their customers that their items were fashionable,

¹¹ *Liberator*, December 12, 1845.

¹² *Liberator*, December 17, 1847.

¹³ *Liberator*, December 23, 1842.

¹⁴ *Liberator*, December 17, 1847.

¹⁵ List of articles sent to the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society by the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society. Andrew Paton to Maria Weston Chapman, November 15, 1845 and List of articles included in letter to Andrew Paton to Anne Weston, November 19, 1850. BPL.

¹⁶ *Liberator*, December 19, 1856.

¹⁷ Fair Announcement, 1839, BPL.

¹⁸ *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, August 1, 1856, 191.

displaying the latest trends. As these trends changed, the clothes and accessories women bought at bazaars were reworked or replaced, not kept for the benefit of future generations taking up valuable wardrobe space. In her thesis, Vaughan Kett analysed the surviving items of clothing in British museums and collections that belonged to Quakers or had connections to the Free Produce movement.¹⁹ Items made with free produce cotton were sent by British and American abolitionists to American bazaars, but the surviving items with Quaker or free produce connections discovered by Vaughan Kett are not necessarily related to the ones made or bought at bazaars. Although some of these items may have been worn or owned by abolitionists it cannot be confirmed.

In chapters 1 and 2 we witnessed how many items sold at bazaars were marked with abolitionist mottoes. However, clothes and accessories were not typically marked in this way. The political origins of these items were invisible when worn by their owners and they are invisible to scholars trying to ascertain whether surviving textile collections have any abolitionist origins or sentiments. Even amongst abolitionists, the meanings in the everyday items they wore only remained for as long as they were remembered. Without prompts from labels, decorative images or inscriptions, the origins of material objects were forgotten over time and have consequently gone unrecorded. We cannot identify the surviving items made to fund anti-slavery campaigns, but acknowledging that they existed in such a large variety and quantity contributes towards our understanding of the ways politics could be literally woven into the fabric of everyday clothes worn by middle-class Britons and Americans. As the rest of this chapter and chapter 4 will show, the transatlantic household could be filled with similar items that were also imbued with invisible abolitionist sentiments.

Abolitionists took inspiration from the tactics successfully employed by other philanthropic causes in producing their accessories. In 1835 Anne Warren Weston described how the success of the children's handkerchiefs 'made in disseminating the truth on the subject of Temperance' had induced the ladies of the BFASS to 'publish an Antislavery Handkerchief.'²⁰ Lydia Maria Child regarded these handkerchiefs 'as sparks falling into a powder magazine;'²¹ such items were equal in effect, if not more thought provoking, than

¹⁹ Vaughan Kett, 'Quaker Women'.

²⁰ Weston to the New York Female Anti-Slavery Society, July 21, 1835, in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society Letterbook, Massachusetts Historical Society.

²¹ Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans*, (Boston: Allen and Tickner, 1833), 152.

discussion and debate. The Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, possesses a surviving anti-slavery handkerchief printed with the title ‘The Poor Slave. Dedicated to the Friends of Humanity.’²² [Fig. 3.1] Printed by the Boston Chemical Printing Company in the 1830s, it shows how female abolitionists used anti-slavery accessories to bridge the gap between fashion and political texts. The design of the handkerchief imitates a newspaper, comprising extracts taken from the children’s anti-slavery periodical *The Slave’s Friend* and the Boston bazaar’s giftbook *The Liberty Bell*. Child-friendly articles such as ‘The Thankful Girl’ and ‘The Good Little Girl’ encouraged children to donate their pocket money to the cause and abstain from slave-grown produce. These handkerchiefs were produced in the hope:

that the sad picture of human suffering these too *truly* portrayed may kindle in the breast of many a free born, happy child, a glow of heartfelt *sympathy*, and cause the *tears* to flow and the infant *offering* to arise to Heaven in behalf of those little injured downtrodden ones.²³

However, there was a disparity between the intended and actual use of abolitionist items. As we will see further on in this chapter, anti-slavery handkerchiefs were also repurposed to make other household items such as quilts, which would prevent them from being used to wipe away tears as the BFASS intended. Although abolitionists carried anti-slavery handkerchiefs in their pockets, we cannot know how effective they were at disseminating political information, nor how they were actually used. Material objects were part of a lifecycle where objects took on new meanings and functions; they responded to new owners and changing surroundings. Without descriptions from their producers or owners, it is difficult to distinguish between the object’s original intended purpose and its actual use. The Gilder Lehrman Collection possesses a silk cloth printed with nine scenes from Uncle Tom’s Cabin.²⁴ The catalogue records the item as a ‘banner’, although Stephen Raillton suggests it was probably sold as a scarf, used as a pocket handkerchief or more likely, ‘displayed at home on a table or as a wall-hanging.’²⁵ These different functions convey the transient uses and meanings ascribed to material objects.

²² Printed Handkerchief, ‘The Poor Slave’, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. 109621.

²³ Melissa Ammidon to the Lowell Female Anti-Slavery Society, July 14, 1835. BPL.

²⁴ *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* Banner on cloth, c.1852. Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. GLC06894.

²⁵ Last accessed January 2016. <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/tog1chp.html>

Wedgwood's Cameo: The Original Abolitionist Accessory

Although not all the items purchased at bazaars were obviously abolitionist, Britons and Americans had been wearing and carrying more overtly abolitionist accessories from the late eighteenth century onwards. When Josiah Wedgwood produced his medallion in 1787, he created an image that would become the definitive symbol of both the British and American anti-slavery campaigns. These medallions were widely distributed, but it is difficult to quantify exactly how many were produced and who they were distributed to.²⁶ In 1974 Michael Craton estimated that by the start of the nineteenth century, over 200,000 cameos were in circulation, but he does not reference the source of this information.²⁷ Like other scholars who have attempted to find sources relating to the medallion's manufacture, I have been unable to determine how many slave medallions were made by Wedgwood, or those who imitated his design.

In August 1788 Clarkson wrote to Wedgwood's agent expressing gratitude that Wedgwood had been 'so good as to furnish me, during the last Sessions of Parliament, with several Cameos for Distribution.' As he was about to embark upon a 'Tour through the Southern Counties of the Kingdom on the Subject of the Slave-Trade', Clarkson requested 'as many as you can spare...for [Wedgwood] has always desired me to make application for any, if I should want them in the Service of the Cause.'²⁸ In 1808 Clarkson recalled that he received 'no less than five hundred' cameos from Wedgwood himself.²⁹ The commission records and order books held in the Wedgwood Museum Archive (WMA) contain several other orders for slave cameos, although there is very little information about who these people were and it is unclear whether they were for individuals or other distributors.

²⁶ The absence of the Wedgwood Oven Books from January 1788 to December 1790 makes it difficult to determine precisely when the first batch of slave medallions were produced, or how many were produced during this time period. Wedgwood Museum Archive. (Hereafter WMA)

²⁷ Michael Craton. *Sinews of Empire: A Short History of British Slavery* (New York: Anchor Books, 1974), 262.

²⁸ Thomas Clarkson to The Agent for Mr Wedgwood, August 27, 1788. 21952-115. WMA.

²⁹ Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade by the British Parliament*, Volume II, (Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1808), 192.

Although the surviving orders for Wedgwood's medallion were placed by men, women were also courted as potential consumers. An undated calling card in the Wedgwood museum archive notes 'M. Bastide has taken the medallions from Mr Wedgwood's to shew the Ladies' at an address in Southampton Street.'³⁰ Without a date, we cannot assume that the slave cameo was part of this selection, but it does show how female consumers were courted by manufacturers; it is not unreasonable to conclude that female abolitionists might have viewed or obtained slave cameos in similar ways.

Wedgwood's kneeling slave was a piece of visual propaganda; it portrayed 'what poems, pamphlets, articles and abolitionist papers were trying to convey.'³¹ Benjamin Franklin believed the medallion 'may have an effect equal to that of the best written pamphlet in procuring honour to those oppressed people.'³² Worn on the body as a fashion accessory, Wedgwood's cameos turned abolitionists into moving anti-slavery advertisements. In 1788 the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* informed readers of this new trend in a description of the slave cameo: '*Fashion* has extended her influence to the *cause of humanity*, and figures, similar to what we have described, are making in *cameo* as bracelets for the ladies.'³³ Writing in 1808, Clarkson recalled the ways abolitionists personalised their cameos, reworking fashion for political means:

Some had them inlaid in gold on the lid of their snuff-boxes. Of the ladies, several wore them in bracelets, and others had them fitted up in an ornamental manner as pins for their hair. At length, the taste for wearing them became general; and thus fashion, which usually confines itself to worthless things, was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity and freedom.³⁴

Oldfield argues that while Clarkson spoke 'with some authority', he 'undoubtedly exaggerated' his claim that the taste for wearing cameos became 'general.'³⁵ Although we cannot know what percentage of the cameos were worn as jewellery and there are no surviving bracelets or hair pins, the number of surviving cameos set into jewellery mounts or

³⁰ Undated Calling Card. 21777-114. WMA.

³¹ Desiree Long, 'Slave Medallion': 172.

³² Benjamin Franklin to Josiah Wedgwood, May 15, 1788, in Ann Finer and George Savage, eds., *The Selected Letters of Josiah Wedgwood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 314.

³³ *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, Thursday, April 3, 1788, Issue 4694. Original emphasis.

³⁴ Clarkson, *Rise*, 192.

³⁵ Oldfield, *Popular Politics*, 157.

frames for household display suggests Clarkson was not exaggerating wildly. By wearing the cameo, ‘frivolous jewellery was lent moral worth by...associat[ion] with a popular and honourable cause;’³⁶ women could not be censored for their preoccupation with ‘worthless things’ if they were worn in the name of abolition. As a ‘recognisably feminine decorative luxury’,³⁷ the cameo enabled women to wear a political emblem whilst conforming to contemporary notions of suitable female appearance.

Although both men and women wore Wedgwood’s cameo, it is possible that they were more desirable for women as there were more ways for them to wear them, for example as hair pins, bracelets, necklaces and brooches. In 1804, John Wilkes sent his friend Mr Sharp, resident of Newport on the Isle of Wight, a cameo to give to his wife:

I beg Mrs. Sharp’s acceptance of the inclosed [sic] medallion, the subject of which will, I am sure strike so sensible a mind. I gave one to the pretty Lydia White of Bath, with the following lines, which I transcribe, almost trembling, for you, and you only. “Afric’s [sic] black son in chains before you see,/ As you have oft fair England’s progeny,/ But twined with flowers we scarcely/ would be free.”³⁸

Wilkes’ letter not only suggests that the cameos were a suitable gift for women, but that they could also be romantic tokens. His cameo to ‘pretty Lydia White’ was accompanied by some of his own poetry, as if it were a love token, not a political symbol. William Dickson also distributed cameos during his tour of Scotland on behalf of the London Committee. Whilst dining with Reverend Alice, Dickson gave Alice’s ten-year-old grandson ‘a cameo for himself and another for any lady he chose to give it to.’³⁹ Oldfield notes that women were ‘more likely than men to possess decorative goods, women were an obvious target of marketing influence.’⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that Wilkes did not give Mr Sharp a cameo, and Dickson suggested Alice’s grandson should give his spare cameo to ‘any lady’, rather than a male friend. Similarly, in 1788, Welsh diarist Hester Lynch Thrale connected wearing a slave cameo as a necklace with marriage:

³⁶ Guyatt, ‘Slave Medallion’: 97-8.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Letter to Mr [Sylvanus] Urban, Birmingham, June 5. *Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review*, Volume 74, Part 1, (1804), 520.

³⁹ January 24, 1792, William Dickson, ‘Diary of a Visit to Scotland’, Quoted in Oldfield, *Popular Politics*, 158.

⁴⁰ Oldfield, *Popular Politics*, 158.

Ladies now wear the Figure of a Negro in Wedgwood's Ware round their Necks, the Inscription these Words *Am I not a Man and a Brother?* So The great Heiresses in the next Generation will perhaps be usefully perwaded [sic] by their Patriotic Mothers to Find the African Blackamoors equally fit for a *Man & a Husband*.⁴¹

Here Thrale sees the cameo as an educational tool; by wearing the male slave as a necklace, women are introducing the idea of a black husband to their daughters. She also connects a political piece of jewellery with the small portraits set into jewellery frames worn as love tokens by her contemporaries. This comparison is also made by American Maria Goodell Frost in her abolitionist story for adolescent girls *Gospel Fruits* (1854),⁴² where the female heroine is teased for bringing a 'likeness' of her 'beau' to Sunday School: a workbag printed with an image of the male kneeling slave.

Guyatt argues female abolitionists set their cameos into jewellery mounts because it feminised an 'unashamedly masculine' image and 'helped to lessen the potential embarrassment experienced by women wearing images of semi-naked black males.'⁴³ She adds men 'would not have encountered such problems' as the medallion was already a recognisably 'male' ornament.⁴⁴ However, as fashionable purchases, cameos were typically set into frames as brooches and necklaces before the slave cameo was produced and men also turned theirs into accessories. In 1779 Wedgwood's customers were informed that their collection of 440 medallion and 379 intaglio designs were 'fit for rings, buttons, lockets, and bracelets; and especially for inlaying in fine Cabinets, Writing-Tables, Bookcases, etc.'⁴⁵ These customised cameos were thought to specifically benefit female customers: 'Ladies may display their Taste in a thousand Ways, in the Application of these Medallions; and thus lead Artists to the better Stile in ornamenting their Works.'⁴⁶ Wedgwood cleverly suggested that by turning their cameos into other objects, women could cultivate and display their creativity.

⁴¹ Katherine C. Balderston, ed., *Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (Later Mrs. Piozzi). 1776-1809*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 714. Original emphasis.

⁴² See Chapter 5 for a full analysis of the use of the workbag in this literature.

⁴³ Guyatt, 'Slave Medallion', 97-8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *A Catalogue of cameos, intaglios, medals, busts, small statues, and bas-reliefs; with a general account of vases and other ornaments, after the antique, made by Wedgwood & Bentley, 5th ed.*, (London, 1779), 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

In February 1788, Wedgwood received a letter from his agent W. Greatbatch regarding his plan to fulfil an order of slave cameos for a Mr Houlbrooke. Greatbatch planned to ‘get 4 cameos of the black kneeling from G. Barnet and make them up for Mr. Houlbrooke to be given to Mr. Swift with the letter.’⁴⁷ While we do not know what form Houlbrooke’s cameos were made into, the letter suggests that Wedgwood was not only providing customers with slave cameos, he was also offering to turn them into other items, as per his catalogue suggestions. By suggesting the various ways in which they could be used, and providing this service to his customers, it could be argued that Wedgwood was upselling his philanthropic endeavour. Although there is no proof that Houlbrooke paid for the service, there is also nothing to suggest otherwise.

While I agree with Davies’ view that women transformed the slave cameo ‘into a sign of fashionable femininity, and the emblem reciprocally transformed women into signs of ardent abolitionist sentiment’ I disagree with her claim that by wearing the cameo ‘the black slave’s call for rights was feminised and...de-politicised...the wearers of the brooch became like the slave, a homogenised emblem of abolitionism’s normative language.’⁴⁸ Women chose to wear the slave cameo on their bodies; it represented their taste and individual preferences. As we will see further on in this chapter, not all women wore the cameo, some were mounted into frames and hung on walls as a household furnishing.

Guyatt has argued that the Wedgwood medallion has been ‘presented as either a piece of jewellery or as a piece of propaganda, rarely has it been discussed in both contexts at once.’⁴⁹ Like Guyatt, I aim to show how British and American women combined politics with fashion by transforming the medallion into a wearable accessory. Scholarly analysis of the medallion has primarily focused on the meanings behind the motto and the image of the kneeling slave and what it tells us about contemporary notions of race, religion and politics.⁵⁰ Those who have discussed the cameo as a piece of jewellery briefly mention it as just another example of the commodification of political campaigns, not in terms of where it might have been worn or its contribution towards a head-to-toe abolitionist outfit. If an image accompanies their

⁴⁷ W. Greatbatch to J. Wedgwood, April 17, 1788, 29455-143, WMA. After the 1790s the slave cameo is described as the ‘black kneeling’ in the WMA’s Oven Book records.

⁴⁸ Davies, ‘A moral purchase’ In Eger, *Women*, 140.

⁴⁹ Guyatt, ‘Slave Medallion’, 94

⁵⁰ See Lawton, ‘Contested Meanings’ and Yellin, *Women and Sisters*.

discussion, it is usually only of one surviving example. Similarly, scholars have ignored the ways medallions were set into frames to be hung upon walls. This chapter uses surviving medallions to show how they were transformed into accessories to be worn on the body, or for display within the household.

Several British and American collections possess Wedgwood medallions that have, at some point, been set into pin-backed mounts for brooches and pendant frames with hanging loops for a necklace chain to thread through. My research has uncovered thirteen surviving Wedgwood medallions set into jewellery: eight pendants with hanging loops, one on a chain and four brooches.⁵¹ [Figs. 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4] The fact that only one has a chain, which may not be related to the original owner, suggests that women wore the cameos in rotation with other pendants using the same chain. The mounts are predominantly gold, reflecting the owners' wealth. Only one of these surviving pendants is set into a coloured frame [Fig. 3.5]. The Wedgwood medallion in New Jersey's Newark Museum is encased by a jewelled blue mount, showing its function as a decorative ornament designed to accessorize matching outfits and other pieces of jewellery. All have frames and loops of different sizes, shapes and styles which suggests that even if Wedgwood suggested the idea, they were not probably not altered by him, but by jewellers acquainted with the cameo's owner. While we know both British and American women received Wedgwood cameos, and that surviving ones set into jewellery are held in both British and American archival collections, this does not definitely prove the nationality of their original owners. The medallion in New Jersey's Newark Museum was discovered by the vendor at a Vermont estate, but that does not reveal much

⁵¹ Pendants: British Museum, 1909,1201.261; Newark Museum, New Jersey, 2003.2; Wilberforce House Museum, Hull, (WHM) KINCM:1982.305; Smithsonian The National Museum of American History, 1987.0005; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 96.779; Victoria and Albert Museum, 414:1304-1885; Rowan & Rowan, Ref OZ1 and http://www.rowanandrowan.com/Articles/275407/Rowan_and_Rowan/Historical/Historical_IT/EMS/historical_erb3.aspx and http://www.rowanandrowan.com/Articles/298419/Rowan_and_Rowan/Historical/Historical_ITEMS/oz1_antislavery_pendant.aspx last accessed January 2016; Brooches: The Art Walters Museum, 48.2597; Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester, 1906.146; Scarborough Museums Trust; Rex Stark Americana personal collection; Sothebys Auction House listing, 2006, last accessed January 2016: <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.76.html/2006/property-from-the-collections-of-hanns-and-elisabeth-weinberg-and-the-antique-company-of-new-york-n08277> Sotheby's note a similar medallion set as a stick pin was auctioned on October 21, 1999, lot 103, but there is no listing or image on the website. This 'stick pin' may have been a brooch, or a hat or hair pin.

about its original owner. Similarly, the pin-backed brooch auctioned by Sothebys was part of an American collection, but this is not conclusive proof.

Penny Tokens: The Kneeling Slave as a Form of Currency and Portable Commemoration

In 1788 William Cowper added a postscript in a letter to Lady Hesketh about one of Wedgwood's 'original' cameos sent to him by 'a very good Quaker named Philips.' Cowper noted 'I understand that they are not purchasable, which makes it all the more valuable. Wedgwood refused to sell them, affirming that it should never be said of him that he sold a negro.'⁵² Although Wedgwood's medallions were not made for profit, this was not true for the medallion-shaped penny tokens decorated with abolitionist images that were also carried on the body. In the late 1780s, token coins flooded the market in an attempt to solve the shortage of British specie. These were stamped with the bearer's name, address and a promise 'to pay the current value on demand.' Oldfield notes that as these tokens were also 'made for sale to collectors or sold in bulk to anyone who would purchase them'⁵³ they 'provided a perfect vehicle for political propaganda'⁵⁴ because they could be stamped with any image or text. The popularity of anti-slavery as a motif is evident in the variety and quantity of surviving tokens with abolitionist images and inscriptions. Testament to the demand for short change, numerous museums hold anti-slavery tokens and medallions dating from the 1790s to the 1830s. Buckinghamshire County Museum holds twelve anti-slavery halfpenny tokens all issued by Francis Wheeler of Aylesbury in 1796. Most of these are engraved with the inscription 'to the friends for the abolition of slavery'; one features a cap of liberty on a pole in front of two crossed flags.⁵⁵ Aside from Wedgwood's 'Am I Not a Man and Brother?' motto, biblical inscriptions were also common such as 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even unto them' from Matthew 7:12.⁵⁶ As well as the

⁵² William Cowper to Lady Hesketh, June 23, 1788 in Thomas Wright, *The Correspondences of William Cowper. Arranged in Chronological Order, with Annotations.*, Volume III (New York: Haskell House, 1969), 289.

⁵³ Oldfield, *Popular Politics*, 159.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁵⁵ Tokens, Buckinghamshire County Museum. AYBCM: 2007.62.1.

⁵⁶ Token c.1787. Colonial Williamsburg, 2002-44. The catalogue record notes that 'tokens of this type, with several variations, were issued in England by The Society for the Suppression of the African Slave Trade from 1787 to 1807.'

kneeling slave motif, other tokens were stamped with images of two hands clasped together in a handshake motion. One such token in Bristol Museum's collection bears the popular inscription 'May Slavery & Oppression Cease Throughout The World.'⁵⁷

These tokens were stamped with anti-slavery images and inscriptions which tapped into a popular campaign that already had an instantly-recognisable motif and motto. We do not know if those who were responsible for choosing the token designs were abolitionists, or if they were specifically targeting abolitionists as a consumer market. However, these anti-slavery penny tokens went against Wedgwood's own desire not to 'sell a negro'; they possessed a small monetary value and could be exchanged for commodities. Here the slave image became a commodity, a form of currency carried by abolitionists. These tokens and medallions moved between the household and public arenas, frequently exchanging hands between abolitionist and non-abolitionist shopkeepers and customers.

Penny tokens and medallions were also made to commemorate transatlantic abolitionist milestones, and the designs and images used altered, reflecting these milestones. A penny token in Southwark Museum's collections includes the dates of George IV's birth, accession, coronation and death with electoral reform and abolitionist milestones. On the reverse of the token is inscribed: 'The Reform Bill Passed 1832. Abolition of Slavery 1834.'⁵⁸ Manufacturers of penny tokens and medallions tapped into the increasing levels of female participation in both the British and American campaigns. One such item made by Thomas Halliday in 1834 to celebrate British emancipation is currently in the National Maritime Museum's coin and medal collection.⁵⁹ The obverse bears the motto 'Am I Not A Woman And A Sister?' around an image of a female slave kneeling before an allegorical figure of Justice, whose arm is extended towards the slave in a gesture of sisterly assistance. The exergue contains a quote from Psalms: 'let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords.' On the reverse there is a wreath with the names of male abolitionists: 'Penn, Granville Sharp, Wilberforce, Benezet, Clarkson, Toussaint L'ouverture, Stephen, D. Barclay', and the inscription 'To The Friends Of Justice, Mercy, And Freedom'. Another medal

⁵⁷ Token, Bristol Museum, O.4519.

⁵⁸ Token, Southwark Museum. N0185.

⁵⁹ Coin/medal, 1834. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (NMMG) ZBA2811.

commemorating 'Emancipation in the West Indies' depicts an African man shaking hands with a white man, whose other hand rests on the shoulder of an African child holding a book.⁶⁰ They are accompanied by a white woman and African woman. Unlike the loin-cloths that typically clothe the kneeling slaves, here the African man, woman and child are all wearing westernised items of clothing, the man wears a shirt with a collar. The Museum of Fine Arts Boston possesses a copper token struck by Americans Gibbs, Gardner & Co for the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York.⁶¹ Similar to the 1834 Greenwich medal, the obverse features the inscription 'Am I not a Woman and a Sister-1838' around an image of a kneeling female slave. The reverse bears the inscription 'United States of America' and 'Liberty-1838' within a single branched laurel wreath. The British system of slave apprenticeship was abolished in 1838, so the token could be further read as a memento that abolitionist milestone. Commemorative medallions combined the penny token and Wedgwood's cameo. On the reverse of one, made to commemorate the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 is an image of Britannia, crowned by Victory, bearing the words 'I have heard their cry.'⁶² Another medallion produced in response to the 1834 Emancipation Act is currently on display at Bristol Museum.⁶³ The obverse is stamped with an image of William IV and his advisers with the inscription: 'I Advocate This Bill As A Measure Of Humanity', the reverse depicts seven slaves dancing around a palm tree and the words 'Slavery Abolished By Great Britain 1834.' According to the NMMG catalogue notes, commemorative medals 'would have been distributed at meetings or sold, with the proceeds going to fund the abolitionist campaign,'⁶⁴ although there is no further reference or information supporting this.

Unlike the Wedgwood cameo worn on the body and the penny tokens carried in pockets and purses, these commemorative medallions were more likely to have been displayed in homes. However, my research suggests that some abolitionists transformed their tokens and medallions into pieces of jewellery so that they could, like Wedgwood's cameo, be worn on the body. Several tokens in the British museum and National Maritime Museum collections

⁶⁰ Medal, NMMG. ZBA2812.

⁶¹ Token, Museum of Fine Arts Boston. 2004.1175.

⁶² Token, Bristol Museum. O.4258

⁶³ Token, Bristol Museum, O.4259.

⁶⁴ Anti-Slavery Medal, ZBA2796, NMMG. Last Accessed January 2016. <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/255029.html>

have tiny holes pierced through the top, possibly to thread ribbon or a chain through. One British token turned into a brooch was listed as part of an Americana auction in 2008; unfortunately we do not know whether the original owner was British or American or when the medallion was altered.⁶⁵ As can be seen in Fig. 3.6, on the back of the medallion, a hinged pin has been attached, transforming it from an item that was either hidden in a pocket or confined to display in the parlour, to a visual display of political affiliation when worn on the body as a badge or brooch.

The various museum catalogue records for this medallion suggests it was struck in 1814 along with 50,000 others by Zachary Macaulay to commemorate the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. Macaulay commissioned the Soho Mint in Birmingham to make his own tokens, having had previous dealings with them over the production of the Sierra Leone Company's coins during his time as Company Secretary and Governor.⁶⁶ The obverse of the medallion depicts a western man shaking hands with an African man, who wears a loincloth and cape around his shoulders. In the background are several huts and people, presumably freed slaves, dancing around a tree. Around this image is the inscription 'We are all Brethren' and 'Slave trade abolished by Great Britain 1807'. Interestingly, the reverse of the medallion contains five lines of Arabic text: 'Sale of slaves prohibited in 1807, Christian era, in the reign of George the Third; verily we are all brothers.'⁶⁷ The National Maritime Museum's catalogue record suggests it 'was intended to deter Arab-speaking African traders from sending slave caravans to the coast for sale to European ship captains.'⁶⁸ The imagery on this token is particularly noteworthy because it is one of the few surviving anti-slavery objects that deviates from the standard kneeling slave motif.⁶⁹ The black man stands erect and mirrors the white man shaking his hand who is now his equal: they are the same height and their postures are mirrored.

⁶⁵ Token mounted with hinged pinback to wear as pin. Historic Americana Auction 2008, <http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=60153>

⁶⁶ Catalogue notes: <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/2001N37> last accessed January 2016.

⁶⁷ Catalogue record notes, NMMG. Last Accessed January 2016. <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/255018.html>

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ For another medal with a standing male slave image see: Medal commemorating the Abolition of slavery, NMMG, ZBA2810.

It is not immediately obvious whether the modified one was worn by a man or a woman, as these medallions would have been owned by both sexes. The medallion is not set into a gilded frame like the Wedgwood cameo brooches and pendants, although the hinged pin is the same style as the brooch listed for auction by Sotheby's in 2006. Nevertheless, brooches were more likely to be worn by women, so it is possible that it was a woman's attempt to make an abolitionist accessory from an item she already had, inspired by the Wedgwood brooches worn in previous years. As we cannot be sure when the hinged pin was fixed onto the medallion, we cannot be certain it was not the work of another owner much later in the nineteenth century. However, it seems more likely that it was altered by an original owner sympathetic to the cause. Whilst this is only one surviving example, it suggests that other British and American abolitionists also displayed creativity in altering their tokens and medallions. Objects that were designed for household display became decorative accessories. As a form of currency, penny tokens stamped with slave images contrasted with Wedgwood's own declaration about not wanting to be associated with the slave trade, as well as the fundamental principle of abolitionism. However, by turning them into accessories, the tokens lost their function as currency and became wearable and transportable symbols of abolitionist sentiment. This surviving pin-backed medallion is one example of the way anti-slavery objects went through a life cycle, taking on new meanings when reworked by their owners.

Workbags: Fashionable Abolitionist Repositories

Women attending the 1848 Worcester County Anti-slavery Fair could expect to find 'bags of every description, from the most novel style of ladies [sic] travelling bags, to the smaller bead, velvet, silk and Berlin worsted wrought Reticules.'⁷⁰ While these particular items were not always 'marked' with anti-slavery images, British and American women made, purchased and owned workbags that were decorated with slave motifs and texts. Worn on the body, these accessories allowed women to physically carry their political beliefs between domestic and public spaces.

Workbags were typically used to carry 'women's 'work': pieces of embroidery and various sewing related accessories. Given what we know about women's anti-slavery sewing circles,

⁷⁰ *Liberator*, April 21, 1848.

some women would have used these workbags to transport their political needlework to sewing circle meetings, often held in the homes of fellow abolitionists. Unlike non-abolitionist workbags, those distributed by the Birmingham Female Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves were not filled with needles and thread, but with political propaganda. In their ‘Card explanatory of the contents of the Society's work bags’ the Society explained that a copy of the *Jamaica Gazette* was placed inside each work bag ‘to shew from the Planter’s own statements, *in their own authentic records*, the sufferings which our present system of Colonial slavery must produce.’ After a description of the *Jamaica Gazette*’s articles, the card finished with the following summary, leaving the female owner in no doubt about the bag’s political sentiments:

The Money raised by the sale of the Society's Work Bags and Albums, is
employed in
CIRCULATING INFORMATION,
In relieving
NEGLECTED AND DESERTED NEGROES,
And in promoting the
EDUCATION OF BRITISH SLAVES.⁷¹

Made from East-Indian cotton, silk or satin, workbags linked abolitionist literature, bazaar sewing circles and the free-produce movement. The workbags produced and distributed by the Birmingham women could be found in the homes of ‘the affluent and influential classes of the community’, including Mrs Clarkson, Mrs Wilberforce, Maria Edgeworth, Elizabeth Fry and Princess Victoria.⁷² Two thousand workbags were distributed across Britain in 1826 alone;⁷³ they would have been as recognisable amongst female abolitionists as Wedgwood’s cameo. Witney Antiques owns a pink drawstring workbag that was given as a gift from Jane Neale ‘to her dear friend Sarah Lloyd’ in 1827.⁷⁴ Workbags were the cameo’s textile equivalent, distributed by female abolitionist networks. Anti-slavery workbags could also be found in the homes of American abolitionists. Washington’s Daughters of the American Revolution Museum (D.A.R), holds two British-manufactured workbags [Fig. 3.7] and a leather coin purse belonging to Philadelphia Quaker Elizabeth Margaret Chandler. Presumably they were either bazaar purchases, or they were sent as a gift.

⁷¹ Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, Card explanatory of the contents of the Society's work bags, n.p., n.d., Wilson Anti-Slavery Collection, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. (Hereafter JRL)

⁷² Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 57.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Reticule, 1827, Witney Antiques, <http://www.witneyantiques.com/flat.items/silkpicture51g.htm>.

Vanda Foster and Aileen Ribero argue bags and purses are ‘chameleon objects, changing their forms and materials radically according to the current tastes and demands.’⁷⁵ Anti-slavery workbags epitomise this description. Just as Wedgwood’s cameos were transformed into pieces of jewellery according to the personal tastes and preferences of their owners, workbags were produced in a variety of styles, fabrics and colours, and printed with different images and texts. Surviving British and American workbags were made in pink, blue, cream and bright yellow fabric, some had ribbon drawstrings, others had metal clasps and chain handles, [Figs. 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10] some were ‘exquisite bead and satin affairs.’⁷⁶ Workbags with clasps provided a more secure repository for valuable contents, although they were also interpreted by one contemporary as a physical prompt: ‘and the Purse-who could rudely shut its clasps against the solicitations of mercy, while that pleading face is there to look a silent reproach for the unkindness?’⁷⁷

The surviving workbags held in museum collections in Britain and the U.S., are printed with a variety of slave motifs that were also used to decorate other household objects: female slaves holding infants, kneeling female slaves and, unusually, a male slave accompanied by a boy and a girl.⁷⁸ Anti-slavery workbags allow us to see how American women were inspired by the earlier efforts of their British sisters and replicated their use of material objects as political symbols for their own campaigns. In 1837 the BFASS commissioned silk stamped ‘from the plate representing a slave mother and her infant sitting under a tree,’⁷⁹ for its own workbags, possibly using the same plate previously used by British women. Earlier that year, *The Liberator* described workbags sold at the 1836 Boston bazaar made to commemorate Boston’s legal victory of the ‘Little Med’ case.⁸⁰ Deviating from the traditional slave motif, these bags were printed with a ‘Slave kneeling before the figure of Justice’ and, amongst other text, the following inscription in golden letters:

⁷⁵ Vanda Foster and Aileen Ribero, eds., *Bags and Purses*, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1982), 6.

⁷⁶ Sara W. Sturge, *Memoir of Mary Lloyd of Wednesbury, 1795-1865* (Privately Printed, 1921), 30. Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London.

⁷⁷ A. Lady, ‘The Reports, &c. from England’, part of ‘Ladies’ Repository. Philanthropy and Literature’, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, (June 1830), No.3, Vol. 1, 41.

⁷⁸ Workbag, n.d., WHM, KINCM:2010.17.

⁷⁹ Julia Tappan to AWW July 21, September 18 and October 11, 1837. BPL.

⁸⁰ Overseen by Judge Lemuel Shaw, the case ruled in favour of slave Maria Sommersett (‘Little Med’) who had been illegally brought into Massachusetts by the wife of her Louisiana owner.

Slavery was abolished in Massachusetts, by the adoption of the Bill of Rights as a part of the Constitution, A.D. 1780. Slavery says of this law, "Lo, 'tis cold and dead, and will not harm me." Anti-Slavery replies, "But with my breath I can revive it!"⁸¹

American abolitionists wore accessories not only to convey political sentiment, but to illustrate their knowledge of abolitionist milestones. Many members of the BFASS attended the trial, so these bags were a physical symbol of their participation in local abolitionist events.

Scholars have discussed the production of these workbags, the images printed upon them and the political pamphlets they held, but they have not considered how they might have been used to store other anti-slavery objects such as penny tokens. The coin purse belonging to Chandler in the D.A.R museum collections⁸² is too small to hold pamphlets or sewing equipment; it was designed as a practical item to hold money. Made of ivory-coloured leather with a steel framed clasp, the purse is printed with a picture of the Quaker Goddess of Wisdom, a slave owner and a kneeling female slave. Akin to the images printed on the 'Little Med' workbags, women would have aligned themselves with the allegorical figure of Wisdom, freeing the female slave. Given the vast number of penny tokens stamped with anti-slavery motifs throughout the nineteenth century in Britain and the U.S., it is feasible that some women would have used their purses to carry and spend what could be described as a 'currency of slavery.'

Female abolitionists used their workbags as repositories for needlework, printed propaganda or penny tokens, however, they were also fashion accessories. In the University of Michigan's Clements Library collections is an anti-slavery drawstring workbag, [Fig. 3.11] thought to be the one carried by Angelina Grimke on her wedding day in 1838. This would not be surprising; as we will see, her invitations were written on abolitionist stationery and her cake made from free-produce ingredients. Describing the event to Elizabeth Pease, Lydia Maria Child considered it an 'abolitionist wedding.'⁸³ The Grimke-Weld marriage was unusually egalitarian: Weld denounced the *femme couverte* part of their marriage vows and

⁸¹ *Liberator*, January 2, 1837.

⁸² Coin purse, 1810-1830, D.A.R, 83.8.3.

⁸³ Lydia Maria Child (LMC) to Elizabeth Pease, August 30, 1838, BPL.

Grimke omitted the word obey. It is interesting that on the day she legally became her husband's property Grimke chose to carry a bag depicting a female slave: also the property of white male slave owners. Cobb argues that by wearing the purse Grimke 'put her sentimental white hands on the bereaved black mother and shackled supplicant' printed upon the fabric, a symbol of 'white women's virtue by wearing the black woman's body.'⁸⁴ However, this could be said of all of the accessories and objects decorated with slave images. Grimke wore her bag as a symbol of her political virtue, it could also be read as a physical reminder of the cause that brought the couple together.

Lawton argues these workbags 'became an extension of the white female abolitionist's body. It served to define and identify her in social, political and economic terms, and in term she redefined and scripted new meanings to it.'⁸⁵ By carrying anti-slavery objects purchased at bazaars, female abolitionists cultivated an image that combined politics with notions of fashionable femininity. Worn on the body, they enabled women to become mobile adverts for abolition, moving between the domestic space and the world outside without censure.

The Bedroom: Bedcovers and Beauty

The Abolitionist Toilette

This section will now consider the bedroom, where the items worn by abolitionists outside the home would have been kept. The bedroom held the various clothes and accessories purchased at bazaars by both sexes: the workbags women carried outside, and the Wedgwood medallion necklaces and brooches in jewellery boxes for safekeeping. As well as the items of clothing and accessories we discussed earlier, bazaars also supplied beauty products and scented items for bedrooms and furniture. Attendees at one of the earliest Boston bazaars in 1837 could freshen their items of clothing with 'Small silken bags of perfume for bureau drawers' bearing the words 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a *woman* hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.'⁸⁶ Like the woman in the biblical verse from Matthew 13:33, the scented bags inserted perfume and abolitionist sentiments

⁸⁴ Cobb, *Picture Freedom*, 168.

⁸⁵ Lawton, 'Contested Meanings', 133.

⁸⁶ *Liberator*, January 2, 1837. Original emphasis.

amongst the layers of folded fabric, clothes and bed linen. When items were removed from the drawers, the sight and the scent of the perfumed bags was an abolitionist assault upon the senses. Those attending the Boston bazaar in 1849 could expect to find ‘Cologne bottles of old Sev’, Scented Olive Oil and Paris Soaps as well as Pastilles Perfumers.⁸⁷ Despite being a utilitarian purchase, soap was highly sought after by American customers browsing at the bazaars. In 1853 British women were informed of ‘the success of the Bristol soap’ sent to Boston in that ‘it is always engaged long before it reaches the hall.’⁸⁸ While soaps and perfumes were not obviously associated with an abolitionist bazaar, or even with any political campaign, the dressing tables and wash stands of anti-slavery supporters were also home to more openly political beauty items.

Held in the Minneapolis Institute Of Art’s collections is an anti-slavery cologne bottle produced between 1830 and 1833 by the London based Falcon Glassworks of Apsley Pellatt.⁸⁹ As seen in Fig. 3.12, it is made of clear, decoratively-cut glass with a male kneeling slave etched onto one side. The lid’s decoration is evocative of a palm tree, linking it to the slave on the bottle containing the scent. The bottle’s design suggests it could have been made for and used by male or female abolitionists; there are no gendered details to suggest otherwise. The bottle was produced by a glass works, so in using it the owner was politicising the perfume they decanted into it. We do not know how many of these cologne bottles were produced, if similar ones were also made by other companies, or if this surviving bottle’s current location is a reflection of the transatlantic nature of anti-slavery and related objects. However, it does show the extent to which British manufacturers targeted abolitionists from every corner of the household down to the scent they wore. When worn in public, the perfume was assigned a private political meaning; only the wearer would know it came from a bottle bearing an image of a slave.

In Clarkson’s oft-quoted recollection of the various ways abolitionists turned Wedgwood’s medallions into fashion accessories, he mentioned snuff boxes as a male alternative to the necklaces, bracelets, hair pins and necklace options available to women. While I have not

⁸⁷ *Liberator*, December 21, 1849.

⁸⁸ *Liberator*, January 28, 1853.

⁸⁹ Cologne Bottle, Minneapolis Institute Of Art, 2001.40A,B. Catalogue record notes, last accessed January 2016. <http://collections.artsmia.org/art/45278/cologne-bottle-attributed-to-falcon-glassworks-of-apsley-pellatt>

found any surviving snuff boxes that were inlaid with the cameo,⁹⁰ there are several other objects decorated with anti-slavery motifs that would have been displayed on dressing tables and furniture in the bedrooms of abolitionists. In the late eighteenth century, fashionable men and women wore ‘patches’ on their faces: small pieces of fabric designed to hide blemishes and give the illusion of beauty spots. These patches were stored in patch boxes, usually glass, metal or enamel boxes with decorative designs.⁹¹ Like the cologne bottle, British manufacturers decided that they would target their abolitionist customers by producing patch boxes with anti-slavery motifs. Several of these have survived, although we know very little about their creators or owners. Like many of the objects discussed in this chapter, historians who have acknowledged them have done so briefly, primarily mentioning them as another example of Wedgwood’s kneeling slave on household objects. Lawton includes the patch box from the Buten Wedgwood Museum collection in her thesis, but uses it as an example of what anti-slavery snuff boxes might have looked like instead.⁹²

Three of the surviving patch boxes appear to be identical, suggesting they were produced on a larger scale. One of these patch boxes is held at the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool,⁹³ another in a personal collection⁹⁴ and the third was put up for auction in 2014 in New York.⁹⁵ As seen in Fig. 3.13, all three boxes are a pale pink colour, the lids featuring a kneeling male slave underneath the ‘Am I Not A Man And A Brother?’ motto, several huts, trees and a ship, presumably a slave ship in the background. Although the auction website

⁹⁰ The Harry M. Buten Wedgwood Museum collection in Merion, Pennsylvania (now closed) contained a glass patch box c.1787, with a Wedgwood medallion mounted on gold. See Harry Buten, *Wedgwood ABC but Not Middle E*. For surviving tobacco boxes bearing images of slaves see British Museum, 1889,0702.14, Iron boxes with kneeling slave and ‘Humanity’ c.1800, WHM, KINCM:2006.3741 and NMMG, ZBA2439.

⁹¹ Oldfield, *Popular Politics*, 180, notes ‘The Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama, has photographs of a medallion set in a nineteenth-century glass patch box, which was later taken out (dismounted) for display purposes.’

⁹² Lawton, ‘Contested Meanings’, 61-63. Lawton makes the assumption that one of Houlbrooke’s Wedgwood cameos was made up into a snuff box and uses this to discuss the moral and slavery connections to snuff and tobacco consumption. Although this was certainly a possibility, it is just as likely they were made into pieces of jewellery or other accessories. Houlbrooke may not have even smoked tobacco or taken snuff, which would somewhat undermine Lawton’s argument.

⁹³ Patch box with abolitionist motif ‘Am I Not A Man And A Brother’. South Staffordshire, c.1790. Enamel on copper, International Slavery Museum Liverpool, 1987.212.3.

⁹⁴ Patch box, England, c.1800. Painted enamel on metal, Collection of Rex Stark, In Sam Margolin, ‘Freedom’, Fig. 3.

⁹⁵ Rare Abolitionist Cosmetic Powder-Box, Printed & Manuscript African Americana by Swann Auction Galleries, March 27, 2014 New York, NY, USA. <http://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/slavery-and-abolition.-wedgewood.-josaih.-am-i-10-c-7eaf541200> Last Accessed January 2016.

lists their box as women's item, it is correct in its observation that the colour was not gender specific. Rex Stark, the auction website and Liverpool's International Slavery Museum all note the boxes' English origins. The Liverpool Museum states its patch box was produced in South Staffordshire but there are no further clues as to the precise location or manufacturer. All date the boxes from 1790-1800, corresponding to the period when patches were fashionable. The auction house website lists its patch box as a 'powder box', so it is possible that men and women also filled these boxes with white lead face powder fashionable in the late eighteenth century. The auction house further notes its box contained a small mirror on the inside to assist its owner in the application of the contents. We cannot confirm if the other two patch boxes also contain mirrors, although as they appear to be identical it is highly likely. American company Taylor B. Williams Antiques, specialists in English enamels and patch box collectors, possess two other British abolitionist patch boxes which it suggests were produced in the Midlands in 1800.⁹⁶ [Fig. 3.14] Both of these feature painted interpretations of the popular male slave motif: on the blue box the slave is standing upright with his arms raised, the jewelled border highlighting the decorative nature of the box's contents.

Just as the cologne bottle gave the perfume it contained a political connection, the patch box politicised its contents. Like the cologne bottle, while the contents were worn on the body, these boxes remained in the private domestic space of the bedroom. The political messages that decorated the box were visible to only the person who wore its contents, or close friends and relatives.

Although we know these surviving patch boxes could be found in British households, the lack of information about them means we cannot claim they were also present in American homes. As the nineteenth century progressed and beauty ideals moved away from the painted face, patches, powder, beauty spots and wigs of the previous century, so did the boxes that held them. Consequently, patch and powder boxes are not listed in the American bazaar reports of the 1830s, 40s and 50s. The fact that several of these patch and powder boxes have survived is suggestive of the ways the meanings assigned to material objects change over time, reflecting changing trends. It is possible that the British abolitionists who owned these boxes repurposed them when patches and powder were no longer fashionable. As small

⁹⁶ 'Eighteenth-Century English Enamels', Taylor B. Williams, Antiques and Fine Arts Magazine Website, <http://www.antiquesandfineart.com/articles/article.cfm?request=158> Last Accessed January 2016.

decorative boxes, they were ideal for storing a multitude of beauty-related accoutrements: hair pins, ribbons and other accessories. While beauty regimes changed over the course of the anti-slavery campaign, the patch boxes with anti-slavery motifs and mottoes remained useful as storage items and relevant to their abolitionist owners whose political views remained constant. These surviving objects do not reveal details about the individual male and female abolitionists who used them, but they do suggest the material presence of anti-slavery in bedrooms and dressing rooms and the various forms this came in.

As items worn on the body, jewellery, workbags, purses, penny tokens, patches, perfume, clothing and accessories purchased at bazaars all contributed towards the creation of an abolitionist appearance. In 1827, British abolitionist Hannah More expressed the sentiments embodied in items that could be purchased at bazaars:

Here charity assumes new grace,
By wearing Decorations face
Long may the liberal scheme abide
For taste, is virtue, so applied.⁹⁷

In ‘wearing’ anti-slavery ‘decorations’, fashionable items became virtuous. While abolitionists may have not traversed the public sphere wearing all of these items, it is plausible that many British and American abolitionists would have held or worn one of these anti-slavery items that could be displayed on the body. In her work on intimacy and material culture, Beverly Gordon adapts anthropologist Edward Hall’s concept of proxemics and argues that the relationship between objects and their user’s identity is based on four proxemic distances: intimate, personal, social and public.⁹⁸ The items discussed so far in this chapter all made contact with the skin of abolitionists; they fall under the intimate zone where visual, tactile and emotional senses are heightened when objects are worn or interacted with. To be used and worn on the body these anti-slavery objects required owners to handle and touch them. When worn in public, these accessories created an abolitionist identity, one that

⁹⁷ Hannah More Papers, ‘The Bazaar,’ July 15, 1827, Add. 42511 / f. 16. British Library Manuscript Collection.

⁹⁸ Beverly Gordon, ‘Intimacy and Objects: A Proxemic Analysis of Gender-Based Response to the Material World,’ in *The Material Culture of Gender/The Gender of Material Culture*, eds. Katherine Martinez and Kenneth L. Ames (Winterthur, DE: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997), 237-252.

was constantly reaffirmed through their use. Workbags and purses were opened and closed, penny tokens exchanged hands in the marketplace, patches and powder could be seen and perfume could be smelt by those in close proximity to the wearer.

‘Traite des Nègres’: Bed Curtains Made From Anti-Slavery Fabric

Moving away from ceramic and glass items upon the dressing table, we will now address the anti-slavery textiles that might be found in abolitionist bedrooms. My research has uncovered six pieces of the same fabric printed with anti-slavery images in museum collections across Britain and the U.S.⁹⁹ In her thesis, Lawton mentions the piece owned by Birmingham Museum, but not in terms of its place within the household; she does not mention the existence of other surviving pieces, merely using the fabric as evidence of the English printing techniques used for workbags. She argues the fabric ‘shows how abolitionists produced visual narratives on textiles and distributed these objects as a means to supplement their work.’¹⁰⁰ However, whilst the images on the fabric were abolitionist, and it was probably used to decorate the homes of abolitionists, there is nothing to suggest the creators were abolitionists themselves.

As seen in Figs. 3.15 and 3.16, the fabric was produced in different colours; the majority of the surviving pieces are red and white, but the sections in the Bristol Museum and Colonial Williamsburg collections are purple and white. Roller-printed onto cotton and titled ‘Traite des Nègres’ (The Slave Trade), the fabric was the result of collaboration between British and French artists and engravers, which explains why the various museum catalogue notes disagree somewhat as to its origins.¹⁰¹ It was designed by Frenchman Frederic Etienne Joseph Feldtrappe, incorporating engravings by British engraver John Raphael Smith based on English artist George Morland's 1791 paintings ‘The Slave Trade’ and ‘African Hospitality’ as well as incorporating earlier engravings by Frenchman Nicolas Colibert. Whitworth Art Gallery’s catalogue records note the fabric

⁹⁹ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 26.189.2; Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, T.2003.54; Bristol Museum, Na2236; Colonial Williamsburg, 2002-81; Historic New England, 1934.1156; Birmingham Museum.

¹⁰⁰ Lawton, ‘Contested Meanings’, 123.

¹⁰¹ The Metropolitan Museum of Art suggests it came from the Alsace region of France, Colonial Williamsburg notes ‘Origin: France, Rouen (probably)’ and Historic New England records it as English in origin.

was ‘produced to rally support in France for the abolition of the slave trade and intended for display in the home,’¹⁰² although it would appear that it was also used in transatlantic households in support of the British and American campaigns. While the fabric appears to have been designed, if not manufactured in France, the distribution of these surviving pieces suggests they were purchased by British and American abolitionists between the 1790s and 1830. This is suggestive of a transatlantic furnishing of the bedroom, using fabric with noticeable anti-slavery images.

The images on the fabric provide a textile narrative to the slave trade and the relationships between African and European families. The fabric depicts Africans being captured by slave traders and rowed out to a nearby slave ship. In one scene an African man in a rowing boat sits with his head in his hands in despair at being removed from his native home. Colibert’s engravings portray idyllic scenes of African families sitting outside their huts, providing a contrast with those depicting the brutal disruption of family life caused by the slave trade. The scenes based on Morland’s ‘African Hospitality’ feature Africans befriending a white family who have been shipwrecked, selflessly providing them with clothes and shelter. Viewed together, the scenes contrast the hospitality of the Africans towards white families with the cruelty they experienced at the hands of white slave traders. By owning a piece of this fabric, the image of utopian African family life, destroyed by slavery, was brought into the white household.

In terms of the fabric’s purpose within the household, Colonial Williamsburg suggests it was probably originally used as a curtain and Historic New England note their piece is a fragment of a bed curtain ‘original to Philip Call House’ in Massachusetts. While we do not know what function the other surviving pieces served, how many other British or American households were furnished with some of this fabric, or if the families that owned them even paid attention to the printed images, we do know they were used in the bedroom by at least one family. Although the slave trade appears to be a somewhat unusual subject for the decoration of bedroom furnishings, it was one of a variety of themes stamped on decorative bedroom fabric throughout the nineteenth century. Writing from Massachusetts in 1882, Eliza Perkins Cabot’s recollection of the literary scenes that decorated her grandmother’s bed

¹⁰² Catalogue notes, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, <http://www.revealinghistories.org.uk/who-resisted-and-campaigned-for-abolition/objects/fabric-le-traite-des-negres.html> last accessed January 2016.

hangings sound strikingly similar to the slave trade design: ‘cotton with outline figures in red, representing the story of Robinson Crusoe.’¹⁰³ In the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is a nineteenth-century bedcover bearing scenes from Robinson Crusoe,¹⁰⁴ so it is plausible to suggest that slave trade fabric was also made into bedcovers. Bed curtains were a practical furnishing but were also decorative fashionable items. The ones owned by Cabot’s grandmother revealed her literary knowledge; curtains made from the ‘Traite des Nègres’ fabric could equally be a symbol of political awareness and potential abolitionist approval.

Abolitionist Quilts: Furnishing the Bed with Political Sentiment

In Chapter 1, we addressed the way female abolitionists used their domestic sewing skills for political purposes, producing items that could be sold at anti-slavery bazaars. As a practical household necessity required to furnish a bed and provide warmth, quilts were saleable items that were made by both British and American women. Women embroidered abolitionist mottoes and motifs onto small household items for bazaars and for their own homes. However, quilts were bigger than pincushions. As large textile objects, quilts required women to decide what patterns and images to incorporate, providing an ideal opportunity for individual political expression. Not all female abolitionists penned political poems, pamphlets or letters, but all women could sew as a result of their gendered domestic education. Elaine Hedges rightly notes that ‘for vast numbers of nineteenth-century women, their needles became their pens and quilts eminently their expressive texts’. Through them, they registered their responses to and participation in, the major social, economic and political events in the world.¹⁰⁵ Quilts were made in homes, for use in the private space of the bedroom, but women regularly used them as gender-appropriate mediums for demonstrating public political sentiments. Quilts allowed women to become ‘not only witnesses to but

¹⁰³ Elizabeth Perkins Cabot, ‘Reminiscences of Mrs. Eliza Cabot’ (Typescript) [taken at Brookline, Massachusetts, June 3, 1882], 11, Cabot Family Collections, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College quoted in Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, ‘Books, Reading, and the World of Goods in Antebellum New England’, *American Quarterly* 48 4 (1996): 593.

¹⁰⁴ Bedspread, Robinson Crusoe, 1810-20, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. 58.1174.

¹⁰⁵ Hedges, *Hearts and Hands*, 11.

active agents in important historical change,¹⁰⁶ they were ‘vehicles for both political sentiment and artistic expression.’¹⁰⁷

Scholarly work on political quilts has largely been the domain of American quilt historians, who have traced surviving examples and used them as evidence that women employed political motifs and inscriptions for a variety of themes and campaigns. Quilt historian Barbara Brackman has specifically written about U.S. quilts and slavery, but her work is written for a non-scholarly readership.¹⁰⁸ Historians of anti-slavery have largely ignored quilts as a source worthy of attention. They have not addressed their role as items of women’s domestic work, as tools of political fundraising, or as items within abolitionist households. This section will look at the descriptions of quilts that were made by British and American women for sale at anti-slavery bazaars as well as analysing the meanings that can be uncovered in surviving American abolitionist quilts. These surviving quilts will be used to discuss the life cycle of textile household objects that furnished beds and domestic spaces.

As part of their attempts to raise funds by furnishing whole household interiors, British and American women made quilts for sale at anti-slavery bazaars. As large items that each required the skills of several women, quilt-making fuelled female abolitionist networks in homes and at sewing circle gatherings. Handmade and produced for sale at bazaars, quilts joined other outlets for women’s political expression. The diaries of rural American abolitionist Mary White provide a valuable insight into the ways domestic feminine outlets for activism supplemented public displays of female political participation such as petitions and lectures. As the head of a large family living in the small rural community of Boylston, Massachusetts, White filled her diary with descriptions of her anti-slavery activities. She describes the lectures she attended, meetings of the local female anti-slavery society she organised and the petitioning efforts of herself and other local women. White and her daughters regularly attended sewing circles and local women frequently visited her house to make items for bazaars. In October 1839, she recorded the quilting efforts of herself and her

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ G. Julie Powell, *The Fabric of Persuasion, Two Hundred Years of Political Quilts*, (Pennsylvania: Brandywine River Museum, 2000), 13.

¹⁰⁸ Barbara Brackman, *Facts and Fabrications, Unravelling the History of Quilts & Slavery*, (Lafayette: C and T Publishing, 2006.) Brackman includes examples of surviving quilts made by American slave owners, their slaves and freed slaves. For an analysis of a quilt made by American slaves 1837-1850 see Claire Somersille Nolan, ‘The Star of Bethlehem Quilt at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.’ *Uncoverings 2005* (Lincoln, Nebraska: American Quilt Study Group, 2005), 93-199.

twenty-three-year-old daughter: ‘Caroline & myself assisted in getting the bed quilt at the Hall for the Antislavery cause.’¹⁰⁹ Made by female abolitionists, the quilt was to be sold at the nearby Worcester anti-slavery fair, to adorn the bedroom of another local abolitionist. White’s diary entry does not describe the quilt, but descriptions of other quilts sold at anti-slavery bazaars suggest what it might have looked like.

As items that required time, effort and skill to produce, bazaar reports praised the women who made them by describing their quilts. In 1846 the Boston bazaar report gave a ‘well-merited tribute of admiration’ for the ‘three elaborately beautiful bed-covers, perfect in their design and execution.’¹¹⁰ Readers were informed that the knitted cotton quilt decorated with a shell pattern sent by the Misses Clapp of Dorchester, had been reserved by the bazaar organisers for one of the rural fairs the following summer. Its ‘lightness and delicacy’ meant it was more likely to ‘sell for full value’ during the warmer months. Bazaar organisers understood the efforts that went into making quilts and saw them as valuable commodities that generated abolitionist income; they were not prepared to sell them for less than the suggested price.

The bazaar report continued to describe the other ‘equally beautiful’ quilt sent by Mrs Brooks of Lowell, that unlike the Clapp’s contribution was ‘intended for winter use.’ Readers were informed that the ‘most perfect and elegantly symmetrical thing of the kind ever exhibited at our Fairs’ had attracted so much attention that it was referred to by admiring customers as the ‘North Star Bed-cover.’¹¹¹ Several abolitionists clubbed together to purchase it as a gift. Sold ‘at the price marked, by the subscription of friends’, it was presented to Mrs Garrison.¹¹² Unfortunately, we do not know whether she was as taken with the quilt as her peers, or how she used it. Records of the Dorchester Female Anti-Slavery Society suggest that the Clapps were from Massachusetts, and while we do not know who eventually purchased the quilt, the likelihood is that it was sold later that year to someone who attended a rural anti-slavery fair.

¹⁰⁹ Friday October 4, 1839, Diary of Mary White, Boylston, Massachusetts., 1836-1844, Vol. 1. Old Sturbridge Village Research Library. Selected entries. Edited by Old Sturbridge Village.

¹¹⁰ *Liberator*, January 23, 1846.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

Although the surviving anti-slavery quilts discussed in this section were made and owned by American women, British women also provided quilts for sale at American bazaars. As part of its report on the 1858 Boston bazaar, *The Liberator* published a letter from British abolitionist Margaret Bracken of Halifax to Chapman regarding a patched bed quilt she had sent. In her letter Bracken describes how making her quilt educated her about the true extent of American slavery:

Whilst sitting at my work, I thought there must be as many stitches in my quilt as you have slaves in America...there are about twenty times as many slaves in America as there are stitches in my quilt.¹¹³

By comparing her stitches to slaves, Bracken felt physically connected to the cause her quilt was made for. In counting the number of slaves, Bracken could not ‘express the appalling sensation’ which came over her upon realising that the ‘helpless misery endured by every individual slave through a life-time of unprotected bondage’ was overseen by a ‘just and holy and righteous and merciful God, who looks down alike on the oppressor and the oppressed.’ The quilt physically prompted an emotional response; Bracken questioned why a God who made ‘every thing beautiful and good and equal’ did not use ‘his almighty power [and] reverse every thing which is wrong and set it right.’ While the stitches resembled slaves only in Bracken’s imagination, she informed Chapman that visually, the quilt’s design represented the ultimate abolitionist goal of racial equality: ‘You will see that the *lights* and the *darks* and the *blacks* are all arranged so as to act, or rather harmonise, in concert; and so would the races, I doubt not [if emancipation was achieved].’¹¹⁴ We do not know if other British or American female abolitionists also decided to use certain colours and patterns to present a textile anti-slavery rhetoric. As an unmarked item, this quilt could be one of many surviving nineteenth-century quilts currently stored in archival collections. If it has survived, the quilt’s abolitionist origins are invisible; we are unable to compare it to the colours and patterns used in surviving anti-slavery quilts. Bracken’s quilt is not only an example of the way American bedrooms were furnished by British women, but of the emotional connections that such household items could evoke in their creators and owners.

¹¹³ Letter from Margaret Bracken to MC, Halifax, October 12, 1857 printed in *Liberator*, February 12, 1858.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Original emphasis.

Unlike the bed curtain fabric whose printed scenes of slavery were visible and easily understood by those in the bedroom, the anti-slavery sentiments worked into unmarked quilts were often hidden from view once they left the spaces they were made in. Unless the new owners of Bracken's quilt read the letter printed in the fair report, they may not have realised the political sentiments behind the chosen colours and layout, nor of the emotions it evoked in its British creator. Indeed, not everyone who attended the bazaar was an abolitionist or subscribed to *The Liberator*. Bracken's response reminds us of the hidden meanings in abolitionist material objects and the power of quilts to acquire new political meanings when associated with a bazaar purchase, or other forms of activism over their life cycle in the household.

Quilts were typically made to mark the major milestones of women's lives: cradle quilts and wedding gifts. Those made by abolitionists were an extension of this tradition; they symbolised a period of a woman's life spent thinking about and contributing towards a political campaign. Displaying a quilt purchased at a bazaar represented their financial contribution towards society funds. Purchasers would also have recognised the skill and time that went in to making them. Displayed across beds, they were daily reminders of the efforts of the woman who made it for a political cause.

Four surviving American quilts have discernible anti-slavery connections and were all made by abolitionists. As discussed, there are undoubtedly many more surviving quilts made by British and American abolitionists whose political sentiments went unrecorded, preventing us from incorporating them into this discussion.

Ohio's Clinton County Historical Society currently holds a quilt made in 1842 by a group of female Quaker abolitionists from Clinton County, Ohio and Wayne County, Indiana.¹¹⁵ According to the catalogue, they were all members of the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends, which met monthly, so it is plausible that this quilt was a product and symbol of these gatherings. It was made the same year that the main Indiana Yearly Meeting barred abolitionist members from appointment to leadership positions and disowned the

¹¹⁵ Hadley Abolitionist Quilt, 1842, Clinton County Historical Society, Ohio Memory collection. Last Accessed January 2016:

<http://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p267401coll36/id/9010/rec/9>

women whose names are written upon the quilt. Disagreeing with those who wished to take an active role in campaigning for abolition, members were ‘tenderly advised...not to join in associations with those who do not profess to wait for divine direction in such important concerns.’¹¹⁶ This quilt was not just a product of the meetings of the newly-formed Yearly Meeting, it was a record of Quaker abolitionist women’s activity. It was a permanent material reminder that they had defied their elders and successfully formed their own faction. While the quilt itself does not feature any anti-slavery motifs or inscriptions, the floral blocks are accompanied by signatures of the female contributors; it was a textile abolitionist Quaker petition.

In her work on album and friendship quilts, Ricky Clark argued that quilts bearing signatures and handwritten messages were made to ‘reify community...women transformed personal relationships into visible, tangible form.’¹¹⁷ By signing their names, Clinton and Wayne County women were not only stating their abolitionist beliefs, they were recording their domestic skills and pride in collaborating to produce a material object. Just as the quilts described in the bazaar reports reveal the role of transatlantic female networks in furnishing American beds, the Hadley quilt is a testament to the strength of familial Quaker abolitionist networks. Clinton County resident Rebecca Harvey Hadley signed the quilt alongside the names of her daughters as well as several female relations from Wayne County, Indiana, migrants who found their abolitionist beliefs unwelcome in Ohio. Clark’s research discovered the signatures of Ohio Hadley women on several other surviving quilt blocks and quilts in 1864 and 1865 as proof of their familial, social and religious networks.¹¹⁸ Their abolitionist quilts were merely an extension, or perhaps a precursor to these later quilts. As with the other surviving anti-slavery quilts, we do not know if the Hadley quilt was actually used as a bedspread or if it was kept as a memento in a bedroom chest or a drawer. We also do not know who the quilt belonged to after it was finished, but as the quilt is described by the Ohio Memory Collection as the ‘Hadley Abolitionist Quilt’, it probably belonged to one of the Ohio Hadley women.

¹¹⁶ Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends, *Minutes of the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends held at White-Water in Wayne County, Indiana*, (Richmond IA: Thos J Larsh, 1841), 18.

¹¹⁷ Ricky Clark, ‘Mid-19th-Century Album and Friendship Quilts’, in *Pieced by Mother, Symposium Papers*, Jeanette Lasansky ed., (Pennsylvania: Oral Traditions Project of the Union County Historical Society, 1988), 77.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

Massachusetts' Worcester Historical Museum possesses a hand-inked anti-slavery quilt that is believed to be associated with abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster.¹¹⁹ Ten of the blocks contain hand-written abolitionist messages dispersed between pink and off-white pieces; a combination of quotations from Thomas Jefferson, Charles Follen and biblical verses. One of these messages reveals the intentions behind the anti-slavery inscriptions:

Dedicated to the cause by a few friends in Everettville,
Princeton, Mass. While ye are sleeping
on your beds of down covered with quilts and
costly tapestry, many a slave lies on the cold damp
ground, covered with naught but Heaven's broad
canopy. Remember the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery
Fair.

We do not know who made this quilt but it is feasible that Abby Kelley was one of the contributors. It reveals how female abolitionists used household objects to contrast the lives of slaves to the homes of abolitionists. In 1837, *The Liberator* included a description of a cradle-quilt in its lists of items sold at the recent Boston anti-slavery bazaar. Readers were informed it was 'made of patch-work in small stars' with the following words taken from Eliza Follen's poem 'Remember The Slave'¹²⁰ written in indelible ink upon the central star:

Mother! when around your child
You clasp your arms in love,
And when with grateful joy you raise
Your eyes to God above—
Think of the *negro* -mother, When
her child is torn away—
Sold for a little slave— oh, then,
For *that* poor mother pray!¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Abby Kelley Foster signature quilt, c.1845. Worcester Historical Museum, Massachusetts. MQ2028.

¹²⁰ Eliza Follen, 'Remember The Slave' in Lydia Maria Child, ed. *The Oasis*, (Boston: Benjamin C. Bacon, 1834), 18. In later editions, Child is incorrectly attributed as the author of the poem.

¹²¹ *Liberator*, January 2, 1837. Emphasis is from the *Liberator* not the writing on the quilt itself.

Unlike the other quilts described sold at anti-slavery bazaars, this quilt survives and is currently in Historic New England's collections.¹²² As seen in Figs. 3.17 and 3.18, the quilt is made of white cotton with 63 star motifs in different coloured floral prints, with the hand-inked text in the middle. Historic New England states that the quilt's makers are unknown; however, it was actually the work of prominent Boston abolitionist writer and bazaar organiser Lydia Maria Child. On January 17, 1837, Child described her achievements in a letter to a friend: 'You have doubtless learned the success of our Fair...My cradle-quilt sold for \$5.'¹²³ Similar to the signatures accompanying the floral motifs on the Hadley quilt, Child's quilt combined traditional quilting patterns such as the North Star motif used in other anti-slavery quilts alongside abolitionist poetry. Both Mrs Brook's 'North Star Bed-cover' and Child's cradle quilt used the eight-pointed star motif, although there is not any particular anti-slavery meaning behind this choice. Although some quilt historians have suggested the motif represented the star that guided runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad,¹²⁴ it was also popular in nineteenth-century quilting generally, commonly embroidered on other handmade items. Several of the anti-slavery samplers discussed in chapter 4 featured eight-pointed stars, but they were not necessarily abolitionist symbols.

We do not know who purchased Child's quilt, or whether it was ever used on a bed or a cradle as originally intended. The fact that it has survived in such good condition can probably be partially explained by the fact that it was made by Child; it may have been safely stored in a bedroom drawer instead of actually being used in a baby's crib. As we will see in the next chapter, parents and children were targeted by abolitionists and manufacturers, and their rooms filled with anti-slavery toys, games and story books. In decorating her cradle quilt with abolitionist text, Child tapped into this rising consumer market. As a writer of

¹²² Cradle Quilt, 1836, Historic New England, 1923.597.

¹²³ Letter from LMC, January 17, 1837, South Natick, Massachusetts. Quoted in Milton Meltzer and Patricia G. Holland, eds., *Lydia Maria Child: Selected Letters, 1817-1880*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 60.

¹²⁴ Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard, *Hidden in Plain View: The Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1999) and Gladys Marie Frye, *Stitched From the Soul: Slave Quilts From the Antebellum South* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1990) both claim Log Cabin quilts were used to signal slaves escaping a safe house or as codes to communicate escape plans, and that certain pattern blocks were used to create a map describing the route to safety. Brackman's standardised response to these claims is: 'We have no historical evidence of quilts being used as signals, codes or maps. The tale of quilts and the Underground Railroad makes a good story, but not good quilt history.' Brackman further notes that Log Cabin pattern dates from the 1860s and many of the patterns used in support of the quilt code hypothesis were not given their current names until the 1930s. Brackman, *Facts and Fabrications*, 7-9.

children's anti-slavery literature, Child's quilt provided a textile connection to her literary works.

The fourth surviving abolitionist quilt reveals how women's political activism was woven into ordinary household material objects, sometimes to the extent of disappearing from sight completely. Between 1840 and 1850, Pennsylvanian Quaker Deborah Coates, wife of prominent abolitionist Lindley Coates, made a large quilt of pieced silk triangles following the popular 'Birds in the Air' pattern.¹²⁵ [Fig. 3.19] As discussed earlier in the chapter, abolitionists produced anti-slavery handkerchiefs printed with motifs of the kneeling slave. In the centre of her quilt Deborah Coates used a scrap of fabric stamped with an image of a kneeling slave bearing the inscription 'Deliver me from the oppression of man' which may have been taken from a handkerchief. [Fig. 3.20] The Coates household was Station 5 on one of the Underground Railroad routes, her quilt is a material reminder of the role her family played in this. During Coates' lifetime the quilt was probably used in a bedroom, as intended, with the slave image politicising a handmade household object. However, after her death, Coates' female descendants could not decide who should inherit the quilt. They compromised by cutting the quilt in half straight through the central triangle bearing the slave image, binding the raw edges so that only a foot was visible on one half and half an arm on the other. The quilt's anti-slavery sentiments remained hidden until a twentieth-century descendant inherited both halves and took the quilt to a conservator to reveal the kneeling slave.¹²⁶

Coates' quilt reveals the life cycle of the material objects that decorated abolitionist bedrooms. Although they were produced as visible symbols of anti-slavery sentiment, by the 1880s the political imagery had been erased by descendants who were more concerned with who inherited it. However, the quilt is also a reminder of the familial bonds evidenced by material objects; Coates' descendants split the quilt because they each felt an emotional connection to the bed cover and wanted a memento of Coates' legacy.

Beds could be furnished with political sentiments in several ways. They could be encased by curtains printed with scenes depicting the slave trade, or they could be draped in quilts made by abolitionists. Analysing the quilts sold at American anti-slavery bazaars and those that

¹²⁵ This quilt was in the collections of the Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, now closed. It is unclear where the quilt's current location is.

¹²⁶ Hedges, *Hearts and Hands*, 71.

have survived allows us to connect well-known female abolitionists through material objects that decorated bedrooms. Helen Garrison received a quilt made by fellow abolitionist Mrs Brookes thanks to the united contributions of other fellow abolitionists; the Garrison household not only published the quilt descriptions in the *Liberator* fair reports, it was furnished by the efforts of its female readers. Lydia Maria Child made a quilt for the cradle of a fellow abolitionist's child, linking her domestic skills with her career as a writer of children's anti-slavery literature. By filling their quilt with anti-slavery messages, the Everetville women created a textile abolitionist pamphlet. Coates' quilt was made during the period when her home was used as a station on the Underground Railroad, and can therefore be viewed as a symbol of the role she played helping runaway slaves to safety. Both Garrison and Coates were wives of presidents of the American Anti-Slavery Association, yet they are frequently omitted from abolitionist narratives and historiography. These quilts provide evidence of the ways households belonging to prominent abolitionists produced and were furnished with anti-slavery textiles. These women made, owned, sold and received anti-slavery quilts, symbols of women's domestic skills and political activism.

Not all abolitionist households were furnished with anti-slavery quilts, but all nineteenth-century bedrooms contained a quilt of some form. We have witnessed how quilts did not have to feature kneeling slave motifs or mottoes to hold anti-slavery meanings; the extent to which political campaigns permeated the private sphere of the bedroom is probably much higher than has previously been considered. Although we do not know in what quantities, British and American women made quilts associated with the anti-slavery campaign and some slept under these quilts in their own homes. Bedrooms and closets contained quilts, bed curtains, patch boxes and cologne bottles on dressing tables, cameos set into jewellery stored away for safe keeping, and clothes and accessories purchased at bazaars. They were repositories for the abolitionist accessories that moved between the domestic interior and the world outside, spaces where the bodies of British and American abolitionists were dressed in the material culture of anti-slavery.

The Abolitionist Parlour and Drawing Room

In 1844, Benjamin Disraeli declared ‘Woman alone can organise a drawing room; man succeeds sometimes in a library.’¹²⁷ Although household manuals advised segregating homes into feminine and masculine spaces, in reality this gendered division was not quite so enforced. Not all middle-class homes were large enough to accommodate separate spaces for men and women, and even then, gendered objects were not bound to these spheres; they moved between rooms throughout the house. Hamlett’s analysis of British middle-class households between 1850-1910 using inventories and sale catalogues found that approximately 67 per cent had a parlour/drawing room and a separate dining room. However, ‘only 30 per cent...included a specifically “male” space, that is, a study, library, smoking room or billiard room.’¹²⁸ Her analysis of household items in inventories suggests that parlours and dining rooms held several uses: dining rooms often contained writing equipment and books, items typically associated with ‘masculine’ spaces as well as women’s workboxes and sewing equipment.¹²⁹ Applied to our imagined transatlantic abolitionist household, the items discussed in the rest of this chapter were primarily used and displayed in the parlour or drawing room, and the dining room, but we must remember that this was not fixed and objects moved between these rooms.

Often the ‘best room’ in the house, parlours and drawing rooms were filled with a variety of materials and objects.¹³⁰ Logan asserts parlours were a ‘synecdoche for that culture itself, a microcosm of the middle-class Victorian world, miniaturised, as if under glass.’¹³¹ In these rooms letters were written, instruments and games were played, books and other print cultures were read and female family members carried out their needlework. As places for relaxation and recreation, parlours allowed inhabitants to view the decorative objects around them at leisure and provided a space to use them. They were the places where family members and visitors took tea and coffee, and where guests were entertained. Parlours and drawing rooms were also abolitionist social spaces: they hosted sewing circles and female anti-slavery society meetings and displayed items for, and from, bazaars in Britain and the

¹²⁷ Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby; Or, The New Generation* (Leipzig: Bernh. Tauchnitz Jun, 1844), Book III, Chapter 2, 118.

¹²⁸ Hamlett, *Material Relations*, 41-9.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹³⁰ Logan categorises the types of materials and objects found in the parlour. *Parlour*, 110, 112 and 167.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, xiv.

U.S. Logan argues ‘the decorative complexity of the Victorian home mirrored the intensity of the issues being articulated around it. The parlour...was a site of collection and display comparable to the museum, department store and trade fair.’¹³² In the abolitionist household, the parlour resembled a bazaar filled with anti-slavery objects. The remainder of this chapter will address the anti-slavery items that decorated the parlours and drawing rooms of British and American households

Prints, Plaques and Paintings: Walls as Canvases for Images of Abolition

Walls provided abolitionists with blank canvases ripe for decoration with anti-slavery prints and images. In 1788 the famous diagrammatic plan of a slave ship, fashioned after the *Brooks* of Liverpool, became the print equivalent of Wedgwood’s medallion, hung within households across Britain. Instantly recognisable, it gave abolition a visual identity and supplied abolitionists with a suitable image that summed up their campaign at a glance. The print depicted the cross-section of a slave ship viewed from above, crammed with the bodies of slaves in neat, unrealistically regimented rows; a diluted attempt to convey the brutal reality of the Middle Passage permitted by the slave trade.

As testament to its popularity as an abolitionist symbol, the London Committee distributed 8000 copies between 1788 and 1789, around 1500 copies in and around Plymouth in 1789 alone, and another 1000 copies in early 1791.¹³³ Although we cannot know how many abolitionist household walls were decorated with framed prints of the *Brooks* slave ship, it was one of the few images to be found on display amongst Quaker abolitionists who did not usually ‘decorate their houses in this manner.’ Writing in 1806, Clarkson recalled seeing only three or four different prints in the homes of his British Quaker friends, the *Brooks* slave ship being one of them. Clarkson believed Quakers chose this print above all others not ‘as a monument of what they had done themselves, or as a stimulus to further exertion on the same subject’ but ‘from the pure motive of exciting benevolence; of exciting the attention of those, who should come into their houses, to the case of the injured Africans, and of procuring

¹³² Ibid., xiii.

¹³³ Oldfield, *Popular Politics*, 165, 166 and 182.

sympathy in their favour.’¹³⁴ According to Clarkson, Quakers decorated their homes with anti-slavery prints as a means to educate and convert others to abolitionism. American female abolitionists also understood the potential of using anti-slavery images that could be read at a glance in lieu of pages of text. At the First Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in 1837, a formal resolution brought forward by Sarah Grimke was passed in their favour:

we regard anti-slavery prints as powerful auxiliaries in the cause of emancipation, and recommend that these “pictorial representations” be multiplied an hundred fold; so that the speechless agony of the fettered slave may unceasingly appeal to the heart of the patriot, the philanthropist, and the christian.¹³⁵

Like Clarkson’s Quaker friends, American women hoped to extend their sphere of influence by filling households with anti-slavery prints of kneeling slaves. Writing to her sister in 1789, British abolitionist Hannah More recalled how her use of the *Brooks* print as a topic of conversation was brought to an abrupt halt at a London party:

I was...showing a section of the African ship, in which the transportation of the negroes is so well represented, to Mr. Walpole &c, when, who should be announced but Mr. Tarleton,¹³⁶ the Liverpool delegate who is come up to defend slavery against humanity. I popped the book out of sight, snapped the string of my eloquence, and was mute at once.¹³⁷

Although More felt unable to debate with Tarleton upon the slave trade, her letter shows how anti-slavery prints enabled women to openly express their interest in and support for abolition at a social gathering attended by members of the opposite sex. Prints brought the topic of slavery into the domestic interior.

In the late eighteenth century, framed prints were usually displayed in the dining room and entrance hall, areas that were considered part of the male domain.¹³⁸ However, this changed

¹³⁴ Thomas Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism: Taken from a view of the education and discipline, social manners, civil and political economy, religious principles and character, of the Society of Friends, Volume I*, (New York: Southwick and Hardcastle, 1806), 270-272.

¹³⁵ *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women held in the City of New-York, May 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th 1837*, (New York: W.S. Durr, 1837), 14.

¹³⁶ Sir Banastre Tarleton, MP for Liverpool.

¹³⁷ H. More to her sister, London, April 1789, William Roberts ed., *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1934), Volume 2, 153.

¹³⁸ Walker and Ware, ‘Pincushions’, 71.

due to the increasing variety and presence of print culture as forms of domestic decoration, and, as spaces such as the parlour and drawing room acquired prominent positions within the household. While only a handful of Quakers possessed one or two framed prints, the household walls of the rest of nineteenth-century society were increasingly ‘treated like pages of an album, in which one can stick more or less anything, even plates, stuffed birds, and garlands.’¹³⁹ This is evident in the number of surviving wall plaques dating from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century featuring anti-slavery motifs and text.¹⁴⁰ These wall plaques relate to our previous discussion regarding the ways abolitionists turned their Wedgwood cameos into pieces of jewellery: they decorated walls as well as the body.

Six surviving wall plaques contain Wedgwood medallions set into frames: the Artnet auction house listing, two on the Timothy Millett Ltd Historic Medals website, and those in collections belonging to the Princeton University Art Museum, Bristol Museum and the British Museum. [Figs. 3.21 to 3.23] Like the brooches and pendants, it is unclear when these medallions were set into their frames, or whose walls they were hung upon. As a gender-neutral item, they may have been used to display the cameo in the household without excluding either sex. Oldfield claims that later in the nineteenth century, the slave cameos set into patch boxes and jewellery in the previous century were ‘mutilated and...mounted in frames for enthusiastic Victorian collectors...evidence of a bold and enterprising assault on eighteenth-century consumer choice.’¹⁴¹ However, as these plaques are undated, there is no proof that those who originally owned the cameos were not the ones who set them into frames later on. These cameos may have been worn first as pieces of jewellery, and then

¹³⁹ Mario Praz, *An Illustrated History of Furnishing, from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Brazillier, 1964), 77.

¹⁴⁰ Wedgwood Plaque, British Museum, 1909,1201.260; Wedgwood cameo in decorative gold frame, Princeton University Art Museum, Trumbull Prime Collection: y1937-37; Wedgwood Plaque, Bristol Museum, O.4233; Six Wall Plaques, WHM, KINCM:2006.3742, KINCM:1996.262, KINCM:2006.3740, KINCM:2006.3748, KINCM:2006.3747, KINCM:1988.61.1, Two framed Wedgwood cameos, Timothy Millett Ltd, <http://www.historicmedals.com/search.php?keyword=anti+slavery&cat=20> ; Framed Wedgwood cameo, Auction House listing, last accessed January 2016: <http://www.artnet.com/artists/josiah-wedgwood/the-wedgwood-slave-medallion-7EEh4VfIG0StFFvk2TU-kQ2>; Australian Auction House listings for Group of Sundries incl. Slavery Plaque "Britannia Set Me Free" and Two Slavery Plaques, c.1840, <http://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/group-of-sundries-incl-slavery-plaque-britannia-311-c-77a26cc5e3> and <http://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/a-slavery-plaque,-circa-1840-485-c-04g5g1jtqv>.

¹⁴¹ Oldfield, *Popular Politics*, 157-8.

transferred to wall plaques as the fashion for wearing the medallion waned or the owner's tastes changed. Lawton briefly references the plaque in Bristol Museum's collections to support her argument that objects that altered Wedgwood's cameo 'reflect the makers' and users' conflicted interests between fashion and politics. This relationship further complicated the object's meaning.'¹⁴² However, these objects are proof that fashion and politics were not necessarily conflicting interests; instead of complicating meanings they compounded them.

While the medallions in Figs. 3.21 and 3.22 are merely set into frames, that in Princeton University Art Museum [Fig. 3.23] is a larger, undated piece of decorative art. It appears to have been handmade: the cameo is fixed in the middle of four gold pleated sunrays made from an unknown material. Unfortunately, there are no clues as to its creator. We know American abolitionists owned Wedgwood medallions, but we cannot be sure it was made for, or was used in an American parlour. Nevertheless, this surviving item provides a glimpse into the various ways Wedgwood medallions were reworked by transatlantic abolitionists to create unique items for domestic display.

The other surviving wall plaques do not contain Wedgwood cameos, but instead are handmade attempts to recreate them. [Figs. 3.24 and 3.25] Also set into round alabaster frames, the plaques held in Hull's Wilberforce House Museum (WHM) collections and on the Australian auction house listings, contain wax figures of male kneeling slaves accompanied by Wedgwood's motto or others such as 'O Lord set me free', 'O Britain to thee we appeal' and 'thank God for liberty.' Their designs and alabaster frames are all similar. However, it is unclear whether they were made by individual abolitionists or if they were purchased from a manufacturer who tapped into abolitionist demand for decorations resembling Wedgwood's cameo. The WHM plaques are attributed to different date ranges between 1790-1833 and appear to be British in origin, produced throughout the British campaigns, although it is also likely similar plaques were hung up in American households throughout the nineteenth century, such as the item in Princeton University Art Museum.

In the absence of photographs or descriptions of households belonging to abolitionists, it is difficult to specify where anti-slavery objects would be displayed, or how rooms might have looked decorated with these political items. Walker and Ware use amateur artist Charlotte

¹⁴² Lawton, 'Contested Meanings', 61.

Bosanquet's 1843 watercolour of a room in Hampshire's Hollington House to show how middle-class drawing rooms were filled with furnishings, paintings, books and sewing equipment;¹⁴³ all items that could possess abolitionist sentiments. One example of how anti-slavery wall plaques and prints might have been incorporated into abolitionist parlours and drawing rooms comes from an unlikely source: Robert S. Tait's 1857-8 painting of Thomas and Jane Carlyle's drawing room. [Fig. 3.26] Although Thomas Carlyle's political views were not pro-abolitionist, the parlour shows typical decorative objects that filled most middle-class British households. Several framed prints are hung upon the walls above the mantelpiece and others are just visible in the room beyond the drawing room. The small round frame hung on the wall by Carlyle's shoulder could easily be one of the alabaster plaques in a home occupied by those sympathetic to anti-slavery.

Unfortunately, there are no images of abolitionist interiors to compare to the Carlyles' drawing room. However, we do know that British and American abolitionists hung prints of the kneeling slave on their walls. As seen in Fig. 3.27, one of the illustrations accompanying the American anti-slavery children's poem 'The Edinburgh Doll' features a woman sitting at a table reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* accompanied by her daughter who is holding a doll.¹⁴⁴ On the wall behind them hangs a framed print of a kneeling slave. This framed picture is not mentioned in the poem, which suggests it was based on an actual print and incorporated into the illustration to add a touch of domestic realism. The illustration is probably supposed to represent the poem's Scottish female characters: the girl Mary, her mother and her doll, although it could equally represent the home of the American or British child reading the poem.

In chapter 4, we will observe how British and American samplers made by girl abolitionists used household objects bearing images of the kneeling slave as inspiration for embroidery patterns. Several of these samplers appear to have copied the image of the male kneeling slave wearing a red loin cloth depicted in the British 1820 print 'The Slave' by Orlando Hodgson. [Fig. 3.28] Although these girls may have embroidered Hodgson's slave from memory, their samplers suggest British anti-slavery prints depicting variations of Wedgwood's kneeling slave could be found in nineteenth-century transatlantic households.

¹⁴³ Walker and Ware, 'Pincushions', 62-4.

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter 5 for a full analysis of this poem.

Hung upon parlour walls, framed abolitionist images were ornamental prompts for the creation of embroidered imitations, also made for display on walls within the domestic space.

British female abolitionists furnished the household walls of their American sisters by making and sending items for sale at bazaars. In 1853, organisers of the Boston bazaar praised 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.’¹⁴⁵ However, individual British women also sent anti-slavery objects to their American acquaintances as gifts. Jane Smith sent Angelina Grimke a ‘large picture of a *Kneeling Slave*’, presumably to mark her recent marriage to fellow abolitionist Theodore Weld. In a letter to Smith, Grimke acknowledged the receipt of her present and described her plans for it in her new marital home:

We purpose pasting it on binder's boards, binding it with colored paper, and fixing it over our mantelpiece. It is just such a speaking monument of suffering as we want in our parlor, and suits my fireboard most admirably. I first covered this with plain paper, and then arranged as well as I could about forty anti-slavery pictures upon it. I never saw one like it, but we hope other abolitionists will make them when they see what an ornamental and impressive article of furniture can thus be manufactured. We want those who come into our house to see at a glance that we are on the side of the oppressed and the poor.¹⁴⁶

Here, Grimke’s letter reveals how female abolitionists decorated their homes with anti-slavery objects and what they hoped to achieve in doing so. Smith’s print, possibly a copy of Hodgson’s ‘The Slave’ or Patrick Reason’s 1835 *Kneeling Slave*, was to be framed in coloured paper and placed in pride of place above the mantelpiece. Abolitionists furnished their households with anti-slavery objects because they were politicised versions of decorative items found in most nineteenth century homes, but also as an attempt to convert others to the cause. Prints and decorative household accessories like fireboards were the domestic equivalents of the medallions worn on the body and the workbags carried by female abolitionists as they went to social gatherings. Although visitors to the Grimke-Weld parlour would have been aware of their host’s political beliefs, these household objects were a domesticated statement of abolitionist affiliation and activism.

¹⁴⁵ *Liberator*, January 28, 1853.

¹⁴⁶ Catherine H. Birney, *The Grimké Sisters. Sarah and Angelina Grimké, The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights* (Boston: Lee and Shephard, 1885), 247-248.

Grimke expressed pleasure upon receiving a gift that matched the other anti-slavery objects in her parlour; the print facilitated the creation of an abolitionist interior. Nineteenth-century household manuals impressed upon their female readers the importance of decorating the parlour with furnishings that were complimentary in colour and taste. Grimke's letter reveals her attempts to combine her political beliefs with her new role as a housewife, attempting to create a well-balanced domestic space that displayed anti-slavery sentiments through the objects within. Grimke's description of her abolitionist fireboard highlights women's roles as creators of anti-slavery household objects, not just for sale at bazaars, but for their own homes. Unfortunately, this unique item does not appear to have survived, but through her description of it, we can imagine how it might have looked around a fireplace, with a print of a kneeling slave on the wall above. In creating her anti-slavery screen, Grimke was making her own version of an abolitionist scrapbook, cutting out the best images from periodicals and other printed sources. It is possible she used pages from the albums produced by female anti-slavery societies, repurposed for domestic display. By combining handicraft with politics, Grimke hoped her screen would serve as inspiration to other women. Although we do not know if any visitors to the Grimke-Weld parlour went on to decoupage slave images onto ordinary household items, presumably Grimke was not the only abolitionist to decorate her home in this way.

Anti-slavery bazaars sold a range of household items, including a wide variety of non-abolitionist prints ready to furnish parlour walls. Customers at the Boston bazaars could expect to find 'flower and pencil Drawings, oil paintings, water-color Landscapes'¹⁴⁷ as well as 'Sketches in Durable Ink...embracing scenes from Shakespeare, and Italian views.'¹⁴⁸ Like the clothes purchased at bazaars, American parlours filled with prints similar to those described in the bazaar reports, could retain tacit anti-slavery meanings. Interestingly, as well as scenes of British villages, prints illustrating the domestic interiors of British abolitionists were popular amongst American bazaar customers: 'The drawings of Harriet Martineau's room, and the views from it, with the sketches of Feethams [and] the residence of Elizabeth Pease, drew crowds around the portfolio that contained them.'¹⁴⁹ Not only were American parlours furnished by the items sent by British abolitionists, Americans were eager to catch a glimpse of what the homes of British abolitionists looked like, perhaps as inspiration for

¹⁴⁷ *Liberator*, December 12, 1845.

¹⁴⁸ *Liberator*, January 30, 1852.

¹⁴⁹ *Liberator*, January 24, 1845.

decorating their own rooms. The items hung upon the walls of our imagined abolitionist household changed from prints of the *Brooks* slave ship displayed in eighteenth-century Quaker households to the purely ornamental prints, paintings and drawings sold at anti-slavery bazaars in the 1840s and 1850s.

The Abolitionist Writing Desk: Inkstands, Letter Holders and Stationery

Parlours, drawing rooms and dining rooms were furnished with anti-slavery objects used by both sexes. In households that did not have a designated male space such as a study or a library, these rooms contained books, anti-slavery literature, writing desks and a variety of associated writing accessories. Decorated with abolitionist mottoes, visitors at the 1837 Boston bazaar could purchase all the necessary accoutrements for signing petitions and writing political pamphlets and literature:

Bunches of quills bore the label, “Twenty-five Weapons for Abolitionists.” On the wafer-boxes was written, “The doom of Slavery is *sealed*.” On one side of the pen-wipers was inscribed, “Wipe out the blot of Slavery;” on the other, “Plead the cause with thy Pen.”...Book-marks of various colored ribbons were printed with... “Speak the Truth in Love;” “Remember those in Bonds.”¹⁵⁰

These items accompanied tables laden with abolitionist and non-abolitionist books, albums, portfolios, scrapbooks, as well as annual reports from British and American anti-slavery societies.¹⁵¹ Wafers were small pieces of paper used to seal envelopes, those sold by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society were printed with abolitionist slogans, quotations and biblical verses. [Fig. 3.29] They were ‘Designed to further the Cause of Emancipation by continually circulating concise Information with regard to the Sin of Slavery.’¹⁵² It is unclear if the Boston bazaar quills, pen wipers and bookmarks were made by British or American abolitionists, but we do know that British female anti-slavery societies produced similar items to furnish British households. In its 1830 ‘Reports from the Ladies Societies in England’, the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* described the ‘variety of fancy articles, such as seals, portfolios, albums [and]...inkstands’ that were ‘adapted to anti-slavery purposes’ by British women ‘for awakening the public attention.’ Upon examination, the author considered them

¹⁵⁰ *Liberator*, January 2, 1837. Original emphasis.

¹⁵¹ *Liberator*, December 12, 1845.

¹⁵² Envelope for antislavery wafers, c.1850. Massachusetts Historical Society.

to be ‘well suited to the purpose for which they were intended.’¹⁵³ While I have not been able to find any surviving writing accessories bearing the abolitionist mottoes described by the *Liberator*, nor any items that were definitely made or used by female abolitionists, there are several surviving items that convey the extent to which the writing desks were sites of abolitionist sentiment.

The Minneapolis Institute of Art possesses a writing box with one of Wedgwood’s cameos inlaid upon the lid.¹⁵⁴ [Fig. 3.30] As with many surviving anti-slavery objects, the catalogue record states the box is British and made around 1790, but it is unclear whether this is just because of the medallion. Wedgwood did suggest setting his cameos into boxes, but there is nothing to suggest the box was not owned by someone who later repurposed a cameo. The wooden box is decorated with rolled cylinders of paper, the medallion fixed onto the centre of the lid, so the box may have been decorated with the intention of displaying the cameo. We do not know who owned this box, or who was responsible for setting the medallion upon the lid. However, like the medallion set into an ornate frame in Princeton University Art Museum’s collection, the writing box contributes to our understanding of the various ways transatlantic abolitionists reworked Wedgwood’s medallion that have not been addressed by scholars. While male and female abolitionists did, as Clarkson recalled, turn their medallions into pieces of jewellery, they also used them to create practical and decorative household accessories.

Currently on display at the WHM is a creamware inkstand in the shape of a nautilus shell.¹⁵⁵ [Fig. 3.31] Decorated with kneeling slave motifs and biblical inscriptions, the inkstand combines a practical piece of writing equipment with abolitionist imagery. The inkstand appears to be British and closely resembles the design and images used to decorate British- and French-manufactured abolitionist tea sets and dinner services. A French sauce boat in Rex Stark’s personal collection also uses the same nautilus shell design,¹⁵⁶ suggesting that the ink stand was one of many items available from the same manufacturer.

¹⁵³ *Genius of Universal Emancipation* (June 1830), 41.

¹⁵⁴ Writing box, c.1790, Minneapolis Institute of Art, 95.19.

¹⁵⁵ Anti-Slavery Inkstand, WHM, KINCM:1954.7.

¹⁵⁶ Sauceboat, France, c.1820. Collection of Rex Stark in Margolin, ‘Freedom’, Figure 35.

My research has discovered a surviving pair of British manufactured papier-mâché letter racks decorated with slave motifs. [Fig. 3.32] Listed as ‘desk accessories’ at a 2013 Dallas auction,¹⁵⁷ these letter racks are unique not only as rare surviving examples of papier-mâché abolitionist accessories, but in terms of the images printed upon them. Unlike the majority of surviving anti-slavery household objects printed with either a male or female slave, these letter racks contain both. With a male image on one and a female upon the other, they resemble an unusual ‘his and hers’ format. These sets’ gender neutrality suggests they could have been used by men or women. Stamped with ‘Jennens & Bettridge Makers to the Queen’ and dated 1840-1850 by the auction house, they were made by the prominent British manufacturers who sold a wide variety of household papier-mâché items from their Birmingham and London shops. The V&A holds a similar pair of Jennens and Bettridge letter racks from around the same period decorated with Gothic religious images,¹⁵⁸ corroborating the dates and British origins of the anti-slavery pair. In their 1851 catalogue, Jennens and Bettridge’s card racks retailed between 10s and 80s per pair,¹⁵⁹ but there are no details regarding what designs were available. It is probable that the male and female slave images were just one of many designs, but it is unclear whether they were a one-off commission from an abolitionist customer, or if Jennens and Bettridge also used the slave motifs to decorate other household items in their range. The auction house listing suggests the letter racks were possibly made for export to America, presumably relating to their location at the time of auction, but this cannot be confirmed. We know that British abolitionists sent similar household objects such as ‘Card-receivers, Letterstands and Inkstands of papier mache and Berlin iron, with China fixtures’¹⁶⁰ to furnish American homes, so it is possible that these letter racks were purchased at a bazaar. If they did originally furnish an American household then they could also have been sent as a gift from a British friend, or purchased directly from Jennens and Bettridge and sent via mail order. Nevertheless, these letter racks are further proof that manufacturers tapped into the transatlantic abolitionist consumer market; they understood that household accessories were a highly marketable and profitable product.

¹⁵⁷ Auction house listing for Matching Papier-Mâché Desk Accessories, c.1840-50, <http://historical.ha.com/itm/political/abolition-movement-matching-papier-mache-desk-accessories/a/6106-38438.s> Last Accessed January 2016.

¹⁵⁸ Letter Racks, c.1840-60, Victoria and Albert Museum, W.94&A-1926.

¹⁵⁹ Aaron Jennens and T.H. Bettridge, *Jennens and Bettridge's illustrated catalogue of papier mâché. Manufacturers, by special appointment, to Her Majesty, H.R.H. Prince Albert, and the Royal Family* (London: Petter, Duff, and Co., 1851-2), 2.

¹⁶⁰ *Liberator*, December 12, 1845 and December 17, 1847.

These three surviving items are ordinary objects decorated with abolitionist motifs that could be found upon British and American writing desks. They do not appear to be gendered. The writing box, the inkstand and the pair of letter racks illustrate the relationship between furnishing the domestic space and facilitating abolitionist correspondence and literature. Used within the home, male and female abolitionists would have been reminded of their political beliefs each time they opened their writing boxes, refilled their quills or sorted through their correspondence.

Male and female abolitionists used stationery decorated with a variety of anti-slavery images in their letters to fellow abolitionists.¹⁶¹ British and American anti-slavery societies sealed their letters with wax seals bearing Wedgwood's kneeling slave, but individuals also employed these images in their personal correspondence. Figs. 3.33 and 3.34 show two of the motifs used as letterheads on surviving American examples: Patrick Reason's 1835 engraving of the male *Kneeling Slave*, the female allegorical figure of Justice extending her hand to a kneeling female slave, circular motifs of the male and female kneeling slaves accompanied by 'British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society' and the ubiquitous 'Am I Not A...' mottoes. These abolitionist letterheads provided correspondents with a visual reminder of their united political beliefs, even on letters that contained no anti-slavery content. Printed by anti-slavery societies, Yellin notes that American abolitionists could purchase this political stationery at anti-slavery bazaars.¹⁶²

Female abolitionists used and reworked their own interpretations of the kneeling slave image on paper, as tokens of abolitionist affection. Known for including signed floral sketches in her correspondence, Sarah Mapps Douglass sketched a slave image on a letter to Elizabeth Chandler, and fellow black abolitionist Sarah Forten illustrated her copy of one of Chandler's poems in Elizabeth Smith's album with a slave drawing.¹⁶³ Planning her marriage to Theodore Weld, Angelina Grimke decided she wanted abolitionist-themed invitations to

¹⁶¹ Surviving examples of abolitionist stationery in the AAS include: Angelina Grimke to Stephen S. Foster, July 17, 1837; Angelina Grimke and Theodore Weld wedding invitation to Abby Kelley, May 1838; Sarah M. Douglass to Abby Kelley, May 18, 1838; Mary N. B. Smith to Abby Kelley, August 16, 1841; Amy Post to Abby Kelley Foster, December 4, 1843; Henry W. Williams to Stephen S. Foster, February 27, 1846; Lucretia Mott to C.W. Pennock, n.d. For a British envelope with anti-slavery imagery see NMMG, c.1860, ZBA2656.

¹⁶² Yellin, *Women and Sisters*, 15.

¹⁶³ Douglass to Chandler, Philadelphia, March 1, 1833, Chandler Papers, Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan and Elizabeth Smith Album, Francis J. Grimke Papers, Spinarn-Moorland Collection, Howard University. Mentioned in Yellin, *Women and Sisters*, 15.

accompany her anti-slavery workbag and free-produce wedding cake.¹⁶⁴ A draft of this invite has survived, [Fig. 3.35] featuring a childish sketch of a woman whose face is coloured in black, above the words ‘Am I not thy sister?’ in between several trees. It is unclear whether the draft was her own attempt to rework the standard slave motif to be reproduced by a printer, or if it was just to show how the invite might look written upon some of the anti-slavery paper Grimke had previously used in her correspondence with Stephen Foster. Signed by both the bride and groom, the invitations sent to guests, [Fig. 3.36] featured Reason’s *Kneeling Slave* image, not the version in the sketch; they used paper with the same letterhead that Grimke used in her correspondence with Stephen Foster the previous year. Female abolitionists deployed anti-slavery stationery to express their personal relationships with others, and their political relationship to the slave printed upon the paper.

Writing letters on anti-slavery paper could also be a subversive form of political activism. In 1843, American abolitionist Amy Post wrote to Abby Kelley on paper containing an anti-slavery image. In her letter, Post explained that she had also used the paper to quietly undermine Quaker authorities who had recently dropped their ‘charge’ cautioning her against placing abolition before her family duties:

I expect they will have a fresh charge against me soon, as I yesterday transcribed Epistles for the Preparative meetings on such paper as this, and have but little doubt but that imploring image, will disturb their quiet, at least I hope it will.¹⁶⁵

Post’s letter reveals that for female abolitionists, anti-slavery stationery did not only express their political beliefs and state their commitment to a campaign, but could also provoke and ‘disturb’ disapproving critics. We do not know whether or not Quaker elders noticed the image heading Post’s transcriptions, or what they thought of her unspoken rebellion. By sending and receiving correspondence printed with anti-slavery motifs, British and American abolitionists were participating in a political paper network. These letters were printed versions of Wedgwood cameos distributed across abolitionist networks in the late eighteenth

¹⁶⁴ For the free-produce desserts and cake made by a black confectioner served at their wedding see Angelina Grimke to Weld, May 6, 1838, in Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844*, 2 Volumes (New York: De Capo, 1970), Volume 1, 665.

¹⁶⁵ Amy Post to Abby Kelley Foster, December 4, 1843, AAS.

century. Akin to the cameos worn on the body as jewellery, stationery provided a tacit statement of abolitionism read at a glance.

Anti-slavery stationery provided abolitionists with a paper call to action; the image was a reminder of the ultimate goal of emancipation. In 1837, Theodore Weld wrote a letter to Angelina and Sarah Grimke upon a piece of paper headed with Reason's kneeling slave. Upon seeing the slave printed upon the paper, Weld replaced a traditional greeting with the following outburst of abolitionist passion:

Ah! Still kneeling, manacled, looking upward, pleading for help! As I caught a sheet at random from a large quantity on the desk at the office to write you a line my dear sisters, I had almost dashed my pen upon it before I saw *the kneeling slave!* The sudden sight drove home a deeper lesson than my heart has learned these many days!! The prayer of the slave! Perdition foretokened to the oppressor and deliverance to the oppressed! Blessed be God, He taketh up the needy out of the dust.¹⁶⁶

Male abolitionists were also influenced by the use of slave motifs upon other household objects. Yellin and Lawton both reference the printed letterheads and hand drawn sketches,¹⁶⁷ but only in terms of the image itself, and abolitionist responses to the image on stationery; they do not acknowledge these letters as part of the material objects within the abolitionist household. These printed medallions sat alongside the plethora of pen wipers, inkstands and letter racks bearing slave motifs upon writing desks and tables in transatlantic households.

As well as writing accessories, anti-slavery bazaars filled the bookshelves of transatlantic households, their book tables laden with abolitionist and non-abolitionist texts. In Chapter 5 we will examine references to domestic objects in children's anti-slavery literature, but the books and publications themselves were household objects in their own right. Charlotte Forten expressed great pleasure at receiving an old copy of *The Liberator* from her friends when she moved to St. Helena to aid the cause: 'It is familiar and delightful to look upon as the face of an old friend' and looked forward to 'display[ing] it to one's friends.'¹⁶⁸ Karen Sanchez-Eppler argues women's abolitionist literature needs 'to be assessed as a variety of female handiwork refashioned for political, didactic, and pecuniary purposes.'¹⁶⁹ In this sense

¹⁶⁶ Theodore Weld to Angelina and Sarah Grimke, December 15, 1837, in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Weld and Grimke*, Volume 1, 490.

¹⁶⁷ Yellin, *Women and Sisters*, 15, and Lawton, 'Contested Meanings', 142-3 and 159.

¹⁶⁸ Diary Entry, Thursday November 27, 1862. Billington, *Charlotte Forten*, 156.

¹⁶⁹ Sanchez-Eppler, 'Bodily Bonds': 34.

anti-slavery literatures were household objects in their own right. These literary contributions may have been written on paper with abolitionist letterheads, using quills, ink stands and pen wipers purchased at bazaars in rooms filled with anti-slavery prints and decorative accessories.

Furnishing the Parlour: Decorative and Functional Items

Nineteenth-century parlours and drawing-rooms were filled with a variety of functional and decorative items that could be purchased at anti-slavery bazaars: ‘sofa nets and window curtains,¹⁷⁰ as well as tidies, antimacassars, hearth rugs, table, piano, cushion, chair and sofa covers, vases, figurines, candlesticks and door handles.¹⁷¹ The BFASS did not exaggerate their claim that ‘Complete furniture for a drawing-room can be furnished’ at their 1846 bazaar.¹⁷²

Although the majority of these items sold at the bazaars in the 1840s and 1850s were not ‘marked’ with abolitionist imagery, surviving objects reveal that these items also existed with anti-slavery motifs. In Rex Stark’s personal collection is an 1830s English candlestick decorated with a female slave,¹⁷³ and the NMMG possesses an enamel plaque bearing a male slave mounted on a door handle from the 1790s.¹⁷⁴ The door handle [Fig. 3.17] is identical to the enamel patch boxes [Fig. 3.13] that were also produced in the 1790s. This suggests they were made by the same manufacturer, who produced a range of enamelled items that could be decorated with the same motif.

Walker and Ware argue that women’s increased participation in the campaigns is reflected in the types of anti-slavery household objects. After 1828, objects became ‘feminised, portraying female subjects and themes...[and they] became more closely associated with the home and with its most “feminine” space, the drawing room.’¹⁷⁵ Bazaars sold ‘all the different specimens of every possible kind of bead-work, wax-work, straw-work, ribbon-

¹⁷⁰ *Liberator*, December 17, 1847.

¹⁷¹ *Liberator*, December 12, 1845 and December 16, 1853.

¹⁷² *Liberator*, December 18, 1846.

¹⁷³ Figure 42, Candlestick, England, c.1830 in Margolin, ‘Freedom’.

¹⁷⁴ Enamel plaque, c.1790, NMMG, ZBA2451.

¹⁷⁵ Walker and Ware, ‘Pincushions’, 71.

work, glass-work, paper-work, shell-work, knit and net-work, embroidered and plain work,' reflecting contemporary trends for unusual handicrafts, and the parlour as the space where women produced and displayed these 'little trifles' of femininity.¹⁷⁶ Surviving items associated with women's domestic work and the parlour as a site of domestic production such as pincushions, needle books, chair covers, tapestries, samplers and Berlin woolwork, all decorated with slave motifs confirms the chronological shift outlined by Walker and Ware. The pincushion in Fig. 3.38 stamped with slave motifs and extracts from the *Royal Jamaica Gazette* resemble the workbags made by British female anti-slavery societies. Several collections in the U.S. also possess this pincushion, which suggests it was sent to American bazaars or individual abolitionists by British women. As with the workbags, it is likely the needlebook in Fig. 3.39 was made by an American female anti-slavery society copying those made by British women.¹⁷⁷ Although the female slave motif was used to decorate a variety of objects, the pincushion in Fig. 3.40 is one of the few surviving hand-embroidered items that featured both the female slave motif and accompanying motto.¹⁷⁸ By using the kneeling slave 'as a motif for traditional feminine crafts,' Yellin argues female abolitionists transformed the image 'into folk art.'¹⁷⁹ However, the PFASS considered them to be functional items capable of political conversion:

the form of the chained and kneeling slave, pictured on a needlebook or a pincushion, may arouse the latent sympathies of many a heart, and suggest to many a conscience the reprovng inquiry, "what hast thou done for the redemption of thy brother?"¹⁸⁰

As useful items associated with women's domestic 'work', I agree with Van Broekhoven's claim that the 'tangible messages' imbued in anti-slavery pincushions were 'read' by female abolitionists 'many times' over their life cycle in the domestic space.¹⁸¹ Unlike purely decorative items that remained in one place, pincushions were physically handled during use and moved around the parlour.

¹⁷⁶ Beverly Gordon, "'Little Trifles': Understanding Victorian Fancywork' Textiles as Primary Sources: *Proceedings of the First Symposium of the Textile Society of America, Minneapolis Institute of Art*, September 16-1 (1988): 141.

¹⁷⁷ Needle case, c.1830-50, Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts.

¹⁷⁸ Pincushion, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, 1922.895/7.

¹⁷⁹ Yellin, *Women and Sisters*, 15.

¹⁸⁰ *1836 Annual Report of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Philadelphia, 1836)

¹⁸¹ Deborah Van Broekhoven 'Needles, Pens and Petitions: Reading Women into Antislavery History' In *The Meaning of Slavery in the North*, eds., Martin H. Blatt and David Roediger, (New York: Taylor Francis, 1999), 138.

Women used their needlework skills to embroider slave motifs onto household accessories. Two surviving examples [Figs. 3.41 and 3.42] both appear to be British and incorporate a male kneeling slave with traditional floral motifs. The WHM piece features lines from John Collins' 'The Desponding Negro' (1792) and was originally used as a chair cover. Walker and Ware reference the chair cover in their work as an example of 'embroidered anti-slavery sentiments and images on fabrics that were used to decorate the home'¹⁸² but they do not discuss how using these objects in the household affected its ability to disseminate these sentiments. Hung upon walls, the slave motifs used to decorate plaques, prints and pieces of embroidery were clearly visible. The slave images upon letter racks, stationery and pincushions were seen every time they were used. This was not applicable to the chair cover and door handle where usage obscured the slave motifs. The abolitionist sentiments were only visible to the user and others, when the object was not in use. This functional barrier needs to be remembered when assessing how effective these objects were at politicising households.

It can be questioned whether abolitionist households became politicised by the presence of anti-slavery imagery and objects, or whether the household domesticated these items, their political meanings lost amongst numerous other abolitionist prints, textiles and china. I would argue using objects reinforced these meanings, but, as we have seen with the chair cover and door handle, sometimes using these objects obscured the imagery. In the case of the sugar bowls, sometimes objects were not used in ways that matched the abolitionist meanings.

Atkin argues domestic objects 'were not very effective [at influencing men] because they were feminine, produced within the woman's domestic space.'¹⁸³ However, there is nothing to suggest that household items decorated with abolitionist images did not also remind men of their abolitionist beliefs. While pincushions would not have been used by men, they would have worn handmade items of clothing that women made using anti-slavery pincushions. They may not have decoupled slave motifs onto fire screens, but they would have benefited from their presence in the parlour and seen them as they sat by the fire. As we have seen, not all household items bearing abolitionist motifs and inscriptions were gender-specific. Both sexes drank and ate from anti-slavery china, both used anti-slavery stationery, both opened

¹⁸² Walker and Ware, 'Pincushions', 71.

¹⁸³ Atkin, 'Pincushions Periodicals': 104.

doors using anti-slavery door handles and slept in beds under anti-slavery quilts. Of course, some men may have resented their homes being encroached upon by a myriad of anti-slavery objects, but we cannot be sure either way. Men were also involved in the consumption of anti-slavery household items from bazaars and manufacturers, either personally, or by providing their wives with the money to purchase them. To suggest men were not as influenced by ‘feminine’ household objects just because they were made within their homes ignores the fact that they shared these objects and domestic spaces with women.

Tea Sets and Sugar Bowls: The Kitchen and Dining Room

According to J.H. Plumb, ‘by 1750 all Europe was in the grip of china-fever. No mania for material objects had ever been so widespread.’¹⁸⁴ By the nineteenth century, china dinner services were essential for domestic dining. The increased demand for tea, sugar and coffee meant no middle-class household was complete without a tea set. British manufacturers tapped into the abolitionist consumer market, to the extent that anti-slavery ‘jugs, plates, cups, and even dinner services were all familiar sights during the 1830s and 1840s.’¹⁸⁵ Mugs, pitchers, tea sets, plates, food covers, serving dishes and sauceboats were all stamped with variations on Wedgwood’s slave motif, politicising mealtimes.¹⁸⁶ Bowls and ladles for serving punch were also decorated with anti-slavery designs,¹⁸⁷ suggestive of attempts to convey abolitionist affiliation when entertaining guests at house parties. As well as kneeling slave motifs, anti-slavery china and ceramics were decorated with inscriptions relating to the sugar boycotts and commemorating abolitionist milestones. On display at the Museum of London Docklands are several pieces from a dinner service decorated with kneeling slaves above a quotation from Clarkson’s 1840 Freemason’s Hall speech: ‘Take courage, persevere to the last.’¹⁸⁸ After 1852, scenes and characters from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* were used to

¹⁸⁴ J. H. Plumb, ‘The Royal Porcelain Craze,’ in *In the Light of History* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), 58.

¹⁸⁵ John Oldfield, ‘*Chords of Freedom*’ *Commemoration, ritual and British transatlantic slavery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 118. For references to a dinner service see John and Jennifer May, *Commemorative Pottery, 1780-1900: A Guide for Collectors*, (London 1972), 133.

¹⁸⁶ Breakfast cup and saucer, cake plate, food cover, c.1830-40, Historic New England, 1942.604AB, 1961.168D and 1961.168C.

¹⁸⁷ Punch bowl, ‘freedom to the slave G.W.’, (1792), Brooklyn Museum, 48.143. Punch ladle, kneeling slave and motto, n.d., WHM, KINCM:1987.159.3.

¹⁸⁸ Museum of London Docklands, 87.213/4.

decorate china and ceramics, accompanying the plethora of related items produced in response to the book's popularity in Britain and America.

Anti-slavery china and ceramics were washed and dried in the kitchen and stored in cupboards and china cabinets, to be brought out when required. Used by both sexes for drinking, eating and entertaining guests, these items moved between the kitchen, the parlour and the dining room. Tea and coffee sets were used at tea tables in the parlour and drawing room, dinner services were used in the dining room. These rooms were also used by abolitionists for sewing circle meetings and entertaining; abolitionist china connected political conversations with household objects and social rituals. We do not know which households possessed anti-slavery china, or how much of it was actually used. Plates made to commemorate the British Emancipation Acts might have been displayed on walls or in cabinets. Similarly, Stevenson notes that we do not know if families purchased entire dinner sets, or to 'what extent families might have combined patterns as they set their tables.'¹⁸⁹

Until the late nineteenth century, the majority of ceramics in the U.S. were imported from Britain and France;¹⁹⁰ the dining rooms of American abolitionists were furnished with Staffordshire china. British women personally contributed towards this through items they sent for sale at bazaars. In 1834, those attending the Boston anti-slavery bazaar could purchase 'beautiful sugar-bowls' decorated with the words 'Sugar not made by slaves' in gilded letters.¹⁹¹ Although these items were not mentioned in subsequent bazaar reports, American customers could still purchase 'Sheffield cutlery' and 'white China Gilt Tea Service[s]' throughout the 1840s.¹⁹²

As the free produce campaigns were rooted in domestic consumption, anti-slavery china was a visible sign of participation displayed in the household. Unlike Wedgwood's cameos which were mostly decorative, china was practical as well as political: it held the East Indian sugar that replaced the slave grown west Indian produce. Elizabeth Heyrick appealed to her 'enlightened and patriotic countrywomen' to use their role within the household to annihilate slavery, for 'in the domestic department they are the chief controlers; they, for the most part,

¹⁸⁹ Stevenson, 'Tie Ins'.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ *Liberator*, December 20, 1834.

¹⁹² *Liberator*, December 18, 1846 and December 21, 1849.

provide the articles of family consumption.’¹⁹³ As the ‘chief controllers’ women played a key role in the abstention movement and persuaded others to follow suit. Cards distributed by members of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society outlined the household’s political power:

By six families using East India sugar instead of West India sugar one slave less is required: surely to release a fellow-creature from a state of cruel bondage and misery, by so small a sacrifice is worthy the attention of all¹⁹⁴

These words were used to decorate sugar bowls [Fig. 3.43], china versions of the printed cards that reinforced the necessity of the ‘sacrifice’ made by the user. British female anti-slavery societies also distributed anti-slavery china and profited from furnishing dining rooms of fellow abolitionists. In 1830 Mrs Hill, the District Treasurer for Oxford reported a 10 shilling ‘Profit on China,’¹⁹⁵ and the members of Birmingham’s Female Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves were informed:

*Anti-Slavery China may be purchased, at prime cost, of SARAH BEDFORD AND SON, China Rooms, New Street, Birmingham; and Associations and District Treasurers can have any quantity by writing to HERBERT MINTON, China Manufacturer, Potteries, Staffordshire.*¹⁹⁶

Here, female abolitionists liaised with one of the main pottery manufacturers to produce items printed with anti-slavery motifs, and then sold them at a profit to fellow abolitionists to raise society funds. Sarah Bedford profited from abolitionist customers by selling anti-slavery china alongside her other wares at full price from her Birmingham premises, and B. Henderson sold anti-slavery sugar basins bearing the words ‘East India Sugar not made by Slaves’ to ‘the Friends of Africa’ from her Peckham warehouse [Fig. 3.44]¹⁹⁷ The blue sugar

¹⁹³ Elizabeth Heyrick, *Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women* (Leicester: A. Cockshaw, 1828), 6.

¹⁹⁴ *East India Sugar* (Sheffield, J. Blackwell, n.d.) JRL.

¹⁹⁵ Female Society of Birmingham, West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall and Their Respective Neighbourhoods for the Relief of British Negro Slaves, *The Fifth Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall, and their Respective Neighbourhoods, for the Relief of British Negro Slaves, established in 1825* (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1830), 63.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁹⁷ B. Henderson, ‘East India Sugar Basins’, Advertising card, china-warehouse, Rye-Lane, Peckham. (London: Printed at the Camberwell Press by J.B.G. Vogel, c.1828) Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London, MIC 899/202.

bowl with gold letters in the Chipstone Foundation Collection [Fig. 3.45] appears to correspond with the image printed on Henderson's advertisement.

Clarkson estimated that between 1791 and 1792 'no fewer than three hundred thousand persons had abandoned the use of sugar' across Britain, a figure comprising 'all ranks and parties. Rich and poor, churchmen and dissenters.'¹⁹⁸ Elizabeth Heyrick's 'personal visits among the poor and labouring classes' in the 1820s found that 'nine out of ten families have cheerfully...abstain[ed] from the consumption of West Indian sugar.'¹⁹⁹ In reality, the high import duties on the East Indian sugar 'made it hard for abstention campaigners to sustain working-class support...Poor women's sympathies for the slave came into conflict with their responsibility for household budgeting.'²⁰⁰ However, the cost of East Indian sugar also affected the abstention efforts of middle-class families, even those of prominent abolitionists. Garrison's son Wendell Phillips recalled:

among the gifts which British friends of the cause sent over to antislavery fairs—among the yellow card-boxes for anti-slavery pennies, and inkstands and tea-cups stamped with 'Am I not a man and a brother?'—a brown-stone bowl, of which the cover was early broken in a certain family, and whose rim bore the delusive legend—EAST INDIA SUGAR, NOT made by SLAVES. Alas! they had forgotten to send the sugar to make good the profession, and we ate from the pretty bowl whatever Cuban or Louisianan sweetness a large household and a moderate purse could compromise upon; for that was one of the compromises which Abolitionists had often to make in spite of themselves.²⁰¹

In contrast to the idealised visions of free-produce domesticity depicted in literature and surviving objects, Phillips reveals his childhood experiences in a real abolitionist household. The lid of the sugar bowl was easily broken; sugar bowls specifically designed to encourage abstention from slave-grown produce were misused. The bowl's inscription, intended to encourage abolitionist consumption failed under financial pressures. Abolitionists purchased and owned anti-slavery tea sets, sugar bowls and china in support of the free-produce

¹⁹⁸ Clarkson, *Rise*, vol. II, 349-50.

¹⁹⁹ [Elizabeth Heyrick], *Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery; Chiefly Addressed to the More Influential Classes. To Which are Added, Thoughts on Compensation*. (London: Hatchard and Son, 1826), 161.

²⁰⁰ Midgley, 'Sugar Boycotts': 147.

²⁰¹ Wendell P. Garrison, 'Free Produce among the Quakers' *The Atlantic Monthly*, (October 1868), 486-7.

movement, but they may have remained unused in display cabinets, or used in ways that were at odds with the texts printed upon their surfaces.

Potholders were used to move hot saucepans, transfer serving dishes from the kitchen to the dining room, and to pass items to others seated at the table. Although potholders were functional items they were often finished with a hanging loop, for easy access but also for display in the kitchen. Potholders decorated with anti-slavery motifs were made by female abolitionists and were sold at anti-slavery bazaars alongside other textile household items bearing similar mottoes. As a child, New York Quaker abolitionist Emily Howland's first 'introduction to the feminine arts' was making a potholder bearing the legend 'Anti-slaveholder' to be sold at the local anti-slavery fair.²⁰² HNE and the Chicago Historical Society (CHS) both possess several anti-slavery potholders,²⁰³ [Fig. 3.46] similar to the one made by Howland. All of the potholders appear to be American, but similar items could have been made by British women for anti-slavery bazaars in Britain and the U.S. In contrast to the other textile household objects decorated with kneeling slaves, these potholders feature happy, dancing male and female black figures. Both potholders in the CHS collections feature the slogan 'Any Holder but a Slave Holder', suggesting 'any option was preferable to remaining enslaved.'²⁰⁴ The words stitched onto the HNE potholders celebrate the slaves' freedom: 'we's gwine norr-/ good bye dixie' and 'we's free.' Taylor and Atkin both discuss the CHS potholders but they do not address their actual use in the home. The surviving potholders are all in very good condition, suggesting they might have been kept for show instead of being physically used. They also allow us to question who used them and whether their political beliefs matched the words embroidered onto the potholders. Although they would have been handled by the female abolitionists who owned them, potholders would also have been used by domestic servants while they cooked in the kitchen and carried meals through to the dining room. In his description of the British households who had abstained from slave-grown sugar, Clarkson noted 'In gentleman's families where the master had set the example, the servants had often voluntarily followed it.'²⁰⁵ No doubt many did, but we cannot know for sure how voluntary or genuine their participation was. The diary of Irish

²⁰² Judith Colucci Breault, *The World of Emily Howland: Odyssey of a Humanitarian* (California: Les Femmes, 1976), 10.

²⁰³ Three Potholders, c.1845-1870, HNE, 1932.62, 1932.61 and 1936.993; Two Potholders, n.d., CHS, 1969.1737.

²⁰⁴ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 122.

²⁰⁵ Clarkson, *Rise*, 349

Catholic Larry Banville, gamekeeper to the Buxton family, provides one insight into the political opinions of domestic servants employed by abolitionists. In July 1834, he ‘received a medal of Miss Buxton and my wife a silk handkerchief and a pair of gloves, all favours to remember the first of August’ adding: ‘I would like to see a little more liberty for us here before we trouble about foreign parts.’²⁰⁶ At the wedding reception of Priscilla Buxton and Andrew Johnston, also held on August 1, 1834 to coincide with the enactment of the Emancipation Act, Banville joined other guests in wearing his medal with a ‘small laurel brooch tied with white and black.’²⁰⁷ However, Banville clearly begrudged spending time securing the freedom of slaves in far flung corners of the Empire while ‘there is no liberty for us.’²⁰⁸ We do not know what Sarah Banville thought of the gifts they received, or if she also wore them to celebrate the Buxton wedding and abolitionist success. Similarly, we should consider how domestic servants felt towards slaves and the abolitionist preoccupations of their employers as they dusted, tidied, cleaned and used household items with anti-slavery motifs and texts.

Conclusion

This chapter has travelled through the imagined transatlantic abolitionist household to analyse anti-slavery objects and situate them in the rooms they were used and displayed. We have seen how women were given Wedgwood cameos by male acquaintances and followed Wedgwood’s suggestions for wearing them on the body as accessories. Female abolitionists wore the cameo as a piece of jewellery, the campaign’s first wearable piece of propaganda. Abolitionists later sought to create their own versions, transforming penny tokens stamped with anti-slavery images into brooches, and possibly necklaces. Abolitionists hung Wedgwood cameos in frames upon their walls, alongside prints and plaques. British and American women produced workbags to raise society funds and carried them to transport sewing equipment and political propaganda. These workbags were examples of fashionable politics: they were decorative accessories printed with abolitionist imagery and containing abolitionist literature. American abolitionists used workbags to reflect local events, such as

²⁰⁶ Larry Banville, Journal Entry for Wednesday, July 30, 1834. Norma Virgoe and Susan Yaxley, eds., *The Banville Diaries. Journals of a Norfolk Gamekeeper, 1822-44*, (London: Harper Collins, 1986), 134.

²⁰⁷ Friday August 1, 1834. *Ibid.*, 135.

²⁰⁸ Thursday July 31, 1834. *Ibid.*, 134.

the 'Little Med' case. Some women used anti-slavery objects to mark important life events, Angelina Grimke's wedding purse was an abolitionist workbag and Reason's *Kneeling Slave* headed her wedding invitations. Women gave anti-slavery objects as gifts to fellow female abolitionists: Jane Neale sent a workbag to Sarah Lloyd and Jane Smith sent a kneeling slave print to Angelina Grimke.

We have seen how bedrooms were filled with unlikely sources of abolitionist sentiment: patches, powder and cologne as well as bed curtains and quilts. Anti-slavery bazaars furnished the homes of abolitionists in Britain and the U.S., supplying a myriad of practical and decorative material objects with overt and hidden political sentiments. Female abolitionists used anti-slavery objects to stimulate conversation at social events, to educate and convert others to the cause, to host tea parties and sewing circle meetings and to state their political beliefs. Women created and displayed handmade anti-slavery objects in their homes to inspire others in the hopes of setting a new domestic trend. They also used items printed with slave motifs to subtly undermine those who disapproved of their anti-slavery activism. China and ceramics were sold to raise funds and educate others about the slave grown items in their homes. They were used to demonstrate participation in the free produce movements and provided a physical reminder of the necessity of the sugar boycotts. However, we have also witnessed the disparity between intended use and actual use of anti-slavery household objects. Sugar bowls were filled with the cheaper slave grown sugar in less-affluent households and anti-slavery prints were not published with the intention of being turned into firescreens. Using these objects in the home often obscured the slave images from view; chair covers were sat on and plates were filled with food. Women repurposed other anti-slavery objects to produce household items, handkerchiefs and poems were sewn into quilts, print cuttings were pasted onto firescreens, penny tokens were turned into brooches. The objects used in this chapter provide physical proof that abolitionist households contained more than cameos, ceramics or prints. British manufacturers and female abolitionists produced anti-slavery items made from a variety of materials: glass, enamel, china, papier-mâché and textiles. Found in every corner of the transatlantic domestic space, the material culture of anti-slavery involved all members of the household, including, as addressed in the next chapter, children.

Chapter 4

Slaves in the Toy Box: Children's Anti-Slavery Games and Samplers in the Transatlantic Domestic Space.

It was for our CHILDREN we did it; and we need not now turn conscious-stricken from their trusting gaze: for we have done what lies with us, to preserve them “an inheritance pure and undefiled, and that not fadeth away.”¹

In its first Annual Report, the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society revealed its efforts were motivated by more than just ‘the slave and his master’, but something closer to home: its members’ children. This chapter examines how the important place children occupied within transatlantic anti-slavery campaigns was translated to ordinary households through material objects. Building upon the theme and structure of Chapter 3, this chapter analyses the anti-slavery objects in the rooms of the ‘imagined’ abolitionist household that were designated to the youngest members of the family: the children.

Hamlett argues that by studying the material culture of the British nursery we can ‘explore relationships between parents and children and...see the home from a child’s perspective.’² In addition to this, this chapter will show how the material culture of spaces occupied by children helps to reveal the transatlantic networks of female abolitionists. As discussed in Chapters 1, 2, and 3, British and American women made and sent items for sale at anti-slavery bazaars that decorated the homes of fellow abolitionist and non-abolitionist consumers. As those who would inherit the abolitionist mantle, children were granted a unique position as consumers of anti-slavery household items. Children were targeted by abolitionists who sought to politicise the household from every corner; toy manufacturers sought to profit from a new consumer market by producing items with anti-slavery themes and images. Children were not just consumers of abolitionist objects, they also created them. Following in the footsteps of their female relatives, British and American girls combined their gendered domestic education with politics by embroidering abolitionist motifs and text onto samplers. This chapter looks at the ways ordinary items bought for, played with and made by children were imbued with invisible and visible political sentiments. By analysing

¹ *Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society; With a Concise Statement of Events, Previous and Subsequent to the Annual Meeting of 1835, Second Edition*, (Boston: Published by the Society, 1836), 39.

² Hamlett, *Material Relations*, 8.

these objects and the sentiments they held, we can begin to imagine the extent to which children's spaces in the transatlantic household were sites of political action, politicised by the items within. Viewed alongside the objects and discussion in chapter 3, we can visualise an abolitionist household that involved each family member through material objects.

As discussed in chapter 3, some scholars have already begun to address the material culture of the abolitionist household. Similarly, historians of childhood, domestic interiors and material culture are increasingly focusing on the toys and objects in these spaces, analysing what they tell us about households, families and patterns of consumption. However, so far the relationship between children and anti-slavery objects in a transatlantic context has been largely ignored. In their chapter on the abolitionist interior, Walker and Ware mention that the home was the place where 'ethical behaviour was taught and gender roles absorbed by children...through reading children's books or learning children's hymns'³ and discuss the use of mother and child motifs on abolitionist artefacts such as workbags and ceramics. They do not, however elaborate on this to include items that were specifically marketed towards, or made by, children. Several historians have analysed the political messages interwoven in specific imperial and abolitionist children's toys and embroidered items. Kelley, Goldner and Stevenson have all discussed the American card game 'Uncle Tom and Little Eva' that combined the narrative of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with play.⁴ Norcia and Ray have unpicked the imperial rhetoric of British children's jigsaw puzzles and board games, using surviving items in archival collections.⁵ Taylor has looked at a British anti-slavery sampler in terms of its national and international sentiments, and an American children's anti-slavery handkerchief.⁶ However, none has looked at more than one or two political board games, puzzles, card games or textile items, neglecting to analyse a selection from all of these categories. This chapter aims to rectify this historiographical gap by analysing surviving anti-slavery toys, puzzles, games and samplers as well as discussing the presence of 'invisible' abolitionist items bought at bazaars in children's domestic spaces.

As witnessed in our tour of the household in chapter 3, the lack of references to anti-slavery items in diaries, memoirs and letters makes it difficult to visualise an abolitionist domestic

³ Walker and Ware, 'Pincushions', 76.

⁴ Kelley, 'Unhappy Families.'; Goldner, 'Arguing with Pictures.'; Stevenson, 'Virtue Displayed'.

⁵ Norcia, 'Puzzling Empire.'; Ray, 'Beast in a Box.'

⁶ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 222-229.

space filled with politicised children's objects. Of course, this paucity of primary sources is a symptom of the 'ordinary' nature of these children's items; they blended into the domestic space and once purchased were not considered worth mentioning. Household inventories do not specify the motifs and themes of the items in each room in enough detail for us to use them as evidence that children's rooms contained abolitionist objects. References to children's toys in private correspondence do not describe objects in sufficient detail for us to draw conclusions about possible abolitionist connections. Instead, this chapter uses the physical objects themselves, surviving children's items in museum exhibitions and archival collections, to create an idea of what sort of items we might find in children's spaces within the transatlantic household. In 1993, Ann Smart Martin criticised historians for not allowing 'the objects themselves to be a critical part of the story' claiming they 'have failed to take full advantage of theoretical tools to understand the complex texts of symbolism and cultural meaning.'⁷ By placing surviving children's items with anti-slavery images, text, content and themes at the centre of the discussion, this chapter hopes to demonstrate how Smart Martin's comments can inform a narrative that combines politics, children, domestic spaces and material culture.

This chapter will begin with a brief outline of the history of children's domestic spaces, and how these changes provided a platform for anti-slavery children's items. It then moves on to discuss what types of children's objects were sold at anti-slavery bazaars. It considers what this tells us about the thought processes of British and American female abolitionists and the decisions they made regarding their child consumer market. This section also addresses the difficulty faced by scholars trying to trace these bazaar items that contained invisible anti-slavery sentiments and what this means in terms of visualising children's spaces within the home. Here, the caveats that need to be remembered throughout the chapter are outlined: the drawbacks of placing material objects at the forefront, the difficulties of drawing conclusions from them and the dangers of reading too much into ordinary children's items. From here on the chapter comprises two halves. The first half moves away from 'invisible' items and focuses on surviving anti-slavery games, puzzles and card games, beginning with the 'Anti-Slavery Dial.' Next, we look at how the legacies of both slavery and anti-slavery were incorporated into board games that were microcosms of British imperialism wrapped up as educational children's toys. From here, the chapter uses surviving jigsaw puzzles to observe

⁷ Smart Martin, 'Makers': 144.

the life cycle of children's anti-slavery objects and as evidence of the ways slave grown produce was presented to British children through play. Moving on from this we address how abolitionist literary narratives such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were used and reworked by British and American manufacturers to produce puzzles and card games. The second half of the chapter focuses on the anti-slavery embroidered samplers made by girls that decorated British and American households. This section analyses the ten surviving samplers that my research has uncovered, and attempts to decode the meanings behind the motifs and inscriptions these girls chose to embroider upon their work. In doing so, it aims to show how children's anti-slavery objects were produced, bought and used in a variety of formats and how we can interpret their meanings. Acknowledging their presence within transatlantic children's spaces sheds light not only on child abolitionists' role within the campaigns, but on nineteenth-century concepts of childhood and material culture.

Spaces for Child Abolitionists: The Nursery, Playroom and Schoolroom

The nineteenth century witnessed changes in the ways middle-class children were allocated their own space in the domestic interior. A result of the rising 'cult of childhood', children were awarded a new prominence in the family unit, one that demanded a separate space for the cultivation and moral education of the future members of society. In British households, this restructuring of the functions assigned to rooms took hold, and a space for middle-class children became commonplace for the first time. In her study of British middle-class household accounts and inventories, Hamlett reports that between 1850 and 1859, 62 per cent mentioned a nursery.⁸ The word 'nursery' usually referred to a space for infants and young children under the age of five; for older children who had a space in addition to the room where they slept, it was called the schoolroom or playroom. This room combined the new ideological emphasis on the importance of children's education and moral discipline rooted in the rise of evangelicalism in the 1830s and 1840s. Consequently, 'material objects in the nursery could literally be inscribed with evangelical moral messages.'⁹ Similarly, John Brewer notes that toys marketed at American children in the late eighteenth century were 'almost all remorselessly didactic: they taught skills, they moralised, they imparted

⁸ Hamlett, *Material Relations*, 137.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

knowledge.’¹⁰ Whilst in agreement with Linda Pollock’s view that the increasing role of the British state in children’s education from the 1850s onwards resulted in a reduced emphasis on discipline,¹¹ Hamlett argues that ‘the material culture of the nursery continued to be used to teach children lessons about neatness and order.’¹² The surviving toys that combined play with anti-slavery discussed in this section all subscribed to this notion of childhood. Jigsaw puzzles, card and board games all emphasised the importance of rules, categorisation, and putting items into their ‘correct’ place.

Anti-Slavery Bazaars as Abolitionist Toy Shops

Now that children had their own spaces within the household, they needed objects to fill them with. The eighteenth-century witnessed the beginning of the commodification of childhood: a ‘consumer revolution’¹³ that created a new meaning for the word ‘toy’.¹⁴ Plumb states that after 1700, English children ‘became luxury objects upon which their mothers and fathers were willing to spend larger and larger sums of money, and not only for their education, but also for their entertainment and amusement.’¹⁵ This created a rapidly expanding consumer market for children’s toys, and manufacturers met the demand by supplying educational and instructive games. According to Plumb, ‘in 1730 there were no specialised toy-shops of any kind, whereas by 1780 toy-shops everywhere abounded, and by 1820 the trade in toys, as [well as] in children’s literature, had become very big indeed.’¹⁶ Children were transformed into little consumers who demanded their own variety of material objects; toys ‘became a synecdoche for childhood.’¹⁷ The female organisers of anti-slavery bazaars understood the significance of this new children’s market and tapped into changes in consumerism. Keen to

¹⁰ John Brewer, ‘Childhood Revisited: The Genesis of the Modern Toy’ *History Today* 30, 12 (1980): 36.

¹¹ Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 123.

¹² Hamlett, *Material Relations*, 122.

¹³ Neil McKendrick, ‘Introduction’, in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, eds., Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 1.

¹⁴ John Brewer, ‘The Genesis of the Modern Toy’ *History Today* 30, (1980): 33.

¹⁵ J. H. Plumb, ‘The New World of Children in Eighteenth-century England’ *Past & Present*, 67 (1975): 91.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁷ Teresa Michals, ‘Experiments before Breakfast: Education and Middle-Class Childhood’ in Dennis Denisoff, ed., *The Nineteenth-century Child and Consumer Culture* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 32.

exploit parents' purses and influence potential child abolitionists, anti-slavery bazaars dedicated entire tables to children's items. These 'Toy Tables' were afforded their own subsection in the bazaar reports, sometimes appearing before descriptions of the book, clothing and fancywork sections. Bazaars catered for children by filling their toy tables with a plethora of children's clothing, books, toys and games that were made and sent by British and American female abolitionists.

In 1846 the Boston bazaar drew parents in with its effusive description of available children's items: 'From Edinburgh, from Ireland and from Wales, some contributions of toys so attractive, that no description can do justice to them...China and wooden toys, English books, beautiful editions, some being illuminated editions of children's story-books; transparencies, games, puzzles, dissected maps...beautiful miniature models of mahogany furniture, kaleidoscopes.'¹⁸ Such a quantity and variety of items reflects the key role that children were afforded as future abolitionists within the wider anti-slavery movement, and as a consumer market. British and American women spent time making and purchasing items they could send to the bazaars that they thought would appeal to children and their parents. Children were considered to be a profitable audience ripe for 'abolitionising' with material objects.

If we look at the items on these toy tables, we can fill the imagined abolitionist interior with them, creating a distinct material culture of juvenile abolitionists within the homes of British and American families. Toys were traditionally gendered on both sides of the Atlantic: Davidoff and Hall argue that in the early part of the nineteenth century, 'while boys were given hoops, balls and other toys associated with physical activities, girls played with dolls, doll's houses, needle books and miniature workbaskets.'¹⁹ In her study of children's portraits Karen Calvert found that after 1830 American children were more likely to be pictured holding a toy, and between 1830 and 1870, 80 percent of girls were shown with dolls.²⁰ This gendering is reflected in the descriptions of items available for purchase at the 'toy table': 'beautifully painted needle-books, purses, bags, cushions, &c. for girls, and the Chinese kites, (a brilliant display) for boys, with...moveable and jointed horsemen and animals.'²¹ Bazaar

¹⁸ *Liberator*, December 18, 1846.

¹⁹ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes, Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 344.

²⁰ Karin Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900*, (New England: University Press of New England, 1992), 112.

²¹ *Liberator*, December 18, 1846.

organisers were keen to point out that they catered to the different demands of both sexes within society's gender norms.

Dolls were common toy table items and could be found in any household home to a female child in the U.K. and the U.S. during the nineteenth century. At the 1847 Boston Bazaar one could expect to find 'dolls in hundreds, of every size, price, material and costume.'²² Their popularity both as girls' toys and as ones that could be purchased at bazaars inspired the American abolitionist children's poem *The Edinburgh Doll*.²³ In the poem a young Scottish girl dies before sending her prized doll for sale at the Boston bazaar, kitted out in clothes she had made. Her mother fulfils her daughter's wishes and sends the doll, with a note to her new American owner.²⁴ Dolls were thought to evoke maternal instincts and provide a form of practice-through-play for girls' future positions as mothers in society. Calvert notes that while it was commonly thought dolls would bring out girls' 'inherent nature', American parents 'honestly believed that suitably gender-specific toys would give their children the most pleasure.'²⁵

The dolls sent by British women to furnish the nurseries of American girls often wore handmade outfits of national dress. Bazaar reports regularly commented upon the popularity of these patriotically attired dolls: 'Dolls of all kinds, Wax, Wooden and Gutta Percha, some in the exact costumes of Wales, Normandy and Guernsey.'²⁶ In 1845, the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society recorded the despatch of '2 Dolls in Highland Costume' to the Boston Bazaar,²⁷ which they repeated most years, usually prompting a special mention in the fair report.²⁸ Just like the household accessories in Chapter 3 that were decorated with scenes of British villages and landmarks, these dolls were a reminder of the British women and girls who made them. They were a toy that physically embodied the networks at play, miniature abolitionists for the female abolitionist-to-be.

²² *Liberator*, December 17, 1847.

²³ A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*.

²⁴ See Chapter 5 for further analysis of the doll in this poem.

²⁵ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 111.

²⁶ *Liberator*, December 21, 1849.

²⁷ List of articles sent to the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society by the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society. This list was presumably enclosed with Andrew Paton's letter to Maria Weston Chapman, November 15, 1845. BPL.

²⁸ See *Liberator*, January 19, 1849.

By selling and buying items for children at bazaars, female abolitionists were tapping into the rising commercialisation of childhood for political motives. They profited from child consumers' demands for a new doll or jigsaw and parents' desires to indulge their children. British and American female abolitionists cleverly politicised homes from the bottom up by targeting the youngest family members through the purchases made by adults. Households were furnished with books, toys and games that funded a political campaign. Anti-slavery bazaars were held annually, ensuring that each year there were novel new items to lavish on children.

American children might have recalled shopping at an anti-slavery bazaar and taking home their new toys, or that their Christmas present one year was bought at a fair their relatives attended. However, these memories are lost to scholars, they were not usually recorded by children; their primary concern was the toy itself, not where it came from. The abolitionist sentiments were invisible to the children who played with them, and they remain invisible to scholars looking at the material items in children's spaces within the home.

The children's items made and bought by British abolitionists to send to American bazaars were from Britain, so it stands to reason similar items would have also been present in the homes of British abolitionists. They, like the other household objects discussed in Chapter 3, can be used to imagine a transatlantic household, not just a British or American one. Any surviving toys currently held in American museum collections with marks of British manufacture or resembling ones that were typically British could have been bought at anti-slavery bazaars. However, it is true that this may only be the case for a very small number of surviving toys and it is impossible to ascertain how many or which ones. We must also remember that although these toys existed, we do not know if they were popular or that children played with them. We do not know if these items have not survived because they were played with and fell apart from overuse, or, if they were neglected on shelves, never played with, and eventually discarded. Regardless, they are still more than just 'toys'. Although it is impossible to know the extent of anti-slavery's presence in children's spaces, the variety and quantity of children's bazaar items requires scholarly acknowledgement. This chapter recognises the spaces occupied by children as important parts of the imagined abolitionist household. It agrees with Miriam Formanek-Brunell's claim in her work on American dolls, that 'objects of ordinary life can be seen as "texts" that shed light upon the

intentions of producers.’²⁹ Scholars need to acknowledge and understand the layers of invisible meanings assigned to children’s toys when drawing conclusions about who bought and played with them and their role within the rooms and homes they occupied. Envisioning an imagined children’s domestic interior where political meanings were assigned to non-political children’s toys is, I suggest, a framework that is useful for those analysing histories of childhood, children’s spaces and children’s material culture.

Games, Puzzles and Cards: Surviving Anti-Slavery Toys

Scholars have not addressed the way anti-slavery was presented to children in toys commonly found in middle-class British households. This chapter aims to rectify this by analysing surviving children’s puzzles and games that do have discernible anti-slavery content or themes. Such items may or may not have come from bazaars, but they were definitely present in nineteenth-century British and American households. These items occupied children’s spaces, such as the nursery, the schoolroom, playroom, or the child’s bedroom. As with the parlour and drawing room, not all middle-class households had several rooms designated for children and the names of these rooms varied. Like the household objects discussed in Chapter 3, toys were not bound to these spaces: they moved between rooms. Games and toys accompanied children into the parlour or drawing room: dolls were carried and held, books read aloud and stored on bookshelves alongside those for adults. Puzzles and board games descended into the parlour or drawing room, spread out across floors and tables. Samplers might have been hung on walls in other rooms besides those designated to children. As part of their educator role, women instructed and supervised their children’s play; toys often combined learning about geography and history with play. Female abolitionists could make household items for bazaars, write letters or read political tracts while overseeing their children playing. This is also true for games and puzzles that did not have anti-slavery sentiments, but for those that did, it created a child-friendly medium for learning about anti-slavery and children’s role within that sphere.

²⁹ Miriam Formanek-Brunell, *Made to Play: Dolls and Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

The Anti-Slavery Dial

Uncovered from the Wilson Anti-Slavery manuscript collections in Manchester's John Rylands University Library is an unusual item designed to educate and occupy British child abolitionists: 'The Anti-Slavery Dial'.³⁰ [Fig. 4.1.] The Dial's creator remains anonymous; the online catalogue record suggests it is from 1845.³¹ A note towards the bottom of the item relates that 'the profits will be given to the Anti-Slavery Society', but while it was sold and bought by abolitionists we cannot know on what scale or how popular it was amongst its child audience. Printed on one sheet of paper, a copper-plate engraving of a sundial visually conveys the notion that the 'sun never sets' on the British Empire: 'there are Negro Slaves at work in the British Colonies during nearly the whole of every 24 hours.'³² The dial resembles a medallion or penny token, the circular diagram bordered by the biblical words 'Remember Them That Are In Bonds. Heb. 13:3' that was often printed on variations of Wedgwood's medallion. Marcus Wood includes the Dial in his anthology *The Poetry of Slavery* and notes that it 'uses a combination of poetic explanation and board game, to allow white children to project themselves onto the world of the slave on the other side of the world, at any time of the day or night.'³³ However, Wood offers no further comments or analysis and I am not aware of those from other scholars. Although it does not appear to be a 'game' or 'toy' in the modern sense, it was a clever way to educate children about slavery by combining poetry and an educational activity.

The Dial was designed to convey the extent of British slavery through a child-friendly clock format. The creator(s) state that it was:

intended to shew the relative time of day at London, and in those parts of the World where Slavery exists. From an inspection of the Dial it may be at once ascertained in what circumstances of Labor or Rest the Negro Slaves are placed at any period of British Time.³⁴

³⁰ Anon., 'The Anti-Slavery Dial' (copper-plate engraving, n.d. c.1845) JRL.

³¹ The Dial includes Jamaica and other West Indian possessions yet legislation emancipating British slaves in the West Indies was passed in 1833, coming into effect in 1834, and apprenticeship ended in 1838.

³² Anon., 'Dial'.

³³ Wood, *Poetry of Slavery*, 374.

³⁴ Anon., 'Dial'.

The central sundial is raised up from the rest of the paper, the child turns the dial so the current time aligns with the London inscription. From left to right the Dial encompasses the following places governed by slavery: Georgia (U.S.), then Jamaica, Caribbee [sic] Is[lands], Demerara, Rio Janeira [sic], St. Salvador, then LONDON, followed on the other side of the dial by C[ape] of Good Hope, Bourbon and Mauritius. These places allow a comparison of the child's daily routine with that of the slaves who make up the dial:

The labor of the Slaves ceases about 9 o'clock in the evening and soon after those in Jamaica have retired to rest, the lash of the driver's whip is sounding in the Mauritius to rouse the unhappy Negroes from their slumbers, to another day of hardship, toil and SLAVERY.³⁵

The reality of this never-ending slavery routine provides an uncomfortable contrast between children's and slave's lives: 'when we are enjoying the domestic comforts of an evening fireside, they are toiling in the field or the plantation under the oppressive heat of a tropical sun.'³⁶ In the American abolitionist poem *The Edinburgh Doll*, Scottish female child protagonist Mary wants to know whether slaves are in the same time zone as her before she dies: 'what's the time/ In states where slaves in bondage are?/ Do tell me, if you can mamma- / Tell me if it is nighttime [sic] there.' Her mother's confirmation that it was, allows Mary to die in peace in the knowledge that her life paralleled those she hoped to help: "'I'm glad it's night with them,'" she said; / "No toil, no sorrow there, just now."³⁷ Although the Dial did not expect children to actually live their lives by the slave's daily routine, the *Edinburgh Doll* does provide a poetic example of a child comparing her own sleep schedule to that of slave children.

Once the child has learnt how to 'tell the time of slavery', the poetic lines underneath the Dial inform children what they can do with their newly-acquired knowledge:

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*, 13.

Then may this Dial serve such end
To give fresh thought to those
In whom, tho' chance the Negro's friend,
Such thinking never rose.
And while our fervent thanks we raise,
For sweet repose, our lot,
Let those who live to curse their days
Be not at least forgot.
One prayer for such might blessings bear,
If acts accorded with the prayer.³⁸

Children were told to feel grateful for the life their free status has granted them and to remember those who are not so fortunate. The rest of the poem warns children not to waste their freedom while others are in chains longing for it:

To him who wastes his hours, when all
That words can do, is done-
Yet heedless lets his talents fall
His moments idly run:
To mark the Dial's shadow glide
Around the silent plate,
Or hear a clock when none beside
May warn him of his fate
To him such voice, so small so still
May do what others never will.³⁹

The never-ceasing drudgery of slave labour is compared to the hours 'idly' wasted by the child audience; the British child spends time 'playing' with the dial whereas the slave has to obey its 'shadow glide.' This 'game' is an educational shock tactic to convey the scale of slavery in a visual format accessible to children. The Dial represents a clock 'silently' ticking away the hours until the next slave child is forced to wake up. Learning to tell the time on a clock was an important childhood lesson, the Dial taps into this by creating a slavery version

³⁸ Anon., 'Dial'.

³⁹ Ibid.

that can be turned by child hands. We can only speculate about where the Dial would have fitted within the domestic interior. It may have been kept with other children's anti-slavery pamphlets and literature, or pinned up on a wall as a reminder not to waste the time they had. We do not know how extensively the Dial was produced but its existence underlines the efforts British abolitionists were making to involve children. By making their daily routine part of the bigger picture they hoped to impress upon them their role in the anti-slavery debate.

'A Tour Through the Empire': Slavery in British Imperial Board Games

In her work on British dissected map puzzles, Norcia notes that from the late eighteenth century 'the imagined community of empire was consolidated in part through the play and performance of children's games.'⁴⁰ Unlike the 'invisible' anti-slavery toys and games, the board game discussed in this section brings slavery, imperial and transatlantic networks explicitly into the abolitionist household. Its presence alone critiques Porter's argument that the British Empire did not have deep roots in British culture;⁴¹ these toys existed and used the presence of the Empire as a tool to educate and entertain British children. They taught children about Empire, slavery and their role within these networks as British citizens. Consequently, they undermine the claim that a majority of the British public were 'ignorant' of the Empire's presence until 1880.⁴² Unfortunately, we do not know how many of these board games and jigsaws were sold, whether they were re-printed to meet demand, or any other details regarding the people who purchased them: where they lived or what their political opinions were. Likewise, we cannot know how popular these games were amongst their intended child audience, or how much children were influenced by their political themes and imagery. Although the well-worn condition of the surviving examples used in this chapter is suggestive of their use in the household, this cannot be extrapolated to all that were sold. Some might have been unwanted presents, some might have been played with once but considered insufficiently amusing or too complicated to warrant further use, others might have remained unopened. In these situations, the imperial and political sentiments are unable

⁴⁰ Norcia, 'Puzzling Empire': 16.

⁴¹ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society and Culture in Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 24.

⁴² Porter, 'Further Thoughts':102.

to permeate the household or influence their child owners as was originally intended. Despite this, on some level a proportion of middle-class British families were buying games with strong imperial themes for their children in the 1850s.

According to Andrew O'Malley, from the late eighteenth century items for British children 'reflecting the trend in instructional play proliferated.'⁴³ In 1856, the female organisers of the Boston bazaar informed parents 'there are a vast variety of Games, literary, architectural, rural, and warlike'⁴⁴ that could be purchased for their children. By the mid-nineteenth century, geography, history and morality were common themes for board games that combined learning and play. Didactic games were also an entertaining way for children to spend rainy days indoors; they required several players and plenty of time. The colourful images on the board were visually stimulating as well as tactile: children physically moved counters to play the game. Whilst I have not found any surviving British board games that were solely dedicated to slavery or anti-slavery, the theme did find its way into at least one that engaged with Britain's imperial Empire. Like the 'Dial', this game was not gendered: both sexes could be entertained and educated about slavery and the Empire.

In the early 1850s, London seller of children's dissected maps, puzzles and games John Betts published his board game 'A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions. Forming a most amusing and instructive ROUND game'. It was priced at 6s, placing it firmly in the middle-class toy market. Hand-coloured and mounted on cloth, the game is a whirlwind tour around 36 places in the British Empire finishing in the Empire's metropolis: London. Players had a choice of two routes, the overland route to India calling at Malta, Alexandria and Bombay, or over sea by way of Ascension, St. Helena, and the Cape. Children became imperial travellers navigating their way through their country's 'possessions' and then raced each other back to London to win the game.

The accompanying booklet contains lengthy descriptions of each place on the map that one child read aloud to the other players upon reaching each destination, providing sufficient entertainment for an entire afternoon. Narrated in a parental tone, the booklet praised successful colonies, reserving moral judgement and disappointment for others. These

⁴³ Andrew O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child: Children's Literature and Childhood in the Late Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), 110.

⁴⁴ *Liberator*, December 19, 1856.

descriptions contained detailed information about the size, climate, population, raw materials, primary exports and histories of each location. 'A Tour' is a physical example of British children's first in-depth acquaintance with the Empire and their role within it. The game represents an imperial expedition or 'tour': the board is the map and the booklet is the tour guide or information booklet to read along the way. Ray's analysis of 1822 board game 'The Noble Game of Elephant and Castle' relates to 'A Tour' in that it 'functions as a map of useful instruction transmitting geographical, cultural and moral ideas, shaping...a larger sense of responsibilities and duties within the world occupied by Britons.' She claims such games simplified 'complex bodies of information...to render British history more comprehensible'⁴⁵ to children. As a competitive game with colourful images, 'A Tour' was a child-friendly imperial history lesson.

O'Malley states that, 'knowledge of geography, and specifically of the raw materials, resources, and agricultural conditions of a given country, was of incredible importance at a time of colonial expansion and broadening international commerce.'⁴⁶ 'A Tour' was published firmly in this context and equipped children with the knowledge to take part. In doing so Norcia argues such toys 'could be used to teach imperial skills such as discovery, collection, administration, organisation and discipline' preparing British children for future careers as 'civil servants, military officers, missionaries, merchants and travellers.'⁴⁷ Dolls were regarded as material preparation for motherhood, and learning how to make items for bazaars prepared girls for a role within the female sphere of abolition and philanthropy. Turning the 'Anti-Slavery Dial' or playing 'A Tour' was a form of practice for the real world, as abolitionists or imperial travellers. Ray argues that 'The Noble Game' used two forms of journeying. These can also be seen in 'A Tour'; by 'visiting' the different places on the board and moving their counters children moved through 'physical and imagined' imperial spaces. They also travelled through 'impressions and ideas'⁴⁸ gaining knowledge about the places they visited that could later be shared with others, mirroring the experiences of adult travellers regaling friends with their adventures. 'A Tour' was made for the middle-classes; the children who played it were members of a class whose members actually visited parts of

⁴⁵ Ray, 'Beast Box': 25-6.

⁴⁶ O'Malley, *Modern Child*, 110.

⁴⁷ Norcia, 'Puzzling Empire': 3

⁴⁸ Ray, 'Beast Box': 24.

the Empire on the board; it was not unfeasible that they would see some of the places on the board in their lifetime.

One surviving copy of 'A Tour' is currently stored in the V&A Museum's collections,⁴⁹ [Fig. 4.2] but the life cycle of this particular game is not over. Building on this chapter's observations about where such games might be found within the abolitionist household, this board game has had an unusual second life cycle through modern British homes. In 1994 it was reprinted by The Historical Games Company in connection with Bethnal Green's Museum of Childhood and sold alongside several other nineteenth-century board games. The reprinted version resembles the original down to the fold lines where the paper creased from being taken in and out of its box. Whilst the game does not have the same influence as it did upon nineteenth-century children, it continues to educate players about the Empire and slavery, and serves as a material object brought back into British households. The only alteration was to advise the twentieth-century audience that

These rules are copied directly from the originals and reflect the moral and social outlook of early 19th century imperialist peoples. The facts and attitudes are often wrong, intolerant and patronising and should be read from a historical perspective.⁵⁰

So far, no other scholars have analysed this board game, and certainly not with regard to its mention of anti-slavery (also absent from the V&A's online catalogue record). Ray has effectively dissected the imperialist meanings behind 'The Noble Game' which was also reprinted by The Historical Games Company. Ray's discussion is restricted to India, nevertheless, her work underscores the way board games used the rhetoric of Empire to sell their product and educate children in British households.

'A Tour' comprises four concentric circles containing 37 numbered coloured pictures each referring to a specific place in the Empire. [Fig. 4.3.] The circular design is similar to the Dial in that both revolve around London. In doing so, the board's design physically places the British children playing the game at the centre of a vast and powerful Empire presiding over

⁴⁹ 'A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions.' Hand coloured lithographic game c.1850-1853. V&A Museum, E.2650:1 to 3-1953.

⁵⁰ 'A Guide to the Historical Games Collection' booklet accompanying reprinted version of Ibid., 1994, 1.

her possessions. At the top of the game the title is accompanied by images of various ships: necessary transport for the imperial traveller. Underneath the title, a gilded British ship decorated in colourful flags rests on a stretch of land guarded by cannons. Titan is flanked by a male sailor and Britannia staking British flags in the ground, a British lion, the symbol of Empire itself sits beside Britannia. [Fig. 4.4.] Idyllic scenes of natives in their homelands border the bottom of the game, with an emphasis on the different animals children might encounter. Trinidad is illustrated with happy black people talking to each other while they pick cocoa beans; Sierra Leone's image shows jubilant black people leaping ashore from a boat, a white man waving his hat in the air. [Fig. 4.5.] In contrast, the inhabitants of Barbadoes [sic] are absent from the illustration, which depicts the violent storm of 1780. Despite the pictures of aborigines and native American-Indians on the board itself, the indigenous populations of Australia, New Zealand and Canada are not mentioned in the booklet. The booklet's entry for Hudson's Bay briefly notes its disapproval that the Hudson's Bay Company traded animal skins with 'several tribes of Indians' for 'blankets and other less unobjectionable commodities...gunpowder, spirits, &c'⁵¹ but does not elaborate on this moralistic statement. 'A Tour' starts its journey with a visit to Heligoland, two small islands off the coast of Denmark, conveying the extent of British rule. The information booklet admits that 'some of our young travellers may think [the journey] almost needless...but as [they] might not have known that Great Britain can boast these possessions, the voyage may not have entirely been in vain.'⁵² Throughout the game the booklet portrays an image of benevolent imperialism. Children were told Aden 'was formerly an insignificant place, but since falling into the hands of the British, its commerce and population have greatly increased.'⁵³ Upon arriving at Sierra Leone, children learn of Britain's 'philanthropic object of promoting African civilisation', although the climate has 'somewhat frustrated the benevolent design...the colony is now increasing both in prosperity and population.'⁵⁴

The booklet's didactic tone is extended beyond instructing children to the places on the board. Those that were considered to be imperial assets were praised; at Calcutta children were told to 'spin again on arriving at this celebrated city.'⁵⁵ Alternatively, forfeits were handed out upon arriving at the less attractive corners of the Empire. At Norfolk Island, a

⁵¹ 'A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions.' Rules and Directions Booklet, 16.

⁵² Ibid., 3.

⁵³ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

penal settlement for ‘only the worst class of convicts’ children were instructed to ‘Stop two turns and lament the degraded conditions to which sin has reduced some of our fellow men.’⁵⁶ ‘A Tour’ was not merely an ‘amusing’ way to learn about geography and history, it was a lesson in morality. Such lessons were extended to the tools required to play the game: dice were associated with the moral vice of gambling and were considered unsuitable for children, teetotums made of bone or ivory were supplied instead. Female abolitionists across the Atlantic used similar arguments regarding the raffles that were held at some anti-slavery bazaars. In a letter to Anne Weston in 1850, Cincinnati abolitionist Sarah Otis Ernst considered raffles a sin because they had an ‘unhealthy influence on others’, imploring Weston ‘Do discard *Raffling* from your Bazaar. It is Gambling.’⁵⁷

Four of the destinations specifically refer to the legacy of slavery. Upon arriving at the Falkland Islands the booklet advised ‘As there is little here of interest to detain the traveller, he is at liberty to proceed to No. 25, [Guiana] and witness the cultivation of cotton by free blacks.’⁵⁸ The booklet further describes Guiana’s economic value to the British household: ‘from British Guiana we obtain a considerable supply of cotton, besides coffee, sugar and other articles common to the West Indies.’⁵⁹ In the British children’s story *The Moss House* (1822), Agnes Strickland’s child character enjoyed learning about the world through play: ‘When Llewellyn was younger, his chief amusement, in the long winter evenings, was to climb on Marianne’s knee and put dissected maps [puzzles] together, while she told him what were the productions of the different countries.’⁶⁰ Such information was considered to be interesting to the child audience, making the game ‘amusing and instructive.’ ‘A Tour’ educated British children about the origins of the material items in their homes: who produced the clothes they wore and the food items in their cupboards. This is a post-emancipation version of ‘The Progress of Coffee Neatly Dissected’ jigsaw puzzle that will be discussed later on in this chapter. It also echoes the way free-produce sugar bowls informed household members of the East-Indian origins of their sugar, discussed in chapter 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁷ Sarah Otis Ernst to AWW, July 28, 1850, BPL. Original emphasis.

⁵⁸ ‘A Tour’ Rules and Directions Booklet, 14.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Agnes Strickland, *The Moss House: In Which Many of the Works of Nature are Rendered a Source of Amusement to Children*, (London: W. Darton, 1822), 28.

From Guiana the child travels to Jamaica, where the booklet provides a highly censored history, apportioning blame to the Spanish: ‘the Spaniards formed a settlement here in 1509, and treated the natives with great cruelty.’⁶¹ Glossing over Britain’s extensive role as fellow perpetrators of ‘great cruelty’, the booklet briefly acknowledges Britain’s involvement and then skips to the 1834 Emancipation Act: ‘It was taken by the English in 1656, and was cultivated by the aid of negro slaves until the year 1834, when slavery was happily abolished throughout the British dominions.’ Here ‘A Tour’ uses abolition to congratulate the Empire, and gives the child player another attempt to win the game: ‘Spin again to commemorate the abolition of negro slavery throughout the British dominion.’⁶² This smug imperialism is repeated upon arriving at Canada: players are permitted to ‘rejoice in this land furnishing a place of refuge to many negro slaves, who have the happiness to escape from cruel bondage in the United States’ and are given an extra spin of the teetotum. The illustration shows a white man greeting a jubilant slave family on the shore, the British flag erected next to a nearby building. [Fig. 4.5.] Interestingly, ‘A Tour’ does not mention the transatlantic networks that were striving to help the American anti-slavery campaign in the 1850s; it uses American slavery as further proof of Britain’s moral superiority.

In her children’s book *The Juvenile Rambler* (1827) Lucy Wilson takes the British child reader on a tour of the world. Unfortunately, she does not engage with anti-slavery; the West Indies are absent from her literary travel itinerary. Slaves are included as romanticised stereotypes, handsomely dressed, happily fanning their masters or providing musical entertainment and food. The preface summarises what is in store for the child reader, but it can also be applied to what ‘A Tour’ offered children playing the game in the 1850s:

Now for adventures! We’re going to travel all over the world, and make ourselves acquainted with the habits and manners of people of various countries. We shall find much to admire, and much to amuse: but I believe we shall like our own native country-our own happy England-better than any of them, and come back rejoicing in the thought that this sea-girt isle is our *home!*⁶³

⁶¹ ‘A Tour’ Rules and Directions Booklet, 14-15.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶³ The front cover bears the following poetic line from Montgomery: ‘Where’er we roam, Our first, best country, ever is at home.’ Lucy [Sarah Atkins] Wilson, *The Juvenile Rambler; or Sketches and Anecdotes of the People of Various Countries with views of the principal cities of the world, and other engravings*. (London: John Harris, 1827), 1. Original emphasis.

Both ‘The Anti-Slavery Dial’ and ‘A Tour’ confirm Wilson’s belief: learning about the rest of the Empire placed Britain on a pedestal by comparison and instilled a sense of national pride. The Dial was designed to make children feel grateful that their daily routine was not governed by slavery, the board game, grateful that their home was its epicentre.

In her discussion of ‘A Noble Game’, Ray argues British children’s board games ‘laid the foundation of imperial ideologies...cementing cultural stereotypes that catered to notions of the heroic, triumphant imperialist figure.’⁶⁴ In ‘A Tour’, British children were encouraged to celebrate imperialism and take pride in their place within the hierarchies of Empire: after visiting everywhere else, whoever reaches London first wins the game. Children are left with a sense of ownership, they own the board game, Britain ‘owns’ all the ‘possessions’ on it.

Anti-Slavery Dissected: Jigsaw Puzzles

Numerous ‘games, puzzles, [and] dissected maps’ were sold at anti-slavery bazaars in an effort to draw in child customers. Jigsaw puzzles were already popular children’s toys; by selling them, abolitionists used the expanding games market for their own aims. Toy manufacturers also tapped into the rising commercialisation of the anti-slavery campaign and popularity of abolitionist juvenile literature, producing jigsaw puzzles that would appeal to the children of British abolitionists. This section will address these surviving puzzles.

Scholarly work on puzzles initially concentrated on cataloguing surviving items without much analysis beyond speculating as to the publisher and date.⁶⁵ More recently, scholars have directed their attention to puzzles that were part of a theme. Norcia’s work joins that of other scholars who have focused on British dissected map puzzles and their role in educating children about geographical and imperial boundaries. The jigsaws discussed in this section educated children about a different set of boundaries: the ones outside their homes and of slavery.

In *The English Jigsaw Puzzle*, Linda Hannas has catalogued roughly 560 surviving jigsaw puzzles between 1760 and 1890, which her research suggests ‘form only the tip of a very

⁶⁴ Ray, ‘Beast Box’: 9.

⁶⁵ Hannas, *English Jigsaw* and *The Jigsaw Book*; Shefrin, *Neatly Dissected*.

large iceberg'. Through her study of surviving British puzzles and advertisement lists, Hannas estimates that between 1820 and 1855, approximately fifty new puzzles were published each year. Of the 334 puzzles mentioned in advertising lists, only fifty remain in archival or personal collections; 15 per cent have survived and 85 per cent have disappeared.⁶⁶ The seven surviving puzzles that have images or text relating to slavery discussed in this chapter are therefore only a tiny fraction of those that might have been found in British and American homes. As Hannas' figures show, jigsaw puzzles were popular with children and thus formed a large part of the burgeoning children's toy market.

Norcia states 'the activity of puzzling' grew out of the eighteenth-century desire to 'tabulate, catalogue, classify and order the world into meaningful hierarchies.'⁶⁷ Influenced by Lockean theories of instructive play, children's puzzles were 'educational material which could promote identification with nation and empire.'⁶⁸ Puzzles were produced in a wide variety of themes ranging from nursery rhymes, pastoral life, natural and national history, fairy tales, bible stories, geography, and literature. It is not surprising then, that manufacturers also produced puzzles that tapped into contemporary political trends and abolitionist children's literature.

Writing to an unnamed friend in 1807, Anglo-Irish educationalist, inventor and father to twenty-two children Richard Lovell Edgeworth considered

no toy is more permanently in requisition than dissected maps and pictures: they are favourites because they require ingenuity and address in putting them together and because they fill up a considerable portion of time!⁶⁹

The popularity of jigsaw puzzles explains the lack of surviving items and the poor condition of those that have. Norcia describes how the ones she examined in archival collections all 'had grubby edges and often filthy surfaces, indicating continual use and manipulation by successive generations of childish hands' and sees this as proof of their original purpose in that 'they were never intended for the rarified atmosphere of the special collections

⁶⁶ Hannas, *English Jigsaw*, 78.

⁶⁷ Norcia: 'Puzzling Empire': 2.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁹ R. L. Edgeworth, December 6, 1807. Quoted in Hannas, *English Jigsaw*, 63. Unpublished letter formerly the property of Hannas, now in the Cotsen Children's Library, Los Angeles.

department, but for grasping child fingers.’⁷⁰ The condition of the jigsaws discussed in this section bears testament to their use: pieces are missing, broken and well-worn.

Currently on display at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery is a jigsaw puzzle that combines racial hierarchies, abolitionist ideology and slave grown produce.⁷¹ Made by the prolific London publishers of puzzles and games E. Wallis, ‘The Progress of Coffee Neatly Dissected’ (c.1815) consists of fifteen wooden pieces stored in a wooden box, alongside a paper key and a sheet of captions for each scene. [Fig. 4.6.] The Wallis’s also made several similar titled jigsaws around this time such as ‘The Process of Making China’ (1810), and then other ‘The Progress of...’ puzzles including Dairy, Wool, Cheese and Wheat. In this light, the ‘Progress of Coffee’ appears to be merely another jigsaw in their theme of industrial processes. Whilst the ‘Progress of Coffee’ does begin with scenes that show black slaves toiling to grow, harvest and process coffee, it quickly takes the slave out of the plantation and into the home of the child piecing it together. One scene shows a black slave dressed in servant’s livery brewing coffee on a kitchen stove, and then serving it to the white, presumably British, family in the following scene. These two scenes are evocative of the late eighteenth-century china decorated with images of black servants and white genteel families drinking tea or coffee.⁷² However, while such tea sets made for the adult market were not abolitionist, the jigsaw uses these scenes to educate children about the origins of their family’s coffee within an anti-slavery rhetoric. The paper captions sheet provides a narrative to the colourful images, intended to be read aloud by the child or parent whilst completing the puzzle. One scene depicting white people drinking coffee at a table is assigned the following abolitionist caption:

How comfortably these good people are seated round the blazing hearth, and how little, probably, are they thinking of the misery of those poor negroes, who, stolen from their native land, and separated from their children, and all they loved, are driven by blows, and too often by greater cruelties to their daily task, without hope of deliverance, till death.⁷³

⁷⁰ Norcia, ‘Puzzling Empire’: 12.

⁷¹ ‘The Progress of Coffee Neatly Dissected’ jigsaw puzzle, c.1815. Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, (NCM) NWHCM: 1956.133.8.

⁷² Creamware coffee pot and coffee cups, c.1760-5, Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, 1980.24.2 and 59.119.107.

⁷³ Caption sheet for ‘The Progress of Coffee’ Jigsaw puzzle, scene 14. NCM.

This is realised in the following and final scene, where a ragged slave begs in the street with the caption ‘Pray remember the poor despised and oppressed Negro Slaves.’ These captions and puzzle pieces replicate the abolitionist arguments used during the British boycotts of slave-grown produce. Those at the coffee table are responsible for the slave’s situation in the final scene and have the power to make a difference by not consuming slave-grown coffee and sugar.

Norcia argues ‘material culture artefacts such as puzzles have a place...as tools for consolidating national identity’,⁷⁴ which can be applied to the coffee jigsaw. By piecing together the relationship between coffee, slaves and the white household, British children formed an abolitionist identity, as did the adults who purchased the puzzle. However, as previously discussed, we do not know how many copies of the jigsaw were produced, purchased or played with. Although the relationship between coffee consumption and slavery was incorporated into the puzzle, the families who owned them were not necessarily aware of it themselves. The jigsaw might have confirmed the abolitionist views of some families, and encouraged others to forego slave-grown produce, but the children who played with this jigsaw were not necessarily from free-produce households. In this sense the jigsaw is a child’s version of the free-produce sugar bowls we discussed in chapter 3. As discussed, the intended purpose did not always correspond with actual use in British and American households: the sugar bowls decorated with ‘East Indian sugar not made by slaves’ owned by abolitionists were sometimes filled with the cheaper slave-grown West-Indian sugar for financial reasons.

Aside from the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* jigsaws that will be discussed shortly, there is only one other jigsaw known to have slavery themes. This surviving jigsaw is currently in Hannas’ personal collection. Made in 1850 and titled ‘The Sugar Plantation’, it was the work of London publisher William Spooner, known for his ‘high quality lithographs in the field of educational entertainment.’⁷⁵ As seen in Fig. 4.7., the jigsaw is of a West Indian sugar plantation; the image bears a striking resemblance to that of Jamaica on the ‘A Tour’ game. The pieces feature male and female black workers cutting, binding and carting the sugar canes while two white overseers observe them, one pointing a stick. In between hills lie the sugar refinery and the mill, and a ship is visible in the distance, presumably to collect the

⁷⁴ Norcia, ‘Puzzling Empire’: 21.

⁷⁵ Hannas, *English Jigsaw*, 152.

sugar. Hannas notes that the jigsaw's box is decorated with another scene called 'Exporting the Sugar' where 'a hogshead of sugar [is] loaded into a rowing boat to take it to a sailing ship anchored further out.'⁷⁶ Hannas' collection holds another Spooner jigsaw 'The Tea Plantation' (1845) showing the efforts of Chinese workers that appears to be a precursor to the later Sugar version.⁷⁷ Unlike 'The Progress of Coffee', 'The Sugar Plantation' contains no additional text and doesn't appear to have much, if any, political intent. The child is not encouraged to question what they are piecing together or to relate the image to the sugar in their homes. The images resemble those of the Caribbean destinations on the 'A Tour' game, depicting industrious and content black workers. It is more of a picturesque glimpse of sugar production in the West Indies than a commentary upon the lives of the black workers or the overseers.

These children's items all work within the household to highlight the complicity of British households in the various stages of slavery. They represent 'a means of transmitting social, political, geographical and imperial mores'⁷⁸ to British children. The Dial shows the hours occupied by slave labour, the board game shows the former sites of slavery under British rule. It pinpoints where the coffee, sugar and cocoa consumed by British families are grown by black workers. The Coffee jigsaw connects the coffee consumed in British homes with slave labour and black domestic servants.

The merging of recreational play and geographical knowledge is a key theme in 'The Anti-Slavery Dial', 'A Tour Through the British Colonies and Foreign Possessions', 'The Progress of Coffee Dissected' and 'The Sugar Plantation'. They relied on children gaining knowledge about the world, slavery and imperial networks through the information provided in the game. These items then required children to demonstrate that knowledge by putting it into practice, either by winning the game, completing the puzzle, or by being spurred into abolitionist activity and inquiry.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 109.

⁷⁷ Ibid. Hannas states York Castle Museum also have a copy of this puzzle, but there is currently no such item in their collections.

⁷⁸ Norcia, 'Puzzling Empire': 2.

Piecing together *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Jigsaws

Images of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* could be found on a variety of decorative and functional items, both handmade and manufactured. Children were not exempt from the spread of Uncle Tom mania; they were the ideal market for such items. Their youth permitted manufacturers to physically connect the children in Stowe's narrative with child consumers. This section will look at surviving jigsaws and card games that tapped in to the popularity of Stowe's novel and the booming children's toy market. Louise Stevenson notes that as 'commercial products, the Tom game tie-ins belonged to a world in which domestic life was intended to offer opportunities for didactic play.'⁷⁹

Although *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was an American novel, British manufacturers were keen to use its popularity to their advantage and fill British households with related merchandise. In his catalogue of children's puzzles, games, atlases and maps, John Betts advertised an *Uncle Tom's Cabin* jigsaw alongside his 'A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions' board game. Priced at 3s 6d was 'A sheet of TWENTY-TWO coloured illustrations, dissected as a Puzzle, and accompanied by a Book of Extracts from the Original Work, adapted to the use of Children.'⁸⁰ Bristol City Council Museum currently possesses a 31-piece jigsaw puzzle fitting this description, as seen in Fig. 4.8.⁸¹ It is unclear whether this puzzle is the one Betts sold in his London premises; if not, it was certainly the work of another British toy manufacturer. Three other *Uncle Tom's Cabin* jigsaws have survived, held at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center Collection (HBSCC) in the University of Virginia Library: one made up of 52 pieces and the others 39 and 34.⁸² Upon inspection, these jigsaws appear to be variations of the Bristol version, they are all printed with similar scenes in the same format. The two larger jigsaws have additional scenes because they comprise more pieces; such variations of the same jigsaw were common. By releasing the same item in a variety of sizes and prices manufacturers expanded their consumer market to a wider age bracket, the more difficult versions appealing to older children.

⁷⁹ Stevenson, 'Virtue Displayed' *Multimedia Archive*.

⁸⁰ Reproduction of Bett's 'Maps, Atlases, Dissected Maps, Amusing, Instructive, And Educational Games, Etc., Etc.' catalogue, reprinted in 'A Tour' Rules and Directions booklet, 19.

⁸¹ *Uncle Tom's Cabin* jigsaw puzzle, 31 pieces, 11 scenes. c.1852. Bristol Museum. T7433.

⁸² *Uncle Tom's Cabin* jigsaw puzzles: 39 pieces, PS2954.U6 U46 1852; 34 pieces, 11 scenes, PS2954.U6 U45 1852; 52 pieces, 18 scenes, Catalogue No. 75.5. University of Virginia Library, Clifton Waller Barrett Library, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center Collection. (hereafter HBSCC)

In his online database of ‘Tomitudes’, Steven Railton notes he doesn’t know the origins of the puzzles in the Virginia collection but they ‘were almost certainly made by the same manufacturer...The odds are good that both were made in England in the early 1850’s’⁸³ which corresponds with my own research. The 52-piece jigsaw was donated to the University of Virginia Library in 1966 by Miss Alice Barlow who said the jigsaw was ‘from her father’s family in Brooklyn, New York.’⁸⁴ If we take it that Barlow’s family were the original owners, and that it was produced by the same manufacturer as the Bristol jigsaw, this is suggestive of the presence of a transatlantic network of anti-slavery children’s toys. Presumably the Virginia jigsaws were purchased by Americans either by mail order or during a visit to from Britain. Alternatively, they could have been received as a gift from British friends, or sent by British women to America and purchased at a toy table at an anti-slavery bazaar. We know British women purchased board games and puzzles for this purpose so it is certainly a possibility. As with the coffee jigsaw, the families who owned the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* puzzles were not necessarily abolitionists, they might not have owned a copy of Stowe’s novel, or even read it. We need to remember that unfortunately we cannot know the political beliefs of British or American puzzle owners, or what they thought about slavery in relation to these children’s toys.

Like the Coffee puzzle, both the Bristol and the 34-piece Virginia jigsaws have a ‘key’ to help children complete it: a coloured paper image of what the end product should look like. The other two jigsaws might have originally had keys too. We do not know how many of these jigsaws were manufactured, how widely they were disseminated or how popular they were; we do know these surviving puzzles were played with at some point by the children who owned them. The catalogue record for the 39-piece notes ‘the corner of one piece is broken and missing; another edge piece is broken’, and of the 35-piece: ‘2 puzzle pieces are missing, some tabs are broken.’ Similarly, one piece is missing from the Bristol puzzle and another has a broken tab. These missing and broken pieces serve as a reminder that the paucity of surviving objects with discernible anti-slavery sentiments results from actual use by children in their homes. Jigsaws were made to be used by their owners, pieces were physically held and jumbled around in the quest to complete the puzzle. They might have been completed on floors or tables, or moved between rooms in order to display the final result. Someone who owned the 34-piece jigsaw wanted to keep playing it with it even

⁸³ Railton, *Multimedia Archive*. <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/games.html>

⁸⁴ Ibid.

though it was damaged: several of the broken tabs that allow the pieces to slot into each other have been replaced with paper. [Fig. 4.8.] It is here that we can witness the life-cycle of abolitionist material culture within the home, items were physically used, moved around, broken, lost, mended and used again by their child owners.

Puzzles drilled children on their knowledge of specific topics and themes, physical tests that required the skills of hand manipulation, intellect and memory. The *Uncle Tom's Cabin* puzzles required knowledge of the storyline as well as the ability to fit oddly-shaped wooden pieces into one large image. As with the Coffee puzzle, children who did not know the story could copy the printed paper key and then read it by following the painted scenes from piece to piece. Referring to dissected map puzzles, Norcia argues that 'the puzzle allowed users to continually rehearse the project of mapping the world by piecing together its parts.'⁸⁵ If we apply this to the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* puzzles, the jigsaw allowed children to constantly re-jig and retell the story according to their own skill and whims. The child might choose to start piecing the jigsaw using the final scene instead of the first, or might complete the outer pieces and then fill the gap in both the narrative and the puzzle afterwards.

Children were 'both puzzlers and puzzle pieces.'⁸⁶ They pieced together the anti-slavery narrative of Stowe's novel and the process required to make household food items like coffee and sugar. They also 'pieced' together their anti-slavery knowledge and opinions, and their place within the broader campaign.

Dealing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Card Games

On Christmas Day 1852, thirteen-year-old Elizabeth Clapp recorded the presents her family received:

The table in the parlor had all our presents on it. Carrie's and Ellen's dolls took up the most room. Mary and I had silk aprons for our presents. John had the life of John Q. Adams. Father and mother had a pair of French vases which cost 3\$.

⁸⁵ Norcia, 'Puzzling Empire': 5.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

Aunt Asubah had a book called “The Mercy Street.” David had a game called ‘Uncle Tom and Little Eva.’ We were all satisfied with our presents.⁸⁷

The Boston Clapp family all received presents that could have been bought at an anti-slavery bazaar: dolls, aprons, vases, books and games. Most likely they were not, but the diary entry provides an example of how the imagined abolitionist household could be filled with items to suit all family members. One item definitely contained anti-slavery sentiments; Elizabeth’s brother David received an *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* card game. Priced at 25 cents, ‘The New and Interesting Game of Uncle Tom and Little Eva’ was the product of Vilen. S.W. Parkhurst, Providence. In an ‘Unsigned Notices’ advertisement published two days before Elizabeth’s diary entry, the New York *Independent* claimed the game’s appeal was ‘in the continual separation and reunion of families.’⁸⁸ The HBSCC has a copy of this game, and images can be viewed on Railton’s Tomitude website.⁸⁹ The game itself is a reworking of the popular British card game ‘Happy Families’, although Kelley’s ‘Unhappy Families’ is a more accurate description given the rule changes.

Kelley argues that Parkhurst’s card game re-enacts ‘the narration of familial separation and Christian justice at the heart of Stowe’s novel’⁹⁰ and textualises ‘Stowe’s assumption that slaves have families broken by slavery.’⁹¹ The game consists of twenty cards illustrated with a character, grouped into five ‘families.’ Players are dealt cards and then decide which family they would like to complete. Once a player holds all the cards in their chosen family, they must ask other players if they have Legree the slave owner, and give up one of their cards if they do not, breaking up their ‘family’ in the process. Here, Ellen Goldner notes children are encouraged to take on the role of the slave ‘dealer’, choosing what family they want and then giving them up to the slave owner.⁹² To win the game children had to give up their families and possess both the Uncle Tom and Little Eva cards as well as the Justice card, a wild card that contained the rules. Children re-enacted Stowe’s vision of God’s justice and white liberal

⁸⁷ Elizabeth Atherton Clapp, Diary entry for December 25, 1852, Boston. *Journal, 1852-1854*, David Clapp Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, MS. N-2151. Many thanks to Mark Kelley for kindly sending me his copy of the diary entry.

⁸⁸ New York *Independent*, ‘Unsigned Notices,’ December 23, 1852.

⁸⁹ Railton, *Multimedia Archive*. <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/game3f.html>

⁹⁰ Kelley, ‘Unhappy Families’: 128.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁹² Goldner, ‘Arguing with Pictures’: 75.

sympathy⁹³ as they repeatedly watched the card ‘families’ brought together and torn apart throughout the game. As Kelley has argued, the game ‘displays how slaves have been forced into various family configurations’ and ‘reintroduces Stowe’s question of who belongs in a family, what constitutes a family, and what kinds of families slavery allows.’⁹⁴ American children were required to physically handle the characters of Stowe’s novel and break up families, bringing the realities of slavery into their secure white household.

Two other Uncle Tom’s Cabin children’s card games have survived. The first was apparently marketed at Europeans as it is in German, French and English.⁹⁵ Played with dice, the box contains 8 large cards and 1 small card illustrated with scenes from the novel and dice icons around the edges. The translated rules are complex. Whoever rolls highest becomes ‘Tom’ and is the ‘banker and director’. It would appear players gain cards by rolling numbers that match the dice on the cards. Whoever has all the cards wins and is ‘Tom’ for the next game.⁹⁶ The other card game: ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’, was published the same year as Parkhurst’s ‘Uncle Tom and Little Eva’. The HBSCC possesses two incomplete copies and The New York Historical Society Library has a complete version,⁹⁷ but as it does not engage with racial possession or white sympathy it has not received much attention from Kelley, Goldner and Stevenson. Published by W. & S. B. Ives, Salem, Massachusetts, like Parkhurst’s it also consists of twenty cards divided into sections for players to collect, but instead of families children collect objects. Each card is illustrated with a character or an object belonging to a character: Tom’s Cabin, George’s Dollar, Aunt Chloe’s Biscuit, George’s Bible, Simeon’s Apples, Rachel’s Chair, Simeon’s Hat, Eva’s Flowers, and Ophelia’s Basket. Instead of giving up their cards like those playing ‘Uncle Tom and Little Eva’, ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ followed the rules of ‘Go Fish’ where children had to collect all the cards to win the game. The rules noted ‘players must be attentive, and remember to call for every card which had been called and obtained...as the game is made longer and more complicated by every failure of memory.’ To win the game, children were required to memorise the material objects within

⁹³ Kelley, ‘Unhappy Families’: 142-3.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁹⁵ European Uncle Tom card game, HBSCC, Catalogue No. 69.104. last accessed January 2016 <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/game2f.html>

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ HBSCC, 90.2 and 69.105; ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ card game with box and 20 cards, 1852, New-York Historical Society Library, LIB.YC.1852.

Stowe's narrative and collect them all, gaining 'the privilege of dealing, and commencing the next game.' The game brought the material objects of abolitionist literature into the household, placing them in children's hands. They physically held, gave away and collected the objects of the characters. By focusing on objects, the game created a dual layer: the objects were associated with the slavery narrative but they were also items that could be found in the child player's home: chairs, baskets, bibles, hats and flowers. In doing so it not only politicised a card game, it politicised those ordinary household items, calling to mind their place within Stowe's narrative: a contrast to their use in the white household. Apart from the multi-language version, we have no way of knowing if, like the jigsaws, these cards games were also played in British households. We also do not know how popular these games were in American homes. Like Kelley, I have been unable to find further mentions of the 'Uncle Tom and Little Eva' game, or any surviving financial or sales records. We cannot know if children enjoyed creating 'unhappy families' or collecting objects. Kelley considers the possibility that David Clapp 'became frustrated with the card game's rules and gave up.'⁹⁸ Like the jigsaws, the two incomplete sets of the object game suggest they were played with. The cards were lost or damaged in parlours or children's spaces, adding to our imagined abolitionist household along the way.

Anti-Slavery Samplers: Displaying Girls' Needlework in Children's Spaces

In our tour of the parlour and drawing room in chapter 3, we witnessed the ways British and American women embroidered anti-slavery images and text onto tapestries and ordinary household items as a form of domestic decoration. We also saw how the walls of these rooms were adorned with anti-slavery prints, plaques and images. Rooms belonging to children were no exception. As women in training, girls imitated their mothers by sewing slaves onto their work, but in a child-friendly and appropriate format: the sampler. Originally kept in a drawer or workbox as a reference guide, from the 1800s onwards samplers were increasingly framed and hung up as a testament to the child's accomplishments. Samplers 'were the refrigerator art of early days', they were evidence of women's success at educating girls in

⁹⁸ Kelley, 'Unhappy Families': 145-6.

‘moral, religious, political and secular arenas, and as display of their own wealth.’⁹⁹ This section uses the historiography of British and American samplers and needlework to decode the anti-slavery motifs and texts used by girls on both sides of the Atlantic. It addresses the ways these samplers decorated children’s domestic spaces and analyses the surviving anti-slavery samplers made by British and American girl abolitionists.

Ensamplers or simply, ‘samplers’ were derived from the French ‘essamplaire’, meaning any kind of work to be copied or imitated, and the Latin ‘exemplar’ meaning a pattern. According to John Phillips, ‘demand for decorative needlework in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries necessitated the development of a convenient means of copying the best designs and stitches.’¹⁰⁰ Pattern books with these designs were mostly German and too expensive for the average household, so each woman made her own ‘incorporating stitches she remembered from childhood or those collected from friends.’¹⁰¹ Samplers provided a ‘space for learning, practicing, recording and creating myriad stitches and diverse motifs in a variety of coloured materials using different kinds of needle and threads’, they were a place for seamstresses and ordinary women ‘to turn to for inspiration when creating new pieces of embroidery.’¹⁰² From the eighteenth century, samplers became less associated with women and more as textile textbooks for girls. In John Palsgrave’s dictionary of 1530, ‘sampler’ was defined as an ‘example for woman to work by’¹⁰³, but by 1799, Samuel Johnson considered it to be ‘a pattern of work; a piece worked by young girls for improvement.’¹⁰⁴

Samplers were a material literary primer; girls learnt ‘their letters’ by stitching them on to fabric, and copied poetry and biblical excerpts they had read. Traditionally a means to preserve skills, learn new stitches and practice technique in the absence of formal written instruction, they later became a way to demonstrate social, religious and political knowledge. However, some contemporaries disapproved of the time and effort girls spent embroidering

⁹⁹ Maureen Daly Goggin, ‘Visual Rhetoric in Pens of Steel and Inks of Silk: Challenging the Great Visual/Verbal Divide’ In *Defining Visual Rhetorics*, Charles A. Hill and Marguerite Helmers, eds., (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004), 103

¹⁰⁰ John G. Phillips, Jr., ‘A Special Exhibition of Samplers,’ *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, (1930): 100.

¹⁰¹ Jane Toller, *British Samplers, A Concise History*, (Sussex: Phillimore & Co., 1980), 13.

¹⁰² Goggin, ‘Pens of Steel’ in *Visual Rhetoric*, 92.

¹⁰³ John Palsgrave, *Lesclarcissement de la Langue Francoyse*, 1530, xxxi, quoted in Goggin, ‘Pens of Steel’ in *Visual Rhetoric*, 92.

¹⁰⁴ Samuel Johnson, 1799, quoted in Glee Krueger, *A Gallery of American Samplers: The Theodore H. Kapnek Collection*, (New York: Bonanza Books, 1984), 8.

religious and political imagery, believing it to be a hindrance to their political education. They argued girls' preoccupation with their needles prevented the acquisition of new knowledge. In his 1758 essay 'The imaginary housewife' in *The Idler*, Samuel Johnson described a wife whose needlework obsession was detrimental to their children's education:

Kitty knows not at sixteen the difference between a Protestant and a Papist because she has been employed three years in filling the side of a closet with a hanging that is to represent Cranmer in the flames. And Dolly...[is] unable to read a chapter in the Bible, having spent all the time, which other children pass at school, in working the interview between Solomon and the queen of Sheba.¹⁰⁵

We cannot know whether the girls who made the surviving anti-slavery samplers possessed political knowledge beyond being able to embroider a slave image, however, the fact that they existed and have survived does suggest at least a basic understanding of contemporary political campaigns.

All girls learnt to sew as part of their gendered education, but 'the more decorative a textile was, the more indicative it was of leisure time and elevated social class.'¹⁰⁶ As with the embroidered household items made by abolitionist women, samplers that displayed fine needlework were the efforts of middle-class girls. The act of sewing was a considered a physical sign of female virtue, achievement and domestic industry, an essential part of female education. This was also true for *what* girls were sewing on their samplers: moralistic tracts, poetry and biblical references were a reflection on the girl's moral education and character. Parents hoped that 'the arduous process of transcribing these sentiments would encourage the girls to adopt the virtuous qualities that the rhetoric espoused.'¹⁰⁷

Used to educate and instruct, girls typically filled their samplers with letters, numbers, proverbs and decorative patterns to show off their newly-learnt stitches. They were usually outlined in decorative borders and accompanied by the child's name, age and date of completion, like a textile copyright or exam entrance form. A reflection of the domestic space they were made in, traditional images such as houses, household objects, animals, flowers and plants were common motifs. The choice and arrangement of subject matter was very

¹⁰⁵ Samuel Johnson, *The Idler*, 13: 'The Imaginary Housewife', July 8, 1758.

¹⁰⁶ Beverly Gordon, 'Spinning Wheels, Samplers, and the Modern Priscilla: The Images and Paradoxes of Colonial Revival Needlework,' *Winterthur Portfolio* (1998): 165.

¹⁰⁷ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 226.

carefully thought out in order to create a well-ordered and balanced composition; a sampler required patience and planning in regard to material and work space. Some girls were better at this than others. On her British anti-slavery sampler from 1836 [Fig. 4.9.], Esther Stewart ran out of space for the letter 'n' in 'African', and squashed it next to the word 'slave' that followed it. Likewise, the anonymous girl who made the undated sampler in Fig. 4.10., didn't finish the poetic lines she initially intended: perhaps she changed her mind or decided it was too much effort after all. Instructing her female readers in 1920, Mrs Christie remarked on the relationship between a well-structured sampler and its intended decorative purpose: 'the elements of which it [the sampler] is composed should be managed with sufficient order and design to make it pleasing to look upon, to be an object worthy to be framed and hung upon a wall.'¹⁰⁸

Parsons notes that girls 'often had to progress through a number of assigned projects before being allowed to select designs for themselves.' She considers that by choosing slavery, parents were attempting to 'edify an increasingly questionable, although clearly significant, activity [sewing].'¹⁰⁹ However, I would suggest that because these anti-slavery samplers were not beginner projects and deviated from traditional samplers, they were more likely to have been chosen by the girls themselves. By choosing slavery as their theme, girls used the design autonomy granted to them to illustrate their own political interests. Even if the anti-slavery theme was the joint decision of the girl and her mother or female relative, it still shows the girl's own understanding of political issues. In deciding to make items that were intended for display, child and adult female abolitionists were consciously politicising the walls in their homes. These domestic works of British and American girls contributed towards the creation of our 'imagined abolitionist household'. A household where children's spaces were filled with anti-slavery samplers, games and puzzles.

Samplers were material symbols of filial duty; they represented the hours girls spent obediently sewing under the instruction of female relatives and their relationship to them. It is not surprising that girls sewed slaves onto their work as a reflection of the world around them and the issues they observed and discussed in their homes. If girls were related to abolitionists, samplers were a means to demonstrate their political knowledge as well as their

¹⁰⁸Mrs [Archibald H.] Anna Grace Ida Christie, *Samplers and Stitches: A Handbook of the Embroiderer's Art* (London: Batsford, 1920), 3.

¹⁰⁹ Parsons, 'Imagining Empire', 131.

needlework skills. We know girls helped make items for sale at bazaars; a sampler might have been preparation for making bazaar items, or a memento of items made that year. Some of the surviving samplers appear to be commemorative pieces celebrating particular abolitionist milestones; the girls who made them may well have been involved in other forms of activism. By displaying anti-slavery samplers on their walls, children's rooms within the household were visibly politicised. Their sentiments were not invisible as with toys and games purchased at bazaars, or hidden inside jigsaw boxes, they were in plain sight for all to see.

Unpicking Surviving Anti-Slavery Samplers

My research has uncovered ten surviving anti-slavery samplers made by American and British girls between 1804 and 1848. As abolitionist items, several of these reside in museums that already have extensive anti-slavery collections, such as Bristol Museum and Wilberforce House in Hull. Three were discovered on auction websites; unfortunately, we do not know who bought them or where they are now. Like the other abolitionist household items discussed in Chapter 3, anti-slavery objects are frequently put up for auction by those related to the original owners or by collectors of samplers, embroidery or anti-slavery downsizing their collections. This section aims to decode the images, inscriptions and meanings girls incorporated into their anti-slavery embroidery, to uncover the ways girl abolitionists politicised domestic spaces. Analysing these samplers helps us place them in our imagined abolitionist household, displayed in children's schoolrooms or bedrooms alongside other anti-slavery toys and games.

Whilst British and American scholars have traced the origins of the sampler and changes in their design from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries through to the nineteenth, few have focused on those with anti-slavery images or text. Historians of textiles, needlework and samplers who have mentioned anti-slavery samplers have not contextualised the items within political campaign; they are just another 'rare' sampler.¹¹⁰ Historians of transatlantic anti-slavery mention samplers or needlework as examples of abolitionist material culture but do not actually describe the images and text used by the girls who made them. In their

¹¹⁰ Sampler made by Esther Stewart, 1836 mentioned in Pamela Clabburn, *Samplers, The Shire Book*, (Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications Ltd., 1998), 21.

unpublished theses, Vaughan Kett and Taylor included anti-slavery samplers in their discussions of abolitionist material culture. Kett mentions the 1836 sampler made by Esther Stewart when it was displayed in the 2007 British Empire and Commonwealth Museum's 'Breaking the Chains' Exhibition as an example of children's anti-slavery needlework but does not go into further detail.¹¹¹ Taylor does discuss Hannah Bloore's 1840 sampler in more detail but again, only mentions one surviving example.¹¹² In her blog, quilt historian Barbara Brackman includes images of other surviving samplers in her analysis of a sampler sent by a reader for her to decode.¹¹³ However, neither she, nor others have specifically addressed the multiple surviving children's anti-slavery samplers in regards to the abolitionist household and girl's domestic work or their presence within children's interior spaces.

Surviving anti-slavery samplers provide an insight into young girls' interpretations of current political events and campaigns. The samplers discussed in this chapter were all made by different, mostly British, girls at different points throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the similarities in the imagery and inscriptions used.

Two of the samplers are untitled and one undated. As the purpose of a sampler was to display a girl's needle skills at a specific point in her life, it would suggest that the sampler was unfinished. Of those with dates, four of the British samplers were made before British Emancipation in 1834 and four afterwards. The two samplers that are labelled as American on their catalogue records are from 1804 and 1848. These girls used their samplers to depict their support for emancipation, and to commemorate abolition. The fact they have survived is testament to their unusual choice of slave motifs; they are memorable and stand out amongst collections of traditional samplers. Like the anti-slavery jigsaws, they represent only a fraction of those made throughout the nineteenth century. These samplers are only a glimpse at the ways girls used their needles for political effect, and the extent to which they were used to decorate their homes. As with the other children's items discussed in this chapter, we cannot know if these samplers were hung up on walls or whether they were stored in drawers

¹¹¹ Vaughan Kett, 'Quaker Women', 92, 172, image in Appendix.

¹¹² Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 222-229.

¹¹³ Brackman, 'Abolitionist Embroidery', *Material Culture, Quilts & Fabric: Past & Present Blog*, Wednesday, November 24, 2010. <http://barbarabrackman.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/abolitionist-embroidery.html> and 'Abolitionist Embroidery 2', Friday November 26, 2010. Last accessed January 2016. <http://barbarabrackman.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/abolitionist-embroidery-2.html>

or workboxes. However, they contribute towards our idea of what an abolitionist's household might have looked like and where items might have been kept and displayed.

All ten samplers picture plants, trees or flowers in some form, three contain images of sheep, three feature angels; all typical motifs used by girls on non-abolitionist samplers. Nine of the samplers feature a worked image of a kneeling male slave, arms raised in prayer with chains dangling from his wrists. The other sampler contains only an excerpt from Cowper's poem about slavery. As the common image in these samplers, we can compare the girls' varying sewing abilities through their attempts to embroider the slave. Some were more advanced with their needles than others, Figures 4.12, 4.14, and 4.16, all include rather lumpy misshapen slaves, filled with brown or black stitches, and with crudely embroidered facial features. In contrast, the slaves in Martha Hague's, E.M.'s and Hannah Bloore's samplers [Figures 4.11, 4.15 and 4.17] closely resemble the ones women embroidered on tapestry pieces discussed in Chapter 3, [Fig. 3.41]. Their slaves are the most lifelike, the slaves' musculatures are highlighted in varying shades and they have hair on their heads. Seven of the slaves are dressed in loincloths, only the samplers by Sarah Sedgewick and Hannah Shields [Figures 4.13 and 4.14] are naked; they appear to have copied the same design of a rather featureless and shapeless slave.

Five of the seven dressed slaves wear red loincloths; those on Hannah Bloore's and E.M.'s samplers are also of a pinkish hue. Whilst it is unclear why red was the colour of choice, it is interesting that so many girls with no known commonality should have chosen it. It suggests that they all copied the image from a similar source. The majority of the coloured images on medallions, tokens, ceramics and other household items were decorated with slaves wearing white trousers or loincloths. The slave in Hodgson's 1820 print [Fig. 3.28] wears a red loincloth, so it is possible this image inspired their design choices. Of further interest is that all of the girls embroidered a male, and not a female slave on their samplers. Although Wedgwood's original design was of the male slave, the female variation was used by British and American women and anti-slavery societies to decorate other objects when these girls were embroidering their samplers. As the male slave image was the definitive abolitionist symbol and was used to decorate more household objects than the female image, it is not unusual that this should also be the case for samplers. If girls were copying the slave image from another anti-slavery object in their homes, it was statistically more likely to be of a male

slave. However, it is certainly interesting that none of these girls chose to use the female equivalent that appealed to their fellow sex.

Considering nine of the ten samplers included imitations of Wedgwood's slave, it is interesting that none of them contain the accompanying motto 'Am I not a Man and a Brother?' In Chapter 3 we witnessed how other embroidered household items such as pincushions were decorated with both the slave image and the motto, and most manufactured objects featured the motto alongside the image. If my suggestion that the girls copied the slave image from another source is correct, then they either chose not to copy the motto, or there was no accompanying motto on the image they used. Ultimately it is unclear why none of the girls included the motto in their work, but as the definitive abolitionist slogan its absence is certainly noteworthy.

Poetic Inscriptions: Children's Abolitionist Text on Samplers

Like the abolitionist inscriptions upon other household objects, the anti-slavery samplers all contained embroidered text. They were the textile equivalent of the juvenile abolitionist literature that could also be found in children's domestic spaces, perhaps hung next to the bookshelf. Samplers were children's versions of the handmade items women made for bazaars decorated with anti-slavery mottoes. Abolitionist girls embroidered poetic verses as well as popular biblical quotations that addressed the slave question from a Christian perspective. Literary texts demonstrated their knowledge of contemporary poems, political tracts and literature. One of the earliest surviving samplers with anti-slavery text is an 1804 sampler titled 'Against Slavery' by eight-year-old American Sarah Gilbert.¹¹⁴ The sampler was put up for auction in Detroit in 2006, so we do not know any further details about Gilbert or where the sampler currently is. On her sampler she embroidered the following verse from William Cowper's 1784 poem 'The Task':

¹¹⁴Auction House catalogue entry, 2006, for 'American Sampler by Sarah Gilbert', c.1804. Last Accessed January 2016: <http://www.artfact.com/auction-lot/american-sampler-by-sarah-gilbert.-age-8.-verse-1-c-102a5ca365>.

I would not have a slave to till my ground
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep
And tremble when I wake. For all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earnd.
No, dear as freedom is,
I had much rather be myself a slave.
And wear the bonds that fasten them on him.¹¹⁵

Surrounded by a decorative border and tiny intricate conical trees, flowers, birds, a woman and a dog, Sarah Gilbert's sampler combined traditional sampler imagery with abolitionist text. Unlike the other surviving samplers made later in the nineteenth century, this one does not feature any slave imagery or indeed, any indication that it contains abolitionist sentiment until the text is read. As the text fills the main part of the sampler with the other images acting more as a decorative border, the poem functions as an embroidered declaration of Sarah Gilbert's stance 'against slavery'.

On her blog 'Quilts and Fabric Past and Present', Brackman discusses the imagery and text on an anti-slavery sampler inherited by 'Reed', a British reader who wished to learn more about the meanings behind it.¹¹⁶ Reed's mother was an American who collected folk art so the sampler is not a family heirloom. Reed thought her mother bought the sampler when they moved to Britain in the 1970s but admits she is not certain, hence her request for Brackman's advice. This sampler features a rather misshapen kneeling slave wearing a red loincloth between a row of conical trees. [Fig 4.10.] The slave looks up at three eight-pointed stars, typically symbols of baptism, regeneration or the Holy Trinity. However, the eight-pointed star was also a popular nineteenth-century quilt pattern; Brackman points out that its use as a motif may have no further significance. Above the stars are two trumpeting cherubs or angels, symbols of those who told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus, or the second coming of Jesus which the bible says will start with an angel blowing a trumpet. Combined with the slave image, it suggests Jesus will answer the slave's plea for freedom. Reed's sampler is one of two surviving anti-slavery samplers that are anonymous and undated, we

¹¹⁵ William Cowper, *The Task, a poem, in six books. By William Cowper, To which are added, by the same author, An epistle to Joseph Hill, Esq. To which are added, an epistle and the history of John Gilpin* (1785), Book II, 'The Time Piece'.

¹¹⁶ Brackman, 'Abolitionist Embroidery', *Material Culture Blog*.

cannot know where or when it originated or who made it. The date would usually be the final touch to a finished sampler; undated examples appear to be incomplete pieces of work. Esther Stewart's British sampler from 1836 [Fig. 4.9.] also features two eight-pointed stars and trumpeting angels above a kneeling slave. While these stars were popular American quilt motifs they were also worked on samplers by British girls. This does not help us to date Reed's sampler or confirm the nationality of the girl who made it, but it does show how girls worked traditional motifs into pieces of work with non-traditional political imagery.

Two of the surviving samplers reference the same poem: 'The Negro's Prayer' by English rector Reverend Legh Richmond. Headed with the poem's title, Reed's sampler features the unfinished line 'Jesus, who maks't the meanest s' in the top left hand corner, as though the girl had planned to fill the space with the rest of the verse but either decided against it at a later date or simply never completed her work. Although Brackman attributes the quotation to an 1818 American periodical, *The Evangelical Guardian and Review*, it originally appeared in Richmond's 1814 poem in *The Negro Servant*, one of the stories in his popular children's collection *Annals of the Poor*. The poem opens with the lines:

Jesus, who maks't the meanest soul
An object of thy care.
Attend to what my heart would speak,
Hear a poor Negro's prayer.¹¹⁷

The incomplete lines stopping one letter into the next word remind us that making an anti-slavery sampler required time and effort, and not all projects were completed, framed and hung up on household walls. Like the other samplers and the medallions set into wall plaques from Chapter 3, we do not know when the sampler was framed. It would have been unusual to frame an unfinished piece; this sampler might have spent its life in a drawer instead of on a wall until it was reclaimed and framed by a later owner or collector.

¹¹⁷ Rev. Legh Richmond, *Annals of the Poor. Containing The Dairyman's Daughter, (with considerable additions) The Negro Servant, and the Young Cottager*, (New Haven: Whiting and Tiffany, Sign of Franklin's Head, Corner of College Green, 1815)

As testament to *The Negro Servant's* popularity amongst its child readers, Martha Hague's British sampler also included embroidered lines from Richmond's literary work.¹¹⁸ [Fig. 4.11.] Currently held in Bristol Museum, Martha Hague's sampler is dated 1837 and its post-emancipation production is reflected in the extract she chose to use. Martha's cross-stitched sampler displays a kneeling slave in a red loin cloth surrounded by a border of long-stemmed roses and rosebuds symbolising love, beauty and joy.¹¹⁹ Various animals accompany this scene: a bird in a tree, a red breasted robin, a butterfly and a spotted dog. Butterflies typically symbolised immortality, inconsistency, playfulness, or the resurrection of the human soul and dogs, fidelity and watchfulness.¹²⁰ Like Reed's sampler, a trumpeting angel above the slave proclaims another verse from Richmond's 'The Negro's Prayer':

Whose God is like the Christian's God
Who can with him compare!
He has compassion on my soul
And hears a Negro's prayer.¹²¹

While the text on Reed's sampler asks God to hear the slave's prayer, the lines used on Martha's sampler describe the slave praising the Christian God above all other gods because he has heard the slave's prayer and granted emancipation. Although Martha Hague's use of Richmond's poem might suggest Reed's sampler was also made by a British girl, *The Negro's Servant* was published across Europe and America throughout the nineteenth century.

The other surviving sampler with discernible American origins also accompanied embroidered slave motifs with extracts from children's anti-slavery literature. In 1848, American Maria Wilds sewed lines from the British children's poem *Zante, The Little Negro*

¹¹⁸ Sampler by Martha Hague, 1837. Bristol Museum, Na2498.

¹¹⁹ In their dictionary of sampler motifs Patricia Andrie and Lesley Rudnicki rightly note 'it is questionable whether or not the sampler maker was aware of the significance of a motif or if it was used merely for decorative purposes. Many motifs have several different, and, at times, completely contradictory meanings.' Patricia Andrie and Lesley Rudnicki, *Sampler Motifs and Symbolism*, (New York: Hillside Samplings, 2003), 10.

¹²⁰ Albarta Meulenbelt-Nieuwburg, *Embroidery Motifs from Dutch Samplers*, (Batsford: London, 1974), 41-3. Although Meulenbelt-Nieuwburg's work focuses on Dutch samplers, the symbolism can be applied to most European embroidery.

¹²¹ Richmond, *Negro Servant*, 131.

(1830) across the top of her work [Fig. 4.12].¹²² Like many of the other samplers, Maria Wild's male slave wears a red loin cloth and is flanked by large trees. The trees are more realistic than those in the other samplers but the slave's facial features are rather misshapen, evidence that it was the 'work' of a child and not a skilled adult. By heading her sampler with the title 'Zante the Negro', the slave image is transformed from a copy of Wedgwood's slave to the slave Zante in the poem, a character from children's abolitionist poetry. Maria Wild's sampler is similar to Reed's sampler in that the text appears to be unfinished. The first letter of each line of the poem is missing; it seems unlikely that they were intentionally left out because the lines do not make sense without them. Although there are several holes in the sampler, the fabric where the missing letters should be is in good condition; it does not look as though the letters were previously stitched and unpicked at a later date. Perhaps Maria Wilds intended to work these letters in a different colour but never went back to finish them. The sampler is unframed as if it was unfinished, providing a possible explanation for the missing letters. However, folds around the edge of the fabric and rust marks from pins suggest it was in a frame at some point during its life. It is impossible to tell if Wilds simply used an embroidery frame while making it, if it was framed by or for her, or by a subsequent owner. Unlike the religious poetry embroidered on to Reed's and Martha Hague's samplers, the lines on Maria Wild's work describe the realities of slavery from the perspective of 'Zante', a slave child:

[D]rag[ge]d from my native shores
 [B]y a cruel white man's hand
 [N]o more to see my native home
 [N]o more to see my native land.¹²³

The lines evoke pity for the slave: hung upon a wall in Martha's 'native home' the sampler would have provided an emotive contrast between her own household and that of the slave Zante. Here the sampler produces the same response as 'The Anti-Slavery Dial' and the 'A Tour Through the British Colonies and Foreign Possessions' board game. Children reading

¹²² Maria Wilds, *Zante the Negro*, Needlework on canvas, 1848. Graphic Arts Textiles Collection GC 072.

¹²³ *Zante, The Little Negro: (addressed to the English child) In Two Parts. A religious tract.*

the poem and the sampler feel grateful for their status as free subjects and the associated domestic security of their own homes. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, comparisons between the experiences of free white and enslaved black children were popular themes in children's abolitionist literature because they instantly connected the child reader to the realities of slavery. Like Martha Hague and the girl who made Reed's sampler, Maria Wilds may have made her sampler after reading the poem as a material way to demonstrate her literary as well as her sewing skills. Samplers that used anti-slavery poetry served as literary abolitionist bookmarks within children's domestic spaces. They were physical reminders that the girl had read the quoted source and a prompt to remember the sentiments it espoused. By including extracts from juvenile children's literature with slave motifs, British and American girls combined abolitionist text and imagery to create a multi-layered abolitionist household object. These samplers were the textile equivalent of the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* jigsaws that brought together Stowe's narrative by piecing a puzzle together.

Attempting to Decode Two Identical Anti-Slavery Samplers

While samplers typically contained similar themes, motifs, stitches and materials, each was a unique piece of embroidery, a reflection of the individual girl who made it. Traditional nineteenth-century samplers usually included the alphabet, a list of numbers, the girl's name, the date, her age and a mixture of images and text. Besides these common components, the choice of font, colour and overall layout rested with the girl herself and the woman instructing her efforts. Although industrial samplers made in schools for girls were usually uniform in appearance, those made by middle-class girls displayed more individuality.

Two of the surviving anti-slavery samplers challenge these existing ideas about samplers as unique pieces of embroidery: although worked in different colours they are completely identical in their motifs, text and layout. They also challenge the idea that the layout and content was usually chosen by their creators: someone else or a printed pattern influenced their design choices. Both samplers were made by British girls: Sarah Sedgewick and Hannah Shields, and are both dated 1832. [Figures 4.13. and 4.14.] York Castle Museum currently holds Sarah Sedgewick's sampler in its collections but does not have any further information

about where she lived.¹²⁴ Hannah Shield's work was put up for auction in 2007 so we are unable to discover any more clues as to its origin or where it is now.¹²⁵ Both of these samplers feature the same, rather basic, image of a kneeling male slave, without the loincloth worn by all the other embroidered slaves. The slaves sit above a grassy strip dotted with sheep, flanked by large flowers and an overgrown plant. Underneath these images are three large carnations, floral symbols of true or maternal love in between two baskets of roses which might refer to the five wounds of Christ.¹²⁶ There are several stylistic differences such as borders, added or omitted leaves and colour; the only motifs embroidered in the same coloured thread are the slave and the sheep. Even accounting for these variations, the two samplers are too alike for it to be a coincidence. In every other aspect, these samplers are identical pieces of work. They both contain the words 'Pity the Negro Slave' across the top of the sampler, a plea to the person looking at the embroidered slave image. Like the repeated use of the colour red for the slave's loincloth in the other samplers, the presence of two so similar samplers suggests that they were inspired by or copied from the same source. Or perhaps, the girls knew each other and completed their work together or shared their designs. However, we do not know if these girls were personally acquainted, and because of the lack of further information regarding their origins, we are unlikely to find out.

What makes these samplers even more unusual are the words 'Emancipated in 1832' above their names underneath the slave and sheep motifs. Whilst it is highly likely that Sarah Sedgewick and Hannah Shields were British, both embroidered the wrong date of the British campaign on their samplers. British emancipation did not come into force until 1834, two years later. As a key milestone in the British anti-slavery campaign this represents a significant error, compounded by repetition. It is unclear whether both samplers were actually made in 1832, or, if they were made after 1834 or 1834 and the dates were just mistakes. Given that there are two samplers this seems unlikely. The dates embroidered on girl's needlework pieces usually referred to the year the sampler was made, so perhaps the girls were optimistic about impending abolitionist success. Another, more likely possibility is that the pattern both girls copied the images and layout from was from 1832 or also misprinted the date. If Sarah Sedgewick and Hannah Shields did copy their sampler design from the

¹²⁴ Sampler by Sarah Sedgewick, c.1832. YCM. YORCM: BA3463.

¹²⁵ Auction catalogue entry for Sampler by Hannah Shields, c.1832. Last Accessed January 2016: <http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/88794/an-unusual-early-19thc-needlework/>

¹²⁶ Meulenbelt-Nieuwburg, *Dutch Samplers*, 13-14.

same source, then we need to consider what this source was. The source's combination of anti-slavery themes and needlework means it is unlikely to be found alongside other embroidery patterns in women's periodicals, nor female anti-slavery articles or bazaar reports. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find the original inspiration for these samplers, but that does not detract from their significance. Sarah Sedgewick's and Hannah Shield's samplers are possible indicators of the role of British female networks, through girls personally sharing sampler ideas. If the pattern was printed somewhere and copied, the samplers are also suggestive of embroidery periodicals and similar sources tapping in to girls' needlework occupations and their political role as child abolitionists.

Embroidering God: Biblical Texts On Anti-Slavery Samplers

Traditional samplers were typically decorated with religious images and texts. Samplers filled with embroidered psalms, prayers and proverbs were material symbols of girl's Christian piety and moral virtue. Given the role of Christianity within the transatlantic anti-slavery movements and the proportion of abolitionists who were Quakers and Evangelicals, religious imagery and texts go hand in hand with anti-slavery. As with Reed's and Martha Hague's samplers, angel motifs and related biblical inscriptions were also used by the girl who signed her sampler with her initials E.M. in 1831. [Fig. 4.15.] Put up for auction online in 2009, E.M.'s sampler appears to be British in origin, but there are no further clues as to its creator. This sampler deviates from the standard square or rectangular format followed by most nineteenth-century samplers and the surviving anti-slavery ones. The zig-zag border is circular, allowing it to be placed in a round frame for domestic display. E.M.'s slave, with anatomically-correct shading, resembles those worked by Martha Hague and Hannah Bloore, suggesting he was possibly copied from the same image. E.M.'s is decorated with floral motifs, baskets of flowers with three flowers in each are embroidered either side of the male slave. Like Reed's, Esther Stewart's and Martha Hague's samplers, two angels by the slave's head illustrate the embroidered inscription:

Though thousand foes our paths attend,
yet God shall be our stay.
Ten thousand angels he can send
to drive our foes away.¹²⁷

Though not a direct quotation, the verse chosen by E.M. calls to mind the following biblical lines from the Book of Matthew: ‘do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?’¹²⁸ Despite the slave’s suffering from white slave-owning ‘foes’, God listens to the slave’s appeals for help and will send angels to fight on his behalf. Esther Stewart’s work from 1836 [Fig. 4.9.] also features motifs of trumpeting angels, but her sampler does not contain any biblical or poetic references to angels or God. Like Sarah Sedgewick’s and Hannah Shield’s samplers, the only text on Esther Stewart’s sampler is ‘Esther Stewart, her Work. The African slave’ underneath the date. Martha Hague’s, E.M.’s and Reed’s samplers all use poetic and biblical text to emphasise the relationship between Christianity and the fight for abolition. Unlike the slave on Wedgwood’s original medallion who asks the viewer to answer his question and campaign on his behalf, the slaves on these samplers ask for God’s divine intervention. They are embroidered versions of the slaves that decorated the wall plaques discussed in Chapter 3, where the slave appealed to God or Britannia for freedom.

Biblical texts featured prominently on abolitionist objects, and embroidered objects were no exception. Currently held at WHM, an anonymous anti-slavery sampler dated around 1836, shows a featureless male slave kneeling on grass and red flowers.¹²⁹ [Fig. 4.16.] The girl who made this sampler embroidered the same biblical inscription as the one behind Reed’s sampler: ‘Thou God Seest me’ from the book of Genesis.¹³⁰ In the Bible, this line refers to Hagar’s realisation that although she had been alone and frightened, God had seen her distress and had been watching over her all along. Used in the context of the samplers, the line suggests that God is watching over the slave and has recognised his plight. Equally, it can be applied to the sampler’s abolitionist creator and the abolitionist viewer in the

¹²⁷ Auction Catalogue record, 2009, for Sampler made by E.M., 1831. Last accessed January 2016: <http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/112877/a-william-iv-slave-sampler-worked/>

¹²⁸ Matthew 26: 53.

¹²⁹ Sampler, maker unknown. c.1836. WHM, KINCM: 1998.26.1

¹³⁰ Genesis 16:13.

household; as Christians they should acknowledge the reality of slavery and strive to abolish it. Like the other surviving pieces, these two samplers were made to be displayed on household walls for children to look at throughout their day. While these samplers were supposed to be a source of pleasure or comfort to children, not all children were enamoured of the embroidered biblical inscriptions hanging on their bedroom walls. In a semi-fictional memoir about her childhood in the second half of the nineteenth century, Agnes Maud Davies wrote of a child's horror when her mother 'presented her with an illumination by her own fair hand in large letters: "Thou God Seest Me."' Like the samplers with the same inscription, the card 'was framed to hang up beside her bed and greet her waking eyes' but the child found the text the 'terrifying', because she 'possessed the simple faith that believeth all things in a literal sense.'¹³¹ Here we witness the different ways children responded to didactic embroidery in their rooms; not all children who looked at the anti-slavery samplers made by siblings and friends would have understood the sentiments behind the embroidered images and inscriptions. Such a response to the embroidered card is a reminder that abolitionist samplers needed to be read by those with knowledge of the anti-slavery campaign to be fully understood. Anti-slavery samplers indicate something of the political knowledge and preferences of their female creators, but to fully politicise children's spaces within the household they needed to be visually accessible. As the embroidered slaves were not accompanied by Wedgwood's motto, other viewers needed to know what the kneeling slave image represented without the textual prompt to understand its political sentiments. Similarly, the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* jigsaw puzzles and card games required children to already have an understanding of Stowe's narrative to reap the political benefits of toys that combined play with anti-slavery.

¹³¹ Agnes Maud Davies, *A Book With Seven Seals, A Victorian Childhood* (London: Cayne Press, 1974), 52.

Conventions and Columns: Incorporating National and Transatlantic Political Events into Traditional Samplers

In 1840, British eleven-year-old Hannah Bloore made an anti-slavery sampler using a combination of cross, eyelet and straight stitches to display her domestic skills.¹³² [Fig. 4.17] Surrounded by a fig leaf border, every inch is filled with detailed embroidered images and text. Currently in the possession of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the catalogue record notes that the sampler was ‘possibly made in Staffordshire’. Like the other surviving samplers, the eye is drawn towards a male kneeling slave in the centre of the piece wearing a loin cloth of a pinkish hue. The shaded detail on the slave’s body demonstrates her sewing skills; Bloore’s slave is more lifelike than some of the other girls’ featureless and misshapen attempts. Above the slave is a large floral bouquet of lilies, carnations and roses: symbols of Christ the Redeemer, purity, innocence, love and beauty.¹³³ Filled with other traditional sampler motifs, Bloore also embroidered a conch shell, birds, a heart, biblical animals and a green dragon, possibly a reference to the Welsh emblem.

Out of the ten surviving anti-slavery samplers, Bloore’s most resembles those typically made by nineteenth-century British girls. It contains biblical and popular texts, traditional and religious imagery and is richly decorated. Unlike other samplers where the main focus was the central slave image, the slave in Bloore’s sampler appears almost as an afterthought, filling an unworked space. The upper half of the sampler is filled with text laden with religious sentiments:

This world is vain
And full of pain
With cares and troubles Sore
but those are blest [sic]
Wich [sic] are at rest with
Christ for evermore

Love the lord and he will

¹³² Sampler made by Hannah Bloore, 1840. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Whitman Sampler Collection, gift of Pet, Incorporated, 1969, 1969-288-317.

¹³³ Meulenbelt-Nieuwburg, *Dutch Samplers*, 13.

Be a tender father unto thee
this I did to let you
See what care my parents
Took of mee [sic]

These were popular nineteenth-century verses: surviving samplers reveal many girls also embroidered them on their samplers alongside pastoral and domestic images. Either side of the slave are biblical inscriptions, on the left is the following from Isaiah 53:7 ‘He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he openeth not his mouth.’ The first line of this verse: ‘He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth’¹³⁴ is missing from the sampler, but we can still read the connection between these lines that refer to Jesus and the kneeling slave motif. Read in the context of the slave image, the slave does not retaliate despite being subjected to the brutal oppression of slavery. Under these lines an embroidered lamb illustrates the one in the verse, but the motif is also a Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, interpreted here as slavery. On the other side of the slave is a quote from Psalms 34:10: ‘The young do lack and suffer hunger but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing’¹³⁵ accompanied by an embroidered lion. In the Bible this passage describes how young lions are dependent upon the benevolence of older lions for their food; without their help they ‘suffer’ and starve, but ultimately God provides for them. In respect to slavery, abolitionists and slaves who look to God will have their needs granted; God is the ultimate benevolent emancipator. Bloore’s sampler is a testament not only to her knowledge of slavery, the Bible and her sewing skills but of the way Christian doctrine was tightly interwoven with abolitionist rhetoric.

In the first half of this chapter we witnessed how board games such as Bett’s ‘A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions’ incorporated the legacy of slavery and abolition into a children’s item that celebrated British imperialism. Here we see how girls incorporated national events associated with the British Empire into their samplers alongside anti-slavery and religious images. Bloore’s sampler was made in 1840; the figure she embroidered was a free man. The Philadelphia Museum of Art catalogue rightly notes that the first World Anti-Slavery Convention was held in London’s Exeter Hall in June that year, so perhaps Bloore’s sampler responded to and commemorated an important national

¹³⁴ Isaiah, 53:7.

¹³⁵ Psalms, 34:10.

abolitionist event. If so, then this sampler is an example of the ways girls used their needlework to connect the public and predominantly male arena of the convention, with traditionally feminine embroidery that was destined to remain on display in the domestic space. This is particularly noteworthy considering the Convention was where the ‘woman question’ was ‘openly discussed by men in a British anti-slavery forum’ for the first time. At the Convention British female abolitionists ‘began to consider the issues involved’, their right to ‘fully participate in mixed assemblies, as office holders, public lecturers and delegates.’¹³⁶ We know British girls were involved in making and sending items to American anti-slavery bazaars during this period, so Bloore’s sampler could also be a reference to her participation in transatlantic anti-slavery activities. After all, she does not specify where the slave is from on her sampler, or whether it was made before the June convention.

The most striking feature of Bloore’s sampler are the words ‘Nelsons Monument’ embroidered underneath the kneeling slave. At first it is not apparent why these words are used; none of the other images or texts have any connection to Admiral Nelson or related monuments, and the topic is an unusual theme for a child’s sampler. In 1840 there were already several Scottish Nelson monuments that were erected in the earlier half of the nineteenth century to commemorate his naval success. However, it is unlikely Bloore was referring to these monuments yet chose not to embroider an image to accompany the text. It is more plausible her sampler was made in response to the competition between 1838 and 1839 to design a monument celebrating Nelson’s achievements to be erected in London’s Trafalgar Square outside the newly completed National Gallery. When Bloore was making her sampler in 1840, building work on William Railton’s winning design had only just begun, the first stone of the column was laid down in September,¹³⁷ three months after the World Anti-Slavery Convention. Nelson’s column was not finished until 1843, long after Bloore completed her sampler.

As a popular national figure of British naval success, the monument and the reference on Bloore’s sampler celebrated a naval hero protecting Britain’s Empire and imperial interests. It is surprising that a girl who was clearly acquainted with the anti-slavery campaign should

¹³⁶ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 158-9.

¹³⁷ ‘The Nelson Memorial’ *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1840: A Journal of Papers on Subjects Connected with Maritime Affairs*, Volume 9 (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1840), 887-888.

wish to celebrate someone who was not; Nelson's pro-slavery views were public knowledge. His naval victories and the abolitionist success of 1834 both embodied public notions of what it meant to be British within an imperial framework, thus the two separate events became aligned in the public mind. Taylor suggests that between 1808 and 1840 Nelson 'underwent an image makeover' from pro-slavery advocate to Britain's saviour, 'therefore (in popular culture at least) [he] must have been an abolitionist.'¹³⁸ Whilst I do not entirely agree with Taylor's idea that Nelson was considered by Bloore as an abolitionist, I do agree with her other points regarding the sampler. Like Taylor, I think it likely that Bloore originally intended her sampler to contain an image of the winning design, she embroidered the words 'Nelsons monument' and left enough space while she worked the rest of the sampler. At a later date, perhaps after the June convention, Bloore decided against embroidering the monument, and replaced it with a kneeling slave instead. Taylor suggests this was due to the influence of the 1840 anti-slavery convention, but I think it more likely that Bloore simply needed another public event to replace her planned monument. Considering that the competition was re-run and Railton had to submit a revised design, it is probable that when Bloore was ready to embroider the monument the final design had not yet been released to the public, or there was not an available image for Bloore to copy. The two biblical verses either side of the slave can be read within the context of anti-slavery so it is plausible that these were added after the slave image when she had changed her mind regarding the monument. It is interesting that Bloore did not unpick the words referring to Nelson's monument and replace them with ones referencing the anti-slavery convention. This might have been because the slave actually symbolised the political views of her household or their bazaar-related activities for the American campaign, not the conference. However, I think the most likely explanation is that after spending so much time and effort on the sampler she did not wish to spoil her efforts or spend more time unpicking words. The sampler reveals the thought processes of an eleven-year-old girl deciding how best to illustrate contemporary events.

Bloore used her needlework skills to connect two public events that combined national politics and ideas of British-ness within transatlantic and imperial frameworks. Although the title of the World Anti-Slavery Convention implies an international delegation, it was 'largely

¹³⁸ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 229.

a transatlantic convention of British and American abolitionists.¹³⁹ Douglas Maynard notes that of the 409 official attendees, ‘40 were Americans, 6 or 7 French, and the rest from the United Kingdom and its colonies.’¹⁴⁰ At the convention, British abolitionists decided to focus their efforts on helping their American delegates to abolish slavery in the United States.¹⁴¹ The convention highlighted the role of British people their Empire as abolitionist paragons that could inspire the American campaign. It also strengthened female abolitionist transatlantic networks; the profits of the American anti-slavery bazaars soared after 1840 as a result of the increasing number of items sent by British women.¹⁴² Nelson’s monument was built ‘for the purpose of Commemorating the many brilliant achievements of that gallant and victorious commander of British fleets...over the combined fleets of France and Spain.’ According to ceremonial reports, a bottle containing ‘various coins of the realm’ was placed underneath the foundation stone,¹⁴³ a permanent reminder of the relationship between Nelson and the Empire. The monument was to be a symbol of Britain’s imperial success in the name of liberty. Like the ‘A Tour’ board game, the monument celebrated victories in battle and reinforced Britain’s superior position as the head of an international Empire. By choosing to embroider inscriptions and images onto her sampler that were connected to Britain’s position within the wider world, Bloore countered Porter’s claim that ordinary British people were ‘ignorant’ of the Empire’s existence. We do not know how much she knew about the history behind the proposed Nelson monument, or of anti-slavery, or the related convention held that year. However, like the board games and jigsaw puzzles that worked imperial and abolitionist sentiments into children’s toys, samplers were evidence that middle-class British children did at least know something about the Empire and their role within in it.

¹³⁹ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 123.

¹⁴⁰ British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention...Held in London...1843* (London, 1843), 11. Quoted in Douglas H. Maynard, ‘The World’s Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840’ *The Mississippi Historical Review* 47, 3 (1960): 456.

¹⁴¹ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 123.

¹⁴² Chambers-Schiller, ‘Good Work’ in Yellin and Horne, *Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 250, footnote 2.

¹⁴³ ‘The Nelson Memorial’ *The Nautical Magazine*, 887-888.

Conclusion

We have seen how children's anti-slavery objects were the result of eighteenth and nineteenth-century ideological shifts towards childhood, education, children's spaces and children's new role in the 'consumer revolution'. This chapter has discussed how children's toys and games bought at anti-slavery bazaars held invisible meanings and what this means in terms of their place in the nineteenth-century transatlantic household. Although we have noted the impossibility of physically tracing these objects, this chapter has suggested that scholars should consider the unknown aspects and tacit meanings of material objects in their work, especially in relation to children's items. Considering the presence of these invisible messages broadens the scope of analysis and potentially politicises ordinary objects that were previously considered unworthy of scholarly attention.

By placing surviving children's objects at the forefront of the discussion, this chapter has shown that material objects are valuable sources for historians trying to reveal the extent to which children and children's domestic spaces were involved in political activities. It has also shown how we can use children's objects to reveal the intentions of toy manufacturers; why did they incorporate political themes into children's items, what were they hoping to achieve? By decoding the images and texts of these items we have seen how children's objects used a child-friendly format to rewrite the anti-slavery rhetoric for their child audience. Items decorated with colourful images were more visually accessible to a younger audience than the black and white political tracts read by their parents.

Unfortunately, the small number of surviving children's anti-slavery objects does not allow us to draw conclusions about the differences, if there were any, between British and American items. However, it does suggest that children on both sides of the Atlantic were targeted by abolitionists and toy manufacturers as potential consumers of political objects. The several *Uncle Tom's Cabin*-themed jigsaw puzzles that featured the same images appear to be the work of the same British manufacturer. As these surviving items are held in both British and American archival collections they are suggestive of a transatlantic network of children's anti-slavery puzzles. The number of British and American items that tapped into the popularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* demonstrate the strong link between children's literature and material culture. They show how abolitionist literary narratives could be

worked into children's toys and embroidered samplers through images and text. In doing so, children and manufacturers created a physical version of the literature that could be moved around the household and played with by more than one child at a time. This relationship between ordinary household objects and abolitionist children's literature will be further discussed in the following chapter, but with regard to material culture references in the narratives of children's literature instead of children's literature in material objects.

In the second half of this chapter we have seen how girls expressed their political knowledge and participation by creating samplers with abolitionist texts and motifs. Just as games and children's literature aimed to simultaneously educate and entertain, girls were expected to absorb these political messages while they sewed. We have seen how analysing surviving samplers allows us to categorise the girls who made them: they were middle-class Britons and Americans, from the same demographic as the intended consumer market for items at bazaars and the games and toys produced by independent manufacturers.

The paucity of surviving samplers and the lack of information about their child creators does not allow us to compare differences between British and American anti-slavery samplers, nor can we argue that samplers altered over time to reflect changes or factions in the British or American campaigns. However, we have been able to analyse the similarities of these samplers by comparing the motifs, texts, colours, and layouts used by transatlantic girl abolitionists. In doing so, samplers have provided a glimpse into the design decisions made by nineteenth century British and American girls, and the relationship between girls' domestic work, children's domestic spaces and political identity. These material objects represent the various methods available to children to express their political beliefs, and to parents who wished their children to be educated about the world outside their homes. Parents bought their children games and toys, mothers instructed girls in creating political needlework.

Using surviving children's anti-slavery objects as the main source material in this chapter has allowed us to visualise the lived experiences and personalities behind the children who made and played with them in their homes. These board games, puzzles and card games are all that physically remain of British and American children's connection to a political campaign, proof that the home was politicised through play. Although we cannot be sure how many of these games were produced, bought, or played with, the missing and broken jigsaw pieces are

a physical reminder that some children did play with these items in their homes; their households did engage with political themes.

Like the household objects made by adult female abolitionists discussed in chapter 3, samplers are often the only surviving items with definite links to British and American girl's abolitionist activity. Unlike the anonymous tapestries and wool work made by women, the names embroidered on samplers reveal the identity of the individual girls who made them. Although we don't know where precisely these girls lived, or who they grew up to be, we do know that these girls existed and had their own political beliefs.

Akin to the missing and broken puzzle pieces, the unfinished texts, squashed letters and misshapen slaves on anti-slavery samplers all contribute towards visualising girls with their own personalities, who made human mistakes; samplers were made in homes not factories. Surviving children's anti-slavery objects represent the lives of 'real' children within children's spaces in our imagined abolitionist household.

Chapter 5

'To Our Little Readers': Material Culture, the Household and Anti-Slavery in Children's Literature

In 1838, an editorial 'anecdote' published in the short lived American children's anti-slavery periodical *The Slave's Friend* conveyed the importance of the child reader. While sharing his carriage journey with a slaveholder the editor gave him a copy of *The Slave's Friend*. Having looked at it, the slaveholder declared: 'Now I begin to fear. If you make children abolitionists slavery must come to an end.' The editor took this statement to further impress upon his child readers what would turn them into these terrifying abolitionists: 'slavery will come to an end if the children read, talk, and act about it...[you] may have some influence with your parents, and persons who are older than you.'¹

As we have seen in chapter 4, children were familiar with the material presence of anti-slavery objects in the transatlantic abolitionist household. Children's anti-slavery literature was an ideal way to disseminate political ideology, combining both educational and moral instruction with entertainment through stories and images. Building on Chapter 4, this chapter looks at the relationship between material culture and children's anti-slavery literature. It analyses the ways children's literature featured the material culture of domestic objects and the abolitionist household within their narratives.

This chapter uses children's anti-slavery literature as its main source material, focusing on those that reference domestic material objects in their narratives. It looks at what types of material objects were described and what they tell us about the writers and audiences of children's literature. It addresses how these objects were used by female writers and how they relied upon the transatlantic nature of female participation in their narratives and in disseminating their works to the child audience. I will consider whether they show a gendered trend in terms of their characters and their child readers, and, if so, what this tells us about the relationship between material culture and female abolitionist writers. By assessing literatures' use of domestic material culture we can compare these narratives to others that used non-

¹ *The Slave's Friend*, 3, No. 2 (1838), 8.

domestic objects such as bowie knives and whips to inform their child readers of the brutal realities of slavery. Such an analysis allows us to consider whether these household objects domesticated the political narrative of anti-slavery or whether they politicised literary and real domestic interiors.

Oldfield notes that after 1830 there was a ‘sharp decline in anti-slavery sentiment in [British] children’s literature’ and even when British abolitionists increasingly turned their attention to the American campaign, ‘writers and publishers seemed disinclined to take up the American issue.’² The absence of references to material culture in the small body of British anti-slavery children’s literature means aside from a few examples, the majority of works discussed in this chapter are American. As such, we are unable to directly compare material culture narratives between British and American literatures. Although the literatures are primarily American, some did incorporate British women and children into their narratives, as will be discussed in *The Edinburgh Doll*.

Similar to the methodological implications of using surviving objects in chapters 3 and 4, when drawing conclusions about what these literatures tell us, we must also consider what they don’t tell us about child abolitionists and material culture. While the use of material objects in children’s anti-slavery literature is interesting, we can only offer suggestions as to why they were chosen over other non-domestic narratives. Abolitionist women chose to write for children, suggesting they felt the potential political outcomes of addressing a juvenile audience was worth their time and effort. By choosing to incorporate household material objects into their narratives, female writers felt it was a suitable theme and suitable medium to educate and convert child readers. Children were deemed an impressionable readership, but as books were purchased by adults, literatures also needed to appeal to parents, and what they thought was suitable for their children to read. Like the production of household and children’s items, we do not know how many copies of the periodicals and books were published or who bought them. Of the literatures discussed in this chapter, we cannot know how many British or American children owned or read a copy, or how popular they were. Of those that did, we do not know how children interpreted the narrative’s use of objects or if it influenced their political beliefs or actions. These limitations need to be remembered as we analyse the narratives and possible meanings of abolitionist children’s literature.

² Oldfield, ‘Anti-Slavery Sentiment’.

Historiography

Oldfield has looked at the history of anti-slavery children's literature in the U.K. from 1750 to 1850, focusing on the creation of sentiment, references to Africa, and depictions of black slave children.³ Other scholars analysing British anti-slavery children's literature have focused on works published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, or in the late nineteenth century in an imperial context.⁴ There is now a substantial body of scholarly work on American juvenile abolitionist literature and many insights can be gleaned from analyses of race, childhood, animals and female writers. These works have discussed the extent to which this form of literature was instrumental in bringing children into the anti-slavery debate. Connolly's work focuses primarily on making explicit the racialised imagery present throughout juvenile anti-slavery literature.⁵ Roth has, like many others, also focused her work on the role and depiction of African-American children in terms of race and friendship as key plotlines.⁶ Keralis has addressed the way the *Slave's Friend* children's periodical used animal imagery and 'pet-making' to discuss the bonds of slavery.⁷ Similarly, Ginsburg has discussed the relationship between girls and domestic animals in the *Slave's Friend* in terms of a rhetoric of citizenship.⁸ Lindey looks at abolitionist children's literature in terms of its representation of girls, education and science.⁹ She discusses the poem *The Edinburgh Doll: And Other Tales for Children*, but not in relation to its depiction of material culture and domestic work in the household. Geist also addresses the *Slave's Friend* as a key means for teaching children about slavery.¹⁰ However, his work represents more of a summary of the journal's history and the themes of morality, violence and justice that pervade each issue. Keller situates anti-slavery children's literature within the discourse of childhood, but makes no mention of the way material culture or the household was worked into that narrative.¹¹

³ Ibid., 44-59.

⁴ Botkin, 'Questioning' and Smith, 'Slavery' In Carey, *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition*; Kutzer, *Empire's Children*.

⁵ Connolly, *Slavery in American Literature*.

⁶ Roth, 'Mind of a Child'.

⁷ Keralis, 'Feeling Animal'.

⁸ Ginsburg, 'Babies' In *The American Child*.

⁹ Lindey, 'Sympathy Science'.

¹⁰ Geist, 'The "Slave's Friend"'.
¹¹ Keller, 'Notions Childhood'.

In his impressive anthology of British and American anti-slavery poetry,¹² Wood includes several poems that refer to material objects, but he only includes a brief description alongside each poem, making no reference to the use of material culture. In their introduction to Yellin's and Van Horne's *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, Bogin and Yellin demonstrate that abolitionist women were instrumental in the writing and publishing of anti-slavery literatures in a variety of formats.¹³ Whilst they discuss speeches and pamphlets, they have not addressed the literatures written for the child audience. Although De Rosa's anthology of children's abolitionist literature is an invaluable reference for historians, she devotes only a small number of pages to her own analysis.¹⁴ In her more scholarly contribution, *Domestic Abolitionism*, she focuses on the role of the mother as an 'abolitionist-mother historian' and the various ways in which the mother-child relationship is used by female writers of anti-slavery children's literature to merge the domestic sphere with that of the slave narrative.¹⁵ Whilst her work discusses some of the same pieces of children's literature as this chapter, De Rosa does not specifically address depictions of material culture as a topic for scholarly attention.

Taylor's unpublished thesis has examined the use of material culture in both *Gospel Fruits* and *The Edinburgh Doll*, and her analysis has proven to be influential upon my own discussion of these literatures.¹⁶ However, Taylor's focus is primarily on the Boston anti-slavery fair and somewhat confined to viewing the literature within that context. Whilst this chapter assesses the way these two literatures made use of items bought at American anti-slavery bazaars, it also attempts to situate them within the transatlantic abolitionist household. My research views these objects as a material address to the female child reader and a representation of the life cycle of material objects.

No other scholars have specifically assessed the ways in which children's abolitionist literature used household material objects and home itself to trigger discussion, to educate and to provide a contrast with the slave's lack of domestic comforts.

¹² Wood, *Poetry of Slavery*.

¹³ Yellin and Horne, *Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 1-19.

¹⁴ De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*.

¹⁵ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*.

¹⁶ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism'.

This chapter begins by looking at the broader historical picture of print culture and nineteenth-century children's literature to contextualise juvenile abolitionists' contributions. Next, it looks at the ways publishers of children's anti-slavery children's literature adapted to their audience and the household as the intended site for their works to be read. Finally, it looks at the role of women, and how the juvenile anti-slavery market provided a 'safe space' for their political sentiments and use of material objects. It then assesses the influence of changing concepts of childhood and motherhood including their roles as abolitionist educators providing realistic depictions of slave experiences within children's literature.

The main body of the chapter begins by assessing anti-slavery alphabet primers. It looks at the ways these primers incorporated the different meanings of family, food, home and the household in regard to the child reader and the slave in the narrative. Next, it addresses the way Maria Edgeworth used Wedgwood's slave medallion in her children's stories to educate the child reader in line with her views on education. The following section focuses on depictions of material objects in relation to anti-slavery bazaars and comprises two parts. The first looks at an extract from the gift book the *Liberty Bell*, the second analyses the poem *The Edinburgh Doll*. These parts build on Chapter 2, describing the ways anti-slavery bazaars were sites for the distribution and consumption of domestic material objects. The next two sections focus on clothing as described in abolitionist children's literature: a physical apron used to educate children and convert slaveholders and an imagined 'wishing-cap' that is a metaphor for anti-slavery activism. Following on from this, it addresses the adolescent reader and the ways anti-slavery literatures used material objects to communicate with older children. The final section looks at the role of the mother and her part as a 'domestic abolitionist' or 'mother-historian abolitionist' in teaching children, primarily girls, about anti-slavery using material culture to support her narrative. It also addresses the role of the household and abolitionist literature's ability to extend these roles beyond the pages of the storybook to the real world. In doing so, it analyses the meanings assigned to the objects described by these literatures and traces the ways these meanings change throughout the narratives, taking on new abolitionist life stories.

Writing for Children: Abolitionist Literature in the Juvenile Market

Abolitionist children's literature was born out of the explosion in print culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries on both sides of the Atlantic. Increased literacy rates and the rising urban middle class meant the nineteenth century 'witnessed a surge in the publication of...picture books, series books, illustrated magazines, paper novels, and magazines.'¹⁷ Nineteenth-century American publisher Samuel Goodrich asserted that the value of American book production grew from \$2.5 million in 1820 to \$16 million in 1856.¹⁸ Anti-slavery literature and children's anti-slavery literatures were part of this bigger picture. Women's literary contributions were extended to the spheres of politics and children, Margaret C. Gillespie claims English women contributed to the rising production of children's literature because 'it became evident juvenile books were a marketable commodity.'¹⁹ Women penned and purchased pamphlets, poems, books and periodicals on an unprecedented scale. Susan Coultrap-McQuin's research reveals prior to 1830, 'about one-third' of American fiction was written by women, rising to 'almost forty percent' of novels published by 1861. By the 1850s 'women were authors of almost half of the popular literary works.'²⁰ Women also formed a significant proportion of the anti-slavery literature market; Midgley writes that in late-eighteenth century Britain, female authors were roughly responsible for around a quarter of poems and tales with an anti-slavery theme.²¹ The popularity of children's anti-slavery poetry meant even female writers could not ignore it when educating and entertaining their own children. In 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote to fellow abolitionist writer Eliza Lee Cabot Follen describing the extent that Follen's anti-slavery poetry had infiltrated her household: 'during all the nursery part of my life [I] made daily use of your poems for my children.'²²

¹⁷ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 9.

¹⁸ Samuel G. Goodrich, *Recollections of A Lifetime*, 2 vols. (New York, 1856), Volume 2, 380-89, as quoted in Zboray and Zboray, 'Books': 3.

¹⁹ Margaret C. Gillespie, *History and Trends* (Dubuque, Iowa: Brown, 1970), 85.

²⁰ Susan Coultrap-McQuin, *Doing Literary Business: American Women Writers in the Nineteenth Century*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 2.

²¹ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 29. This estimate is based on the works known to be written by women in Peter C. Hogg, *The African Slave Trade and its Suppression: a Classified and Annotated Bibliography* (London, Frank Cass, 1973).

²² Charles Edward Stowe, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Compiled From Her Letters and Journals by Her Son Charles Edward Stowe*, (London: Sampson Low & Co., 1889), 'Letter to Mrs Follen' 16 February 1853, 197. De Rosa references this quotation in the footnotes of *Domestic Abolitionism*, 166, and incorrectly states the letter was dated 16 December 1852.

However, not all scholars agree on the extent to which this new anti-slavery market permeated the literary sphere. Anne MacLeod claimed that ‘slavery was all but invisible in juvenile fiction.’²³ Donnarae MacCann has also voiced similar opinions to MacLeod in her work on African Americans in children’s literature. Looking at the period between 1830 and 1865, MacCann declared ‘materials from this era are scarce’²⁴ and that ‘only a miniscule number of writers who entered the children’s book field wrote antislavery tracts, and those who did rarely wrote an abolitionist narrative or textbook that was not to some degree ambivalent in its attitude towards Blacks.’²⁵ MacLeod’s claim is not just an overstatement, it is completely untrue. Alongside the numerous newspapers and periodicals published by the various anti-slavery societies, a vast array of books, pamphlets, poems and periodicals were published specifically with children abolitionists in mind, what Taylor calls a ‘significant segment of the juvenile book market.’²⁶ In his 1989 analysis of British anti-slavery children’s literature, Oldfield identified ‘some 40 children’s books published between 1750 and 1850 that contained pronounced anti-slavery sentiments,’ though he admitted the precise figure was probably much larger than this.²⁷ I agree with Oldfield; whilst it would be ‘misleading to assume’ that all children’s literature published during this period ‘contained anti-slavery sentiments, the numbers are significant enough to suggest they played a vital role in shaping attitudes’²⁸ towards the concepts surrounding slavery, race and childhood.

The popularity of this ever-increasing juvenile literary sphere caused a reader of Garrison’s newspaper *The Liberator* to declare in 1831, that ‘Everybody writes now for children’²⁹ as though it were the latest fashion craze sweeping the country. In terms of the presence of material culture within these child narratives and their place within female abolitionist bazaar culture, that is certainly a possibility. Eager to jump on the bandwagon, Garrison responded to his reader’s requests to create his own children’s subsection by giving them their own

²³ Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children’s Literature on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 92.

²⁴ Donnarae MacCann, *White Supremacy in Children’s Literature: Characterizations of African Americans, 1830-1900*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁶ Taylor, ‘Selling Abolitionism’, 232.

²⁷ Oldfield, ‘Anti-Slavery Sentiment’: 59.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁹ *Liberator*, January 22, 1831. Letter to the Editor from ‘U.I.E.’, January 4, 1831. Taylor, ‘Selling Abolitionism’, 232, also cites this article but misquotes the letter and incorrectly references it ‘February 1831.’

column or, 'Juvenile Department'. Building on the style of their popular 'Ladies Department' column, the 'Juvenile' variation included short stories and poems with anti-slavery narratives. In doing so, Garrison revealed his belief that children's abolitionist literature played an important role in maintaining and converting his army of young abolitionists; it was certainly not 'invisible'. Whilst the *Liberator's* 'Juvenile Department' as a section dedicated specifically to its child readers only lasted until 1837, the *Liberator* continued to reserve a steady proportion of its columns, pages and advertisement sections to the children of abolitionist readers. Chapters 1 and 2 conveyed the *Liberator's* role in regularly advertising local and national anti-slavery social events to its female readers. Similarly, the *Liberator* extended this practice to include its juvenile divisions, dutifully reporting the dates of their sewing circles, society meetings, choirs and bazaar activity. Viewed alongside the children's books and periodicals containing abolitionist stories, we can see how abolitionists addressed children from all corners of the literary sphere, from news bulletins and memoranda to fiction. The presence of all of this child-orientated literature ultimately worked to highlight the important position children held within the movement and to encourage children to become political participants.

Adapting Children's Literature for the Abolitionist Household

Publishers of children's abolitionist literature understood the importance of the household as the site for disseminating their works and altered the format accordingly. Written specifically for children, the short-lived monthly periodical magazine the *Slave's Friend* contained only sixteen pages and was 3" x 4 1/4" in its entirety,³⁰ the perfect size for young hands. This undoubtedly contributed towards the high circulation rates during its two years of publication.³¹

Capitalising upon the burgeoning market for children's literature, in 1853, American publisher John P. Jewett released *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as part of his

³⁰ Connolly, *Slavery in American Literature*, 22.

³¹ Geist states: 'In its first year [1836] about 200,000 individual copies and 5,000 bound volumes were distributed. In 1837 a total of 130,150 copies were circulated, or an average of 10,845 per issue. While these figures do not seem overly impressive, the circulation... was roughly comparable to that of the *Anti-Slavery Record* for the same year.' Quoted in Geist, 'Slave's Friend': 28. De Rosa reports similar figures: 'roughly 250,000 copies of *The Slave's Friend* were published by the American Anti-Slavery Society by 1837.' Quoted in De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 9.

‘Juvenile Anti-Slavery Toy Books’ series. A reworking of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s original, Jewett made his intentions clear by the following statement on the cover page: ‘This little work is designed to adapt Mrs Stowe’s touching narrative to the understanding of the youngest readers and to foster in their hearts a generous sympathy for the wronged negro race of America.’³² Jewett further elaborated upon his intended audience, describing his vision for the book’s use and his adaptations for the household:

The purpose of the Editor of this little Work, has been to adapt it for the juvenile family circle. The verses have accordingly been written by the Authoress [Beecher Stowe] for the capacity of the youngest readers, and have been printed in a large bold type. The prose parts of the book, which are well suited for being read aloud on the family circle, are printed in a smaller type, and it is presumed that in these our younger friends will claim the assistance of their older brothers or sisters, or appeal to the ready aid of their mamma.³³

Jewett’s decision to use two font sizes demonstrates his knowledge of his dual market audience as well as the arena in which that audience resided. In doing so he accommodated adults and older children as well as younger children who still read aloud and required observation and instruction. Juvenile abolitionist literature used family story-time not only to sell books to abolitionist parents, but also to spread the messages contained within to the widest possible audience. This resembles the reading of pamphlets and abolitionist literature at sewing circle meetings as a way of providing light entertainment and information. Children’s literature could be read aloud by the child, which permitted female family members to continue their various handicrafts while they listened.

Female Writers: A Safe Space?

De Rosa argues that American publishers’ willingness to print British women’s abolitionist literature in the early decades of the nineteenth century ‘opened doors’ for their American sisters. Upon the achievement of British emancipation in 1834, publication rates of British female abolitionist literature dropped, only to be renewed in the 1850s after the release of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. De Rosa argues that this ‘silence’ of British juvenile abolitionist

³² Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom’s Cabin (designed to adapt Mrs S’s narrative to the understandings of the youngest readers)*, (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co, 1853), cover page.

³³ Stowe, *Pictures and Stories*, preface.

literature alongside the supportive bond of transatlantic female abolitionist networks allowed their American sisters to gain the attention of publishers.³⁴

MacLeod claims ‘publishers and authors who hoped to see their products widely sold walked carefully around those where angels feared to tread’,³⁵ meaning anti-slavery. However, children’s literature *did* engage with anti-slavery. If anything, children’s literature allowed writers to be more open in their abolitionist sentiments than elsewhere in the publishing world.

When Lydia Maria Child published her abolitionist pamphlet *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* in 1833,³⁶ concerned parents rushed to cancel their subscriptions to the children’s periodical she edited, the *Juvenile Miscellany*.³⁷ Child had in fact previously published children’s stories with anti-slavery content.³⁸ Nevertheless, the scores of concerned parents who may have been unaware of the abolitionist themes in her earlier juvenile works, clearly felt that literature was a powerful means to convert impressionable minds. Child’s experience was not uncommon amongst American female abolitionists who wrote both adult and children’s anti-slavery literatures. The fact that many of these female abolitionists addressed their juvenile audiences through pseudonyms, does suggest that they feared a similar public backlash.

Keralis argues that because the moral education of children ‘fell within the bounds of the domestic sphere’; abolitionist literature ‘existed in an interstitial zone between the literary

³⁴ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 15.

³⁵ MacLeod, *A Moral Tale*, 116.

³⁶ Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*. (1833) Child called for immediate emancipation without compensation to slave-owners, voiced her opinions on racial equality and controversially argued against colonization in Africa.

³⁷ *The Juvenile Miscellany* was the first periodical published solely for children within the United States. LMC was forced to cease publication the year following the publication of her *Appeal* pamphlet because of the financial distress caused by the large number of concerned parents who cancelled their subscriptions.

³⁸ See Lydia Maria Francis, ‘The Little Master and His Little Slave’ *Evenings in New England. Intended for Juvenile Amusement and Instruction. By an American Lady*, (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, 1824), 138-47; ‘Jumbo and Zairee’ *Juvenile Miscellany* n.s. 5 (January 1831): 285-99; ‘Mary French and Susan Easton’ *Juvenile Miscellany* 3rd series, 6 (May 1834): 186-202.

public sphere and the domestic.³⁹ De Rosa terms this ‘domestic abolitionism’; female authors educating children in ‘political and moral consciousness’ using their juvenile audience as a ‘safety net’ that allowed them to write in ‘public forums.’⁴⁰ Poetry also worked within this framework: Midgley states that women’s poetic contributions to anti-slavery literature are proof that they ‘found a way to voice social and political criticism through the acceptably ‘feminine’ means of poetic sentiment and appeals to the emotions.’⁴¹ Female abolitionists wrote, edited, purchased, discussed, disseminated and read children’s anti-slavery literature from within the nursery, the schoolroom and the parlour. It is this ‘safe’ space that will be assessed throughout this chapter, looking at female writers’ employment of the household and material objects in their narratives and what this says about their juvenile audience.

The Abolitionist Childhood and the Role of the Mother as an Abolitionist Educator

In 1828, a section in American periodical *The Christian Examiner and Theological Review* titled ‘Books for Children’ argued such a topic was ‘of more importance than it may appear at first sight’ because ‘this is a reading community; and the sentiments and principles of many children are formed almost as much by reading, as by intercourse with the world.’⁴² In line with this, MacLeod views children’s literature as ‘a source of social history’ that ‘is useful for what it has to say directly about the values the authors hoped to teach children, and...what it suggests about the fears, the anxieties, and the doubts of its creators.’⁴³ Children’s anti-slavery literature reflected the contemporary understanding of childhood and the role of the child in society. In the early nineteenth century, the previously-held belief that children were inherently depraved gave way to the ‘cult of childhood’ with its emotional emphasis on romanticised notions of children’s innate innocence. Believing that they had ‘a more profound awareness of enduring moral truths’,⁴⁴ children ‘ascended to a position of

³⁹ Keralis, ‘Feeling Animal’: 122.

⁴⁰ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 10, 23.

⁴¹ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 34.

⁴² *The Christian Examiner and Theological Review*, 5, (Boston: Published at the Office of the Christian Examiner, 1828), 402.

⁴³ MacLeod, *A Moral Tale*, 11.

⁴⁴ David Grylls, *Guardians and Angels: Parents and Children in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, (London: Faber, 1978), 35.

ideological prominence'⁴⁵ and were granted the ability to reform and convert society. Geist states that children were seen as 'passive vessels into which could be poured the moral values' of society,⁴⁶ this blank slate gave writers of children's literature a free rein to use their juvenile readers as a small army that could be moulded into ideal citizens. Through their works, children's writers were able to address moral and cultural issues that adult society had been unsuccessful in reforming. When advising parents on suitable books for children, *The Christian Examiner* considered this powerful moral influence of children's literature upon young minds:

Impressions are easily made at an early age, which are hard to be obliterated in mature years. Everything which is read in childhood forms a moral lesson; and the little heroes and heroines of these stories become at once models for the imitation of the boys and girls who read them.⁴⁷

As a consequence of this new 'cult of childhood', children's literature 'provided the perfect vehicle for the dissemination of humanitarian ideas, and...played a vital role in creating an anti-slavery consensus.'⁴⁸ The rising popularity of children's literature and the 'cult of childhood' was a powerful combination that allowed abolitionists to cast their net over a wider part of society. When proposing the addition of a 'Juvenile Department' in *The Liberator*, a reader claimed such an addition would 'make your paper welcome in many families where it might not otherwise be thought of and thus another avenue would be opened for the entrance of the truth.'⁴⁹ Children had the ability to spread anti-slavery ideology within and across households where attempts by adult abolitionists had failed.

In her work on 'moral mothers', Mitzi Myers asserted that children's literature is 'crammed with clues to changes in attitudes, values and behaviour...what cultures want of their young and expect of those who tend them.'⁵⁰ Children's abolitionist literature reveals society's expectations of women as mothers, both in terms of their place in the narrative and as educators in the home. Keller argues that because women were now responsible for raising

⁴⁵ Keller, 'Notions Childhood': 86.

⁴⁶ Geist, 'Slave's Friend': 29.

⁴⁷ *Christian Examiner*, 5, (1828), 403.

⁴⁸ Oldfield, 'Anti-Slavery Sentiment': 44.

⁴⁹ *Liberator*, January 22, 1831.

⁵⁰ Mitzi Myers, 'Impeccable Governesses, Rational Dames, and Moral Mothers: Mary Wollstonecraft and the Female Tradition in Georgian Children's Books', *Children's Literature* 14, (1986): 33.

‘the newly important child’, children’s literature, primarily written by women ‘was born of the concern with the role children would play in the nation’s future.’⁵¹ According to MacCann, ‘children were to come away from their story hours with rekindled godliness and patriotic fervor’.⁵² Women were also responsible for selecting suitable reading materials and reading them to their children. In *The Mother at Home; or, the Principles of Maternal Duty*, John S. C. Abbott claimed women’s responsibility to educate society through their children was bestowed by God himself. He informed his female readers of this higher plan:

O mothers! reflect upon the prayer your Maker has placed in your hands. There is no earthly influence to be compared with yours. There is no combination of causes so powerful, in promoting the happiness in the misery of our race, as the instructions of home.⁵³

According to Abbott, women’s role as moral educators included the political sphere of anti-slavery; it was merely an extension of their ‘earthly influence’. De Rosa argues that nineteenth-century notions of motherhood ‘empowered women as children’s guardians’⁵⁴ against the horrors of slavery.

If nineteenth-century children’s literature *did* contain numerous pieces referencing anti-slavery, which were *not* timid in their sentiments, how did female writers work such themes into their narratives? In her work *American Childhood*, MacLeod states that conventional nineteenth-century juvenile literature contained ‘staid, domestic and predictable’ narratives and often consisted of stories ‘centred on a child in need of some moral correction; the correction of this or that fault then constituted the whole plot.’⁵⁵ In his work on British anti-slavery children’s literature, Oldfield considers the majority of children’s books published between 1750 and 1850 to be ‘unashamedly moralistic and concerned above all with inculcating a compassionate humanitarianism.’⁵⁶ Female writers of juvenile anti-slavery literature, whom De Rosa terms ‘domestic abolitionists’, modified this in their work: children were either educated about or rescued from the immorality of slavery.⁵⁷ De Rosa argues that

⁵¹ Keller, ‘Notions Childhood’: 86.

⁵² MacCann, *White Supremacy*, 23.

⁵³ John S. C. Abbott, *The Mother at Home; or, the Principles of Maternal Duty Familiarly Illustrated*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1833), 167.

⁵⁴ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 65.

⁵⁵ MacLeod, *American Childhood*, 91.

⁵⁶ Oldfield, ‘Anti-Slavery Sentiment’: 45.

⁵⁷ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 43.

these female writers employed three main themes in their work: ‘the victimised slave child, the abolitionist mother-historian and the young white abolitionist.’⁵⁸ Literatures that used material objects in their narratives primarily used De Rosa’s ‘abolitionist mother-historian’ and the ‘young white abolitionist’ themes as they relied upon the domestic setting and the mother’s role as educator.

Eliza Weaver Bradburn’s *Pity Poor Africa* (1831) is one of the earliest examples of the ‘abolitionist mother-historian’ role and one of the few instances where material culture was used in British abolitionist children’s literature. Upon learning about slavery from her mother the female child decides to make a box to save money for missionaries who are attempting to convert Africans to Christianity. Using her new-found knowledge, Eliza expresses her wish to write children’s books ‘about missionaries, and slavery, and idolaters. I dare say some children would be induced by them to give their money.’⁵⁹ Later on in the narrative,⁶⁰ Eliza and her brother William create a collection of passages from the bible that condemn slavery and present it to their mother as physical proof of their mother’s success as an ‘abolitionist mother-historian.’ Children’s abolitionist literature was used in households on both sides of the Atlantic to educate children about slavery in an accessible format that fitted the existing narrative of children’s didactic stories and periodicals.

Abolitionist Literature as Truth-Telling: Providing a Realistic Educational Narrative

In her 1850 child-rearing manual, Mrs J. Bakewell outlined her advice to her female readers regarding what constituted appropriate reading material for children. Novels were not approved; she stipulated children should only be given and allowed to read ‘texts true to nature, and the moral of which is evidently good.’⁶¹ In agreement with Mrs J. Bakewell, educational theorists and writers of children’s literature such as Maria Edgeworth claimed children’s stories should not be a journey into the land of make-believe; they should be instructive in a moral and practical sense whilst engaging the child’s attention. Edgeworth justified her dislike for fairy-tales in the preface to her 1796 collection of children’s stories

⁵⁸ De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*, xvi.

⁵⁹ Eliza Weaver Bradburn, *Pity Poor Africa: A Dialogue for Children in Three Parts* (London: John Mason, 1831), 13-14.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶¹ Mrs J. Bakewell, *The Mother’s Practical Guide in the Physical, Intellectual, and Moral Training of her Children*, (New York: Lane and Scott, 1850), 101.

The Parent's Assistant: 'It may be said that a little experience in life, would soon convince them, that fairies, giants and enchanters, are not to be met with in the world.'⁶² Whilst Edgeworth's views were not universally held by those writing for the child abolitionist, her thoughts do offer an explanation for why children's abolitionist literature did not follow the fairy tale narrative with a happy ending. To do so was unrealistic; honesty in children's stories was understood not only as a means to educate children, but as a life-lesson in morality: 'in real life they must see vice, and it is best that they should be early shocked with the representation of what they are to avoid.'⁶³ Children should be taught the realities of slavery as soon as possible if they were to grow up to become active abolitionists.

This transparency started from infancy with 'W Is for Whipping Post' in alphabet books and continued throughout the majority of children's anti-slavery literature. The 1830 pamphlet 'A Sketch of the Slave Trade and Slavery For Little Children' began with the lines 'I'll tell you a story, come sit on my knee;/ A true and a pitiful one it shall be.'⁶⁴ Living up to these words, the pamphlet wasted no time in conveying the horrors of the slave ship to the 'little' child: it described slaves being smothered, thrown overboard, trodden upon, eaten by sharks, and a rather grim depiction of their mouths being clamped open with metal irons so they would not starve themselves. Periodical magazines designed specifically for the child abolitionist readership such as the *Slave's Friend* were full of equally horrifying tales and 'anecdotes' about the realities of slavery, which often appeared to relish providing its readers with particularly gory descriptions of flogging and malnourishment.

The printed images that accompanied anti-slavery literature were particularly effective shock tactics. Reminiscing about his childhood in 1899, American abolitionist Aaron M. Powell recalled how a picture of a slave woman being whipped printed in a piece of abolitionist literature he saw as a boy etched the horrors of slavery upon his memory.⁶⁵ Powell horror was intensified by listening to the literature which accompanied it:

⁶² Maria Edgeworth, *The Parent's Assistant; or, Stories for Children*. 1796, (Boston: S. H. Parker, 1826), viii.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ 'A Sketch of the Slave Trade and Slavery, For Little Children' (London: Vogel, c.1830) JRL

⁶⁵ Aaron M. Powell, *Personal Reminiscences of the anti-slavery and other reforms and reformers*, (New York: Plainfield, N.J, 1899), 1-2.

this picture, with the interpretation of it which my mother gave to me, as she read from the anti-slavery pamphlet which had found its way into our rural home, in the valley of the Hudson, made a deep and lasting impression upon my memory, which the lapse of more than half a century has not sufficed to efface.⁶⁶

Though distressing to him as a child, in Powell's case the anti-slavery literature was successful in producing the desired effect: 'It gave me a vivid conception of the cruelty and injustice involved in the odious system of 'property in man,' ownership of men and women, created in the image of God.'⁶⁷ Powell's response was exactly what abolitionist writers wanted to achieve, a lasting memory that would convert the reader to the cause.

Whilst the *Slave's Friend* was filled with similar articles to those that haunted Powell, children's abolitionist literature held the potential to create less upsetting memories in its child readers. New York Quaker abolitionist Emily Howland recalled how as a 'very young' girl, she tried to copy an illustration in her 'favorite' periodical the *Slave's Friend* that featured a black and a white girl playing together among flowers. When the black woman who came to wash for the Howland's brought her daughter who was of a similar age, Emily took her hand and led the girl into her father's study: 'I received the raillery of the clerk, which I felt proud to bear with the spirit of a martyr.'⁶⁸ By providing a political alternative to popular fiction, writers sought to 'abolitionise' every aspect of childhood. The popularity of children's anti-slavery literature ensured that even the leisure time of its audience would be heavily influenced by abolitionist themes.

'A is an Abolitionist': Learning the ABCs of Anti-Slavery through Material Culture

Anti-slavery in print culture aimed specifically at children started at the very beginning: learning the alphabet. This section discusses how anti-slavery versions of the alphabet used material culture, household imagery and meanings of the home to educate children and persuade them to take up the cause of abolition. In his influential 1693 essay on child-rearing, outlining his theories for improving English education, John Locke suggested parents devise games to teach their children how to read using an ivory ball engraved with the letters of the alphabet: 'if Play-things were fitted to this purpose...Contrivances might be made to teach

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁸ Colucci Breault, *Howland*, 10.

children to read, whilst they thought they were only playing.⁶⁹ Taking Locke's suggestion and responding to the rising demand for children's literature, alphabet books, or primers, made learning letters a game. Using rhymes and coloured pictures as a way for children to associate a letter to a word beginning with that letter, alphabet books taught children their alphabet within this discourse of instruction through play. Building upon the popularity of existing alphabet books such as *The New England Primer*, were those produced by abolitionists.

In 1847 *The Anti-Slavery Standard* referred to one of these abolitionist alphabet books in its article quoting from the Report of the Committee of the Eleventh Annual Fair of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.⁷⁰ The joint work of Philadelphia Quaker sisters Hannah and Mary Townsend, *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet* was presented at the bazaar and sold to abolitionist parents.⁷¹ Karen Sanchez-Eppler states that learning one's 'letters' was 'an essential element in the molding of each child's character.'⁷² Anti-slavery alphabets aimed to shape children into little abolitionists. As we have seen in Chapter 4, the scale of the market meant the bazaar allocated children their own 'Toy Table'. The Townsends' *Alphabet* exploited this by providing an abolitionist version of a book these parents were already buying for their children.

In her analysis of the printing bills to publishers Merrihew & Thompson, Martha Sledge states that the PFASS 'might have spent around \$17.00 to print the *Alphabet*, but there are no figures indicating how many [copies] were printed.'⁷³ She also attempts to calculate the *Alphabet's* 'pecuniary benefit' through the cash receipts from the fair, listed in the PFASS minute books. Although the PFASS logged the *Alphabet* under 'books' and later under 'toys', it recorded a substantial increase in profits in both categories the year the *Alphabet* went on

⁶⁹ John Locke, *The works of John Locke, Esq; in three volumes. The fifth edition. To which is now first added, The life of the author; and a collection of several of his pieces published by Mr. Desmaizeaux*, (London, 1751), Section 150, 69.

⁷⁰ *Anti-Slavery Standard*, Thursday, January 21, 1847, 'Report of the Committee of the Eleventh Annual Fair of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.' For a similar article see *The Liberator* January 29, 1847.

⁷¹ Hannah and Mary Townsend, *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet*, (Philadelphia: Printed for the Anti-Slavery Fair, Merrihew & Thompson, 1846)

⁷² Karen Sanchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 11.

⁷³ PFASS minutes 1847, quoted in Martha Sledge, "'A is an Abolitionist': The Anti-Slavery Alphabet and the Politics of Literacy' in *Enterprising Youth, Social Values and Acculturation in Nineteenth-Century American Children's Literature*, Monika Elbert, ed., (New York: Routledge, 2008), 71.

sale in 1846. In 1845 toys brought in \$22.77 and books \$58.19. In 1846 toys raised \$73.15 and books \$94.48.⁷⁴ As an item that bridged both categories as an educational book and an attractive ‘toy’, the *Alphabet* would have undoubtedly been a popular purchase.

The Anti-Slavery Alphabet consists of sixteen pages, with two letters printed on one side of each page, hand-sewn into a paper cover. The first page contains an introductory poem titled ‘To Our Little Readers’ that outlines the role of the child reader as an abolitionist in training. The rest of the book contains the alphabet images and verses. The letters are illustrated by hand in bright primary colours, each with an accompanying rhyming verse. [Fig. 5.1.] The simplicity of style reflects its audience; it was written for young children to enjoy looking at and easily memorise.

Each letter is used in the *Alphabet* to discuss the various features of slavery: the ‘N-oisome and stifling’ journey in the ‘V-essel’ from Africa, the ‘G-ong’ that calls them to work in the ‘C-otton Field’ and the ‘R-ice swamp’. Themes employed throughout include the impact on the slave child’s family and the contrast between the slave’s native home and his slave quarters. The physical cruelty inflicted by those involved in the slave system is mentioned in almost every verse, emphasising the emotive plea for the child reader’s assistance. Words associated with the material culture of the home are also frequently used to describe the ways the child reader has been complicit in allowing the practice of slavery to continue.

The use of ordinary words in the *Alphabet* is consistent with Locke’s suggestion to use everyday, familiar objects as learning aids for children. Many of the words such as ‘sugar’, ‘pie’, ‘tea’, ‘candy’, ‘corn’, ‘cake’, ‘horses’ and ‘cows’ are ones that children learn to use when describing the world around them. The *Alphabet* uses these words to teach the child the less familiar ones associated with slavery. The household words used in the *Alphabet* reflect the child reader’s domestic environment and provide a contrast to the words with slavery connotations that would not be found in the homes of free children.

The *Alphabet* was designed to appeal to a wide age range of children. Younger children who listened to parents reading out each verse, could point at the large colourful illustrations and remember the associated letter. Moving on from this, children could use the *Alphabet* to

⁷⁴ PFASS minutes 1846 and 1847, quoted in Sledge, ‘Alphabet’ In Elbert, ed., *Youth*, 71.

memorise and recite the alphabet in the correct order. Older children who had learnt the basics of literacy, could then use the short rhyming verses to simultaneously learn new words and political concepts. Primers written with older children and young adults in mind such as *The Gospel of Slavery: A Primer of Freedom* were less simplistic. In *The Gospel of Slavery*, each letter was accompanied by a verse as well as a political and religious commentary. By keeping the structure and verses simple, the *Alphabet* ensured that children would learn their political substitutes instead of the ones traditionally used in primers.

In *The New England Primer*, ‘A’ is designated the word ‘Adam’ calling to mind the story of creation and the ‘beginning’ of the alphabet. However, *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet* wastes no time in conveying its political sentiment by substituting ‘Adam’ for ‘Abolitionist’:

A is an Abolitionist
A man who wants to free
The wretched slave
and give to all
An equal liberty.⁷⁵

Here, the substitution of ‘Adam’ with ‘Abolitionist’ creates a political ‘Adam’, the man created by God to give the slaves their freedom. References to the household feature prominently throughout the *Alphabet*’s narrative, connecting the child reader to his or her domestic surroundings. In the quatrains for the letters N and O, the child reads an idealised depiction of the imagined native home belonging to the slave in the narrative:

⁷⁵ Townsend, *Alphabet*, 4.

N is the Negro, rambling free
In his far distant home,
Delighting 'neath the palm trees' shade
And cocoa-nut to roam.⁷⁶

O is the Orange tree, that bloomed
Beside his cabin door,
When white men stole him from his home
To see it never more.⁷⁷

In this utopian image, the slave is surrounded by nature. The orange tree that grows 'beside his cabin door' evokes an image of domesticity as though the tree is part of the slave's garden. Plants and the civilised cabin 'door' hint at a Western- and Christian-approved image of 'home' that allowed children to empathise with slaves who would see their homes 'never more'. The letter Q is used to convey the change in the slave's abode, the word 'home' noticeably absent from the quatrain:

Q is the Quarter, where the slave
On coarsest food is fed,
And where, with toil and sorrow worn,
He seeks his wretched bed.⁷⁸

The impact of slavery is further highlighted with the use of 'wretched bed', an opportunity for the child reader to compare their own, presumably comfortable bed, which may well have been where they read the *Alphabet*.

Building on this, a similar theme throughout the *Alphabet* is the impact of slavery upon the family unit. Here my views coincide with De Rosa's, who argues that the *Alphabet* 'arouses consciousness about the political, economic, religious, and familial crises that slavery spawns and spurs young children to effect its abolition.'⁷⁹ By memorising this abolitionist alphabet,

⁷⁶ Townsend, *Alphabet*, 10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁹ De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*, 72.

the child reader is invited to compare their family with that of the slave. *The Alphabet* uses several letters to list the villains behind the destruction of the slave's family: the [slave] 'D-river', the 'M-erchant' and the 'K-idnapper' whom we are told steals 'That little child and mother'. Carrying on from this, the *Alphabet* repeatedly uses the relationship between child and parent to emotive effect. In the introductory poem, the child reader is informed that the slave child is 'Motherless and desolate'. In the *Alphabet* itself, the 'I-nfant' is cruelly torn 'from the arms/Of its fond mother'⁸⁰ Fathers also make an appearance: 'P is the Parent' who cries because 'The child he loved to lean upon,/His only son, is gone!'⁸¹ The narrative attempts to create a new abolitionist family where the slave becomes the sibling of the child reader through Christian doctrine. This is conveyed by following 'A is an Abolitionist' with:

B is a Brother with a skin
Of somewhat darker hue,
But in our Heavenly Father's sight
He is as dear as you.⁸²

The slave child may be separated from his 'mother', 'parent' and 'infant' sibling, but the child reader can actively help by acknowledging the slave as a 'brother'. However in the 'E is for Eagle' quatrain, the reader is informed that 'while we chain our brother man,/Our type he cannot be.'⁸³ Thus, the *Alphabet* constructs the slave child as a 'brother' in the eyes of God, who will only be the white child reader's equal in 'type' through emancipation.

Sledge claims this racialises the slave's body and simultaneously constructs the 'whiteness' of the child reader. She argues that in doing so the *Alphabet* 'codifies rather than challenges white social hierarchies.'⁸⁴ By describing the 'Brother' as having skin of a 'somewhat darker hue' than the child reader, the child reader's skin is assigned a contrasting 'whiteness', and, according to De Rosa, a racial superiority. However, this racial assumption is what allows the 'B is for Brother' quatrain to educate the child reader about monogenism. The verse employs the ideology of monogenism to paint the white child reader and the black slave as equals in

⁸⁰ Townsend, *Alphabet*, 8.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁴ Sledge, 'Alphabet' In Elbert, ed., *Youth*, 76.

the eyes of God. In doing so, the *Alphabet* creates an abolitionist family comprising the slave ‘brother’ and their mutual ‘Heavenly Father’. Sledge’s argument that the *Alphabet* reinforces rather than challenges nineteenth-century racial politics, fails to consider that by referencing monogenism, the *Alphabet* attempts to counter those in the audience who argued otherwise.

Sledge maintains that whilst the *Alphabet* uses the child reader to ‘challenge the politics of slavery’, it also perpetuates ‘white, middle-class social hierarchies.’⁸⁵ It is true that the *Alphabet* assumes a white middle-class readership and that those readers held a position in society that enabled them to influence the anti-slavery campaign. However, this is true of almost all abolitionist literatures, reflecting privileges associated with the racial and social status of the writer and the intended reader. Lynn Rosenthal argues that British children’s literature ‘was essentially a middle-class phenomenon that paralleled the emergence of a sufficiently large middle-class reading public’ so its writers were ‘primarily concerned’ with ‘the formation of the character of the middle class’⁸⁶ This encompasses learning about the realities of slavery but also provides the first step towards the level of education and literacy required for children to grow into adult abolitionists. In the introductory poem ‘To Our Little Readers’, the child reader’s access to education is connected to the ‘equal liberty’ in the following ‘A’ quatrain that will be granted to slaves if they are successful child-abolitionists.⁸⁷ Here my views match De Rosa’s who argues that the *Alphabet* ‘presents the [child reader with the] vocabulary necessary to engage in...[abolitionist] activities’,⁸⁸ such as food boycotts and converting non-abolitionists through conversation and activism.

Besides educating the child reader about the nature of slavery, the *Alphabet* suggests several ways that children can participate in anti-slavery activities. One child-friendly method is to boycott slave-grown produce by rejecting the food items listed in the S quatrain. The introductory poem tells the child ‘you can refuse to take/ Candy, sweetmeat, pie or cake,...Saying “no”—unless ’tis free.’⁸⁹ The ‘free’ refers to ‘free-produce’ meaning made without slave labour. As discussed in chapter 3, many children were participants in the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 69.

⁸⁶ Lynne Meryl Rosenthal, ‘The Child Informed: Attitudes towards the Socialization of the Child in Nineteenth-Century English Children’s Literature,’ Unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1974, xiii-xiv.

⁸⁷ Townsend, *Alphabet*, 3-4.

⁸⁸ De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*, 72.

⁸⁹ Townsend, *Alphabet*, 3.

transatlantic free-produce movement and boycotted items made with slave-grown sugar. Shops selling free-produce marketed their compliant sweets and treats at this young demographic.

With regard to the ‘S is the Sugar’ quatrain, Sledge argues that the child reader is politicised in terms of class, as the chosen food items are those enjoyed by a middle-class audience. This is not particularly surprising considering the *Alphabet* was produced by middle-class women for a middle-class market. However, whilst ‘cake’ and ‘candy’ would certainly be found amongst middle-class households, ‘pie’ and ‘tea’ were also popular among the lower classes during the 1840s. Sledge considers the use of ‘your’ as evidence that the child ‘is indulging in extravagance’,⁹⁰ yet it is these very items that the introductory poem suggests the child reader avoids in order to become the ‘A-bolitionist’ in the first quatrain. Slavery is in every cupboard of the child reader’s home, preventing the formation of the family bond with their slave ‘B-rother’.

I agree with Sledge’s argument that the *Alphabet* ‘reveals the politicization of children and childhood’,⁹¹ and add that the *Alphabet* attempted to create a juvenile army of abolitionists through literacy and anti-slavery literature. In *The Anti-Slavery Standard*’s reference to the committee report, the PFASS considered the *Alphabet*’s financial and political impact on the abolition campaign:

This little book was not only a source of much pecuniary profit, but we believe will sow Anti-Slavery seed in the heart of many a child, who in future years, will plead that ‘his brother of a darker hue’ may have an ‘equal liberty’ with himself.⁹²

Here, the PFASS confirm their intention to educate a generation of children about slavery in the hopes that they will grow into fully-fledged abolitionists. The PFASS’s use of the phrase ‘sow Anti-Slavery seed’ refers to the *Alphabet*’s front cover where the words ‘In the morning sow thy seed’ are printed. Read in the context of the PFASS report and the *Alphabet*, the morning seed may refer to the child abolitionist, and the evening the adults. Thus, it is

⁹⁰ Sledge, ‘Alphabet’ in Elbert, ed., *Youth*, 76.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁹² *The Anti-Slavery Standard*, Thursday January 21, 1847, ‘Report of the Committee of the Eleventh Annual Fair of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.’

worthwhile planting the ‘seed’ of slavery early in the morning (childhood) in the hopes that it may grow into an abolitionist in the evening (adulthood).

The *Alphabet’s* introductory poem directly addresses the child reader and requests their assistance in the fight against slavery:

Listen, little children, all,
Listen to our earnest call:
You are very young, ’tis true,
But there’s much that you can do.
Even you can plead with men
That they buy not slaves again,
And that those they have may be
Quickly set at liberty.
They may hearken what you say,
Though from us they turn away.⁹³

Here, the ‘morally superior’ position of the child as a converter is used to show that adults will listen to their innocent requests which would otherwise have fallen upon deaf ears. The poem also encourages the child reader to extend their conversion attempts to their fellow school friends: ‘Sometimes, when from school you walk,/You can with your playmates talk,/Tell them of the slave child’s fate.’⁹⁴ The final Z quatrain brings the *Alphabet* full circle by linking the ‘Zealous man, sincere,/ Faithful, and just, and true’ with the ‘Abolitionist’ from the first quatrain. Connecting the child reader to the adult abolitionist allows the *Alphabet* to bring the child into the political arena and legitimises the Z quatrain’s call for help: ‘An earnest pleader for the slave—/ Will you not be so too?’⁹⁵ This question directly targets the child reader as an abolitionist and requests a verbal and physical response.

The appeal of the abolitionist primers remained strong. In 1856, ten years after the arrival of *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet*, a more concise attempt to merge literacy and abolition arrived from Leeds in the form of the *Alphabet of Slavery*.⁹⁶ [Fig. 5.2] In their work on anti-slavery

⁹³ Townsend, *Alphabet*, 3.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 16.

⁹⁶ Anon., *Alphabet of Slavery*, (Leeds, 1856) JRL.

alphabets and juvenile abolitionist literature, neither Martha Sledge or De Rosa discuss or even mention the existence of the *Alphabet of Slavery*. Indeed, De Rosa incorrectly notes that Abel. C. Thomas' *The Gospel of Slavery: A Primer of Freedom* (1864) is 'the only other recovered antislavery alphabet.'⁹⁷ Marcus Wood includes it in his Anglo-American anthology of anti-slavery poems *The Poetry of Slavery*, but offers no further analysis.⁹⁸ Unlike *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet* which was a colourful gift book, the entire verse of the *Alphabet of Slavery* is printed on one piece of paper, headed with a medallion-shaped image of a male and a female slave, kneeling side by side, with the male 'Am I not a Man and a Brother?' motto around the top and the female 'Am I not a Woman and a Sister?' underneath. In contrast to *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet* which begins by ascribing the first letter A to the reader, the *Alphabet of Slavery* starts instead with the slave: 'A Is an AFRICAN torn from his home.'⁹⁹ The child reader is immediately encouraged to compare the child plight of the slave being removed from his or her home with their own domestic comfort and safety.

Published in 1864 by Philadelphian minister Abel Charles Thomas for an American audience, *The Gospel of Slavery: A Primer of Freedom*¹⁰⁰ was aimed at older children and young adults, being less of a 'learn by rote' guide and more of an informative 'primer' for abolition, following the format of the alphabet. Each letter is accompanied by a relief image; the majority of these graphically depicting the brutality of the slave owner. The few exceptions to this include 'A Stands for Adam', illustrated by a white and a black child sitting on opposite ends of a makeshift see-saw, a house visible in the background and the eye of God above, watching them play. Continuing this theme, 'N Stands for Negro' is accompanied by an image of a white girl teaching a black male slave to read, the pair about to be discovered by a white overseer. Each letter and poem is followed by abolitionist political commentary, aimed at the older target audience of aspiring anti-slavery activists. Unlike the other two alphabets, the themes of free-produce and the home are absent. Instead, the letters focus on religion and the violent treatment of slaves.

These three anti-slavery alphabets demonstrate how abolitionists tapped into the child market for political motives. Abolitionists reworked contemporary learning methods for their own

⁹⁷ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 164.

⁹⁸ Wood, *Poetry of Slavery*, 374.

⁹⁹ *Alphabet of Slavery*.

¹⁰⁰ Abel Charles Thomas, *The Gospel of Slavery: A Primer of Freedom* (New York: T.W. Strong, 1864)

aims, seeking to convert young children and persuade them to convert others to abolitionism in due course. Abolitionist alphabets employed the rhetoric of the household and changing meanings of home for political effect. In doing so, they relied upon actual domestic spaces as the sites for disseminating the alphabet's contents. The material culture of the home was both in children's abolitionist literature and around it.

Lucy's Cameo 'of Wedgwood's Ware': Representations of the Slave Medallion in Children's Literature

As the most recognisable symbol and material object of the transatlantic anti-slavery campaign, Wedgwood's slave medallion provided an ideal way for writers of non-abolitionist children's stories to include the notion of slavery in their work and instigate a discussion around it. Anglo-Irish writer Maria Edgeworth's children's book *Harry and Lucy Concluded; Being the last part of Early Lessons* (1825), used Wedgwood's slave medallion as an educational tool that fitted her own ideas about childhood, methods of learning and children's literature.

Following her father's earlier works, Maria Edgeworth's *Harry and Lucy Concluded* was 'intended for young people. From the age of ten to fourteen',¹⁰¹ presumably aimed at those who had read the previous stories in their younger years and were now ready for a more age-appropriate sequel. Edgeworth's opinion that children should be provided with accurate facts and not fairy-tales meant that her *Harry and Lucy* stories were filled with detailed descriptions of the various equipment and processes that the two children discovered and experimented with. This extended to a section involving the famous Wedgwood slave medallion. When writing the sequel in 1823, Edgeworth wrote to Josiah Wedgwood II¹⁰² asking for some clarification regarding the slave medallion: 'On what coloured ground are the cameos mentioned in the Botanic Garden? –The negro in chains...I mention them in this book- but have only seen the engraving.'¹⁰³ It is noteworthy that despite the previous popularity of the slave cameo, by 1823 Edgeworth did not know someone who owned one for her to view; her only memory of the image was the engraving used to illustrate Erasmus

¹⁰¹ Maria Edgeworth, *Harry and Lucy Concluded; Being the last part of Early Lessons*, (London, 1825), v.

¹⁰² Edgeworth's correspondence was with Josiah Wedgwood II. His father Josiah Wedgwood I, was responsible for the creation of the slave cameo.

¹⁰³ Postscript of letter from Maria Edgeworth to J. Wedgwood II, January, 8 1823. 2481-3 WMA.

Darwin's 1796 poem 'Economy of Vegetation' in *The Botanic Garden*.¹⁰⁴ See Fig. 5.3 for the page containing the cameo engravings she refers to. She wrote again several weeks later to ask if he had 'any copies of the negro slave or the Botany Bay cameo & would you do as much for me as Mrs Frankland did, as you will see, for Harry & Lucy.'¹⁰⁵ Wedgwood replied describing the colours used and, as per her request, enclosed physical copies of both cameos so that the story might be as true to them as possible. Edgeworth gratefully thanked Wedgwood 'for the beautiful cameos which for themselves and as proofs of your kindness will ever be dear to me.'¹⁰⁶

This scene that Edgeworth was so keen to accurately portray used the cameos to simultaneously educate Harry, Lucy, and the juvenile audience about slavery, within the context of material culture and manufacture throughout the Empire. The scene opens with their family friend Mrs Frankland arriving with 'two small packets' for the children, which they unwrap to find 'two cameos of Wedgwood's ware.' Lucy receives the anti-slavery medallion which was described, true to form, as 'black on a white ground, represented a negro in chains, kneeling with his hands raised in a supplicating manner, with this motto engraved, "Am I not a man and a brother?"'¹⁰⁷ Harry receives the brown clay Botany Bay cameo decorated with the three allegorical figures of Peace, Art, and Labour. Mrs Frankland tells Harry that 'thousands' of the slave medallions had been distributed and that: 'no doubt considerable effect was produced by "the poor fettered slave, on bended knee,/From Britain's sons imploring to be free."¹⁰⁸ Edgeworth closes the scene with this reference to Darwin's poem, where she originally saw the engraved image of the slave cameo, bringing her research and writing full circle.

¹⁰⁴ Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden: A poem, in two parts. Part I. Containing the economy of vegetation. Part II. The loves of the plants.: With philosophical notes* (London: J. Johnson, 1796) Darwin was the grandfather of Charles Darwin.

¹⁰⁵ Maria Edgeworth to J. Wedgwood II, January 24, 1823. 2480-3 WMA.

¹⁰⁶ Maria Edgeworth to J. Wedgwood II, June 13, 1824. 2480-3 WMA. J. Wedgwood II's reply describing the colours used: 'The Negro in chains was black on a white ground- The Botany Bay Cameo was of a colour brown.' Quoted from letter from J. Wedgwood II to Maria Edgeworth, January 13, 1823. 2484-3 WMA.

¹⁰⁷ Edgeworth, *Harry and Lucy*, 122-3.

¹⁰⁸ Edgeworth, *Harry and Lucy*, 123. The quotation is taken from Darwin, *The Botanic Garden, Part I*, 54.

Whilst Edgeworth does not describe slavery, or indeed anti-slavery in any great detail, she clearly felt it was a topic that was both instructive and interesting to her child readers. By including it in her narrative, Edgeworth educated her readers about slavery, history, allegorical imagery, manufacture and other parts of the Empire. Whilst Edgeworth's decision regarding which child should receive which cameo may not have had any particular meaning, it is noteworthy that it is Lucy who receives the slave cameo with the male figure, whilst Harry receives the Botany Bay cameo with the allegorical female figures. Edgeworth's use of the Wedgwood slave medallion is the only example I have found in children's literature to reference its existence, a particularly noteworthy fact. Whilst the slave cameo was not produced specifically for the children of abolitionists, and as far as we know children did not receive them on a large scale, its use in the story is interesting. By physically giving Harry and Lucy their own to keep, Edgeworth reveals her belief that children appreciated and could make use of material culture imbued with political sentiments. Edgeworth's decision to use material objects as a learning tool was one which we shall now see replicated by a variety of female authors addressing an abolitionist child audience.

Depictions of Bazaars and Material Objects in Anti-Slavery Children's Literature

As discussed in chapter 2, the anti-slavery bazaars in Britain and America were key sources of income, support and advertising for the abolition movement. These bazaars were public arenas for the display and sale of a vast quantity and variety of material objects. These objects were the result of British and American women's combined domestic efforts over several months, creating physical representations of their political activism. As discussed in chapter 4, the household was the site for this abolitionist production and display. Female abolitionists made clothing and decorative household accessories in their homes, to be sold at bazaars and displayed in the homes of other abolitionists. It is not surprising then, that female writers of children's abolitionist literature drew upon the items made and sold at bazaars in their narratives. These literatures used the material culture of the bazaar to educate the characters in their stories and by extension, the child reader. Anti-slavery narratives that used domestic objects usually focused on the importance of the mother-daughter relationship and used the household as the setting. This was a reflection of the female networks involved in the writing of children's literatures, the production of the real material objects, and as transatlantic female abolitionists.

Embroidering ‘Liberty’ in the *Liberty Bell*

The following literature effectively illustrates how the material household objects made and sold at bazaars were used by writers as a tool for children to learn about slavery and strengthen transatlantic networks. The 1847 edition of BFASS’ bazaar gift-book *The Liberty Bell* printed an ‘anecdote’ where an English mother from Bristol, recalled her daughter’s explanation of the words she had been stitching on a piece of embroidery bound for the Boston fair. Karen Sanchez-Eppler¹⁰⁹ refers to it as a ‘sampler’, but the story merely calls it ‘work’, which meant any handmade item, usually some form of embroidery. As anti-slavery bazaars chiefly sold decorative household accessories, it is more likely that the ‘work’ was part of an embroidered cushion cover or similar item. Titled ‘An English Child’s Notion of the Inferiority of the Colored Population in America’, the mother explained that her five or six-year-old daughter had ‘long been interested (so far as she can understand them) in the objects of the American Anti-Slavery Society’ and for the past two years had sent ‘her little offering to the Boston Fair, and has already finished the piece of work which is to be her contribution this year.’¹¹⁰ The child had sewn the word ‘Liberty’ in the middle of the work and seeing her younger brother’s admiration, proudly explained to him the meaning of the words ‘Liberty’ and ‘Freedom’. ‘For do you know, Dicky, in America there are a number of cruel black people who make slaves of the whites?’ Quickly rectifying the mix-up, the mother ended her anecdote with her wish that

any apologist of slavery could have seen her face of incredulity and horror when I corrected her mistake, and she found that in fact the whites were the cruel, *degraded* oppressors, and the blacks the guiltless victims.¹¹¹

In this story, the piece of embroidery ‘marked’ with abolitionist words is used as a material vehicle to educate children about the true meaning of slavery. It serves as a physical prompt to the mother, causing her to discuss definitions of anti-slavery with her daughter. The decorative accessory not only teaches the child in the story; the anecdote probably caused

¹⁰⁹ Karen Sanchez-Eppler, ‘Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolition’, *Representations*, 24, (1988): 55.

¹¹⁰ ‘An English Child’s Notion of the Inferiority of the Colored Population in America’ in *The Liberty Bell, By Friends of Freedom*, (Boston: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1847), 48.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49. Original emphasis.

several female readers to check that their own children had not been innocently ignorant of the basic facts of slavery. As a representation of female ‘work’, the girl’s brother admires his sister’s efforts because she has embroidered words with political connotations upon it; the embroidery is what draws his attention and prompts the political discussion. The anecdote was memorable enough that anyone who had bought an item from that year’s fair embellished with the word ‘liberty’ would have wondered if it belonged to the child in the story. In doing so, this literature used female transatlantic networks for literary and political effect. It conveys a sense of motherly solidarity by depicting a ‘realistic’ example of child abolitionists. Here, the British woman lets her American sisters in on the secret behind one of the items sent to their bazaar, personalising the material culture of the bazaar. This description of the ‘amusing’ mistakes children might make trying to grasp the anti-slavery concept provides light entertainment, whilst emphasising the role of the mother, the household and material objects in rectifying them.

Miniature Female Abolitionists: *The Edinburgh Doll*

Contributing to thematic use of the bazaar and material culture in literary narratives is *The Edinburgh Doll: And Other Tales for Children* (1853),¹¹² the poetic work of American female writer ‘Aunt Mary’.¹¹³ The poem is unusual in that it is narrated by the physical object, a doll sent from Edinburgh to the Boston anti-slavery bazaar. By making the doll the narrator, ‘as told by herself’, the poem gives the material culture of anti-slavery a voice that connects objects to abolitionism. Unlike the ‘anecdote’ in the *Liberty Bell*, written for a predominantly adult female audience, the *Edinburgh Doll* speaks directly to the child abolitionist. ‘Dedicated by little Mary to all the children who read it’, the doll tells her child readers that her poem has been written specially for them.

The Edinburgh Doll was written as a poetic response to an article published in the *National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette* that quoted from the 1853 Boston Fair Report’s story ‘Little Mary’s Doll’. The article described a letter sent to the BFASS from a Scottish woman

¹¹² Aunt Mary, *The Edinburgh Doll and Other Tales for Children*, (Boston: J. P. Jewett, 1853), Hereafter: A.M.

¹¹³ De Rosa’s research suggests that ‘Aunt Mary’ might have been the pseudonym of a woman called ‘Mrs. Hughs’[sic], who had previously published children’s books in Boston, Philadelphia and New York. De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*, 215.

regarding her late daughter Mary. It is somewhat unclear whether this letter was true or if it was another cleverly designed fictional ‘anecdote’. Upon seeing all the items the Edinburgh female abolitionists were sending to the Boston bazaar, Mary became ‘deeply interested’ and resolved to send the new ‘wax doll’ she had received for Christmas to the bazaar the following year.¹¹⁴ Vowing to increase the doll’s value to the cause, Mary set to work making a fine outfit for the doll and ‘took much pleasure in making the clothes.’¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, Mary died before the clothes were finished, but her mother continued her work and sent the doll to the bazaar the following year as her daughter had intended. ‘Aunt Mary’ notes that ‘from this beautiful and touching letter, the facts were drawn on which this little story in rhyme is founded.’¹¹⁶ Aunt Mary’s poem takes the basic narrative in the letter and transforms it into a piece of abolitionist propaganda. She employs the framework of the white child’s sacrifice established in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and connects it to the material culture of children’s toys and the bazaar.

The poem opens with a description of the doll’s perilous journey from her home in Edinburgh across the Atlantic to her new life in Boston, echoing the Middle Passage:

On ocean wide I tossed about,
’Mid stormy waves, full many a day,
And glad was I to hear the cry
That we were safe in Boston’s bay.¹¹⁷

As De Rosa and Taylor have rightly observed,¹¹⁸ the doll’s journey to Boston is likened to literary depictions of those endured by Africans taken from their homes and sold into slavery. In the doll’s case, she has been sent by the mother of her late mistress to become the property of another girl. De Rosa remarks that the use of ‘innuendoes of a middle passage...make the reader question whether the poem espouses proslavery or abolitionist sentiments.’¹¹⁹ However, the money raised from this transaction will be used to help free those slaves who actually travelled across the Atlantic in a slave ship. Once the doll arrives and is ‘uncased and

¹¹⁴ A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*, 2.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁸ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 134 and Taylor, ‘Selling Abolitionism’, 251.

¹¹⁹ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 134.

brought to light' in the Horticultural Hall, her interactions with the visitors at the fair who 'came and stood to gaze on me' debating whether or not they wanted to purchase her, remind the child reader of a slave auction. The doll is highly sought after, but her worth lies in the identity of her late abolitionist mistress:

And many sought the doll to buy,
(Only because I once was *hers*,)
So many wished for me that I
Might have found fifty purchasers.¹²⁰

Taylor remarks that the allusion to 'competitive bidding for property' in the form of the doll's 'fifty purchasers' would have been 'readily grasped by children well-versed in the horrors of slavery';¹²¹ a consequence of 'facts not fairy tales' children's abolitionist literature. However, unlike slave auctions 'the public gaze upon the doll is a feminine one of sympathy rather than one of masculine avarice and lust.'¹²² The female abolitionists at the fair shed 'tears' at the sight of the doll, not because she is a slave, but because she represents a child abolitionist who did not live to see her activism come to fruition. Though the desire to own the doll is an abolitionist one, the poem still conveys the notion of 'ownership' by referring to Mary as the doll's 'mistress'. The doll's position as the personal property of her child owner is continued by Mary's mother, who 'addressed a letter to the doll's new mistress', included in the box for Boston. De Rosa argues that in doing so, the mother demonstrates that she has 'not learnt as much' as her late daughter about slavery, her 'disturbing' use of the word mistress replicates a master-slave relationship that counter the doll's purpose.¹²³ However, it could be argued that the use of mistress is an abolitionist attempt to rewrite the vocabulary of slavery, the child-abolitionist 'mistress' whose doll represents her activism. Through making and buying domestic objects such as dolls, the child reader can personally help abolish slave ownership by 'owning' a material piece of the anti-slavery campaign. By narrating the doll's own abolitionist voyage, the child reader is able to compare the experience of the Middle Passage with the ship filled with material objects seeking to abolish it.

¹²⁰ A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*, 7. Original emphasis.

¹²¹ Taylor, *Selling Abolitionism*, 251.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 252.

¹²³ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 135.

As discussed in chapter 1, anti-slavery bazaars were the outcome of the combined efforts of dedicated transatlantic female abolitionists. These women spent months working in their homes and in sewing circles to produce enough items to fill the bazaar hall. In producing decorative household items for bazaars, women's 'work' was given abolitionist sentiments. The importance of female abolitionist 'work' runs throughout *The Edinburgh Doll*. The doll informs her female child readers of the lengths these abolitionists had gone to for the sake of the bazaar: 'For busy hands in other lands/ Had worked and toiled for many a day.'¹²⁴ By emphasising the effort involved, their 'work' becomes a political activity; the outcome of hard work is abolitionist success. As this work was carried out in the home, the poem highlights the domestic interior as a site for political action and discussion. The doll's narrative paints a picture of the abolitionist household as a transatlantic factory for the anti-slavery cause, filled with girls and women toiling away in their homes towards a common goal.

The doll is used to educate children about the bazaar's purpose, to explain why she was sent so far away from her owner. The doll questions why the hall has been filled with 'precious' material objects and wonders why other countries are involved in such an event:

Why are all these precious things
Gathered from places near and far,
And why have those in other lands
Helped to enrich the great bazaar?¹²⁵

Her question is answered through by the slave's 'cry of woe' and 'sad bondage wail'; the emotive catalyst that spurs Mary into action. Mary struggles to comprehend the 'bondage groan' of the slave: 'She scarce could think such things were true'; her distress explains why she 'begged and prayed/ To send her doll to the bazaar' as a material sacrifice.¹²⁶ The description of Mary begging and praying to be allowed to intercede on behalf of the slave calls to mind the slave image on Wedgwood's medallion. The slave kneels in a beseeching position, hands clasped in his prayer to God. Although the child audience would probably already be acquainted with the basic meaning of slavery and charity fairs such as the anti-

¹²⁴ A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*, 5.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7, 9.

slavery bazaar, the explanation validates the doll's journey across the 'stormy seas' and emphasises her higher political purpose:

why they've worked and toiled
And sent their precious gifts so far;
This is why Mary begged that I
Might come for sale to the bazaar.¹²⁷

The poem's repeated emphasis on the effort required by the female abolitionists to make their work highlights their dedication to the cause, mirroring the slaves toiling away. Mary's exertion in making the doll's clothes 'all my little clothes, so nicely made,/ Were from her workbox brought,/ Where they were all so neatly laid'¹²⁸ and desperation to demonstrate her commitment is almost what causes her death. For those children who might have attended bazaars as consumers, the poem prompts them to use their domestic skills for a political purpose by showing what children can achieve with their hands. After all it is the 'pretty clothes' made by Mary that turn the doll into a commodity by increasing her monetary value. Without Mary's effort the doll would just be another toy.

The Edinburgh Doll is a prime example of the ways female writers of children's abolitionist literature employed the mother-child relationship for political purposes. The author's pseudonym, 'Aunt' Mary conveys notions of a friendly female family member, using storytelling to guide her niece through her political journey. Mary's abolitionist journey begins with her request for parental permission to help the cause by donating her doll, 'Dear mother, if you'll let me try' and finishes with her mother addressing a note to the doll's new owner. This relationship between Mary and her mother demonstrates the potential for political activism when the two females work together, combining their skills and effort. Mary dies before the clothes are finished; without her mother's assistance they would remain in 'her little workbox' unable to achieve their purpose. To ensure her efforts have not been wasted, Mary's mother completes her daughter's needle 'work' by finishing the doll's clothes and political work by sending the doll to the bazaar:

¹²⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 15.

The work begun by Mary's hands,
Those hands now mouldering in the grave,
By others now has finished been,
And sent to aid the suffering slave.¹²⁹

The doll and her clothes form a physical representation of their relationship and joint efforts, a material embodiment of their domestic abilities and anti-slavery sentiments.

The Edinburgh Doll is a poetic depiction of the transatlantic nature of female anti-slavery, with the bazaar as the stage for this material political activism. The poem's basic storyline combines the transatlantic efforts of female abolitionists, both young and old. The doll, Mary and her mother are Scottish, the people at the bazaar who gaze at the doll and the doll's new 'mistress' are American.¹³⁰ Together they turn the doll into a political symbol.

Through the eyes of the doll, the child reader witnesses the transatlantic realm of the bazaar: 'I could not ever hope to tell/ Of all the treasures rich and gay,/ Which from your own and other climes/ Were gathered in the hall that day...many from here, and some from home.'¹³¹ As we have seen in chapters 1, 2 and 4, Scottish women sent vast quantities of handmade items to their American abolitionist sisters to sell at the Boston and Philadelphia bazaars. In showing the collaborative female effort from Britain, America and beyond, the poem paints a realistic depiction of the transatlantic sisterhood for the child reader. Discussed in the section on bazaars in chapter 4, dolls were popular girls' toys and formed a large part of the children's tables at anti-slavery bazaars. These dolls were made by women on both sides of the Atlantic, but ones that wore handmade outfits of national dress from Scotland frequently drew compliments from bazaar organisers. The roles played by British and American female abolitionists in the poem are key to the success of Mary's story, and thus the entire anti-slavery movement.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹³⁰ The final destination of the original 'Mary's doll' is revealed in Anne Weston's bazaar report published in *The Liberator*: 'The Doll was purchased by a very devoted friend of the slave for Lilian, a daughter of the Rev. J. Freeman Clarke, formerly minister of 'The Church of the Disciples' in Boston. May she, and all the other little children who shall read this letter, live to be always and ever the opponents of American slavery!' *Liberator*, January 28, 1853.

¹³¹ A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*, 6.

For the child reader who might have seen items being made for bazaars in their own homes, but never attended a bazaar, the poem allows the child to imagine the final destination for the items they and other family members have made. In the examples used throughout chapters 2 and 4, the detailed bazaar reports already did this, listing the items from each city and table in their annual reports and periodicals such as the *Liberator*. *The Edinburgh Doll* worked in a similar way, but as a poem written for children it was much more accessible. Following this ‘annual report’ format the poem informs the reader of the various objects made political through the bazaar: ‘The needle-work so gay and bright-/ Statues and toys for girls and boys- /...Books, portraits, puzzles, medals, games,/ Sweet-scented fans from climes afar,/ Glass, china, bronze.’¹³² In my analysis of anti-slavery bazaars in chapter 2, I discussed how bazaars drew in consumers with their ‘exotic’ and ‘rare’ foreign objects, creating a sense of spectacle. This is replicated in the poem’s fictional bazaar where the ‘sweet scented fans from climes afar’ literally smell of their exotic homelands. The list features items that were sold at real bazaars and commonly owned or desired by children. That the child reader might possess such objects politicises the child reader’s household as an actual or potential site for the display of abolitionist objects.

In previous chapters we have seen how British women would gather to ‘view’ the items made by their fellow abolitionists prior to their despatch to the U.S. bazaars. British women took pleasure in admiring the items, so it is believable that a child like Mary would be inspired to contribute as well. Mary’s response to viewing the ‘exhibition of articles’ at ‘Mrs Wigham’s house’¹³³ conveys the power of material objects to inspire ordinary children to be political activists. Although the letter from the real Mary’s mother implies it was the material objects themselves that inspired Mary to sacrifice her Christmas present, Aunt Mary deviates from this narrative. Instead she rewrites it to align with the popular literary idea that the realities of slavery permanently damaged children’s innocence, and thus children themselves. Spencer D. C. Keralis states that children ‘were perceived both as particularly vulnerable to the depredations of slavery and as particularly effective advocates for its abolition.’¹³⁴ Although the drawing-room filled with bazaar items was the driving force behind the real Mary’s activism, the poem chooses a more political option: the knowledge of slavery instead. Upon

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid, 3.

¹³⁴ Keralis, ‘Feeling Animal’: 122.

hearing the ‘sad bondage wail’ of the slave, Mary’s ‘lovely cheek turn[ed] pale’, and she offers up her doll as a material sacrifice:

“I’ll make her pretty clothes myself,
Dear mother, if you’ll let me try;”
But ere her work of love was done,
Sweet Mary laid her down to die.¹³⁵

Instead of decorative items made for the bazaar, the slave’s ‘wail’ is what educates Mary about slavery; she donates her own doll to help their plight in response. Whilst the real Mary probably died from illness or disease, in the poem her death is caused by the loss of her childhood innocence through learning about the true nature of slavery. Mary’s saintly death emulates that of another literary white child abolitionist, Eva St Clare in Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. De Rosa argues that Eva ‘represents the first female who takes center stage, talks, and tries to abolish slavery.’¹³⁶ Like Mary, Eva also dies at the height of her abolitionist efforts and does not live to see the results of her actions.¹³⁷ In replicating Stowe’s narrative, De Rosa argues Aunt Mary ‘overtly challenges Stowe’s story of Little Eva’¹³⁸ by writing a poetic version that uses Mary and her doll to specifically address a female child audience. This connection is conveyed to the child reader through a portrait of ‘Eva and poor Uncle Tom’.¹³⁹ In the list of items for sale at the bazaar. Lindey discusses this use of the ‘intertextually determined figure of the dying white girl’¹⁴⁰ as a narrative employed by Aunt Mary in her other children’s works, however she does not discuss *The Edinburgh Doll* beyond a brief synopsis. Mary’s ultimate sacrifice tapped into the sentimental literary narrative popularised by Stowe’s novel. Mary represented the white, innocent, morally-superior child who taught adults about humanity and remained the image of Christian virtue and humanity even in the face of adversity or death.

At the bazaar, children and adults come to view and purchase Mary’s doll simply because it was associated with her and represented a female child’s attempt to bring an end to slavery.

¹³⁵ A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*, 10.

¹³⁶ De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*, 173.

¹³⁷ De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*, 216.

¹³⁸ De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*, 215.

¹³⁹ A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Lindey, ‘Sympathy Science’: 62.

Here, my views tally with De Rosa's, who argues that the poem encourages girls to 'celebrate abolitionism', and creates a means for Mary and her doll to 'embody heroic nonconformists who participate in a public forum to advance abolitionism.'¹⁴¹ In the author's introductory note to the child reader, 'Aunt Mary' outlines her hopes that Mary and her doll's efforts will serve as a driving force to all who read her story:

may it be the means of awakening among *the children*, a zeal for the cause of the suffering humanity; and of each who reads this simple story may it be said, as with truth it might be said of little Mary, "She hath done what she could."¹⁴²

Here, the power of material objects as anti-slavery weapons is extended beyond the poem and into the homes of the child reader. Mary's doll has the ability to awaken the seed of abolitionism in other children and instils pride in their attempts to emulate the story. *The Edinburgh Doll* makes Mary a heroine, and gives women the agency to let their children become little abolitionists by using their domestic needlework skills.

While *The Edinburgh Doll* used artistic license with the details surrounding Mary's death, it was with political intent. A child who dies because the reality of slavery is so unbearable makes for a stronger subject than a child who dies from an unrelated illness. By turning Mary's story into a format that was accessible to children, her material and physical sacrifice was brought into the homes of many children who would not have read the original fair report. Mary's death served as a reminder that life was fragile and children should not postpone their desire to participate in political activities. In one of the final verses, the doll expressed this rather morbid sentiment to the child reader:

And to the children I would say,
Whate'er your hands may find to do,
O, do it quickly now, I pray,
For short may be the time for you.¹⁴³

The doll's parting advice is a warning: take action against slavery while you can. This echoes the 'sow thy seed in the morning' quotation from Ecclesiastes printed on the front cover of

¹⁴¹ De Rosa, *Mouths of Babes*, 215.

¹⁴² A.M., *Edinburgh Doll*, 3. Original emphasis.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 17.

The Anti-Slavery Alphabet and its reminder to ‘think not it can ever be/ Too early to begin’. *The Edinburgh Doll* provides the child reader with the means to be political through the creation of material objects for bazaars and the purchase of those made by others. It also provides the incentive: the untimely death of the young abolitionist heroine Mary encouraged other young female abolitionists to seize their opportunity to say ‘She hath done what she could.’

The Edinburgh Doll was an educational and motivational piece of children’s abolitionist literature. It specifically targeted the female child as the activist: the mother directly appeals to girls to emulate her daughter’s work. Mary is granted a political role that cannot be halted by others, even by death itself. The poem politicises a domestic toy most girl readers would have possessed at some point in their childhood. In giving the doll a voice, a material object that children could identify with was given political power. The poem educated the child reader about the transatlantic networks of anti-slavery and the role of bazaars within this framework. The child reader is informed of the important role that they, their mothers and female relatives can play from within their own household, using their domestic skills for political impact.

Abolitionist Aprons: Clothing as an Anti-Slavery Weapon

In the American children’s story *The Young Abolitionists; or, Conversations on Slavery* (1848), the discourse surrounding clothing and slavery in children’s literature is continued. This scene focuses on the decorative items of clothing in the abolitionists’ home, adhering to the themes of honesty and education depicted in other abolitionist children’s literature. The scene opens with the mother, Mrs Selden, expressing her surprise that her daughter Jenie [sic] entered the parlour carrying ‘in her hand a beautiful embroidered apron [that] had been purchased for her but a few days before, and was an article she valued very highly.’¹⁴⁴ This triggers an anti-slavery conversation between parent and child. With ‘the greatest earnestness’ the girl uses the apron to make a beseeching request: ‘Mother! Will you send this to the little slave girl?’ The mother was ‘deeply moved by this instance of generosity and pity on the part of her little daughter’ but struggled to ‘make the child understand the apron

¹⁴⁴ Jane Elizabeth Jones, *The Young Abolitionists; or, Conversations on Slavery*, (Boston: Published at the Anti-Slavery Office, 1848), 24.

could not well be sent, and even if could, would not be very useful.’¹⁴⁵ After spending quite ‘some time’ trying to explain why, the frustrated mother suggested that her daughter ‘had better take her pennies and buy tracts and send them to the slaveholders, that they might be convinced that slavery was wrong’, for all the good that it would do. Worried that ‘she should not sufficiently encourage the beautiful spirit of the child’ in her anti-slavery interest, the mother ‘allowed her to sell the apron and purchase an anti-slavery book, which she sent to a distant [slave-owning] relative residing in the south’.¹⁴⁶ Pleased with the outcome of her request and displaying her childish innocence, the girl ‘fondly hoped’ that her action would ‘show him that slavery was wicked, and would induce him to give up all the little boys and girls that he held.’¹⁴⁷

Here, items of clothing trigger the anti-slavery conversation between the child and parent. The ‘beautiful’ embroidery upon the apron serves as a reminder of what the other slave children do not have, yet it is only ‘useful’ in the financial sense. The mother does not suggest sending the apron to a bazaar, nor does she send the money from selling it; she purchases a book instead. Although it is just as unlikely that one anti-slavery book would induce a slave owner to give up his slaves as an apron would, *The Young Abolitionists* cleverly uses the purchased book as a link to the physical book the story is in. In doing so, it underscores the persuasive anti-slavery potential of didactic literature, especially that written for children. This passage highlights the domestic interior as a site for political action and discussion; the child brings the apron into the parlour to make her request. It also works to demonstrate the capacity of the household and the ‘beautiful’ decorative objects within, as abolitionist weapons. The apron’s financial value is apparent, and represents the plethora of household items could equally be sold for political purposes.

As an educational tool, the passage ends with the child’s pleasure at the successful outcome of her suggestion, suggesting that if the child reader were to do the same they too could become political participants. However, the focus is primarily on maintaining the girl’s selfless personality. Her request is granted not necessarily because it would be the most successful political contribution or even because it appealed to the parent’s own abolitionist leanings, but because the mother did not wish to dampen the child’s innocent altruistic

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 25.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

‘spirit’. It is noteworthy that the ‘beautiful’ apron would not be ‘useful’ to a slave. Here the material culture of the white abolitionist household is held up as superior to that required by and given to the black slave.

The ‘Imagined’ Material Object: Clothing as an Abolitionist Metaphor in Children’s Literature

Whilst the aprons, dolls and needlework described in the previously discussed literature recalled physical ones in the child reader’s household, female writers also made use of imagined material objects as metaphors for abolitionism. In anonymous American female author S. C. C.’s short story ‘The Wishing-Cap’ (1847), philanthropic action and abolitionism are given a material embodiment in the form of an imaginary item of clothing: the wishing-cap.¹⁴⁸ The story tells of four siblings: Fanny, Mary, William and Harry who express their desire to make a wishing-cap like Fortunatus’ legendary magical hat, which could be used to bring an end to slavery and poverty. The children discuss the impossible task of making such an item: ‘I don’t see how we any of us could ever make such a cap’ whilst expressing their intention to work hard in the attempt: ‘I would go to work pretty soon, if I thought I could make such a cap.’¹⁴⁹ Here the story evokes the occupation of domestic needle ‘work’ and the arduous process required to make such items. Their mother expresses her hunch that the boys ‘have already begun one, and that your two sisters have been helping you’ but that the realities of life would probably prevent its completion: ‘it may be that you will spoil it, or leave it half done when it becomes an old story, and so never have any of the good wishes you have expressed, accomplished.’¹⁵⁰ This description could be applied to both handiwork items for bazaars that were left unfinished or household items that were discarded when they grew worn and old-fashioned. It also works as a reminder of the determination required to be an abolitionist; the child reader might have lapsed due to boredom, or their family members might have found other ‘worthwhile’ causes to spend their efforts on. Confused as to the nature of the cap they have been supposedly making, their mother elaborates that it was not ‘a

¹⁴⁸ S.C.C., ‘The Wishing-Cap’, in Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, Harriet L. Brown and Anne Wales Abbot, eds., *The Child’s Friend and Family Magazine*, 9, (Boston: L. C. Bowles, 1847)

For the two sequels to ‘The Wishing-Cap’ (‘The Wishing Cap No.2’ and ‘The Wishing-Cap No.3 Concluded’) see *Ibid.*, 9-10 (1848): 102-5 and 178-81. Several other children’s stories during this period used the ‘wishing-cap’ as a plot device to support a morally didactic narrative.

¹⁴⁹ S.C.C., ‘Wishing-Cap’, 68.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

real cap, like the one you wear to school’ but something more figurative ‘something that had so much power as to do whatever the person who was supposed to wear it, should earnestly wish to do.’¹⁵¹

Their mother’s reminder that ‘if you really wish there should be no poor person in the world, you will, whenever you have an opportunity, do all you can to prevent it’¹⁵² speaks to the reader and by extension those they knew, who claimed they ‘wished’ to help the anti-slavery campaign but couldn’t spare the time when it actually came to taking part. The solution to the impossible task of making a ‘wishing-cap’ alone is provided by the mother: ‘if everyone would take hold and do the same thing, a wishing-cap would be made, a pretty large one...that should cover all heads and so do what all heads wished.’¹⁵³ The children astutely observe that ‘everybody won’t take hold, mother, so there will never be a wishing-cap except in the story,’¹⁵⁴ drawing links with abolitionists who must have felt at times that the campaign would not succeed without the full support of everyone around them. Though the children despair at this flaw in their plan, their mother informs them that whilst she does not doubt ‘it will be a great many years before such a thing is done,’ and not within her own lifetime, ‘that is no reason why we should not do what we can do help it on, at least begin one.’¹⁵⁵ Speaking to her children as well as those reading the story, the mother makes her case for political activism: the journey may be long but we should attempt to help for the time in our lives we are on the same path. Here, ‘The Wishing-Cap’ uses the same ‘sow thy seed’ rhetoric used in *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet* and repeated in *The Edinburgh Doll*.

‘The Wishing-Cap’ can be seen as an allegory for the struggles faced by abolitionists. Through the eyes of the children in the story we can see references to the seeming impossibility of their goal, the uphill battle without universal support and the apathy of abolitionists who grew weary. In doing so, ‘The Wishing-Cap’ made these feelings accessible to a juvenile audience, and provided encouragement for children who felt their abolitionist efforts were futile compared to those of the adults around them.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 68-9.

¹⁵² Ibid., 69.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 69.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

Teenage Abolitionists: Addressing the Older Child Reader in Anti-Slavery Literature

The literatures discussed so far in this chapter were preoccupied with the young abolitionist reader. This section addresses those which attempted to incorporate older girls on the brink of adulthood into their narratives. In 1856, American Maria Goodell Frost published her short story *Gospel Fruits; or, Bible Christianity Illustrated*, the winning entry to a contest sponsored by the American Reform Tract and Book Society in search of:

the best manuscript for a religious Anti-Slavery Sunday School book, showing [children and youth] that American chattel slave-holding is a sin against God, and a crime against man, and that it ought to be immediately repented of and abolished.¹⁵⁶

In her preface, Frost stated ‘It is the design of this little work, to show what *true religion* is, and that it cannot exist without a sympathy for the oppressed...that the Gospel spirit is perfectly antagonistic to Slavery.’ As her political and religious views make clear, Frost’s sentiments were in line with those of the American Reform Tract and Book Society, which explains her success in the contest.

De Rosa maintains that Frost ‘adopted and adapted Stowe’s schema of a young abolitionist girl protagonist who possesses both religious and political awareness.’¹⁵⁷ However, this is where the similarities end. Both Stowe in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Aunt Mary in her poem *The Edinburgh Doll*, kill off their white female abolitionists once their innocence has been destroyed by discovering the true nature of slavery. In *Gospel Fruits*, however, Frost’s white female heroine Kate Summers, successfully sees the reward of her abolitionism through the conversion of her classmates.

Gospel Fruits meets the Society’s brief in every aspect. Set in the fictional Miss Chester’s Grove Street Sabbath School, the uneducated opinions of the girls in attendance are used as a rallying call for religious and political reform. The story reveals the girls’ various interpretations of anti-slavery and Christianity and exposes the discrepancies between their public Christian persona and their selfish pro-slavery internal monologue. Despite her role as

¹⁵⁶ Maria Goodell Frost, *Gospel Fruits; or, Bible Christianity Illustrated; A Premium Essay*, (Cincinnati: American Reform Tract and Book Society, 1856), v.

¹⁵⁷ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 136.

the heroine of the story, Kate participates in abolitionist activity because she is 'being good', not because she is driven by any real incentive to educate or convert. Her classmate Adeline Roberts dutifully attends the Sunday School but her vanity and pro-slavery opinions mean that despite outwardly appearances she isn't a 'true' Christian. Described as 'handsome' and 'more richly dressed than any of the other girls', Adeline rudely sits in the teacher's chair when she leaves the room and shows off her beauty and wealth to the other girls by visibly 'pulling off and replacing upon her finger, a very pretty ring.'¹⁵⁸ This realistic portrayal creates a connection with the female reader, allowing them to imagine themselves in the narrative. In this context, it seems fitting that real material objects are used as the trigger for anti-slavery discussion.

Kate physically introduces her classmates to the idea of abolitionism by taking an anti-slavery workbag to her Sunday school class. However, unlike Adeline, Kate does not flaunt her 'treasure'. Its presence is only revealed as a consequence of Kate's disdain for Adeline's repeated ring-twirling when she remarks she 'would not give [her] work-bag for a dozen such rings as that.'¹⁵⁹ Upon discovering the bag is from England, the other girls gather round excitedly trying to see the 'treasure' for themselves. Frost's description of Kate's workbag corroborates with the real-life workbags that female adult abolitionists made and used to demonstrate their anti-slavery affiliation. Combining both politics and aesthetic appeal:

It was a very pretty pink workbag, with a bright, shining clasp; upon one side was engraved the figure of a kneeling slave, with fettered hands and limbs, and underneath, the words, "Am I not a man and a brother?" Upon the other side were the beautiful lines of Cowper.¹⁶⁰

The reaction of Kate's classmates to her anti-slavery workbag conveys the level of prejudice and ignorance that pervaded amongst church-attending Christians of all ages. In her shock at seeing the printed slave image, pro-slavery Adeline throws the workbag onto the floor exclaiming: 'As I live, there is a nigger on it!' Julia Arnot and several other girls voice their disapproval of such an unsavoury image on a 'very pretty' accessory: 'Well, I am sure I would not have a nigger on my workbag'.¹⁶¹ In spite of the insults bestowed on her by the other girls, Kate insists that the slave image 'is not a nigger...It is a poor slave, a colored

¹⁵⁸ Frost, *Gospel Fruits*, 11.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

man, in chains.’¹⁶² In response to the word ‘colored’, Adeline snootily announces that Kate’s use of such words ‘is the abolitionist touch of gentility’,¹⁶³ confirming her pro-slavery sentiments to the reader.

Gospel Fruits was written about, and for, adolescent girls. This is made apparent through the girls’ reactions to the male slave printed on the workbag. Some of them manhandle the workbag and tease Kate by referring to the printed slave image as her ‘beau’. The girls compare the workbag to a contemporary love token that girls might proudly show their friends. When classmate Anna Foster asks why everyone is crowding around the bag, Adeline replies ‘Oh! it is only Kate Summers’ beau; she has brought his likeness to school, that is all....only think of marrying a nigger.’¹⁶⁴ This scene compares the workbag with the male slave image to other female accessories that held male images such as locketts and framed miniature photos. It also introduces the topic of miscegenation, and paints the girls as uneducated in their stance on the matter. The girls are so incredulous at the notion that one of them might be romantically attached to a black man that laughter is their united response. In Kate’s calm and dignified reply that he is merely a ‘poor slave’, Taylor rightly argues the scene demonstrates ‘how such attacks [regarding miscegenation] might be rebutted, thereby preparing young female abolitionists for the criticism they might face.’¹⁶⁵

The workbag in *Gospel Fruits* acts as a narrative vessel for the lived slave experience. The slave image permits the reader to witness the insults he receives because of his appearance and the possibility of engaging in a mixed-race relationship. In *The Edinburgh Doll*, Mary’s doll narrates her journey to Boston and her display at the bazaar as a material abolitionist analogue for the slave’s middle passage voyage and slave auction. In *Gospel Fruits*, the workbag becomes a material embodiment of the physical abuse slaves were subjected to. Upon discovering the nature of her workbag, Kate’s ‘rude companions’ snatch, drop and manhandle the work bag in their eagerness to all see it for themselves. When the bag is returned to Kate she is upset her ‘treasure’ has been ‘considerably defaced by its late adventure’¹⁶⁶ as though the male slave has been the victim of assault. Here, the inanimate

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 14.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Taylor, ‘Selling Abolitionism’, 258.

¹⁶⁶ Frost, *Gospel Fruits*, 13-14.

workbag is given human feelings, much like Mary's doll who expresses relief at arriving safely after her perilous sea journey.

One of Kate's classmates Hellen [sic] May, remarks that she had never fully understood that 'antislavery [sentiments] had anything to do with religion' before Kate told her otherwise. Through her workbag, Kate educates her classmates about the true meaning of anti-slavery, and its relevance to them as Christian members of society:

it represents a principle. The principle of the golden rule is violated by slavery; anyone can see that by looking at this picture. Who would like to be fettered and chained down as this man is, so like a brute?¹⁶⁷

The printed slave image on the workbag functions as an emotive symbol; the other girls are asked whether they would like to be in his position. Whilst this refers to the chains binding him to slavery, it could also imply being reduced to using a decorative accessory manhandled by a group of excitable girls. In her discussion of Frost's *Gospel Fruits*, De Rosa argues that Kate's workbag and her explanation of the 'principle' of anti-slavery, help to 'remove the taboo from "abolitionist" by linking it to religion, an established and acceptable part of [the Sunday schoolgirl's] lives.'¹⁶⁸ I would add to this, that the 'taboo' as De Rosa puts it, is removed by linking both religion and abolition to something all the girls could identify with irrespective of their Christian beliefs: the material culture of the workbag and the domestic sphere it embodied.

Taylor argues that anti-slavery juvenile literature 'provided abolitionist children with fictional representations of children facing social ostracism from their peers...who were willing to sacrifice popularity and social standing...because of their abolitionist beliefs'¹⁶⁹ Frost's narrative is a prime example of this. Kate is teased by her classmates for her workbag but also for the 'abolitionist touch of gentility' when she uses the 'correct' contemporary racial terminology. As such, Frost describes how readers should react in a similar situation, and the reward they will receive for remaining strong in the face of adversity. While Frost does convey how abolitionist readers may be socially ostracised for their political beliefs,

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶⁸ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 137.

¹⁶⁹ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 254.

ultimately her narrative has a successful outcome through the education and conversion of the other girls.

Frost's use of the workbag in her narrative links the abolitionist sentiments of the children to those of the adults who made, bought and owned the real anti-slavery workbags that the book refers to. Women reading *Gospel Fruits* to their children, and the young adults who appear to be Frost's intended audience, would have known precisely which workbag the passage referred to. The anti-slavery workbag printed with lines of abolitionist verse and the kneeling slave image epitomised the material culture of anti-slavery by politicising a domestic accessory.

The fact that Kate has her own anti-slavery workbag, or at least, is permitted to take it with her to Sunday school, provokes a discussion around the life cycle of the object. Anti-slavery workbags fitting Frost's description were typically made and owned by British adult female abolitionists in the 1820s and 1830s. They provided a material way for female anti-slavery supporters to spread their abolitionist sentiments. They merged the traditionally feminine practice of using a workbag to store sewing supplies in the private domestic space of the home, with the more public one of attending meetings and distributing pamphlets. These reticules were taken by their owners to anti-slavery sewing circle meetings, but it is likely they were also carried in public to other political and non-political destinations. The workbags were a way for women to carry their sewing accoutrements alongside copies of the latest political pamphlets. Unlike those of real life female abolitionists, Kate's bag is not used as a storage space for sewing paraphernalia, nor to store pamphlets or to attend political meetings. Kate wears the workbag as an accessory to her Sunday school class, thus merging Christianity and abolitionism, as in the Society's brief. This action imitates adult female abolitionists who took their workbags to various religious, sewing circle and other political meetings.

Gospel Fruits was published in 1856, so we may reasonably assume that the initial workbags owned by the female adult abolitionists of the 1820s and 1830s were probably not still being used on a regular basis. It is plausible that when the workbags grew tired, unfashionable or were simply replaced by better models, they were handed down to younger members of the family to use. This re-distribution of anti-slavery material objects would have worked to re-

kindle the workbag's original political meanings amongst a new social circle who may not have seen one first hand before. Workbags with anti-slavery images were also sent from Britain to America for sale at anti-slavery bazaars; Kate's workbag can be read as the successful product of both the bazaar and the transatlantic networks that provided it.

It is important to remember that the workbag and its life cycle narrative, presented in *Gospel Fruits*, was a work of fiction designed to amuse and educate young Christians and abolitionists. Frost was also writing to meet the brief in the Society's guidelines. However, her decision to use an anti-slavery workbag to convey the relationship between abolitionism and religion provides a stellar example of material culture in children's literature.

Kate's workbag exposes the ability of material objects to shock the ignorant and uneducated, and reveal the private beliefs of others. By seeing and physically handling the workbag, the girls in Frost's narrative are provoked into a display of their true pro-slavery sentiments. The workbag peels away their pious façade and shows them what for they really are. Kate's workbag is a decorative symbol of her humanitarianism, whereas Adeline's ring merely reflects her vanity and pro-slavery character. Here my views match Taylor's, who argues that Adeline's ring is immediately perceived by the classmates and the reader as a reflection of her wealth and social status, but Kate 'must explain the humanitarian importance'¹⁷⁰ of her own ornamental 'treasure' for others to acknowledge its worth.

Unlike the other children's abolitionist literature discussed in this chapter, *Gospel Fruits* does not use the mother character as a literary device to explain and contextualise the material object to the audience. Instead, the young adult takes her place as abolitionist educator and converter. In this sense, *Gospel Fruits* attempts to identify with the adolescent reader by creating a realistic literary representation of how they might fill the role of the 'domestic abolitionist' usually played by the mother. Lindey argues that by analysing the portrayal of girls in abolitionist literature we can 'examine how women writers imagined the rising generation of girls'¹⁷¹ within that sphere. In *Gospel Fruits*, Frost imagines her young female readers as the moral educators and converters of their peers, as budding abolitionists copying their mothers' tactics by re-working items of material culture for a newer, younger audience.

¹⁷⁰ Taylor, 'Selling Abolitionism', 259.

¹⁷¹ Lindey, 'Sympathy and Science': 60.

Gospel Fruits further deviates from the narrative employed by the other literatures by not subscribing to the household setting that had proved so popular elsewhere. Instead, the section of the story that incorporates the workbag takes place at the Sunday school. Whilst this meant it would meet the Society's submission guidelines, it also extended the arena for education and conversion to places that were not necessarily attended by abolitionists. Frost places her narrative in a Sunday school setting, creating a story that replicated the ordinary weekly routine that young Christian female readers would identify with and view as a potential site for anti-slavery activity.

Children's abolitionist literatures that illustrated their political sentiments through the inclusion of household material objects spoke, on the whole, to a female readership. Whilst many of the characters were given male siblings, it was predominantly the female characters who made, used, bought and received the material objects that comprised the narrative. This gendered narrative mirrored the real household of their female readers, forging a link between the literary domestic sphere and the physical one. These stories and poems also echoed the material ways that they, and other female relatives used material objects to raise funds, decorating the homes of other abolitionists with their efforts. Sara Lindey states that children's anti-slavery literature 'provide[d] a forum for women writers to speak to girls of their era in children's literature, imagining their younger sisters' and daughters' roles and responsibilities.'¹⁷² These writers saw the political traction that could be gained through addressing their works to the younger generation of female abolitionists. That female writers saw their literature as a 'forum' to voice their entreaties of political participation is evident in their works. The 1846 edition of the American periodical *Child's Friend and Youth Magazine* printed James Montgomery's 1826 poem 'Inscription under the Picture of an Aged Negro Woman'. Editor and Boston abolitionist Eliza Follen evidently thought Montgomery's verse was relevant to her female audience in 1846, when she added the following note: 'Will not these eloquent lines touch the hearts of American women and American girls who will soon be women?'¹⁷³ Evoking the 'Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?' motto,¹⁷⁴ the 'Aged Negro Woman' addresses her female audience with the following lines:

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Editor's note, presumably belonging to Eliza Follen. James Montgomery, 'Inscription under the Picture of an Aged Negro Woman' (1826) re-printed from *Christian Child's Faithful Friend* in Eliza L. Follen, ed., *Child's Friend and Youth Magazine*, 5, (Boston: Leonard C. Bowles, 1846), 143.

Art thou a woman? So am I; and all
That woman can be, I have been, or am, -
A daughter, sister, consort, mother, widow.
Which e'er of these thou art, O be the friend
Of one, who is what thou canst never be!¹⁷⁵

Highlighting her slave status to the audience, the editor's asterisk clarifies what the white female reader will never be, by including a footnote beneath the verse indicating '*A slave.' The poem lists the various familial labels that the female reader will be given by society throughout her lifetime, but the label of slave is one she will not receive. The young adult reader who has yet to be a 'consort', 'mother' or 'widow' is instead asked to be a 'friend' to the woman who, as the result of slavery, describes herself as a: 'childless widow now, a *friendless slave*.' Evoking the young readers' future aspirations for marriage and a home of their own, the female audience is beseeched 'at the altar of your household joys' to 'Vow one by one, vow altogether: vow,...Against oppression by your brethren's hands;/Till man nor woman...Nor son, nor daughter...Shall *buy*, or *sell*, or *hold*, or *be a slave*.' Follen's editorial note to her audience reveals her belief that the teenage girls 'soon' approaching the 'household joys' of adult life were just as necessary to the anti-slavery campaign as the adult women who had been wives, mothers and widows.

Anti-slavery literature successfully conveyed the various ways that girls could become abolitionists and revealed why their participation was necessary to the anti-slavery campaign. The material culture of the household and the domestic objects within provided an ideal way for writers of children's literature to convey this to their readers.

¹⁷⁴ Wood argues that this line also 'anticipate[s] the famous 'Aren't I a woman?' aphorism of the great North American ex-slave activist Sojourner Truth.' Quoted in Wood, *Poetry of Slavery*, 296. This line was later attributed to Sojourner Truth in Frances Dana Barker Gage's 1863 report, in reference to her 1851 speech at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio.

¹⁷⁵ Montgomery, 'Inscription Under The Picture Of An Aged Negro Woman' re-printed from *Christian Child's Faithful Friend* in Follen, ed., *Child's Friend*, 143.

The Rhetoric of Mothers, Girls, Households and Objects in Children's Anti-Slavery Literature

Robyn Russo argues that children's literature was a space for women to voice their abolitionist opinions without 'jeopardising their position as 'true women' within nineteenth-century gender ideals.'¹⁷⁶ Similarly, De Rosa has argued that female abolitionist writers used their child audience as a 'safety net'¹⁷⁷ that permitted them to write about politics and anti-slavery without the same level of scrutiny subjected to women writing abolitionist works for adults. The 'safety' of children's literature created a space for female writers to communicate their views on the home, material objects and anti-slavery to their child readers but also to the mothers and female relatives of that audience. Here I agree with Russo; the female writer always wrote for this 'dual audience';¹⁷⁸ women purchased these literatures and read them to their children, or would be present whilst their children read them aloud. In this sense Russo argues that children's literature 'proved a clever circumvention of social barriers', permitting what was not acceptable elsewhere. By creating this 'safe space', female abolitionists were able to speak to each other through children's literature, turning it into what De Rosa calls a 'public forum.'¹⁷⁹ In the literary examples analysed in this chapter, we can see how women used the material culture of the home to discuss how best to bring up young abolitionists with other politically-minded mothers.

The role of the mother figure and the household are dominant themes throughout the children's abolitionist literatures that used material objects discussed in this chapter. In the *Liberty Bell*, *The Edinburgh Doll*, 'The Wishing-Cap' and *The Young Abolitionists*, the mother is the adult who narrates the story to the audience. The mother figure is used in these literatures to educate the children in the narrative and the child reader about slavery and anti-slavery. In *The Edinburgh Doll*, the doll is the narrator who educates the audience, but Mary's mother writes the initial letter that inspired the poem. She is also instrumental in taking Mary to the viewing of bazaar items that prompts the 'real' Mary to donate her doll. Mary's mother is the other key character in the poem and educates the children at the bazaar by finishing the doll's clothes. In the *Liberty Bell* anecdote, the mother is responsible for

¹⁷⁶ Robyn Russo, "When Children Are Not Glad" Sympathy, Performance, and Power in Abolitionist Children's Literature' *The AnaChronisT*, 14, (2009): 68-9.

¹⁷⁷ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 10, 23.

¹⁷⁸ Russo, 'Children Glad': 73-4.

¹⁷⁹ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 10, 23.

teaching her daughter how to embroider the word 'Liberty' as part of a traditional female accomplishment, but she is also the person who corrects her daughter's mistake and informs her of the true meaning of slavery. In other scenes in *The Young Abolitionists*, Mrs Selden teaches her children about the realities of slavery and slave life by comparing the slave's situation to their own household. She also educates her daughter about how best to go about converting slave-owners, suggesting the purchase of anti-slavery literature instead of sending an apron. Later on in the narrative the Selden children help to hide fugitive slaves who have escaped from their masters. In 'The Wishing-Cap', the mother educates her four children about slavery and the realities of trying to eradicate it, through an invisible item of clothing. This use of the mother figure ultimately emphasises the role they played in the creation and display of anti-slavery material objects within the household.

Several of these literatures used the household as the setting for the narrative to unfold. Even in *The Edinburgh Doll*, the home is the place where the doll's clothes are made, and the setting for Mary's ultimate sacrifice through her death. As the domestic space regarded to be the domain of the woman, it is not surprising that the parlour dominates as the chosen room within the narrative. In *The Young Abolitionists*, Jenie physically brings the apron and the topic of anti-slavery into the parlour, where the rest of the scene plays out. Similarly, the young girl in the *Liberty Bell* anecdote completes and displays her embroidered item for the bazaar in the parlour with her mother and younger brother. In 'The Wishing-Cap', the room is not explicitly mentioned but we are told the children gather round the fire to discuss the wishing-cap with their mother, which implies they are sitting in the parlour. The result of this use of the home and the parlour as the place where mothers educate children, is to connect the material objects they are discussing with the domestic interior that surrounds them. Likewise, the setting reflects the location where the story is read, bringing the narrative to life as a believable concept.

The fact that female children are the key characters in literatures that illustrated their narratives with material objects has not gone unnoticed. This literary presence of the girl abolitionist using material objects to learn about slavery and convert others reflects the lives of real female child readers. Girls made items that were sent to anti-slavery bazaars and, as we have seen in chapters 3 and 4, adorned their samplers with slave images. It is therefore natural that girls and their work should feature prominently in narratives that used material

objects to teach about slavery. De Rosa argues that while female writers of abolitionist literatures included both male and female child protagonists in their narratives, before 1850 ‘only the boys *speak*, while the girls are spoken *about*.’¹⁸⁰ She claims that after 1850 every female abolitionist writing for children ‘casts a girl as the primary force for restoring American ideals.’¹⁸¹ However, De Rosa’s claim is not entirely correct. Whilst female writers *did* increasingly use the image of the saintly suffering white girl in their narratives after 1850, it is not true that female characters had no voice before that point. In *The Young Abolitionists* (1847) Mrs Selden’s daughter Jenie is the child who instigates the conversation on slavery by asking if her mother will donate the apron, and physically brings the item into the scene. Her brother merely accompanies his sister into the parlour. The year 1847 provides another example of girls’ abolitionist autonomy in S.C.C.’s ‘The Wishing-Cap’. Fanny and Mary are given equal responsibility with their brothers in their conversation about creating a ‘wishing-cap’. In fact, Fanny wishes ‘that there should be no people so wicked as to want to have slaves’ while her sister Mary wishes she ‘had money enough to buy the freedom of all the slaves.’¹⁸² De Rosa includes both these literatures in her work, but appears to have overlooked the speaking roles given to the girl characters.

Material objects enriched children’s anti-slavery literatures by providing a means for the child character and child reader to participate in abolitionist activity. They used the mother figure, the household and material culture to encourage children to boycott slave-produce and to convert others through conversation and decorative household objects. Children were targeted as ideal candidates for converting adults to the cause because of contemporary notions of superior childhood morality and innocence; children could succeed where adults had failed. English writer Amelia Opie embodied this ideology in her 1825 work *The Negro Boy’s Tale: A Poem* when she informed her child readers of their abolitionist purpose as redeemers: ‘You will make the world what we of the present generation wish it to be, but are not able to make it ourselves.’¹⁸³ In spite of this, Keller argues that in prompting children to ‘speak out’ against slavery, this encouragement from children’s abolitionist literature was actually ‘a clear challenge to the moral authority of adults’¹⁸⁴ that went against contemporary

¹⁸⁰ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 11.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² S.C.C., ‘Wishing-Cap’, 68.

¹⁸³ Amelia Opie, *The Negro Boy’s Tale: A Poem*, (New York: Samuel Woods and Son, 1825), preface.

¹⁸⁴ Keller, ‘Notions Childhood’: 87.

beliefs regarding the familial hierarchy where parents and elders were to be obeyed, not questioned. In this sense it could be argued that female writers of abolitionist children's literatures used material objects to undermine the patriarchal authority within the household, and thus the institution of slavery.

This chapter has argued that the domestic setting worked to create a believable narrative that politicised the child reader's home environment. However, Sanchez-Eppler has forcefully argued that because it was believable it reinforced patriarchal definitions of gender and domesticity. She considers that although female writers used an 'idealised' domestic setting as a means to contrast the 'moral and emotional standards by which to measure...[and correct] the evils of slavery' they were actually using standards that were 'implicated in the values and structures of authority and profit they [sought] to criticise.'¹⁸⁵ She elaborates that by situating the child character within a white middle-class family unit these narratives 'reproduce[d] under the benign guise of domesticity a hierarchy structurally quite similar to that of slavery itself.'¹⁸⁶ Despite the anti-slavery rhetoric of these literatures, according to Sanchez-Eppler, their use of the hierarchical relationship between the 'doting mother' and the 'dutiful child' resembles 'the values of the plantation.'¹⁸⁷ Sanchez-Eppler clarifies that she does not deny that 'the domestication of slavery' was a useful political tool for abolitionists writing to children, but that in doing so 'the practice [of glorifying the domesticity of women and children] had costs for women, children and slaves'¹⁸⁸ by masking the realities of their societal confinement to the domestic sphere. Although the household was considered the domestic realm of the female sex, women's social 'confinement' to it cannot be compared to the slave experience. In doing so it minimises the brutal reality of slavery and the plantation. Children's abolitionist literatures used middle-class structures of the family and the household to show how these spaces could be sites of political action for female abolitionists. This chapter has traced the ways female abolitionist writers used material objects to reflect personal, social and political attitudes. In doing so, they infused these objects with meanings. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton argue that people assign meanings to material objects, and that these meanings are subject to change throughout the object and the person's

¹⁸⁵ Karen Sanchez-Eppler, *Touching Liberty, Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body*, (California: University of California Press, 1993), 45.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

lifetime.¹⁸⁹ Through assessing the presence of these objects in anti-slavery literature we can observe these meanings and see how the literary meanings ascribed to the objects in the narrative have changed. In the *Liberty Bell* anecdote, the child's embroidery piece moves between various functions. It begins as a display of domestic skill, raises funds at a bazaar, and then is an educational object, all within the same scene. In *The Young Abolitionists*, an apron that has been given purely ornamental meanings due to its beautiful embroidery becomes the catalyst for anti-slavery discussion. The apron stops being a decorative accessory and is seen in terms of its financial worth to a political campaign. When the apron is sold, those meanings are lost to the new owner, and the political sentiments are assigned to the literature that was purchased from the apron's sale.

The Edinburgh Doll and *Gospel Fruits* are two other literatures that are particularly good examples of Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton's key argument. In the opening scene of *The Edinburgh Doll*, Mary's doll represents a Christmas present and a beloved toy. As the narrative progresses, the doll is given her own voice and clothes that symbolise the hard work and final sacrifice of her owner Mary. Upon arriving at the bazaar, the doll is transformed from an ordinary present into an abolitionist souvenir, one saturated in Mary's story. The doll's life story continues to change after Mary's death; she becomes a present for another child, starting the cycle over again. As this chapter has discussed, Kate's workbag in *Gospel Fruits* represents the life cycle of the 'real' abolitionist workbag as well as the one in the narrative. Kate's workbag represents the work and political sentiments of the British women who made and sent it, as well as taking on Kate's own abolitionist identity. When Kate takes the bag to Sunday school it is a decorative accessory like Adeline's ring, but reveals its anti-slavery meanings through the slave image when discovered by the classmates. The girls also impart their own meanings onto the bag; they liken the image to a 'beau' and the workbag to a locket or painted portrait. Once the girls have been educated about slavery, the bag becomes a humanitarian item that symbolises their conversion to abolitionism. Female writers of children's anti-slavery literature used these meanings and life cycles to produce political narratives that resembled the lived experiences of objects and their female readers.

¹⁸⁹ Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, *Meaning of Things*, 17.

Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the extent to which the domestic material culture of the home was used as a literary device by female abolitionist writers of children's literature. It has examined the use of material domestic objects such as aprons, medallions, workbags, dolls, needlework emblazoned with emancipatory sentiments and the entirely metaphorical wishing-cap, to educate children about slavery. The children's literature discussed in this chapter commonly referred, and predominantly spoke, to female children and their female relatives; a female writer for a female audience united under the abolitionist household. These writers used this material culture to educate children about slavery using the objects that surrounded them in their predominantly middle-class anti-slavery homes on both side of the Atlantic. Aprons, workbags, dolls, clothes, toys and needlework were all items that girls would have helped to make or observed their female relatives making, either for their own homes or for sale at an anti-slavery bazaar. In doing so, the children's literature and poems that used these items 'abolitionised' the everyday material culture of the home both the writer and audience inhabited. Under the instruction of female writers, the material objects used in children's literature urged child readers to use them as incentives as well as a means to participate in political activity.

The nature of the objects and their widespread presence in ordinary households allowed them to become physical bookmarks in the home. Each apron, doll, workbag or piece of embroidery held the ability to remind children and their families of the anti-slavery stories they had read, long after the book had been returned to its place on the shelf. These bookmarks had the capacity to prompt female abolitionists of all ages into political activity; they too could use their own objects to educate or convert others around them to the cause.

Female writers of children's abolitionist literature used the material culture of the home in their works because it allowed them to speak to every woman and child within the boundaries of the home, whilst encouraging them to act beyond it. It was a safe space for these writers to communicate their support for their abolitionist sisters' efforts in producing and selling household items at bazaars and displaying them in their homes. Anti-slavery literatures that used these material objects in their narratives highlighted the potential reforming and educational qualities of the domestic items sold at bazaars. In the narratives this chapter has

discussed, aprons became anti-slavery 'books' destined to convert the slave owner, embroidery corrected miss-held beliefs and workbags were physical prompts for discussion between friends. Dolls carried out the political bidding of their creators. Keller argues that children's anti-slavery literature 'empowered the white child as an agent of reform',¹⁹⁰ but I would argue that it was the material objects within the texts that truly empowered the female reader. Represented in children's literature as genuine instruments of educational and conversion, the objects enabled women and children to see their homes as sites of abolitionist activity. The use of material objects in the narrative validated the young female reader's role in the anti-slavery debate and provided a visual reminder of their future abolitionist potential.

¹⁹⁰ Keller, 'Notions Childhood': 94.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to provide an in-depth and object-based analysis of the relationships between material culture and female abolitionists in Britain and the U.S. To achieve this, I have used a variety of surviving objects previously unanalysed by scholars or not specifically discussed in terms of their use within abolitionist households.

This thesis has contributed towards existing historiographies in several ways. It has supplemented previous work on the visual and material culture of anti-slavery by Margolin, Wood, Oldfield, Cobb and Walker and Ware by using a wider range of British and American objects and by analysing them in terms of their use in the household.¹ It has added a political angle to our view of nineteenth century middle-class domestic interiors, and a material culture approach to anti-slavery. It has also made a significant contribution towards the historiography of children's political material culture, especially that of girl abolitionists. It draws on surviving objects that have either not been used as sources or have not been used to discuss children, their toys and their spaces in terms of anti-slavery and material culture. These include board games, jigsaws, card games, children's literature and samplers, which reveal the ways children were targeted by manufacturers and female abolitionists as consumers, as well as the avenues available to them for participating in contemporary political campaigns. Chapter 5 provided an original analysis of the ways female abolitionist writers used material culture in narratives addressed to a juvenile abolitionist audience. Taken as a whole, this thesis contributes to the new imperial history, suggesting the ways British households could be influenced by the Empire and issues that extended beyond the metropole.

A challenge throughout this thesis has been trying to unpick the political meanings of extant objects. To achieve this, I described the imagery, inscriptions and materials used on anti-slavery objects and situated them within my framework of the imagined 'abolitionist household.' I used letters, diaries, pamphlets, periodicals and bazaar reports to contextualise these objects in the lives of abolitionists who used them. To supplement my discussion, I also used the information in museum catalogues and auction house listings to comment on the

¹ Margolin, 'Freedom'; Wood, *Blind Memory*; Oldfield, *Popular Politics*; Cobb, *Picture Freedom*; Walker and Ware, 'Pincushions'.

possible origins and functions of the objects in their collections. By analysing these objects in the domestic spaces they would have furnished, I placed material culture at the forefront of the discussion, rather than as an accompaniment to traditional printed sources as other scholars have done. There is always, of course, a risk of reading too much into objects when we know very little about their owners or creators. Thus, throughout, I have considered what we do and do not know, and what can reasonably be suggested about the objects being discussed. It has often been difficult to determine if items were produced in Britain or the U.S., and whether the location of surviving items reflects the location of its original owner. This has limited the degree to which a comparison between British and American household objects, toys, samplers and children's literature that referenced material culture has been possible.

This thesis has uncovered and analysed spaces that were sites of female abolitionism, spaces that enabled women to demonstrate their political beliefs and participate in transatlantic political campaigns using material objects. These spaces included sewing circles, bazaars, the domestic interior and the 'space' of children's abolitionist literature. Through their production of anti-slavery objects, sewing circles maintained a constant domestic base for participation and created a regular weekly or monthly space for women to dedicate their abolitionist energies. By creating a space dedicated to the production of political items, sewing circles established an arena where women could combine their domestic skills with their anti-slavery beliefs without male scrutiny. Attended by a group of like-minded middle-class women, sewing circles transformed the normally private domestic activity of needlework into a collaboration of political 'work' for a united cause. Sewing circles enabled and encouraged women to use and display their traditionally feminine domestic skills to create ordinary and decorative household objects. Whether they were unmarked or emblazoned with anti-slavery motifs and mottoes, these objects were saturated with political sentiment. Producing them transformed a passive pastime into an activity associated with stimulating abolitionist discussion and the creation of political propaganda. Sewing circles were not just private production lines of embroidered slaves; participants also disseminated political information and educated other members while they worked. We have witnessed how one woman typically read pieces of abolitionist literature aloud as entertainment while the others made items for bazaars. This combination of material culture and literature is also evident in the works written by female abolitionists that incorporated material objects into

abolitionist narratives for a child audience. Sewing circles created a platform for the sale of political objects and brought abolition into the homes, daily routines and social calendars of female abolitionists. Through looking at the domestic production of abolitionist objects we have seen how sewing circles created a means for women to express political interest and participate as abolitionists within the prescribed social boundaries of female behaviour. Women used and reworked contemporary constructions of femininity to demonstrate their political opinions and claim a space for their political activities inside and outside the home.

Bazaars were an extension of the sewing circle, moving away from the church hall and parlour to large spaces attended by both sexes, filled with the contributions of local, national and transatlantic female abolitionists. For women who lacked the time to make items for sale at bazaars, whose needlework skills were rudimentary, or who simply did not wish to make items or attend sewing circle meetings, bazaars created a political space they could attend. By displaying items decorated with anti-slavery mottoes, bazaars provided a female-centred alternative to attending a lecture or reading pamphlets and periodicals. In contrast to contemporary concerns about the superficial nature of shopping, bazaars actively encouraged women to exercise their consumer power and spend money on clothes and household objects. Bazaars linked consumerism to abolitionist success; by purchasing items, women personally contributed to the cause. By putting a price on handmade items and selling them to customers, bazaars commercialised and politicised women's domestic work. Sewing circles met regularly throughout the year, but bazaars were large social events that created a distinct and annual space for politics in the secular calendar.

Sewing circles and bazaars not only created new spaces for women's anti-slavery activities, they also relied upon existing ones. As a material-culture-orientated extension of the female society meetings that were held in member's homes, they were often held in the homes of British and American female abolitionists. These meetings took place on both a formal and informal basis. Bazaars, meanwhile, relied upon the domestic space as a site of production; the items for sale were produced in parlours and drawing rooms. These spaces were also used to display items to other female abolitionists before they were sent to the bazaar.

Bazaars were dependent upon the homes of abolitionists not just for the production of items but as the final destination of objects sold. Bazaars furnished domestic interiors with a variety

of material objects, physical reminders of political consumerism and bazaar attendance. Chapters 3 and 4 used the domestic space to situate surviving objects within the places they were used. Bazaars and sewing circles transformed the household into a site of abolition.

In chapter 5, I explored the relationship between domestic space, material objects and children's abolitionist literature. Written by female abolitionists in their homes, they remind us that households not only produced material objects but also abolitionist literatures. Reflecting the spaces they were created in, and would usually be used, women writers frequently used the home as the main setting for their anti-slavery narratives. They used the material culture of the home because it allowed them to speak to every woman and child within the boundaries of the home, whilst encouraging them to act beyond them. The household was a safe space for these writers to communicate their support for their abolitionist sisters' efforts in producing and selling household items at bazaars and displaying them in their homes.

Female abolitionist networks played a vital role in creating and sustaining the relationship between material culture and a political campaign. Sewing circles and bazaars were formed by, and dependent upon, the existence of local, national and transatlantic networks and their combined efforts. The anti-slavery bazaars held in the U.S. were the result of the successful collaboration between British and American women. By analysing the fair reports and the private correspondence between female abolitionists, this thesis has demonstrated how women provided encouragement and support by producing and sending items for their abolitionist sisters to sell at their bazaars. These material contributions were encouraged by the detailed bazaar reports published in abolitionist periodicals such as *The Liberator*. American women confirmed they had received the donated items and described which contributions they liked the most, what sold well and requested specific items for the next bazaar. To make a profit they needed networks of female consumers who would attend, purchase items, and return the following year. Bazaars extended abolitionist networks from the local to the transatlantic.

Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated the impact of these networks on the abolitionist household. By describing and analysing the types of material objects sold at bazaars, distributed through female anti-slavery societies and given as gifts, we can see how these networks ultimately

collaborated to furnish the homes of transatlantic abolitionists. Workbags were produced and sold by female anti-slavery societies to raise funds, but were also distributed as gifts to influential women. Filled with copies of the *Jamaica Gazette* and other abolitionist literature, workbags facilitated a network of printed propaganda through a fashionable accessory. We know men gave Wedgwood cameos as gifts and tokens of friendship or affection to their female acquaintances; it is equally possible that women also gave them to female friends. Female anti-slavery networks enabled women to give material objects decorated with slave motifs as gifts to fellow abolitionists. Women used anti-slavery objects to stimulate conversation at social gatherings and hosted anti-slavery tea parties using abolitionist china that demonstrated their free-produce usage. These networks also politicised children's spaces within the abolitionist household: bazaars supplied toys and games with invisible anti-slavery meanings and the handmade items produced by women abolitionists inspired girls to embroider slave motifs on their samplers.

In chapter 5, I demonstrated how women writers used these networks to disseminate their juvenile abolitionist literature throughout British and American households. Displayed on toy tables and book tables, they were sold at anti-slavery bazaars alongside the material objects used as literary devices in their narratives. As with the female abolitionist sewing circles and bazaars networks, female abolitionist writers used material objects to entertain and educate an audience network of abolitionist children. As works that were read to children by their mothers, juvenile anti-slavery literature provided a literary forum for women to speak to each other and their children about anti-slavery, using the material objects in their homes.

This thesis has revealed the extent to which women's bodies, ordinary household objects and the domestic interior were politicised throughout the transatlantic anti-slavery campaigns in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrated how women became drivers of political activism, through the creation of handmade items at anti-slavery bazaars. This thesis established a concept of the imagined transatlantic abolitionist household and then 'travelled' throughout through it in chapters 3 and 4. To achieve this, I located a variety of surviving anti-slavery objects from across Britain and the U.S. and situated them in the rooms they were used and displayed in. In doing so, this thesis has built upon the work started by Walker and Ware by taking a more in-depth tour through the household using a wider range of surviving anti-slavery objects and descriptions of items in bazaar reports. By

tracing these objects and analysing them in the rooms they furnished we have been able to visualise how abolitionist households might have looked. Ultimately this has revealed how political campaigns like anti-slavery permeated transatlantic domestic spaces through a variety of handmade, manufactured, practical and decorative objects.

The surviving objects used in this thesis provide physical proof of the scale of anti-slavery material culture, its presence in middle-class households and women's relationships with these objects. It has demonstrated how each room could contain items with tacit or overt anti-slavery sentiments. This was a result of items produced by individual female abolitionists, female anti-slavery societies, bazaars and British manufacturers. Together they furnished households with anti-slavery items made from a wide variety of materials. This thesis has enriched our understanding of the ways households contained political objects and the extent to which manufacturers tapped into the political consumer market by producing items associated with contemporary socio-political events. Anti-slavery was not the first political cause to be used in this way, but as a campaign that already had a recognisable motif and motto it handed British and American manufacturers a profitable consumer market. Through an analysis of surviving items, chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated that material objects are valuable, yet often overlooked, sources for historians trying to reveal the extent to which women, children and domestic spaces were involved in political activities. By addressing children's spaces, toys and samplers I showed how the material culture of anti-slavery incorporated all generations of the family and how girl abolitionists could demonstrate their political knowledge and participation by producing objects.

This thesis uncovered real, lived experiences of British and American female abolitionists and their relationships to material objects and their homes. It revealed a mixture of positive, lukewarm and decidedly negative, lived experiences for women within a male-dominated political campaign. These experiences highlighted the importance of transatlantic female networks for initiating and sustaining production, although they were also a mixture of friendships and factions. Women's experiences revealed the reality of producing handmade items for sale at anti-slavery bazaars; women were proud of but exhausted by their efforts. They felt a duty to use their sewing skills to help slaves, yet also wanted praise and recognition for their efforts. Chapter 2 built upon this by demonstrating women's fears that their handmade items were not good enough for the wealthy fashionable customers of the

Boston bazaars and their hopes that their efforts had not gone unnoticed. Chapter 2 revealed what women personally thought about the objects they made, sold and purchased at anti-slavery bazaars and how this enriches our understanding of transatlantic female networks.

As well as analysing the types of objects which furnish abolitionist homes, I have considered the ways these objects might actually have been used and the potential consequences upon the object's ability to convey anti-slavery sentiments. Anti-slavery objects were probably frequently used in ways which differed from their original purpose; an analysis of this reveals the life cycle of abolitionist material culture. Using surviving anti-slavery household objects as the main source material allowed the lived experiences and personalities of adult and child abolitionists who made and used them to be visualised. It is important to acknowledge and analyse the potential disparity between the intended use assigned to anti-slavery household objects by their creators and manufacturers and how they were actually used in abolitionist households. Sugar bowls produced purchased in support of the sugar boycotts were not necessarily used to hold the east Indian sugar they promoted, but slave grown west Indian sugar. Ultimately, household budgets influenced the ways anti-slavery objects were used in less-affluent households.

Women embroidered slave motifs onto their needlework as symbols of their anti-slavery beliefs. However, when this embroidery was turned into functional household objects like chair covers, such beliefs could be hidden from sight, obscured both from the person sitting on the chair, and onlookers. Door handles decorated with enamelled kneeling slaves could have reminded those in the household of the campaign and their role within it each time they entered and left a room. Alternatively, using the handle required the user to physically cover the slave with their hand, possibly putting them out of sight. China dinner services and tea sets decorated with slave motifs politicised mealtimes, but when plates were filled with food, the motifs were obscured. Anti-slavery periodicals and newspapers were published to disseminate news and information, but by cutting out images for scrapbooks and fire screens they became decorative and functional household objects.

I have also discussed how the meanings assigned to anti-slavery objects varied according to their user; domestic servants who used them were not necessarily abolitionists. While we know little about how female domestic servants felt about cleaning abolitionist homes and

using items such as potholders decorated with anti-slavery motifs, it is a topic which deserves further scholarly attention.

We cannot be sure how many households possessed anti-slavery cameos, prints, china, textiles, games, samplers, children's literature or any of the household objects described in this thesis. However, these objects are physical reminders of that ways abolitionists expressed political beliefs and how these beliefs extended into their homes. For women and children who did not leave recorded memories, these objects are all that remain of their connection to a political campaign. Games and puzzles, with their well-used pieces, prove that in some households, playtime was politicised. Quilts, embroidered pincushions, samplers and chair covers attest to girls and women who used their domestic skills and their place within their homes to engage with political themes. Missing and broken and repaired jigsaw pieces, samplers with incorrect dates, misshapen slaves and squashed letters, all reveal the lived experiences of women and child abolitionists which have gone unrecorded in more traditional accounts of anti-slavery activism.

This thesis has used surviving objects to imagine how they might have been used in abolitionist households and to trace their life cycle. It has revealed how women reworked items into other objects, how the form and meanings of anti-slavery objects was changeable, reflecting the personalities of individual female abolitionists. I have argued that anti-slavery material culture was woven into the fabric of transatlantic households and is crucial to histories of female abolitionists in Britain and the U.S.

Bibliography

1) Objects in Archival Collections and Auction House listings

2) Manuscript Sources

3) Published Primary Sources

3.1) Newspapers and Periodicals

3.2) Contemporary Articles and Books Pre-1900

4) Secondary Sources

4.1) Published Secondary Sources: Books

4.2) Published Secondary Sources: Journals

4.3) Unpublished Papers and Theses

1) Objects in Archival Collections and Auction House listings

Surviving Objects:

This list is not exhaustive, but includes the items referenced in this thesis as well as other anti-slavery objects. All websites last accessed January 2016.

aaawt.com

pitcher, Staffordshire stoneware, handle depicts a supplicant slave; sides are molded in high relief displaying anti-slavery vignettes including scene from 'uncle tom's cabin', where Liza and Harry escape slavery, (c1850-1859), http://www.aaawt.com/html/ceramic_gallery13.html

Andover Historical Society

Banner, male kneeling slave 'Am I Not a Man and a Brother?' Reverse: 'When Woman's Heart is Bleeding, Should Woman's Voice be Hush'd' image of made group of Southern slaveholders tearing an infant from the arms of its slave mother. Made by Andover anti-slavery society possibly used at anti-slavery bazaars, c.1830s.

ArtNet.com

Wedgwood medallion in gold frame, c.1787.

<http://www.artnet.com/artists/josiah-wedgwood/the-wedgwood-slave-medallion-7EEh4VfIG0StFFvk2TU-kQ2>

Art Walters Museum

Anti-Slavery Brooch, medallion, with kneeling slave in chains, (n.d.), Accession Number 48.2597

barnebys.co.uk

pitcher and small pitcher, ironstone, decorated with blue transfer of quote from United States' constitution's first amendment, 'justice' pardoning a kneeling slave and a printing press, (c.1837), <https://www.barnebys.co.uk/realisedprices/lot/7894484/blue-transfer-decorated-anti-slavery-ironstone-pitcher-and-a-small-pitcher>

slave emancipation society seal, blue-dip jasper, kneeling slave with motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother?', (c1800), <https://www.barnebys.co.uk/realisedprices/lot/2414123/a-blue-dip-jasper-slave-emancipation-society-seal-possibly-wedgwood-4/>

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

medal, Falmouth anti-slavery society, inscribed with 'an association of the liberated descendants of Africa formed to extend the blessings of freedom to their enslaved brethren throughout the world', reverse side features image of king street chapel in Falmouth, (1839), Accession Number:1947N46.1

penny token, design commemorating abolition of slave trade, with Arabic script, (1814), Accession Number: 2001N37

penny token, white man and black man shaking hands with inscription 'we are all brethren', (1814), Accession Number: 2003.0035.4.2

Slave trade fabric.

Bolton Museum and Archive

Tewkesbury medal, depicting a freed slave standing beneath beams of light, (1834), Object Number 1901.19.35

Boston Museum of Fine Arts

medallion, jasper ware, with kneeling slave in chains with motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (c.1786-1787), Accession Number: 96.779

penny token, obverse with image of kneeling female slave in chains and inscribed 'am I not a woman and a sister-1838'; reverse inscribed 'United States Of America Around Liberty-1838' (1838), Accession Number: 2004.1175

Bristol Museum

jigsaw, showing characters uncle tom and Eva from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (c.1852), Object Number: T7433

medallion, copper alloy; obverse with bust facing right, reverse with Britannia surrounded by allegorical figures and crowned by 'victory', Object bears motto: 'I have heard their cry', (n.d.), Object Number: O.4258

medallion, on obverse William IV with advisers, and on reverse 7 slaves dancing around a palm tree, (1807), Object Number: O.4259

medallion, with words on obverse 'I advocate this bill as a measure of humanity' and on reverse 'slavery abolished by Great Britain 1834', (c.1834), Object Number: O.4259

penny token, with 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother' and 'Liverpool or Bristol. payable at London' written around the edge; on one side, a picture of a slave kneeling and in chains with

motto 'may slavery & oppression cease throughout the world'; on other side are two hands in a handshake, (n.d.), Object Number: O.4519

penny tokens, white metal and black enamel, with mottoes 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother?' (obverse) and 'whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them' (reverse), (n.d.), Object Numbers: O.4489, O.4488, O.4487, O.4486 and O.4234

printed cotton, with scenes illustrating Europeans in Africa and the slave trade, (c.1790-1810), Object Number: Na2236

sampler, coloured silks on linen, cross stitch. Border of rosebud stems with verse in centre, kneeling figure of a slave wearing a red loin cloth, wrists and ankles chained, (1837), Object Number: Na2498

two figures, characters uncle tom and Eva from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (c.1850-1870), Object Number: Na2107

wall plaque, by Josiah Wedgwood, in jasperware and framed, with motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother?' (1790), Object Number: O.4233

British Museum

cameo, jasperware, black relief on a white ground shows kneeling slave with chains, (c.1790), museum Number: 1909,1201.260

medallion, jasper ware, ornamented with applied moulded figure of chained kneeling slave in relief in black basalt, (c.1790), museum Number: 1909,1201.261

sugar bowl, blue glass, with wording 'east India sugar/not made by/slaves', (c.1820-1830), museum Number: 2002,0904.1

Brooklyn Museum

punch bowl, earthenware, inscription on inside around the top reads 'success to trade and navigation in all free states—north river' below is inscribed 'august 17, 1792—Albany packet two brothers' and at the bottom, 'freedom to the slave g.w.', (1792), Accession Number: 48.143

wool embroidery on paper, antislavery theme entitled 'contraband 1862', (1862), Accession Number: L2006.5

Buckinghamshire County Museum

medallion. copper, obverse inscribed 'to the friends of the abolition of slavery', reverse inscribed 'Aylesbury', (1795), Number: AYBCM: 1960.137.1

penny tokens, obverse inscribed 'to the friends of the abolition of slavery', reverse inscribed 'Aylesbury', (1796), Numbers: AYBCM: 1920.199.1, AYBCM: 1917.60.1, AYBCM: 1917.61.1, AYBCM: 1919.107.1, AYBCM: 1922.479.1, AYBCM: 1928.32.1, AYBCM: 1956.84.1, AYBCM: 1928.34.1, AYBCM: 1958.145.1, AYBCM: 1928.33.1

Chicago Historical Society, Decorative and Industrial Arts Collection

Two Potholders, Great North Western Sanitary Fair. n.d. Dancing male and female black figures, 'Any holder but a slaveholder'. 1969.1737.

Chipstone Foundation Collection

sugar bowl, blue-glazed and gilded with wording, 'East India sugar/not made by/slaves', (c.1820), Accession Number 1999.22

Clinton County Historical Society Ohio Memory Collection

Quilt, by abolitionist Quaker women of Ohio and Indiana, (1842)

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

medal, with kneeling slave in chains with inscription 'Am I Not A Man And Brother'; border bears words 'British & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society' and 'General Anti-Slavery Convention Held In London 1840', (1840), Accession Number: 2003-173,A&B

medallion, unglazed jasper ware with kneeling slave in chains with motto 'am I not a man and a brother?', (c.1790), Accession Number: 1982-202

painting, watercolour on woven paper, with six vignettes of slave life, (c.1832-1835), Accession Number: 2007.301.1

sugar dish, with kneeling slave in chains; reverse bears the words 'east India sugar not made / by slaves / by six families using / east India, instead of / west India sugar, one / slave less is required', (c.1825-1830), Accession Number: 1998-37

textile, cotton with roller-printed depictions of slave trade scenes, (c.1820-1830), Accession Number, 2002-81

token, white metal, obverse with kneeling slave in chains with inscription 'am I not a man and brother', reverse with words 'whatsoever/ye would that/men should do/to you, do ye/even so to /them', (1787), Accession Number: 2002-44

Cowan Auctions

printer's block, wooden, by David Felt, with kneeling slave and motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (c.1815-1825), <http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=34838>

sugar bowl, bone china, with transfer of kneeling slave in chains, (c.1812-1829),
<http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=17641>

medallion, obverse features depiction of man in European dress shaking hands with man in African tribal dress, and African village of conical huts in background; inscription reads 'we are all brethren/slave trade abolished/by great Britain/1807/c.f.t', (1807),
<http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=60153>

pitcher, copper lusterware, with kneeling slave in chains, (c.1840),
<http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=6406>

two penny tokens, brass, one with motto 'am I not a man and a brother' and one with motto 'am I not a woman and a sister', (1838),
<http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=66203>

Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington (D.A.R)

medallion (82.53)

sugar bowls (99.69.1.a, .b)

sugar bowl (99.69.2.a, .b)

two anti-slavery purses/workbags attributed to Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, c.1830. (82.137.1 and 82.137.1.2)

pin holder (82.137.3)

Medallion (2004.44) made of black basalt and white jasperware by Josiah Wedgwood, Staffordshire, England between 1795 and 1805

Coin purse (83.8.3) made of ivory color leather with a printed picture of the Quaker Goddess of Wisdom, a slave owner and a kneeling female slave in chains; made by the Ladies Society for Relief of Negro Slaves in England between 1830 and 1810; steel frame and clasp; owned by Elizabeth Margaret Chandler of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Coin (2015.6.1) made of copper with kneeling slave in chains and anti-slavery inscription "Am I Not a Man and A Brother" on one side and clasped hands with inscription "May Slavery and Oppression Cease Throughout the World" on other side; made in England in 1790

Coin (2015.6.2) for a slave auction with image of a slave and the inscription "W.W. Wilbur Auction & Commission Merchant 1846 / Charleston So. Ca." on one side and a tree with the inscription "Merchants & Manufacturers Agent / Collection Broker Notary Public & C. on the other side

Coin (2015.6.3) made of copper with kneeling female slave and the phrase "Am I Not a Woman and a Sister" on one side and a wreath with the phrase "United State of America / Liberty / 1838" on the other side

Seal (2013.7) made of glass with image of a kneeling slave and the inscription "Am I not a man and a brother" incised on it 1820-1840

Plate (2015.18) made of earthenware with transfer printed abolitionist design and the title "The Tyrant's Foe"; made about 1830-1850

Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College

pincushion, printed, with kneeling slave in chains and motto 'remember the slave', (n.d.), identifier: SW09-A0009459

sugar basin, with printed image of kneeling slave in chains, (n.d.), identifier: SW09-A0009458

workbag/purse, with black printed image of female slave sitting under tree holding infant, (n.d.), identifier: SW09-A0009460

workbag: kneeling slave in chains. text on reverse reads 'negro woman, who sittest pining in captivity and weepest over thy sick child: though no one seeth thee, god seeth thee: though no one pitieth thee, god pitieth thee; raise thy voice forlorn and abandoned one: call upon him from amidst thy bonds for assuredly he will hear thee', (c.1898), Identifier: SW09-A0009464

Glasgow Museum

collecting box, varnished wood, painted on the front is wording 'donations to the ladies emancipation society?'; on top of lid is transfer print showing a white man, probably an overseer, with one hand he holds a black baby, in the other a raised whip while a kneeling black slave pleads with him; underneath are the words 'cease not to cry unto the lord our god for us? from I Samuel ch 7, (n.d.), Accession Number: PP.1987.246.1

Historic New England

bed curtain fragment, with images of sailors abducting native Africans; background of village huts, palm trees and ships, (c.1785-1800), Accession Number: 1934.1156

breakfast cup and saucer, white-bodied porcelain with brown transfer-printed image of kneeling, chained slave near palm tree, (c.1830-1840), Accession Number: 1942.604AB

cake plate, white body with lobed rim; dark brown printed image of supplicant, chained slave near palm tree (taken from emblem of English society for the abolition of slave trade, (c. 1830-1840), Accession Number: 1961.168D

food cover, domed, with rope border in relief, and white body with lobed rim; dark brown printed image of supplicant, chained slave near palm tree (taken from emblem of English society for the abolition of slave trade, (c. 1830-1840), Accession Number: 1961.168C

potholder, decorated with anti-slavery motifs, (c.1845-1870), Accession Number: 1932.62

potholder, two black people needlepointed in wool; woman in red and green with yellow hat, man in red and brown, with text 'we's gwine norr-/good bye dixie', (1845-1870), Accession Number: 1932.61

potholder, with wool cross-stitch of two black people, a woman in orange and a man in red, with text 'we's free', (c1862-1870), Accession Number: 1936.993

Quilt, with antislavery poem, (c.1836), Accession Number: 1923.597

sugar bowl, with printed image of supplicant chained slave near palm tree, (c.1830-1840), Accession Number: 1961.168B

teacup, white body with lobed rim; dark brown printed image of supplicant, chained slave near palm tree (taken from emblem of English society for the abolition of slave trade, (c. 1830-1840), Accession Number: 1961.168I

teapot with lid, printed image of supplicant, chained slave near palm tree, (c.1830-1840), Accession Number: 1961.168a

historical.ha.com

mini sampler, two black figures with caption 'we's free', (n.d.),
<http://historical.ha.com/itm/antiques/black-americana/civil-war-era-stitchery-mini-sampler-we-s-free-can-you-imagine-the-joy-felt-by-a-slave-who-is-told-that-they-are-now-free/a/625-25071.s>

pair of pinprick art portraits with verses, pencil, ink and watercolour, with image of kneeling slave and seated woman; abolitionist verse written in ink below each image, (c.1840-1860),

<http://historical.ha.com/itm/antiques/abolition-pair-of-pinprick-art-portraits-with-verses/a/6106-38439.s#Photo>

desk accessories, papier-mâché letter holders, hand-painted, one with a kneeling slave in chains in a tropical setting and one with a forlorn female; male is accompanied by motto 'am I not a man and a brother?', (c.1840-1850) <http://historical.ha.com/itm/political/abolition-movement-matching-papier-mache-desk-accessories/a/6106-38438.s>

International Slavery Museum Liverpool

cup, white china, with print of tropical scene showing overseer whipping kneeling slave in chains, accompanied by verse 'From Sun to Sun the Negro toils / No smiles reward his trusty care, / And when the indignant mind recoils, / His doom is whips and black despair', (n.d.), Accession Number MMM 54.171.486

patch box, Staffordshire enamel on copper, with image of kneeling slave in chains and motto 'am I not a man and a brother', (c.1790), Accession Number 1987.212.3

sugar bowl, porcelain, bowl inscribed 'east India sugar. The produce of free labour', (c.1820-1830), Accession Number MMM.1994.111

Massachusetts Historical Society

Wafers attributed to Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, circa 1850. 16.6 cm x 14.5 cm. From Collection of wafers, tickets to anti-slavery bazaars, envelopes, etc. Wafers were printed antislavery slogans that could be detached and used to seal or close envelopes.

Envelope for antislavery wafers. Attributed to Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, circa 1850 6.9 cm x 10.7 cm. From Collection of wafers, tickets to anti-slavery bazaars, envelopes, etc..

Banner, Cotton, paint by unknown, Boston, 1843. 125 cm x 116 cm This banner, used by William Lloyd Garrison at Massachusetts antislavery fairs and festivals, has a central painted medallion depicting a black man in a red sarong throwing off his shackles. Above the medallion is painted "This is the Lord's doing"; below the medallion, "Slavery abolished in the British West Indies August 1st 1834. Laus Deo." Textiles 03.003.

Banner Cotton, paint, silk fringe by unknown, Boston, 1843. 'The Almighty has no Attribute, That can take sides with the slaveholder.' 87.5 cm x 120 cm. A banner used by William Lloyd Garrison at Massachusetts antislavery fairs and festivals. Textiles 03.012

Banner, Cotton, paint by unknown, Boston, 1843. 'God Himself is with us for our captain. II Chron. Xiii:12.' 87.5 cm x 117.5 cm. Textiles 03.011

Banner, Cotton, paint, silk fringe by unknown, Boston, 1843. 'Great is Truth! Great is Liberty! Great is Humanity! And They must & will prevail!' 115 cm x 95 cm, Textiles 03.010

Banner, Cotton, paint, silk fringe, 1843. 128.75 cm x 123.75 cm. Textiles 03.009. 'The Liberator commenced January 1st 1831.' The banner features an oakleaf wreath with "W. L. G." (the initials of William Lloyd Garrison).. "I am in earnest! I will not equivocate! I will not excuse! I will not retreat a single inch! And I will be heard!"

Banner, Cotton, paint, silk fringe, 1843. 115 cm x 132.5 cm, Textiles 03.008. 'Our fanaticism! all me are created equal: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

Banner, Cotton, paint, silk fringe by unknown, Boston, 1843. 92.5 cm x 119.38 cm, Textiles 03.006. Our trust for victory is solely in god. We may be defeated, but our principles, never.'

Banner, Cotton, paint, silk fringe by unknown, Boston, 1843. 113.75 cm x 96.25 cm, Textiles 03.005. 'Proclaim Liberty. Throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof.' Image of liberty bell in centre.

Banner, Cotton, paint by unknown, Boston, 1843, 116.25 cm x 135 cm, Textiles 03.004. 'Shall a republic which could not bear the bonds of a king, cradle a bondage which a king has abolished?'

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Traite des Negres fabric, Accession Number: 26.189.2

millersantiquesguide.com

jug, creamware, printed with printed cartoon image of a man eating and declaiming against taxes making 'slaves of us all'; also inscribed 'British slavery', (n.d.), <http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/11445/late-18thc-creamware-mug-printed-in-black-and-overprinted/>

mug, Staffordshire pottery, printed with image of released slave and quotations from the bible, 'farmers' creed' and 'god speed the plough', (c1830), <http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/147108/a-staffordshire-pottery-anti-slavery/>

plaque, green jasper ware, kneeling slave with chains, (early c19th), <http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/224242/an-early-19th-century-wedgwood-green/>

plate, depicting freed slaves standing before a hut bearing the word 'Liberty', inscription reads 'Freedom First of August 1838', (c.1838), <http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/569/blue-and-white-abolition-of-slavery-plate-freedom/>

Minneapolis Institute of Art

cologne bottle, blown and cut glass with encased sulphide copies of Wedgwood's anti-slavery medallion, (c.1830), Accession Number: 2001.40a, b

writing box, with Wedgwood medallion, (c.1790), Accession Number: 95.19

Museum of London Docklands: London, Sugar and Slavery

Sugar Bowl (1825) ID no: 87.213/4

Sierra Leone medal/token, ID no: 96.79/131. Numerous other tokens also currently on display.

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

cup, white porcelain, with a black transfer print depicting a European handing a paper to two slaves, one is dancing for joy; inscribed below is 'liberty given to the slaves', (c.1834), Object ID: ZBA2469

envelope, with anti-slavery image, (c.1860), Object ID: ZBA2656

figure, kneeling slave, (c.1790), Object ID: ZBA2491

kneeling slave figure, bronze with motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (c.1787), Object ID: ZBA2479

plaque, mounted on the front of a door handle. coloured enamel, with pleading African and huts and ships in background, with motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (c.1790), Object ID: ZBA2451

plate, white porcelain with a black transfer-print depicting a kneeling female slave in chains, a palm tree to the left, (c.1830), Object ID: ZBA2467

plate, white porcelain with black transfer print of kneeling female slave holding bible; broken chains nearby, motto reads 'remember them that are in bonds', (c.1830), Object ID: ZBA2468

plate, with Britannia in the centre, a lion holding a shield at her feet, trampling chains underfoot; personification of Justice to the right; in the background is a bust of William Wilberforce, (1808), Object ID: PAH7367

silk pincushion, with female slave and motto 'remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them'; the back of this item has an extract from the '*Royal Jamaican Gazette*' of 1 august 1827, with a notice of the sale of a black child aged seven, with a biblical quotation beneath, (c.1827), Object ID: ZBA2453

woolwork picture, with kneeling African in black and grey, (c.1820), Object ID: ZBA2840

Newark Museum, New Jersey

Antislavery pendant Blue jewelled, 1794, Object Number: 2003.2.

vases, with images from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (c.1850-1869), Object Number: 68.106A, B

New York Historical Society Library

'Uncle Tom's Cabin' card game with box and 20 cards, 1852, LIB.YC.1852.

Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery

jigsaw, entitled 'the progress of coffee neatly dissected'; (c.1815), Accession Number: 1956.133.8

jug, with print of kneeling slave in chains and motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (c.1800), Accession Number: 1923.158.43: D

medal, inscription reads 'slave trade abolished by Great Britain', (1807) Accession Number: 1980.26.1.51

pottery, earthenware sugar box, inscription reads 'East India Sugar Not Made By Slaves', (n.d.), Accession Number: NWHCM: 1934.37

teapot and cover, creamware, with black transfer prints; on one side is shepherd boy with flock, on other are man and woman attended by young black servant/slave, (n.d.), Accession Number: 1946.70.355

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Needle case, c.1830-50. Stamped with printed image of female slave kneeling before figure of justice. 'Am I not a woman and a sister?' 'the mighty are gathered against me: - not for my transgression, nor for my sin-Holy Writ.'

Printed Handkerchief, 'The Poor Slave', Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. 109621.

Philadelphia Museum of Art

sampler by Hannah Bloor, linen with depiction of kneeling slave in chains and surrounded by verses, (1840), Accession Number: 1969-288-317

Princeton Art Museum (Trumbull Prime Collection)

Wedgwood cameo, porcelain, with ornamental gold frame added later, possibly in c.19th, (1789), Accession Number: y1937-37

Princeton University

sampler, by Maria Wilds, with embroidered image of 'Zante the negro' and abbreviated verse: '[d]rag[ge]d from my native home // [b]y a cruel white man's hand // [n]o more to see my native home // [n]o more to see my native land', (1848), record online:

<https://graphicarts.princeton.edu/2014/02/27/anti-slavery-sampler/>

Rex Stark Personal Americana Collection

Over 300 items, mostly British/Staffordshire manufactured ceramics including vases, candlesticks, sauceboats, plates, jugs, sugar bowls, patch boxes, figurines. There is no list or catalogue of these items.

RowanandRowan.com

Anti-slavery Pendant, Wedgwood medallion in gold pendant mount, c.1788. Ref OZ1
http://www.rowanandrowan.com/Articles/298419/Rowan_and_Rowan/Historical/Historical ITE MS/oz1_antislavery_pendant.aspx

Anti-slavery Pendant, Wedgwood medallion in gold pendant mount, c.1788. Ref ERB3
http://www.rowanandrowan.com/Articles/275407/Rowan_and_Rowan/Historical/Historical ITE MS/historical_erb3.aspx

Scarborough Museums Trust

Wedgwood Medallion with hinged pin as a brooch.

skinnerinc.com

pitcher and two mugs, decorated with a genre scene of a couple in a landscape and a verse, one mug with scene titled 'Eva pressing Uncle Tom,' the last depicting 'a west side view of the cast iron bridge over the river wear', <https://www.skinnerinc.com/auctions/2570M/lots/931>

Smithsonian National Museum of American History

Antislavery medallion necklace on chain, (1787), Accession Number:1987.0005.

Sothebys

Wedgwood jasperware 'Slave Medallion' as brooch/pin, 2006.

<http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.76.html/2006/property-from-the-collections-of-hanns-and-elisabeth-weinberg-and-the-antique-company-of-new-york-n08277>

Sothebys note a similar medallion set as a stick pin was auctioned on October 21, 1999, lot 103, but there is no listing or image on the website. This 'stick pin' may have been a brooch, or a hat or hair pin.

Southwark Museum

token, gilt, obverse with bust of William IV, reverse inscribed 'the reform bill passed 1832. abolition of slavery 1834', (1834), inventory Number: N0185

St. Croix Historical Society

Two red potholders 'Any holder but a slave holder', n.d.

tennants.co.uk

plate, Staffordshire pottery, painted with image of African mother and child with words "'As borrowed beams illumine our way and shed a bright and cheering ray", "I labour and have no rest, (Lam.5C5V)", "So Christian Light dispels the gloom that shades poor Negro's hapless doom" and "I am oppressed undertake for me, Isaiah 28C14V" ', (c.1838),

<http://www.tennants.co.uk/Catalogue/Lots/75187.aspx#sthash.dtRThuwv.dpuf>

Timothy Willett Limited, Historic Medals and Works of Art

All items available to view online:

<http://www.historicmedals.com/search.php?keyword=anti+slavery&cat=20>

Anti-Slavery Token, enchaind slave kneeling right, /I. 33 mm (BHM 269).

Anti Slavery Wedgwood Framed Medallion, jasperware, 1787, by Josiah Wedgwood, a figure of a kneeling slave in chains, Am I Not A Man And A Brother, 68 x 64 mm, contained in turned wood frame.

Anti Slavery Wedgwood Plaque, jasperware, 1787, by Josiah Wedgwood, a figure of a kneeling slave in chains, Am I Not A Man And A Brother, 74 x 64 mm, contained in original turned wood frame.

Anti slavery, white metal medal, 1787, enchaind slave kneeling right, Am I Not A Man And Brother, rev. legend in six lines, 33 mm (BHM 269).

Anti slavery Token, silvered bronze medal, 1787, enchaind slave kneeling right, Am I Not A Man And Brother, rev. legend in six lines, 33 mm (BHM 269).

Anti Slavery Token, , white metal medal, 1787, enchaind slave kneeling right, Am I Not A Man And Brother, rev. legend in six lines, 33 mm (BHM 269)

Anti Slavery, cast iron tobacco jar, circa 1800, a kneeling slave in chains, 'Humanity', 135 x 90 x 70 mm.

Anti-Slavery, York Election, William Wilberforce, white metal ticket, 1807, W Wilberforce esq within wreath of oak, rev. The hero/ of freedom/ the pride of/ his country/ and ornament/ of human/ nature/ africa rejoice/ yorkshiremen have acted independently within wreath, 36 mm (BHM 626), pierced for suspension.

London, Anti Slavery Convention, white metal medal, 1840, by J. Davis, bare head bust of Thomas Clarkson, three quarters facing, rev. a slave enchained, Am I Not A Man And A Brother/ British And Foreign Anti Slavery Society/ General Anti Slavery Convention In London . 1840, BHM 1977.

Thomas Clarkson, The First Meeting of the Anti Slavery Society in London, bronze medal, 1840, by J. Davis, draped bust right, Thomas Clarkson, rev. a kneeling slave right, Am I Not A Man And A Brother/ British And Foreign Anti- Slavery Society/ General Anti-Slavery Convention Held In London 1840/ President Thomas Clarkson Aged 81, (BHM 1977).

University of Michigan, Clements Library, Weld Grimke Collection

Angelina Grimke's wedding purse. No accession number.

University of Virginia

Uncle Tom's Cabin Berlin woolwork, two pieces.

-(Clifton Waller Barrett Collection)

decorative screen, with twelve panels featuring scenes from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (n.d.), ,
online record: <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/berlinworkhp.html>

four Staffordshire mugs, with printed images of scenes from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (n.d.), online
record: <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/mugshp.html>

-(Dr. and Mrs. Robert n. Carde Collection)

pitcher, Staffordshire earthenware, featuring image of the character Eliza from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (1853), online record: <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/pitcherhp.html>

-(Harriet Beecher Stowe Collection)

card game, featuring twenty cards, based on '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*' and a cloth piece with eight scenes, (1852), Object Number: LIB.YC.1852

jigsaw, eleven scenes from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (c.1852-1863), call Number: PS2954. U6 U46 1852

- (Harry Birdoff Collection)

two candlesticks, in shape of figures from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (c1850-1859), online record:
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/togirandelhp.html>

two handkerchiefs, both feature lyrics from the song that Jewett commissioned Whittier to write about Eva's death '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (1852), online record:
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/tomituds/muslinhp.html>

Victoria and Albert Museum

Board Game, entitled 'A Tour Through the British Colonies and Foreign Possessions', (1850),
museum Number: E.2650:1 to 3-1953

figure, moulded lead-glazed earthenware painted in enamel colours, freed slave with book
bearing the words 'bless god / thank briton / me no slave', (c.1833), museum Number: C.129-
2003

Wedgwood medallion, with loop for necklace or wall hanging, with kneeling slave in chains,
(c.1787), Museum Number: 414:1304-1885

pincushion, bearing anti-slavery motif, (c.1829), Museum Number: T.1695-1913

Reticule workbag, produced for Female Society for Birmingham, printed on front in black is a
scene of a female slave sitting under a tree holding a child. To the right stands an overseer
carrying a whip and pointing to distance where there are more slaves hoeing in a field; under the
image is inscribed 'the driver's whip unfolds its torturing coil.' / "She only Sulks - go lash her to
her toil" ; there is another inscription printed on the back of the bag, (c.1825), museum Number:
T.227-1966

seal, black basalt, engraved with kneeling slave and motto 'am I not a man and a brother',
(c.1737-1790), museum Number: 305-1867

workbag with antislavery pamphlets, printed on front in black is a scene of a female slave sitting
under a tree holding a child, with house in background; on the back of the bag is printed 'negro
woman, who sittest pining in / captivity and weepest over thy sick / child: though noone seeth
thee, / god seeth thee; though noone pitieth thee, / god pitieth thee; raise thy voice forlorn / and
abandoned one; call upon him / from amidst they bonds for assuredly / he will hear thee',
(c.1827), museum Number: T.20-1951

Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

medallion, bronze, with image of kneeling slave in chains and motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (n.d.), Accession Number: 1980.114

medallion in plain oval metal frame. with black relief of kneeling slave in chains, with motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (1786), Accession Number: 1906.146

pincushion, round with silk hinge and front and back motif of woman in chains, with motto 'Am I Not Your Sister?', (c.1790-1810), Accession Number: 1922.895/7

Printed slave trade fabric, Object number: T.2003.54;

Wilberforce House Museum, Hull

candlestick, Sheffield silver, Zachary Macaulay. with kneeling slave in chains and motto 'dulce periculum', (1813), Accession Number: KINCM:1998.103

jug, inscribed with 'health to the sick. honour to the brave; success to the lover; and freedom to the slave', (n.d.), Accession Number: KINCM:2006.3745

jug, inscribed with 'health to the sick. honour to the brave; success to the lover; and freedom to the slave', (n.d.), Accession Number: KINCM:1981.823

jug, inscribed with 'remember them that are in bonds', (n.d.), Accession Number: KINCM:1979.117

wall plaque, two wax figures of kneeling slave in chains, two painted ships and an eye in the clouds, motto 'o Britain to thee we appeal' set in circular alabaster and wood frame, (c.1790-1820), Accession Number: KINCM:2006.3748

wall plaque, wax figure of kneeling slave in chains appealing to Britannia saying 'o Britannia set me free' set against ceramic naval background with ship on the left hand side, (c.1790 -1833), Accession Number: KINCM:2006.3747

workbag, silk, male slave with boy and girl under a tree outside a hut, on the back is a six verse poem entitled 'the slave's address to British ladies', (n.d.), Accession Number: KINCM:2010.17

ink stand, creamware, in shape of nautilus shell, decorated with transfer image of kneeling slave in chains, (n.d.), Accession Number: KINCM:1954.7

medallion, white alabaster background, with image of kneeling slave in chains with motto 'a I not a man and a brother', (1787), Other Numbers: DB578

tobacco box, cast iron, lid decorated with kneeling slave and the word 'humanity', (c.1800-1850), Accession Number: KINCM:2006.3741

wall plaque, circular alabaster wall plaque with wax kneeling slave in centre with motto 'am I not a man and a brother', (c.1790-1820), Accession Number: KINCM:2006.3742

wall plaque, wax figure of kneeling slave with motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (c.1800-1830), Accession Number: KINCM:1996.262

wall plaque, with wax figure of kneeling slave with chains with motto 'o lord set me free' against a white ceramic background, (c.1800-1833), Accession Number: KINCM:1988.61.1

figurine, pearlware ceramic, kneeling slave with inscription 'bless god, thank brittin, me no slve', (c.1833-1860), Accession Number: KINCM:1982.351

jug, green-coloured parian, depicting scenes from '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*', (c.1852-1860), Accession Number: KINCM:1979.106

plate, with image of slave and motto 'Am I not a man and a brother?', (n.d.), Accession Number: KINCM:2005.2566

punch ladle, with silver bowl and brass stamp, inlaid in bowl is token of kneeling slave; inscriptions read 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother' and 'whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them', (n.d.), Accession Number: KINCM:1987.159.3

sampler, with kneeling slave in chains with red loin cloth with motto 'thou god seest me xxxxx', (c.1836-1840), Accession Number: KINCM:1998.26.1

wall plaque, alabaster (no frame) with wax embossed figure of kneeling slave against a painted ceramic background of two ships sailing on the sea with motto 'thank god for liberty', (c.1807-1833), Accession Number: KINCM:2006.3740

woollen tapestry panel, (chair cover) kneeling slave with verse 'on Africa's wide plains where the lion now roaring with freedom stalks forth the vast desert exploring, I was dragged from my hut, and enchained as a slave in a dark floating dungeon upon the salt wave', (c.1800-1833), Accession Number: KINCM:1948.4

Witney Antiques

reticule, pink silk drawstring workbag with front panel bearing print of kneeling slave and rear panel with printed anti-slavery verse, (1827), Handwritten note: Jane Neale to her dear friend Sarah Lloyd, Christians town, 4th month 26th 1827. online entry: <http://www.witneyantiques.com/flat.items/silkpicture5lg.htm>

Sampler, Esther Stewart, 1836. No reference number.

This sampler was not transferred to Bristol Museum with the rest of the anti-slavery artefacts when the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum closed in 2008. My correspondence with Sue Giles, Senior Curator of World Cultures at Bristol Museum, suggests it may have been a

loan but they have no records where it came from or where it is now. Clabburn, *Samplers*, 21, states the sampler was owned by Witney Antiques in 1998, but Witney Antiques have been unable to confirm if they currently have the sampler.

Worcester Historical Museum, Massachusetts

Signature Quilt attributed to Abby Kelley Foster, hand-inked text on fabric. c.1845, Everettville, Princeton, Massachusetts. MQ2028.

Text on one segment reads:

‘Dedicated to the cause by a few friends in Everettville, Princeton, Mass.
While ye are sleeping on your beds of down covered with quilts and costly tapestry,
many a slave lies on the cold ground, covered with naught but Heaven's broad canopy.
Remember the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair.’

www.invaluable.com

paperweight, bronze kneeling slave with sign: ‘to be sold’, (c.1800-1835),
<http://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/slavery-and-abolition.-to-be-sold.-13-c-314bd4ac15>

Wedgwood cosmetic powder box, porcelain glazed brass box with kneeling slave in chains; in the background a slave ship and a scene of a hut, (c.1800), <http://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/slavery-and-abolition.-wedgewood,-josaih.-am-i-10-c-7eaf541200>

white porcelain tea cup and saucer, with two transfers, one of a black woman, with her child on her lap and another on the saucer, (c.1800-1830s), <http://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/slavery-and-abolition.-barbauld,-anna-laetitia-11-c-a18ee3461f>

www.liveauctioneers.com

Sarah Gilbert antislavery sampler, with trees, flowers, birds, lantern, dog, cat and girl, (1804),
https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/1969194_sarah-gilbert-sampler-against-slavery-1804

www.millersantiquesguide.com

sampler, kneeling figure of a black slave in chains above a field of sheep and inscribed ‘pity the negro slave, emancipated in 1832, Hannah Shields’, (c.1800-1830),
<http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/88794/an-unusual-early-19thc-needlework-/>

E.M. sampler, William iv, with kneeling slave, (1831),
<http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/112877/a-william-iv-slave-sampler-worked-/>

York Castle Museum Trust

sampler, by Sarah Sedgewick, worked on linen in wools, with slave in chains between two bushes; underneath is a blue band with sheep with motto ‘pity the negro slaves emancipated in 1832’, (1832), Object Number: YORCM: BA3463

pincushion, small and disc-shaped, the pins inserted around the edge; covered in pale-blue silk, one side printed with an advertisement from the *Royal Jamaica Gazette*, August 1, 1827, the other with a picture of a slave kneeling in chains, (1840), licence Number: CC BY-SA 4.0

workbag, yellow silk with metal frame and chain strap, printed on one side with picture of slave with child, (1835), licence Number: CC BY-SA 4.0

2) Manuscript Sources

American Antiquarian Society (Boston, Massachusetts)

Abby Kelley Foster Papers

Birmingham Public Library (Birmingham, England)

Records Relating to the Birmingham Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, 1825-1919

Boston Public Library (Boston, Massachusetts)

Antislavery Collection

Samuel May Jr. Papers

Weston Family Papers

William Lloyd Garrison Papers

British Library

Hannah More papers.

Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

Samuel J. May Anti-Slavery Collection

John Rylands Library, University of Manchester

Raymond English Anti-Slavery Collection Boxes 1-20

Library of the Religious Society of Friends (London)

Junior Anti-Slavery Society of Philadelphia, Minutes

Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, Minutes and Correspondence

Sara W. Sturge, *Memoir of Mary Lloyd of Wednesbury, 1795-1865* (Privately Printed, 1921)

B. Henderson, 'East India Sugar Basins', Advertising card, china-warehouse, Rye-Lane, Peckham. (London: Printed at the Camberwell Press by J.B.G. Vogel, c.1828) MIC 899/202.

Old Sturbridge Village Research Library, Massachusetts

Diary of Mary White, Boylston, Massachusetts., 1836-1844, Vol. 1. Selected entries. Edited by Old Sturbridge Village.

Mitchell Library, Glasgow

William Smeal Collection

Wedgwood Museum Archive, Barlaston.

Order Books,

Letters of correspondence,

Moseley collection

University of Keele Library

Wedgwood Manuscript Collection.

Haverford College Library

Quaker Collection.

3) Published Primary Sources

3.1) Newspapers and Periodicals

Anti-Slavery Bugle

Anti-Slavery Record

Anti-Slavery Reporter

Child's Friend and Youth Magazine

Friends' Miscellany

Genius of Universal Emancipation

Household Words

Juvenile Miscellany

National Anti-Slavery Standard

North Wales Chronicle

Pennsylvania Freeman

The Christian Examiner and Theological Review

The Idler

The Liberator

The Liberty Bell

The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1840: A Journal of Papers on Subjects Connected with Maritime Affairs

The Slave's Friend

3.2) Contemporary Articles and Books Pre-1900

1836 Annual Report of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. Philadelphia, 1836.

A Catalogue of cameos, intaglios, medals, busts, small statues, and bas-reliefs; with a general account of vases and other ornaments, after the antique, made by Wedgwood & Bentley. 5th ed., London, 1779.

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Anon., *Alphabet of Slavery*. Leeds, 1856.

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Appendix: Figures



Fig. 3.1. Printed Handkerchief, 'The Poor Slave', Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. 109621.



Fig. 3.2. Wedgwood pendant. Medallion, jasper ware, chained kneeling slave in relief in black, with inscription above set in an oval gold mount. 1909,1201.261. Courtesy of the British Museum.



Fig. 3.3. Wedgwood Medallion with necklace loop. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, 414:1304-1885.



Fig. 3.4. Wedgwood brooch. The Art Walters Museum, 48.2597



Fig. 3.5. Wedgwood pendant. Newark Museum, New Jersey, 2003.2.



Fig. 3.6. Token mounted with hinged pinback to wear as pin. Cowan Auctions. Historic Americana Auction 2008.



Fig. 3.7. Two silk workbags attributed to Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, c.1830. (82.137.1 and 82.137.1.2) a pinholder (82.137.3) and a cameo (82.53) Courtesy of the Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington.



Fig. 3.8. Yellow silk workbag. Image courtesy of York Museums Trust: YORCM: BP499.



Fig. 3.9. Workbag, n.d. Wilberforce House Museum, Hull. KINCM:2010.17.



Fig. 3.10. Reticule/Workbag with anti-slavery literature. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, T.20-1951.

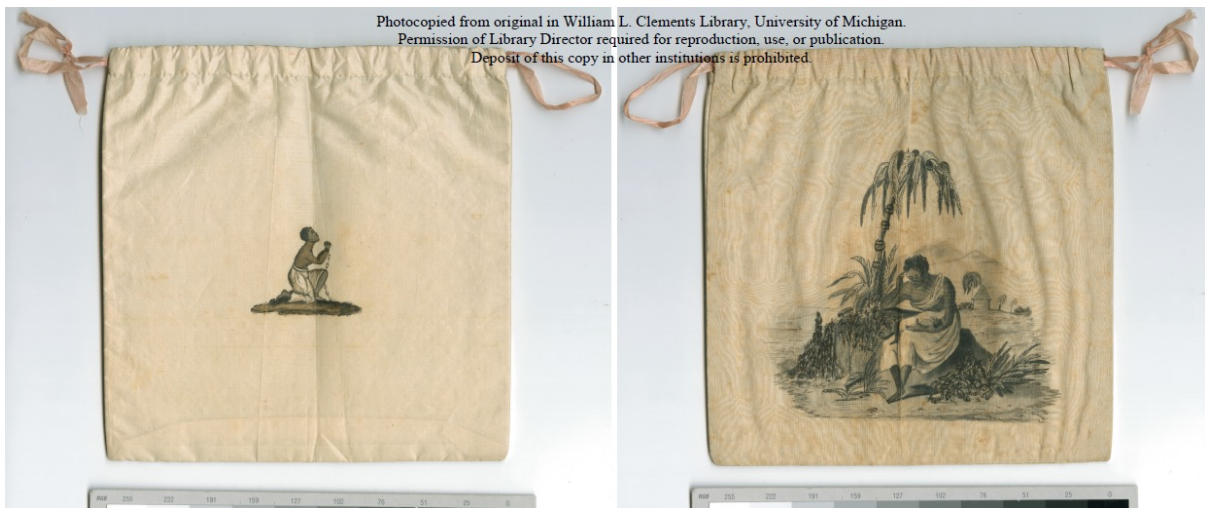


Fig. 3.11. Workbag, believed to be Angelina's wedding purse. Courtesy of the University of Michigan, Clements Library, Weld Grimke Collection.



Fig. 3.12. Cologne bottle, blown and cut glass with encased sulphide copies of Wedgwood's anti-slavery medallion, (c.1830), Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2001.40a,b.



Fig. 3.13. Patch box, Staffordshire enamel on copper, with image of kneeling slave in chains and motto 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother', (c.1790) International Slavery Museum Liverpool, 1987.212.3



Fig. 3.14. Two Patch Boxes, c.1800. 'Eighteenth-Century English Enamels', Taylor B. Williams, Antiques and Fine Arts Magazine Website.



Fig. 3.15. Traite des Nègres printed fabric, purple and white. Bristol Museum, Na2236.



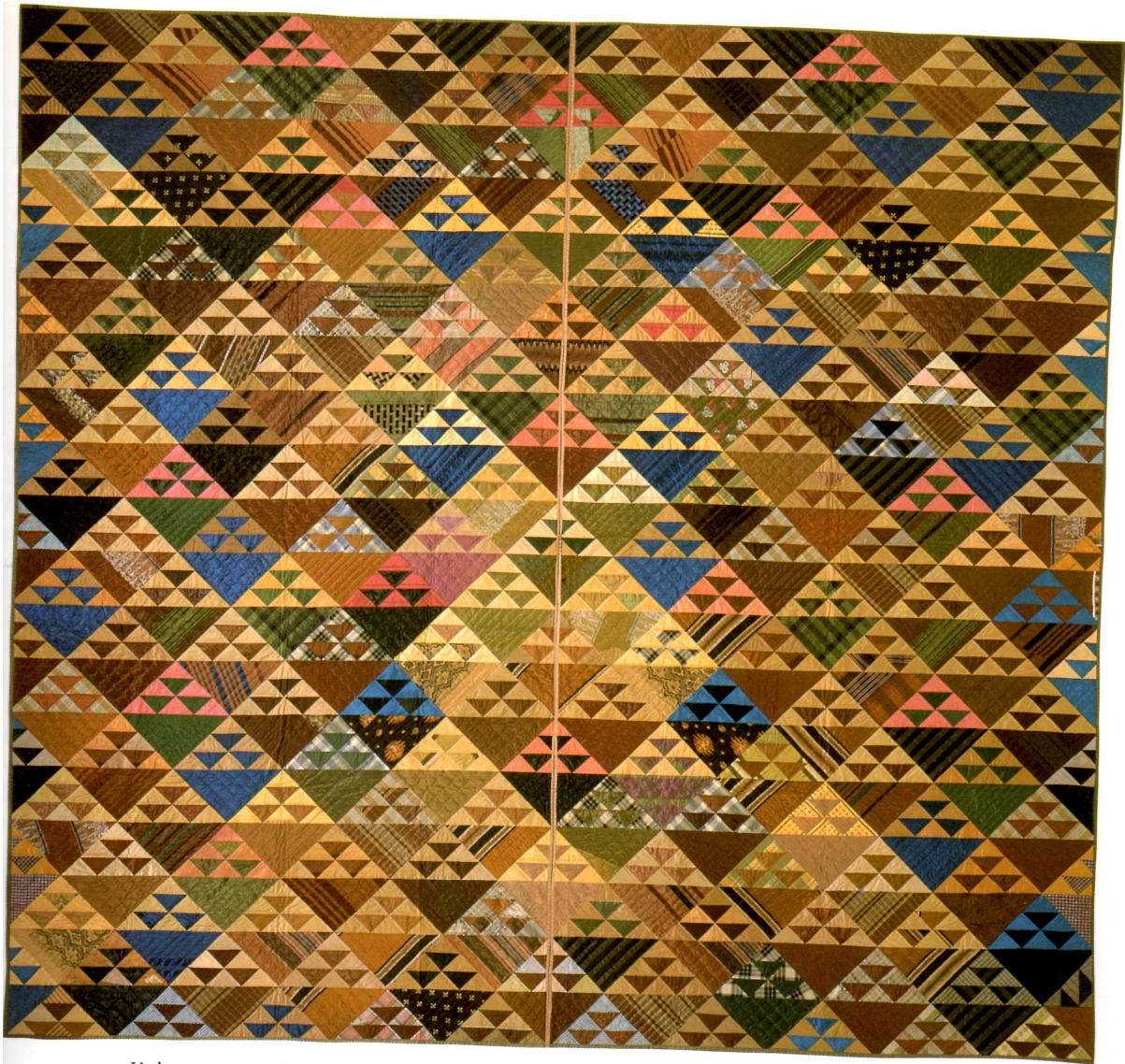
Fig. 3.16. Traite des Nègres printed fabric, red and white. Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, T.2003.54.



Fig. 3.17. Cradle quilt, with antislavery poem made by Lydia Maria Child, c.1836, Historic New England. 1923.597.



Fig. 3.18. Hand-inked Poem in centre of Cradle Quilt. c.1836, Historic New England. 1923.597.



Unknown pattern, by Deborah Coates, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, c. 1840–1850, 96½ × 89 inches, pieced silks, with stamb work. Collection of M. ...

Fig. 3.19. Deborah Coates' Quilt, c.1840-1850. Previously in the Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, now closed. Image courtesy of Elaine Hedges, Pat Ferrero and Julie Silber, *Hearts and Hands, Women, Quilts and American Society*, (Tennessee: Rutledge Hill Press, 1987), 71.



Fig. 3.20. Slave Motif from the centre of Deborah Coates' Quilt, c.1840-1850. Previously in the Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, now closed. Image courtesy of Elaine Hedges, Pat Ferrero and Julie Silber, *Hearts and Hands, Women, Quilts and American Society*, (Tennessee: Rutledge Hill Press, 1987), 70.



Fig. 3.21. Wedgwood cameo plaque, Bristol Museum, O.4233.



Fig. 3.22. Oval plaque of caneware and black basalt depicting a chained slave in black relief, kneeling, with inscription impressed above. Within a moulded black basalt frame. Courtesy of the British Museum.



Fig. 3.23. Wedgwood medallion in gold decorative frame, c.1790. Image courtesy of Princeton University Art Museum, Trumbull Prime Collection: y1937-37.



Fig. 3.24. Plaque, n.d. Wilberforce House Museum, Hull, KINCM:2006.3748.



Fig. 3.25. Plaque, n.d. Wilberforce House Museum, Hull, 1790-1820. Wilberforce House Museum, KINCM:2006.3742.



Fig. 3.26. Robert S. Tait, *Thomas and Jane Carlyle in the drawing Room of their House in Cheyne Row, 1857-8*. In Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods. The British and their Possessions*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 94.



Fig. 3.27. Illustration of mother, child and doll. Framed kneeling slave print upon the wall. In Aunt Mary, *The Edinburgh Doll and Other Tales for Children* (Boston: J. P. Jewett, 1853), 12. Image Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society.



Fig. 3.28. 'The Slave' Orlando Hodgson, London, 1820. Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, PHM RH1.

A man may sell himself to work for another, but he cannot sell himself to be a slave. <i>Blackstone.</i>	All men are created free and equal, and have an inalienable right to liberty. <i>Fundamental Principle of American Government.</i>	He that holds another man as property, is more detestable than the robber and the assassin combined. <i>Thomas Day, 1776.</i>	The negroes are destitute of the Gospel, and ever will be, under the present state of things— <i>Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, 1834.</i>	ANTI-SLAVERY. The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it. <i>Prov. xxix. 7.</i>
Those are man-stealers who abduct, keep, sell, or buy slaves. <i>Grotius, 1650.</i>	Men-buyers are exactly on a level with Men-stealers. <i>Rev. J. Wesley, 1777.</i>	Slaves are liable, as <i>chattels</i> , to be sold by the master at his pleasure, and may be taken in execution for debt. <i>Kentucky Law of Decent.</i>	To be a slave, is to be denied the privilege of reading the Gospel of the Son of God. <i>Elijah P. Lovejoy, 1837.</i>	Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by law. <i>Psaln xciv. 20.</i>
Slaveholding is injustice which no considerations of policy can extenuate. <i>Bishop Horsey, 1786.</i>	I thought it my duty to expose the monstrous impiety and cruelty, not only of the slave-trade, but of slave-holding itself, in whatever form it is found. <i>Gran. Sharpe, 1787.</i>	Time has proved that slavery and education are incompatible. <i>Cassius M. Clay, 1845.</i>	To be a slave, is to be shut out from all enjoyment in this world, and all hope in the next. <i>Elijah P. Lovejoy, 1837.</i>	<i>Anti-slavery.</i> —Who will stand up for me against the evil-doers, or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity. <i>Psaln xciv. 16.</i>
Man-stealers! the worst of thieves; in comparison of whom, highway robbers and housebreakers are innocent. <i>Rev. J. Wesley, 1777.</i>	Liberty is the right of every human creature as soon as he breathes the vital air; and no human law can deprive him of that right. <i>Rev. J. Wesley, 1777.</i>	All meetings of slaves, at any meeting-house or school, for learning to read or write, shall be deemed unlawful. <i>Virginia Code, 1819.</i>	Negroes are not free agents, have no personal liberty, no faculty of acquiring property, but are themselves property, at the will of their masters. <i>Patterson, in Convect. 1787.</i>	ANTI-SLAVERY. Woe unto him that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work. <i>Jer. xxiii. 13.</i>
The children of men are by nature free, and cannot without injustice be either reduced to or held in slavery. <i>Judge Jay, 1786.</i>	The owners of slaves are licensed robbers, and not the just proprietors of what they claim. <i>Mr. Rios, Kentucky, 1780.</i>	The Christian religion classes man-stealers with murderers of fathers and mothers. <i>Bishop Porteous.</i>	Why ought slavery to be abolished? Because it is incurable injustice. <i>William Pitt.</i>	ANTI-SLAVERY. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL. <i>Ex. xx. 15.</i>
The Almighty God has no attribute that can take sides with Slaveholders <i>Thomas Jefferson.</i>	To hold a man in slavery is to be every day guilty of robbing him of his liberty, or of man-stealing. <i>Jonathan Edwards, 1791.</i>	He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. <i>Exodus xxi. 16</i>	Let sorrow bathe each blushing cheek, Bend piteous o'er the tortured slave, Whose wrongs compassion cannot speak, Whose only refuge is the grave. <i>Mrs. Merion.</i>	There are Three Millions of Slaves in the United States of Christian (?) America.
ANTI-SLAVERY. Be not partakers of other men's sins.	ANTI-SLAVERY. Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them. <i>Heb. xiii. 3.</i>	<i>Anti-slavery.</i> —Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law. <i>Rom. xiii. 10.</i>	ANTI-SLAVERY. God hath made of one blood all nations. <i>Acts xvii. 26.</i>	Is not every slave a brother or a sister, ought we not then to seek for immediate, universal, and unconditional EMANCIPATION.
<i>Anti-slavery.</i> Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. <i>2 Cor. iii. 17.</i>	Proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound. <i>Isaiah lx. 1.</i>	Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.	<i>Anti-slavery.</i> Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them. <i>Matt. vii. 12.</i>	Oppression is the forerunner of revolution, are not Slaveholders then tampering with the internal peace of America?
<i>Anti-slavery.</i> Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness. <i>Bible.</i>	Every slaveholder is guilty of reducing human beings to the condition of brutes and things.	All who fellowship with slaveholders are abettors and promoters of theft, robbery, and concubinage.	There is no respect of persons with God. <i>Rom. ii. 11.</i> In the churches of the U. S. separate pews are generally provided for the negroes.	The slave can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but what must belong to his master. <i>Louisiana Civil Code.</i>
There are Seven Millions of Slaves in the World, held by professedly Christian nations	<i>Anti-slavery.</i> In Christian America there is no Marriage for the Slaves.	In America Slaves are joined to Churches, as members, to enhance their price on the auction-block.	Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. <i>Matthew, xxii. 29.</i>	In America 30,000 slaves are members of the Presbyterian Church, and these men and women have no legal marriage.
NO UNION with SLAVEHOLDERS.	Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke.	Is every Free Church to have a SLAVE STONE in it?— <i>Rev. Dr. Duncan of the Free Church.</i>	Slaves shall be deemed, held, taken, reputed, and judged in law to be chattels personal. <i>South Carolina Code.</i>	Every slave in America is a stolen man or woman—every slaveholder is a man-stealer.
While men despise <i>fraud</i> , and loathe <i>pay sine</i> , and abhor <i>blood</i> , they shall reject with indignation the wild and guilty phantasy, that man can hold property in man. <i>Brougham.</i>	My God what wish can prosper, or what prayer, For those who deal in cargoes of despair; Or drive a leathsome traffic, gauge and span, And buy the muscles and the bones of man. <i>Cowper.</i>	Are we then fanatics? Are we enthusiasts? Because we say to a Slaveholder, Do not rob, Do not murder. <i>Charles James Fox.</i>	Have we separated ourselves from our moderate brethren to form an alliance with manstealers. <i>Rev. H. Grey, Moderator of the Free Church General Assembly for 1846.</i>	Slaves regard all instruction, addressed especially to themselves, as a device of their masters, to make them more obedient and profitable to them. Such are the workings of slavery.

Fig. 3.29. Wafers attributed to Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, circa 1850.
Massachusetts Historical Society



Fig. 3.30. Writing box with Wedgwood medallion, c.1790, Minneapolis Institute of Art, 95.19.



Fig. 3.31. Inkstand, n.d. Wilberforce House Museum, Hull, KINCM:1954.7.



Fig. 3.32. Desk accessories, papier-mâché letter holders, c.1840-1850. Auction Online <http://historical.ha.com/itm/political/abolition-movement-matching-papier-mache-desk-accessories/a/6106-38438.s>

Mary N. B. Smith
to Abby Kelley



Original available
upon request

Essex 18th August 16th 41,

My dear friend Abby,

As a favourable opportunity now presents it self of sending you a line, I very readily embrace it.

Often, yes very often has my mind wandered in pursuit of you since you left us, thinking of your trials that must needs come, if you are faithful to do your duty every opportunity,

& I think you are, judging from what I saw while here. —

Oh this is a lying world ^{to many souls}, we are faithful — the cry of Infidel has been sounded loud & long, until of late it has rather subsided, I believe it has always been thought safe to follow the Bible until of late, some have become wise above what is written, & think all of God's holy word ought not to be preached, & even some of our most devoted christians, are crying out why do you want to fall in with all these new fangled notions & indeed it is new fangled — to feel for our suffering brothers & sisters & try to labour for their deliverance from all sin, Oh! my soul I am sick of the religion that is a going, all our time must be spent for self, pray for self, talk for self, I want to try to love my neighbour as my self, & remember those in bonds as bound with them" & try to live devoted to God, deal justly, love mercy, & walk humbly, with God — For one I cannot see any harm in trying to be pure, & to make others pure, & for my encouragement, I read, "blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"

Fig. 3.33. Letter with abolitionist letterhead, Mary Smith to Abby Kelley, August 16, 1841. Image Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society.

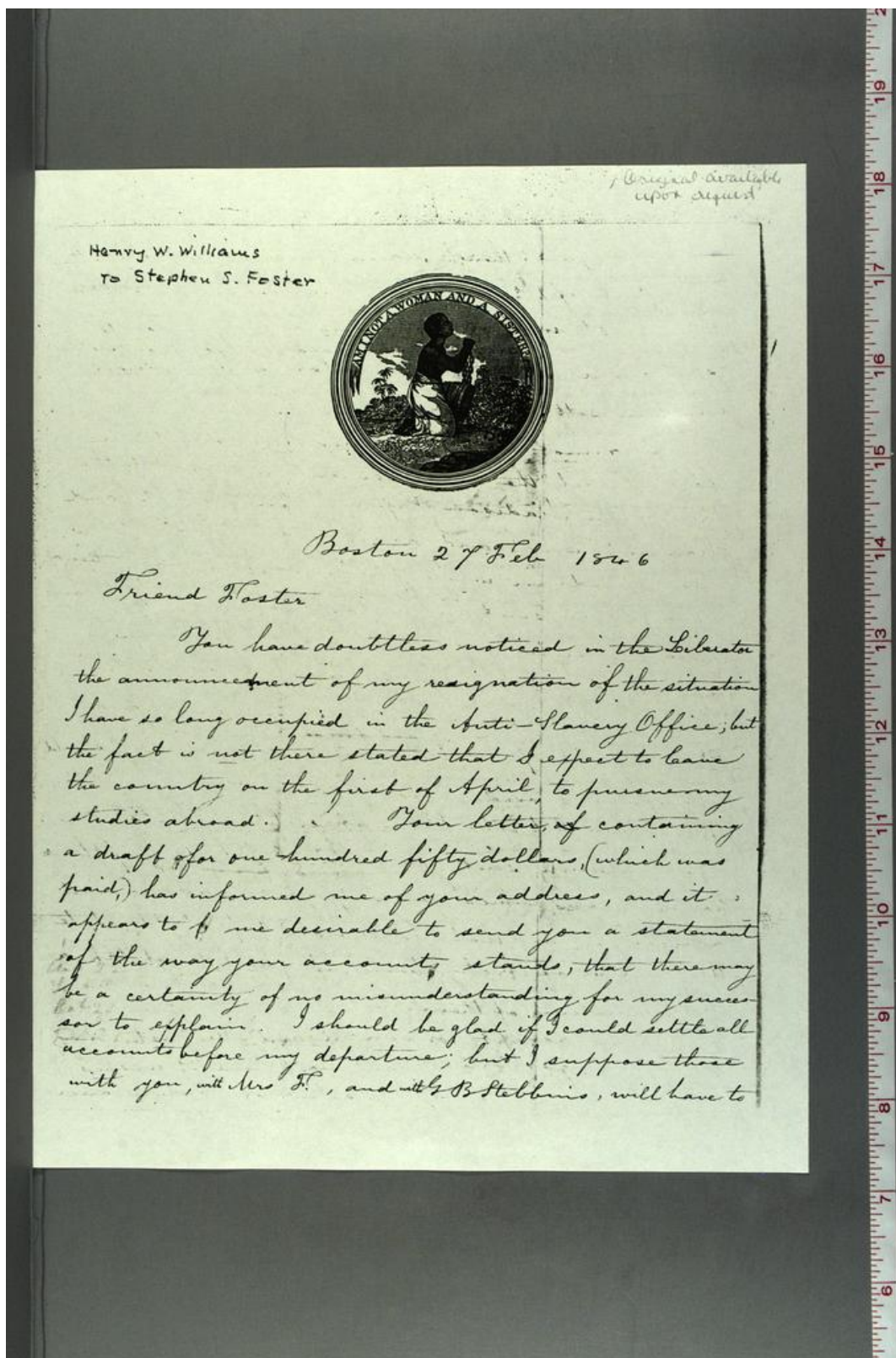


Fig. 3.34. Letter with abolitionist letterhead, Henry W. Williams to Stephen S. Foster, February 27, 1846. Image Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society.

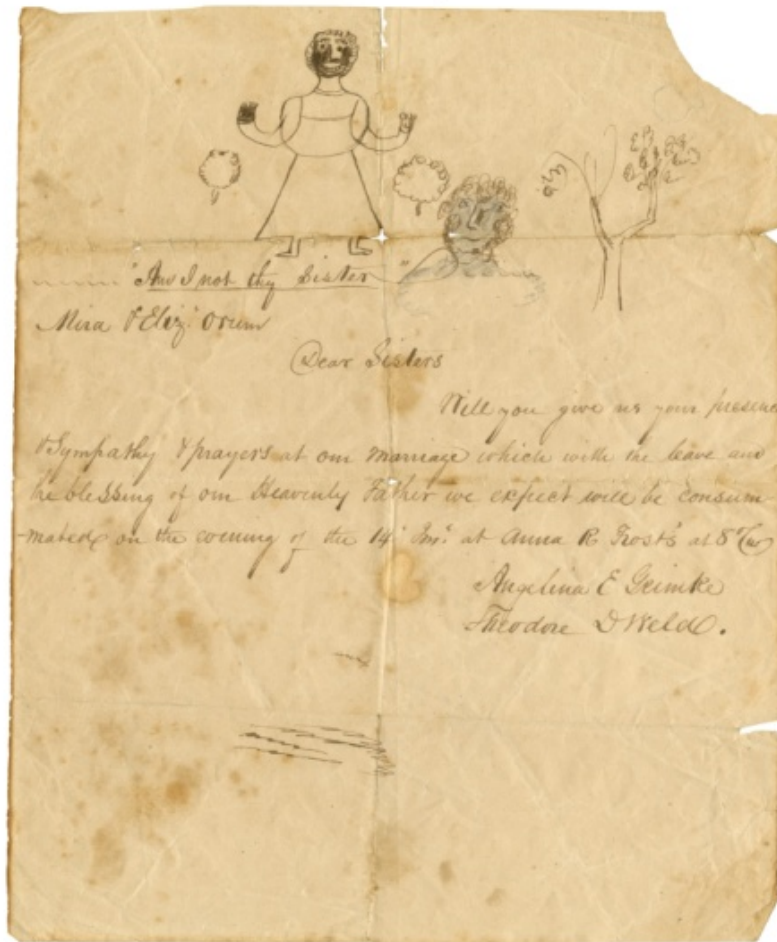


Fig. 3.35. Draft of Grimke-Weld wedding invitation. Image Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Original available upon request

May 10th 1838



Abby Kelley
Dear Sister

On the 14th inst. we expect to consummate our marriage in the city of Philadelphia at 8 o'clock at 3 Bellmont Place - in Spring St. above Sunipet at 8 o'clock in the evening - Will thou grant us thy precious sympathy and prayer on that solemn occasion -

Grimke
Angelina C. Grimke
Theodore D. Weld

May 1st

Theodore Dwight Weld, abolitionist (Nov. 23 1803 - Feb 3 - 1895)
b. Hampton, Conn. son of a Cong. minister, descended from
Rev. Thos. Weld, the first minister of Roxbury. Passed his
youth near Andover, Mass. Studied for ministry, advocated
temperance in the West during Conventions
From 1830 zealous in Anti Slavery. Helped found. Seminary
at Cincinnati, O.
married Angelina Grimke May 14, 1838

Fig. 3.36. Grimke-Weld wedding invitation to Abby Kelley, May 1838. Image Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society.



Fig. 3.37. Plaque mounted on the front of a door handle. coloured enamel, c.1790. Image courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, ZBA2451.



Fig. 3.38. Pincushion. Image courtesy of York Museums Trust: CC BY-SA 4.0.

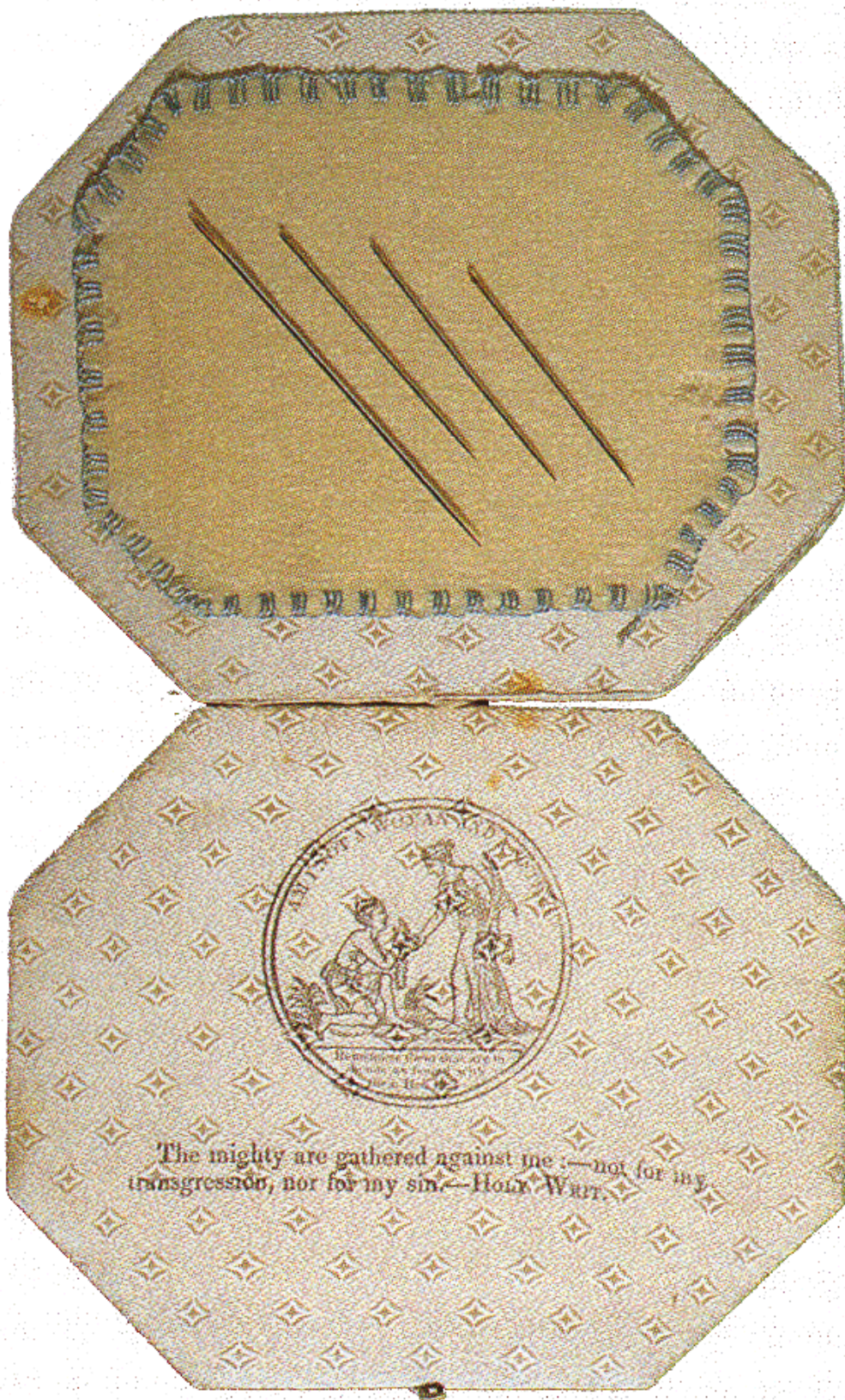


Fig. 3.39. Needle case, c.1830-50. Image courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.



Fig. 3.40. Pincushion, round with silk hinge and front and back motif of slave woman in with motto 'Am I Not Your Sister?', Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, 1922.895/7.



Fig. 3.41. Woolwork picture, c.1820. Image courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, ZBA2840.

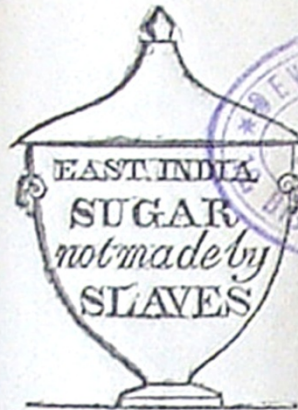


Fig. 3.42. Woollen tapestry panel, (chair cover) c.1800-1833. Wilberforce House Museum, Hull, KINCM:1948.4.



Fig. 3.43. Sugar Bowl, 1825. Image Courtesy of the Museum of London Docklands, 87.213/4.

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**EAST INDIA
SUGAR BASINS.**



**B. HENDERSON,
China-Warehouse,
RYE-LANE, PECKHAM,**

Respectfully informs the Friends of Africa,
that she has on Sale an Assortment of *Sugar
Basins*, handsomely labelled in Gold Letters:

"East India Sugar not made by Slaves."

"A Family that uses 5lb. of Sugar per Week, will, by using
East India, instead of West India, for 21 Months, prevent the
Slavery, or Murder of one Fellow-Creature! Eight such Families
in 19½ Years, will prevent the Slavery, or Murder of 100 !!"

PRINTED AT THE CAMBERWELL PRESS, BY J. B. G. VOGEL.

Fig. 3.44. B. Henderson, 'East India Sugar Basins', Advertising card, china-warehouse, Rye-Lane, Peckham. (London: Printed at the Camberwell Press by J.B.G. Vogel, c.1828) Image courtesy of the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London.



Fig. 3.45. Sugar bowl, blue-glazed and gilded with wording, 'East India sugar/not made by/slaves', c.1820, Image courtesy of the Chipstone Foundation Collection, 1999.22.



Fig. 3.46. Two Potholders, Great North Western Sanitary Fair. n.d. Dancing male and female black figures, 'Any holder but a slaveholder'. Image courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society, Decorative and Industrial Arts Collection, 1969.1737.

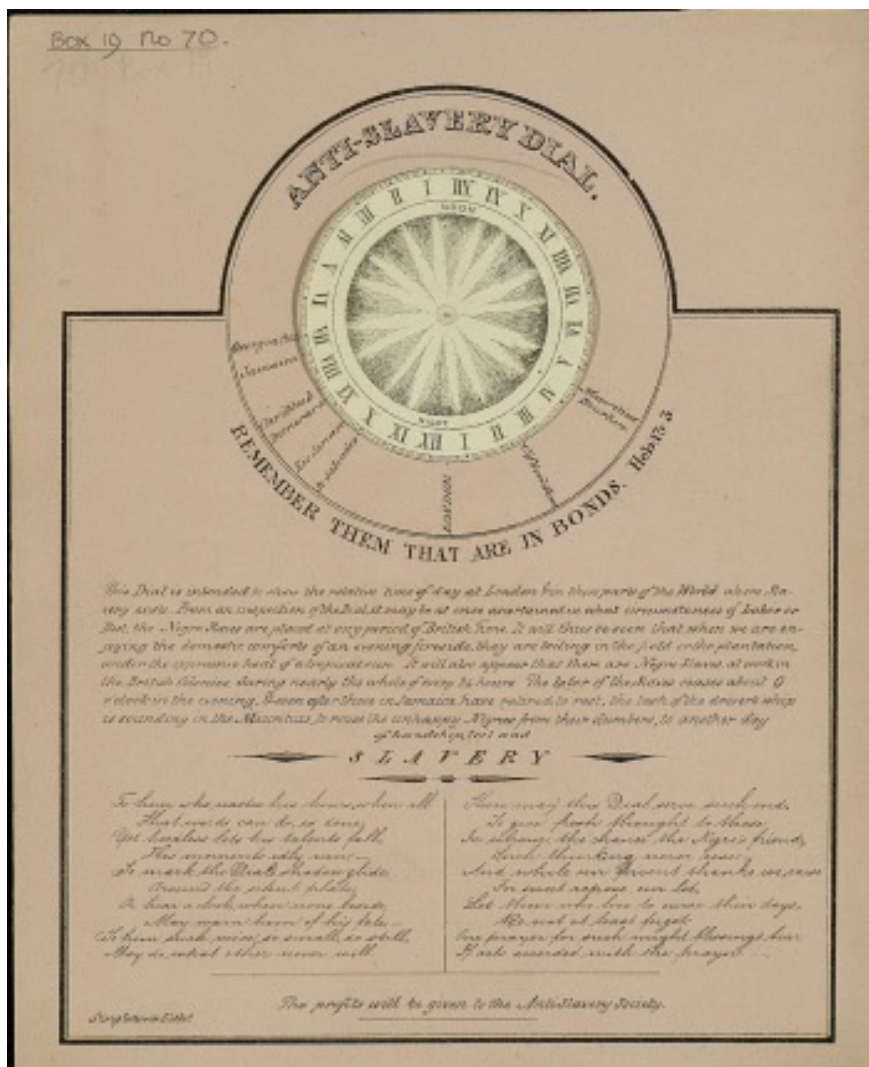


Fig. 4.1. Anon., 'The Anti-Slavery Dial' (copper-plate engraving, n.d. c.1845) Courtesy of John Rylands Library, University of Manchester.



Fig. 4.2. 'A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions.' Hand coloured lithographic game c.1850-1853. Victoria & Albert Museum, E.2650:1 to 3-1953.



Fig. 4.3. Close ups of top and bottom halves of main board section from 'A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions.' Reprinted by The Historical Games Company. Source: Author's own.



Fig. 4.4. Top and Bottom banners from 'A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions.' Reprinted by The Historical Games Company. Source: Author's own.



a) Sierra Leone



b) Jamaica



c) Canada

Fig. 4.5. Images representing Sierra Leone, Jamaica, Canada from 'A Tour Through The British Colonies and Foreign Possessions.' Reprinted by The Historical Games Company. Source: Author's own.



Fig. 4.6. ‘The Progress of Coffee Neatly Dissected’ jigsaw puzzle, c.1815. Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, NWHCM: 1956.133.8.

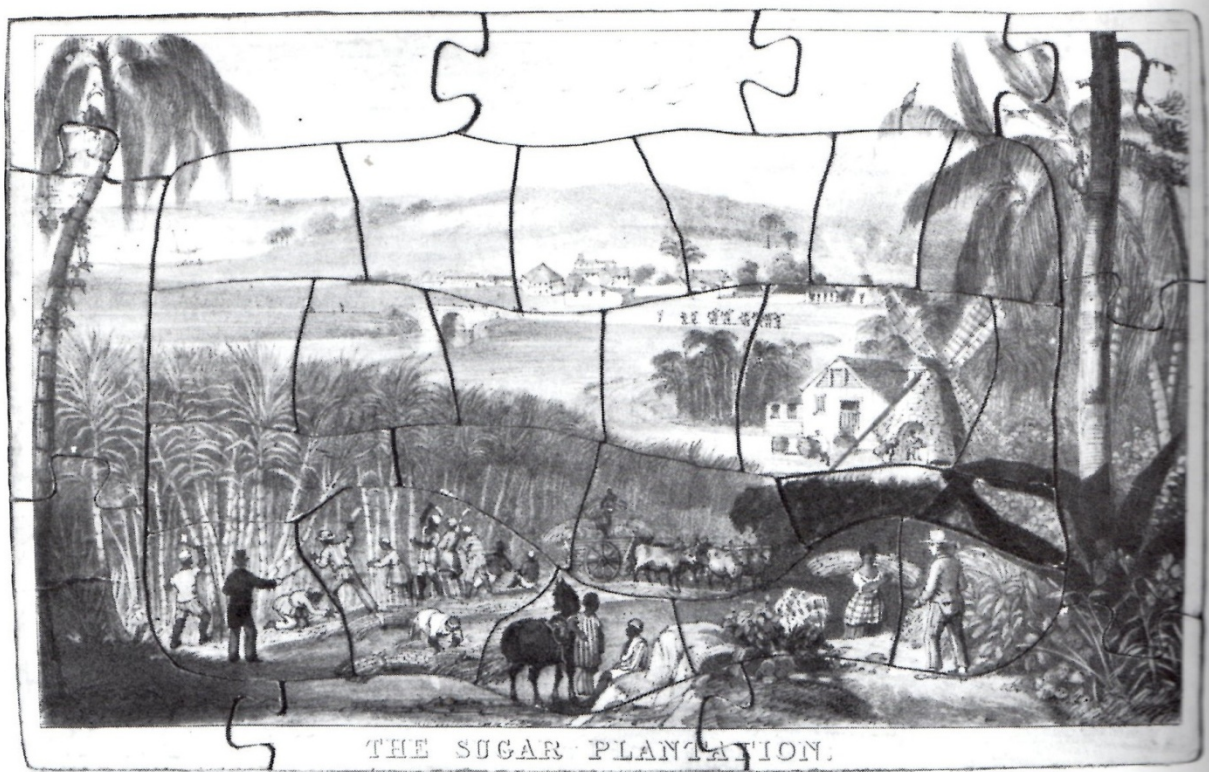


Fig. 4.7. William Spooner, 'The Sugar Plantation' (1850) in Linda Hannas, *The English Jigsaw Puzzle, 1760-1890*, (London: Wayland Publishers, 1972), plate 41.



Fig. 4.8. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* jigsaw puzzle, 31 pieces, 11 scenes. c.1852. Bristol Museum. T7433.



fig. 4.9. Sampler made by Esther Stewart, 1836 in Pamela Clabburn, *Samplers, The Shire Book*, (Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications Ltd., 1998), 21.



Fig. 4.10. Reed's sampler, n.d. Barbara Brackman, 'Abolitionist Embroidery', *Material Culture, Quilts & Fabric: Past & Present Blog*, Wednesday, 24 November 2010. <http://barbarabrackman.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/abolitionist-embroidery.html>



Fig. 4.11. Sampler by Martha Hague, 1837. Bristol Museum, Na2498.



Fig. 4.12. Maria Wilds, Zante the Negro, Needlework on canvas, 1848. Graphic Arts Textiles Collection GC 072.



Fig. 4.13. Sampler by Sarah Sedgewick, c.1832. York Castle Museum. YORCM: BA3463.



Fig. 4.14. Sampler by Hannah Shields, c.1832.

<http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/88794/an-unusual-early-19thc-needlework/>



Fig. 4.15. Sampler made by E.M., 1831.

<http://www.millersantiquesguide.com/items/112877/a-william-iv-slave-sampler-worked/>



Fig. 4.16. Sampler, maker unknown. c.1836. Wilberforce House Museum, Hull, KINCM: 1998.26.1.



Fig. 4.17. Sampler made by Hannah Bloore, 1840. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Whitman Sampler Collection, gift of Pet, Incorporated, 1969, 1969-288-317.

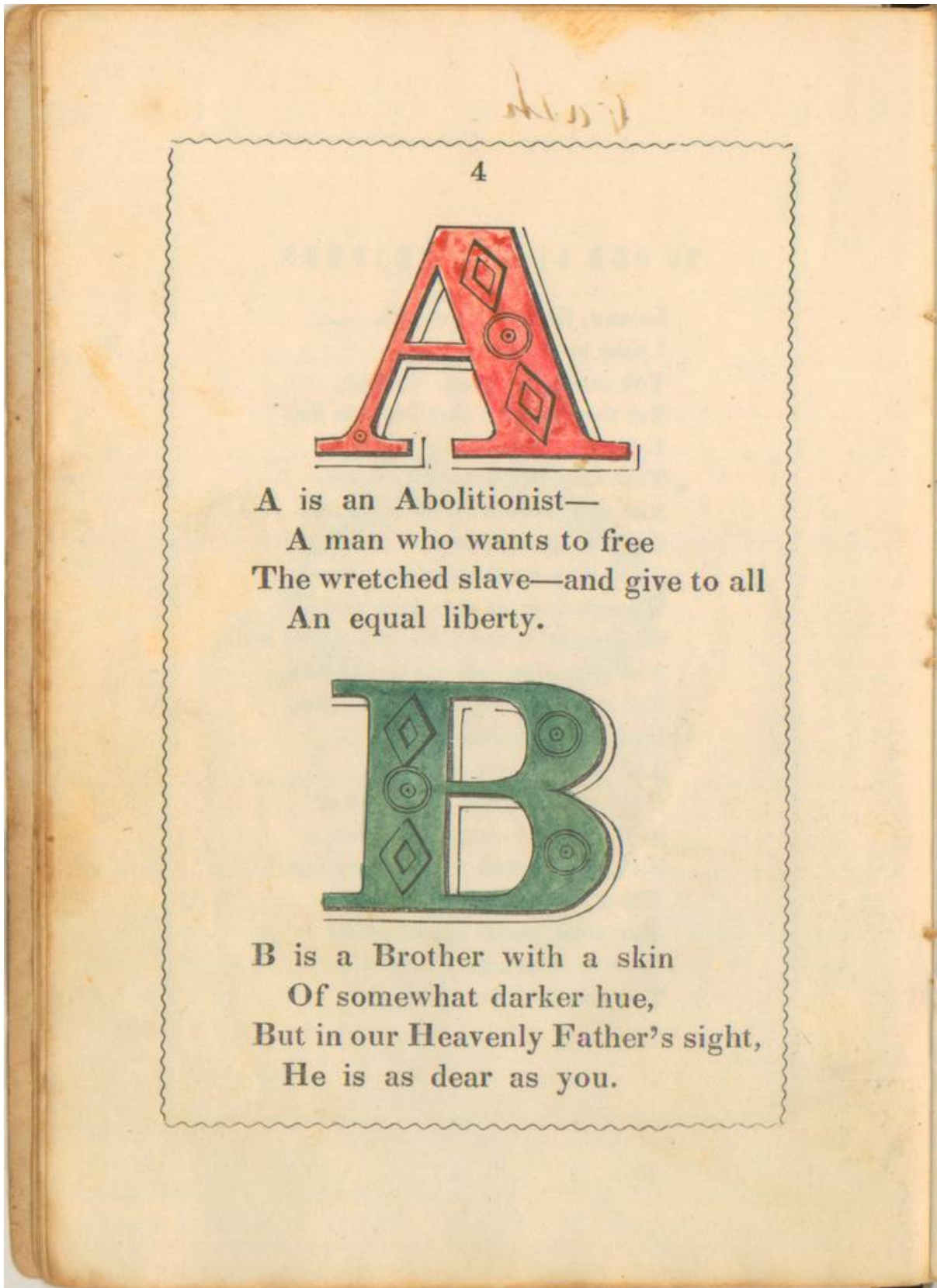


Fig. 5.1. Hannah and Mary Townsend, *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet*, (Philadelphia: Printed for the Anti-Slavery Fair, Merrihew & Thompson, 1846), 4. Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

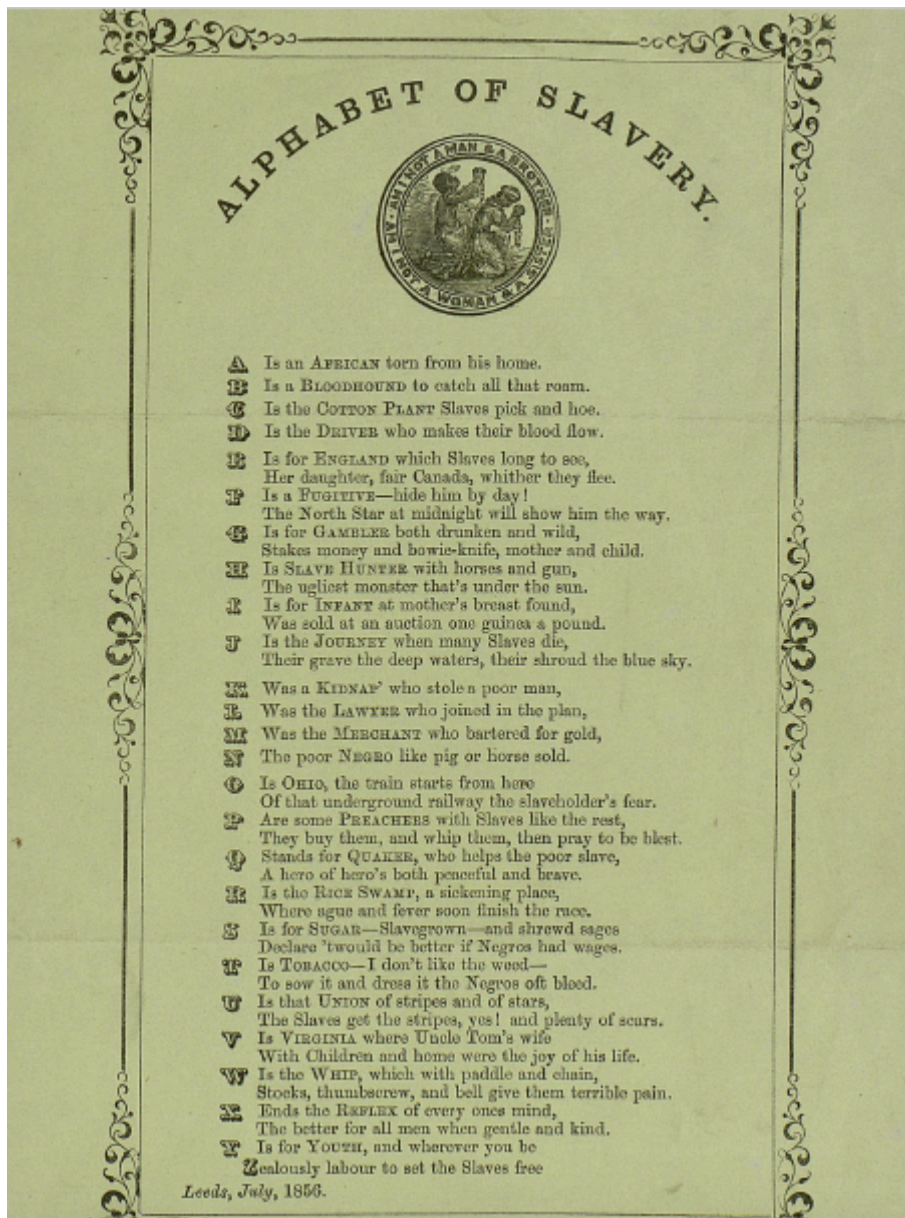


Fig. 5.2. Anon., *Alphabet of Slavery*, (Leeds, 1856). Courtesy of John Rylands Library, University of Manchester.

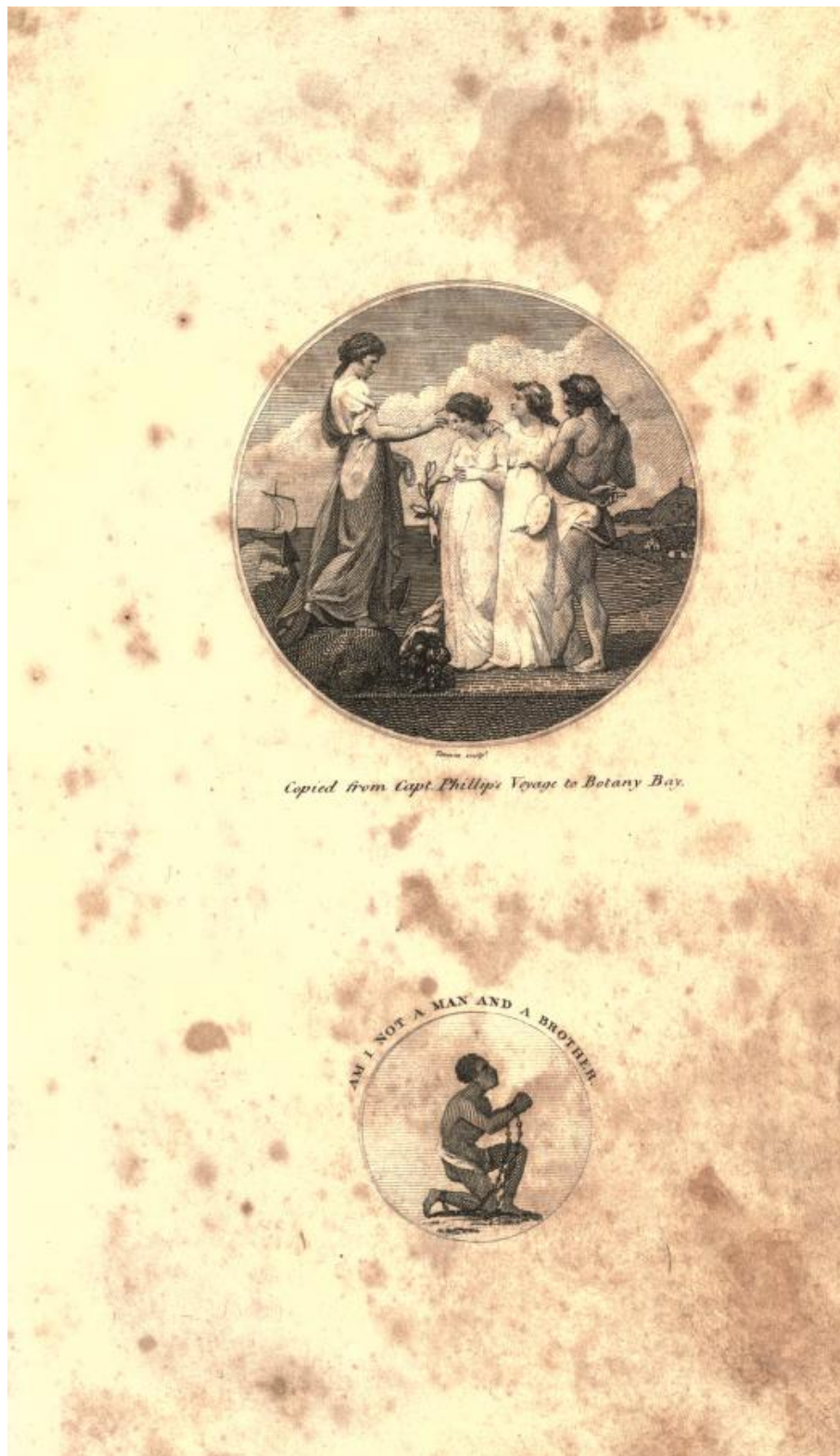


Fig. 5.3. Botany Bay and Wedgwood cameo images in Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden: A poem, in two parts. Part I. Containing the economy of vegetation. Part II. The loves of the plants.: With philosophical notes* (London: J. Johnson, 1796). Courtesy of the Wedgwood Museum Archive.