

“What Counts as Radical Abolitionism? A Reconsideration of Recent Scholarship”

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“What counts as radical abolitionism” is a question without a clear or consistent answer among historians. Scholars now use the word “radical” to refer to many different kinds of abolitionists, even those once considered moderates or barely abolitionists at all, and some abolitionists seem to be considered more radical than others. If “radical abolitionism” is not simply a redundant phrase, then historians who use the term presumably have in mind some answer to the question of what counts as radical. Yet that question has rarely been explicitly asked. Why?

In the abolitionists’ era, the majority of Americans viewed *all* antislavery reformers as radicals – David Wilmot and Charles Sumner, no less than Susan B. Anthony, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, or Frederick Douglass. “What counts as a radical abolitionist” was seldom asked because the answer was obvious: *all of the above*. Abolitionists alone conceived of the issue as a multiple choice question. In 1840, when the American Anti-Slavery Society splintered into factions, Garrison and his allies claimed that only they represented “*radical abolitionism*.”¹ Garrison’s critics, like Lewis Tappan, favored working through churches and electoral politics to attack slavery, while Garrisonians refused to vote, labeled the Constitution and most churches as proslavery, and welcomed members of various reform movements into their societies. But even after the 1840 schism, “what counts as radical abolitionism” was not really a live question: both Garrison and his critics would have agreed that the answer was Garrisonism. Later, however, political abolitionists and eventually some Republicans claimed the term “radical” themselves; in 1855, for example, a coalition that included Douglass formed a Radical Abolitionist Party.

For a brief moment before the Civil War, then, “what counts as radical abolitionism” was a comprehensible question about which some abolitionists disagreed. But in retrospect, this moment was brief. After the Civil War, abolitionists downplayed their differences, constructing triumphal narratives that gave all factions important roles. Meanwhile, reconciliationist narratives about the Civil War once again cast all abolitionists as fanatics, little caring about differences.² These trends largely continued until the work of historians Gilbert Barnes and Dwight Dumond beginning in the 1930s. In contrast with Civil War “revisionists” who cast all abolitionists as destructive nags, Barnes and Dumond rehabilitated abolitionists like Theodore Dwight Weld and James Birney. But they did so by insisting on the very distinction Tappanites and Liberty Party men drew between themselves and “ultras” like Garrison. Rather than wondering “what counts as abolitionism,” Barnes and Dumond took for granted both that the answer was Garrisonism and that radicals were marginal mischief-makers.³

The next generation of abolitionist historians were less likely to deem “radical” or “ultra” dirty words. Many scholars writing in the midst of the Civil Rights movement were instead more interested in recovering a tradition of radicalism that stretched from abolitionists to the New Left. Some historians agreed with Barnes and Dumond that there were crucial differences between Garrisonians and the mainstream but reversed their negative judgments on Garrison and his agitational style. Indeed, many historians now agreed with Garrison that political abolitionists had been forced to compromise their calls for racial egalitarianism in order to make electoral gains in the fight against slavery, thereby forfeiting the moral high ground held by agitators who remained outside formal politics. Yet it is worth noting that scholars who *celebrated* Garrisonian means and ends were not significantly challenging earlier estimates of what *counted* as radical abolitionism so much as they were advancing new estimations of what radical abolitionism counted *for*.⁴

Other historians in the 1960s and 1970s contested the work of Barnes and Dumond by emphasizing what abolitionists shared in common instead of what divided them. Many scholars were impressed by the demand for “*immediate* emancipation” as a key marker that distinguished all genuinely radical abolitionists from more diffuse antislavery sentiments or half-measures like colonizationism. Indeed, for most scholars since, “abolitionism” and “immediatism” have been synonymous. Yet historians who tracked the rise of antislavery immediatism as a coherent movement did not dwell much on the question of what counted as radical abolitionism, because the question seemed tautologous: to be an immediatist *abolitionist*, not an “antislavery” temporizer, was by definition to be radical. Consequently, the contested question for historians of the Civil Rights era, broadly defined, was not “What counts as radical abolitionism?” but, to cite the title of a 1965 essay, “Who was an abolitionist?”⁵

In the 1970s, as intellectual and cultural historians worked to understand *who* the abolitionists were, other unifying themes in the abolitionist movement began to appear, which put pressure both on the old distinctions drawn by Barnes and on the assumption of more recent scholars that Garrisonians *were* significantly – and admirably – more radical than political moderates. For example, Lewis Perry’s 1973 book *Radical Abolitionism* argued that the “anarchistic” abolitionists – that is, “non-resistant,” non-voting reformers like Garrison who argued that all human government was predicated on force – were neither a lunatic fringe nor lonely forerunners of the New Left. Instead, these “radical abolitionists” actually shared key premises with a variety of abolitionists. What Perry described as an anarchistic impulse characterized some political abolitionists like William Goodell no less than Garrison. A second but related historiographical trend in the 1970s, exemplified by Ron Walters’s *The Antislavery Appeal*, was to qualify and complicate the radicalism of the *entire* movement by identifying continuities between antebellum culture and even the most eccentric abolitionists.⁶ Works like

these eroded the Barnes-Dumond position as surely as scholarship that rehabilitated the Garrisonians, and in fact these two streams of scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s often flowed together. Yet neither historiographical camp offered an explicit consideration of “what counts as radical abolitionism.” Indeed, for historians like Perry and Walters, this was simply the wrong question to ask, given profound continuities within the movement and between it and the surrounding culture. As Perry explained in his preface, “It is not my purpose to argue that one faction of abolitionists, for better or worse, was more ‘radical’ than others.”⁷

Understanding the history of this historiography is important because it helps explain how we have gotten to where we are now. On the one hand, it explains why historians still often refer to abolitionists as “radical,” because one legacy of both the Barnes-Dumond era and the scholarship of the 1960s is the presumption that some or all abolitionists, for better or worse, *were* radical. Yet this historiographical survey also helps explain why, despite continued usage of the word “radical,” “what counts as radical abolitionism” is a question whose answer remains implicit. These trends have only been strengthened by an enormous proliferation of scholarship on abolitionism in the last twenty-five years, which has been both cause and consequence of a significant expansion in the cast of characters now included in studies of abolitionists and in the range of questions asked about them. In particular, the last quarter century has witnessed the full flowering of new scholarship on abolitionist women and black abolitionists.⁸ Yet greater appreciation for the array of issues engaged by abolitionists – from women’s rights to the nature of interracial sex, from the legitimacy of violence to the nature of wage labor – has multiplied the number of issues on which a particular reformer can be adjudged “radical” or not. The same reformer called a “radical” in one book because of his racial egalitarianism, for instance, may appear in another book, or even the same book, as a non-radical because of his coolness towards working-class concerns.

Moreover, the movement of groups like black abolitionists from the periphery to the center of our historical narratives has often been accompanied by claims that some previously neglected individual or group needs recovery precisely because he, she, or they were *more* radical or radical *earlier* than the movement's usual suspects. Whereas the turn to immediatism was once seen as the hallmark of white abolitionist radicalism, for example, scholars now emphasize that black abolitionists were the first immediatists. That abolitionists like Garrison still did not agree in every particular with black immediatists like David Walker only underlines now that calls for immediate abolition were a lowest common denominator for "radical abolitionism" – what was left in the absence of other markers of radicalism like the open advocacy of slave insurrections, or full political equality for black men, or full political equality for black *women*. The incorporation of women and black abolitionists into movement histories has also led to greater scrutiny of abolitionist *practice* as well as theory, and of the frequent gaps between them. As a result, Garrison's radicalism on the question of racial equality is no longer viewed only in the light of what he *said*, but in light of black abolitionists' charges that Garrison's antislavery society was not sufficiently advanced in the hiring and promoting of black reformers.⁹

In sum, historians searching for "radical" abolitionism must now survey a much more diverse field than the largely bipolar movement considered by Barnes, Dumond, and their early critics. And at the same time this diversity has destabilized classifications that were once widely accepted. Consider, for example, the titles of Perry's *Radical Abolitionism* and John Stauffer's prize-winning 2002 book, *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*. Whereas for Perry, "radical abolitionism" described "non-resistant" anarchistic thinkers like Wright and Garrison, Stauffer's "radical abolitionists" were those who, in direct opposition to the Garrisonians, embraced "Bible politics" and ultimately came to embrace violence as well.

As the late George Fredrickson noted in his review of *Black Hearts of Men*, counting a variety of “political abolitionism” as “radical abolitionism,” rather than the “non-violent, generally apolitical perfectionism” of Garrison, was something of a break with historiographical precedent. Yet Stauffer’s definition of “radical abolitionism” betokens a more general flux in usage, one especially evident in recent books on John Brown, which have refocused attention on Brown as the premier radical, and books on Abraham Lincoln, which have argued that Lincoln, once the clear foil to “radical abolitionism,” was more radical than we thought.¹⁰

Given these kinds of reassessments, it is no wonder that historians entering the thicket of historiography on abolitionism now emerge with multiple definitions of “radical abolitionism.” One recent book begins by reporting that “many historians” have used the term “radical abolitionists” to refer to the Liberty Party, political abolitionists, and the “radical wing” of the Free Soil movement. And a recent biography of Brown describes the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, founded by the anti-Garrisonian Tappanites after the 1840 schism, as “a more radical counterpart of ... the Garrisonian American Anti-Slavery Society.”¹¹ As these two examples suggest, what may be most striking about recent trends is that Garrison’s once secure position as the *locus classicus* of abolitionist radicalism is no longer unquestioned. That Garrison epitomized radical abolitionism was a point on which almost all historians could once agree, but Garrison’s role as a benchmark for radicalism now competes with claims that an alternative tradition of “black radicalism” was more revolutionary than anything Garrison proposed. According to recent works on Brown and some books on political abolitionism – such as Bruce Laurie’s tellingly titled *Beyond Garrison* – Garrison’s insistence on “moral suasion” made him less confrontational, perhaps less sympathetic to black abolitionist concerns, and implicitly less radical than abolitionists willing to employ violent or formal political means. The appellation “radical” has also been attached, in just the last decade, to figures as different from Garrison

and each other as Benjamin Lundy, David Walker, Lydia Maria Child, Thomas W. Higginson, Theodore Dwight Weld, and Alvan Stewart. Literati like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman are also making bids for inclusion in the “pantheon” of radicals, and in John Stauffer’s new biography on Douglass and Lincoln, even Caleb Bingham’s reader *The Columbian Orator* is described as a very “radical” book. Meanwhile, “radical abolitionist” is often still used in its conventional senses as a reference to either immediatist or to Garrisonian abolitionists, broadly defined.¹²

Far from settling the question of “what counts as radical abolitionism,” this variety of usages calls attention to the need for asking it, and to the potential confusion that can result from deploying the word “radical” – as I myself have in the past – without an explicit answer to the question in mind. Yet when we do ask explicitly the question of “what counts as radical abolitionism,” we are immediately confronted with the question of what counts as *radical*. Consider the range of meanings one could give to “radical” or the rough cognates sometimes used in its place, like “militant,” “aggressive,” “revolutionary” or “confrontational.”¹³ Is radicalism a personal temperament – a willingness to go to extremes? A measure of one’s wholeheartedness or commitment to a cause – perhaps judged by the congruency between one’s views and one’s actions? Is “radical” a sociological word for measuring the observable differences between the habitus of a reforming minority and that of a putative mainstream? Or are certain doctrines about rights, or political economy, or social organization, inherently “radical,” so that one can track the fate of “radicalism” over time as a tradition of thought? Is a “radical” ideology, unlike “conservative” ideologies that appeal to the precedent or authority of the past, one that is future-oriented and new?¹⁴

How one answers such questions matters, if only because not all answers are compatible in individual cases: for example, if radicalism is a measure of temperament or willingness to run

to extremes, it has no necessary correlation with the substance of a radical's views. As a clipping printed in Garrison's *Liberator* in 1864 put it, if radicalism "implies thoroughness, completeness, opposition to half-heartedness," then "it may apply to a good man or a bad man—to a good object or a bad object. A man may be a radical saint, or a radical villain—a radical anti-slavery man, or a radical pro-slavery man." Yet even if consensus could be reached, as this writer presumed it could, on what a "good object" is, other complications arise. One of Lincoln's friends once quipped that Lincoln was "conservative as to *means*" but "radical ... so far as *ends* were concerned," raising a question so familiar to abolitionists themselves—if we could agree on which ends are "radical," what "means" are radical means? There is also the question of time: calling someone radical sometimes indicates the degree of change in their personal views. A "radical" is someone who has been "radicalized." But that means someone once radical could later be less radical, or vice versa.¹⁵

One seeming way out of this morass might be to use the etymology of the word "radical" as a guide to usage. Yet the original meaning of the word as "relating to the root" does not always clarify the issue. Reformers who advocate "root and branch" social change sometimes have in mind the creation of an entirely new social order, an "uprooting" and new planting. Yet in calling for reform that goes to "the root," some self-described radicals depict their demands as a return to some earlier order, an attempt to prune back corrupt overgrowth and quicken a long buried idea. "Radicalism" might refer to a demands for a new system or a restoration of first principles, to "revolution" in either of its two, contradictory meanings as *rotation* and *innovation*. To say that "what counts as radical" is "whatever goes to the roots" would also be to answer one question with another, since one would then have to decide what counts as the root of a social problem.

This panel's purpose is to *raise* such questions about what counts as radical abolitionism rather than to answer them definitively. Here I've attempted to explain why the question of what counts as radical has seldom been asked, despite continued and sometimes contradictory usage of the term "radical abolitionism," and then to explore some of the ways the question might be posed. In closing, however, let me say why I believe the question is worth asking. First, without spelling out what we mean by the term "radical," we may hinder our ability to ask questions worth answering, like whether abolitionists, in general or in specific, became more or less radical over time. If radicalism is a sociological or anthropological term, then asking who and what was a radical minority in antebellum America is also another way of asking what the mainstream was. Of course, those questions might be answerable without even using the shorthand of the word "radical." Perhaps it would be possible to dispense with ambiguous terms like "radical" or "militant" or "revolutionary" in favor of the specific adjectives cloaked by these words, like "immediatist," "Garrisonian," "non-voting," "anti-party," "political," "non-violent," "feminist," "racially egalitarian," "non-pacifist" or "actively violent." But even then, of course, we may find that these words are as slippery as "radical." Generalizations about what or who counts as radical or Garrisonian or "non-violent" break down in individual cases and at individual moments in time.¹⁶

But should we abolish "radical abolitionism" entirely? To use Lincoln's words from a very different context, my own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of people will not. We talk about what counts as "radical" because that word goes to the root of what we believe about the roots of social problems and bedrock principles. An article published in the *New York Times* a year ago this week contained an interview with a then-college freshman who belonged to the new Students for a Democratic Society. Brian Kelley told the *Times* reporter that "I actually think violent action isn't radical at

all. ... Radicals go to the root of the problem, and they want to change society. Violence doesn't change society, and if it doesn't go to the root of the problem, it's not radical." As this statement shows, to ask what counts as radical is to raise the still contested question of what changes society and what needs to be changed.¹⁷

My own view is that Kelley's position—that violence is less radical than non-violence—is still a defensible one even with regard to the history of abolitionism. As we've seen, it was once widely assumed by historians of abolitionism that "radical abolitionism" referred to the Garrisonian non-resistants, but today, that meaning is no longer self-evident. Yet by almost all of the metrics listed above, "non-resistance" still qualifies as "radical" — its adherents were a minority, many of whom were certainly "extreme" in their degree of personal commitment; it represented an especially uncompromising version of key principles often identified as part of a "radical" tradition, like individualism and the equal worth of all human beings; and if "radicalism" is identified with *innovation*, it would be hard to imagine an antebellum American worldview more future-oriented than the millennial outlook of many abolitionist pacifists. Their view was especially radical given that the antebellum United States, by any measure, was a violent society in which vigilantism and lynch mobs were customary, the nation was imagined to have been born and baptized in patriotic gore, and praise for the willingness to *fight* for freedom was central to reigning ideologies of masculinity and race.¹⁸ Those who said "peace" in this environment might be condemned as impractical or dismissed as pusillanimous, but it would be difficult not to call them "radical," especially if we are concerned, as scholars like Professor Perry have been before us, less with "delineating a tradition of American radicalism" than with "understanding ... the time in which" abolitionists lived. But my answer to the question of what counts as radical abolitionism is only one among many. If the question of what counts as radical abolitionism were posed explicitly, what answer would you give?¹⁹

NOTES

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¹ “New Organization,” *Herald of Freedom*, rept., *Liberator*, 8 May 1840.

² See Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Abolitionists Remember: Antislavery Autobiographies and the Unfinished Work of Emancipation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

³ Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1933); Dwight Lowell Dumond, *Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961). See also Betty L. Fladeland, “Revisionists vs. Abolitionists: The Historiographical Cold War of the 1930s and 1940s,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 6 (1986), 1-21; Merton Dillon, “Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond: An Appraisal,” *Reviews in American History* XXI (1993): 539-52.

⁴ See Aileen S. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850* (1967; Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1989), 3-38; James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: the Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976); McPherson, *Struggle for Equality*; James Brewer Stewart, “The Aims and Impact of Garrisonian Abolitionism, 1840-1860,” *Civil War History* 15 (1969), 197-209; James Brewer Stewart, “Peaceful Hopes and Violent Experiences: The Evolution of Reforming and Radical Abolitionism, 1831-1837,” *Civil War History* 17 (1971), 293-309; Staughton Lynd, *Intellectual Origins of American Radicalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1968).

⁵ Ronald G. Walters, “The Boundaries of Abolitionism,” in *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, ed. Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 16; Larry Gara, “Who Was an Abolitionist?” in *The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists*, ed. Martin Duberman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 32-51. See also “Notes on Terms” in David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (1975; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 21-22; David Donald, “Toward a Reconsideration of the Abolitionists,” in *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era* (New York, 1956), 26; James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 3-8; Gordon E. Finnie, “The Antislavery Movement in the Upper South before 1840,” *Journal of Southern History* 35 (August 1969), 332-333. For an example of a study explicitly describing “immediate emancipation” as the culminating point of “radical antislavery thought,” see David W. Blight, “Perceptions of Southern Intransigence and the Rise of Radical Antislavery Thought, 1816-1830,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 3, no. 2 (1983), 139-163.

⁶ Lewis Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought* (1973; Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995); Ronald G. Walters, *The Antislavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “William Lloyd Garrison and Antislavery Unity: A Reappraisal,” *Civil War History* 13 (1967), 5-24; Donald G. Matthews, “The Abolitionists on Slavery: The Critique behind the Social Movement,” *Journal of Southern History* 33 (1967), 163-182; James Brewer Stewart, “Evangelicalism and the Radical Strain in Southern Antislavery Thought during the 1820s,” *Journal of Southern History* 39, no. 3 (1973), 379-396; Lawrence J. Friedman, *Gregarious Saints: Self and Community in American Abolitionism, 1830-1870* (New York: Cambridge

University Press, 1982). See also Merton L. Dillon, "The Abolitionists: A Decade of Historiography, 1959-1969," *Journal of Southern History* 35 (1969), 510. One historiographical controversy I haven't considered here is the voluminous scholarship produced in response to Stanley Elkins' "anti-institutional" thesis about the abolitionists in *Slavery*. Yet if included in this survey of the literature, I think the Elkins debate would reinforce the points I'm making. On the one hand, Elkins' interpretation of the abolitionists, along with that of David Donald, directed attention at the question of "who the abolitionists were" and whether they were irrational fanatics, rather than on the content of their views and the radicalism thereof. On the other hand, to the extent that Elkins considered the content of abolitionism, he tended to stress similarity among "abolitionists," from Garrison to the Transcendentalists. Subsequent historians contested Elkins' thesis that "anti-institutionalism" was the fundamental premise that all abolitionists shared, but did not contest as strongly the idea that there were things all abolitionists shared. Indeed, the attempt to make the abolitionists seem like intelligible, well-adjusted, mentally normal antebellum Americans reinforced scholarship that explored the coherent structure of abolitionist thought and its intersections with the structure of American culture generally.

⁷ Perry, *Radical Abolitionism*, xxiv. The zealous attempts of New Left radicals to claim that abolitionists were part of a long-lived radical tradition may have encouraged this reticence on the part of Walters, Perry, and others to identify "radical" abolitionists; in that climate, identifying abolitionists as "radical" would have undermined the attempt to emphasize that abolitionists were products of *their* time.

⁸ Though many works could be listed here, representative examples include Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). See also Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, eds., *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism* (New York: The New Press, 2006). In casting this increasing inclusiveness in abolitionist histories as a relatively recent development, I realize that there were precedents for it, both in the literature cited above and in pioneering work like Benjamin Quarles's *Black Abolitionists* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, *They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom 1830-1861* (New York: Atheneum, 1974). The pushing of historical chronologies of abolitionism back in time also led, in some earlier articles, to a use of the term "radical" to refer to groups otherwise seen, because of their gradualism or colonizationism, as moderates or conservatives.

⁹ See Manisha Sinha, "Coming of Age: The Historiography of Black Abolitionism," in McCarthy and Stauffer, eds., *Prophets of Protest*, 23-38; Sinha, "An Alternative Tradition of Radicalism: African American Abolitionists and the Metaphor of Revolution," in *Contested Democracy: Freedom, Race, and Power in American History*, ed. Manisha Sinha and Penny von Eschen (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 9-30; Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), chaps. 6-7. On the implication that Garrison's interracial relationships evinced a lack of commitment to racial egalitarianism, see David S. Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 51-55; John Stauffer, *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of*

Race (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 153-154. Historians of women sometimes use the term “radical abolitionists” specifically to denote those abolitionists who supported women’s rights. See, e.g., Mary P. Ryan, *Mysteries of Sex: Tracing Women and Men through American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 158-159.

¹⁰ George M. Fredrickson, “Black Hearts and Monsters of the Mind: Race and Identity in Antebellum America,” *Modern Intellectual History* 1 (2004), 132.

¹¹ John T. Cumbler, *From Abolition to Rights for All: The Making of a Reform Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 10-11; Evan Carton, *Patriotic Treason: John Brown and the Soul of America* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 95-97. Cumbler goes on to reject the distinction between “radical abolitionism” and Garrisonian abolitionism that he detects in the historiography, but the fact that he identifies “radical abolitionism” with the Liberty Party and its descendants is a measure of the influence of books like Stauffer’s on literature now appearing.

¹² On Lundy as a “genuinely radical abolitionist” in an essay that still identifies Garrison as “radical,” see David W. Blight, “William Lloyd Garrison at Two Hundred: His Radicalism and His Legacy for Our Time,” in *William Lloyd Garrison at Two Hundred*, ed. James Brewer Stewart (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 5. On Walker, Peter P. Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (College Park: Penn State University Press, 1997), 40, 250, *passim*. On Child, Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 794; Sarah N. Roth, “The Mind of a Child: Images of African Americans in Early Juvenile Fiction,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 25 (2005), 107. On Weld, see David Brion Davis, “The Culmination of Racial Polarities and Prejudice,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (Winter 1999), 770. On Higginson, W. Scott Poole, “Memory and the Abolitionist Heritage: Thomas Wentworth Higginson and the Uncertain Meaning of the Civil War,” *Civil War History* 51 (2005), 203-204. On Stewart, see Frederick J. Blue, *No Taint of Compromise: Crusaders in Antislavery Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005). On Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman, see Sandra Harbert Petrulionis, *To Set This World Right: The Antislavery Movement in Thoreau’s Concord* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist*, 484. Cf. Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, 16-17, 35-42. The image of a “pantheon” of radical abolitionists is George Fredrickson’s in “Black Hearts and Monsters of the Mind.” On the *Columbian Orator* as a radical book, see John Stauffer, *Giants: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Twelve, 2008), 63. Alongside all of these “radical abolitionists,” Garrisonians still are considered “radical” in some sense by many scholars, but not always for the same reasons. In James Oakes’s *The Radical and the Republican*, for example, Garrison appears as an “ultra” radical who influenced Douglass’s initial withdrawal from political action, yet in Oakes’s story, Douglass’s move away from Garrison towards political action did not necessarily make him *less* radical. Garrison’s radicalism is also pictured by Oakes’s mainly as intransigent utopianism, instead of as an essential feature of his non-voting ideology. See Oakes, *The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007).

¹³ See Herbert Aptheker, “Militant Abolitionism,” *Journal of Negro History* 26 (1941), 438-84; Stanley Harrold, *The Rise of Aggressive Abolitionism: Addresses to the Slaves* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004); Sinha, “An Alternative Tradition of Radicalism”; Jane H.

Pease and William H. Pease, "Confrontation and Abolition in the 1850s," *Journal of American History* 58 (March 1972), 923-937.

¹⁴ Conal Condren, "Radicalism Revisited," in *English Radicalism, 1550-1850*, ed. Glenn Burgess and Matthew Festenstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 311-337. In this paragraph and the two following, I've benefited from the editors' introduction and the afterword, by J. C. Davis, in Burgess and Festenstein, eds., *English Radicalism*; Lynd, *Intellectual Origins of American Radicalism*; introduction to Harvey Goldberg and William Appleman Williams, eds., *American Radicals: Some Problems and Personalities* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1957), esp. pp. 1-2; Alfred F. Young, "Afterword: How Radical was the American Revolution?" in *Beyond the American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism*, ed. Young (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 317-364.

¹⁵ "Radicalism," *Liberator*, 29 April 1864; Gillespie quoted in Oakes, *Radical and the Republican*, 171. For an interesting example of an essay stressing the means by which a group of radicals were "radicalized," see Albert J. von Frank, "John Brown, James Redpath, and the Idea of Revolution," *Civil War History* 52 (2006), 142-160.

¹⁶ See Perry, *Radical Abolitionism*; Walters, *Antislavery Appeal*; Walters, "The Boundaries of Abolitionism." I've also argued for the slipperiness of "radical" boundaries in "The Fourth and the First: Abolitionist Holidays, Respectability, and Radical Interracial Reform," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (2005), 129-151.

¹⁷ Ben Gibberd, "To the Ramparts (Gently)," *New York Times*, 23 March 2008, online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/23/nyregion/thecity/23sds.html> (retrieved 2 March 2009).

¹⁸ See introduction to John R. McKivigan and Stanley Harrold, eds., *Antislavery Violence: Sectional, Racial, and Cultural Conflict in Antebellum America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 2-3; François Furstenberg, "Beyond Freedom and Slavery: Autonomy, Virtue, and Resistance in Early American Political Discourse," *Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (March 2003), 1295-1330.

¹⁹ Perry, *Radical Abolitionism*, 297.