TRAVELING ABOLITIONISM AND FEMALE EDITORSHIP: PERFORMING THE GIFT BOOK GENRE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ABOLITIONIST CULTURE

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Abstract

In the antislavery gift books *The Liberty Bell*, (1839-1858), and *Autographs for Freedom*, (1853-1854), Maria Weston Chapman and Julia Griffiths, respectively, compile writings by prominent literary, political, and religious antislavery figures in order to fundraise for their opposing political affiliations, to bring the horrors of slavery into the domestic sphere, and to promote antislavery activism and political change. This project will focus on the several textual performances of abolitionism that can be found in the gift books, ranging from explicitly performative writing by Chapman in the *Bell*, to the manipulation of the liminal space between author and editor by Griffiths in *Autographs*. By examining the gift book, when overtaken for reform purposes, as a tool for promoting political and social agendas in a space deemed befitting for women, this project explores the ways in which Chapman and Griffiths appropriate and modify the genre into a more tempered and acceptable political space for radical politics.
The work of this thesis is dedicated to the indefatigable support of my mentors at Georgetown University and to the unwavering patience and encouragement of my family.

With love and thanks,

Meaghan Morrissa Fritz
**Table of Contents**

Chapter I: Adopting the Gift Book Genre as a Political Tool in Female Abolitionism…1

Chapter II: Traveling Performativity in Maria Weston Chapman’s *The Liberty Bell*….31

Chapter III: The Liminal Editorship of Julia Griffiths’ *Autographs for Freedom*……59

Afterword……………………………………………………………………………………………..88

Endnotes ……………………………………………………………………………………………..90

Bibliography ………………………………………………………………………………………93
List of Illustrations

Figure 1: “Nubian Watercarrier.”………………………………………………….36

Figure 2: “Anti-Slavery Token.” ………………………………………………….….47

Figure 3: Autographs for Freedom. Title Page Vol. 2…………………………….82

Figure 4: Autographs for Freedom. Preface. Vol. 2………………………………83
Chapter I

Adopting the Gift Book Genre as a Political Tool in Female Abolitionism

In the antislavery gift books The Liberty Bell, (1839-1858), and Autographs for Freedom, (1853-1854), Maria Weston Chapman and Julia Griffiths, respectively, compile writings by prominent literary, political, and religious antislavery figures in order to fundraise for their opposing political affiliations, to bring the horrors of slavery into the domestic sphere, and to promote antislavery activism and political change. This project will focus on the several textual performances of abolitionism that can be found in the gift books. Although much literary scholarship either ignores or disregards antislavery gift books as political propaganda void of literary merit, suggesting that “literary quality was regarded as less important than persuasiveness” (Thompson 160), this project will demonstrate the cultural and literary importance of the genre to female activists. By examining the gift book, when overtaken for reform purposes, as a tool for promoting political and social agendas in a space deemed befitting for women, I will prove how Chapman and Griffiths appropriate and modify the gift book, molding the genre into a more tempered and acceptable political space for radical politics.

Although many antislavery gift books were published throughout the nineteenth century, my analysis will focus on The Liberty Bell and on Autographs for Freedom because of the disparate political affiliations and somewhat dramatic backgrounds of the women compilers that make these particular gift books a compelling addition to the ongoing conversation on nineteenth-century antislavery culture. Because Chapman and Griffiths were considered to be radical and, at times, sensationallly outspoken activists,
their appropriation of the conservatively feminine gift book genre is particularly striking. Julia Griffiths, an influential white British abolitionist who traveled from England to America to help the antislavery cause, to live with Frederick Douglass, and to help finance and edit his antislavery newspaper, the North Star, compiled and edited both volumes of Autographs for Freedom. Griffiths’s personal relationship with Frederick Douglass and their anti-Garrisonian leanings add a unique political slant to the collection that, at times, focuses more on the abolitionist movement than on slavery itself. Maria Weston Chapman, strongly aligned with the Garrisonian faction of the abolitionist movement at this time, served as an editor for Garrison’s influential abolitionist newspaper, The Liberator, while also publishing regularly on her own. Like Griffiths, Chapman also traveled extensively and worked for the antislavery cause while abroad, editing several volumes of the annually published The Liberty Bell while traveling in Paris. That both women traveled while editing their respective compilations adds a transnational aspect to the books that enhances the political and cultural performances of the gift books.

Although the collections are clearly separate publications and in no way connected to each other, I find it significant that before Griffiths traveled to the United States to help Douglass edit the North Star, Chapman strongly offended Douglass by insinuating that he could not manage the paper’s finances because he was a black man (McFeely 165). Furthermore, Chapman “fell out” with him shortly after Griffiths published the first volume of Autographs for Freedom (Taylor 90). The Liberty Bell and Autographs for Freedom, then, serve as interesting representations of antislavery gift
books organized under two opposing political mindsets by women with similar activist ambitions. By comparing the women’s polarized approaches to editing gift books, this project will explore the transnational contexts that Chapman and Griffiths negotiated, their attachment to important male abolitionist figures, and the varying performance techniques that the women employ in their collections, ranging from explicitly performative writing in *The Liberty Bell* to Griffiths’ more subtle manipulation of the liminal space between editorship and authorship in *Autographs for Freedom*.

I. The Traditional Gift Book Genre

Before exploring *The Liberty Bell* and *Autographs for Freedom*, it seems important to define the purpose, characteristics, and history of the gift book genre. Scholars Frederick W. Faxon and Ralph Thompson, respectively, published definitive books in the early twentieth century that defined and chronicled the history of the gift book genre. Although Faxon’s text, *Literary Annuals and Gift Books: A Bibliography, 1823-1903*, published in 1912, focuses specifically on British gift book culture, he examines the history of the American gift book in relation to its British predecessors. Thompson’s book, *American Literary Annuals and Gift Books, 1825-1865*, published in 1936, considers more fully the unique Americanness attributed to the gift book once the genre crossed the Atlantic. However, despite the authors’ nationalist slants, both of which will be explored further in this chapter, both Thompson and Faxon label the British gift book *The Forget-me-not* to be “undoubtedly the first ‘literary annual’” (Faxon xi).

Published by R. Ackerman in 1823, *The Forget-me-not* was edited by Frederick Shoberl,
who, inspired by the popularity of similar texts in Germany, predicted their equal success in England (Faxon xi). With the advent of *The Forget-me-not*, the demand for gift books drastically “increased until it can only be called a fad or a craze” (Faxon xi). The genre persisted in England for about thirty years before finally tapering off around 1857 (Faxon xi).

The gift book, most typically a literary anthology given as a gift during the holiday season, generally consisted of short stories, essays, poetry, and elaborate engravings. Although often enjoyed by the entire family, the gift book’s predominant audience consisted of white, middle-class women. As a result, while gift books were mostly read by women, they were generally purchased by friends, both male and female, in addition to “parents, godparents and other interested relatives” (Jump 3). The ornate appearance of the book, a quality that tremendously increased consumer interest in the product, differed from other literature on the market, especially as technology continued to develop and improve the quality and beauty of the bindings and illustrations. Faxon describes, “The ‘really truly’ gift-books had an appearance and make-up all their own, very different from any other volume. At first they were the small duo-decimos, then octavos, and finally some of them appeared as quartos. Their bindings were ornate, often to the point of gaudiness” (xiv). Though the price of the gift book seems to have varied by quality, they were generally “sold at all prices, some bringing a guinea in England, and $5.00 in America” (Faxon xv).

Antislavery gift books differed considerably in appearance, profit margins, and readership when compared to more traditional gift books. While antislavery gift books
maintained the format of a literary miscellany, neither the *Bell* nor *Autographs* showcase elaborate bindings or illustrations. Focusing on the practicality of the gift book as a way to promote abolitionist propaganda, editors such as Chapman and Griffiths were more concerned with the antislavery message that was portrayed inside the gift books than with the expensively produced decorative bindings. Moreover, the frivolity of ornate bindings on an antislavery gift book could potentially detract from the seriousness of the cause, inappropriately emphasizing the wealth and leisure of privileged white readers in comparison to the plight of the slaves. While there appears to have been somewhat of a range of gift book printings for the *Bell* with a few editions more elaborately bound than others “so that purchasers might buy according to their abilities,” the majority of Chapman’s volumes were exceedingly plain in appearance (Thompson, “The Liberty Bell” 160).

In addition to maintaining an appropriate tone for the antislavery gift books through modest binding techniques, Chapman and Griffiths most likely kept the books simple in order to keep production costs as low as possible in order to make a profit at the antislavery fairs. The antislavery cause, as it turns out, was extremely expensive to keep running, and Chapman and Griffiths edited the *Bell* and *Autographs* specifically to fundraise for their respective antislavery societies. Chapman’s fundraising efforts focused on the annual Boston Bazaar, the largest and most profitable fundraising event of the year for the American Anti-Slavery Society, at which the *Bell* premiered and was therefore sold annually. The Boston Bazaar, organized and run by Chapman herself, was held annually throughout the holiday season so that Bostonians “were treated to a few days of
mild excitement and a chance to buy Christmas presents at the same time that they helped to unshackle the slave” (Thompson, “The Liberty Bell” 155-156). Though it is believed that the *Bell* achieved at least a marginal profit, Thompson notes, “the public sale of the volumes could not have been large, for they were not intended to amuse, and their format was not sufficiently elaborate to be in itself an attraction” (Thompson, “The Liberty Bell” 158). The antislavery gift book, then, unlike more traditional gift books that reached a broad swath of the American reading public, was a more serious volume, designed not as much to entertain as to inform and influence. The simple binding took away from the glamour of the genre, and the antislavery gift book overall seemed much less popular than its more sentimental, traditional counterpart.

The desire for simplicity in antislavery consumerism can be seen in Anne Warren Weston’s notes on the 1853 Boston Bazaar, published in the *Liberator*, in which she enumerates the wide variety of goods sold at dozens of merchandise booths. After detailing the majority of the products sold at the fair, most handcrafted and donated by smaller antislavery societies throughout America and across the Atlantic, Weston ultimately admits, “We feel a sort of incongruity between these trifling and pretty details, and the great and magnificent end to which they are subsidiary” (14). While the objects sold at the fair provided much of the American Anti-Slavery Society’s funds throughout the year, Weston seems embarrassed to detail the frivolity of the objects and of the event in general when compared to the cause of slavery. She also emphasizes that many of the goods sold at the event were relatively modest in order to appeal to as many customers as possible, specifically noting the more conservative booths that “included many articles
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” (Weston 14).

Like Chapman, Griffiths produced *Autographs* to be sold annually at an antislavery bazaar where fundraising was the main purpose of the event. Griffiths, in a circular detailing the events of the Rochester Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Sewing Society’s 1853 holiday fundraising festival, notes that though the festival didn’t profit quite as much as the society was hoping, “we are far from feeling disheartened or depressed. Small as the sum may seem to many, we believe it the largest ever realized in Rochester and an Anti-Slavery Celebration” (“Circular” 1). Because the antislavery gift book was designed to be inexpensively produced in order to make money for the cause, and because the activists wanted to keep costs reasonable for well-meaning consumers, the antislavery gift book generally remained simple with few illustrations and conservative bindings.

Antislavery gift books can further be compared to traditional gift books in the uniqueness of their titles. While the titles of traditional gift books capitalized on sentimental tropes such as “gifts, tokens, souvenirs, mementos, keepsakes and offerings, with all conceivable qualifying adjectives, or else they bore the name of some flower, plant or gem,” antislavery gift books assumed more patriotic names, as seen in *The Liberty Bell* and *Autographs for Freedom* (Faxon xv). Chapman’s use of a bell to represent her collection is significant, perhaps most obviously, in its symbolization of American freedom. However, this symbol also highlights the varying physical qualities
of a bell, ranging from its function as a noisemaker to its role as marking the passing of
time by ringing at specific intervals. Like a bell, Chapman’s collection kept time of the
abolitionist movement. Because the *Bell* ran for nearly twenty years, the gift book
annually marked the progress of the abolitionism and the continued perpetuation of
slavery. The *Bell* literally marks the years in which the slave has not been freed.

The title page of the *Bell* contains a small engraving of a ringing bell with the
inscription “Proclaim Liberty to ALL the inhabitants” (Chapman 1). The *Bell*, like a
physical bell, clamors for the attention of American citizens in order to proclaim its
antislavery message. Chapman emphasizes that the symbol of liberty found in the bell
cannot exist while slavery continues to thrive. The depiction of the ringing bell thus
serves to summon Americans to the antislavery cause in order to ensure the founding
principles of American culture. The *OED* also notes the expression ‘to ring a bell,’
defining the connotation as, “to awaken the memory, to set one remembering” (“To ring”
Def. 3d). Chapman’s gift book serves as a reminder both of the ongoing antislavery
efforts and of the system of slavery. Purchasers of the *Bell* would have been reminded of
the abolitionist cause and of the plight of the slave every time they saw the volume in
their homes. The *OED* defines liberty as “exemption or release from captivity, bondage,
or slavery” (“Liberty” Def. 1a). By using an iconic symbol of freedom for the title of the
gift book, Chapman exaggerates the irony of American freedom, reminding readers that
liberty is in fact not guaranteed to all despite America’s lofty patriotic ideals.
Interestingly, the *OED* also defines liberty as “The condition of being able to act in any
desired way without hindrance or restraint; faculty or power to do as one likes”
(“Liberty” Def. 3a). The title of the _Bell_, therefore, can also be read as Chapman’s creation of a space within the gift book tradition in which she, and other women, can speak openly about politics in a more socially accepted forum within the conservative nineteenth-century public sphere. Editing the gift book allows Chapman the liberty to create an antislavery anthology that represents the American Anti-Slavery Society in a less radical format.

Julia Griffiths’ use of the title _Autographs for Freedom_ is also significant. Clare Taylor, in her definition of the gift book, mentions a hybrid collection known as the autograph book. Taylor writes of gift books, “They were usually small, elaborately bound volumes, sold for charitable purposes, and like a more popular variant, the autograph book, contained poems and stories” (88). Griffiths’ gift book, then, seems to be capitalizing on the popularity of both the autograph book and the traditional gift book. Perhaps capitalizing on the popular petition culture of the antislavery movement, and clearly wishing to display the most prominent names of those devoted to the cause to the public, Griffiths’ collection exalts the agency of those willing to combat slavery. By both contributing to her collection and by signing their names to those contributions, Griffiths ensures that writers for _Autographs_ take personal accountability in challenging the system of slavery, and thus encourage her readers to also take a personal stance on the issue as well. Though _Autographs_ contains a few more illustrations than the _Bell_, its main attraction would have been in the facsimile autographs that followed each contribution by a number of the most famous antislavery writers and activists of the time. The facsimile autographs add a personal touch to the collection, bringing the handwriting and
correspondence of many of the celebrity writers into the home. Faxon writes that most gift books generally contained, “an engraved or colored ‘inscription plate’ upon which the donor was expected to write his name and that of the fortunate recipient-to-be” (xiv). A collection such as Autographs, therefore, would encourage readers and purchasers to add their own names and signatures to the volume as well. Autographs thus invited readers to sign their names to the “good cause” of abolitionism (Griffiths, Vol.1 v).

The popularity of the gift book genre erupted at an exciting moment of technological progression, soaring literacy rates, and increasing wealth of the growing middle class. These factors strongly contributed to the growth of the “golden age of periodicals” (Thompson 2). Thompson describes the fervor of American print culture, noting, “American newspaper circulation increased between 1810 and 1828 nearly twice as rapidly as the population” (2). Parallel to the growth of periodical circulation, the abolitionist movement continued to grow throughout the early and mid nineteenth century. As the American public began to read in historically great numbers, printing presses began to apply new technologies, such as steam power, to their production techniques, allowing them to produce a greater number of books and periodicals much more quickly and at considerably lower prices. As a result of easier access to reading material and an increased amount of income and time for leisure, American citizens also began reading outside of the periodicals and newspapers, devoting more time to genres such as poetry and the novel (Thompson 2). Activists in the abolitionist movement continuously capitalized on the print culture of the nineteenth century, growing and adapting to the literary demands of American citizens. The gift book served several
particular functions for its readers, in that it was not only a pretty artifact to be displayed in the living room, or a miscellany of contemporary literature, but also a sentimental gift that was displayed with pride and tenderness in homes. Thompson notes that the gift book had a significant effect on “those who received the books as marks of Christmas regard, upon the families who leafed them thru on rainy afternoons or wintry evenings…the gift book was among the most treasured of personal belongings” (1-2). Furthermore, “Unlike other volumes, it was not, once read, forgotten. Throughout the year it lay upon the parlor table, an ornament awaiting re-examination in an idle hour” (Thompson 2).

Antislavery gift books deviate most clearly from traditional gift books, however, in their ultimate purpose as gifts. While traditional gift books were pretty artifacts with impressive illustrations that readers could present in their homes and enjoy throughout the year, antislavery gift books didn’t necessarily make a nice gift for consumers to give to family and friends. Simple in binding and often propagandistic in content, antislavery gift books probably wouldn’t have made a pretty centerpiece for a coffee table, and in many homes, it may have been deemed inappropriate or controversial to display the Bell or Autographs in more public spaces of the home, such as the parlor, that would have been a place where guests were received. Who bought volumes of the Bell and Autographs, then? To whom were they given as gifts? Though a number of volumes may have been bought by patrons of the Bazaars and Festivals, or by sympathizers of the movement to give to other friends with antislavery leanings, the bulk of the audience for the antislavery gift book appears to have been the activists themselves. Thompson
describes the relatively low profit turned by the antislavery gift books, noting that the *Bell* in particular was probably kept running for so long “simply because it was an impressive means of propaganda and because it was useful in keeping alive interest in the fairs. No doubt a considerable part of each edition was given away, either to those who had contributed directly to its publication or to those who had aided the bazaar in some way” (“The Liberty Bell” 158-159). Aside from a situation like the *Bell*, where there was a new volume printed each year making it a Boston Bazaar tradition that may have appealed to consumers, the antislavery gift book appears to have been most often a gift to those who helped contribute to the books and to the fairs in order to thank volunteers for their work, and to encourage their continued support and work in the following year. The antislavery gift book thus also became a token of remembrance for activists.

Another obvious difference between the traditional gift book and the antislavery gift book, as alluded to in the previous paragraph, can be seen in the literary content of the compilations. Faxon emphasizes the conservative and decorous subject matter that generally presided within the traditional gift book genre, explaining, “There was never a contribution that savored of the lack of refinement. These volumes were intended as gifts, and were such that they might ornament the drawing-room table of the most fastidious without offense either to mind or eye” (xxi). Thompson qualifies that while it is difficult to cohesively describe the gift book genre in its varied manifestations, he echoes, “About the only sweeping conclusion possible is that all were highly moral and polite” (24). Antislavery gift books, in content, were obviously far different from more polite volumes that readers would showcase in their homes. Highly political and critical of American
cultural norms, the Bell and Autographs, though at times catering to the sentimental and romantic writing styles desired by women readers at this time, could be viewed as abrasively propagandistic by sensitive or apolitical readers.

Both Faxon and Thompson criticize the literary quality of the gift books, especially once the market became inundated with the genre. Faxon remarks, “All the better class of ‘gift-books’ throughout their existence diluted their good things with many a mediocre article by unknown or unnamed authors” (xxii), and Thompson hints, “The spirit of the time was one of conformity, not experiment” (29). Despite the scholars’ highbrow criticism, however, the gift book gradually grew into a legitimately literary genre that showcased impressive work by both famous and unknown writers. Valerie Levy’s work, for example, highlights both the political and literary potential of the antislavery gift book, noting that the Bell “offered … an ideal venue for expressing … radical political views while still maintaining a high level of artistic artistry” (137). This project emphasizes how Griffiths and Chapman worked to create gift books of high literary quality that also allowed them to express and refine their radical antislavery views.

II. Literary Nationalism and the Gift Book

Though the gift book model didn’t reach America until a few years after it prospered in England, once the genre crossed the Atlantic it achieved greater consumer enthusiasm than its British counterparts. At their peak, American gift book publishers “issued an ever-increasing number, until from 1846 to 1852 an average of sixty appeared
each year- sixty-six have been recorded for 1851, and there were probably others” (Faxon xii). Faxon traces the first successful American literary gift book to the *Atlantic Souvenir*, an annual published in Philadelphia in 1826iv. Although American gift book publishers copied the format of the English gift books and generally borrowed English illustrations, Faxon emphasizes that the literature of the gift books was emphatically American. Thompson explains in more depth the importance of the gift book to the American literary identity. Because America had yet to establish a thriving arts scene in the early nineteenth century, the country’s cultural reputation constantly competed with that of its transatlantic ancestors. Criticized for their “barbarity and crudeness” Americans had no developed literary medium through which they could repudiate these claims (Thompson 4). The gift books, however, aimed toward an increasing middle class, were “handsome and costly; they were ‘artistic’ and ‘refined.’ They met a demand for ‘culture’ and showed the purchaser that his country could produce- and would support- its own painters, engravers, and authors” (Thompson 4). The production of elaborate gift books in American presses proved that American typographers, printers, and illustrators could manufacture texts as ornate as those of their British competitors (Thompson 4). Although British gift books sold fairly well in America, Thompson presumes that more Americans were apt to buy American gift books “since national pride figured largely in their acceptance” (8). The gift book thus became a form of cultural collateral for Americans, defining a space that showcased the work of major American literary figures, proved to their British counterparts that there was a place for literary culture in America, and exposed the growing middle class to higher culture.
Faxon’s and Thompson’s focus on gift book nationalism creates an idyllic snapshot of the genre that simplifies its content, its transnational influences, and its role in creating a socially acceptable space for writers to critique American culture and ideals. Faxon’s focus on the British and American binary of the gift book market fails to acknowledge the complicated and intertwined transatlantic relationship between England and America at this time, especially within the abolitionist movement. Dividing his extensive bibliography into separate sections based on their respective British and American origins, Faxon simplifies the collaborative aspects of the genre. Without acknowledging the gift book’s frequently transnational content, especially in the case of the *Bell and Autographs*, Faxon overlooks how women such as Chapman and Griffiths used the genre to question and challenge American nationalism, both through their criticism of the American institution of slavery, and through their active recruitment and subsequent showcasing of foreign criticism in the form of literary contributions, essays, and letters from European activists that frequently decorated the pages of their American gift books.

Faxon’s nationalist slant seems particularly insubstantial when we consider that Chapman and Griffiths traveled abroad while editing the 1853 and 1854 volumes of the *Bell and Autographs*. Chapman fled to Paris not only to educate her children in Europe’s superior school system and to alleviate the grief of mourning her recently deceased husband; she also went there with her antislavery work in order to escape increasingly acerbic criticism regarding her radical politics and outspoken work with Garrison. It seems doubtful that Chapman, fleeing to a foreign country to retain her safety and
respectability while still engaging in American humanitarian work, considered the *Bell* a glorification of American ideals. In fact, at this time in the mid-nineteenth century, many activists, such as abolitionist Sarah Remond, became expatriates, traveling to Europe to fight for the antislavery cause and never returning to America. William and Ellen Craft remained in England for nearly twenty years before returning to America, and activists William Wells Brown and Henry “Box” Brown also worked abroad for years before returning to America. As can be seen in Chapman’s stories and in the overall tone of the gift book, Chapman felt increasingly critical of American ideals and she used the *Bell* as a forum through which she could express these sentiments. Griffiths’ travels to America are equally problematic for a nationalist reading of the gift book genre. That Douglass needed the help of a white British woman to edit and fund his newspaper negates Faxon’s and Thompson’s views that once the gift book genre crossed the Atlantic that it became uniquely American. Despite the fact that *Autographs* was an American antislavery gift book edited by a British abolitionist, the content of its volumes showcases the tangled relationship between English and American activists at this time, depicting mutual criticism and encouragement. Overall, *Autographs* is a much more transnational text than a uniquely American text.

The abolitionist movement, as depicted in the *Bell* and *Autographs*, simply couldn’t run without emotional and financial support from abroad. Valerie Levy notes that, “Chapman reached out to Europe’s liberal communities in particular, and much of the success that *The Liberty Bell* enjoyed was due to the funds that Chapman and other Boston abolitionists acquired through their transatlantic relations and campaigns” (141).
This same transatlantic relationship can be seen in Anne Weston’s report of the Boston Bazaar as she illustrates, “The same voices that long since bade us God speed yet utter their cheering tones of sympathy and encouragement … to a more earnest and entire consecration in our glorious work. From Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth, London, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Dublin, and Cork, were received collections surpassing … those of any previous year” (Weston 14). Although traditional gift book culture may have been more nationalistic in tone and content, Faxon and Thompson fail to account for the transnational influences of the antislavery gift books and their critique on American politics and culture.

It should be noted, however, that in a separate article, “The Liberty Bell and other Anti-Slavery Gift Books” Thompson briefly accounts for the transnational characteristics of abolitionist gift books by noting that modern audiences reading the Bell are “likely to be more impressed by the international sources of its letterpress than by anything else… Taken by itself, this fact means little, but when it is realized that the average American literary annual was aggressively nationalistic, the fact becomes more significant” (“The Liberty Bell” 161). Because gift books were traditionally “representative of the high tide of American cultural self-consciousness, and had risen to popularity on a wave of interest in the native genius” Thompson argues that the Bell and other antislavery gift books were unique in their attack of the weaknesses of American culture (“The Liberty Bell” 161). Thompson explains that the nationalist criticism of the Bell “made for at least a temporary diminution of the scorn for all things foreign. Behind the emotional excesses of abolitionist fervor lurked at least this one element of sanity. Not that the Liberty Bell
made the most of the possibility, however” (“The Liberty Bell” 161). This thesis will
demonstrate how Chapman and Griffiths did, in fact, effectively use the gift book genre
as a way to bolster the abolitionist movement and further transnational relations. Taking
full advantage of the gift book tradition, challenging its norms and modifying and
expanding it to their needs, Chapman and Griffiths negotiated both American nationalism
and the transnationalism of the abolitionist movement in the Bell and Autographs,
creating volumes that both embraced and criticized American nationalism while also
powerfully collaborating with other nations in the fight to end slavery.

III. Contemporary Considerations of the Gift Book Genre

Both Faxon’s and Thompson’s conservative and ultimately dated scholarship
places particular emphasis on the early writings of canonical writers that can be found
within various gift books, noting in particular Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allen Poe,
and Ralph Waldo Emerson, among others. While Faxon’s work essentially ignores the
genre as a feminine space in which canonical female writers also published and edited
regularly, Thompson’s work makes a more nuanced, though still limited, argument about
the content of the gift books and the effects of women readers and writers on the genre, as
he notes that the gift books “coincided, moreover, with the American woman’s
emergence into the world of letters” (5). Although Thompson recognizes the presence of
women in the literary marketplace, his interpretation of their work is dismissive, as can
be seen in his opinions of women’s work within the genre, concluding, “It was logical,
furthermore, that the gift books should be highly sentimental and exotic” (5).
More recent scholarship explores in depth the role of women writers and editors in the gift book marketplace. In her article, “‘Delectable’ Books for ‘Delicate’ Readers: The 1830s Giftbook Market, Ackerman and Co., and the Countess of Blessington,” Ann Hawkins defines the gift book market between the years of 1822 and 1860 as “the most popular, and the most lucrative literary medium” (20). Selling thousands of copies for a considerable profit, the gift book genre created a major literary market for middle-class women readers. Hawkins details the popularity of the gift book genre and its importance to nineteenth-century literary culture, arguing that the genre allowed contributors, especially women, to both adhere to and challenge “cultural constructions of gender” through the negotiation of a socially acceptable genre (20). However, early nineteenth-century critics of the genre, notably male critics and reviewers, questioned the gift book’s cultural appropriateness (Hawkins 22). Conservative critics of the genre not only questioned the morality of women’s images in the lavish illustrations of the gift books, but as Hawkins also notes, “Once the reviewer associates the images with pornography, and the women in the images with ‘public women,’ it follows that the writers of these books- already public women for having published- share much in common with other public women, prostitute” (24).

Women were able to manipulate the genre, however, maintaining an outward appearance of social complicity while criticizing and often parodying social norms through their work in the gift books. While the social and historical contexts that Harriet Devine Jump’s chapter explores are similar to those of Hawkins’s article, Jump specifically focuses on the reactions of male writers, and the consequential female
counter-reactions, to the gift book genre in her essay, “‘The False Prudery of Public Taste’: Scandalous Women and the Annuals, 1820-1850.” Although nineteenth-century male authors often felt uncomfortable contributing to gift books, a publication space that was essentially “a woman’s world,” women writers, “felt less uncomfortable with the public purveyance of the kind of restrictive domestic ideology which was the specialization of the annuals” (Jump 3). No matter the degree of literary acclaim of women writers Jump notes that, interestingly, they “seem not to have been troubled by considerations of pride and self-respect when offered the opportunity of publishing in these volumes… Whatever their private opinions may have been, women writers felt less uncomfortable with the public purveyance of the kind of restrictive domestic ideology which was the specialisation of the annuals” (3). Jump argues that women overtook the genre, outwardly conforming to the feminine ideals embodied in gift book publications in order to ensure profitable sales, while also manipulating the genre to subtly embed opposing messages that they wished to impart to their readers within the stories. While outwardly conservative and designed to be read at home in the private sphere, the genre also allowed women to write, publish, and comment publicly on a variety of political and social issues. In short, many of the stories “undermined and deconstructed the very models of femininity and domestic bliss that they were overtly recommending” (3).

While Jump’s analysis focuses on the traditional gift book genre, her argument is useful to the study of antislavery gift books such as the Bell and Autographs. While Chapman and Griffiths were harshly criticized for their radical politics, their close attachments to prominent male antislavery figures, and their very public abolitionist work, their
respective gift books allowed the women to write publicly about antislavery issues in a genre deemed socially appropriate for their gender. By placing their political criticisms within the feminine gift book genre, this project argues that both Chapman and Griffiths sought to make their radical politics more approachable for readers outside of the movement, while also creating a space in which they could subtly critique abolitionist politics as well.

Maria Weston Chapman’s work on *The Liberty Bell* is perhaps one of the most definitive examples of a woman using the gift book genre as a platform for social and political commentary. Though certainly not the first antislavery gift book, *The Liberty Bell* “was the first to draw successfully upon the popular gift-book tradition in order to sell abolitionist propaganda for a profit” (Levy 142). Valery Levy’s essay, “Lydia Maria Child and the Abolitionist Gift Book Market,” concentrates on the friendship and literary relationship between Lydia Maria Child and Chapman. Though the chapter is interesting in its outlook on Child, Levy sheds considerable light both on the interactions between Chapman and other nineteenth century figures and also on the workings of *The Liberty Bell*. Levy explores Chapman’s motivations for appropriating the gift book “tradition” and explains, “Chapman used *The Liberty Bell* to illuminate the internal, or ‘domestic,’ work that women could accomplish (Levy 140-141). Chapman referred to the *Liberty Bell* as the *Bell*, and the gift book was published and sold annually as a holiday fundraiser at the Boston Bazaar, which, “organized by the Chapman-Garrison faction under the auspices of the BFASS, was by far the most popular of the antislavery fairs” (141). Levy explains, “The *Bell* made its first appearance at the sixth of these fairs, held
on October 29, 1839, and was marketed for the attendees, who already shared an interest
in, if not a devotion to, abolitionism” (142). The Bell was “was attractive to purchasers
for its ethical content and honorable reputation,” and it enjoyed a wide readership of both
American and European audiences (Levy 143).

Levy argues that Child and Chapman used the gift book to “bridge the gap
between thought and action amongst abolitionists’ potential supporters” (143). In order to
embrace the muffled political potential of the gift book genre while also working around
its inherent limitations, the women used subtle rhetorical devices to convey Garrison’s
“potentially unpalatable ideas” (Levy 143). Because Garrison “was famous (and
infamous) for his markedly strident language,” Child and Chapman worked to temper
Garrison’s politics in order to make the antislavery cause “more appealing to its
predominantly female audience” (Levy 143). While Garrison’s radicalism could be off-
putting to more moderate readers, the gift book format allowed Child and Chapman a
quieter, more feminine space in which they could take “control over the propaganda”
while also promoting, albeit more gently, radical political viewpoints (Levy 151).
Masking radical politics beneath a feminine veneer was not always easy, however, and
the women often “walked a fine line between speaking up for their beliefs and remaining
true to more conventional notions of a woman’s place” (Levy 151). The “fine line” that
the women walked is particularly clear in Chapman’s story, “The Young Sailor”vi (Levy
151). Throughout the story Chapman illustrates various moments in society in which she
must perform quietness in order to retain her feminine respectability instead of
challenging the pro-slavery opinions of men. In her portrayal of the events in the Bell,
however, Chapman speaks freely against the men’s arguments, patiently rebutting each and every pro-slavery argument in a non-patronizing tone that is far from fanatical. Chapman’s defense of abolitionist ideals through a litany of rational and gentle counterarguments allows her to effectively use the gift book as a space in which she can make a strong antislavery statement and challenge men while also retaining her respectability and personal spunk.

While a moderate amount of scholarship has been devoted to Chapman and her editorship of the *Bell*, less work has explored Julia Griffiths’ short-lived collection, *Autographs for Freedom*, and how it both differs from and compares to its long running predecessor, the *Bell*. *Autographs* was published in two volumes from 1853-1854, though it appears that Griffiths originally imagined a greater scope for the project, as can be seen in the preface of the second volume of *Autographs* when Griffiths thanks the contributors and mentions that she hopes they will write for her “in other numbers of ‘The Autograph,’ which may be called forth ere the chains of the Slave shall be broken and this country redeemed from the sin and curse of Slavery” (v-vi). Once Griffiths returned to England in 1855, however, the project appears to have been abandoned, as Griffiths turned her attention to forming numerous British antislavery societies that worked, in part, to fundraise and support the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society transatlantically. Importantly, Taylor also notes that Chapman “fell out with … Douglass and his English helper, Julia Griffiths, when the latter produced a small gift-book, *Autographs for Freedom*, for sale at the Rochester fair in 1853 and 1854” (90). We can thus assume that Griffiths’ gift book was viewed as a threat to Chapman, or that it at least rivaled
Chapman’s *Bell*. While the two gift books may have ultimately rivaled each other for readership and for the work of popular contributors, both the *Bell* and *Autographs* appear to be hybridized forms of the gift book that Chapman and Griffiths appropriated for their own fundraising needs.

As both women ultimately had more serious social and political goals for their gift books than simply indulging and entertaining middle class women readers, and because of the antislavery gift books’ purpose to serve as encouragement to activists, fundraisers, and propagandistic recruiting tools for the cause, the *Bell* and *Autographs* differ most importantly from traditional gift books in their inherent and intentional performativity.

**IV. Performativity and the Antislavery Gift Book**

Marvin Carlson’s introduction to *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, states that performance is “an essentially contested concept” (5). Performance theorists such as Richard Schechner define a performance as a live bodily experience directly related to theater or ritual that is divorced from text. Although Schechner admits that “performance is an inclusive term” in which “theater is only one node on a continuum,” he ultimately argues that performance theory “is rooted in practice and is fundamentally interdisciplinary and intercultural” (xvii). While other theorists explore linguistic performance, performance of the everyday, etc., Schechner’s definition is “much more limited” (22). In fact, the defining factor for Schechner is that performance needs to be “an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual
or group” (22). By limiting the broad connotations of performance to live theater, Schechner is able to situate theater “where it belongs: among performance genres, not literature. The text, where it exists, is understood as a key to action, not its replacement. Where there is no text, action is treated directly” (19).

This project argues against Schechner’s claims that literature hinders the direct action of the performance. While I have no interest in claiming the gift book genre as theatrical, or in any way a live performance, I would like to argue, in the case of antislavery gift books, that the text can be a replacement for action, or for live performance (Schechner 19). Despite the success of some female orators, such as Angelina Grimke, in the nineteenth-century antislavery scene, many women felt uncomfortable about speaking or lecturing about abolitionism in public. Taylor notes that, “Maria Weston Chapman and her sisters disliked speaking in public, but found a natural outlet in writing and publishing their opposition to slavery” (87). Taylor labels writing as an alternative to speaking in public, and as “a liberating experience, suitable for female abolitionists who were unable or disinclined to take part in public life” (87). Writing thus became a way for women to treat action directly, but in a more culturally acceptable manner (Schechner 19). Antislavery literature, unlike other forms of literature, was actually designed to do something. The Bell and Autographs encouraged abolitionists already working for the cause, educated and recruited new people to the antislavery movement, and at the very least, sought to make their readers feel something about the wrongs of slavery, make them change their attitudes, and make them individually accountable for the perpetuation of the system. Purchasers of antislavery gift books
became further implicated in the genre’s performativity. While buying gift books at an antislavery fair can be read as a direct performance of abolitionism, the actual giving of the *Bell* or *Autographs* as a gift to another person enacts the activism that the volumes textually promote.

Both Chapman and Griffiths not only perform their role as antislavery activists loyal to opposing factions of the movement, but they also perform their activism using various performative rhetorical techniques within the gift books. While Chapman performs through a careful use of performative writing, Griffiths inhabits the liminal space between editor and writer of *Autographs*. Although Griffiths doesn’t contribute to the collection beyond writing the prefaces, the contributors write letters to her, creating a liminal space in which she is both an absent and central part of the collection. Before exploring the varying performances within the *Bell* and *Autographs*, it seems important to define the concepts of performative speech-acts and liminality and how the terms will be used throughout this project to argue that antislavery gift books were, despite Schechner’s purist viewpoints, unique performances within the antislavery movement.

Despite the seemingly infinite variations of the definition of the performative, I derive my understanding of performativity from the iconic works on speech-acts by John Austin and Jacques Derrida, respectively. I understand the term ‘performative’ to, most importantly, connote agency, as Austin famously claims that in performative utterances, “to say something is to do something; or in which by saying or in saying something that we are doing something” (177). Performative acts, as I see them working within antislavery gift books, then, actually do something in their writing. Griffiths, and
Chapman in particular, use the writing and editing of gift books to encourage abolitionists, raise money for the cause, spark political change, and convince the general public to acquire abolitionist ideals. I also incorporate Derrida’s notion of citationality into my understanding of the performative, particularly his notion that each successful speech act is a repetition of a prior successful speech act, as can be seen when he argues, “Would a performative statement be possible if citational doubling did not eventually split, disassociate from itself the pure singularity of the event?” (184). Furthermore, Derrida extends the performativity of speech acts to ordinary language as well, breaking from Austin’s strict definition of the pure performative that exists successfully solely under specific circumstances, such as a wedding ceremony.

Judith Butler argues in her article, “Critically Queer,” that the power of a performative action to do something comes not from the subject enacting the performative, but from the citationality of the act’s success. For example, Butler defines performative acts as “forms of authoritative speech,” but she argues that the authority of the speech act comes from the repetition of the authoritative act throughout history (17). She explains, “There is no power, construed as subject, that acts, but only a reiterated acting that is power in its persistence and instability” (Butler 17). The authority that Chapman and Griffiths enact through the gift books, then, is successful in part because of the tradition of the gift book genre that they both cite and appropriate in their gift book variations. The power of the gift books is also gleaned from the successful rhetorical and performative techniques handed down throughout the abolitionist movement, which was thriving in the mid-nineteenth century by the time Griffiths began working on...
Finally, the Bell and Autographs engage in a citationality of the sentimentalism of a post Uncle Tom’s Cabin culture, of the success of travel writing, and of the political tracts and essays that populated successful antislavery periodicals such as the Liberator and the North Star. The gift books are ultimately performative and representative of the abolitionist movement during the 1850s.

Furthermore, several of the literary pieces included in the gift books contain passages in which the writer breaks away from the sentimental tale or poem and speaks directly to the reader, inquiring her opinion of the matter, asking her to morally justify both for herself and for her country why it is acceptable for slavery to continue. Though the women editors of these gift books were not standing before a “live audience” and speaking aloud, in the moment, to a crowd of abolitionists, eager listeners, or irate slavery supporters, does that make their performance less active? Chapman and Griffiths were both outspoken and politically active women, and it seems that their decision to write through a conservative, sentimental medium in order to obtain money, support, and awareness for the cause was just as much a performance of abolitionism in the nineteenth century as Angelina Grimke’s speeches. Although Chapman and Griffiths didn’t interact with a live audience, through literature they addressed and interacted with a wide scope of American and European readers. Thus, the antislavery gift books were an active part of nineteenth-century performance culture.

V. The Editorships of Maria Weston Chapman and Julia Griffiths
Maria Weston Chapman creates in the Bell a space in which she can slightly soften radical Garrisonian politics and negotiate the gift book genre to both appeal to readers and to publicly comment on social and political issues. In her story, “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone,” Chapman performs cultural and feminine norms within a subversive political agenda that questions the capitalist economic system that perpetuates slavery and that, at times, replaces antislavery action with passive consumerism within the abolitionist movement. The other story that Chapman contributes to the 1853 edition of the Bell is “The Young Sailor,” a piece that mediates the propriety and femininity that Chapman must retain in public, as seen in the story when Chapman encounters a racist, pro-colonization sailor and listens to his rant without comment, with scathing private criticism on the character later made public through the gift book. Both “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone” and “The Young Sailor” are travel narratives, and my thesis will also explore the role that Chapman’s transnational travels, to both Paris and Haiti, affect her performance of abolitionism. Within her writings, Chapman embraces and manipulates performative writing. This project will explore the rhetorical techniques that Chapman deploys through the lens of performative writing theorists such as Peggy Phelan, Della Pollock, and Gay Gibson Cima.

Julia Griffiths performs her role as editor very differently within Autographs. While Chapman both aggressively edits and contributes to the Bell, aside from her authorship of two short prefaces, Griffiths remains markedly absent from Autographs. By exploring the concepts of liminality in performance as discussed by Victor Turner, Peggy Phelan, and Jon McKenzie, I hope to better explore Griffiths’ performance in
*Autographs.* I will argue that Griffiths occupies a liminal space within the gift book that exists somewhere in between outspoken editorship and marked authorship. Despite the absence of contributions by Griffiths in *Autographs*, the collection contains numerous letters addressed or written to Griffiths in response to her request for contributions. Griffiths thus retains a virtually silent (unmarked), yet omnipresent role that is extremely affective to the performance of the collection. Both capitalizing on Uncle Tom-Mania and hiding behind it, I will explore how *Autographs* both engages with and at times resists the transatlantic fanaticism over Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, sparking a further discussion on how *Autographs* illustrates British and American transatlantic abolitionism at this moment in the nineteenth century.
Chapter II

Traveling Performativity in Maria Weston Chapman’s The Liberty Bell

In her story, “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone,” Chapman carefully balances cultural and feminine norms with a subversive political agenda, which questions the capitalist economic system that perpetuates slavery and, at times, replaces antislavery action with passive consumerism within the abolitionist movement. Although Chapman ultimately uses her abolitionist identity to further her cause in “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone,” she chooses to conceal it in her second travel narrative, “The Young Sailor,” instead using the gift book as an active space in which she can critique and dismantle contemporary pro-slavery rationale more explicitly than in public, social discourse. By using characteristics of the travel narrative in her contributions, Chapman enhances her representation of the political and cultural progressiveness of other nations toward the abolition of slavery while also heavily critiquing America’s continued perpetuation of the slavery system and rampant prejudice toward both African Americans and abolitionists. Chapman’s work in “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone” and “The Young Sailor” illustrates the dual performance of masked social femininity and outspoken performative writing that she engages in as editor and writer of the Bell.

Gay Gibson Cima’s notion of the host body explains that women “established themselves as hosts for a networking web of information-sharing, becoming colonial, national, transnational, and diasporic cultural critics…The host body granted them a collective body, a way of imagining relationality alongside of or outside of nationhood. It offered a way of being one ‘body’ despite their geographic dispersion” (5). As Chapman
edits the gift book from Paris and contributes stories to the *Bell* about her travels, she becomes a transnational critic of American, British, French, and Haitian culture.

Chapman’s abolitionist identity thus offers her a “collective body” that allows her to negotiate, bridge, and critique numerous cultures while maintaining her Americanness (Cima 5). By claiming a host body that is part of the larger abolitionist “networking web” Chapman is able to engage in a transnational community that works both outside and within nationalism for the common cause of freeing the slave (Cima 5). Despite her traveling body, Chapman dons one abolitionist host body that she utilizes to explore and critique both contemporary and specifically abolitionist political opinions throughout several different nations. Chapman’s use of performative travel writing, both rhetorically and through her donned abolitionist body, creates an active performance within the gift book that critiques abolitionist politics, consumerism, pro-slavery rationale, and the public sphere.

Chapman’s outspokenness about her abolitionist identity in one story, and her subsequent denial of it when speaking with an American sailor on her voyage to Haiti, suggests a complicated criticism of the public sphere that Chapman mediates through the freedom of travel writing, a genre that allows her to speak freely from abroad to illustrate the progressiveness of other cultures and to emphasize America’s shortcomings without enduring the social repercussions that disrupted her life in America and that forced her, in part, to travel to Paris. Jurgen Habermas defines the concept of the public sphere as “first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens” (22). While access to the public sphere may
be “guaranteed to all citizens,” the extent to which it was guaranteed, especially for
nineteenth-century women activists, seems problematic in a discussion of female reform
literature (Habermas 22). Habermas’s defining work on the public sphere spends
particular time discussing its growth in the early nineteenth century when print
technology and literacy began to pervade European culture. He explains, “The
bourgeoisie public sphere could be understood as the sphere of private individuals
assembled into a public body, which almost immediately laid claim to the officially
regulated ‘intellectual newspapers’ for use against the public authority itself” (Habermas
23). He continues, “In those newspapers, and in moralistic and critical journals, they
debated that public authority on the general rules of social intercourse” (Habermas 23).

When “private individuals” such as Maria Weston Chapman “assembled into a
public body,” such as the Garrisonian faction of the abolitionist movement, the press
became a place for these intellectuals to combat political “public authority” on various
reform issues through periodical organs such as Garrison’s Liberator (Habermas 23).
However, just because all citizens had access to the public sphere, didn’t mean that
everyone had an equal degree of access. In a culture that favored white men and that
viewed the proper place of women as being within the home, nineteenth-century cultural
norms perpetuated a substantial inequality that limited female access to the public sphere.
While Chapman had greater access to the political public sphere of the nineteenth century
than most women because of her close collaboration with William Lloyd Garrison, her
reputation mainly centered on her work as Garrison’s assistant and on her editorship of
the Bell, one of the longest running annual gift books of the nineteenth century. Chapman
thus uses the press to her own feminine advantage, appropriating the gift book as a space to speak against the “public authority” of both contemporary politics and the abolitionist movement itself (Habermas 23).

Because “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone” focuses on Chapman’s quest to track down the artist of a bronze sculpture, a discussion on commodities and Chapman’s negotiation of the economic climates of nineteenth-century France and America seems crucial to an understanding of the performative functions of the text. Chapman admiringly describes the statue (Figure 1) as a “woman carrying water; her beautiful arm drawn downward, and displayed at its full length by the weight of the vase, and her dress and attitude chosen so as to show to the best advantage the fine African features, where nothing was exaggerated or extenuated” (“Sculptor” 246). Chapman’s description pointedly details the physical properties and the fine quality of the statue as an object, or as a piece of art, before settling on a description of the sculpture’s portrayal of an African woman. Chapman’s delayed mention of the woman’s African ethnicity both enhances the artistic quality of the sculpture while also effectively shocking readers. Through the description of the sculpture’s African subject, Chapman conflates the reality of American slavery with high French art. The beauty of the sculpture, Chapman explains, “was such that a single glance could not fail to break the associations of ugliness and repulsiveness which Slavery has connected with the name of Africa” (“Sculptor” 247). Chapman’s description emphasizes the sculpture’s disruption of the imagery of the American slave through its depiction of the purity and beauty of the African race as it exists outside of
slavery. The sculpture, then, exists both as a material object of fine art, and as a representation of African potential.

Marx defines a commodity as “an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another” (665). A commodity “is therefore, so far as it is a material thing, a use-value, something useful” (Marx 665). The bronze statue, the story’s central commodity, functions in several ways in Chapman’s story. As a piece of art, the sculpture is useful to the consumer in its fine artistic quality and variance in subject matter. Because the artist’s sculptures can be found “in every fine collection of bronzes in Paris,” its most obvious use-values are its beauty, its fine quality, and its exclusivity as desired by art collectors (Chapman, “Sculpture” 251). On a more metaphorical level, however, the sculpture is comprised of several-use values that Chapman employs to make her antislavery statement. For example, the sculpture depicts the natural beauty and strength of Africans outside of slavery, implying a stark contrast to the imagery of the ragged and abused American slave. Chapman emphasizes the importance of exposing the sculpture to the American body so that they can see an example of an African “out of whom they have not trampled the beauty and the grace of life, that they forget how differently the very same being would appear to them under different circumstances” (“Sculpture” 248).

The sculpture is also useful to Chapman in that it debunks the common belief that Africans were of an inferior race. Chapman even suggests an inherent superiority in the African subject of the sculpture, describing, “The sculptor had denied her no advantage of drapery or position, which a European subject might claim” (“Sculpture” 246).
Figure 1: “Nubian Watercarrier.” Charles Cumberworth.
Depicting the African woman as sculpted in a completely natural pose, Chapman stresses that the figure is so naturally beautiful that she does not need artistic enhancement or props to emphasize her beauty. The fine quality and artistic skill of the statue also elevates the figure of the African woman into the highest societal realms of Paris, allowing Chapman to subtly emphasize America’s flagrant insistence on perpetuating slavery even though European nations had abolished slavery years before. While in America slaves are often viewed as less than human, the African figure of the French artist invites the African into the most exclusive galleries and homes in Europe.

However, despite Chapman’s altruistic fascination with the bronze sculpture, she initially appears to be unaware of the sculpture’s blatant commodification of the African body. As Chapman describes how the sculpture could represent the African race if slavery were abolished, she fails to recognize how the display of the figure turns the African woman’s body into an object for sale, making the sculpture a commodity akin to the slave body itself. Ironically, Chapman, one of the most outspoken female abolitionists of the nineteenth-century, glorifies the purchase of an African body in an economic transaction that recalls the sale of slave bodies on the auction block. Seemingly unconsciously, Chapman endorses the same capitalistic system that sells and purchases African bodies as commodities.

Upon closer examination, however, Chapman’s story can be read as an intentional parody of the commodification of slave bodies in the United States. Her portrayal of the statue as a commodity thus becomes more politically motivated in promoting emancipation and critiquing a degree of abolitionist activism than it is capitalistic. Aware
that the audience of the gift book genre was comprised of mainly middle-class women and abolitionists, the majority of whom supported the cause through purchases of freed labor materials and cultural artifacts like *The Liberty Bell* itself, Chapman cloaks her critique of the capitalist system that perpetuates slavery in the same consumerist language that would likely appeal to her female and activist readers. Jump argues that female gift book writers had to both satisfy the wants of their readers while also accommodating their own social and political agendas, describing that “Authors had to perform a delicate balancing act, supplying their readers with what they wanted to read” (3-4). Consequentially, women gift book writers often wrote sentimental stories filled with surreptitious social or political commentary. As a result of the political or social messages embedded within the texts, Jump explains, “The short stories undermined and deconstructed the very models of femininity and domestic bliss that they were overtly recommending” (3).

Although Chapman appears to be endorsing the consumerist mindset that allows the figure of the African woman to be bought and sold in the same capitalist system that sustains slavery, it can also be argued that the story shows a “willingness to parody the conventions” of abolitionist culture that supports itself through the sale of African or slave memorabilia to an audience that fails to view the irony inherent in favoring consumerism over activism (Jump 17). As was seen in Anne Weston’s discomfort at the consumerist details of the Boston Bazaar, Chapman herself ultimately decided that there were more efficient ways of fundraising for the cause and would later abandon both the annual Boston Bazaar and the *Bell* in 1858. Through direct comparisons of American and
French consumerism and an emphasis on the funds that she manages for the American Anti-Slavery Society, Chapman’s story appears to be critiquing the activists and consumers at events like the Boston Bazaar whose humanitarian work both begins and ends with the purchase of frivolous commodities to benefit the slaves as opposed to more outspoken advocacy for their freedom.

Throughout the story, Chapman negotiates and challenges the economic systems of both America and France. Marx characterizes capitalist nations as being comprised of “‘an immense accumulation of commodities,’ its unit being a single commodity” (665). Chapman, as a female citizen of a capitalist nation, recognizes her power as a consumer in American culture and seems surprised that that power holds little weight in French culture. Chapman’s interaction with the adverse economic systems peaks when she cannot obtain the contact information of the artist of the bronze sculpture, leading her to wryly comment that “France is not in any eminent degree a commercial country. One proof of this is the difficulty with which one can wring the name of a workman from his employer, or the address of an artist from a wholesale dealer in the production of art” (“Sculpture” 247). After describing herself as an abolitionist, however, the dealer’s “narrow notions of commercial policy yielded immediately to his feelings of humanity” and he divulges the artist’s address (Chapman, “Sculpture” 248).

Although Chapman seems to regret her loss of commercial control in France, the airy tone of her complaints suggests a humorous recounting of the situation belied with an internal respect for a culture less concerned with turning a profit than with preserving the integrity of the product and the producer. Chapman’s goodwill toward the economic
situation can also be seen when the dealer’s “feelings of humanity” take precedence over his “commercial policy” (“Sculpture” 248). Her interactions with the French art dealer provide both a humorous anecdote for her readers and a subtle commentary on the progressive social and cultural norms found in France, a country that embraces abolitionism and that supports and appreciates racially progressive art that is the antithesis of the image of the American slave. By adopting the comparative functions of the travel narrative form, Chapman, again, makes a subtle critique on the consumer culture of her American readers.

After explaining the concept of exchange-value, Marx deduces that when exchanging commodities, “There exists in equal quantities something common to both. The two things must therefore be equal to a third, which in itself is neither the one nor the other. Each of them, so far as it is exchange-value, must therefore be reducible to this third” (666). Marx continues to explain that the third property of commodities, or the “common property” of all commodities, is “that of being products of labor” (667). Marx further describes “the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labor is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labor” (667). Interestingly, Chapman’s story focuses not only on the statue as the artist’s product, but also on her missed encounters with the artist, or the “laborer” that produces the sculpture, Cumberworth (Marx 667). Although Marx argues that laborers feel frustrated and alienated by a production process that divorces workers from the product until the moment of exchange in the marketplace, Chapman’s story inverts this concept. While Cumberworth presumably has complete control over his
artistic production, his attempts to reconcile with his work in the act of exchange are consistently thwarted.

More importantly, it is Chapman herself who thwarts the product exchange, as can be seen both in her repeated exhortations of relief as she continuously misses the artist, and in her frequent excuses as to why she couldn’t actually purchase sculptures from the artist even if they were to meet. Chapman is embarrassed that she can’t complete the transaction. When she finally tracks down Cumberworth’s lodgings she immediately confesses, “And now I half regretted that I had found him; so ungracious, so almost dishonest did it seem to enjoy the creations and listen to the conversation of genius, without doing something to nourish the brilliant flame” (Chapman, “Sculpture” 249). Although Chapman leaves her card asking Cumberworth to visit her the next day, she leaves the apartment for “an affair of some urgency” and misses his call. Chapman again expresses relief, explaining, “Again I felt a sensation of relief, - one by no means unimportant, since I was not prepared to meet him. I had already spent for the Anti-Slavery Bazaar all the money I could spare, and more too” (“Sculpture” 250). Chapman dismisses the missed opportunity to meet with Cumberworth by justifying, “Besides, it would not be a good pecuniary investment. So far from it, that I could hardly hope that it would be purchased at all. Much as this man’s works had interested me, I felt, on the whole, glad that the interview might be postponed to a more convenient season” (“Sculpture” 250).

Chapman’s focus on her inability to actually buy Cumberworth’s art emphasizes both her abolitionist responsibilities to the Boston Bazaar and her power as a consumer to
control the marketplace exchange even in a country that “is not in any eminent degree a commercial country” (“Sculpture” 247). Instead of lamenting the lost opportunity to buy Cumberworth’s product, however, Chapman ultimately focuses more closely on his role as the producer of the art and on the progressive thinking embodied within his statues. After Cumberworth passes away Chapman regretfully explains, “I can never on earth see and know Cumberworth, nor thank him for what his genius has done to reinstate a race, by sanctifying art to the service of humanity” (“Sculpture” 251). Valerie Levy emphasizes Chapman’s desire to promote antislavery action, explaining that she “saw in the gift-book an opportunity to bridge the gap between thought and action amongst abolitionists” (143). Stressing the progressive thinking behind the art as being more important than the commodity itself, Chapman again directs the message of her story away from passive consumerism and toward the progressive thinking and antislavery action that Cumberworth’s statue inspires.

Chapman’s power as a female consumer within the story recalls Gayle Rubin’s criticism of Marx for neglecting the role of gender in a capitalist economy. In his focus on “workers, peasants, or capitalists” Marx fails to account for the inequality found in gender roles in a capitalist society that particularly oppresses women (Rubin 771). Rubin explains how Marx’s analysis stops at “the quantity of the commodities… which would be necessary to maintain the health, life, and strength of a worker” without evaluating that it is generally through housework, and thus through unpaid female labor, that the commodities are sufficiently prepared to sustain the worker (772). As a result,
“Housework is therefore a key element in the process of the reproduction of the laborer from whom surplus value is taken” (Rubin 773).

Chapman’s story and her work in the gift book genre can be seen as doing the “housework” necessary to keep the Garrisonian faction of the abolitionist movement, and other Boston societies with which Chapman was involved, running. Because the majority of the small profits from the *Bell* were contributed back to abolitionist societies with Garrisonian leanings, Chapman’s work, like housework, is also unpaid and “necessary to maintain the health, life, and strength” of Garrisonian abolitionism (Rubin 772). It is through her “unpaid female labor” that *The Liberty Bell*, an antislavery commodity, can be “sufficiently prepared” to sustain the worker, or the male abolitionists who have political power in the nineteenth century (Rubin 772). Chapman’s work in the gift book genre, then, exemplifies Rubin’s argument regarding women labor as the unseen, and thus unrewarded, force behind a successful capitalist nation. Because nineteenth-century women had little political power aside from fundraising for the cause, signing petitions, and writing and distributing antislavery literature, their work was, essentially, supplemental to whichever faction of the antislavery movement they were aligned. Chapman’s, and the *Bell’s* contributors’ unpaid work thus creates a “surplus value” for the abolitionist business (Rubin 773).

Rubin concludes, “a ‘wife’ is among the necessities of a worker, that women rather than men do housework, and that capitalism is heir to a long tradition in which women do not inherit, in which women do not lead” (773). Although Chapman’s work on *The Liberty Bell* can be viewed as supplemental to the political work of male activists,
it seems unfair to claim that her work in the gift book genre hindered her from “inherit[ing]” or “lead[ing]” the abolitionist movement (Rubin 773). Known as William Lloyd Garrison’s “right hand woman,” Chapman not only closely collaborated with Garrison and edited his newspaper the *Liberator*, the main artery of abolitionist periodical culture, but she also ran several antislavery societies and led the gift book market in sales, making the *Bell* a staple of nineteenth-century abolitionist culture for nineteen years (Levy 137). Although she was not rewarded fiscally for her extensive work, Chapman achieved a considerable degree of political and social independence through her abolitionist work. Her experience as both the editor and as a contributor to the *Bell* allowed Chapman to publish writing that outwardly conformed to feminine norms, but that also pointedly commented on nineteenth-century social and political issues, especially those that affected her within the abolitionist movement itself.

In order to maintain the feminine respectability of the gift book genre while also using *The Liberty Bell* as a forum for political and social commentary, Chapman had to perfect a textual performance that balanced femininity and sentimental writing with serious political undertones. Della Pollock describes performative writing as “not a genre or fixed form (as a textual model might suggest) but a way of describing what some good writing does. All good writing isn’t and needn’t be performative” (75). Although not every story within *The Liberty Bell* is necessarily performing, “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone” contains several of the qualities that Pollock deems performative.

Chapman “deploy[s]” performative writing “technique[s]” throughout the story, but her writing becomes most obviously performative as she performs the power of her
abolitionist identity abroad (Pollock 79). After struggling to procure information about Cumberworth she realizes, “a means which, here, proved as effectual to promote my object as it would have done in the United States to defeat it” (“Sculpture” 247). She continues, “I told a dealer in bronzes, in whose window the statuette was displayed, that I was an American Abolitionist, and wished, for the sake of my colored countrymen, to see Monsieur Cumberworth, that I might suggest to him the idea of sending some of his beautiful works to the Northern States” (Chapman, “Sculpture” 247-248). Pollock argues that performative writing is “consequential” (95). In order to be performative, writing must initiate some kind of response or “make a difference” in some way (Pollock 95). Chapman’s performance as an American abolitionist not only enacts respect and “feelings of humanity” from the art dealer, resulting in his shared information regarding Cumberworth’s lodgings, but the textual performance within the gift book also seeks to make her American readers recognize the irony of Chapman’s need to travel across the Atlantic in order to find public acceptance as an abolitionist. Chapman’s comments highlight the progressive political opinions of Europe and stress America’s stubborn and anachronistic prejudices, not just toward African American slaves, but toward female abolitionists as well. Pollock also deems performative writing as evocative, claiming, “It operates metaphorically to render absence present- to bring the reader into contact with ‘other worlds,’ to those aspects and dimensions of our world that are other to the text as such by re-marking them. Performative writing evokes worlds that are other-wise intangible, unlocatable” (80). Chapman’s story brings her American readers “into contact” with progressive European cultures that abolished slavery years before America,
while effectively “re-marking” the progressiveness of Europe to make *American* prejudice other (Pollock 80).

Chapman’s performance as an American abolitionist also allows her to further press her critique of capitalism. By performing an interest in promoting the sale of Cumberworth’s art in America, Chapman satisfies both the art dealer’s and her American readers’ consumerist expectations. However, she explains the need for Cumberworth’s art in the marketplace as a necessity because residents of the Northern states “so seldom see a negro, out of whom they have not trampled the beauty and the grace of life, that they forget how differently the same being would appear to them under different circumstances” (“Sculpture” 248). While encouraging the purchase of Cumberworth’s art as a commodity, Chapman’s true intention is to make his art performative. Twisting capitalist consumerism, Chapman again emphasizes that the action, or the effect, that the sculptures have on the consumer, is more important than its status as art. Chapman makes Cumberworth’s art performative in order to incite action and awareness in the American people.

Interpreting the statue as a symbol of humanitarian potential, Chapman’s ambitions for the sculpture seek to re-mark the iconic image of the slave for both American and antislavery culture. Because the predominant portrayal of slavery within the antislavery movement was generally found in images of the abject slave, Chapman’s focus on the sculpture’s ability to humanize the American slave suggests a much stronger critique on the antislavery movement than its consumerist tendencies. Perhaps the most
Figure 2: “Anti-Slavery Token.” Ohio Historical Society.
predominant female abolitionist symbol of this time can be seen in the image of the kneeling slave woman whose shackled hands reach out in supplication to antislavery supporters (Figure 2). Above the image is written, “Am I not a woman and a sister?” (“Anti-Slavery Token”).

Chapman’s obsession with the free African woman of Cumberworth’s statue sharply contrasts with that of the Anti-Slavery token. On the token, the somewhat androgynous slave figure kneels on the ground and is encompassed by the supplicating slogan “Am I not a woman and a sister?” that, in words only, seeks to unite the female slave to her female supporters through gendered sympathies. Cumberworth’s statue, however, depicts a clearly feminine and African woman as its subject, who, instead of kneeling imprisoned on the ground as in the token, walks upright from the circular base of the sculpture as if she were coming directly out of the antislavery coin, or the abolitionist movement itself, to walk equally with her advocates. While the token’s figure looks beseechingly above for help, Cumberworth’s statue looks directly at her audience as an equal.

Focusing on the figure of the free African in Cumberworth’s statue, Chapman reappropriates the antislavery symbol of the abject slave and replaces it with a humanitarian image that is not only performative in the affective reaction that it will draw from American citizens, but also in its aim to change the representation of slavery within the abolitionist movement. Dismissing the figure of the abject slave as ineffective in inspiring change among American citizens, Chapman instead proposes a new icon for the abolitionist movement in the free African woman of Cumberworth’s statue, implying that
the face of abolition should exalt freedom instead of slavery. Not only critiquing abolitionist consumerism, then, another motive of “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone” is to critique the movement’s fetishization of the slave body that ultimately detracts from its work to free the slave body. Similar to activists who purchase antislavery products without contributing time or action to the cause throughout the rest of the year, Chapman suggests that the movement’s preoccupation with the abject slave loses sight of a future where slaves will be freed. Instead of focusing on the troubles of the slave, Chapman proposes a new tactic for the abolitionist movement that alternately promotes the strong potential and bright future of slaves freed from the system of American slavery.

Ironically, despite Chapman’s inability to purchase the statue on her own, funds were raised by both French activists and managers of the American Anti-Slavery Society to purchase the statue and to display it at the Boston Bazaar in 1853. Weston describes the statue’s presence in detail, recounting, “We have not yet referred to the most beautiful and striking object of attention that the Bazaar afforded. Placed near the centre of the room, on a small white marble table, the first object that caught the eye upon entering was a statuette in bronze, by Cumberworth, ‘The African Woman at the Fountain’” (14). Interestingly, Chapman, due to her travels in Paris, wasn’t present at the Bazaar of 1853. The statue, then, seems to travel in her place. Instead of selling books at the gift book table, the statue is present to sell copies of the Bell for Chapman. As Chapman wishes throughout “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone,” Cumberworth’s statue travels to America to serve as an example for both Northern citizens and for the abolitionists themselves. The display of the sculpture at the Bazaar thus enacts Chapman’s textual performance;
the sculpture is featured at the Bazaar with the intention of affectively influencing Northern citizens and abolitionists to make more active strides toward the abolition of slavery.

Strangely, Weston also notes that the sculpture, “was purchased for the sum of $125, by the managers of the Bazaar, and others sympathizing with them in their admiration of ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin,’ and by them presented to Mrs. Stowe. All will agree that it could not have had a more fitting destination” (14). Although Stowe’s influence on the abolitionist consumer market will be discussed more fully in the next chapter as the first volume of *Autographs* features Stowe’s name in place of Griffiths’, it seems likely that members of the American Anti-Slavery Society were able to raise enough money to buy the statue solely by advertising it as a gift to Stowe. Because of Stowe’s overwhelming popularity with the publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and the subsequent mainstreaming of abolitionist culture, her name practically guaranteed sales, or in this case fundraising support, in transatlantic cultural, literary, and abolitionist marketplaces. Although Garrisonian reception of Stowe’s work was ultimately fraught and clearly against colonization, a nineteenth-century political movement that encouraged the return of slaves to Africa instead of making them free citizens in America, purchasing the statue, even if under the auspices of donating it to Stowe, allowed the American Anti-Slavery Society to present the sculpture at the Bazaar, fulfilling Chapman’s wishes to make the statue visible as a new tactic to inspire antislavery action both within and outside the abolitionist movement.
In addition to making Cumberworth’s statue performative through travel writing, Chapman’s writing also alternates between performative moments of serious address to her readers and more light-hearted performances of humorous travel anecdotes. Schechner’s chapter, “From Ritual to Theater and Back: The Efficacy-Entertainment Braid,” focuses on the interminably fluctuating character of theater that interchangeably relies on either efficacy or entertainment within its performances. He describes the performances where efficacy dominates as “universalistic, allegorical, ritualized, tied to a stable established order; this kind of theater persists for a relatively long time” (Schechner 134). On the other hand, performances where entertainment dominates are “class-oriented, individualized, show business, constantly adjusting to the tastes of fickle audiences” (Schechner 134). When theater is at its best, efficacy and entertainment are closely braided and working together. Although Schechner prefers the bodily performances of theater to be outside of the text, the concept of the efficacy-entertainment braid can be seen working within Chapman’s specifically performative text as well.

Chapman’s story relies on the efficacy of the performance of abolitionism when she pauses in her speech regarding the necessity of bringing Cumberworth’s sculptures to the Northern states to say, “It has been well said, that there is one circumstance, the effect of which we can remark upon nobody: the circumstance of our own absence. As long, therefore, as we are selfish tyrants, we can see nothing upon the face of the negro but ugliness and debasement. It is the shadow of ourselves” (“Sculpture” 248). Chapman’s pause in narrative in order to make a political statement is a writing technique that Amy
Beth Aronson refers to as an “authorial addendum” (203). The authorial addendum allowed women writers to maintain nineteenth-century social and gender norms by writing sentimentally throughout the body of their work while still “enabling their politicized expression[s]” in an abrupt change of tone generally found at the end of their writings (Aronson 203). Because women writers maintained cultural expectations of femininity throughout the sentimentality of their work, “The authorial addendum helped early activist women to become political, speaking out and plugging into the immanent power of growing, middle-class audiences, while also maintaining substantial, accepted sources of eloquence and power” (Aronson 204).

Chapman’s addendum showcases features of efficacy theater and becomes clearly “allegorical” in its masked reference to colonization (Schechner 134). Because colonization was a solution to the slavery issue lamented by Chapman and other Garrisonian abolitionists, her words, then, are “tied to the “established order” of colonization politics (Schechner 134). Chapman’s addendum again obtains an allegorical tone when she refers to her presumably white readers as “selfish tyrants” who acquire moral blackness through the “shadow” cast on them as a result of their cruelty to slaves and freed blacks (“Sculpture” 248). White Americans are thus characterized by the attainment of moral blackness that is a reflection, or a “shadow,” of their fickle colonizationist leanings (Chapman, “Sculpture” 248).

Almost immediately after her addendum, however, Chapman reverts to the entertainment portion of her performance in order to temper her political comments. Adopting a tone reminiscent of “show business” entertainment, Chapman shares a
humorous anecdote in which she confuses the orthography of two French words and
spends hours searching for Cumberworth’s lodgings under the name of “No 2., Passage
Cendrier” as opposed to “Impasse Sandrie” (“Sculpture” 249). This entertaining anecdote
restores a degree of the light-hearted sentimental femininity expected of women writers,
and it allows Chapman to “adjus[t] to the tastes of fickle audiences” who may not
appreciate Chapman’s political opinions (Schechner 134). Through her addendum and
the corresponding anecdote that follows, Chapman’s story embraces the efficacy-
entertainment model and is thus designed to both entertain and educate her readers.

“The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone,” although on the surface a travel narrative
detailing Chapman’s fruitless attempt to meet Cumberworth, ultimately engages in a
thorough criticism of the capitalist system that perpetuates slavery and that also,
ironically, drives much of the participation within the abolitionist movement. By subtly
disparaging consumerism and by focusing on the performative functions of
Cumberworth’s sculpture, Chapman seeks to re-mark the abolitionist movement as a
cause not only against slavery in that it works to assist the downtrodden slave, but also,
and more importantly, as a humanitarian cause that seeks to achieve and to promote
freedom for all Americans entrapped by the system of slavery.

While Chapman uses performative writing techniques such as the authorial
addendum and the use of evocative and consequential writing throughout “The Sculptor
of the Torrid Zone,” her performance differs in “The Young Sailor” in the way in which
she dons individual feminine and abolitionist host bodies at will to compliment the
transnational abolitionist host body that allows her to acceptably travel for the cause.
Throughout “The Young Sailor” Chapman hides and then exalts in her abolitionist identity, hiding it when necessary in public and then glorifying it through her writing in the *Bell*. By assuming two essentially different characters, the traveling woman and the activist, Chapman manipulates her travel experiences into a textual performance that enables her to critique proslavery arguments and disagree with male opinions while publicly retaining her femininity. Cima describes the conflation of writing and performance in early American female literature as follows:

> I take seriously the ways in which women’s live performances were intertwined with religious, political, and cultural rhetoric and, conversely, the ways in which their writing was performative or self-consciously theatrical. They did not perceive performance and writing as opposites, but rather as linked systems whose operations were inextricable. Written publications were routinely regarded as performances or productions, and sermon performances, for instance, were viewed as criticism, subject to legal action. (3)

Cima’s work on the inextricability of performance and writing in the nineteenth century supports my claims against Schechner’s views that texts cannot be read as active events. By viewing women writers as intentionally combining writing and performance, and of thinking of writing as a performance in and of itself, we can view the gift book as a genre that it is rhetorically performative and consequentially active.

Chapman begins “The Young Sailor” by recounting the various pro-slavery arguments of a young man she encounters in Massachusetts, who rants that the abolition of slavery would “put a stop to agriculture, ruin commerce, impoverish the master,
distress the Slave, *turn* back civilization, *bring* back barbarism, and thus destroy the prospects of liberty in the United States and thus throughout the world” (“Sailor” 195). Upon hearing these arguments, Chapman admits, “It seemed absurd, indeed, to offer a refutation to all this contradictory nonsense,” concluding, “It is worse than useless to indulge men of this stamp with a reply; I meekly inquired whether, if the three millions of blacks could be suddenly turned white, he would venture to present a single one of these considerations for keeping them in Slavery” (“Sailor” 196). Chapman’s initial response to the man’s comments, aside from indignation, is simply *not* to reply, as a public confrontation on the political issue of slavery between a man and a woman would most likely have been viewed as socially inappropriate. Instead, Chapman “meekly” chastises the man on his prejudice, using the feminine sentimentality expected of her gender to question his morals in place of his politics (“Sailor” 196). However, it is clear through her portrayal of the event within the *Bell* that Chapman merely performs the societal role expected of her in public, ultimately mocking and applauding her feigned meekness within the *Bell*. Though Chapman, albeit not quite as explicitly as within her recounting of the event in the gift book, challenges her male opponent’s racism, the feminine host body through which she performs contrives a subdued tone that is evidently tolerated in the public sphere.

Later in the story, as Chapman details her encounter with a pro-slavery young sailor that she meets on her voyage to Haiti, she again chooses to respond to male proslavery opinions by not immediately responding to his provocative claims. As she and an ill abolitionist friend traveled to the “City of the Cape” (“Sailor” 197) in search of a
more suitable climate for his health, Chapman converses with the young sailor from Maine “upon those especially American things, politics and religion” (“Sailor” 198). As the sailor was unaware of Chapman’s and her companion’s abolitionist identities, he spoke freely of his pro-slavery views which Chapman patiently lists, ending with his exhortation that, “If the same time and money they’ve wasted had been spent properly, they might, by this time, have bought up all the niggers at the South, and shipped them home to Africa, where they came from” (“Sailor” 200). Rhetorically, Chapman transcribes the sailor’s diatribe seemingly word for word, never breaking to insert her own commentary or to respond directly to the sailor. Although Chapman doesn’t respond immediately to the sailor’s remarks, the lengthy transcription of his pro-slavery prejudices is saturated with her constrained silence, gradually building in tension until Chapman finally erupts into a pointed and focused response within her narrative, declaring:

I did not ask him what the South would do, deprived of three millions of laborers; nor whether the navies of the world would suffice for their transportation; nor what resources the fatal Liberian coast offered for their subsistence; nor whether they would consent to go; nor whether the rule that made Africa their home, would not make Europe ours, and leave the United States to the red men; nor whether the Slaveholders would not cry in chorus. (201)

She continues, “Neither did it seem advisable to meet the other arguments, -historical, theological, physiological, arithmetical, or dystogistical,” detailing at length the flaws in the sailor’s beliefs (“Sailor” 201).
In this instance, Chapman’s breathless rebuttal to the sailor’s remarks, however, occurs within the space of the gift book, not within the public sphere. Chapman’s intelligent and well-spoken counterarguments are expressed through the abolitionist identity, or host body, that she dons as editor of the *Bell*; her feminine host body is utilized on the ship, where she eventually brings the sailor to silence by questioning how the role of the ship’s beloved black steward fits into his proslavery opinions. Chapman ultimately leaves the sailor “the last word, which was, that it was useless to talk” (“Sailor” 202). Using her feminine host body, again, to affectively confront her male opponent, Chapman, though much more passively than in her counterarguments in the *Bell*, effectively challenges the sailor’s proslavery opinions in as acceptable a manner as possible by attacking his hypocritical friendship with the black steward of the ship, muting the proslavery discourse and making her antislavery arguments publicly heard without harming her feminine respectability nor revealing her abolitionist identity.

Perhaps the most useful characteristic of Cima’s definition of the host body exists in its ability to protect the women who appropriated it, as they could “shield themselves from censure as they spoke, whether in person or in print... Women critics created provisional surrogate bodies through which they could safely issue their critiques” (3) While Chapman’s performance of her feminine host body protects her respectability in the public sphere, her assumption of her abolitionist body within the *Bell* allows her to use her editorship to publicly express her political beliefs in a genre where both her feminine and abolitionist bodies are protected. We can also read the *Bell*, then, as a host body that Chapman adorns in order to safely express her political beliefs. Cima describes,
“A host body may be donned in print through a set of rhetorical moves, or in person through a set of gestural and oral patterns. Because of its non-material status, the host body provides the woman critic with a certain safety. It acts as a prophylactic against censorship or censure” (4). Chapman thus uses the Bell as a host body “donned in print” where she can speak publicly in a socially protected genre (Cima 4).

Although the performance techniques that Chapman engages in “The Sculpture of the Torrid Zone” and “The Young Sailor” both vary and overlap considerably, the texts are performative in their critique of the abolitionist movement, patriarchal society, and the rampant pro-slavery discourse of the nineteenth century. Speaking both to abolitionists and to readers of the general public that may have bought the book at the Boston Bazaar, Chapman seeks to encourage more active work in sympathizers for the cause, while also informing readers of the general public of the antislavery counterarguments to popular pro-slavery arguments of the time, hoping to incite their sympathy and action as well. By publicly writing and contributing to the Bell, Chapman takes an active role in the editorship of the gift book that will differ greatly from the work and performance techniques that we see within Griffiths’ Autographs. While Griffiths remains intentionally absent from Autographs, Chapman’s work sets the tone for the Bell, ultimately creating a gendered conversation within the protective host body of the gift book that allowed women writers to express their political sentiments not only in a space that valued their political opinions as equally as those of other male abolitionists, but that also allowed the women the opportunity to challenge male political opinion outside of the abolitionist circle.
Chapter III

The Liminal Editorship of Julia Griffiths’ Autographs for Freedom

Maria Weston Chapman’s work within the Bell is markedly different from Julia Griffiths’ mode of editing Autographs. Chapman resists labeling herself as editor, instead attributing authorship of the Bell to all contributors, or “Friends of Freedom,” of the gift book (Chapman iii). By marking her work within the Bell through the authorship of individual contributions such as “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone” and “The Young Sailor,” Chapman merges more wholly into the volume, seamlessly aligning her work with that of other abolitionists in place of claiming individual editorship. Because the American Anti-Slavery Society, the political faction for which the Bell was affiliated, had endured several fractures in membership as a result of Garrison’s radical politics, Chapman’s avoidance of the title of editor in place of group authorship suggests a desire to promote unity not only within the gift book, but within the American Anti-Slavery Society as well. Her unmarked editorship more explicitly links the text to the American Anti-Slavery Society and allows readers to identify the Bell more closely with its political faction than with Chapman’s individual activism. Because of the longevity of the Bell, Chapman’s audience would have been aware of her work behind the gift book, making a specific statement of her editorship redundant and counterproductive to the text’s purpose of fundraising for a cohesive American Anti-Slavery Society. Because she also engaged in editorial work for Garrison’s Liberator, adding literary contributions to the Bell in place of sole editorship allowed Chapman a space to continue developing and publishing her own writing.\(^x\)
Nearly reversing Chapman’s approach to the gift book entirely, Griffiths claims editorship of Autographs but does not contribute literature to the gift book, allowing her voice to exist solely in the prefaces of each volume, a stark contrast to the personal travel narratives that Chapman shares in the 1853 volume of the Bell. However, although Griffiths doesn’t write for the collection, both volumes include several letters and short essays that respond directly to Griffiths and her call for papers, marking her strong presence within the volumes despite the absence of her own antislavery opinions and writing. This chapter will argue that Griffiths’ work most clearly differs from Chapman’s in the liminal space that Griffiths occupies as editor of Autographs, a space that ultimately allows Griffiths more flexibility in whom she can approach to contribute to the text and the freedom to create a new mode of passive, yet entirely effective, activism within the abolitionist gift book. While Chapman’s identity is extremely visible in her travel narratives within the Bell, Griffiths’ initial absence in the table of contents of Autographs gradually matures into a persistent editorial omniscience that dominates the text and allows both her body and her antislavery beliefs to be implicated and revealed through the work and addresses of more powerful antislavery speakers. Although she doesn’t contribute literarily to the collection, Griffiths works in an in-between space within the gift book, creating an effective and diverse performance of abolitionism within the gift book that expands the role of female editorship and demonstrates the power of passive activism within the abolitionist movement.

To better understand Griffiths’ artful manipulation of the liminal space of gift book editorship, we might begin by exploring Victor Turner’s influential work on the
liminal figure. Turner’s work on liminality engages Arnold Van Gennep’s theory on rites of passage. Gennep defines the rite of passage as a three-step process beginning with the subject’s separation from normalcy, followed by a liminal phase in which the subject exists in flux between normalcy and the culmination of the rite, to the completion of the rite, in which the subject reenters society having accomplished the rite of passage.

Because Griffiths published *Autographs* near the end of the gift book trend, her foray into the genre, especially in the first volume, can be read as a “rite of passage” into the world of female abolitionism and antislavery fundraising. Unlike Chapman, whose work with Garrison collided with the politics of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), Griffiths’ abolitionist work with Frederick Douglass was separate from her work with the relatively new Rochester Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Sewing Society. While the *Bell* had been sold at the Boston Bazaar for several years, the Rochester Ladies’ Society sold the first volume of *Autographs* at their second fundraising festival. Griffiths, and her work on *Autographs*, consequentially, was thus part of a fledgling society attempting to meaningfully integrate into the well-rooted American abolitionist movement. Gennep’s three-tiered rite of passage, then, can be clearly traced through Griffiths’ work on the first volume of *Autographs*, especially when compared to Chapman’s celebrated work with the AASS and the *Bell*.

Turner is most interested in the second, or liminal, phase of the rite of passage, especially as it is reenacted in ritualistic cultures. He describes people within the liminal phase, or, “liminal personae (‘threshold people’)” as “necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons allude or slip through the network of classifications that
normally locate states and positions in cultural space” (Turner 89). Griffiths’ compilation of *Autographs* allows her to “slip through the network of classifications” that label women’s work within the “cultural space” of the gift book genre (Turner 89). In the first volume in particular, it becomes difficult to define, or to classify, Griffiths’ role in *Autographs*, as, aside from the preface, she is entirely absent from the collection, yet omnipresent and persistently visible through the several contributions and letters that both directly and indirectly refer to her. Emphasizing the transitional nature of the liminal state, Turner argues “Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (89). Existing between silent editor and active author, Griffiths negotiates her liminal presence within *Autographs* to passively perform activism through the words and actions of others. Liminality is thus layered throughout *Autographs*, as the production of the text itself can be read as a rite of passage into gift book publishing, while Griffiths operates both within and outside the rite of passage, maintaining a liminal presence between editor and author of the text throughout both volumes despite her successful reintegration to abolitionist fundraising with the successful reception of the first volume.

Through her work on *Autographs*, Griffiths essentially becomes the newcomer, not only to the abolitionist gift book tradition, a market controlled by Chapman’s *Bell*, but also to abolitionist fundraising. In order to successfully compile the first volume of *Autographs*, Griffiths departs from the normal fundraising tactics of the Rochester Ladies’ Society*, satisfying Gennep’s first phase of separation from normalcy. The majority of Griffiths’ work on the first volume of *Autographs* can be seen as occupying
the liminal phase of the rite of passage. One important characteristic of the liminal phase, as furthered by Turner, “implies that the high could not be high unless the low existed, and he who is high must experience what it is like to be low” (91). Despite Griffiths’ and the Rochester ladies’ moderate success in the March fundraising festival, Griffiths essentially starts from scratch in her compilation of *Autographs*. When compared to the *Bell’s* prominence, Griffiths clearly “experience[s] what it is like to be low” in the gift book market (Turner 91). The distinction of the *Bell*, in contrast to the hundreds of failed and short-lived gift books that flooded the market between 1830 – 1860 that also threatened Griffiths’ success in her endeavors with *Autographs*, marks Griffiths’ entry into gift book work as a novice, recalling Turner’s argument that, “The neophyte in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group” (95). New to the genre, Griffiths, “a blank slate,” most likely used the *Bell* and other gift books as a model for *Autographs* and how to use the book as a fundraising strategy (Turner 95).

Griffiths also submitted to the help, authority, and expertise of Harriet Beecher Stowe, whom she repeatedly thanks. In a circular detailing the results of the second antislavery fundraising festival of the Rochester Ladies’ Society, Griffiths explicitly mentions, “While referring to ‘The Autograph’ we desire to express our warm gratitude to each of the distinguished philanthropists who contributed to its pages. In this connection we would especially mention Mrs. H. B. Stowe, whose deep interest in our enterprize, whose wise suggestions, and whose generous assistance were invaluable to us” (Circular 1). Turner describes how it is not just one or two figures that transmit
authority to the neophyte, as Stowe or Chapman would to Griffiths, but “also neophytes in many rites de passage have to submit to an authority that is nothing less than that of the total community. This community is the repository of the whole gaunt of the culture’s values, norms, attitudes, sentiments, and relationships” (95). Griffiths must listen to the advice of the community and of other abolitionists and engage in a careful citationality of the gift book trend in order to finish the first volume of Autographs with enough success to continue publishing subsequent volumes.

Griffiths remains in the liminal phase of the rite of passage until the publication of the second volume of Autographs, in which she reenters the abolitionist community as a successful gift book editor capable of creating an annual profitable and well enough received to continue publication. As will be argued later in this chapter, Griffiths becomes more authoritative in her role as editor as she overcomes the liminal phase of gift book publishing throughout the second volume of Autographs, more forcefully claiming her role as editor while relying somewhat less on the works of others to facilitate her presence within the collection. However, despite having completed the “rite of passage” into successful gift book publication, Griffiths continues to cultivate the editorial power that she finds within the liminal, in-between space of editorship and authorship within the genre.

Perhaps the in-between nature of Griffiths’ role as editor and omniscient contributor of Autographs can be theorized more clearly through Jon McKenzie’s work on the liminal-norm. Moving beyond Turner’s exploration of the liminal phase of rites of passage, McKenzie defines liminality as “a mode of embodied activity whose spatial,
temporal, and symbolic ‘betweenness’ allows for dominant social norms to be suspended, questioned, played with, transformed” (218). Griffiths’ work within *Autographs* embodies the “symbolic ‘betweenness’” of gift book editorship, allowing her to “susu[nd]” and “questio[n]” the normative methods of editing the genre, which generally consist of an editor compiling but not contributing to the text, or of a more active editor who both compiles and contributes to the collection, as seen in Chapman’s work in the *Bell* (McKenzie 218). Griffiths works between the norms, as both volumes of *Autographs* lack literary contributions written by her but instead contain letters written directly to her or that mention her in some way. Transforming the liminal space between editor and author into a passive, yet surprisingly powerful publishing space, Griffiths advances a new approach to female abolitionism that is simultaneously passive and active.

Despite Griffiths’ lack of active authorship within *Autographs*, a considerable amount of correspondence included in the gift book written specifically to Griffiths is from the pens of distinguished abolitionist figures, as can be seen in the letter from the Bishop of Oxford included in the first volume of *Autographs*. The Bishop writes, “Madam:- I readily comply with your desire. England taught her descendents in America to injure their African brethren. Every Englishman should aid the American to get rid of this cleaving wrong and deep injury to his race and nation. I am ever yours” (Oxford 28). An asterisk by the Bishop’s name designates him, evidently through a rare glimpse of Griffiths’ voice within the collection, as “A son of that distinguished friend of humanity WILLIAM WILBERFORCE” (Oxford 28). Through her association with the Bishop,
Griffiths maintains a strong presence in his writing despite the physical absence of her voice within the letter. The Bishop’s letter, and Griffiths’ footnote regarding his familial identity, then, proves useful to her performance of abolitionism in a myriad of ways. Throughout her work in Rochester, Griffiths remained adamant about the importance of working transatlantically with British activists. In the circular detailing the meeting of the Rochester Ladies’ Society Griffiths mentions:

The anti-slavery warfare is often toilsome and wearisome; but we see many grounds for encouragement. We cannot cast our eyes across the waters of the wide Atlantic without being cheered and gladdened by the prospect … our trans-Atlantic friends alike inform us of a large increase of interest in Great Britain and Ireland on the subject of slavery. (“Circular” 2)

The Bishop’s letter in particular not only softens the tone of England’s insistently acclaimed moral superiority rampant throughout the mid-nineteenth century\textsuperscript{xiii} by allowing England to actually \emph{share} the blame of American slavery, but it also encourages English activists to remain persistent in their endorsement to the American antislavery cause, a platform Griffiths sought to promote throughout her time in Rochester, as seen in her support of transatlantic activism in the circular. As Chapman remains connected to the Boston Bazaar and the AASS through her writings in the \emph{Bell}, using the collection as a way to remain physically present both within the gift book and at the Boston Bazaar, Griffiths uses \emph{Autographs} as a space in which she can continue to collaborate with transatlantic colleagues while undertaking the American ills of slavery in her activist travels. Though the Bishop holds “every Englishman” accountable for the American
wrongs of slavery, he implies that American abolition is the responsibility of all English citizens regardless of sex, implicating Griffiths’ involvement with Douglass and with the Rochester Ladies’ Society as necessary for the execution of American abolition (Oxford 28). As the Bishop orders that “Every Englishman should aid the American” in enacting the abolition of slavery, he seems to be particularly encouraging readers, particularly British readers, to look to Griffiths as an example and to encourage her in her transatlantic work abroad (Oxford 28). Despite the disclaimer that blames England for America’s dependence on slavery, the Bishop hints that Americans still need the help and guidance of their abolitionist predecessors. By recruiting “aid” for the American abolitionist movement, the Bishop subtly emphasizes Britain’s national superiority, or at least their progressive humanitarianism and expertise in abolitionism that had allowed them to abolish slavery twenty years earlier (Oxford 28). Thus, while Griffiths appears to be endorsing the self-deprecating viewpoints of England’s bad example regarding the slave trade, in reality she subtly acknowledges that American abolitionism needs the support and guidance of their more experienced transatlantic brothers and sisters in order to finally rid the country of the system of slavery.

By choosing to include the Bishop’s letter in the collection, Griffiths effectively speaks through him, making an aggressive transatlantic antislavery statement that justifies her professional relationship with Douglass without furthering the argument herself. Griffiths demonstrates her approval of the Bishop’s remarks through the inclusion of the piece and by aligning herself, at least in correspondence, with the Bishop’s views. Although her own words don’t denounce the effect of England’s slavery
Griffiths’ presence is omniscient throughout the letter, allowing the Bishop to speak both for and through her, particularly in his references to English responsibility to the American abolitionist movement.

Griffiths most clearly emerges in the Bishop’s contribution when noting his genealogy as the son of the “distinguished” British abolitionist, William Wilberforce (Vol. 1 28). Revealing her editorial presence in this particular moment signifies Griffiths’ implication in the Bishop’s transatlantic politics and beliefs. Because William Wilberforce was a symbol of British abolitionism, her emphasis on the Bishop’s relation to him further implicates her in the belief that American abolitionists need the help of their more experienced transatlantic counterparts to effectively abolish slavery. Although the Bishop speaks generally about the need for British support in the American abolitionist movement, it is clear that he is directly encouraging Griffiths in her efforts abroad, allowing her to hover beneath the veneer of his words without directly commenting on or endorsing transatlantic abolitionism. Ultimately, Griffiths allows the Bishop to justify her work abroad at a moment when she was sharply criticized in American culture for her personal and professional relationship with Douglassxiv.

Griffiths consistently aligns herself with more experienced and renowned activists throughout both volumes of the gift book, as can be seen in her emphasis on the Bishop’s identity as the son of legendary British abolitionist, William Wilberforce. Griffiths’ contact with the most famous and reputable abolitionist figures at the time throughout her compilation of Autographs not only accredits her abolitionist work, but extends her
performance as an abolitionist and gift book editor committed to raising money for the cause.

Griffiths’ liminal presence within *Autographs* both adopts the norms of the gift book genre while simultaneously transgressing them. McKenzie coins a term titled the liminal-norm, which “refers to any situation wherein the valorization of transgression itself becomes normative- at which point theorization of such a norm may become subversive” (219). Griffiths’ “transgression” into the world of female gift book editing is completely normative by 1853, due, in part, to Chapman’s success with the *Bell*, but also as a result of the genre’s development into a uniquely feminine space in which women could speak publicly, although some more vehemently than others, about political and social issues (McKenzie 219). However, Griffiths intentionally manipulates the norm of gift book editorship to allow major antislavery figures to argue against slavery on her behalf. In the process, she acquires an omniscient power over the collection that allows her to both speak and remain silent on the antislavery question. Griffiths’ work thus becomes “subversive” through her mastery of the normative, through which she ultimately challenges the boundaries, capabilities, and potential of the gift book genre (McKenzie 219).

Griffiths employs several rhetorical tactics that allow her to subvert characteristics of the normative gift book. The overall content of *Autographs* is striking in its cultural, national, and political diversity. Griffiths worked to accumulate as many celebrity contributions as possible in order to both increase consumer interest in the collection and to set *Autographs* apart from the more traditional gift book format as seen in the *Bell*. In
the process, however, *Autographs* evolves into a contradictory compilation in which readers encounter work that glorifies Harriet Beecher Stowe on one page followed by a piece that condemns colonization on the other; in which major work by Frederick Douglass exists in the same volume as a submission from his rival, Henry Wells Brown. Unlike Chapman, whose work on the *Bell* was so closely aligned with her Garrisonian politics that it was virtually impossible to ignore the political implications within the text, Griffiths claims no political affiliation for the Rochester Ladies’ Society and thus frees the collection from miring itself in party loyalty. Chapman’s *Bell* was mainly organized through the political cohesion of its contributions that more or less consistently promoted Garrisonian beliefs, and that, at times, was designed specifically to soften Garrisonian radicalism and to make his politics more palatable for moderate readers. By refusing to be present within the gift book, Griffiths allows the collection to run amok with as many antislavery opinions as formats for the contributions, effectively dismantling the organizing principles of the genre.

Griffiths also subverts the inherent formality of the gift book genre through her use of the autograph trope and the abundance of included correspondence, effectively generating a more intimate tone and personal reading experience for consumers. When purchasers of *Autographs* leafed through the volumes in their homes, they were welcomed into the inside world of antislavery work, in which the contributors wrote letters not just to Griffiths, but to the readers of the books as well. Chapman’s *Bell* is organized in the more traditional gift book format, which includes an array of literary contributions including poems, short stories, essays, etc. but her collection lacks the
uniqueness found in Griffiths’ facsimile autographs. Chapman’s *Bell* thus became a staple of abolitionist culture as a result of its complete appropriation of the gift book format and her dedication to ensure that it was published annually. *Autographs* resists the traditional content of the gift book genre by including correspondence and even a novella by Frederick Douglass, *The Heroic Slave*. While all of Chapman’s contributors were white, Griffiths includes work not just by Frederick Douglass, but also by other prominent African Americans, such as William Wells Brown, James McCune Smith, and William G. Allen, as well. Griffiths thus challenges and subverts the inherent formality and the racial boundaries of the traditional gift book genre, merging characteristics of the autograph book and the gift book into one collection that challenges the traditional gift book format.

Like the *Bell*, *Autographs* also becomes a token for the Rochester Ladies’ Society, documenting their efforts in their own unique autograph scrapbook that illustrates their professional networking and transatlantic collaborations throughout the year. Griffiths thus becomes a facilitator in merging the work of the small Rochester Ladies’ Society with the rest of the abolitionist movement, utilizing *Autographs* to document their integration into the movement. However, while the *Bell* can often feel exclusive in tone due to its political loyalty to Garrisonian abolitionism, *Autographs* evokes a more open approach that invites the reader to engage with antislavery politics in all of its disparateness in the mid-nineteenth century. Instead of tying readers down to one specific abolitionist viewpoint, *Autographs* allows readers to explore the movement on their own terms and to carefully consider a variety of opinions on abolitionism, ultimately, and
inadvertently showcasing how, despite the array of political opinions on abolitionism, that all activists were united in freeing the slave. Through her subversion of the gift book format, then, Griffiths creates a unity within the collection that Chapman misses in her focus on Garrisonianism.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Griffiths works to subvert the norms of nineteenth-century gift book editorship by undertaking *Autographs* as a project that, though not directly related to Douglass, helped to fundraise for his abolitionist newspaper and other antislavery efforts. Unlike Chapman, whose work on the *Bell* publicly coincided with Garrison’s radical politics, forcing her work to focus on softening Garrisonian radicalism for more moderate readers, Griffiths’ separation from Douglass’ politics gives her greater freedom to choose contributors and to allow the gift book to organically develop in its inconsistency, a paradoxically useful organizational technique that allows the book to unite a myriad of antislavery opinions in one cohesive volume. Because *Autographs* isn’t directly affiliated with Douglass’ politics, Griffiths gains more control over whom she can summon to contribute to the gift book, a luxury not afforded to Chapman’s work on the staunchly Garrisonian *Bell*. By requesting submissions for *Autographs*, Griffiths commands involvement from the most prominent antislavery activists of the mid-nineteenth century in a grass-roots women’s antislavery effort in Rochester to help create a gift book in order to fundraise more efficiently for the cause. That both male and female activists concede to her call for papers heightens her power as a liminal editor, allowing her, as always, to silently preside over the submissions without comment.
Griffiths challenges the role of gift book editor by choosing to dwell in the liminal space between editor and writer, presence and concealment. Griffiths remains separate from the antislavery conversation within *Autographs*, stuck in the silent, in-between liminal space of the rite of passage long after *Autographs* emerges into print and into society. As Griffiths refuses to fully tether herself to the text, *Autographs* itself refuses to be tied to any specific school of antislavery thought, ultimately encompassing a variety of nationalist and antislavery perspectives that create a complicated and inconsistent gift book that reveals the disparate antislavery opinions of the mid-nineteenth century.

Griffiths’ expert handling of the liminal-norm can be seen in her printed correspondence with Douglass. In the second volume of *Autographs*, Douglass writes to Griffiths, “Dear Madam- If the enclosed paragraph from a speech of mine delivered in May last, at the anniversary meeting of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, shall be deemed suited to the pages of the forthcoming annual, please accept it as my contribution. With great respect…” (Douglass 251). By including this brief correspondence from Douglass, Griffiths emphasizes his break from Chapman’s and Garrison’s work within the AASS, highlighting his independent work and collaboration with the rival faction of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society instead. Although Griffiths never verbally aligns herself with Douglass, nor the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the liminality of her editorship allows her to preside in between political parties as an unbiased editor. Therefore, Douglass’ politics are presented, but do not overtake the collection. Griffiths’ is intentionally deceptive in her political affiliation with Douglass, fundraising in part to help run his paper and to fund
other abolitionist efforts, without claiming loyalty to his politics. By remaining politically mute and omniscient throughout the collection, Griffiths is able to garner support from abolitionists who probably wouldn’t have contributed to the collection, such as William Wells Brown, if they had known she was politically affiliated with Douglass. Through her command for submissions, Griffiths reinforces the gift book format while also intentionally destabilizing the genre’s uniformity in the diversity of opinions in which she publishes. Griffiths thus works within the liminal-norm of gift book culture to subvert the genre, making the collection personal, passively political, and indicative of the array of antislavery opinions extant within the movement. By internalizing and theorizing the norms of gift book culture, Griffiths is able to subvert both the genre and her role as editor.

In addition to transgressing the normative gift book genre, Griffiths works to intentionally manipulate the liminal space between editor and author of *Autographs*. Peggy Phelan’s influential work, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, substantially contributes to the layered conversation on liminality, offering a new reading of performance that focuses on the space between the visible and the invisible; between the real and the impossibility of the real. While Phelan belongs to Schechner’s hierarchical school of thought in which live performance reigns supreme, *Unmarked* offers a new reading of the liminal space that furthers the discussion on Griffiths’ work within *Autographs*.

Phelan’s brief autobiographical interlude in the first chapter depicts emotionally fraught “quiet contests” in which Phelan competes with both her siblings and the ghost of
her deceased sister in family car rides as a child. The portrayal both of the unspeakable and of the ghost of Phelan’s sister perhaps most precisely illustrates the guiding principle of liminality that Phelan labels as “unmarked.” She recounts, “There were nine of us in that car, but it was the one who was not with us that we worried about, thought about, remembered. In the clarity of her absence, we redefined ourselves. The real was the absence of her; we were representations of that loss” (Phelan 12).

Like the physical absence of Phelan’s sister, Griffiths’ virtual omission of her own voice from *Autographs* ultimately allows the gift book genre to be “redefined” (Phelan 12). Lacking both an outspoken editor and a professed political slant, *Autographs* is able to get closer to the real of antislavery politics as a direct result of Griffiths’ absence from the text. Phelan engages the psychoanalytic views of Lacan and Freud to argue that one can only know herself, or identify, through her failure to ever fully know herself. Rather, the subject identifies through knowing what she both relates to and resists in the identity of the other. Phelan describes, “In that declaration of identity and identification, there is always loss, the loss of not-being the other and yet remaining dependent on that other for self-seeing, self-being” (13). By engaging with liminal editorship, Griffiths becomes dependent on the work and correspondence of her contributors to identify her to her readers. Reading the contributors to *Autographs* as the other, Griffiths, in her liminal editorship, loses the power of speaking within the gift book, ultimately “not-being” a part of the outspoken activism within the collection (Phelan 13). Griffiths loses her identity and, consequentially, becomes dependent on her writers for her editorial “self-being,” allowing the collection itself to gradually express
and reveal her activist identity (Phelan 13). Griffiths paradoxically becomes lost in, and at the same time implicitly inextricable from the absolute whole of, the gift book.

Furthering the notion of the impossibility to self-identify, Phelan narrows her definition of the unmarked, arguing:

Relatively comfortable with this notion of the failing signifier we can begin to extend this proposition to the visible itself. Possibly, through the impossibility of saying a wholly material truth, we might see what the possibility of the immaterial is (which is perhaps to see how to say it). Lacan and Freud called this immateriality the unconscious; it speaks through the symptom. I am calling this immateriality the unmarked; it shows itself through the negative and through disappearance. I am speaking here of an active vanishing, a deliberate and conscious refusal to take the payoff of visibility. For the moment, active disappearance usually requires at least some recognition of what and who is not there to be effective. (19)

Griffiths’ editorial work within *Autographs* undoubtedly qualifies as an instance of “active vanishing, a deliberate and conscious refusal to take the payoff of visibility” (Phelan 19). Deliberately muting her presence within the collection, Griffiths challenges the editorial and contextual potential of the gift book genre, allowing *Autographs* to grow into a collection that is not marked with Griffiths’ personal or political agenda, but one that gets to the heart of the “visible itself” in the abolitionist movement at this time (Phelan 19). Griffiths’ active disappearance is replaced by the words of her contributors,
making her absence crucial for both her liminal performance and the subsequently
effective performances of her contributors within *Autographs*.

As contributors write to Griffiths, they inevitably mark her, making her
invisibility visible (Phelan 27). However, her marking within the text often serves to
make her editorial persona *more* elusive, as contributors repeatedly mistake her position
within the society or misspell her name. Although she is repeatedly referred to throughout
both volumes of the gift book, the careless mistakes of her contributors often leave her
more unmarked than she can even make herself through her intended invisibility. For
example, Reverend C. G. Finney in the first volume of *Autographs* addresses his letter to
“the president of the society,” even though Griffiths, in her prefaces to *Autographs* and in
other work for the Rochester Ladies’ Society, designates her role within the society as
“secretary” (74). In the second volume, Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, inexplicably
addresses his letter to Griffiths beginning, “Dear Sir” (273). Furthermore, several of the
letters mark her professionally as the secretary of the society, or address her as Madam,
never fully marking her though alluding to her presence. While Chapman became
famous, in part, through her work on the *Bell*, Griffiths refuses to “take the payoff of
visibility,” within *Autographs*, silently enduring mistakes to her identity in order to
maintain her editorial liminality (Phelan 27).

Through the professional, impersonal addresses of her contributors, Griffiths
avoids implicating her physical body with the text, choosing instead to emphasize the
disparateness of her editorial body. Intentionally allowing her contributors to mistake her
editorial identity and to thus discordantly mark her, Griffiths is nearly impossible to trace
within *Autographs*. She becomes both man and woman within the gift book; both secretary and president of the Rochester Ladies’ Society. Through her cunning manipulation of editorial liminality, Griffiths refuses to be tethered to a political affiliation, or to be identified as sole author or editor of *Autographs*. Instead, she occupies all positions and titles, drastically increasing her presence and her power as a speaker in the text, while still remaining physically untraceable. Griffiths thus detracts attention from her physical, controversial body that is tied to Douglass through the professionalization and dispersion of her editorial body. Ultimately, Griffiths uses the liminal editorship of the gift book to hide her physical body from the text by replacing it with disparate editorial bodies that enact the abolitionist work for which she came to America.

Griffiths further scatters and deemphasizes her editorial identity through the strategic and targeted visibility of Harriet Beecher Stowe. In the first volume of *Autographs* in particular, Griffiths places considerable emphasis on the work of Harriet Beecher Stowe, presumably to capitalize on the exceedingly profitable cultural phenomenon widely regarded as Uncle Tom-Mania that swept both British and American culture in 1853. In the British edition of the first volume of *Autographs*, Stowe’s name presides over the title page, reading in large letters, “Autographs for Freedom. By Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and Thirty-Five other Eminent Writers” (London iii). Griffiths’ name, aside from a brief byline at the end of the preface, remains unmarked. Stowe occupies much of the literary real estate within the first volume of *Autographs*, contributing one poem and two short stories, while at least two entries from other
contributors use their space to refer to Stowe, as can be seen in the reprinting of a letter from the Earl of Carlisle to Stowe as his contribution to Griffiths’ collection. Stowe’s presence within the gift book becomes virtually overwhelming, marking her body as the face of the collection while Griffiths remains poignantly unmarked. While Griffiths attributes the increase in transatlantic interest in the abolitionist movement to “that blessed book, ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’” (“Circular” 2), a review in the Athenaeum criticizes Autographs for catering to Uncle Tom-Mania, chastising, “Her well-meaning friends are desecrating her offering to the cause of Liberty by thrusting on her the tawdry and suspicious honours of Lionism… This publication will be found jarring— to say the least of it— even by those who justify such adulation when it is privately expressed on the score of the emotion of the moment” (“Autographs” 191). The extent to which Griffiths thrusts Stowe in the spotlight of the gift book in order to remain unmarked herself is criticized by the reviewer in the Athenaeum, who chastises Griffiths for ostentatiously celebrating Stowe by giving her body such a remarkable presence in the volume. Griffiths, however, far from idolizing Stowe, works duplicitously in her editing tactics, using Stowe’s name to draw attention both to the volume and away from herself as editor. While Griffiths strategically caters to Uncle Tom-Mania for the financial purpose of fundraising as much money as possible through the popularity of Stowe’s name at this time, she also allows Stowe to embody female abolitionism within the first volume of Autographs in order to more quickly facilitate the gift book’s success in the consumer market and to thus ensure her future as editor of a stable annual.
While male contributors repeatedly addle her marking, Griffiths actively allows both famous and infamous female antislavery novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe, in the first volume of *Autographs* in particular, to mark and to identify with the gift book. By remaining unmarked, and by intensely featuring Stowe, even labeling her as author of the first volume, Griffiths intentionally marks Stowe as the leading woman of the first volume. Phelan’s understanding of the unmarked pays particular attention to gender, taking on a feminist slant in which she considers the inherently unmarked nature of women. She writes, “The proposition that one sees oneself in terms of the other is itself differently marked according for men and women. When the unmarked woman looks at the marked man she sees a man; but she sees herself as other, as negative-man… The image of the woman is made to submit to the phallic function and is re-marked and revised as that which belongs to him” (Phelan 17). Griffiths, again manipulating the liminal-norm with which her editorship engages, re-marks the role of female abolitionism, and of female gift book editorship for that matter, by allowing another woman, the famed Stowe, to predominate the collection. Instead of featuring Douglass or other famous male activists whose work graces the pages of *Autographs*, such as Gerrit Smith or William Seward, for example, Griffiths counters nineteenth-century gender norms by featuring Stowe as a phallic figure on the title page, marking her in a way that dramatically contrasts Griffiths’ active work to remain unmarked throughout the collection. In a system where “The male is marked with value; the female is unmarked, lacking measured value and meaning” Griffiths intentionally marks Stowe, and gives her name more “measured value and meaning” than important male activists of the time.
Phelan notes, “Within the realm of the visible, that is both the realm of the signifier and the image, women are seen always as Other; thus *The Woman* cannot be seen. Yet, like a ubiquitous ghost, she continues to haunt the images we believe in, the ones we remember seeing and loving” (6). Griffiths challenges the visibility of the woman, marking Stowe as tangibly visible in a volume haunted by Griffiths’ role as “ubiquitous ghost” (Phelan 6). While Stowe is definitively marked, Griffiths haunts the pages.

Despite Stowe’s virtually overwhelming presence within the first volume, however, Griffiths, though still never fully present, achieves a much greater degree of agency in the second volume of *Autographs*, entirely displacing Stowe on the title page of the text. The title page of the second volume (Figure 3) this time reads, “Autographs for Freedom. Edited by Julia Griffiths,” with Griffiths’ name domineering in large letters where’s Stowe’s name had been featured previously (Vol. 2 ii). Perhaps more significantly, after a brief preface in the second volume that declares “‘The Rochester Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Society’ would congratulate themselves and the friends of freedom generally on the progress made, during the past year, by the cause to which the book is devoted,” Griffiths’ small byline indicating authorship of the preface is replaced by a facsimile of her own signature (Vol. 2 v). Although she remains equally absent from the second volume of *Autographs*, Griffiths at least, in the preface, marks herself as an integral part of the collection through the presence of her autograph, merging her physical and editorial bodies in a brief moment of revealed editorship (Figure 4).
FOR FREEDOM.

EDITED BY

JULIA GRIFFITHS.

"In the long vista of the years to roll,
Let me not see my country's honor fade;
Oh! let me see our land retain its soul
Her pride in Freedom, and not Freedom's shade."

Figure 3: Autographs for Freedom. Title Page. Vol. 2.
vi

Preface.

this country redeemed from the sin and the curse of Slavery.

On behalf of the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.

Julia Griffiths

Rochester, N. Y.,

Figure 4: Autographs for Freedom. Preface. Vol. 2.
Another notable component of Griffiths’ more definitively marked preface to the second volume can be seen in her reference to the work of both the Rochester Ladies’ Society and “the friends of freedom generally” (Vol. 2 v). While Griffiths claims editorship on the title page of Autographs, the title page of Chapman’s Bell features work by the “Friends of Freedom” (Chapman ii). Seemingly aligning her work with the Bell, Griffiths marks herself as a contender in the abolitionist gift book market. Although Stowe’s figure continues to predominate within the pages of the second volume, with three contributors writing about Stowe in addition to another contribution, this time a travel narrative of her time in England written by Stowe herself, Griffiths at least marks herself as an integral presence of the gift book through her signature and passively confident preface. While Griffiths refuses to let go of the power of a liminal editorship by contributing more forcefully to the text, the explicit claiming of her editorship marks the completion of her rite of passage into successful gift book editorship. After basking in this success, Griffiths again strategically disappears into the liminal space between editor and author of the text.

Although Griffiths appears to be making a deliberate performance of abolitionism through her artful editorship and divergent inclusion of contributors, Phelan’s book focuses on the:

performative politics operative in photographs, paintings, films, theatre, political protest, and performance art. By suggesting that all these forms of representation participate in a performative exchange, I hope to broaden current disciplinary boundaries which define the field of the gaze, the animate and the inanimate, and
the seen and the unseen. Performance is the art form which most fully understands
the generative possibilities of disappearance. Poised forever at the threshold of the
present, performance enacts the productive appeal of the nonreproductive. (27)

Phelan contends that performance exists only in the present, and that any sort of
reflection or documentation of live performance inherently changes the genre,
automatically becoming “something other than performance” (146). However, through
Phelan’s broadening of the definition of the “performative exchange” to mediums such as
photography and film, I propose that, in the case of abolitionist gift book literature,
writing itself, or rather the absence of writing in the case of Griffiths, can also engage in
the “performative politics” of performance culture” (Phelan 27).

Phelan argues that writing can “broach the frame of performance but cannot
mimic an art that is nonreproductive” (148). To compensate for the irreproducibility of
live performance, Phelan insists that writing must “discover a way for repeated words to
become performative utterances, rather than… constative utterances” (149). Recalling
Austin’s performative and constative utterances, Phelan posits that writing must do
something in order to claim status as a performance. Chapman’s and Griffiths’ work
within the gift book genre utilizes performative writing to enact social and political
change. In the preface of the first volume Griffiths claims, “The good cause to which the
volume is devoted … while it shall prove acceptable as a Gift Book, may help swell the
tide of sentiment that, by the Divine blessing, will sweep away from this otherwise happy
land, the great sin of SLAVERY” (Vol. 1 v). Although Griffiths concedes that one of the
use-values of Autographs is its quality as a gift, she emphasizes that the real goal of the
volume is to “swell the tide of sentiment” in order to increase an awareness and activism that will eventually end slavery. Griffiths continues:

Should this publication be instrumental in casting one ray of hope on the heart of one poor slave, or should it draw the attention of one person, hitherto uninterested, to the deep wrongs of the bondsman, or cause one sincere and earnest effort to promote emancipation, we believe that the kind contributors, who have generally responded to our call, not less than members of our Society, will feel themselves gratified and compensated. (Vol. 1 v-vi)

*Autographs* can thus be read as a performative text in its aims to inform readers, to invoke their sympathy, and to subsequently enact action and activism to abolish slavery. Griffiths’ use of performative writing finds “a way for repeated words to become performative utterances” (Phelan 149). Although the words are printed and repeated throughout the printing of the gift book, each reading of the text can be viewed as a separate performance, in which specific readers in specific places and at specific times experience the performance of abolitionism through a reading of the gift book. Each reading, similar to live performance, is unique depending upon whom is reading the text, where they are reading, how they read it, etc. Despite the absence of a live performer, texts such as *Autographs* and the *Bell* always seem to have a live audience. Each separate reading of the text becomes irreproducible, making the gift book genre as capable of engaging “performative politics” as live performance, simply in a different format (Phelan 27). Moreover, Griffiths’ mastery of liminality, as displayed in her careful and deliberate use of performative techniques, creates a textually embodied performance of
abolitionism that magically appears and disappears at will, that makes editorial order out of textual chaos, and that ultimately allows Griffiths to fundraise for Douglass without disclosing her intentions nor directly advocating his cause.

By manipulating the liminal-norm, Griffiths creates an effective performance of abolitionism that, while considerably different from the work of Chapman, becomes equally as effective for the abolitionist cause. Griffiths challenges the role of gift book editor by choosing to dwell in the liminal space between editor and writer, presence and concealment. She remains separate from the antislavery conversation within *Autographs*, stuck in the silent, in-between liminal space of the rite of passage long after *Autographs* emerges into print and into society. As Griffiths refuses to fully tether herself to the text, *Autographs* itself refuses to be tied to any specific school of antislavery thought, ultimately encompassing a variety of nationalist and antislavery perspectives that create a complicated and inconsistent gift book that reveals the disparate antislavery opinions of the mid-nineteenth century. Through her work in the liminal space of gift book editorship, Griffiths marks *Autographs* as a performative contender in the competitive gift book market.
Afterword

Despite their varying approaches to gift book editorship, both Chapman and Griffiths undertake a revolutionary form of activism within their respective gift books. Although women had subtly critiqued societal and cultural norms within the gift book format since its inception, Chapman and Griffiths adopt the genre in a way that enables them to not only critique a pro-slavery, male dominated society, but to also carve out a powerful space for female editors within the antislavery movement. While both Chapman and Griffiths worked as editors to substantial abolitionist newspapers run by Garrison and Douglass, respectively, the Bell and Autographs allowed the women an editorial space in which their work and political opinions were featured and not simply supplementally attached to the periodical views of their more powerful political counterparts.

Chapman utilizes the gift book in a way that seeks to attract new members to the abolitionist movement, while also deeply criticizing the passivity of the cause itself. While the Bell remains staunchly Garrisonian in its political views, Chapman is able to use the gift book to soften Garrison’s and her own political radicalism in order to make their views more approachable to moderate readers. Through the use of performative writing, Chapman criticizes America’s capitalist support of the slavery system in addition to the passive consumerism that often replaced antislavery action both within the movement and outside of it. Advocating a more active approach to abolitionism, Chapman tempers her radical activism in her writing through the consumerist praise of Cumberworth’s statue that she ultimately is unable to buy, and through her biting, though
performatively feminine, remarks to public male pro-slavery opinions, as seen in “The Young Sailor.”

Despite Chapman’s effectiveness in moderating Garrisonian radicalism, however, Griffiths ultimately garners greater editorial power through her manipulation of the liminal space between editor and author of *Autographs*. Unlike Chapman, whose abolitionist body is deeply implicated in both the travel narratives that she contributes and to the political slant of the *Bell*, Griffiths successfully separates her physical body from her editorial body, effectively refocusing the collection’s work on abolitionism and away from her controversial affiliation with Douglass. While Chapman is incessantly present throughout the *Bell*, Griffiths controls when, where, and for what purpose her body will be affiliated within the text, ultimately creating a disparate editorial body that allows her to speak from a variety of powerful viewpoints within both volumes of *Autographs*. Through several cleverly duplicitous and artful rhetorical techniques Griffiths transgresses normative gift book editorship to create a new, powerful method for women editors to control their volumes. She also creates a live, embodied performance of abolitionism in which her editorial body enacts a new spectacle of abolitionism within the gift book genre itself.

Despite their different approaches to gift book editorship, however, the appropriation of the gift book genre for abolitionist means allowed the women a space to work independently from Garrison and Douglass, creating a uniquely feminine activism within the genre that ultimately furthered their political capabilities within the antislavery movement.
Endnotes

i Faxon’s text was originally published in 1912. The edition with which I am working was reprinted in 1973 and includes supplementary essays by Eleanore Jamieson and Iain Bain. Jamieson’s essay details the varying binding styles and publishing techniques of gift books. Bain’s essay explores the production of prints and illustrations featured in the varying gift books.

ii Thompson also notes that the literary annual was ultimately a variation of the traditional almanac, explaining, “A yearly publication with calendars and weather forecasts, the almanac easily lent itself to less matter-of-fact usage, and no great stretch of the imagination is required to understand how, with the introduction of pictures, stories, and poems, there developed the ornamental gift book of the nineteenth century” (3).

iii Taylor defines the symbolic implication of the Liberty Bell as referring to the actual bell that was rung in Philadelphia after the declaration of American independence (87). She also notes, “Philadelphia held two conventions of anti-slavery women in 1838 and 1839, and Maria attended the first, witnessing the burning by a pro-slavery mob of the new Independence Hall. The title thus reaffirms the abolitionist’s intention of proclaiming liberty even in the face of tyranny, and reminds of the sentiments of liberty and equality” (Taylor 87).

iv Although Thompson ultimately agrees that the Atlantic Souvenir was the first successful American literary annual, that it wasn’t necessarily the first. He notes that another gift book, The Philadelphia Souvenir, had been slated months before the publishers of the Atlantic Souvenir began production, and he also claims that another gift book actually hit the stands a few days before the Atlantic Souvenir is release. Thompson finally concedes, however, that the initial success of the Atlantic Souvenir established the genre’s popularity in America (2).

v Levy notes that Chapman “fondly” referred to the Liberty Bell as the Bell (141). To avoid repetition, I will also abbreviate the title of the gift book as the Bell in all subsequent references.

vi See Chapter II.

vii I have decided to focus on the 1853 edition of the Bell simply because it was published during the same time in which Griffiths published Autographs. I recognize that the Bell is an extensive collection comprised of several volumes, but for the scope of this project, I have decided to focus on the volume from 1853.

viii Maria Weston Chapman collaborated closely with radical abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison, editing his newspaper The Liberator, in addition to engaging in writing and fundraising designed to support his faction of the abolitionist movement.

ix See Chapter I, pg. 11.

x Aside from her work in the Bell, Chapman also published poems and essays in abolitionist periodicals, several tracts, and more extensive work such as Right and Wrong in Massachusetts (1839) and
In the circular written by Griffiths detailing the success of the second fundraising festival for the Rochester Ladies’ Society, Griffiths mentions that the “British tables presented an elegant and attractive appearance” and that the American “tables were amply provided with useful and ornamental articles” (1). Previous to selling the first volume of Autographs, then, it can be assumed that the Rochester Ladies’ Society held typical fundraisers of the time period that involved the sale of home goods and crafts in which all profits went toward abolitionist work.

The Bell is unique in its established annual publication rate; most gift books only lasted for a year or two before going out of print. Thompson, although he fails to acknowledge the duration of the Bell, notes, “‘The Rose of Sharon’ holds the American record for duration, with its eighteen volumes. ‘The Token’ was successful during fifteen years, while the ‘Odd Fellows Offering’ gladdened the hearts and eyes of its patrons for twelve years. Many lived two or more years, but the great majority came only once, and, not being strong enough to hold their place, were soon forgotten” (xii-xiii).

Particularly following the success of Uncle Tom’s Cabin in England, British response to the American antislavery movement was often filled with a tone of moral superiority for abolishing slavery nearly thirty years before. The success of Uncle Tom’s Cabin placed America on the literary map, but not without insecurities on both sides of the Atlantic. Sara Meer describes America’s misgivings for the novel’s popularity in England by explaining, “The book’s popularity renewed international antislavery alliances and forged new ones, but some American readers saw only hostility in the British reception of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, assuming its critique of slavery was being used to reinforce anti-American prejudice” (3). Many British reviews and articles published on Uncle Tom’s Cabin used the success of the novel to criticize the institution of slavery in America, a country that despite such efforts to establish its freedom from England to create an equal democracy for all, had enslaved a significant portion of its population. Because of America’s fraught and often competitive relationship with England at this time, many Americans felt insecure about the novel’s widespread success. Likewise, the success of Stowe’s novel in England marked great insecurities in British audiences as well. Audrey Fisch argues, “The unprecedented commercialization of the novel gave Stowe’s text unparalleled power. As much in response to this new commercialization phenomenon which Uncle Tom’s Cabin inaugurated in the world of Victorian culture as to the thematics of the novel itself, voices on intellectual, moral, literary, and political doubt emerged” (15).

In the biography Frederick Douglass, William S. McFeely describes in detail the controversy surrounding the intimate interracial friendship between Griffiths and Douglass. Their relationship was harshly criticized both outside of and within the abolitionist movement, though McFeely notes, “The more loudly the abolitionists deplored the interracial relationship, the happier their opponents became” (165). Several abolitionists thought the friendship so distracting to the work of the movement that they requested that Douglass “end his friendship with Julia Griffiths because it was harming the antislavery cause” (170). Despite their intimate friendship, “By 1855, the criticism
had become so shrill that the two could no longer withstand its pressures. Julia packed her bags and went back to England, where she continued her antislavery activities” (McFeely 182).
Bibliography

“Anti-Slavery Token.” *Ohio Historical Society.*


