From Gradualism To Immediatism:

William Lloyd Garrison's encounter with David Walker's Appeal.

By: Nikki Hurtado

May 8, 2009

Robert Finley was one of the founders of The American Colonization Society (ACS), the organization dedicated to removing all free blacks from the United States and transporting them to newly formed American colonies like Liberia, or to Canada or the Caribbean. A Presbyterian minister originally from New Jersey, Finley believed that by establishing a new colony for America's blacks, there would be another opportunity to spread Christianity to lands that had not yet been converted. Finley also thought that colonization was necessary for "uplifting the free negro."[1] In an attempt to bring the black community into agreement with the plan, Finley met with a newly formed committee, whose goal it was to oppose and stop the colonization plan. This committee was formed by twelve important leaders in the black community and was led by James Forten. In January 1817, during the meeting held in Philadelphia at Bethel Church in which the twelve were selected, an audience of more than three thousand, which was mostly black, was in attendance to hear more about the recently formed ACS. Forten asked the attendees for "ayes" if they supported the plan. The crowd's answer was silently but deeply heard, as not a soul uttered a sound. Then Forten asked for those who opposed the plan and "One long tremendous 'No' went up which…seemed as it would bring down the walls of the building."[2]

The majority of American blacks considered the plan undesirable for many reasons, some of which were that America was their home, built on their blood and sweat, and by removing free blacks from America, slavery could actually go on indefinitely as slaves would no longer have the example of their brothers and sisters living in freedom.[3] The gradualism of the past, in which emancipation would come eventually at some distant point in the future, evident in ideals like colonization, gave way to an urgent demand for an immediate end to slavery The abolition

[1] Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 4-5.
[2] *The Emancipator* (New York), June 30, 1835.
[3] David Walker, *David Walker's Appeal To The Colored Citizens of The World, But In Particular, And Very Expressly To Those of The United States of America*, (Boston: David Walker, 1829). For greater clarity read Article IV of *Walker's Appeal*: *Our Wretchedness In Consequence of The Colonizing Plan*. See also, Quarles, 4-8.

movement began to transform as its proponents came to understand the necessity for a more revolutionary stance, whether or not it involved pacifist or violent acts would become a decisive division among the new immediatist reformers. Historians have traditionally credited the white reformer William Lloyd Garrison who called for immediate, uncompensated abolition for redirecting antislavery efforts away from colonization and towards racial equality. However, as the incident at Bethel Church suggests, many black people had already rejected colonization and by the late 1820s powerful black voices had appeared that developed these sentiments into articulate attacks on slavery.

During the 1820s in response to this culmination of events and circumstances a new tradition of black abolitionism took shape. Through the written word and in public speech the new black abolitionist focused on self-help and the belief that only a united black community, which is educated in its history as well as the principles of democracy, can bring freedom and equality to itself. Black abolitionists by the likes of John Russwurm, David Walker, and Henry Highland Garnet broke through previous boundaries, which restrained the black voice and its revolutionary spirit. However, as white abolitionists sought to contribute to the movement their innate sense of paternalism took over the movement and subsequently suppressed important aspects of the black voice. These efforts marginalized black abolitionists for more than a decade.

Steadily over the course of the past forty years, historians have reclaimed the importance of black abolitionists. Benjamin Quarles made it his life's work to show the lengths that blacks in antebellum America went to, not only to fight the idea of colonization but also to gain freedom and equality for every black in America.[4] In his 1969 book *Black Abolitionists* Quarles set to work to discredit a white-oriented historiography that emphasizes the work of white

[4] Details on the life of Benjamin Quarles and his other works of black history are located at http://www.nathanielturner.com/benjaminquarlesbio.htm. He was one of the first to write about the black American's participation in the American Revolution. Acknowledging that black activists left little behind by the written record he attempted to use what evidence did exist in regards to black action. All of Quarles previous work culminated in his 1969 book *Black Abolitionists.*

"benevolent" abolitionists. He responds to these earlier attempts that the movement was led and fueled by blacks in America. Quarles successfully demonstrates that black unity was the core of the abolitionist movement. In *Black Abolitionists,* a story of the intellectual emancipation of the free and enslaved blacks of America unfolds to demonstrate that through their own work they were able to raise themselves up higher than the subjugated positions into which the whites—pro and anti slavery advocates alike—had forced them. Quarles uses evidence from meetings of the black community to illustrate their strong opposition to ACS' efforts to exile blacks by way of colonization to places such as Haiti, Sierra Leone, and Canada. Quarles also employed the many black-authored newspaper articles that gave voice to the communities' desires and actions. Due to a growing distrust of the paternalism of white advocates and a suppression of their rights, black writers picked up the cause of carrying the call for freedom in the press. Through black newspapers in the 1820s-30s black writers called for the education of America's black citizens so that they could actively participate in voting in order to bring civil and human rights to all people of the nation regardless of color.

Quarles skillfully lays before his readers a chronological explanation and description of the black abolitionist movement in America. It is Quarles contention that the black fight for freedom was often carried by former slaves who had a deeper level of understanding and compassion then any white social reformers could begin to tap into. The addition of blacks into the movement is what differentiated it from previous abolition movements. Black reformers had arrived at a place in history where they were ready and able to proclaim "that the fight against slavery was the black man's fight."[5] Quarles introduces revolutionary and controversial writers such as David Walker and Henry Highland Garnet to demonstrate the new strain as they and

[5] Quarles, viii.

many others rebelliously declared that blacks in America must "awaken" to free themselves from the tyranny of the proslavers.

Although early twentieth century historiography of the antebellum era was laden with perspectives of events gleaned from contemporary white newspapers and literature, modern historians have reoriented themselves in the slave epoch with a more deliberate attempt to take post-colonial theory into consideration. Anna Green and Kathleen Troup discuss postcolonial perspectives in *The Houses Of History: A Critical Reader In Twentieth-Century History and Theory:*

> Postcolonial historical writing began when the experience of imperialism and colonialism began to be questioned, and this process invariably entailed the revision or rejection of previous historical accounts which narrated European expansion as largely unproblematic. Postcolonial histories include the perspectives of the colonized and often revise the understanding of their experiences.[6]

When looking back at written evidence from the time, today's historian is able to interpret the side of the story of the colonized from the more readily available pro-slavery or paternalistic white abolitionist publications. When the modern historian began to use a post-colonial lens to re-examine the events that led to emancipation, some of the greatest scholarly contributions have come from the attention given to works by black writers, scholars, and orators of the period.

Other historians have followed, developing the ways in which the black immediate knowledge of the evils of slavery could stimulate radicalism in the movement. In "Models of Agency: Frederick Douglass And 'The Heroic Slave'" Cynthia Hamilton reads the reports of whites' testimony of slave insurrections and looks at their words with new understanding.[7] Hamilton argues that the black voice was often silenced by fears of pro-slavery advocates as well

---

[6] Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses Of History: A Critical Reader In Twentieth-Century History and Theory* (New York: NYU Press, 1999), 278. See for detailed explanation to post-colonial research and analysis.

[7] Cynthia S. Hamilton, "*Models of Agency: Frederick Douglass and The Heroic Slave*." Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 114, no. 1 (2004): 87-136. America: History & Life, EBSCOhost (accessed September 16, 2008). Cynthia Hamilton is head of American studies at Manchester Metropolitan University, in Cheshire, United Kingdom.

as white paternalistic advocates of the anti-slavery movement causing black abolitionists to carefully strategize their efforts to promote immediate and direct action. By looking closely at Frederick Douglass' *The Heroic Slave*. Hamilton argues that Douglass recognized his inability to write directly about the heroism of America's blacks and to condemn white accommodation with slavery because the general American public was unwilling to hear it. Douglass responded by presenting the true story of a slave rebellion as a work of fiction allowing him to take literary license to embellish and embolden his heroes while at the same time providing a palatable story to white readers, because if was after all a work of fiction, was it not?

Historian Hannah Geffert creates an idealized revolutionary situation by illuminating the relationship between white abolitionist John Brown and his fellow black rebels in the Harpers Ferry uprising that took place in Virginia in 1859. In her article "John Brown And His Black Allies: An Ignored Alliance," Geffert detailed the networks of black community organizations that were born out of the churches in the north and south alike and how these networks spread into all avenues of black society.[8] Geffert acknowledges how crucial black abolitionists like Harriet Tubman were in planning the rebellion. Geffert portrays John Brown, the white abolitionist, as the hero even though black networks existed. She asserts these black organizations did not come together in a way that would enable them to rise up until Brown came along and joined them into a cohesive unit in which rebellion could actually take place. The title of the article suggests Geffert wished to prove the importance of both sides of an alliance, including the important contribution of the black community. Although she is successful in providing evidence of black self-help organizations she fails to connect their importance to Harper's Ferry.

[8] Hannah Geffert, "*John Brown and His Black Allies; An Ignored Alliance*." Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography 126, no. 4 (2002): 591-610. America: History & Life, EBSCOhost (accessed September 16, 2008). Hannah Geffert is assistant research professor of political science at Shepherd University, West Virginia

Philip Edmondson examines independent black agency in the press.[9] Edmondson more clearly demonstrates relationship between white and black abolition in which white activists played a role but were not the main actors. In his article "'To Plead Our Own Cause'; The St. Domingue Legacy And The Rise Of The Black Press," Edmondson uncovers a tradition of black rhetorical literature that rose out of the Haitian Revolution and could in fact trace its roots to a style of writing that began with what the Puritans called the "Jeremiad" which warned of divine punishment for moral obtuseness. In relying more heavily upon evidence left by black activists in books and black newspapers of the era, Edmondson successfully displays a source of black power that had yet to be proclaimed. Edmondson's piece begins by linking powerful black revolutionary action and thought with early writers like John Russwurm, editor of the first black newspaper *Freedom's Journal* and David Walker, the paper's press agent and later author of the incendiary pamphlet known as *Walker's Appeal.* Whereas Quarles and John Stauffer have credited famous abolitionists like Frederick Douglass' influence to white abolitionists like Gerrit Smith and William Lloyd Garrison, Edmondson uses personal letters, black newspapers, and biographies to show that Russwurm, Walker and Henry Highland Garnet were strong black influences on the better-known historical characters' journey to radical abolitionism.

Edmondson explores the birth and progress of the transformation of abolition from gradualism to immediatism, pinpointing a divergence in the movement in reaction to a culmination of factors that originated in the three major revolutions of the time: the American Revolution, The French Revolution, and the Haitian Revolution. Out of a necessity to awaken the United States to the hypocrisy so prevalent in every area of life, and to call to action the free and enslaved blacks alike, writers like Russwurm understood that in creating a black history based on the Haitian Rebellion, the only successful slave uprising in history, they would be able

[9] Philip Edmondson, 'To Plead Our Own Cause'; The St. Domingue Legacy And The Rise Of The Black Press, *Prospects* 29 (2004).

to "exhort free black readers to emulate the vigor of the St. Domiguan rebels in taking control of their communities and personal lives" and that these early radical black activists would use the "St. Domingue legacy to unite free black communities, to promote literacy education, and to build firm moral character."[10]

For the purposes of this paper, the most important recent contribution to the field to the study of abolition's transformation from gradualism to immediatism as well as the relationship between white and black abolitionists, was made by John Stauffer in his book *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*.[11] Stauffer uncovers a connection between four abolitionist activists, two black—James McCune Smith and Fredrick Douglass—and two white—John Brown and Gerrit Smith. All of these men were vital to a revival in the movement's revolutionary spirit in later years. The title of the book reflects the consensus of the four that slavery would not end and that well-meaning whites could not really help blacks until whites had a total change of heart. McCune Smith articulated this sentiment when he said, "The heart of the whites must be changed, thoroughly, entirely, permanently changed."[12] Stauffer goes on to evaluate this unique perspective of the four showing that McCune Smith suggested that, "whites had to understand what it was like to be black. They had to learn how to view the world as if they were black, shed their 'whiteness' as a sign of superiority…they had to acquire, in effect, a black heart" so that they might understand more deeply the black person's suffering.[13] Stauffer emphasizes the inter-racial relationship between these men and their belief in a black heart and credits this for a new intensity in attacks on slavery that began in the 1840s.

[10] Edmondson, 121-eoa.
[11] John Stauffer, *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*, (Cambridge: Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002).
[12] Letter written by James McCune Smith to Gerrit Smith in Stauffer, 1.
[13] Stauffer, 1.

Stauffer's work compels the historian to go back to a lost opportunity for abolitionists to adopt the empathy of the black heart. This paper examines the relationship that William Lloyd Garrison forged with a powerful and influential black voice, that of David Walker. It argues that Garrison sought to defuse Walker's *Appeal*, in a sense demanding that abolitionists develop a "white heart," the opposite of what McCune Smith had determined was necessary. As a result of Garrison's rigid position on pacifist activism he attempted to dismantle any revolutionary abolition movement that was willing to support violence to bring an immediate end to slavery. Garrison believed in immediate emancipation but only through the effort to prick the conscience of whites through moral suasion. Garrison's voice was extremely powerful in abolitionist circles; because of this the more radical black voice was dampened. But it would not be forgotten as Stauffer demonstrates that a later generation of reformers would pick up Walker's call as his voice is unleashed yet again by the likes of Henry Highland Garnett and Frederick Douglass.

By returning to David Walker, whose *Appeal* is a powerful call for the black community to take action and responsibility for its own freedom and to attack slavery, and to Garrison's efforts to discredit it, this paper examines the distinct discursive strategies taken by these two important abolitionists. Though Walker and Garrison would not develop a personal relationship as Stauffer's abolitionists had, the engagement of ideas is crucial for understanding this period of non-violent abolition, as Garrison recognized the primacy of Walker's language and arguments in the black community, and his efforts demonstrate that he took them seriously.

EARLY ABOLITIONISTS

There have always been some whites who disagreed with human bondage, but though they were troubled by slavery, never became abolitionists. There were other whites who believed so fiercely in the emancipation of slaves and their natural rights to equality that they risked their lives and dedicated themselves to end slavery.[14] Needless to say, anti-slavery advocates acknowledged the contradiction between human bondage and the founding principles of the United States, as they were laid out in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Based on their interpretations of the intention of the Founding Fathers in the drafting of the these two documents, some of the early anti-slavery men and women, and those who supported the end of slavery without supporting the means by which abolitionists sought to reach it, believed these documents held the means to bring slavery to an end. They understood that the end of slavery would come gradually, by stopping the spread of slavery into the new territories of the U.S., and in this way the institution of slavery would certainly come to a natural death.[15] The supporters of a slow diplomatic emancipation were called gradualists and they generally believed in non-violence and patience to free the slaves. Many of these gradualists supported the Colonization Plan, which would move all blacks out of the U.S. once they were free. Liberia in Africa and Haiti in the Caribbean were just two of several possible locations that were suggested for their relocation.

Though some would later come to question the motives and sincerity of colonizationists, they did have the public's ear in the North and held quite a bit of political and social sway. Henry Clay, who represented Kentucky in both houses of Congress and made multiple unsuccessful attempts at the presidency, spoke in Washington D.C. at a meeting about colonization. While

[14] Many books have been written on Abolitionism in the U.S. suggested reading: John Stauffer, *Black Hearts Of Men* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press), James Brewer Stewart, *Abolitionist politics and the coming of the Civil War*, (Amherst : University of Massachusetts Press).

[15] Stephen B. Oates, *With Malice Toward None: A Life Of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994). The biographical work on the life of President Lincoln by Oates discusses at length many of the early Americans who would eventually form the Republican Party and their opinion that the spread of slavery would be a direct violation of the principle pillars of America.

extolling the virtues of the plan in reference to the blacks, whom he thought could not amalgamate into white American society, Clay declared to the audience "It was desirable, therefore, as it respected them, and the residue of the population of the country, to drain them off." An additional benefit to sending them somewhere else would be that "the colony itself…might be rendered instrumental in the introduction into that extensive quarter of the globe, of the arts, civilization, and Christianity."[16] The goals of colonization, to spread missionary ideologies and the removal of blacks from American white society, spurred a great push among Northerners and helped to gain a modicum of support among Southerners.

Almost simultaneously to the attempts to colonize blacks, there was a growing movement burgeoning within the black community. Since their participation in the American Revolution, in which they helped to win freedom for America from its tyrannical oppressor across the Atlantic, a new belief and understanding was born in their hearts of the promise made to all Americans that they would be free and equal. Amongst themselves, they understood that they accomplished something of immense importance. Many knew that the very words written in the Declaration were possible in part due to their own action and sacrifice. The self-knowledge of their own personal potential coupled with the vision of an egalitarian society in which they lived an equal existence with all citizens would drive a new generation of black activists in a fight to gain the freedom of every slave in America.[17]

America was not the only place where the battle to end slavery was raging. In 1789 the French Revolution ushered in a new age of freedom among the French when the Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued. Similar to the American Declaration of Independence, France's Declaration stated all men are free and equal. This had a reverberating effect across the Atlantic

[16] Henry Clay as quoted in Walker, *Appeal, 56.*
[17] For further reading on black Americans in the Revolutionary war and their introduction to democracy and natural rights ideologies, see Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* and Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

in the French colony of Haiti, also known as St. Dominque. Free as well as enslaved blacks alike on the island learned of the Revolution that occurred in France and knew that the wealthy plantation owners wanted their own independence from the mother country. However, these slave owners did not support the ideals of freedom and equality for all, especially not blacks. Some of Haiti's free people of color began to negotiate with the French government for their rights but back on the island, the plantation owners would not recognize any rights of citizenship to the free blacks. Eventually the slaves began a rebellion in 1791 that lasted until 1803 when the island would declare its independence and the official end to slavery.[18] The success of the Haitian Revolution would become a beacon to slaves and freedmen alike throughout the Americas. The legacy of the rebellion would come to represent the antithesis to the white belief in black inferiority. Haiti and its black revolutionary leaders would stand as a symbol of Republican beliefs and government.

By telling the story of Haiti and lifting it up as a model to emulate, the new rising radical abolitionists found a powerful weapon in the written word. Approximately a decade before the establishment of the black press in the United States, white abolitionist and writer Benjamin Lundy sent a black correspondent of his paper, the *Genius of Universal Emancipation,* to Haiti to report on the nineteenth anniversary of Haitian Independence. In choosing to focus on Haiti's Revolution, Lundy opened the dialogue to an historical legacy of black power that promoted black ability and dispelled long held beliefs of their inferiority. The coverage of the independence celebration showed readers in the United States that Haiti was "the other American Revolution" but a revolution "that ended slavery and founded a black nation" an objective that

[18] For a thorough treatment of the Haitian Revolution and its affects on abolition in the United States, see Philip Edmondson's article.

the American Revolution failed to meet.[19] This theme would become a core tenet of the new radical abolition movement on the horizon and the power of the press would carry its message.

In 1827 Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm founded *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in the United States. Edmondson credits co-editor John Russwurm and his press agent David Walker with understanding "the power of the press to organize and connect free black communities by rhetorically constructing collective identity."[20] Their attempt to unite the black community would help to move the abolition movement from one of slow gradualism to a radical movement that urged the people to become educated and if necessary to throw off the yoke of their oppressors through violent and revolutionary means. Through the written word, Russwurm was able to draw a connection between the American colonies' right to revolt against their oppressors, France's Revolution that was publicly celebrated by white supporters of Democracy in American, and America's blacks who were fighting against the tyranny of a white government and society that kept them subjugated.

In *Freedom's Journal's* 1827 prospectus, the editors acknowledged the intent of the paper, in part, was to use Haiti's black revolutionary legacy to encourage literacy among blacks in the United States. Black activists like Russwurm and Walker believed that when blacks were educated they would read history, and in it they would find a long tradition of black accomplishment and power dating back to Egypt and Ethiopia. It was imperative to them that they give a voice to blacks, allowing them to define themselves, as well as discuss the issues important to them and this freedom of speech would happen in the black newspapers. Russwurm

[19] Edmondson, 122.
[20] *Ibid*., 121.

declared in his prospectus "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us."[21]

Early on in the paper's existence a series of six essays were published entitled *From The Scrapbook of Africanus*, attributed to an *Africanus,* but written by Russwurm.[22] The intention of the essays was to ignite the African American community by instilling in them a connection to Haiti and their African brethren who successfully claimed their freedom and equality by rebelling. Edmondson asserts that by creating "a counterrevolutionary mythos based on republican principles" black abolitionist writers were able to make the Haitian Revolution personally meaningful to Americans by showing where the American Revolution failed to fulfill its promises of freedom and equality for all men.[23]

Russwurm also employed the rhetorical literary technique of the Jeremiad, a tradition of writing dating to the Puritans. Ministers would invoke the looming wrath of God to get the attention of those going astray from their covenant with God. Black writers used the Jeremiad to warn whites of God's retribution for their sin of slavery. This powerful tool was useful not only to strike fear into whites but also to empower blacks by instilling them with the belief that they are God's chosen people and they will be victorious over the evil slave-owners that have oppressed them.[24] Another tool Russwurm used was to raise black consciousness regarding white violence in order to bring unity to the black community. Black writers used the white technique of turning their enemy into brutes in order to justify the use of violence and rebellion. In his final essay, Russwurm provided a profound warning as he says to whites that the "chain has a certain length, which should they undertake to stretch, may snap."[25] In no uncertain terms, Russwurm

[21] John Russwurm, *Freedom's Journal,* as quoted in Edmondson, 127
[22] Edmondson provides evidence that the writer was Russwurm.
[23] Edmondson, 128.
[24] *Ibid*., 130.
[25] *Ibid*., 132.

declared that if American whites continued their current course, America would find itself in its own black revolution. David Walker would eventually follow in Russwurm's footsteps with his own series of essays that were written in the tradition of the black Jeremiad, in a revolutionary call to action that was bolder in its rhetoric than anything that had come before him.

Though the exact date is debatable, Walker was born in approximately the year 1785 in Wilmington, North Carolina to a free mother and an enslaved father.[26] From an early age Walker could not stay in the presence of his fellow enslaved blacks living free while watching them live a tortured existence, whipped and chained by the hands of whites. Walker declared, "If I remain in this bloody land, I will not live long. As true as God reigns, I will be avenged for the sorrow, which my people have suffered. This is not the place for me."[27] Walker wanted to get far away from the sound of the chains holding his brethren.

As Walker traveled north away from the borders of slavery he witnessed innumerable tragedies blacks suffered. Eventually Walker reached Boston, Massachusetts, which would remain his home until the end of his life. Once he reached the city that was known for its abolitionist sentiments, he set out to learn to read and write so that, in the words of Garnet, "he might contribute something to the cause of humanity."[28] Walker set up business as a dealer in used clothing. His business was successful and he earned a reputation as an honest and reputable businessman, yet he never became wealthy because he shared his earnings to further the cause of abolition and to help in gaining the freedom of many slaves. Walker married Eliza Butler and dedicated his time to the pursuit of knowledge and abolition. Garnet conveyed the public's image of Walker when he stated that to everyone who knew him he "possessed a noble and courageous

[26] David Walker and Henry Highland Garnet, *Walker's appeal, with a brief sketch of his life: and also Garnet's Address to the slaves of the United States of America* (United Kingdom: Dodo Press, 2000). Donald Jacobs, *David Walker; Boston Race Leader, 1825-1830*, Essex Institute historical collections 107 Nov. 1 (1971), 94-eoa. A general description of Walker's life can be found in Garnet's sketch and in Donald Jacobs' article

[27] Walker, as quoted in Garnet, *Walker's appeal, with a brief sketch of his life*,

[28] Garnet, *Walker's appeal, with a brief sketch of his life*, 4-5.

spirit."[29] Garnet also asserts that although Walker is most well known by the publication of the *Appeal* it was his practice of his moral convictions and the principles by which he lived that made him most beloved in memory.

In 1827 Walker received word that John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish were starting the first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*. Always ready to support anything that would raise up the black man in society, Walker volunteered to be a press agent and spread the word of the paper. He was an avid supporter of Russwurm's work. Walker's reputation among his fellow blacks obtained widespread public support for the paper before its inception.[30] Walker's primary reason for supporting the paper was that it united blacks, and he knew that unity would bring their freedom.

At the outset, *Freedom's Journal* opposed colonization, which was in-line with Walker's belief that it was really about exiling American blacks to another country. Because of its effort to spread anti-colonization sentiment Walker had even more reason to support the paper's editors and their work. The subject of colonization would later be reserved for some of Walker's most vehement condemnations as he would emphatically deny any good intentions on the part of the American Colonization Society, specifically targeting Henry Clay for orchestrating the scheme that, for Walker, was only to further the cause of the slave owners and enable them to continue slavery into perpetuity.

Frustrated that emancipation was looking less likely with time, David Walker, now a rising leader in the black Abolition movement in Boston, responded with his four article *Appeal* that was aimed at condemning human bondage, stopping the colonization plan, condemning white Christian hypocrisy, and inciting blacks to stand up for their own freedom and equality.

[29] Garnet, *Walker's appeal, with a brief sketch of his life*, 4-5.
[30] Jacobs, 95-96.

Walker boldly broke out of the confines of the subjugated role he and his fellow blacks had been forced into by whites. It was Walker's goal to bring global attention to the conditions of slavery and to incite a transformation in the emancipation movement. Two years prior to William Lloyd Garrison's publication of the *Liberator*, Walker concluded that slavery could not wait for a gradual end to human bondage, but instead needed immediate abolition.

To The Colored Citizens of The World, But In Particular, And Very Expressly To Those of The United States of America-DAVID WALKERS APPEAL

Walker made his declarations in a four-part *Appeal*, which aimed to orient abolitionists in a more radical direction, a direction that Henry Highland Garnet refers to as the Anti-Slavery Reformation.[31] Walker's text entitled *To The Colored Citizens of The World, But In Particular, And Very Expressly To Those of The United States of America*, but is more commonly known as *David Walker's Appeal.* Written in 1829 and inspired by the successful slave uprising in Haiti, Walker condemned slavery calling black people in the U.S., as well as the rest of the world, to rise up against it, because, it was God's will and it was in the divine voice that he wrote: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."[32] Walker turned to Biblical scripture often to support his beliefs and to mock White Christian pro-slavery morality.

From the opening of Walker's appeal he called on God to enable him "to demonstrate in the course of this appeal, to the satisfaction of the most incredulous mind" the conditions of the American slave. Walker claimed those conditions were justified by white Americans through a

[31] Garnet, *Walker's appeal, with a brief sketch of his life*, 1.
[32] Gospel of St. Mathew, chapter xviii, v. 6., as quoted in Walker, 76.

historical framework of the institution of slavery, and based on biblical writings.[33] Walker had witnessed first hand the terrible abuses and degradations forced upon the American black, yet, his knowledge and breadth of argument transcended the African experience in America. Walker pointed out that others had been enslaved since the times of the "Israelites in Egypt" and the "Helots in Sparta."[34] In his study of the ways in which slavery historically existed and was enforced, Walker testified that no other group of human beings in the history of the world suffered as the American slave and that the "colored people of these United States are the most degraded, wretched, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began."[35]

Walker set out his argument to educate the public on proslavery tactics in order that he might arm them with the necessary knowledge needed to end black subjugation. Walker knew that in order to continue the oppression of blacks and their "degraded" state, it was important that whites justified their inhumane actions. Whites considered blacks as incapable of participating in civilized society and politics because they believed them to be physically and mentally inferior. Even well educated men like Thomas Jefferson wrote that the blacks were "in reason much inferior" to the whites and scientifically unable to better themselves.[36] In *Notes On The State of Virginia* Jefferson asserts that black inferiority was rooted in nature, on the basis of his observations of his own slaves. Jefferson states that the most apparent difference between the races is skin color, "The difference is fixed in nature," and he goes on to ask, "is this difference of no importance?"[37] It was Jefferson's conviction that blacks viewed white physical characteristics as more beautiful than their own, and, that their preference "in favour of the whites," was comparable to "the preference of the Oran-ootan for the black women over those of

[33] Walker, 11.
[34] *Ibid*.
[35] *Ibid*.
[36] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes On The State of Virginia*, (Thoms Jefferson, 1782), 139.
[37] *Ibid*., *138*.

his own species."[38] Jefferson went further into separating the races by observing that the blacks "secrete less by the kidnies, and more by the glands…which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour," and Jefferson claimed that this was due to their "difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus…the principal regulator of animal heat."[39] Jefferson also contended that sex for the black is mere desire, rather than love and that this is in part due to their lack of feeling. He said "those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them."[40] Jefferson thus asserted the possibility that the black was a separate species from the white. In his declaration that the blacks are "in reason much inferior" to the whites, Jefferson reasoned that black people could never live freely in a republican society.

Walker recognized the unjust comparisons Jefferson attempted to make.[41] He said that to compare a man in chains' ability to participate in intellectual society side by side with a free white man is like "putting one wild deer in an iron cage, where it will be secured, and hold another by the side of the same, then letting it go, and expect the one in the cage to run as fast as the one at liberty."[42] The bondage that had stunted the progression of blacks in all facets of social, political, and intellectual life was not a recognizable handicap that whites were willing or able to consider. This was no small matter as it was closely related to the position people took on colonization.

Due to the prevailing opinion among whites that blacks could not rise above their current status, the plan of colonization took hold in much of the North. Its advocates considered it as a generous way for whites to make amends for the cruelty of taking the Africans from their homes

---

[38] *Ibid*.
[39] *Ibid*.
[40] *Ibid*., 139.
[41] Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism In The United States*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 165-193.
[42] Walker, 21.

in the first place. The plan even gained some support in the black community. There were blacks who, because of their experience and interaction in white America, agreed that they would never fit into white society. Although white colonizationists claimed to be trying to help the blacks, Walker regarded their aims as untrustworthy and selfish. Convinced that Americans like Henry Clay, worked towards a gradual form of emancipation that would see its end in the removal of all blacks from the U.S., Walker condemned the plan and its supporters. Clay offered colonization as a fair solution for every one concerned offering that by moving them back to Africa, America would return Africa's stolen children, and save blacks from a life in which they could never be treated equally living side by side with the whites. But Walker felt Clay's actions were self-motivated and derived out of racial prejudice and that Clay really wanted to remove the example of free blacks from the view of slaves so that they could keep the slaves in perpetual bondage. Walker however did accept that there were white friends of the blacks who had pure intentions in their support for colonization. Walker entreated these supporters of colonization to leave the idea alone, and he went further to advise free blacks not to return to Africa because it was no longer their home, and that America belonged more to them than the whites because they had built it with their "blood and tears."[43]

Convinced that his brothers and sisters were capable of participating in and adding to the new nation, Walker sought to imbue the blacks with the knowledge that they could and would rise above their current state of degradations. Using carefully chosen biblical references, Walker let the past demonstrate the difference between all previous slave societies and the contemporary state of slavery for the black. In ancient times, said Walker, the Pharaoh of Egypt was ready to place a slave in one of the highest positions of power in the kingdom because it was the slaves' situation, not their inherent physical or mental attributes that subjugated them to the lowest rungs

[43] *Ibid*., 76.

of society. Therefore, once free, the ex-slaves amalgamated into these ancient societies. But in white Christian America, it was an absolute necessity that the slaves be forced into a false reality in which they were broken down to mere brutish and ignorant beings and told that "they were not of the human family," and that they were "originally from the tribes of Monkeys or Orang-Outangs."[44]

Walker could condemn colonization because he believed in his people's ability and right to participate as citizens in America. Having studied the founding principles of the United States, Walker drew comparisons between the relationships the early American colonists had to Great Britain and the relationship between America's black population with the whites. Walker asked the world to pay attention to the words in the Declaration of Independence and to reflect on its meaning for the black men born on American soil: "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it its their duty to throw off such government." Walker condemned the whites for their brutality and dared them to look at their own words written in the Declaration, so that they might face the truth that they had subjected blacks to "cruelties and murders" when in fact the blacks had "never given" them any provocation.[45] Challenging white Christian citizens, Walker dared them to "see your declaration, Americans!! Do you understand your own language?" He reminded them that to secure their natural rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, they rose up against their tyrannical British oppressors. They won their freedom and created a new country where "all men are created equal" and the world accepted this new nation and praised them for their defiance against their oppressors.

[44] *Ibid*., 20.
[45] *Ibid*., 85-86.

In contrast, for Walker, the treatment by the Crown in Great Britain could not be compared to the horrors committed against the black men and women in America. Challenging supporters of democracy Walker said, "now, Americans! I ask you candidly, was your sufferings under Great Britain one hundredth part as cruel and tyrannical as you have rendered ours under you?"[46] Walker asserted that this was the irony of a nation founded on the principles of equality for all men: to be so deeply rooted in brutal and murderous slavery, while relying on a foundation of freedom and equality for all. Walker asked for the rest of the world to join him in his observation of these hypocrisies.

It was Walker's position that the early American colonists found reason to rebel against their mother country, declaring their own independence on the grounds of poor treatment and lack of representation. Walker articulately suggested that blacks might just be on the same grounds as the first Americans. Walker admitted that most whites would not believe that the blacks could be successful in winning their own freedom from whites by way of insurrection or a renunciation of the U.S. government in the way that the early colonies had done with Great Britain. But, Walker desired for the black people of America to see that, whether they were still living on the southern plantation forced to labor their lives away as property for the slave owner, or were considered legally free, released from the actual chains of the master, all blacks would remain enslaved and none could be truly free until all were free.[47] Furthermore, true freedom would not come until the words in the Declaration came true for all of America's children regardless of skin color.

In order that any class of citizens is able to fully participate in their government they need to be given the legal means to get involved, and they need an equal opportunity to comprehend

[46] *Ibid*., 86.
[47] *Ibid*., 42.

the issues that involve them. Walker warned that supporters of slavery would attempt to discredit his argument by portraying him "as an ignorant, impudent, and restless disturber of the public peace" to diminish his credibility.[48] Walker asserted that the slave owner in America knew that to keep black people down and bound by ignorance was the only way they could continue to enslave them. Walker charged that the whites had come to believe that "heaven has designed" the blacks to be servants to them and their children, and that blacks need not expect any more from life than this servitude.[49] For supporters of slavery, an education was a wasted indulgence.

There was a strong religious component to Walker's call for literacy and education. Walker charged that to protect and justify the institution of slavery, the whites believed they had to keep the black in ignorance. If blacks were literate they could read the word of God for themselves. Whites feared that to teach blacks the word of God would give the blacks a vision that they were not created to be the slaves of white men. Elias B. Caldwell, Secretary of the American Colonization Society and justice of the Supreme Court warned what damage educating the blacks could do:

> The more you improve the condition of these people, the more you cultivate their minds, the more miserable you make them in their present state. You give them a higher relish for those privileges which they can never attain, and turn what we intend for a blessing into a curse.[50]

Many whites felt it was better to never let blacks taste the life of education and higher society because they would not accept a life of slavery afterwards, and, the whites believed the blacks would never be able to fully be a part of their white civilized world.

What might the result and motive be for denying a full education? Walker proffered that "for the Africans to acquire learning in this country, makes tyrants quake and tremble" because

[48] *Ibid*., 12.
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] *Ibid*., 63.

"they know that their infernal deeds of cruelty will be made known to the world."[51] If black people in America earned an education and could use the political, social, and historical markers that were privileged to educated whites, then they would not abide by one more day of slavery at the hand of a white Master. Walker asked,

> Do you suppose one man of good sense and learning would submit himself, his father, mother, wife and children, to be slaves to a wretched man like himself, who, instead of compensating him for his labours, chains, handcuffs and beats him and family almost to death, leaving life enough in them, however, to work for, and call him master? No! No! He would cut his devilish throat from ear to ear, and well do slaveholders know it. The bare name of educating the coloured people, scares our cruel oppressors almost to death.[52]

Walker concluded that this is why the whites had to keep the blacks in ignorance.[53]

Walker believed blacks could prove their oppressors wrong and that God would deliver them, but they first must "go to work and prepare the way of the Lord."[54] Walker said that it was the blacks' duty to prove to the world that they were not the degraded animals that the slave owners made them appear to be. They would do this by seeking to educate themselves and to dedicate themselves in the study and worship of God and his laws.

Proslavery advocates used scripture to justify their enslavement of blacks and their treatment of them as inferior and bestial creatures. Walker wondered what kind of God-fearing Christians question God's decision in creating blacks and what kind of Christian "chained, and hand-cuffed…dragged…children from their parents, mothers from their sucking babes, wives from their husbands, driving them from one end of the country to the other."[55] Whites in America claimed to be superior and the chosen ones of God, yet they "would also convene and wait almost in breathless silence for the poor coloured people to commence singing and praying

[51] *Ibid., 44*
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] *Ibid*., 42-44.
[54] *Ibid*., 42.
[55] *Ibid*., 23.

to the Lord" and upon catching the blacks on their knees in prayerful reverence of their maker, the whites would beat them almost to death to punish them for praying to God.[56] Walker argued that white Americans could not possess a true belief and knowledge of the Bible because they openly disregarded the word of God and his commandments, and in so doing he condemned white Christianity.

Walker also found the ministry wanting. He noted that he had known plenty of supposed preachers of the Gospel who held men in bondage and treated them brutally. "They think it is no harm to keep them in slavery and put the whip to them," declared Walker. Preachers were blind to the evils of slavery and its conflict with biblical teachings of love. Regardless of the pamphlets and periodicals that came before the ministers extolling the brutality of the slave trade, the plight of the runaway slaves, and their own first hand witness of the abuses on the backs of the blacks, the ministers failed to acknowledge that anything was wrong. In Walker's own experience, he saw the message of his master, the Lord God, "of peace and not of blood and whips" twisted cruelly and violently by a preacher when he directed the slaves at their seats to do as their white masters told them because it was their duty, and, if they did not, they would be whipped.[57]

Walker believed that the God he worshipped was ready to lead his people out of their bonds, just as he had done for the Israelites. Walker cautioned that if the people of the United States did not open their eyes, the divine consequence for their practice of slavery would be "the final overthrow of its government."[58] He issued his most direct admonition, "unless you speedily alter your course, you and your country are gone!!!!!! For God Almighty will tear up the very face of the earth."[59] Though Walker hoped white Americans would see the error of their ways and live peacefully along side blacks, he was quite sure that some whites would never be able to

[56] *Ibid.*, 49.
[57] *Ibid.,* 51.
[58] Ibid.
[59] *Ibid.*

repent for the severity of their sins against the blacks of America.[60] "The Americans may be as vigilant as they please, but they cannot be vigilant enough for the Lord, neither can they hide themselves, where he will not find and bring them out."[61] Noting that white ministers insisted slaves remain humble before them, Walker accepted that blacks should be humble. However, it was not towards the white master that Walker knew his people should maintain humility, but instead to the master in heaven, God. White arrogance would be punished, Walker declared, by God who would bring them down lower, and the black would be his instrument in this merciful and judicious act.

It is here that Walker called his fellow brothers to action. He recognized that those ignorant blacks who sided with white slave owners, would oppose his endeavor to bring freedom and equality to his people, but he also recognized this resulted from a lack of faith that their reality could change for the better. Expounding on Republican rhetoric, Walker called on his brothers and said "I appeal to heaven for my motive in writing—who knows that my object is, if possible, to awaken in the breasts of my afflicted, degraded and slumbering brethren, a spirit of enquiry and investigation respecting our miseries and wretchedness in the Republican Land of Liberty!!!!!"[62] Walker went on to tell his enslaved brothers that they must be ready to take action because God, "will surely go before you." David Walker recognized and claimed that he was ready to die for his beliefs in the absolute right for black freedom and equality. For him it was God's will that his people would be free by the grace of God, and by their own hand. Walker warned whites that if they did not free the slaves and learn to live with them in peace, God would

[60] *Ibid.,* 79.
[61] *Ibid.,* 87.
[62] *Ibid.*, 12-13.

bring judgment upon the earth and that whites "will yet curse the day" that they were born, and he declared "My colour will yet, root some of you out of the very face of the earth!!!!!!"[63]

It was Walker's hope that he would incite blacks in America to rise up and take their freedom from their white oppressors, but unlike the successful slave uprising in Haiti, Toussaint L'Overture led, *Walker's Appeal* did not generate the same immediate end to slavery that he had hoped for. It did however cause a ripple of changes that could be considered a dismal failure or a transforming success.

Within the abolition community, some disagreed with this militant tone. William Lloyd Garrison, the white Abolitionist advocated for pacifist methods. On January 1, 1831 Garrison published the first issue of his abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*. In it Garrison declared that he has "determined, at every hazard, to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation...till every chain be broken, and every bondman set free!"[64] Garrison said there was no more time for moderation, and called for the immediate emancipation of slaves. Garrison would claim a dominant role within the abolitionist movement itself as well as in subsequent historiography on the topic.

Historians do not question Garrison's motives.[65] With the release of *The Liberator*, Garrison gained a large audience of black as well as white readers who were able to read many commentaries on the denigrated position and moral injustice against blacks. Although he addressed many of his articles to black readers and devoted time and energy to their betterment, Garrison knew that the audience he needed to reach was white, especially those supporting the colonization effort to which he was profoundly opposed, and to slave owners themselves. His goal was to cause a complete moral conversion of American whites. Garrison's cause needed to

[63] *Ibid.*, 83.
[64] *The Liberator*, January 1, 1831.
[65] Russel B. Nye, *William Lloyd Garrison: And The Humanitarian Reformers*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955) and James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists And American Slavery*, (New York: Hill And Wang, 1976).

be carefully balanced with constantly elevating the position of black Americans while speaking in language that would attract rather than repulse white racist readers. As a result, although his intent was to give voice to the black struggle for freedom and equality his strong belief in pacifism and his paternalistic expression of his beliefs would serve to quiet the black voice rather than free it.

The general position of the paper was provided in a poem in the first issue. It spoke of the retribution and upheaval to come with the emancipation of the slave but ended with an admonition, which left little doubt of its writer's pacifist stance:

> Not by the sword shall your deliverance be; Not by the shedding of your masters' blood; Not by rebellion, or soul treachery. Uprising suddenly, like swelling flood; Revenge and rapine ne'er did bring forth good. God's time is best!—[66]

The poem is signed G—, there is little doubt it was penned from Garrison himself. By publishing poems and articles such as this Garrison engendered a commitment to immediate emancipation but denounced any acts of violent rebellion to bring it about. An article in the same issue declared "Slavery and war will be abolished throughout all Christendom, and the abolition of them depends on public opinion; and public opinion is directed by the pulpit and the press—by speaking and writing; and there is no other way."[67] Garrison's inclusion of articles such as this supported his claim that the path to emancipation must be one of moral suasion instead of violence.

Calls for pacifism came from many quarters. A gentleman in Vermont introduced himself as "a friend to Liberty, Peace" and claimed to be "purified from licentiousness, violence enthusiasm and fanaticism."[68] Garrison's direct response to the gentleman's remark regarding unwanted enthusiasm was that enthusiasm "is necessary to quicken the dormant and to inspirit

[66] *Ibid*.
[67] *Ibid*.
[68] *Ibid*.

the heart of the reformer…But…licentiousness, and violence, and fanaticism—these are traits which do not belong to truth or justice."[69] Skilled at always connecting reader's letters with his beliefs and inserting his own thoughts into them, Garrison reiterated his contention that fanaticism and violence could not be a part of the abolition movement. And because Walker's appeal and other actions like it was branded by Garrison to be of this ilk, his opposition to it could be construed as opposition to these black abolitionist, diminishing black unity rather than increasing it.

Garrison's first address to Walker's *Appeal* demonstrates his comprehension of the power behind Walker and his words as he warned, "The south may reasonably be alarmed at the circulation of Mr. Walker's *Appeal*; for a better promoter of insurrection was never sent forth to an oppressed people."[70] He then promised future articles with editorial comments about the Appeal because he said it was "one of the most remarkable productions of the age."[71] However, he stated the opinion of his paper, "We have already publicly deprecated its spirit."[72]

In a later examination of the *Appeal* Garrison declared "that men should never do evil that good may come" and went on to say that it is a part of life that man must suffer his burdens until God is ready to reap his vengeance upon those who he finds guilty, "that the almighty will deliver the oppressed in a way which they know not" it is for this that Garrison proclaimed, "we deprecate the spirit and tendency of this Appeal."[73] Garrison had spent a great deal of time and work demonstrating his sincere and dedicated mission on the side of blacks. He had established for his readers relationships with leading white abolitionists and had attempted to gain the trust and loyalty of blacks. Now he denounced one of their own; The "spirit and tendency" of the

[69] *Ibid*.
[70] *Ibid*.
[71] *Ibid*.
[72] *Ibid*.
[73] *The Liberator*, January 8, 1831.

Appeal had been debased for the black community who were so desperately looking for someone to lead them out of their bonds.

Garrison used the threat of Walker to legitimate pacifist abolition. "Mr. Walker but pays them in their own coin, but follows their own creed, but adopts their own language. *We* do not preach rebellion—no, but submission and peace" castigated Garrison.[74] With this short passage Garrison equated slave rebellion with slavery itself. Carefully he then separated his movement from the others, saying that "the idea of a bloody insurrection at the south" was contrary to their desires.[75] Although he admitted that if anyone "were ever justified in throwing off the yoke of their tyrants, the slaves are that people" he was unwavering in his pacifism.[76]

A writer sounding much like Garrison wrote a series of essays in the Liberator entitled "To The Colored Population of the United States" the author is only revealed as P.H. In his first issue he responded to a southern charge "that writing on the subject of slavery, at the north, has a tendency to excite the slaves against their masters," to which P.H. responded, "There is no doubt that mischief might be done by inflammatory publications addressed to the blacks and circulated among them… Walker's *Appeal* is of this character."[77] He went on to say that the *Appeal* and works like it should not be judged on their geographical origin but by their content. He said for the most part the publications he had seen had, "been mild and temperate, and neither intended to inflame the slaves, nor likely to produce such an effect…with the exception, perhaps, of such incendiary works" like Walker's *Appeal* which was "circulated secretly among the slaves, for the express purpose of stimulating them to acts of blood."[78] His disparaging comments about

[74] *Ibid*.
[75] *ibid*.
[76] *Ibid*.
[77] *Ibid*.
[78] *Ibid*.

Walker's *Appeal* would likely have served to detract further the trust blacks had in their own leadership.

P.H. urged blacks to take the higher moral road, "If your white countrymen have treated you with injustice, return them not evil for evil, but overcome evil with good. Show them…that you are superior to revenge" so that they may prove their worth to their oppressors.[79] In an example of paternalism P.H. benevolently attempted to instruct the colored population he aimed to save on the objectives for which they should be aiming, tell your oppressors that "you demand nothing but the peaceable restitution of your rights; and that the preservation of the republic, and the freedom of your enslaved brethren by a just process, are the consummation of your wishes."[80] Phi's solution was to instruct blacks to create a fund to pay for attorneys so that they may obtain freedom from their oppression in the courts. These were the objectives he articulated for them, rather than an ideology that was born from them. No other suggestion of self-help, education, or black leadership emanated from his pen, although he had the opportunity to impart such wisdom in his instructional essay, in which the readership of *The Liberator* were ready to be advised. Only a white paternalist could encourage actions that are subject to a "just process". It is more convenient for someone to urge moral and political suasion through political measures who has white skin and has not felt the lash on his back or the pain of watching their children sold to other parts of the country, which was the raw center of Walker's *Appeal.*

In a very articulate article written by a colored reader, only introduced by Garrison as such, the writer allied himself with the Garrisonian movement and its objective of emancipation declaring:

> And may all this be done without bloodshed… I advocate, like yourself, the doctrine of universal emancipation, and am anxious, with the rest of my brethren,

[79] *The Liberator*, February 5, 1831.
[80] *Ibid*.

> for our just rights and the enjoyment of these inestimable blessings…yet I am very far from wishing a second St. Domingo…it is my hope that the eyes of this people will shortly be opened to their true interest, by opening the prison doors and letting the oppressed go free.[81]

It is fascinating that the letters from the black population do not include names of the writer and that for the majority of the articles are not provided introduction or praise for their contribution. The exaltation done for white writers is absent. For example Garrison introduced an article by author Theodore Elbert of Sweden, describing it as:

> One of the finest specimens of reflective composition that we have ever read, and deserves an existence which shall survive the grandeur of St. Paul's…massive and gorgeous…the whole structure is stately and imposing. But the sentiments of the youthful foreigner—how comprehensive, how copious, how profound![82]

Elbert's piece was an unpublished travel article about London. How astounding that Garrison could lavish such ornamentation on this writer of travel monologues, yet issue after issue neither introduces nor compliments the lyrical contributions of his black correspondents dedicated to the cause of freedom for Americas enslaved, the cause for which *The Liberator* after all is named.

Although *The Liberator* gave room for the black voice and its avenues for activism, he did not praise or encourage openly any of their efforts at self-help. The result of Garrison's abduction of the abolition movement was a quieting of the movement itself as black readers waited and trusted in this new voice of the people to bring an end to their degraded condition. It would not be long though before blacks would realize that though Garrison's call was for the immediate end to slavery, he as a white American had the luxury of a pacifist stance that disregarded the need for a black hero and a black voice.

It might be recalled that John Stauffer, in his recent work, following black abolitionist McCune Smith, asserted that for abolitionism to reach its full potential, white abolitionists would

[81] *The Liberator*, January 22, 1831.
[82] *The Liberator*, January 29, 1831.

need to develop a black heart in order to fight along side the black abolitionists instead of always leading the way. This reading of Garrison suggests that the editor of *The Liberator* attempted to convert any black hearts of his time to a white heart, in which the luxury of time and patience to bring an end to slavery was considered the only morally right thing to do.

A NEW GENERATION PICKS UP WALKER'S CALL

One future black abolitionist who was moved by Walker's work and appended the *Appeal* with his own contribution, was Henry Highland Garnet, an ex-slave who became a minister, orator, and an abolitionist and supported militant actions to end slavery. Garnet revered Walkers work citing it as an instrument in the fight for abolition. In his *Sketch* on Walker's life, in which he discussed the merits of the *Appeal*, Garnet declared, "this little book produced more commotion among slaveholders than any volume of its size that was ever issued from an American Press."[83] Inspired by *Walker's Appeal,* Garnet wrote *An Address To The Slaves of The United States Of America*, which was first read at the National Convention held at Buffalo, N.Y., in 1843 and subsequently published attached to *Walker's Appeal.*[84] Although *Walker's Appeal* had at its publication been considered the boldest condemnation against slavery to date, Benjamin Quarles says that Garnet's address was "the most forthright call for a slave uprising ever heard in antebellum America."[85] Stemming from David Walker's important contributions to the black abolition movement and slave uprisings that occurred soon after, like Nat Turner's Rebellion in Virginia, Garnet declared in his address to his brothers:

> We do not advise you to attempt a revolution with the sword, because it would be Inexpedient. Your numbers are too small, and moreover the rising spirit of the age, and the spirit of the gospel, are opposed to war and bloodshed. But from this

[83] Garnet, *Walker's appeal, with a brief sketch of his life*, 5.
[84] Henry Highland Garnet, *An Address To The Slaves of The United States Of America*, (Henry Highland Garnet, 1843).
[85] Quarles, 226.

> moment cease to labor for tyrants who will not remunerate you. Let every slave throughout the land do this, and the days of slavery are numbered. You cannot be more oppressed than you have been—you cannot suffer greater cruelties than you have already. Rather die freemen, than live to be slaves. Remember that you are FOUR MILLION… Awake, awake; millions of voices are calling you!... Let your motto be resistance! resistance! resistance![86]

Garnet's admiration of Walker would be so great that he would obtain permission from Walker's widow to write *A Brief Sketch of The Life And Character Of David Walker*, which would accompany future publications of Walker's *Appeal.*

Frederick Douglass was another who would rise to the defense of black-led rebellion once he recognized the need for more aggressive action. Though once employed by Garrison at *The Liberator* and actively supporting the Garrison method of moral suasion, just five months after Garnet's address, Douglass joined the revolutionary call when he spoke in Boston indicating that he was no longer calling for pacifist means to end slavery. Douglass declared that he would be glad to hear "that the sable arms which have been engaged in beautifying and adorning the South were engaged in spreading death and devastation."[87] As Douglass moved in a different direction the split with the Garrisonians would be profoundly felt throughout the abolition movement.

In *Frederick Douglass' Narrative*, Douglass tells his own story of the transformation of an uneducated slave into a free intellectual black man skilled in the art of oration and literature. Historian David W. Blight credits the white world of text and knowledge for enlightening Douglass and credits British anti-slavery efforts for Douglass' introduction to abolition. However, writers like Edmondson demonstrate a direct influence by the early reformers like Russwurm, Walker, and Garnet. Douglass writes in his narrative that long before Garrison issued his first printing of *The Liberator*, he, "always drew near" when the other slaves would speak of

[86] Henry Highland Garnet, 96.
[87] Quarles, 228.

abolition.[88] From Douglass' own biography we see him credit his first influences in the movement to the black voices around him. One of Douglass' greatest mentors was black abolitionist James McCune Smith who, as John Stauffer demonstrates, has all but been erased from the historical record. One wonders if the insertion by white historians that white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison as Douglass' inspiration is the cause for McCune Smith's disappearance from Douglass' story in mainstream historiography.

Although Douglass initially was a follower of the Garrisonians he always worked towards the emancipation and betterment of his fellow blacks. Like Russwurm, Walker, and Garnet before him, Douglass wrote moving accounts of the life of a slave and with the eloquence of a great intellect and orator would help, along with the horrific realities of the civil war, to move the nation's morality towards an attitude of intolerance in regards to slavery. With an open mind and a fresh perspective those studying the antebellum abolition movement can clearly see a resemblance and continuation of the black Jeremiad tradition that began with Russwurm in Douglass works. The revolutionary black rhetorical strategy of linking education, Republican principles, Christian beliefs and a black historical legacy of insurrection to the task of unifying not only America's blacks but every truly enlightened human being was present every time Douglas put pen to paper, stepped on a platform to speak, spoke before thousands of his fellow blacks, or held the attentive ear of President Lincoln. Douglass held dear the idea of "liberation through the power of language"[89] and he knew without a doubt that in the North and South alike, "literacy was power."[90]

The new militant vein running through the movement showed the new radical abolitionist's belief that their way was the only way to end the suffering of the slaves and to

[88] Frederick Douglass, *Frederick Douglass Narrative*, ed. David W. Blight, 7.
[89] *Ibid., 4.*
[90] *Ibid., 6.*

close that chapter in the formation of American society and government, as well as to show that even the temperate moderationists conceded that radicalism may be necessary. Out of the increased pressure placed politically and socially by these groups on America's conscience, America reached a boiling point in its contradictory policy of permitting human bondage while basing its very existence on principles of Freedom and equality for all, in its experiment with a Democratic government.[91]

Black abolition was suppressed in history because of pandering to a white ego centric and paternalistic need to relegate blacks to a lower rung in the social and political hierarchy of the antebellum era. Although whites were helpful to the cause to bring freedom for all blacks, and was welcomed and appreciated, it was not responsible on its own for the uprisings and black movements that helped to accomplish the end of slavery in the United States.

Slave rebellions such as the *Creole*, the *Amistad,* Nat Turner's rebellion and all of the innumerable accounts of heroism on the underground railroad, demonstrated that the black power movement and civil rights fight for black agency and justice have existed since the beginning of the foundation of the U.S. Some of the most daring examples on the underground railroad and in the Civil War, were seen when ex-slaves, risked their lives and freedom to go back across the Mason-Dixon line to help those still held in bondage to escape.

Considered at the time of publication "the most inflammatory publication in history" *Walker's Appeal* was an integral part of the transformation of the abolition movement in America from one of non-resistant gradualism to a revolutionary movement that would risk all to bring the immediate end to slavery and to raise the quality of life for all blacks in America to be

[91] Read Stauffer for a thorough narrative on the transformation and growth of radical abolitionism. David Walker's *Appeal*, discusses at length the contradictory realities between the founding principles and the actual oppression of Blacks.

equal to that of his fellow white citizens.[92] In fear of the uprisings that would grow out of the *Appeal*, many Southern states implemented stricter laws to protect slavery and their right to protect their "property" at any cost. Georgia and North Carolina both prohibited "incendiary publications" as a direct result of the pamphlet and four black men in New Orleans were arrested for circulating the *Appeal*.[93]

In an attempt to move abolition out of the hands of gradualists and to radicalize its supporters, William Lloyd Garrison picked up the revolutionary spirit of Immediatism, but did so explicitly from a pacifist bent which practiced moral suasion rather than violence. The result was an undoing of the black abolitionists efforts towards self-help and a quieting of the black voice. However, there came an eventual realization by many of Garrison's original supporters that the narrow road to emancipation had to be traveled with a determination to end slavery, as activists like Walker had testified to, first through the power of literacy and education, but ultimately through unity. A realization that as long as white abolitionists led the way with their white hearts, they would continue to leave blacks behind them, but, by joining together with a "black heart" whites and blacks alike could fight for the freedom of Walker's "afflicted" and "degraded brethren," in order to establish a true Republican land of liberty in which the words "all men are created equal" and are truly entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is a reality regardless of the color of their skin.[94]

[92] Quarles, 17. In Quarles' book, Quaker Benjamin Lundy considered the *Appeal* "an injury to the cause" but acknowledged its powerful influence.
[93] *Ibid*.
[94] Declaration of Independence.

Bibliography

I. Primary Sources:

Bible. Gospel of St. Mathew, chapter xviii, v. 6

Emancipator, The. New York, June 30, 1835.

Garnet, Henry Highland. *An Address To The Slaves of The United States Of America,*1843.

Jefferson, Thomas. *Notes On The State of Virginia.*

The Liberator, Boston, January 1, 1831-February 5, 1831.

Walker, David. *David Walker's Appeal: To The Colored Citizens of The World, But In Particular, And Very Expressly To Those of The United States of America*. Boston, September 28, 1829.

II. Secondary Sources—Books:

Childs, Matt D. *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006

Green, Anna and Troup, Kathleen. *The Houses Of History: A Critical Reader In Twentieth-Century History and Theory.* New York: NYU Press, 1999.

Hinks, Peter P. *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker And The Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

Jordan, Winthrop D. *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism In The United States*. London: Oxford University Press, 1974

Nye, Russel B. *William Lloyd Garrison: And The Humanitarian Reformers*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955

Oates, Stephen B. *With Malice Toward None: A Life Of Abraham Lincoln.* New York, New York: Harper Perenial, 1994.

Quarles, Benjamin. *Black Abolitionists.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Stauffer, John. *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Stewart, James Brewer. *Abolitionist Politics and the Coming of the Civil War*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, c2008.

Stewart, James Brewer. *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists And American Slavery*. New York: Hill And Wang, 1976.

III. Secondary Sources: Journal Articles:

Edmondson, Philip. " 'To Plead Our Own Cause', The St. Domingue Legacy and The Rise Of The Black Press." *Prospects* 29 (2004): 121-eoa.

Geffert, Hannah. "John Brown And His Black Allies; An Ignored Alliance." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 126, no. 4 (20020: 591-610.

Goodheart, Lawrence B. "To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and The Problem Of Antebellum Slave Resistance." *History: Reviews of New Books* 26, no. 2 (1998): 97.

Hamilton, Cynthia S. "Models Of Agency: Frederick Douglass And 'The Heroic Slave'". Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 114, no. 1 (2004): 87-136. *America: History & Life*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 16, 2008).

Higginbotham, A. Leon, Jr. "The Impact of The Declaration Of Independence." *Crisis* 82, no. 9 (1975): 360-eoa.

Jacobs, Donald. "David Walker; Boston Race Leader, 1825-1830." *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 107 (1971): 94-107.