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ANTISLAVERY IMPULSES

ROBERT H. ABZUG
Department of History, University of Texas at Austin
E-mail: zug@austin.utexas.edu

W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013)

Ethan J. Kytle, *Romantic Reformers and the Antislavery Struggle in the Civil War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

The year 2015 marks not only the sesquicentennial of Appomattox but also the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Martin Duberman's anthology *The Antislavery Vanguard*, a collection of essays that set the agenda for an ever-expanding treatment of antislavery that continues to this day.[1] In assessing these new additions to that literature, I began to think about the arc that historians of American abolitionism have traced in the past half-century, and the ways in which Kytle and McDaniel were inheritors and extenders of that historiographical revolution. Duberman defined his purpose as bringing together the work of historians bent on overthrowing a long-prevailing view of abolitionists as "meddlesome fanatics . . . wrapped in their self-righteous fury, who did so much to bring on a needless war." He initially imagined a volume that would debate abolitionist virtue and vice but could find no scholars who would uphold the older stereotype. Instead, his contributors explored themes largely sympathetic to the reformers.[2]

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[1] Martin Duberman, ed., *The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists* (Princeton, 1965).

[2] Martin Duberman, "Introduction," in Duberman, *The Antislavery Vanguard*, vii–x, at vii. Duberman was reacting to the so-called revisionist historians of the Civil War era who saw the conflict as a "needless" bloodletting brought about by southern fire-eaters and irresponsible abolitionists fanning the flames of sectionalism. A partial rebuttal came as early as the 1930s in the work of Gilbert Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, who brought Theodore Dwight Weld, James G. Birney, the Tappan brothers, and the Grimké sisters into prominence and vastly widened the view of abolitionism beyond Boston and the vicinity. See especially Gilbert Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse: 1830–1844* (New York, 1933); and Gilbert Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina*

Why had this shift occurred? Duberman pointed out that support of and direct participation in the civil rights movement by some of these writers guaranteed a more empathic view of the abolitionists. He might have also noted that the reevaluation of abolitionists followed on the heels of another civil rights-related scholarly revolution—a reinterpretation of slavery and Reconstruction that began in the mid-1930s and recognized the full humanity, equality, capabilities, and plight of African Americans. The work of W.E.B. Du Bois, Herbert Aptheker, John Hope Franklin, C. Vann Woodward, Kenneth Stampp, and Leon Litwack, among other scholars, had a direct impact on the contributors to *The Antislavery Vanguard*. David Brion Davis's magisterial *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (1967), prefigured by his lead essay in the Duberman volume, soon gave chronological, geographical, and interpretive breadth to the rediscovery of abolitionism. History itself was moving quickly. Urban riots, the Civil Rights Act, the Vietnam War, and a broad cultural revolution were remaking scholarship and a vision of the past in ways that deeply affected work on the antislavery movement. This was true not only because of the issue of civil rights but also because of new attitudes toward the role of radical activism in effecting social change.[3]

For many historians, this new literature and the times themselves enmeshed abolitionism and antebellum reform in general into more global interpretations of slavery's place in world economies, race in American history, and the market revolution's transformation of American society. New protagonists, especially women and African Americans, appeared in the abolitionist drama. Scholars also revealed such unflattering dimensions as endemic racism among white antislavery advocates, as well as resistance by some to the rights of women. Finally, the role of religion, always lurking and sometimes dominant in both old and new scholarly

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Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké 1822–1844, 2 vols. (New York, 1934). However, the zeal of Dumond and Barnes in promoting the importance of "evangelical" abolitionism was at least partially motivated by a desire to undercut the importance of the Garrisonians, who bore the brunt of revisionist criticism and in the Barnes/Dumond version continued to be marked as harsh extremists.

[3] Some key works include W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York, 1935); Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York, 1943); John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York, 1947); C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge, 1951); Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1955); Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-bellum South* (New York, 1956); Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction: 1865–1877* (New York, 1965); Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago, 1961); and David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, 1967).

versions of abolitionism, found new interpreters and remained a force with which to reckon when imagining abolitionist and other reform motivations.[4]

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Interestingly, even as the framework of antislavery history has grown in dimension and depth, certain key persons and moments have remained touchstones through which to develop new interpretations. McDaniel, in returning to Garrison, and Kytle, in reimagining the 1850s, have surveyed very familiar territory with mostly good results. McDaniel's *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* pays homage in its title, of course, to David Brion Davis's sweeping internationalist trilogy. McDaniel focuses especially on the careers of William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. He addresses both Davis's international theme and his emphasis on the importance of the broad history of ideas to the study of slavery and abolitionism. McDaniel manages to rework well-known histories and personages into an original framework for understanding the mutual influence of European movements to Garrisonian views of American democracy.

McDaniel divides *The Problem of Democracy* into three parts. The first, "Origins," follows the development of Garrison's belief in the American democratic experiment, his move to antislavery immediatism, and the ways in which he merged an increasingly radical commitment to abolitionism with an already broad interest in European democratic and nationalist movements and other harbingers of progress in the world at large. He looks at major turning points in abolitionist history of the 1830s and 1840s and enriches our understanding of stories already told in a variety of biographies and broader accounts of abolitionism, by emphasizing the role of transatlantic connections dating back to Garrison's embrace of Byron's heroic style and participation in the Greek struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire (21–85).

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[4] The list of significant works would dwarf this brief review but one need only consult the footnotes and bibliographies of recent contributions to the field to see just how wide-ranging and detailed the literature has become. As a side note, I might mention that intellectual lineages, though not really "schools" of interpretation, can be traced within the field. One example is this very review. The University of California, Berkeley, which for a time amassed a crucial cohort of scholars in the field of slavery and race, spawned not only my own work (under the mentorship of Stampp and Litwack) but also that of the mentors of the authors under review. McDaniel was a student of Ronald Walters at Johns Hopkins, who had studied with Winthrop Jordan at Berkeley. Kytle's mentor was Charles Capper, a Berkeley Ph.D. of the same generation, who studied with Henry May, a close friend of Stampp and a student of the broader religious dimensions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American culture. Of course, Berkeley was only one hotbed of reform scholarship.

Some parts of McDaniel's argument in this section are more convincing than others. Adding the internationalist perspective to Garrison's conversion to abolitionism is certainly helpful. At the same time, he does little to relate the international perspective to the tumultuous religious and experiential moments of Garrison's life, dutifully mentioning his Baptist background and conversion at the hands of Lyman Beecher but making little of them. McDaniel fields important arguments concerning Garrison's relationship with Benjamin Lundy, the Quaker publisher of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, though the importance of Lundy's religious orientation is not discussed at all. Even Garrison's Fourth of July speech of 1829, in which he endorsed colonization but at the same time predicted apocalypse should slavery not be quickly abolished, receives inadequate attention. Finally, the religious vision of David Walker's *Appeal*, so influential in the earliest issues of *The Liberator* and one consonant with Garrison's own apocalyptic sensibility, receives little recognition.

McDaniel feels far more at home once he puts Garrison on the boat to England in 1833 and begins in earnest to develop a central theme of the book—the influence of European and especially Anglo-Irish movements on the emerging shape of Garrisonian antislavery advocacy. No one has charted these influences in as nuanced, integrated, and well articulated a manner. Furthermore, McDaniel interprets Garrisonian interactions with European reformers and ideas not only in the early period but also into the 1850s, and uses them to illuminate aspects of abolitionist history normally considered solely from domestic perspectives. For example, he brings new insight to the old topic of the antislavery schism by deftly adding the role of the internationalist bent of Garrisonianism into the mix of divisive issues.

The second section, "Ideas," consists of valuable chapter-length discussions of four key concerns of Garrisonian reform. McDaniel introduces the brilliant Wendell Phillips as the main protagonist, the impassioned orator–philosopher of the movement. McDaniel has read deeply in Phillips and begins with a discussion of "Public Opinion," ably demonstrating the influence of Tocqueville and other English and Continental thinkers on abolitionist thought. He notes most of all what one might call the impossible ambivalence felt by reformers in a democracy when faced by a majority that is indifferent or openly hostile to their cause. The spotlight returns to Garrison in a chapter on "Nationalism," as the continuity of Garrison's love of country and pride in the American experiment comes in vital tension with slavery. McDaniel usefully discusses Garrison's attraction to some of the nonresistance ideas of John Humphrey Noyes, especially as Noyes helped to shape "come-outer" strategies concerning the churches. Yet here, as in the question of "religion" in the earlier period of Garrison's life, McDaniel doesn't really plumb the detail and implications of either Noyes's or Garrison's religious quest enough to satisfy at least this reviewer's sense of the importance of spiritual matters.

Two more chapters, one on "Aristocracy" and another on "Influence," elucidate European and American reformers' agreement on big principles and difference on details, and also where each group learned from the other. Particularly intriguing examples are Garrison's interest in Daniel O'Connor's campaign for Irish "Home Rule" (which McDaniel argues became a "partial inspiration" for the *Liberator*'s disunionist slogan of the early 1840s, "No Union with Slaveholders"), as well as the values and rapport he shared with leaders of such English reform movements as the Chartists and the Anti-Corn Law League.

The final section, "Events," consists of three chapters that weave Garrisonians' transatlantic relationships from the 1840s into a narrative of the roller coaster ride of the late 1840s through the Civil War. McDaniel contrasts and compares the reactions of Garrison and Phillips as they faced the 1850s, the Civil War, and the beginnings of Reconstruction. In the late 1840s and early 1850s, of course, momentous events transpired in both Europe and the United States. The revolutions of 1848 in Italy, France, and the German states, and the Hungarian nationalist movement within the Habsburg Empire, excited many Americans as symbols of the contagion of freedom, and he shows the ways in which these events dovetailed with expectant developments on the antislavery scene.

McDaniel illuminates as well the impact of the failures of European revolutions and, in America, the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Law on European reformers and nationalists, and on American abolitionists in Europe and those at home. In all, especially on the question of transatlantic reactions, he provides new dimensions to our understanding of the international web of reform as various individuals confronted both success and reversals not only on a local level but also with a transatlantic breadth of vision. He also effectively complicates Garrison's attitude toward politics, one usually summed up in the caricature of his 4 July 1854 burning of the US Constitution. These acts have long stood as the key symbol of Garrison's views on government and his wish to sever the Union. McDaniel argues such a view reads "politics" too narrowly by equating it mostly with electoral politics. He notes that in fact Garrison's active interest in political affairs from the very beginning of his career and certainly in the 1840s and 1850s indicated instead a deep connection to the political process, albeit with a widened and radical perspective on roads to influence. Rather than comparing him only to "political abolitionists" of the time, McDaniel observes, for instance, that John Humphrey Noyes chided Garrison for not being religious enough and for spending too much time engaged in political dramas. After all, what could be more politically involved than burning the Constitution (and the Fugitive Slave Law as well as two court orders sending Anthony Burns back to slavery)?

In short, McDaniel makes the case that Garrison's vision was truly international, politically interested, and democratic, one that, except for slavery, positioned America as a model for the world. European movements, in turn, whether the romantic nationalist crusades or the antislavery or other reform movements, gave Garrison a sense that the world truly was ahead of the United States in its grappling with bondage. This internationalist context was reflected in the earliest masthead for the *Liberator*, "Our Country is the World—Our Countrymen are Mankind," and continued as an important element of Garrison's thinking through the Civil War.

Are there limits to the work? McDaniel himself points to the problem of using a small cast of characters to characterize the nature of whole movements. Future historians will need to test whether and how much the antislavery movement, in all its variety, may or may not have reflected such cosmopolitan influences beyond the Garrisonian wing. In addition, though one might assume that this particular transatlantic exchange of ideas ran briskly in both directions, one mostly hears about the influence of Europeans on Americans. Yet we know that the example of the American Revolution, the Constitution, and America's experiment in democracy (no matter that suffrage was limited by gender and race) all had profound impact on Europe. It would have been good for McDaniel to elaborate on the shape of that influence among Garrison's European circles.

As important, one never quite gets why Garrison and Phillips, two supremely talented white men, felt moved to devote most of their lives to the least popular cause in America—that of the slave. To borrow a keyword from Gilbert Barnes, what "impulse" drove them? As I have noted, a closer look at religion, especially Garrison's odyssey from evangelicalism to a highly personalized and intense religious faith, might have yielded more inflected insight into his interpretation of politics. I would argue that, early on, fears of God's Judgment helped push Garrison toward immediatism and shaped at least much of his earliest abolitionist ponderings on the nature of democracy and the future of the republic.

Furthermore, a more sensitive treatment of the mature Garrison's pan-Christian sense of everyday piety might have led McDaniel down interesting paths in the transatlantic sphere of his study. For example, the abolitionist's admiration for the Catholic emancipation movement in England and Home Rule in Ireland was something one might not have expected from a soul at least partially imbued with the spirit of anti-Catholicism endemic among abolitionists of the 1830s. Greater exploration of this subject, especially with regard to Italy, might have uncovered a story of mutual influence and sympathy between modernizing Italians and Garrisonians, one in which a more nuanced view of American anti-Catholicism (still in full flower among many non-Garrisonians) might have been limned. However, that I even wondered about this question points to a real virtue in McDaniel's book—in reframing the Garrisonian experience in relation to Europe and deepening the discussion of democracy as a live and contingent experiment in the minds of Garrison and Phillips, McDaniel implicitly and explicitly raises questions he can safely leave for others to answer.

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Ethan J. Kytle's *Romantic Reformers and the Antislavery Struggle in the Civil War Era* employs a very different cast of characters in a more limited but crucial time period—the chaotic decade of the 1850s. Kytle rightly points out that most historians have treated various abolitionist factions, chastened by decades of infighting and outright schism, as fully formed entities by the late 1840s. In a historiography replete with finely tuned studies of the pre-1850 movement, it is indeed puzzling that few have attempted to define a distinct style or ideological framework through which to analyze the various ways abolitionists responded to the challenges of the Fugitive Slave Law, Bleeding Kansas, the caning of Charles Sumner, and John Brown's raid, all within the context of a crumbling political system. Kytle rightly thinks that the turn of some abolitionists from nonviolent moral suasion or third-party politics to active and sometimes violent resistance deserves closer study, and that their cultural predispositions are a key to understanding that transformation (6).

Kytle begins his quest for a new way to characterize 1850s abolitionism with a long introduction that defines a new strain of romantic reformers, the "New Romantics," and what he see as a representative cohort: Theodore Parker, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Martin Delany, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. He see them as possessing a particular, loosely shared vision emerging from nineteenth-century Romanticism but taking radical turns in the 1850s. He notes that his cohort shared common characteristics of Romantic thought with such "early antislavery romantics" as Garrison, Weld, and Lydia Maria Child. However, he argues that the New Romantics "broke decisively" with the older group on the question of direct resistance through a heightened sense of particular aspects of the Romantic spirit. "They blended the immediatism and perfectionism of early reformers," Kytle notes, "with new romantic points of emphasis, including martial heroism, romantic racialism, sentimentalism, and self-culture" (7–8).

He follows this general assertion with biographical chapters on each of his subjects that explore the nature of their antislavery commitments through the lens of his concept of the New Romantic. His chosen reformers, while aware of each other, differed so significantly in occupation, gender, race, formal religious background, and actual mutual contact that Kytle mostly links them through the varied ways Romanticism helped shape their antislavery responses. He makes his case for Romantic influence especially well with Parker, Stowe, and Higginson, white New Englanders who all were well schooled in Unitarian, post-Calvinist Christian Romanticism, and, of course, Transcendentalism. The chapters on Douglass and Delany, one ex-slave and one free black, rely sometimes on more impressionistic reasoning in linking them formally to Romanticism while underlining the bedrock personal roots of their antislavery quests. For Douglass, the influence of Romanticism and especially Transcendentalism is made clear. Delany, as the son of a free black mother and an enslaved father, benefited from his mother's urge to educate him and the family's tradition that he had descended from African royalty. He needed little cultural support for what had already manifested itself as a romantic attachment to Africa and a belief in black self-development (and life in an environment that to some degree allowed it). In any case, neither Douglass nor Delany completely bought 1850s American Romanticism. They especially condemned aspects of its racial assumptions. For instance, as Kytle points out, Douglass and Delany objected openly to the romantic racialism that characterized, in Theodore Parker's words, Africans as "the most docile and pliant of all the races of men" (quoted at 63).

While creating a construct of the New Romantic may have helped Kytle make sense of the actions of these abolitionists in the fraught atmosphere of the 1850s, it isn't clear to this reviewer that the label adds much to his well-wrought and insightful narratives in the biographical chapters. Part of the problem lies in the very pervasiveness of Romantic thought in antebellum America, and the difficulty of isolating what particular traits beyond the vague ones he names differentiate the early and later generations of radical abolitionists or, for that matter, other reformers enamored of various Romantic ideals. He is quite aware of the problem and, in the twenty-eight-page Introduction, does his best to differentiate northern and southern Romanticism as well as early and late northern reform varieties.

It makes for good reading but, in the end, the justification for a separate category of interpretation (as in Old Left versus New Left) at times seems more limiting than helpful. "Martial" heroism, a willingness to engage in active bodily resistance and even violence, seems to be the great dividing line. Certainly, abolitionists who openly battled slave catchers or slaveholding settlers and later helped John Brown plan his raid seemed a new breed. How much, however, can that break with nonviolence be attributed to Romanticism rather than to individual personality or the demands of the moment? Were the New Romantics all that different from Garrison's generation in their commitments or willingness to act courageously in the face of danger? Kytle's view of the older generation suffers from a one-dimensional and limited description of their past histories and also their own actions during the 1850s. Perhaps a sign of recognition of the problem is his own occasional need to attach, seemingly randomly, the label "New Romantic"to one or another of his characters, as if to shore up by assertion an ambiguous case.

For example, Kytle's search for the "New" in Romanticism inspires a very interesting discussion of the origins of Parker's doctrine of "higher law" in theology and politics. However, as he notes, the differentiation of God's laws and human law had been preached for a long time, and even as a doctrine that fueled antislavery activity. He does not mention at all the highly influential application of the doctrine by Charles Grandison Finney in reaction to Ohio's 1839 fugitive slave law (though Finney did not directly advocate flouting it). His insightful account of Douglass's break with Garrison over the disavowal of the Constitution seems similarly flawed only by his attempt to make it reflect aspects of a New Romanticism. After all, as becomes very clear from reading McDaniel, burning the Constitution, the Fugitive Slave Law, and other proslavery legislation was a new and radical act for Garrison that engendered as much opprobrium and threat from everyday citizens as the actions of the New Romantics.

Still, Kytle's guiding question—what was different about the 1850s, at least for the actions and profile of some abolitionists—is strikingly important and his life narratives, while foundering in search of a way to navigate the deep waters of Romanticism, help to define some more complicated convergence of ideas and events. Kytle's biographical sketches provide pictures of individuals facing a decade fraught with apocalyptic dread and millennial promise. Romantics they were, but ones whose motivations and actions cannot be explained by a single and all too vaguely defined interpretive category.

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If there is a commonality to these very different books, it is an implicit and perhaps unconscious assumption more understandable in historiographical than historical terms. Both McDaniel and Kytle spend relatively little time trying to grapple with a central and inadequately answered question that for a while seemed important to ask: How was it that a small minority of white Americans—most notably Garrison, Weld, Phillips, Kytle's cohort of "New Romantics," and other radical abolitionists—came to the personal consciousness and commitment that compelled them to resist a dominant American culture that saw nothing terribly wrong with slavery. Indeed, many across the nation counted on it as the engine of a rapidly expanding economy. They feared that emancipation would destroy the social fabric, unleashing pent-up anger in the form of a race war, rape, and pillage—in short, engendering a disaster on par with the Godly punishment that early abolitionists feared from *avoiding* emancipation.

I do not mean the question that David Brion Davis opened so productively in *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*: how was it that *cultures* in the West which had, since biblical days, honored and supported the institution of slavery, came by the eighteenth century to find reasons to ameliorate, condemn, or abolish the institution? Rather, how was it that that some resisted the dominant fears of American culture and argued that slaves and free blacks should enjoy freedom and equality? It was one thing to advocate an end to slavery in the West Indies from a perch in London or to lead a movement for national autonomy or religious equality with a constituency of great magnitude, as in the case of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, the Italians in Italy, or the Irish in Ireland or Catholics in England. It was quite another for a white American to crusade openly for the emancipation of a hated race whose enslavement afforded the United States a booming economy and implicated virtually all governmental and financial institutions, North and South. What allowed the few to take that leap of faith and action on slavery? Dr Sylvan Tomkins asked this very question in his article for *The Antislavery Vanguard*, "The Psychology of Commitment: The Constructive Role of Violence and Suffering for the Individual and for His Society."[5]

The question has never been satisfyingly or comprehensively answered, and neither McDaniel nor Kytle develop an adequate answer. They recognize religion as one force but never really develop the lifelong evolutions of personal spiritual life that shaped their subjects' abolitionist commitments. A second ingredient seems to be some set of events that undercut the sense of confidence that each of their historical actors had in the basic rightness of everyday life and society. For instance, Garrison's turn from colonization to abolition seems to have been sparked by his move from New England to Baltimore, there to witness slavery firsthand and to be jailed for exercising the journalistic freedom he took for granted in Boston. That, combined with a reading of David Walker's *Appeal*, reconfigured his priorities. Similar shocks to the system, something similar to what a much later generation would call radicalization but in the nineteenth century was understood more in religious or spiritual terms, made other converts. For instance, it was the killing of Elijah P. Lovejoy and the mobbing and near lynching of Garrison that turned Wendell Phillips into an immediate emancipationist.

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[5] Sylvan Tomkins, "The Psychology of Commitment: The Constructive Role of Violence and Suffering for the Individual and for His Society," in Duberman, *The Antislavery Vanguard*, 270–98.

By the 1850s, with both political and radical antislavery alternatives well articulated in the public sphere, it still took such shocking events to inspire sympathetic souls to action. The Fugitive Slave Act was key. All northerners now faced the fact that slaveholders might challenge the status quo in northern communities. For most white Americans, preserving the Union remained the primary goal. However, soon the very compromise that sought to insure continuity began to have the opposite effect. Even then, most northerners worried more about the "slave power conspiracy" and defense of white interests in the territories than about freedom and equality for African Americans.

For some, however, these incursions of slavery into northern life resulted in conversions to a more radical stance. The Fugitive Slave Law inspired not only Kytle's New Romantics to action but the old ones as well. Wendell Phillips participated in the defense of Anthony Burns, while others lent their support to the war in Kansas. Garrison burned the Fugitive Slave Act and court orders relating to Burns at the same time he disposed of the Constitution. More moderate antislavery advocates or even those who had not thought much about the issue also underwent such change. Slave catching even affected visionaries who usually preferred a quieter existence and businessmen who never imagined themselves in the role of abolitionist. The case of Ralph Waldo Emerson, reticent individualist par excellence and lord of the Romantic Transcendentalist universe, provides us with a vivid example of the visceral body blow that the Compromise of 1850 inflicted upon more passive antislavery types. Addressing the citizens of Concord in May 1851, after passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, Emerson declared that he would leave his beloved study to engage in antislavery politics. "I wake in the morning with a painful sensation," he declared, "which I carry about all day, and which, when traced home, is the odious remembrance of that ignominy which has fallen on Massachusetts, which robs the landscape of beauty, and takes the sun-shine out of every hour." Or, more succinctly, Amos Adams Lawrence famously remarked in reaction to the capture and deportation south of Anthony Burns, "We went to bed one night old-fashioned, conservative, compromise Union Whigs and waked up stark mad Abolitionists." This mill owner soon became a supporter of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society in Kansas.[6]

It is no real criticism of McDaniel and Kytle that they chose not to probe this question more deeply. They each had their own interesting agenda. Yet the basic question of commitment underlay the extraordinary energy the Garrisonians and New Romantics devoted to the cause, and was the precondition for all the ideas and actions that both authors focus upon. Perhaps it is simply that the creation and growth of abolitionist consciousness might seem a smidgen less remarkable to a historian in 2015 than it did when Duberman published *The Antislavery Vanguard*. For scholarship at least, that would be a shame, for an assumed sense of familiarity with the attitudes of the abolitionists and how they came to their advocacy may slowly erode our sensitivity to the very special world of darkness and light that antebellum Americans inhabited.

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[6] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Fugitive Slave Law," available at www.rwe.org/vi-the-fugitive-slave-law-concord.html; Lawrence quoted in James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, 1989), 120.