5 *"facts and FACTS": Abolitionists' Database Innovations*

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It is well known that *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* had a tremendous impact on the U.S. abolition movement when it was published by the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1839. Produced through the collaboration of Angelina Grimké Weld, her husband, Theodore Weld, and her sister, Sarah Grimké, the book offered American abolitionists new ammunition for their spoken and written war against slavery.[1] What is less well known, however, is that *American Slavery As It Is* was the product of a new way of using media, one that is now familiar to us through our computer-based keyword and Lexis/Nexis searches. The book combined personal testimony from those who lived, or who had lived, in the South, some of them former slaveholders, elicited via a form letter—a questionnaire of sorts—with evidence gleaned from a vast archive of newspapers. Here I will focus on that innovative use of newspapers, for in writing *American Slavery As It Is*, the Grimkés and Weld reconceptualized the press to mine it as a database, and modeled ways other abolitionists could use the press and the writings of the South against itself.[2]

Sarah and Angelina Grimké were born into a slaveholding family in South Carolina but rejected that life to become ardent abolitionists, traveling New England as accomplished, convincing speakers, testifying to their direct experience of seeing the effects of slavery on both slaves and owners. They drew on their experience in their writings as well. (Angelina Grimké wrote the only antislavery work by a Southern white woman addressed to other Southern women, *An Appeal to Christian Women of the South*, 1836). When Angelina Grimké married the abolitionist and reformer Theodore Dwight Weld in 1838, both were in frail health. They settled in Fort Lee, New Jersey, with Angelina's sister, and all three retired from public speaking. Abolitionist friends were dismayed at losing such effective orators. The three next took up an extraordinary work, *American Slavery As It Is*, the most widely read antislavery publication until the novel *Uncle Tom's*

Cabin was published serially in 1851. Indeed, Harriet Beecher Stowe reported that she kept *American Slavery As It Is* "in her work basket by day and slept with it under her pillow at night till its facts crystallized into Uncle Tom."[3] *American Slavery As It Is* was priced to sell in bulk for widespread distribution—37 1/2 cents each, and $25/hundred—and sold a hundred thousand copies in its first year.[4] It was an important gesture in the move away from theology or exhortation, and toward reliance on documented, factual information to change the minds of white Northerners about slavery. As Angelina Grimké Weld wrote to her sister Anna R. Frost, "facts, FACTS, have set in motion all that machinery in England" that freed the slaves in the British West Indies and turned England against slave-grown cotton.[5] The English abolitionists had discovered that compiling concrete facts and statistics—such as the high percentage of British sailors who perished on slave ships, gleaned by patiently combing through ships' logs—was far more effective in turning public opinion than appeals to sentiment. Data will out.

American Slavery As It Is compiled testimony from those who had lived in the South and from former slaveholders like Sarah and Angelina Grimké themselves, but it also relied heavily on materials from the Southern press, particularly advertisements for runaway slaves. Such ads had appeared in newspapers for the previous century, and republishing them was not in itself an innovation. Abolitionists had already discovered that they could reconceptualize and effectively recapitalize such ads so that they no longer functioned as conventional notices of slaveholders seeking lost property, addressing other likeminded readers. Instead, if brought to a nonslaveholding readership, the same ads worked as exotic or troubling announcements, news from some other world. Incidental classified ads in one context became the instruments of pure moral suasion in another. The eighteenth-century British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, in his groundbreaking *Abstract of the Evidence delivered before a select committee of the House of Commons in the years 1790 and 1791, on the part of the petitioners for the Abolition of the Slave Trade* excerpted runaway slave advertisements mentioning brands on face or hands, from a Jamaican newspaper.[6] In the United States, William Lloyd Garrison's Boston-based paper *The Liberator*, beginning with its sixth issue in 1831, reprinted ads for runaway slaves and slave auctions in a section called "Slavery Record." This reprinting turned the slaveholder's voice against himself.

When these ads were recontextualized in *The Liberator*, as Dan McKanan observes, "the slave owner became a witness against himself, testifying that violence was intrinsic to the property relation of slavery."[7] Soon, other journals took up the practice of using

such "self-subverting quotation[s]."[8] Reprinting such ads was attractive because it removed abolitionist discourse from the abstract realm of rhetorical defense or opposition and crucially used the slaveholders' own words, spelled out in the brass-tacks language of commercial speech. The Grimké-Weld collaborative work, however, both subpoenaed that "testimony" and highlighted the role of data supplied by the thousand witnesses by omitting their own names from the work.[9] They shifted from a strategy that treated these ads as anecdotes or vignettes to one that reinterpreted them as the containers of data about the brutality of slavery. The marks, scars, and shackles that slaveholders noted as a means of identifying individual runaways became the individual, incremental indictments of slavery that might be systematically collected and analyzed. The ads were abstracted, their information pried loose and accumulated, aggregated en masse.

American Slavery As It Is was one in a multitude of projects that helped to create the modern concept of information, by isolating and recontextualizing data found in print. In his essay "Farewell to the Information Age," linguist Geoffrey Nunberg notes the shift in the nineteenth century from understanding *information* as the productive *result* of the process of being informed to a *substance* that could be morselized and extracted in isolated bits.[10] With its information abstraction, *American Slavery As It Is* became a model and a source for other abolitionist works like Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1853 *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* and William Goodell's 1853 *The American Slave Code in Theory and Practice*. But it is also a close ancestor of those forms of muckraking that have depended more on sifting public documents and putting their information into new juxtapositions rather than depending on going undercover or making secret materials public. From the 1950s to the 1970s the investigative journalist I. F. Stone, for example, scoured the *Congressional Record* and other government documents for many of his revelations. Such materials documented "contradictions in the official line, examples of bureaucratic and political mendacity, documentation of incursions on civil rights and liberties." His "use of government sources to document his findings was also a stratagem. Who would have believed this cantankerous-if-whimsical Marxist without all the documentation?"[11] Leaking and whistle-blowing may have a certain glamour, but Stone's journalism, like the Grimkés' and Weld's abolitionism, depended on something at once more subtle and more provocative of present concerns, not the opening of secrets but rather the painstaking extraction of already public information from the sources that have obscured it by dint of sheer proliferation. Don't think of Wikileaks, think of the power of search itself.

Both Grimkés had previously used their own testimony about slavery extensively in speaking and writing. In 1837, Weld had published *The Bible Against Slavery,* initially in the *Anti-Slavery Quarterly Magazine*, and then as a ninety-eight-page pamphlet. In it, he interpreted slavery in the Hebrew Bible as a form of paid service that could be stepped out of essentially at will, thus refuting claims that the Bible sanctioned chattel slavery as it was practiced in the United States. His biblical interpretation drew on another form of text mining, familiar to ministers: the concordance, essentially a keyword search through the text, providing context, in use since the thirteenth century. *American Slavery As It Is* importantly shifted the focus to the present when it took as its text the newspapers, along with testimony derived from questionnaires. It represented data mined from an enormous number of papers. Forty-five years later, Weld recalled:

> After the work was finished, we were curious to know how many newspapers had been examined. So we went up to our attic and took an inventory of bundles, as they were packed heap upon heap. When our count had reached *twenty thousand* newspapers, we said: "There, let that suffice." Though the book had in it many thousand facts thus authenticated by the slave-holders themselves, yet it contained but a tiny fraction of the nameless atrocities gathered from the papers examined.[12]

Weld noted that the sisters had "spent six months, averaging more than six hours a day"—the good daylight hours—"searching through thousands upon thousands of Southern newspapers, marking and cutting out facts of slave-holding disclosures for the book."[13]

With these large piles of papers, it became possible for the Grimkés and Weld to sort, categorize, and annotate what they found in the ads. The Grimkés used their expert knowledge as the Southern-raised daughters of a slaveholding family to identify some of the figures involved and to interpret the practices hinted at in the ads in newspapers that were, crucially, published by slaveholders. These ads were a weapon. In the words of Sarah Grimké, written to her friend Jane Smith as she worked on the book:

> Our present occupation . . . looking over southern papers, is calculated to help us . . . see the inside of that horrible system of oppression which is enfibred with the heart strings of the South. In the advertisements for runaways we detect the cruel whippings & shootings & brandings, practiced on the helpless slaves. Heartsickening as the details are, I am thankful that God in his providence has put into our hands these weapons prepared by the South herself, to destroy the fell monster.[14]

They mined the advertisements for information that they then sorted into categories such as "tortures, by iron collars, chains, fetters, handcuffs, &c.," "brandings, maimings, gun-shot wounds, &c.," and "Mutilation of Teeth."[15] They interpreted this data. Thus, for example, what might be the simple loss of a tooth in an era of bad dentistry, mentioned among other physical attributes in an ad for a runaway, is exposed as part of a scheme to identify slaves:

> Another method of *marking* slaves, is by drawing out or breaking off one or two *front teeth*—commonly the upper ones, as the mark would in that case be the more obvious. An instance of this kind the reader will recall in the testimony of Sarah M. Grimké . . . of which she had personal knowledge; being well acquainted both with the inhuman master . . . by whose order the brutal deed was done, and with the poor young girl whose mouth was thus barbarously mutilated, to furnish a convenient mark by which to describe her in case of her elopement, as she had frequently run away.[16]

These advocates thus took an undifferentiated pile of ads for runaway slaves, wherein dates and places were of primary importance, rendered in the neutral language of commerce, and transformed them into data about the routine and accepted torture of enslaved people.

Interpreted correctly, the ads yielded information on a horrifying spectrum of abuse, both of enslaved people's bodies and their spirits. Runaway ads documented the separation of families—evident in such items as "Runaway—my negro man, Frederick, about 20 years of age. He is no doubt near the plantation of G. W. Corprew, Esq. of Noxubbee county, Mississippi, as *his wife belongs to that gentleman, and he followed her from my residence*."[17] The Grimké-Weld use of italics redirects the reader to Frederick and his wife's forced separation. Other advertisements illuminate the use of slaves in medical experiments. Beyond the ads, the Grimkés read other parts of the Southern press to take the pulse of the South. They clipped news stories that reported the jailing of enslaved children or extremely elderly people and news stories that celebrated the capture and punishment of runaways. The presence of these accounts unaccompanied by condemnation in public newspapers yielded evidence of "public opinion" in the South, a phrase *American Slavery As It Is* uses repeatedly. In a group of sections organized as responses to anticipated objections, the section demolishing the claim that "Public opinion is a protection to the slave" defines law as the distillation of public opinion, and sets forth the ways in which laws deprive slaves of rights and put them in danger.[18] It also uses newspaper ads as an index of public opinion, pointing out for example that the *New Orleans*

Bee with a large circulation among merchants, planters, and professional men, and thus "a fair index of the 'public opinion' of Louisiana," published ads for runaways identifying women by their whipping scars or physical deformities on parts of their bodies that would require that the women be stripped to show the marks, and thereby providing evidence that Southern public opinion did not object to this.[19]

Marking and reprocessing the newspapers allowed Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké to compile the book's "many thousand facts thus authenticated by the slaveholders themselves."[20] Having sorted and categorized the data in the ads, the sisters and Weld offered various modes of sorting the same information in the body of the book. Testimonies of white former Southerners, or Northerners who had visited the South, or those still living in the South, for example, were presented as blocks of narrative. Then, some of the same material was extracted from the narratives and broken up into topics. While some topics, such as "Slaves suffer from hunger" were supplied mainly by brief extracts from narratives or questionnaires or other personal accounts, and others like "Punishments: Floggings" and "Punishments: Tortures" entirely from runaway ads, others, like "Clothing," drew together individual testimony, material from legal documents, and runaway ads. Those ads were central. The text explains: "We have . . . given to the testimony of the slaveholders themselves, under their own names, a precedence over that of all other witnesses." It follows with testimonies that back up these ads and "show, that the slaveholders who wrote the preceding advertisements, describing the work of their own hands, in branding with hot irons, maiming, mutilating, cropping, shooting, knocking out the teeth and eyes of their slaves, breaking their bones, etc., have manifested, *as far as they have gone* in the description, a commendable fidelity to truth." *American Slavery As It Is* moves recursively; each set of data is backed up by another level of evidence. The compilation of runaway ads supply solid evidence in the slaveholders' words, but further testimony confirms that specific slaveholders have committed these deeds. Personal testimony explains the analysis of runaway ads, and ads authenticate the testimony.

The book was made more usable to readers via a detailed table of contents and an index, which allowed for discontinuous, topical access. The table of contents breaks the sections down via headings and offers a nearly page-by-page digest, which forecasts and prepares the reader to be bombarded with horrifying particulars, as Stephen Browne notes.[21] Indexes generally serve as a bridge between author and reader, offering concepts, even if the author did not use a specific term directly. Indexes allow readers to access material from additional angles. One can use the *American Slavery As It Is* index

to look up subjects such as "Lives of slaves unprotected, 155" and "chopping of slaves piecemeal, 93."[22] The index entries also editorialize: "plantations second only to hell, 114."[23] The individual and specific horrors were thus catalogued, sorted, and made accessible to be used as evidence in speechmaking or novel writing.

The index provided its users with tools for quick access to information, and enhanced the users' authority, and thus the authority of the book. Readers reported that they could use *American Slavery As It Is* to "stump" slaveholders—one said he related incidents of cruelty from the book, and when the slaveholders said they were lies, "he would pull Weld's volume from his pocket and give names, places, and dates from Southern papers."[24] The Grimké-Weld mode of reading the proslavery press so convinced readers of its reliability that they even felt confident substituting the Grimké-Weld readings for their own. As Louise Johnson discovered, and as Meredith McGill and Trish Loughran explore in relation to 1830s reprinting practices, Charles Dickens took the book up in his *American Notes* in 1842.[25] He quoted from it without attribution, recording specific ads that he lifted from *American Slavery As It Is* in his reports on his Southern travels as though he had come across the ads himself. In other words, he drew on a work compiled in New York and New Jersey from papers mailed from the South, to flesh out and provide detail for his own travels in the South.[26] Circulation and recirculation became a mode through which readers and travelers themselves came to understand the South and slavery. Writers like Stowe, Dickens, and the man who used the book to stump Southerners, relied on *American Slavery As It Is* for knowledge and details. But for ex-slaves speaking on the abolitionist circuit, it was a ready reference, containing information on laws having to do with slavery. Its "thousand [white] witnesses" carried authority that reflected back on the speaker's own statements. When Frederick Douglass read from it in an 1846 talk to English working people he thereby established that his own experiences and observations fit a larger pattern. He read aloud from the laws on slavery, recorded in *American Slavery As It Is* because "no better exposure of slavery can be made than is made by the laws of the states in which slavery exists. I prefer reading the laws to making any statement in confirmation of what I have said myself; for the slave holders cannot object to this testimony, since it is the calm, the cool, the deliberate enactment of their wisest heads, of their most clear-sighted, their own constituted representatives."[27] He extended the circuit of recirculation by recommending that his listeners read Dickens's *American Notes* for more information.

The representations of slavery in *American Slavery As It Is* were amplified and sent back out. The material recirculated back to the Southern newspapers, as well, and

became a taunt, as Stowe reports: after the book was published, "a copy of it was sent, through the mail, to every editor from whose paper such advertisements had been taken, and to every individual of whom any facts had been narrated, with the passages which concerned them marked."[28] When Southern newspapers responded by attacking the volume, their attacks publicized *American Slavery As It Is.* Moreover, the book taught abolitionists and others a mode of reading the press. After drawing on *American Slavery As It Is* in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe then used it in composing *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, quoting, for example, the "testimony" given by "an unimpeachable witness, Miss Sarah M. Grimké" of the iron collar being used on "[a] handsome mulatto woman."[29] Stowe's *Key*, according to Thomas Leonard, "recycled Weld-Grimké clippings and added her own from more than 200 southern papers to support her novel."[30] Stowe notes of *American Slavery As It Is* in her *Key* that "the papers from which these facts were copied were preserved and put on file in a public place [the office of the American Anti-Slavery Society], where they remained for some years, for the information of the curious."[31]

Slaveholders objected that the information represented in these sources reflected atypical situations, but the sheer number of newspapers comprising the Grimké-Weld database provided a strong refutation to that argument. In fact, the slaveholders had a point: in any single paper that *American Slavery As It Is* quotes, there might be only one such ad, and, in fact, the Grimkés must have looked at some papers that yielded nothing. Moreover, someone taking up the invitation to visit the office of the American Anti-Slavery Society to read the newspapers they had used might find the ads in very different form. The Grimkés and Weld sharply edited the ads to eliminate most of the identifying information about the ex-slaves, ensuring that the notices they had converted to raw material for their antislavery arguments did not inadvertently revert to their original function and provide information that would lead to recapture. They also trimmed to highlight the points they wished to focus on—the separation of families and not the escapee's "rather sulky appearance," for example.[32] Trimming also concentrated the information, making it easier to compile. When a single ad was placed alongside dozens of other similar advertisements, the information became a data point in a wide-ranging representation of a common practice. They noted, too, that they had selected the runaway ads that they included from many others that they could have quoted, and that these were representative of a larger whole: "Scores of such advertisements are in Southern papers now on our table. We will furnish the reader with a dozen or two."[33] It was the work of trimming, sifting, and aggregating the material that recreated it as a

database and not just a collection of anecdotes. This work allowed for its recontextualization and analysis.

The Grimké-Weld household's project of mining the newspapers was made possible by access to large piles of Southern newspapers. Where did they get the papers? They could have looked to the reading rooms and public libraries of New York City, locations crucial to spreading ideas and information. Some reading rooms were political, offering print resources in support of a cause. For example, in the late 1830s there were at least two antislavery reading rooms in New York City, both run by antislavery newspapers, making use of the newspapers and magazines they received in their exchanges. Like other newspapers, abolition papers exchanged free copies with other publications and were allowed by the U.S. Post Office to mail exchange copies without cost. The antislavery papers received copies of pamphlets, as well, which they made available to visitors who paid a yearly or weekly fee. Both of the New York reading rooms framed their projects as offering resources to the black community.

One New York reading room was run by David Ruggles, an African-American activist with the New York Committee of Vigilance, which watched out for and fought against kidnappers and slave catchers, and editor of the *Mirror of Liberty*, whose office was located at Lispenard and Church Streets. In May 1838 he complained that black men were excluded from "Reading Rooms, popular lectures, and all places of literary attractions and general improvement," and announced that he had opened a reading room at the Committee's office, which was also his home, offering "access to the principal daily and leading anti-slavery papers, and other popular periodicals of the day."[34] His reading room offered access to these papers for a fee—from $2.75 per year to 6½ cents per week, waived for "strangers visiting this city"—including the many fugitive slaves Ruggles was in contact with.[35] Another antislavery reading room soon opened less than half a mile away, sponsored by the weekly *Colored American*, a black-owned newspaper. In January 1839, the paper announced that it planned to offer to "friends and subscribers" a place to read the other papers they received in their exchanges. While those papers would have included the abolitionist press, the *Colored American* exchanged with others as well. It announced, "Our Files are well filled with the principal Foreign and Domestic papers—Religious, Moral, Literary and Political."[36]

While these antislavery reading rooms—and others around the country, like the one Frederick Douglass ran in Rochester—were valuable as sites for following the movement, spreading knowledge of events and tactics, and possibly for education and self-improvement as their prospectuses proclaimed, they were not extensive repositories.

The Grimkés and Weld surely did not draw their wealth of evidence from them. Other newspapers, too, offered visiting readers some form of access to their exchange papers, but even those would not have been sufficient for the purposes of the Grimkés and Weld, especially since most newspapers were partisan and more likely to exchange with like-minded publications, and therefore have only such newspapers on hand. A different kind of home-based exchange became relevant here for the thorough and extensive coverage that gave *American Slavery As It Is* its powerful evidentiary status.

According to Trish Loughran, Theodore Weld commuted daily from his home in Fort Lee, New Jersey, to his office on Nassau Street in Manhattan, where he purchased "in bulk" newspapers that were to be "sold for waste when their newsworthiness expired," and brought them home to Fort Lee, where "the Grimkés performed 'their daily researches' at the kitchen table."[37] Forty years after the fact, Theodore Weld reported that he had purchased the more than twenty thousand papers comprising his database—all the "papers published in the Southern States and Territories," somewhere between six months' and two years' worth—from a reading room that he recalled as the New York Commercial Reading Room.[38] This was almost certainly Gilpin's Merchants' Exchange Reading Room, a large room located inside the New York Stock Exchange which received hundreds of newspapers from around the country and the world.[39] The runaway ads and other data which Weld and the Grimkés drew from these pages originated in the same web of commerce that merchants were deeply interested in. Just as the words of the slaveholders could be turned against themselves, institutions like the Exchange reading room that commerce depended on could be turned from their tasks of commerce and used against themselves.

Ruggles had complained of the whites-only policy of reading rooms like this one. As well, like most public spaces associated with commerce, the room probably did not admit women; an 1863 engraving of the interior shows an all-white, all-male clientele.[40] The collaboration between Theodore Weld and the Grimké sisters, then, allowed the sisters access to an immense lode of data from which they would otherwise have been barred; their labor and expertise made the processing and reading of this data possible. Not only had their collective project imagined data by dint of its displacement from its original Southern contexts, their project had also depended on an additional displacement of those same sources from the commercial to the domestic sphere.

The extraordinary repurposing, reuse, and, most important, reconceptualizing and new juxtapositioning of media represented by *American Slavery As It Is* entailed a complex negotiation between modes of access to media, expertise, and the imagination to see

that Southern newspapers not only could be made to speak against themselves, but also could be picked through, tagged, and sorted to support a new mode of understanding. That new mode of understanding might be called informatic, though informatics—like computers—of course lay many years in the future. Weld and the Grimkés arrived at an informatic sensibility out of the growing sense of urgency that abolitionists felt—the sense that simply softening the hearts of slaveholders was ineffectual and that hard facts were needed—which impelled them to turn to a new way of working. Like present-day academic researchers who pick through databases for particular uses of words, for authors' names, or for fragments of poetry to place them into new contexts that will yield new interpretative possibilities, Sarah and Angelina Grimké and Theodore Weld reconceived of ads and articles in proslavery papers as alienable bits—as content—that could be broken free of context and aggregated, strung along different threads to yield a damning portrait of slavery written in the slaveholders' own words.

Notes

1. *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York: Arno, [1839] 1968). On authorial attribution, see note 9 below. Critics have also argued that the book—addressed to readers who might never have seen black people—popularized a focus on enslaved people's inhuman suffering, which made them seem less human.

2. See Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770–1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 355, for details of how the testimonies of first-hand witnesses to slavery's abuses were gathered in response to a widely distributed "personalized circular letter" reproduced using the new technology of lithography. Harriet Beecher Stowe also reported these procedures in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin: Presenting the Original Facts and Documents Upon Which the Story Is Founded* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat, [1853] 1968), 21.

3. Jean Fagan Yellin, "Doing It Herself: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Woman's Role in the Slavery Crisis," in *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin,* ed. Eric J. Sundquist (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 90.

4. Benjamin P. Thomas, *Theodore Weld: Crusader for Freedom* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1950), 172.

5. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, 1822–1844*, vol. 2 (Gloucester, MA: Smith, 1965), 789.

6. Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 197.

7. See Augusta Rohrbach, "'Truth Stronger and Stranger than Fiction': Reexamining William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator,*" *Truth Stranger Than Fiction: Race, Realism, and the U.S. Literary Marketplace* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 2, for an examination of the relationship of *The Liberator* to "liberal capitalism and moral suasion."

8. Dan McKanan, *Identifying the Image of God: Radical Christians and Nonviolent Power in the Antebellum United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 135.

9. Although writers like Spender have criticized Theodore Weld for failing to share authorial credit for *American Slavery* with his wife and sister-in-law, and he did sign the circular requesting information, his name does not actually appear on the 1839 edition as the book's author. Authorial credit seems to have been assigned to Weld later. Moreover, the unsigned Introduction, which convenes the book's readers as the jury that will weigh the witnesses' testimony, explicitly empanels both women and men on the jury. Dale Spender, *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them: From Aphra Behn to Adrienne Rich* (London: Routledge, 1982), 166.

10. Geoffrey Nunberg, "Farewell to the Information Age," in *The Future of the Book*, ed. Geoffrey Nunberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 103–138.

11. Victor Navasky, "I. F. Stone," *The Nation* 277 (July 21, 2003): 17.

12. Quoted in Catherine H. Birney, *The Grimké Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimké, the First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1885), 258–259.

13. Quoted in Birney, *The Grimké Sisters*, 258.

14. January 24, 1839, quoted in Thomas, *Theodore Weld*, 168–169.

15. *American Slavery,* 72, 77, 83.

16. Ibid., 83.

17. Ibid., 164.

18. Ibid., 143.

19. Ibid., 154.

20. Birney, *The Grimké Sisters*, 259.

21. Stephen Browne, "'Like Gory Spectres': Representing Evil in Theodore Weld's 'American Slavery As It Is,'" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (August 1994): 277–292.

22. *American Slavery*, 214, 212.

23. Ibid., 217.

24. Thomas, *Theodore Weld*, 172.

25. Louise H. Johnson, "The Source of the Chapter on Slavery in Dickens's American Notes," *American Literature* 14 (January 1943): 427–430; Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770–1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834–1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

26. *American Slavery*, 127–128.

27. Frederick Douglass, *American Slavery: Report of a Public Meeting Held at Finsbury Chapel, Moorfields, to Receive Frederick Douglass, the American Slave, on Friday, May 22, 1846* (London: C. B. Christian, 1846).

28. Stowe, *Key*, 21.

29. Ibid., 89; see also 21 and 90.

30. Thomas C. Leonard, "Anti Slavery, Civil Rights, and Incendiary Material," in *Media and Revolution: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Jeremy D. Popkin (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 121.

31. Stowe, *Key*, 21.

32. *American Slavery*, 166, includes a four-line item "from the 'Richmond (Va.) Whig,' June 30, 1837. 'Ranaway, my man Peter.—He has a *sister* and *mother* in New Kent, and a *wife* about fifteen or eighteen miles above Richmond, at or about Taylorsville. Theo. A. Lacy.'" This emphasis, of course, did not appear in the much longer advertisement as it was actually printed, which also noted the man's skin color and build, sulky appearance, and what he was wearing ("Notice").

33. *American Slavery*, 83.

34. "Circular," par. 2, *Colored American*, June 16, 1838: n.p. Accessible Archives, www.accessible.com (accessed April 30, 2012).

35. Graham Russell Hodges, *David Ruggles: A Radical Black Abolitionist and the Underground Railroad in New York City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 135.

36. "READING ROOM," *Colored American* (January 12, 1839): n.p. Accessible Archives, www.accessible.com (accessed April 30, 2012). See also "A Reading Room," *Colored American* (February 10, 1838): n.p. Accessible Archives, www.accessible.com (accessed April 30, 2012).

37. Loughran, *Republic in Print*, 355, 356, 357.

38. Birney, *The Grimké Sisters*, 258–259.

39. Other than Weld's mention of it, I have found no references to the New York Commercial Reading Room. The size of Gilpin's Exchange, its proximity to the office of the American

Anti-Slavery Society offices, and the fact that the *Emancipator* had used its resources shortly before the Grimké-Weld project began suggests that forty years after the fact, Weld simply got the name of the room wrong, possibly mixing it up with the name of one or more similar rooms in other cities ("Reading Room Gleanings," *Emancipator* 42.163 [February 15, 1838]: col. A). In 1834, Gilpin's cost seven dollars a year to use, or, for "strangers," seventy-five cents per month; see Edwin Williams, *New York As It Is, in 1834; and Citizens' Advertising Directory Containing a General Description of the City and Environs* (New York: Disternall, 1834), 159.

40. An engraving showing the interior of the "Reading Room of the Merchants Exchange and Newsroom" appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, May 30, 1863, 147. It is on the Mr. Lincoln and New York website (Lincoln Institute): http://www.mrlincolnandnewyork.org (accessed January 28, 2012).