

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: RACE, NATIVISM, AND THE MAKING OF CLASS
IN ANTEBELLUM CITY-MYSTERIES

Timothy Wade Helwig, Ph.D., 2006

Dissertation Directed by: Professor Robert S. Levine, Department of English

This study analyzes white working-class identity construction in antebellum popular print culture and offers a fresh perspective on race relations in the antebellum period. By analyzing anti-slavery and nativist political discourses in popular fiction and newspapers of the 1840's and 1850's, I argue that sensational novels by such writers as George Lippard, Augustine Duganne, and Ned Buntline provided space whereby working-class whites could articulate their anxieties toward wage labor and critique the professional classes through a sympathetic identification with free, northern African Americans. My first chapter reveals how city-mysteries, largely bereft of heroic, white working-class agents of change, rely upon dynamic black male protagonists and the racially ambivalent discourse of "wage slavery" to appeal to the multi-racial working classes. In this context, I discuss Lippard's *The Quaker City; or, the Monks of Monk-Hall* and *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, in which Lippard mounts class critique through representations of the "Herculean" black male hero that resonates with contemporary depictions of the white laborer and through class-inflected minstrelsy discourse. My second chapter examines the role of anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant nativist discourse in city-mysteries' economic critique of chattel slavery. When Lippard, Duganne, and to a lesser extent, Buntline, present their white working-class characters as the victims of literal and figurative

enslavement plots by Catholic officials and dissipated, slave-owning merchants, nativism proves a flexible rhetoric that reinforces the texts' racial sympathy and helps to develop class protest against the professional classes. My third and final chapter illuminates the cross-racial strategies of class protest among early labor newspapers, early African-American newspapers, weekly story papers, and nativist newspapers—an array of under-studied print sources that register the potential and the limits of cross-racial solidarity during the antebellum period.

RACE, NATIVISM, AND THE MAKING OF CLASS IN ANTEBELLUM CITY-
MYSTERIES

By

Timothy Wade Helwig

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctorate of Philosophy
2006

Advisory Committee:
Professor Robert S. Levine, Chair
Professor John Auchard
Professor Ralph Bauer
Professor Lori Merish
Professor Heather Nathans

© Copyright by
Timothy Wade Helwig
2006

For my parents, Daniel and Patricia Helwig

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend sincere gratitude to the English department at the University of Maryland for supporting me and providing me with invaluable professionalization over the past eight years. Among all of the kind people who played an important role in my development, I am indebted foremost to the director of my advisory committee Bob Levine for his patience, meticulous commenting, and honest advice. I am fortunate and ever grateful to Bob Levine for taking an interest in me and for supporting my scholarly work. I am also indebted to John Auchard, who inspired me with his great talent and enthusiasm for teaching and for his unflagging support of my work. I owe a great debt to Ralph Bauer, who always asked the tough questions and helped me to sharpen my ideas. I also owe a great deal to Lori Merish, who served as my mentor at the beginning of my graduate career and was gracious to serve on my dissertation committee, and to Heather Nathans, who offered me fresh perspectives through which to see and develop my work. I thank Linda Coleman, who played an instrumental role in my acclimation to the university and in my professional development.

Because my project depended upon access to a wide array of popular print sources of the antebellum period, I am grateful to the knowledgeable staff members of the American Antiquarian Society and the Library Company of Philadelphia. I am indebted to the American Antiquarian Society for providing me with a short-term visiting academic research fellowship when this project was in its early stages. The guidance provided by the helpful and approachable staff members, along with the camaraderie offered by other scholars whom I had the good fortune to meet, helped

this project to gestate and grow in immeasurable ways. I thank the staff members at the Library Company of Philadelphia, who assisted my exploration of the writing of George Lippard. I am grateful to the English department at the University of Maryland for awarding me a grant for research travel and a fellowship for my final year of graduate study.

Throughout completion of this project I benefited from many dear friendships both inside and outside of the academy, but I would like to acknowledge especially the support of Chuck Martorana, Beth Kulbicki-Hepler, Judi Ketteler, Elizabeth Van Schaick, Bryan Love, and Helen Hull. I deeply appreciate their friendship, which is constant and true. I also appreciate the support of my brothers Dan Helwig and Ted Helwig, my nephew Derek Helwig, and my aunt Lois Reynold.

Magdelyn Hammond, a devoted partner, a trusted friend, and a keen editor, gave me the confidence to finish this project and sustained me with her love.

Finally, I thank my parents for seeing me through my years of graduate study with their love, encouragement, and sacrifice. It is to them I proudly dedicate this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Figures.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1. Denying the Wages of Whiteness: the Racial Politics of George Lippard's Working-Class Protest.....	28
Chapter 2. City-Mysteries and the Cultural Work of Nativism.....	96
Chapter 3. Black and White Print: Cross-Racial Strategies of Class Protest in Antebellum Popular Print Culture.....	162
Coda.....	226
Bibliography.....	233

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	“Fourpe Tap’s Encounter with the Giant Negro.” <i>Fourpe Tap; or, the Middy of The Macedonian</i> , 1847.....	62
Figure 2	“The Negro, ‘Bulgine.’” <i>The Bank Director’s Son</i> , 1851.....	72
Figure 3	“Frontispiece wood engraving,” <i>The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk-Hall</i> , 1845.....	84
Figure 4	“Kissing the Pope’s Toe.” <i>The Republic</i> , 1851.....	219

Introduction

Overview

From the early 1840's through the late 1850's, dozens of sensational novels promising to expose the mysteries and miseries of urban life were serialized in weekly story papers, printed as cheap pamphlets, and compiled into affordable novels. Made possible by technological developments in printing during the 1830's and inspired by Eugene Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris* serialized abroad in 1842-1843, this genre caught the imagination of the increasingly literate working-classes in the northeast and flourished in the two decades preceding the Civil War. With such titles as *Secret Guilt*, *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk-Hall*, and *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*, city-mysteries titillated readers with late-night, candle-lit journeys into the dank lairs of lascivious rakes and the secret dens of corrupt politicians with insatiable appetites for power and wealth. If city-mysteries entertained their wide-eyed readers with Gothic horrors and revenge plots already popularized by Charles Brockden Brown and Edgar Allan Poe, the novels also provided a weighty critique of the excesses of the capitalist marketplace and a scathing indictment of those who would undermine the republic for personal gain. The same men who, by night, indulged their lust and greed in secrecy, by day walked proudly along the streets of the metropolis as "respectable" merchants, politicians, and priests.

That city-mysteries appealed to the working-class is no great surprise. The novels were part of a burgeoning market for popular writing, fueled by the 1830's penny papers which provided a more affordable alternative to the 6-cent dailies read

by the mercantile and upper classes. Penny papers, such as Benjamin Day's initial *New York Sun* in 1833, were notorious for sensational crime reports infused with artisan republican commentary.¹ Artisan republicanism, which would become a signal feature of city-mysteries, was a political rhetoric by which urban craftsmen articulated their grievances against the gradual dissolution of the apprenticeship system of labor in the first half of the nineteenth century. By comparing their loss of autonomy in the workplace against the Jeffersonian republic's promise of equality, artisans and their political sympathizers argued that "acquisitive individualism, the pursuit of profit, was not necessarily the summum bonum of the American republican character."² The enormous success and popularity of Day's class-inflected *New York Sun* spoke to the appeal of such rhetoric, which helped to spark an outpouring of penny papers in the northeast. By 1840, thirty-five penny papers circulated in New York City alone.³ With a reliable audience of literate working-class readers already established by the penny papers and the 5-cent weekly story papers of the 1830's,⁴ American city-mysteries appealed to their followers' thirst for political scandal, sensational crime news, and artisan republican critique of the wealthy.

While the serializations of Eugene Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris* and G.W. Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London* were enjoying popular success abroad in the

¹ See Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Rev. ed. [1990]. New York: Verso, 2003), 100-101.

² Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 63.

³ Hans Bergmann, *God in the Street: New York Writing from the Penny Press to Melville*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 23.

⁴ Michael Denning reports that the U.S. Census of 1840 found astoundingly that 97% of adult whites in the northeast were literate. Denning slightly qualifies this finding by noting that the figure "was based on a minimum standard of literacy." Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America*, (Rev. ed. [1987]. New York: Verso, 1998), 31.

1840's, American authors began turning out their own city-mysteries.⁵ Between 1843 and 1860, more than fifty novels and novellas appeared promising to reveal the “mysteries and miseries” of urban life.⁶ Although a few of the novels chronicled life in faraway towns such as New Orleans and San Francisco, the majority of city-mysteries were set and published in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.⁷ Not only were these three cities prominent sites of publishing prior to the Civil War, but they also experienced the highest rates of immigration and labor unrest. As a result primarily of economic hardship and political unrest, an estimated five million people emigrated from Europe to America between 1815 and 1865.⁸ By 1855, more than half the population of New York City was foreign-born; of these, fifty-four percent were natives of Ireland and twenty-nine percent were natives of Germany.⁹ In Philadelphia, by the end of the 1840's, the foreign-born population grew from ten to forty percent: approximately two-thirds were Irish peasants and twenty percent were German skilled workers.¹⁰ With native-born workers feeling threatened by the labor competition immigrants posed, nativist riots directed largely at Catholic immigrants

⁵ G.W.M. Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London* was serialized in London between 1844 and 1848, and its sequel, *The Mysteries of the Court of London*, was serialized between 1848 and 1856. Kimberly Gladman reports that Reynolds's two city-mysteries combined sold more than one million copies and made him the most popular writer in England. See Kimberly Gladman, “Upper Tens and Lower Millions: City Mysteries Fiction and Class in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” Doctoral Dissertation, (New York University, 2001), 27.

⁶ David S. Reynolds and Kimberly Gladman, “Introduction.” In *Venus in Boston and Other Tales of Nineteenth-Century City Life*, by George Thompson, ix-liv, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), xi.

⁷ Ned Buntline's *The Mysteries and Miseries of New Orleans* was published in 1851, and *The Mysteries and Miseries of San Francisco* was published anonymously in 1853.

⁸ Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1979), 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

¹⁰ Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 29.

erupted in the major northeastern cities throughout the 1840's and the 1850's. City-mysteries, which were preoccupied with the changing urban landscape and represented the anxieties of native-born laborers, naturally engaged questions of ethnic identity and employed nativist rhetoric. Therefore, for the purposes of studying the racial and ethnic ambivalences integral to the construction of white working-class identity in antebellum popular culture, this dissertation focuses on the writing of northeastern city-mystery writers George Lippard, Augustine Duganne, and Ned Buntline.

George Lippard, a prolific writer of popular novels and an ardent labor activist living in Philadelphia, provides the richest case study of city-mysteries' complex construction of white working-class identity. Before his premature death from consumption in 1854 at the age of thirty-one, Lippard published nearly a dozen city-mysteries—including his bestselling *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk Hall* in 1845—and wrote several successful novels set during the Revolutionary War. Lippard's literary career followed the trajectory of many popular novelists of the period when in 1848 he started his own newspaper, *Quaker City Weekly*. In addition to providing a vehicle for the serialization of his sensational novels, the weekly story paper provided Lippard with a forum to express his working-class political sympathies and to promote his semi-secret communitarian society the Brotherhood of the Union. Lippard's city-mysteries are unique within the popular genre for their complex rendering of white working-class identity through anti-slavery and nativist discourses. An opponent of the Fugitive Slave Act who insisted that the causes to end “wage” slavery in the north and chattel slavery in the south must be linked, Lippard

relied upon sympathetic representations of “Herculean” free black workers to help develop his city-mysteries’ working-class protest. Just as Lippard’s racial sympathy is progressive among contemporary labor activists and especially within the context of antebellum popular fiction, Lippard’s engagement with nativist discourse is ahead of its time. While other northeastern city-mystery writers constructed white working-class identity by distinguishing “virtuous” native-born laborers from “dissolute” unskilled immigrants, Lippard tempered his employment of anti-Catholic nativism with a meta-critical caution about the threat nativism posed to class solidarity. Lippard, who witnessed the violent nativist riots of 1844 in Philadelphia and objected to nativists’ vitriolic attacks against the city’s Catholic populace, used nativist discourse strategically to develop his dual critique of “wage” and chattel slavery.

Treated as a minor poet in literary scholarship and best known as an associate of Edgar Allan Poe, Augustine Duganne published more than a half dozen city-mysteries while living among the cities of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. In 1843 Duganne published what may be the earliest example of city-mystery writing in America, and in 1857 he published his last city-mystery as the genre was in decline.¹¹ An ardent abolitionist who contributed poetry to *The National Era* and an avowed nativist who served one term in the New York Legislature as a Know-Nothing, Duganne offers us a second iteration of white working-class identity in the city-mystery genre. In Duganne’s city-mysteries of the 1840’s, artisan republican, anti-

¹¹ Duganne published a novella, *The two clerks, or the Orphan’s gratitude: being the adventures of Henry Fowler and Richard Martin*, while living in Boston in 1843. Although Osgood Bradbury’s novella *The Mysteries of Lowell* of 1844 is often credited as the first city-mystery written by an American author, Duganne’s *The Two Clerks* incorporates many tropes that would become commonplace in the genre. In 1857 while living in New York City, Duganne published *The Tenant-House, or, Embers from Poverty’s Hearthstone*.

slavery, and nativist discourses converge to help develop a class critique of “upper ten-dom.” Although these novels are not nearly as accomplished for their character and thematic development as Lippard’s, Duganne’s earlier city-mysteries also reflect the genre’s dependence upon a sympathetic engagement with blackness for mounting effective working-class protest. Duganne’s city-mysteries of the 1850’s, however, fulfill Lippard’s reservations about unrestrained nativist discourse: with nativist hostility toward unskilled immigrants overshadowing an artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes, Duganne’s later city-mysteries offer conventional, paternalistic representations of blacks and ultimately reinforce middle-class values associated with Protestant, “moral” reform. Duganne’s strategies of class protest, which changed during his writing career along with his positions on slavery, immigration, and labor reform, make his city-mystery writing central to studying the popular genre’s construction of white working-class identity.

Ned Buntline, the self-promoted alter ego of Edward Z.C. Judson, is best known for creating the legend of Buffalo Bill and for writing more than 100 dime novels for Erasmus Beadle’s publishing powerhouse after the Civil War. However, before he began churning out dime novels about frontier life, Buntline was a well-known public and literary figure in antebellum New York. As a writer of at least five city-mysteries between 1848 and 1851 and as editor of his weekly story paper *Ned Buntline’s Own*, which ran from 1848-1854, Buntline fashioned himself a populist defender of the native-born, white working classes against an alliance of corrupt public officials and their immigrant lackeys. Like Duganne, Buntline was devoted to nativist political causes: he was an active member of the Know-Nothing Party during

the 1850's and he formed a nativist militia in Maine.¹² Yet unlike his contemporaries Lippard and Duganne, Buntline consistently espoused proslavery views and regularly presented caricatures of blacks in his fiction. Buntline's city-mystery and newspaper writing constructs white working-class identity through artisan republican rhetoric and fervent nativist discourse. By locating the economic threat to the (native-born) working-class in the "criminally disposed" immigrant populace and the "degenerate" free black community, Buntline, I will be arguing, fails to develop a coherent critique of the wealthy classes and helps us to see the importance of anti-slavery rhetoric to the genre's working-class protest.

As Lippard, Duganne, and Buntline developed the genre of American city-mysteries during the 1840's, they appealed to the working-class's interests already nurtured by the penny press. Lippard and Duganne drew regularly upon high-profile court cases to enhance their books' appeal, and they developed potent artisan republican critiques against perceived threats to the "honest" laborer and his family. Lippard based *The Quaker City* upon an 1843 court case in Philadelphia in which a man was acquitted of murdering his sister's alleged seducer;¹³ in their fiction, both Lippard and Duganne protested Nicholas Biddle's United States Bank's mismanagement of funds bequeathed by Stephen Girard to build a college for orphans in Philadelphia.¹⁴ In the preface and the appendix to *The Mysteries and Miseries of*

¹² Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 22.

¹³ David S. Reynolds, "Introduction." In *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk Hall*, by George Lippard, vii-xliv, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), xii.

¹⁴ George Lippard references the Girard College Fund controversy in *The Quaker City* (1845) and *The Nazarene* (1846); Augustine Duganne references it in *The Knights of the Seal* (1845) Stephen Girard died in 1831, but Girard College was not built until 1848.

New York, Buntline reports on poverty in the Five Points area of New York City and challenges overseas missionaries to focus their attention on the nation's poor. The three writers' indignation toward perceived violations of the public trust, made on behalf of the poor and downtrodden members of society, is consistent with the artisan republicanism that pervades antebellum popular culture and marks the city-mystery genre.

Because the concept of "artisan republicanism" is so central to my study, a fuller elaboration of its meaning and significance is in order. Cultural historian Sean Wilentz has analyzed how republican rhetoric, which called upon citizens to act virtuously to protect the public good and by extension preserve the nation, was taken up and transformed into a powerful rhetoric of protest by artisans during the antebellum period. With the apprenticeship system of labor gradually replaced by wage labor and the formerly self-employed forced into an unstable marketplace, artisans utilized republican discourse to condemn merchants and industrial capitalists who could set wages and exploit others' labor for private gain. In this configuration, artisans who worked with their hands and valued above all their independence in the workplace were at war with merchants and employers who exploited the labor market and valued above all their accumulation of wealth and power. Artisan republican discourse, then, was directed at the moneyed classes who the newly emerging working-class saw as a grave threat to their own livelihood and to the well-being of the nation. Wilentz locates iterations of artisan republican rhetoric in "court records, ceremonial speeches, contemporary prints and drawings, and accounts of parades and

festivals” in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ With its roots in eighteenth-century protests against the British crown and its construction of antebellum trades as truly “republican” ventures, artisan republican rhetoric captured the white working-class’s suspicion of “aristocratic” non-producers and its desire for economic self-determination.¹⁶

Historians and political scientists have debated the usefulness of class as a meaningful category of identity, asking whether class is objectifiable (i.e., economically determined) or complexly subjective (i.e., culturally, historically, and politically contingent). City-mysteries are particularly useful for studying the efficacy of class as a way of defining groups with shared and oppositional economic interests, since broad conflicts among groups of people with varying degrees of economic power and with competing interests only emerged with the maturation of a free market economy during the antebellum period. Wai Chee Dimock and Michael T. Gilmore’s 1994 collection of essays, *Rethinking Class*, represents the different ways recent cultural critics have considered class in their scholarship and testifies to the continuing importance of class to literary studies. In their introduction to the collection, Dimock and Gilmore chart three waves in literary studies that wrested the concept of class formation away from reductive economic determinism. The first wave, of which David Montgomery’s historical scholarship on the nativist riots of 1844 in Philadelphia is representative, turned away from privileging trade unions and instead studied the political protests and leisure activities of the working classes. The second wave, represented by Sean Wilentz’s analysis of artisan republican rhetoric in

¹⁵ Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

Chants Democratic, considered class as a primarily political rather than an economic identity. According to Dimock and Gilmore, both waves “remain attached to a general sense of the working class as a locus of shared interests, and as a more or less integral (not to say privileged) historical subject.”¹⁷ However, the third wave, which considered the role of domesticity in the formation of *middle-class* identity, prompted a reconsideration of class identities less reliant upon economic determinism. Dimock and Gilmore write, “Along with the rediscovery of the middle class, the working class too has been subjected to a scrutiny more nuanced, more intricately featured, and more respectful of internal differences.”¹⁸ My study of antebellum city-mysteries, which draws upon the scholarship of David Montgomery, Sean Wilentz, and Eric Lott, considers how the convergence of popular political rhetorics—artisan republicanism, anti-slavery, and nativism—helped to shape the oppositional relationship between the “non-producing” and “producing” classes emerging in the 1840’s and the 1850’s. City-mystery writers’ various iterations of these popular political rhetorics reveal how class identity cannot be reduced to economic forces alone, and they reveal the difficulty of maintaining class solidarity in a period marked by racial and ethnic strife.

Sean Wilentz’s *Chants Democratic* views class as more of a political than an economic identity in the antebellum period, which is appropriate given the fluid nature of people’s financial and occupational identities in the uneven replacement of apprenticeships by wage labor. Although Wilentz views the union strikes of the

¹⁷ Wai Chee Dimock and Michael T. Gilmore, “Introduction,” *Rethinking Class: Literary Studies and Social Formations*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

1850's and artisans politicking on their own behalf as signaling the rise of class consciousness, he ultimately sees class as something manifest in the competing political interests among entrepreneurs, journeymen, master craftsmen, and artisans. My study of city-mysteries extends Wilentz's approach of locating class consciousness in the prevailing political rhetorics of the antebellum period—namely, artisan republican, anti-slavery, and nativist discourses. And yet, what makes city-mysteries unique in their formation of white working-class identity is the way in which the writers imbed economic arguments within their use of political rhetoric, thus laying the groundwork for the rise of a politically powerful working class, whose struggle for economic rights would take place most successfully in the political arena.

Despite their conspicuous employment of artisan republican rhetoric and their scenes of urban squalor, city-mysteries do not articulate what we would consider a coherent working-class protest against capitalists. There are no successful labor strikes to celebrate in the city-mysteries, as there would be in the dime novels following the Civil War.¹⁹ There are few realistic scenes of characters working long shifts under unsafe conditions, as Rebecca Harding Davis would detail in 1861 in “Life in the Iron-Mills.” Instead, in a bewildering metropolis where individual agency is frustrated by larger social forces, rural greenhorns and fallen middle-class characters struggle to thwart the schemes of powerful villains who act dishonestly and manipulate the new marketplace for their own gain.²⁰ Without a realistic depiction of

¹⁹ Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 126-127.

²⁰ Augustine Duganne's view of human agency can be bleak. At the end of *The Knights of the Seal*, the heroes are merely fortunate to have escaped the compulsive villains. Duganne writes, “Clarence Western and Hawthorne are the creatures of circumstance, guided by those with whom they may come in contact. How narrowly they escaped the snares of Evil, the reader has seen.” Augustine Duganne,

the daily lives of the working-class in city-mysteries, the class protest must be analyzed according to the novels' invocation of the dominant political rhetorics that shaped white workers' growing understanding of themselves as a class. The convergence of artisan republican, anti-slavery, and nativist discourses reveals surprising cross-racial alliances between white and free black workers in the city-mystery genre, and thus helps build a working-class identity that focuses more on shared political and economic interests than on supposed intrinsic similarities among whites.

In *Beneath the American Renaissance*, David S. Reynolds explores how canonical antebellum writers harnessed and reworked a variety of "native idioms" circulating throughout popular culture. The ironic figure of the likable criminal, the preference of "honest sin" to "hypocritical virtue," and a deep sympathy for oppressed groups are just a few of the characteristics of city-mystery writing that were, he says, absorbed into the works of Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman.²¹ Although Reynolds recognizes the subversive potential of city-mysteries' social protest, his comparative study does not provide an in-depth analysis of the complex and contradictory impulses of the popular genre. Written largely by and for the working-class from the early 1840's through the late 1850's, city-mysteries provide us with an understudied avenue for understanding how the white working-class articulated class consciousness and expressed an alternative vision for a community free from the social inequities growing in the urban northeast. Michael Denning has

The Knights of the Seal; or, The Mysteries of the Three Cities, (Philadelphia: Colon and Adriaance, 1845), 204.

²¹ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 201.

identified what he calls city-mysteries' "mechanic accents"; that is, "certain signs that are central to both dime novels and to larger political and social discourses."²² For Denning, city-mysteries' artisan republican rhetoric, recurring inheritance plots, and mechanic heroes constitute "mechanic accents" that would appeal to working-class readers of the genre.²³ However, Denning does not fully explore the essential role of anti-slavery and nativist discourses in city-mysteries' uneven expression of class protest. As I will be arguing throughout this study, the potential and the limits of the popular novels' critique of the wealthy and professional classes, in fact, hinge upon these two popular antebellum discourses.

Race and Nativism in Antebellum City-Mysteries

In the past twenty years, literary and cultural critics have made invaluable contributions to understanding racial ambivalence and white working-class identity in antebellum city-mysteries, and yet, to date, no full-length study has examined the genre's representation of racial and ethnic characters. This is surprising considering that among the "typed" characters that populate these novels, there is a copious and diverse depiction of black and immigrant characters. From free blacks and mulatto women to Irish Catholics and Spanish pirates, minority characters appear in every city-mystery. While these characters play both central and minor roles in the novels' various plots and subplots, they offer insight into how the white working-class defined and imagined itself—and they reveal the potential and limits of the city-mysteries' class protest against the hegemonic consolidation of the professional middle-class. In a genre produced and consumed largely by native-born whites in

²² Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 83.

²³ *Ibid.*, 116-117.

America, it is telling that the novels' black and immigrant characters are central to understanding how anti-slavery and nativist rhetorics helped to shape white working-class identity.

As cultural historians David Roediger, Eric Foner, and Eric Lott have shown, the white working-class had a tumultuous relationship with free blacks and slaves throughout the antebellum period. Despite the fact that white and free black workers were mutually in economic conflict with middle-class professionals who set their wages, it is well known that class solidarity never fully materialized between white and black workers before the Civil War. One need look only at Frederick Douglass's personal account of the brutal beating he received from his white co-workers in a Baltimore shipyard to discern the hostility many whites felt toward blacks in the competitive marketplace. With "whiteness" becoming a commodity by which white workers could assert status despite their low economic status, and "blackness" in turn becoming associated with the degraded status of a slave, white workers were invested in protecting free labor and the marketplace as an enclave of whiteness.²⁴ In *The Wages of Whiteness*, Roediger argues that slavery came to signify for working-class whites the ultimate degradation that had not yet befallen the white laborer. "All labor republicans existed in a society that offered the opportunity for white workers to measure their situations not only against the dream of a republic of small producers but also against the nightmare of chattel slavery."²⁵ For Roediger, whose view of race relations between white and black workers is fairly bleak, labor activists' use of

²⁴ David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, (Rev. ed. [1991]. New York: Verso, 1999), 45-47.

²⁵ Ibid., 44.

the terms “white slavery” and “wage slavery” “was not an act of solidarity with the slave but rather a call to arms to end the inappropriate oppression of whites.”²⁶ While Roediger is generally correct that such terms as “white slavery” and “wage slavery” can appropriate blackness without calling chattel slavery into question, Eric Foner counters that some of the white artisans and factory workers who used the term “wage slavery” were indeed anti-slavery and used the term to attack chattel slavery. Foner writes, “The idea of wage slavery contained condemnation of slavery itself. The central values of the early labor movement—liberty, democracy, personal independence, the right of the worker to the fruits of his or her labor—were obviously incompatible with the institution of slavery.”²⁷

Eric Lott’s study of the racial ambivalences that mark working-class whites’ engagement with black culture builds upon Foner’s line of argument and is particularly useful to the study of city-mysteries. In *Love and Theft*, Lott locates white working-class identity as it is staged through race and argues that race had become “a kind of metonym for class” by the time the first minstrel troupe performed in New York City in 1843.²⁸ According to Lott, blackface minstrelsy registered in its white working-class audience not only feelings of white superiority but also racial envy for the pre-industrial freedom associated with blackness. In Lott’s analysis, blackface provided a mask through which working-class whites could *simultaneously* voice their resentment toward blacks and upper-class whites—“a fact that implied

²⁶ Ibid., 68.

²⁷ Eric Foner, “Workers and Slavery,” in Paul Buhle and Alan Dawley, eds., *Working for Democracy*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 23.

²⁸ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 72.

some sense of cross-racial identification.”²⁹ Although Lott’s focus on various popular amusements of the antebellum period extends only to a brief reading of the racial ambivalence in city-mysteries by George Lippard, Lott’s stimulating treatment shows the potential of a more complete analysis of the genre along the lines of its racial and ethnic representations.

City-mysteries borrowed liberally from black culture, regularly invoked the vexed term “wage slavery,” represented and developed a host of black characters, and implicated scheming northern merchants in slaveholding. Building upon Eric Lott’s detection of racial ambivalence in other areas of antebellum popular culture, we find that city-mystery writers relied upon an engagement with blackness and anti-slavery rhetoric to represent the fears and anxieties of their white working-class readership. Although city-mysteries rarely articulated explicit anti-slavery protest in their pages—just as they did not express a coherent working-class protest—the novels’ engagement and even preoccupation with blackness could lead to strong racial ambivalence and even some of the more sympathetic portrayals of blacks in antebellum American writing.

In order to exacerbate their white working-class readers’ anxieties and anger about wage labor, city-mystery writers appropriated elements of the black slave narrative and suggested an analogy between “wage” and chattel slavery. Rural greenhorns who come to the city looking for work are lured into counterfeiting and forgery schemes; desperate and homeless young men who have fallen from the middle-class become pawns of corrupt and duplicitous merchants; and virtuous men and women are falsely imprisoned, held against their will, or murdered once they

²⁹ Ibid., 84.

have become expendable to their wealthy captors. In lieu of depicting explicit scenes of exploited labor in the workplace, city-mysteries incorporate these figurative and literal enslavement plots to represent the exploitation of the disenfranchised when republican values are sacrificed for private gain. Artisan republican rhetoric that extols the virtues of the “enslaved” and condemns the greed of the wealthy often accompanies the enslavement scenes and signals both a political and economic class protest. Furthermore, despite the fact that the term “wage slavery” itself may not appear in many of the city-mysteries, disempowered white characters are referred to repeatedly in the city-mysteries as “slaves.”³⁰ On the surface, it certainly appears that city-mysteries appropriated the enslavement plot with little regard for the plight of the black slave and the free black worker. However, when we consider the rich depiction of black characters in the novels and consider the writers’ use of nativist rhetoric to enhance their artisan republican critique of the upper classes, we will see how the enslavement plots contribute to cross-racial sympathy and point toward an economic critique of slavery.

That city-mysteries contain racial caricatures is well documented. In his introduction to the 1995 edition of George Lippard’s *The Quaker City*, David S. Reynolds points out the unsympathetic treatment of the novel’s few black characters. “Devil-Bug’s helpers Mosquito and Glow-worm seem the stereotypically brutish, comical blacks characteristic of antebellum popular culture.”³¹ Moreover, Michael Denning’s conclusion that dime novels were not directed at blacks and that dime

³⁰ Lippard, Duganne, and Buntline use variants of the term “slave” (i.e., “slavery,” “enslavement,” “enslaved,” “slavish,”) to describe the plight of their white working-class characters.

³¹ David S. Reynolds, “Introduction,” *The Quaker City*, xxxix.

novels did not have black readers might lead us to assume city-mysteries were not particularly concerned with black culture.³² And yet Lippard and Duganne, in fact, do incorporate what amount to sympathetic portrayals of blacks to help develop an artisan republican critique of northern wage labor. Lippard employs “Herculean” black male protagonists to represent the plight of the working classes, develops multi-racial plot lines of shared class oppression, and provides sympathetic representations of fugitive slaves. At the climax of Lippard’s *The Quaker City*, the apocryphal nightmare of the fallen republic includes “slaves of the city, white and black, marching along one mass of rags and sores and misery, huddled together.”³³ In *The Knights of the Seal*, Duganne presents a quadroon as a virtuous True Woman who is in constant flight from slave-catchers and would-be seducers, and he incorporates sensational scenes of bodily violence against free black workers in the north. Buntline, arguably the city-mystery writer least sympathetic to blacks and the anti-slavery cause, depicts scenes of black culture in the notoriously diverse Five Points area that suggest a degree of black-white identification among the laboring classes and publishes sketches sympathetic to blacks in his weekly story paper. With this study’s more complete treatment of black characters and their role in city-mysteries, we can see how the genre’s artisan republican protest relies upon a sympathetic engagement with blackness and in a move toward class solidarity attempts to produce cross-racial identifications among the working classes.

³² Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 30.

³³ George Lippard, *The Quaker City: or, The Monks of Monk Hall*, [1845], (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 389.

Surprisingly, nativism, another popular antebellum discourse, not only lends itself to artisan republican rhetoric but also contributes to the racial sympathy in city-mysteries. In order to figure workers' fears of displacement in a mystifying marketplace, all of the city-mystery writers exploited nativist fears of perceived Catholic conspiracies against the republic. With a legacy that stretched back to the earliest Puritans' perception of being beset in the wilderness by Satan and the imperial powers of England, nativism in the 1840's and 1850's could exploit "honest" laborers' anxiety toward modernization and their nostalgia for the Jeffersonian ideal by alleging insidious plots against the republic. In *Conspiracy and Romance*, Robert S. Levine argues that "conspiratorial discourse, an absolutely central expression of early national and antebellum culture, was a melodramatic discourse that presented oppositional conflicts between villainous plotters and virtuous Americans in the vaguely defined social space of the American republic."³⁴ Popular city-mystery writers, with their allegorical dramas that pitted virtuous individuals against villains who embody "corrupt" institutions, found nativism particularly useful to their republican cause.

Nativist discourse, which dates from the Puritans' initial settling on the continent, experienced a resurgence during the first half of the nineteenth century. Although the U.S. Constitution officially outlawed the legal disenfranchisement of Catholics, fears of external threats to the young republic color George Washington's Farewell Address of 1796.³⁵ Animus toward Catholics persisted in the popular

³⁴ Robert S. Levine, *Conspiracy and Romance: Studies in Brockden Brown, Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 12.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

imagination into the late eighteenth century with the fireside game, “Break the Pope’s Neck.”³⁶ Although Catholics made up only 35,000 of the more than 3 million people living in the country in 1790, anti-Catholic sentiment persisted into the early nineteenth century because of its regular outbreak during times of crisis and warfare.³⁷ Anti-Catholic nativism resurfaced as Catholic immigration soared in the three decades leading up to the Civil War.

Between 1815-1865, approximately 5,000,000 people from central and western Europe emigrated to America in search of work and political freedom.³⁸ Robert Ernst explains that most immigrants fled their homelands due to economic hardships that resulted from urbanization in England, economic depression in Germany, and the Potato Famine in Ireland.³⁹ As part of this fifty-year wave of immigration, “54,000 Catholics arrived in the 1820’s, 200,000 in the 1830’s, 700,000 in the 1840’s, and 200,000 in the year 1850 alone.”⁴⁰ Although native-born workers perceived unskilled immigrants who settled in northern cities and accepted low wages as a threat in the marketplace, Catholic immigrants were singled out because of the perception that they were especially unfit for the responsibilities of citizenship and could be easily manipulated by priests with designs to overthrow the republic. Samuel Morse’s popular anti-Catholic tract of 1834, *A Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*, makes the classic nativist argument against the

³⁶ Ray Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860*, (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1963), 16.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁸ Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City 1825-1863*, 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-6.

⁴⁰ Robert S. Levine, *Conspiracy and Romance*, 108.

Roman Catholic Church's influence in America's national affairs and links the resurgence of anti-Catholic fears to the spike in immigration. In Morse's feverish imagination, the Austria-based Leopold Foundation's efforts to finance the construction of Catholic churches in America are part of a conspiracy to overthrow the republic. In fomenting fears of anti-Catholic plots from abroad, Morse extends his nativist argument to include immigrants of all religious faiths. Morse writes, "However well disposed they may be to the country which protects them, and adopts them as citizens, they are not fitted to act with judgment in the political affairs of their new country, like native citizens educated from their infancy in the principles and habits of our institutions."⁴¹ According to historian Tyler Anbinder, "By linking Catholicism (which most Americans had always despised) to immigration (which they had previously considered beneficial), Morse laid the foundation for decades of American nativism that would follow."⁴²

During the 1830's and 1840's, nativism manifested itself in local public controversies and influenced local elections throughout the northeastern states. In the 1830's, New York City politicians were embroiled in a passionate debate over whether to continue using the King James Bible exclusively or to allow Catholic students to use the Douay Bible in public education.⁴³ When New York Governor William H. Seward proposed that public funds should be used to establish parochial schools for the instruction of Catholic students who felt alienated in Protestant-based

⁴¹ Samuel Morse, *Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*, [1835], (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 57.

⁴² Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 9.

⁴³ The Douay Bible, which eliminated the anti-Catholic bias of the King James Bible, was completed in France in 1609-1610.

public schools, outraged nativists helped to elect school commissioners who would require that all students read the King James Bible.⁴⁴ Subsequently, nativists created the American Republican party and assisted in electing nativist James Harper the mayor of New York City in 1843.⁴⁵ The bloody nativist riots in Philadelphia during 1844 contributed to nativist political victories in that city, and Boston elected a nativist mayor in early 1845.⁴⁶ When city-mysteries first entered the publishing world in the early 1840's, nativist fears of Catholic conspiracies and nativist animus toward unskilled immigrants had reached a feverish pitch in northeastern cities.

The city-mysteries of George Lippard, Augustine Duganne, and Ned Buntline reveal how easily nativism lent itself to artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes. Although the three writers did not share the same commitment to the nativist political agenda, they all engaged the discourse. Discussing the anti-Catholic undertones of Lippard's city-mysteries, Michael Denning argues, "The difficulty of maintaining an anti-nativist stance is indicated by the careers of two other dime novelists, 'Ned Buntline' and A.J.H. Duganne."⁴⁷ Whereas Denning's analysis suggests city-mystery writers utilized nativism against their better judgment, the novels reveal that nativism played an important role in developing their class-inflected protest against "wage slavery" and their critique of chattel slavery.

Consistent with the paranoia and conspiratorial tone of political nativists, city-mysteries depict threats to the republic and its virtuous native-born artisans through

⁴⁴ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 10-11.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁷ Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 114.

wide and intricate networks of subterfuge. Like the nativist secret societies that popped up in the 1840's and were open only to native-born producers, city-mysteries of the same decade represent their villains as part of a coalition of idle non-producers and their political allies.⁴⁸ Artisan and fallen middle-class heroes are regularly beset by greedy merchants who exploit the unregulated marketplace, duplicitous politicians who are quick to sacrifice republican principles for personal gain, and rakish priests who plot to overthrow the republic. Immigrants often appear as the willing henchmen and impressionable dupes of the villains. In each case, the sensational and hyperbolic plots typically involving unskilled Irish-Catholic immigrants help to develop the artisan republican critique of powerful and wealthy members of society.

If nativist discourse marginalizes Catholics and immigrants in order to normalize Anglo-Saxon Protestantism in city-mysteries, it also contributes to the striking racial ambivalence and economic critique of chattel slavery articulated in city-mysteries. A large part of the nativist Know-Nothing Party's appeal in the north during the early 1850's has been attributed to its anti-slavery platform. Northern lodges of the Know- Nothings advocated the end of slavery, and surviving broadsides of various northeastern nativist parties confirm they opposed the extension of slavery as late as 1855.⁴⁹ According to Tyler Anbinder, nativists' opposition to slavery

⁴⁸ Tyler Anbinder argues in *Nativism and Slavery* that semi-secret nativist organizations sprung up in northeastern cities in the mid-1840's after nativist political organizations lost their broader appeal among voters. The Order of the United Americans (OUAM) was founded in New York City in 1844. "Primarily a workingmen's benevolent society, the OUAM limited its membership to 'producers' by excluding merchants, professionals and bankers. Criticizing primarily the economic impact of the immigrant on American life, the existence of the OUAM demonstrates that workingmen did not trust the more prominent nativist groups to address their concerns" (14). A nativist fraternal organization, the United Sons of America, was founded in Philadelphia in 1845 and enjoyed popularity in Boston (13-14).

“derived from their devotion to Protestant values, as American ministers regularly condemned ‘rum, Romanism, and slavery’ as the three evils cursing the nation.”⁵⁰ As early as 1845, George Lippard was making a similar connection between Catholicism and the institution of slavery in *The Quaker City* when he cites “Priest-craft, and Slave-craft, and Traitor-craft” as the three curses plaguing America.⁵¹ In sum, city-mysteries’ association of their “non-producer” villains with Southern slaveholding and Catholic conspiracies to “enslave” the republic help to develop a critique of chattel slavery in the popular genre.

City-Mysteries and the Making of Class

This dissertation explores the complex class and racial sympathies of antebellum city-mysteries. The literary scholarship has debated whether city-mysteries articulate working-class protest at all, with Michael Denning pointing to the middle-class ideology reinforced by Lippard’s widespread use of the seduction plot. Other critics have suggested the class protest is largely ineffective, with David S. Reynolds concluding that Lippard’s working-class sympathy is often undermined by excessive sensationalism. Rather than focusing on the plot devices and the Gothic tropes pervasive in the genre, this study considers how the period’s dominant political rhetorics function in city-mysteries to help develop working-class identity and to help mount class critique of the professional middle-class. As I have been suggesting, in a popular genre directed at the white working classes whose racial politics are often

⁴⁹ “Constitution of the State Council of the American Party of Massachusetts, August 7, 1855,” 1855; “Platform of the American Party of Vermont,” 1855; and “Read and Circulate!! Hon. A.H. Stevens, of GA, on Know-Nothingism,” 1844. These broadsides are preserved by the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

⁵⁰ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 106.

⁵¹ George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 388.

assumed to be reactionary, we find that the effectiveness of city-mysteries' working-class protest depends largely upon a sympathetic engagement with blackness.

Nativism, which often divided the working-class and served the interests of the middle-class, could also help to build cross-racial identification between white and free black workers. By surveying a wide spectrum of city-mysteries with varying class, racial, and ethnic sympathies, we can not only appreciate the diverse iterations of class within sensational fiction but also gain a fuller understanding of race relations during the antebellum period. Unexpectedly, the popular genre is distinguished among nineteenth-century American letters for its racial sympathy, and constitutes a glimmer of the cross-racial class solidarity that never fully materialized before the Civil War.

In my first chapter, I focus on the role of anti-slavery rhetoric in city-mysteries' working-class protest, paying particular attention to the writing of George Lippard. Lippard's city-mysteries reveal how their effective class critique relied upon the employment of black male protagonists, the vexed use of the term "wage slavery," and sympathetic representations of fugitive slaves. After considering the racial sympathy of Lippard's city-mysteries from the 1840's through the early 1850's, I provide a close reading of anti-slavery rhetoric in his best known novel *The Quaker City*. I contextualize Lippard's working-class politics within his newspaper writing for *Quaker City Weekly* and his polemical writing for *The White Banner*, a journal devoted to establishing the Brotherhood of the Union. Finally, I consider the racial sympathy of Lippard's contemporary and friend, Augustine Duganne, whose city-mysteries' class protest suffers from what amounts to an ambivalent engagement with

blackness. Although both Lippard and Duganne spent time supporting anti-slavery efforts and protesting the Fugitive Slave Act, their city-mysteries' racial sympathy—and thus class protest—varies widely.

In the second chapter I turn to city-mystery writers' complex employment of nativist rhetoric to mount working-class critique. In the context of antebellum northern nativist and working-class politics, Lippard offers a unique case study of a prolific popular writer both implicated in and critical of anti-Catholic conspiracy theory. Lippard's city-mysteries' employ nativism to distinguish the powerful villains from the virtuous republicans, as well as to link the causes to abolish "wage" and chattel slavery. Yet in his writing for *Quaker City Weekly* and for his own semi-secret society the Brotherhood of the Union, Lippard provides a meta-critique of how anti-Catholic animus fractures working-class solidarity and ultimately serves the interests of the wealthy classes. While studying Lippard's flexible use of this dominant rhetoric, I also contextualize the city-mysteries of Duganne and Buntline within their active participation in the nativist Know-Nothing Party and their writing for nativist newspapers of the 1850's. By constructing immigrants rather than the wealthy classes as the preeminent threat to the native-born working poor, Duganne and Buntline unwittingly reinforce middle-class values in their city-mysteries.

Recent scholarship on the vast products of antebellum print culture tends to separate considerations of the penny press and the early black press, thereby overlooking the dynamic exchange of ideas and discourses among these ephemeral cultural texts. On the one hand, critics David S. Reynolds, Alexander Saxton, and Dan Schiller look at the penny press's class accents without a full consideration of

their racial sympathy. On the other hand, scholars of the early black press overlook black newspapers' working-class sympathies and employment of class-inflected nativist discourse. In my third chapter I demonstrate how representative early labor papers, black newspapers, weekly story papers, and nativist newspapers employ cross-racial strategies of working-class protest, which points to the potential for solidarity among white and free black workers during the antebellum period.

Inauguration of Class Consciousness

Studying the political discourses in antebellum city-mysteries proves essential to understanding the conflicted and varied class and racial arguments of these popular novels. By considering the convergence of the dominant rhetorics of artisan republicanism, anti-slavery, and nativism in city-mysteries, we can see the racial ambivalence that is central to the antebellum construction of white working-class identity and that registers the potential for cross-racial sympathy. Such a critique of popular political discourses serves to provide new insights into the place and value of the class and social arguments these writers make: city-mysteries' ambivalent racial and ethnic politics, in fact, necessitate revising the prevailing view of the antebellum white working-class as a reactionary monolith and necessitate treating the popular literary genre as a rich source of insight about nineteenth-century American culture. Furthermore, the dominant political discourses employed by city-mystery writers show their continuing importance to the study of canonical and popular literature after the Civil War. From the realistic short stories of Rebecca Harding Davis to the scientific objectivism of turn-of-the-century naturalists, the working-class concerns and the strategies of class protest developed in antebellum city-mysteries endure.

Chapter One

Denying the Wages of Whiteness: The Racial Politics of George Lippard's

Working-Class Protest

Introduction

In George Lippard's 1853 city-mystery, *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, white shoemaker Arthur Dermoyne interrogates clergyman Herman Barnhurst, whom he suspects of seducing the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Philadelphia and forcing her to have an abortion in New York City.⁵² Although Dermoyne's suspicions about Barnhurst are correct, he cannot elicit a confession from the devious clergyman and makes an ominous threat before departing. A shoemaker of medium height yet with a muscular body that is marked and "hardened" with the signs of labor, Dermoyne bends an inch-thick iron candlestick nearly double and claims that he can fell an ox with a single, well-placed blow. "'Why, you are a very Hercules!'" Barnhurst cries, and then listens in horror as Dermoyne grips his temples and explains in excruciating detail how he would punish the young woman's seducer.⁵³ "'Now, for instance, were I to encounter the seducer of Alice Burney,—were I to stand face to face with him, as I do with you,—were I to place my thumb upon his right temple and my fingers upon his left temple,—thus....I would, quietly, without a word, crush his skull as you might crush an egg-shell.'"⁵⁴

⁵² George Lippard names the abortionist character Madam Resimer, an allusion to the sensational criminal case against abortionist Mrs. Restell that was covered by the penny press in 1849. In *Quaker City Weekly*, Lippard lends his support to Ned Buntline who in *Ned Buntline's Own* condemned Mrs. Restell and lambasted James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald* for running her advertisements. See George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, October 6, 1849, 1.

⁵³ George Lippard, *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, [1853], (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Literature House/Gregg Press, 1970), 111.

Such an improbable feat of strength as one-handed skull-crushing may have seemed credible to readers already familiar with P.T. Barnum's freaks and with penny press reports on human oddities. But what is more noteworthy is how Lippard's investment in the shoemaker's bodily strength and "honest" labor, in contrast to abstracted forms of power and authority associated with middle-class professionals, is marked with racial implications. Just prior to Dermoyne's displays of physical prowess, he recounts how he became a shoemaker in order to defend his right to take an interest in the kidnapped young woman well above his class status. Dermoyne's personal history shares tropes with the black slave narrative popularized eight years earlier by Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* and by the public testimonies of former slaves. Dermoyne explains that as an orphan, "There was no other career before me, than the pauperism of the outcast or the slavery of an apprentice. I chose the latter. The overseers of the poor bound me out to a trade. I grew up without hope, education, or home."⁵⁵ After working ten-hour days for ten years as an apprentice, he graduated to the status of journeyman, and through a chance encounter at work, acquired literacy. "As I sat upon my work-bench, listening to a book which was read by one of my brother workmen, I became aware that I was not only poor, but ignorant; that my body was not only enslaved, but also my soul.—Therefore, I taught myself to read; to write; and for three years I have devoted five hours of every night to study."⁵⁶ In order to contrast the honest laborer's virtue with the haughty clergyman's duplicity, Lippard tells what amounts to a "white" slave narrative. In

⁵⁴ Ibid., 111.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 107-108.

addition to overcoming a fractured home life and being sent by an “overseer” to an apprenticeship that is equated with slavery, Dermoyne gains self-knowledge after he teaches himself to read in a scene that resonates distinctly with Douglass’s achievements in the *Narrative*.

Although the invocation of “white” slavery is problematic, threatening to minimize the horrors and cruelty of chattel slavery, Dermoyne’s sympathy for black slaves, even as he traces his lineage according to “class” rather than “racial” lines, reveals how Lippard’s working-class protest relies upon an ambivalent engagement with racial discourse. Through Dermoyne, Lippard launches an artisan republican critique of the professional classes for their indifference toward the plight of the working poor. Dermoyne’s diatribe against the middle-class singles out four professions—lawyers, doctors, ministers, and merchants—for exploiting the “fruits of the labor” performed by white workers. When he shares his hope for the future, Dermoyne imagines a space that is free of “wage” and chattel slavery, though not expressly multi-racial. “‘May be the day will come, when, gifted with wealth, I can enter the workshops of Philadelphia, and say to the workmen, ‘Come, brothers. Here is CAPITAL. Let us go to the west. Let us find a spot of God’s earth unpolluted by white or black slavery....And there,—oh, my God!—there will we, without priest, or monopolist, or slaveholder, establish in the midst of a band of brothers, the worship of that Christ who was himself a workman, even as he is now, the workman’s God.’”⁵⁷ Lippard’s inclusion of black slavery among the period’s pressing social ills, and his designation of slaveholders as prime oppressors, show how the popular writer

⁵⁷ Ibid., 108.

could use chattel slavery to represent the exploitation of the working poor and indicate his growing commitment to eradicating chattel slavery.

Just a few years earlier in his weekly story paper *Quaker City Weekly*, Lippard responds to a disgruntled Southern letter-writer whom he has offended. “Can we attack Wages Slavery and be silent about Chattel Slavery? Are we to hold our peace about the enslavement of white men, because the discussion of that topic involves a review of the nature and results of Black Slavery?”⁵⁸ Although Lippard’s newspaper also contains instances where he privileges the needs of the white working poor in the north over the plight of black slaves in the south, it is usually in the context of his perception and criticism that middle-class abolitionists neglect the poor in their midst. For example, in the third edition of his paper, Lippard chastises abolitionists for tolerating the “slavery” of white working women. “Hitherto some of the greatest talkers against slavery—Southern slavery—have been refreshingly oblivious of the existence of a serfdom in our midst, compared with which even black slavery looks beautiful. *The slavery of white women in our large cities, who, brought up in comfort, sometimes in luxury, are, by the death of those they love, forced to work for their living, and in seven cases out of ten, work for ‘just enough to keep body and soul together,’ and whose existence is one perpetual palpitation between the life of ill-paid labor and the life of splendid prostitution.*”⁵⁹ Despite such appeals to “white slavery” in *Quaker City Weekly*, Arthur Dermoyne’s condemnation of wage and chattel slavery in *New York* indicates the explicit racial sympathy of Lippard’s city-mysteries.

⁵⁸ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, March 3, 1849, 1.

⁵⁹ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, January 13, 1849, 3.

In addition to linking the causes of wage and chattel slavery, the scene between Dermoyne and Barnhurst reveals another strategy of Lippard's working-class protest, as class consciousness trumps racial division. At the same time Lippard was struggling to navigate between his sympathy for black slaves and his disdain for middle-class abolitionists, he was navigating the politics of whiteness. With the unprecedented influx of Irish and German immigrants into northeastern cities during the 1840's and early 1850's, artisan republicanism rhetoric's ability to articulate the interests of all white persons was weakening. As Matthew Jacobson has shown, prior to the increasing immigration of the 1840's, whiteness was defined simply in opposition to blacks and Native-Americans. However, native-born artisans, especially those descended from Anglo-Saxon stock, began to distinguish gradations of "whiteness" in which the Irish and Germans were viewed as more akin to blacks than to "whites."⁶⁰ Lippard, who witnessed the 1844 nativist riots in Kensington, a manufacturing suburb of Philadelphia, and lamented that ethnic divisions were fracturing working-class solidarity, was reluctant to engage in the politics of what Jacobson calls "variegated whiteness."⁶¹ While Lippard's investment in black characters helped him to consolidate monolithic whiteness and avoid sectarian division, Dermoyne's personal narrative in *New York* conflates class and race in a way that could initiate an alliance between multi-ethnic white workers and black slaves.

⁶⁰ Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 41-42.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

Initially, in response to Barnhurst's insult to his German heritage, Dermoyne defends the Germans as a weakened race that will soon rise and invigorate the nation. Yet ultimately, Dermoyne traces his heritage according to a lineage based upon class. Touting his working-class roots, Dermoyne explains, "'My father, (I am told, for he died when I was a child), was a wealthy farmer, whose wealth was swallowed up by an unjust lawsuit and a fraudulent bank. My grandfather was a wheelwright; my great-grandfather a cobbler; my great-great-grandfather a carpenter; and his father, was a tiller of the field. So you see, I am *nobly* descended....Not a single idler or vagabond in our family,—all workers, like their Savior,—all men who eat the bread of honest labor.'"⁶² If Shelley Streeby is right that in his pro-Mexican War novels Lippard "tries to subsume class within race and nation by urging his readers to identify with a fictive, white U.S. national body," the reverse is true in his city-mysteries as class interests have the potential to trump racial division.⁶³ In his working-class hero Arthur Dermoyne, Lippard provides his readers with a class-based identity independent of racial and ethnic difference and develops working-class consciousness through a de-racialized oppositional relationship to the privileged classes. *New York*, therefore, encapsulates Lippard's racially sympathetic strategies to figure the anxieties and the hopes of white workers: anti-slavery discourse helps Lippard to articulate the grievances of the white working-class, and a class-based identity that is not racially or ethnically exclusive serves as his hope for the future.

⁶² George Lippard, *New York*, 109.

⁶³ Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 52.

Immediately following this racially ambivalent chapter that ultimately constructs a brotherhood of working-class men independent of racial and ethnic difference, Lippard, in a chapter entitled “Below Five Points,” introduces the reader to black vigilante Old Royal and members of the Black Senate. In a room more than thirty feet below ground and accessible only through a series of narrow passages leading from a gambling-house in Five Points, the Black Senate, a group of fugitive slaves from the South, plots its flight to Canada. Old Royal, an escaped slave from South Carolina, bears a striking resemblance to Arthur Dermoyne in his powerful physique and in the respect he commands as leader of the Black Senate. “This gentleman is a giant; his chest is broad; his limbs brawny; and his face, black as the ‘ace of spades’ is in strong contrast with his white teeth, white eyeballs, white eyebrows, and white wool. He is a negro, with flat nose, thick lips, and mouth reaching from ear to ear.”⁶⁴ Although Lippard’s description of Old Royal’s facial features calls up the racist imagery of 1840’s phrenology, it does not ultimately bear out the pseudoscience’s presumption of blacks’ racial inferiority. Instead, when his former master Harry Royalton and a slave-catcher aptly named Bloodhound burst into the subterranean room that is suggestive of a site on the underground railroad, Old Royal fights ably to protect the fugitive slaves. “As [Harry Royalton] fired, his heels were tripped up; his ball passed over old Royal’s head. Harry was leveled to the floor, and in an instant old Royal’s giant-like gripe was on his throat. And by his side, wriggling in the grasp of a huge negro, black as ink, and strong as Hercules, our friend, Bloodhound, rubbed his face against the floor.”⁶⁵ Just as Dermoyne would

⁶⁴ George Lippard, *New York*, 118-119.

crush a libertine's skull with his bare hands, Old Royal manhandles his master into submission. The chapter concludes with the fugitive slaves murdering Bloodhound in cold blood, the sensational violence ameliorated by the fact that the slaves recognize in Bloodhound the man who "“stole my fader”" and "“took me mother from Filfedlfy and sold her down south.”"66

The juxtaposition of the Herculean Arthur Dermoyne and the giant-like Old Royal is neither incidental nor exceptional for Lippard. Black and mulatto characters—from Revolutionary War heroes and grog-shop owners to fugitive slaves and mundane servants—appear virtually everywhere in Lippard's novels. Sometimes the tragic victims of the Fugitive Slave Law, for which Lippard held especial animus, and sometimes the heroic defenders of a distressed woman's virtue, black and mulatto characters often share their white working-class counterparts' disdain for abstracted forms of power associated with the middle-class. For instance, in *New York* Dermoyne and Old Royal are linked further in their mission to mete out vigilante justice against duplicitous "respectable" citizens who would otherwise avoid punishment for their crimes. Dermoyne announces his mission to clergyman Barnhurst as "“to punish those criminals whom the law does not punish; to protect the victim it does not protect.”"67 When the mysterious Court of Ten Million convenes and tries a corrupt senator for attempting to rape a fugitive mulatto slave-woman named Esther Royalton, Old Royal stands among the court's esteemed members. "“On the right of the judge stood a huge negro, whose giant frame was clad in a suit of

⁶⁵ Ibid., 119.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 120.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 111.

sleek blue cloth, while his white cravat and his wool, also of snow-like whiteness, increased the blackness of his visage. It was, of course, Old Royal.”⁶⁸ In what other antebellum text can we find a vigilante court ostensibly comprised of blacks and whites who are trying a white politician for crimes against a black woman? The fact that the Court of Ten Million is made up of vigilantes merely underscores Lippard’s point that the legal courts fail to protect the most vulnerable members of society. It is, in fact, the employment of sympathetic black and mulatto characters such as Old Royal and Esther Royalton to help express working-class protest that distinguishes Lippard among his contemporaries. That critics have largely overlooked the broad spectrum of blacks appearing in Lippard’s novels is surprising, and calls for further inquiry into the popular genre’s complex rendering of class protest through racial discourse.

Questions of Class and Race

David S. Reynolds describes Lippard as a “radical-democrat,” Gary Ashwill calls him a “quasi-pornographer,” and Michael Denning terms him “the most overtly political dime novelist of his or subsequent generations.”⁶⁹ Which characterization is correct? Probably all of them. Writing more than twenty novels and publishing his own weekly story paper during the exciting and turbulent emergence of the popular penny press, Lippard competed for a rapidly growing readership in the 1840’s and the

⁶⁸ Ibid., 163.

⁶⁹ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Gary Ashwill, “The Mysteries of Capitalism in George Lippard’s City Novels” (*ESQ* 40.4, 1994: 293-317); Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America*, (Rev. ed. [1987]. New York: Verso, 1998), 87.

early 1850's.⁷⁰ With technological advances in the steam press and the opening of the Erie Canal in the early 1830's, small urban entrepreneurs could start up cheap newspapers and reach an unprecedented number of readers. Although many such newspapers were short-lived ventures, such successful northeastern penny papers as Benjamin H. Day's *New York Sun* printed 22,000 copies per day in 1835 and James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald* claimed a daily circulation of 20,000 in 1839.⁷¹ For a sense of the extent to which the newspaper market was flooded with penny papers during the antebellum period, in New York City in 1850 approximately 153,000 total copies of dailies were in circulation for a population of roughly 500,000.⁷² In content, these dailies, along with the numerous weekly story papers that sprung out of them, were not their fathers' newspapers. In contrast to the reserved tone of the 6-cent newspapers that preceded penny papers and were tailored to the upper classes, class-inflected dailies and weekly story papers provided the lurid details of gruesome murders, fatal shipwrecks, and tragic fires alongside more traditional news items.⁷³ For example, page two of the September 2, 1835 edition of the *New York Herald* contains a bland report on the state of the newspaper industry in

⁷⁰ Michael Denning reports that approximately 89% of northern artisans and 70% of northern farmers and laborers were literate between 1830 and 1895. *Mechanic Accents*, 31.

⁷¹ The capacity figure of Day's steam press comes from Hans Bergmann's *God in the Street: New York Writing From the Penny Press to Melville*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 21. The circulation figure for Bennett's *New York Herald* comes from Isabelle Lehuu's *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 44.

⁷² Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page*, 16.

⁷³ Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Rev. ed. [1990]. New York: Verso, 2003). Saxton locates the working-class politics of the penny press with Jacksonian democracy and white egalitarianism. "Pioneered by artisan printers, these dailies remained predominantly urban artisan in both their readership and their ideological responses" (96).

England and reprints a sensational description of an attempted slave insurrection in Shelbyville, South Carolina.⁷⁴ With the penny press catering to mass readers' thirst for explicit crime reporting and salacious scandal, the violent imagery and sexual suggestiveness of Lippard's writing appears not so shocking after all.

What distinguishes Lippard among his fellow city-mystery and serial writers, aside from the unmatched popularity he enjoyed with his novel *The Quaker City* in the mid-1840's, is the tireless energy he devoted to exposing social injustice in the northeastern cities throughout his writing career.⁷⁵ A descendant of German and English immigrants, Lippard was born on a farm west of Philadelphia in 1822 and endured a great number of personal tragedies in his short lifetime. After his mother died in 1831, Lippard moved in with relatives in Philadelphia and lived apart from his father, who would remarry in 1833.⁷⁶ When his father died in 1837 and Lippard received no inheritance, he looked for work and began writing for Philadelphia penny paper *Spirit of the Times*. Despite his work for several other Philadelphia newspapers and his own novel-writing, Lippard struggled financially throughout a life that ended prematurely in 1854. At his death at the age of 31, Lippard had outlived his wife and two children. Through his training as a writer for the class-inflected penny press and his continual struggles with poverty, Lippard came to the militant view that literature had the foremost responsibility to expose corruption and to improve society. In the

⁷⁴ *New York Herald*, September 2, 1835, 2.

⁷⁵ *The Quaker City* was originally published in ten installments during 1844. The collected volume, released in 1845, sold 60,000 copies the first year and an average of 10,000 each year for the next decade. It remained America's best-selling novel from 1845 until Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appeared in 1852. David S. Reynolds, "Introduction." In *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk Hall*, by George Lippard, vii-xliv, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), vii.

⁷⁶ Beth Mann, "George Lippard: Germantown Romanticized," *Germantown Crier* 40.4 (Fall 1988): 79.

lone edition of *The White Banner*, a quarterly periodical that he created for the Brotherhood of the Union, Lippard declared, “Our Idea of a National Literature, is simply: that a literature which does not work practically, for the advancement of social reform, or which is too dignified or too good to picture the wrongs of the great mass of humanity, is just good for nothing at all.”⁷⁷ Writing primarily for white working-class readers, Lippard critiqued capitalist greed that he considered responsible for the growing class inequities, railed against corrupt politicians whom he perceived had failed to uphold the republican principles of the country’s Founding Fathers, and exposed the self-serving paternalism of the professional middle-class and hypocritical moral reformers.⁷⁸ When homestead legislation that Lippard supported failed repeatedly to win support in Congress and the new western territories did not correlate into relief for the white working-class struggling in the urban northeast, he founded a semi-secret society, the Brotherhood of the Union, based on cooperative labor and farming. In an era that witnessed the expansion of wage labor and the

⁷⁷ George Lippard, *The White Banner: A Quarterly Miscellany*, (Philadelphia: George Lippard Publisher, 1851), 148.

⁷⁸ The critical research into the readership of antebellum city-mysteries has been marked by insupportable generalizations and stymied by the lack of reliable information about consumers of reading material from the period. While Michael Denning erroneously applies his evidence of a working-class readership of post-bellum dime novels to earlier city-mysteries in *Mechanic Accents*, Paul Erickson argues recently that city-mysteries cross lines of class and gender. For instance, contemporary reports that Lippard’s *The Quaker City* divided Philadelphia along class lines indicates that the novel had wealthy and poor readers. The fact that some city-mysteries included advertisements for women’s novels, such as Maria Cummins’ popular *The Lamplighter* of 1854, shows the likelihood of a female audience. While the fact that *The Quaker City* sold more than 10,000 copies annually between 1845-1852 makes a diverse audience inevitable, I would argue that Lippard’s polemical writings in defense of the working-class in *Quaker City Weekly* strongly suggest he wrote foremost with a working-class readership in mind. For more information about the readership of antebellum popular fiction, see Paul Erickson, “Welcome To Sodom: The Cultural Work of City-Mysteries Fiction in Antebellum America,” Doctoral Dissertation, (University of Texas at Austin, 2005).

consolidation of the middle-class, Lippard was a seminal if minority voice politicking on behalf of the working-class.

Although Lippard's passionate working-class convictions and propensity to criticize middle-class society may have put him at odds with the literati in Boston, he was a major player in the literary scenes of Philadelphia and New York. Lippard befriended Edgar Allan Poe and fellow city-mystery writer Augustine Duganne when they lived in Philadelphia, and all three men supported each other's writing careers. Although his writing did not share the same European and genteel sensibilities as Poe's, Lippard was delighted when Poe praised his early Gothic novel, *The Lady Annabel; or, The Doom of the Poisoner*, serialized in Philadelphia's *Citizen Soldier* newspaper between 1843-1844. In turn, Lippard paid homage to Poe by running a column in *Quaker City Weekly* that featured the "tomahawk man" as a severe Justice of the Court of Literary Affairs and by defending Poe's posthumous reputation against Rufus Griswold's slanderous obituary. If some of Lippard's light-hearted satire rubbed Poe the wrong way, Poe did not show it as he visited Lippard's *Quaker City Weekly* office seeking money en route to Richmond just three months before his death.⁷⁹ Lippard published four of Duganne's poems in *Quaker City Weekly*, and plugged Duganne's short-lived newspaper *The Iron Man* in rural Pennsylvania. Duganne, in turn, commemorated Lippard in the character of George Davenant in the city-mystery he wrote while living in Philadelphia, *The Knights of the Seal; or, The Mysteries of the Three Cities*. On July 15, 1852 the abolitionist newspaper *The National Era* reported on a meeting in Philadelphia where Lippard and Duganne each gave speeches calling for the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law. While Lippard was

⁷⁹ James Hutchisson, *Poe*, (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 242-243.

not on equally friendly terms with city-mystery writer and working-class advocate Ned Buntline, both men advertised the other's novels in their respective newspapers and Lippard defended Buntline during his trial for his role in the Astor Place Riots. The fact that Buntline was an avowed nativist put them at odds politically and may account for their lack of closer ties.

Although evidence of direct interaction between Lippard and writers deemed "canonical" is not extensive, city-mystery and canonical writers shared similar literary aims and drew regularly upon antebellum popular culture in their writing. Lippard's calls for a national literature and his focus on social reform place him in dialogue with the canonical writers associated with the Young America movement. David S. Reynolds has shown in meticulous detail how canonical writers drew upon elements of the penny press culture to which Lippard contributed. In fact, Lippard praised Walt Whitman's editorial work for the newspaper *The Brooklyn Daily Freeman* in a notice in *Quaker City Weekly*: "The Brooklyn Daily Freeman, edited by Walter Whitman, is decidedly a good paper. Its editor displays not only ability but tact—and as the world goes, tact is the great thing in a newspaper."⁸⁰ In turn, Whitman commented, albeit with plenty of factual errors, on Lippard following the writer's death. "[Lippard] was handsome Byronic,—commenced at 18—wrote sensational novels—drank-drunk-drunk—died mysteriously either of suicide or mania a potu at 25—or 26—a perfect wreck—was ragged, drunk, beggarly."⁸¹ Despite the

⁸⁰ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, June 30, 1849, 3.

⁸¹ Walt Whitman, *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts, Vol. I*, ed. Edward F. Grier (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 434. Lippard died of consumption at the age of 31 and there is little evidence suggesting that he was an alcoholic. Whitman's claim that Lippard died "ragged, drunk, beggarly" may have been drawn from a report published in the *Boston Post* during the early part of 1854 stating that Lippard was dying poor and friendless. *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury*, which

shared aims of Lippard and canonical writers, Shelley Streeby has argued that Lippard attempted to trace a national literature founded upon working-class issues and religious tolerance in Philadelphia as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon and Puritan roots privileged by Hawthorne.⁸² Lippard's disillusionment with the Boston literati is on display in an attack he launched against Henry David Thoreau's *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* in *Quaker City Weekly*. Lippard writes, "As to Mr. Thoreau linking the name of CHRIST with the name of BUDDHA, he must answer for himself. We know but little of BUDDHA: have an indistinct idea that he is either a Boston God, with a Silver Dollar for his creed, or a Hindoo God with ten heads and as many arms. But Mr. Thoreau does great injustice to himself—great injustice to every man of liberal sentiments—by this silly burlesque upon the name of Christ. He should be ashamed of such a miserable piece of Bostonism."⁸³

Despite Lippard's prolific city-mystery writing and engagement with the important literary questions of the antebellum period, scholarly attention to Lippard's writing did not accelerate until the revisionary work of Jane Tompkins's *Sensational Designs* and David S. Reynolds's *Beneath the American Renaissance* helped to expand the traditional literary canon in the 1980's. As literary critics who were interested in the cultural context of canonical writers recovered lesser known writers and as cultural critics who were focused on the social importance of popular print

serialized Lippard's final city-mystery *Eleanor; or, Slave Catching in the Quaker City*, reprinted a refutation of the *Boston Post's* report. "The writer of this resides in close proximity to [Lippard's] dwelling, has visited him frequently during his illness, and *knows* that he has wanted nothing for that money could obtain or careful nursing obscure" (*Philadelphia Sunday Mercury*, February 5, 1854, 2).

⁸² Shelley Streeby, "Haunted Houses: George Lippard, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Middle-Class America," *Criticism* 38.3 (Summer 1996): 443-472.

⁸³ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, June 23, 1849, 2.

culture opened up questions of class, critical attention to antebellum city-mysteries tended to focus on the prolific, mature, and thematically complex writing of Lippard as representative of the popular genre. A primary concern of this innovative scholarship has been the extent to which Lippard was successful in articulating a coherent working-class protest in his novels. Perhaps as part of a defensive posture against those who question Lippard's admission into a revised canon, critics have tried to account for the salacious sexuality and the pervasive voyeurism found in his city-mysteries. As a result, critics have come to contradictory and unsatisfactory conclusions about the efficacy of Lippard's working-class protest; and more importantly, they have largely overlooked Lippard's engagement with the racial and ethnic discourses that are seminal to his work.

The earliest evaluation of Lippard's working-class protest led to contradictory conclusions. Leslie Fiedler includes a discussion of Lippard's *The Quaker City* in his 1970 survey of the "male novel," and he concludes that Lippard sought "to sentimentalize and glorify the life of the humble."⁸⁴ On the other hand, Reynolds, as if already aware of the new direction American literary studies was about to take in the 1980's, published a Twayne author-study of Lippard in which he argues that Lippard's sympathy for the poor "did not go to the opposite extreme of idealizing them or meliorating their plight."⁸⁵ Reynolds is less convinced of Lippard's class-inflected social critiques in *Beneath the American Renaissance* just six years later. Preoccupied with following a meta-narrative whereby the canonical "greats" masterfully reworked the sensational excess and tempered the fiery rhetoric of

⁸⁴ Leslie Fiedler, "The Male Novel," *Partisan Review* 37, 1970: 80.

⁸⁵ David S. Reynolds, *George Lippard*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 57.

popular city-mystery writers, Reynolds uses Lippard to show how the subversive themes of his “flawed” writing were reworked by Hawthorne and Melville. “Major works, such as *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick*, as will be seen, boldly absorbed the paradoxes of the radical-democrat imagination but invested them with a new intensity and artistry that rescued them from their increasing crassness and formlessness.”⁸⁶ Ultimately, in his specific analysis of Lippard’s novels, Reynolds concludes that the sensational violence and sexuality compromise the radical political content. In reviewing Lippard’s bestseller *The Quaker City*, Reynolds finds that, “Dismayed by the social injustice and social inequities, Lippard exploits every device of popular sensational literature to expose the social elite; but time and again sensationalism becomes an end in itself.”⁸⁷

In fact, Lippard’s class-inflected social critique regularly rises above the sensational literary devices typical of the city-mystery genre. By focusing on the salacious seduction plots in Lippard’s fiction, Michael Denning also reaches an ambivalent conclusion about the writer’s working-class protest. Although Denning credits Lippard’s legacy of providing the “mechanic accents” and “mechanic heroes” to post-bellum dime novels and story papers, he argues that Lippard’s attempt to graft the eighteenth-century seduction plot onto the class conflicts of the antebellum period is flawed because explicit scenes of debauchery encourage readers to identify with the rakish seducer. Moreover, Denning observes, “For the most part, Lippard’s seduction tales do *not* involve poor girls.”⁸⁸ The fact is that in *The Quaker City*, the focus of

⁸⁶ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 208.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 206-207.

Denning's chapter on Lippard, the seduction plot of middle-class angel Mary Arlington dominates only the first third of the novel—Mary's seduction is complete by page 134 of a nearly 600-page novel—and then gives way to a forgery plot that is rooted in chattel slavery. By limiting his attention to the seduction plot of *The Quaker City*, Denning inevitably overlooks the importance of racial and ethnic discourses that pervade the novel and register class identity for Lippard.

Contrary to the prevailing critical perception that racism plagues Lippard's portrayals of black characters, I am arguing that Lippard's racial sympathies are complex and radical. Eric Lott's study of blackface minstrelsy, *Love and Theft*, offers insight into the racial ambivalence that could attend such antebellum popular forms as city-mysteries. Building upon the work of David Roediger and Alexander Saxton, Lott argues that minstrelsy provided a space whereby working-class whites could critique the professional middle-class by engaging blackness. According to Lott, mimicking blacks on stage could both exploit the white working-class's racist fears of degradation and yet call up a longing for a pre-industrial past of "ludic transgressive glee."⁸⁹ Thus, for the white working-class performers and theater-goers, "blackface provided a convenient mask through which to voice class resentments of all kinds—resentments directed as readily toward black people as toward upper-class enemies."⁹⁰ When Lott shows how minstrelsy influenced other working-class forms such as city-mysteries, he finds racial ambivalence in Lippard's *New York: Its Upper*

⁸⁸ Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 97.

⁸⁹ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 77.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

Ten and Lower Million, because the inheritance plot includes a black man (Randolph Royalton) and a working-class white man (Arthur Dermoyne) as potential heirs. “The lineaments of Randolph’s story reveal that when structured along acceptable class lines—when, that is, there was an implicit twinning of blacks and working-class whites—black characters in such writing, as in popular culture at large, could be portrayed in liberatory ways.”⁹¹ Although his brief treatment of *New York* captures an iteration of Lippard’s complex and broad employment of racial and anti-slavery discourses, Lott also argues that Lippard’s racism is on display when “he uses race as a metaphor for corruption” in *The Quaker City*.⁹² For Lott, the fact that the arch-forgery turns out to be the bastard son of a Creole slave is evidence enough. A fuller treatment of *The Quaker City*, as elaborated below, will reveal that the forgery scheme implicates the north in chattel slavery and that the forger’s disguise as a Southern planter places him in a long line of dissipated, aristocratic villains who appear in Lippard’s writing. Lott’s intention was not to conduct a full-scale analysis of the racial politics in Lippard’s city-mystery and newspaper writing, but that is precisely what is necessary to appreciate the most radical moments of racial sympathy in Lippard’s opus.

The most insightful consideration of the racial inflections of Lippard’s working-class politics has been provided by Shelley Streeby. Reading one of Lippard’s city-mysteries within its original publication in *Quaker City Weekly*, Streeby demonstrates how parallel plot lines of exploitation among white workers, women, and free blacks help Lippard to construct working-class identity. In

⁹¹ Ibid., 80.

⁹² Ibid., 80.

Streeby's view, "Lippard's constructions of class crucially rely on a set of analogies between imperiled women and oppressed men that can also unsettle and reconfigure dominant race and gender boundaries."⁹³ That Lippard endows his black characters with virtuous agency in *The Empire City*, an early version of *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, is evidence of a somewhat occluded sympathy in Lippard's writing. "By insisting on the active virtue of a slave, Lippard aligns the oppression of free workers with the oppression of slaves and suggests that both problems represent nondemocratic antagonisms that must be addressed by immediate action."⁹⁴

In their discussions of Lippard's racial politics, Lott's and Streeby's mutual attention to Lippard's parallel plot lines is not all that different from Reynolds's focus on plot-level role reversals. For Reynolds, the racist caricatures of blacks that appear in Lippard's writing are complicated by the reversals of power that black characters enjoy occasionally over whites and that comprise "a veiled, indirect prophecy of slave revolt."⁹⁵ While these brief power reversals may challenge readers' assumptions about the inferiority and social subordination of blacks, they also carry with them the potential to call up violent images of slave rebellions in the minds of white readers. In fact, to appreciate the depth of Lippard's racially sympathetic strategies for working-class protest, we must look beyond his texts' plot devices to his deft and subversive employment of anti-slavery and nativist discourses. Michael Denning offers a brief treatment of Lippard's engagement with these prominent antebellum

⁹³ Shelley Streeby, "Opening Up the Story Paper: George Lippard and the Construction of Class," *boundary2*, 24:1 (1997): 202.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 199-200.

⁹⁵ David S. Reynolds, "Introduction," *The Quaker City*, xxxix.

discourses, as he credits the inheritance plot of *New York* with enabling Lippard to transcend “the contradictions within the ideology of artisan republicanism surrounding race and slavery.”⁹⁶ And, according to Denning, Lippard’s ambivalence toward nativist conspiracy theories against the Catholic Church leads to the failure of his incomplete and fragmented novel *The Nazarene; or, The Last of the Washingtons*.⁹⁷

Inquiry into anti-slavery and nativist discourses, though not fully explored by Denning, offers one of the best avenues for studying Lippard’s working-class politics. Because exposing the corruption of the wealthy and detailing realistically the suffering of the poor precluded romantic representations of white working-class agents of change, Lippard employed disempowered black characters and utilized anti-slavery tropes to figure the exploitation of the white working-class. Thus, Lippard’s villains are typically northern merchant princes implicated in the slave trade, dissipated southern planters, and despotic officials of the Roman Catholic Church; Lippard’s class-inflected protagonists are typically northern white mechanics, free black workers, and fugitive slaves from the south. By insisting on the individual’s right to the fruits of one’s labor, Lippard appropriated the tropes of chattel slavery and “Catholic slavery” to figure the “wage slavery” of his white working-class readership. And yet unlike many antebellum labor advocates’ invocation of “white slavery” that ignored the plight of black slaves, Lippard’s appropriation of slavery tropes leads to sympathetic representations of blacks and sharp denunciations of the Fugitive Slave Law. Only by analyzing his employment of anti-slavery and nativist

⁹⁶ Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 116.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

discourses, by surveying his extensive use of black and mulatto characters, and by contextualizing those racial representations in antebellum popular print culture, can we provide a fuller assessment of the efficacy of Lippard's working-class protest. Inevitably, such an assessment complicates the prevailing assumptions about the supposedly reactionary racial politics of the city-mystery genre.

Working-Class Protest and Anti-Slavery Discourse

"Then came the slaves of the city, white and black, marching along one mass of rags and sores of misery, huddled together; a goodly tail to the procession of the King. Chains upon each wrist and want upon each brow. Here they were, the slaves of the cotton Lord and the factory Prince."⁹⁸ In this apocalyptic vision of America in 1950 that marks the climax of the class critique in *The Quaker City*, Lippard links the oppression of white wage laborers in northeastern cities with the oppression of black slaves on southern plantations. While critics have singled out this passage as a unique moment of cross-racial identification in Lippard's writing, the fact is that anti-slavery discourse permeates Lippard's city-mysteries in representations of the white working poor as "wage slaves," in sympathetic portrayals of fugitive black slaves, and in constructions of villains as involved in the slave trade. In *The Quaker City* the bankrupt white worker John Davis appeals to the haughty bank-president that "'for six long years have I slaved for that six hundred dollars'"; in *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, fugitive slave Randolph Royalton, disguised as a white slave-owner, laments that "'at every turn of life, I am met by the fatal whisper, 'There is negro blood in your veins!'"; and in *The Nazarene*, arch-villain Calvin Wolfe taunts

⁹⁸ George Lippard, *The Quaker City: or, The Monks of Monk Hall*, [1845], (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 389.

the homeless white worker in his power, ““Consider yourself sold to me, as a mere bale of goods is sold, after this hour.””⁹⁹ Why does Lippard’s critique of the wealthy classes rely so heavily upon anti-slavery discourse? And to what extent does Lippard’s invocation of that discourse carry with it a critique of the institution of chattel slavery?

A key to understanding Lippard’s racially inflected strategies for representing the fears and anxieties of his white working-class readership lies in his editorials in his *Quaker City Weekly*. Lippard’s weekly story paper, with its stated object “to make the Literature of Fact and Fiction, an effective instrument in the cause of human progress,” became a prominent voice of labor reform in the antebellum period. In *Quaker City Weekly* Lippard called for an end to the twelve-hour workday, defended the rights of factory operatives to go on strike, and promoted his communitarian semi-secret society the Brotherhood of the Union. Like other labor agitators of the 1830’s and 1840’s, Lippard invoked the terms “wage slavery” and “white slavery” to describe the exploitation of the white working-class. David Roediger has observed that the term “white slavery” had greater currency than the term “wage slavery” among antebellum labor advocates because the former suggested a mutable state of being: “white slavery” could be eradicated and white workers could rise above their degraded state, whereas “wage slavery” would always exist in a wage marketplace and thus white workers would remain in a state of “enslavement.”¹⁰⁰ Because “white

⁹⁹ George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 407; George Lippard, *New York*, 80; George Lippard, *The Nazarene: or, The Last of the Washingtons. A Revelation of Philadelphia, New York, and Washington in the Year 1844*, (Philadelphia: George Lippard and Co., 1846), 68.

¹⁰⁰ David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, (Rev. ed. [1991]. New York: Verso, 1999), 73.

slavery” focused on the needs of *white* workers, Roediger argues, the “use of a term like *white slavery* was not an act of solidarity with the slave but rather a call of arms to end the inappropriate oppression of whites.”¹⁰¹ On the other hand, Eric Foner has asserted that the term “wage slavery” contains the potential for an alliance between white workers and black slaves. “Inherent in the notion of ‘wage slavery,’ in the comparison of the status of the northern laborer with the southern slave, was a critique of the peculiar institution as an extreme form of oppression....The entire ideology of the labor movement was implicitly hostile to slavery: slavery contradicted the central ideas and values of artisan radicalism—liberty, democracy, equality, independence.”¹⁰²

Bearing in mind the racial exigencies of the two terms, it is therefore telling that variants of “wage slavery” appear approximately twice as often as variants of “white slavery” in the columns of *Quaker City Weekly*.¹⁰³ Lippard’s privileging of the non-racially specific term “wage slavery” reflects his insistence on linking the causes to abolish wage and chattel slavery, and reflects the cross-racial sympathies found throughout his city-mysteries. In an editorial entitled “Wages vs. Chattel Slavery,” the writer “Aleph” (likely a penname for Lippard) criticizes northern and southern senators for debating which form of slavery is worse. “What miserable special pleading! While the mass of the people know and feel the evils of both kinds

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 68.

¹⁰² Eric Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 60-61.

¹⁰³ My claim that “wage slavery” appears twice as often as “white slavery” is based upon an unscientific survey of all extant copies of *Quaker City Weekly* available at the American Antiquarian Society and the Library Company of Philadelphia. Together, these two research sites have a nearly complete run of the newspaper.

of Slavery, these lawyers on the floor of Congress attempt to whiten the evils of their respective localities, by blackguarding the vices and virtues of all other parts of the Union.”¹⁰⁴ On another occasion Lippard insists outright that “slavery is an evil” to be cured not by “a mere *paper* manumission,” but by giving the southern black “his share of the profits of his labor.”¹⁰⁵ Lippard also draws an analogy between chattel slavery and the “ground rent” slavery of northern whites in another editorial: “THE SAME system of reasoning, which enables a White Man to hold property in a Black Man in South Carolina, enables a White Man in Philadelphia, to hold a White Man under bondage, by means of Ground Rents. When you destroy one kind of Slavery you must destroy the other.”¹⁰⁶ Lippard’s opposition to chattel slavery is reinforced by the fact that he uses the term “white slavery” almost always in the context of poor labor conditions in England. The fact that slavery had been abolished in England in 1807 enables Lippard to lament the “White Slavery of England” without inadvertently denying the horrors of chattel slavery.

The opposition to chattel slavery and the racial sympathy that mark Lippard’s labor agitation in *Quaker City Weekly* re-appear in his fiction’s relentless critique of class oppression. Eric Lott claims that “black characters (and black writers) were seldom featured” in such working-class forms as the dime novel, but Lippard’s texts regularly represent the oppressed classes as multi-racial.¹⁰⁷ In his Christian parable of

¹⁰⁴ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, January 19, 1850, 2.

¹⁰⁵ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, January 13, 1849, 3.

¹⁰⁶ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, September 15, 1849, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft*, 79. The suggestion that blacks are scarce in city-mysteries can also be inferred from Michael Denning’s claims that “no dime novels [were] aimed at Blacks” and that there is “no evidence of any Black readership” (Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 30).

1851, *Adonai, The Pilgrim of Eternity*, Lippard develops his class critique through anti-slavery discourse and includes blacks among the oppressed. Published in the short-lived periodical *The White Banner*, devoted to Lippard's labor organization the Brotherhood of the Union, *Adonai* represents world history as a series of failed revolutions against class oppression dating from the reign of Roman Emperor Nero. In the parable, Lucius the Sybarite, a godless sentinel in Nero's service, undergoes a religious conversion and becomes Lucius the Christian. Renamed Adonai, he slumbers in a trance for millennia and awakens intermittently to observe sundry revolutions on earth. In a prologue that establishes the text's pre-occupation with class conflict, Lippard relates the parable of the Rich Man and the landless poor. A humble Jesus figure dressed in rags meets the Rich Man who oversees vast lands and great riches. When the Rich Man asks what he can do to inherit eternal life, the humble stranger replies: "'You have a Palace, Rich Man! Let its luxurious chambers be tenanted by the blind, the halt, the famine-stricken, who now surround me. You have lands, Rich Man? Divide them among the white and black slaves who now gather your harvests, with the labor of hopeless bondage, and baptize their hard-earned food with bitter tears.'" ¹⁰⁸ Just as black and white slaves suffer under a monarchy in a futuristic American dystopia in *The Quaker City*, blacks and whites are united in performing fruitless labor in *Adonai*. And whereas *The Quaker City* imagines the wrath of God raining down upon America's oppressors, *Adonai* argues for a radical re-organization of wealth and property consistent with the aims of Lippard's Brotherhood of the Union.

¹⁰⁸ George Lippard, *Adonai: The Pilgrim of Eternity*, (Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1851), 7.

The institution of chattel slavery plays an integral role in Lippard's class critique when Adonai awakens in 1848 and pays a visit to the New World. Although all of his previous travels ended in disillusionment at the failed revolutions in the Old World, Adonai is confident he will find true republican equality in America. "There, at least, in the land of Penn and of Washington, shall we behold a free people, dwelling in Brotherhood, without a single slave to mar the peace, or call down upon their heads the vengeance of God. Hail, Land of the New World, set apart by God as the heritage of millions who toil!"¹⁰⁹ However, upon reaching Washington, Adonai is greeted by a slave-dealer whose first words are, "'Do you want to sell or buy?'"¹¹⁰ Then, "The good-humoured man smiled and blew his whistle, when lo! a crowd of men and women and children, came running through the narrow door, into the yard bounded by gloomy walls. And they ranged themselves in a line before the eyes of Adonai. And Adonai saw that some of the men were black, and some of the women also, but there were many whose countenances were as fair as that of the good-humoured Man by his side."¹¹¹ The setting of the nation's capital and the selling of people in a parable might suggest an allegory for the health of the nation and the devaluation of labor; however, Lippard makes clear that chattel slavery is the blight on the New World by describing the squalid conditions of the slave-pen and indicating that the human commodities are bound for the plantation.

In *Adonai's* climactic scene, in which a poor man dramatically raises the sword of re-animated George Washington to smite a despotic alliance of Kings,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 42.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 46.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 46.

Priests, and Rich Men, Lippard includes blacks among the crowd of the disenfranchised. “Negroes, Caffirs, Hindoos, Indians, the men of China, Japan, and the Islands of the sea—the men of Europe and the New World—these all were there, with their wives, their mothers, their sisters and little ones. It was as though all the Poor of the World had been gathered together by the fiat of God.”¹¹² Also among the crowd lurks Satan, whose final, desperate threat to Adonai and the Arisen Washington is that America will suffer acutely under the money changer, the lust for the Dollar, and the landowner. With western prairies in the hands of landlords who “in effect own the lives and souls of the millions who toil upon those lands,” Satan predicts a race war. “Yonder in the Earth, the very *presence* of the African race is sure to give birth at first to Disunion, and then to a war of races—a war of annihilation between the white and black.”¹¹³ Although Satan’s words echo colonizationists’ fears that a race war would ensue once slavery was abolished, Lippard does not suggest that slavery has ended under Satan’s dire prophecy. In fact, Satan explains, “Out yonder on the broad prairies shall dwell, not Lords of old, with lance and spear—but Lords of Land, who owning all the Land, shall in effect own the lives and souls of the millions who toil upon those lands.”¹¹⁴ It is not hard to see in Satan’s prophecy Lippard’s support of homestead legislation and his opposition to admitting slavery into new western territories: “the lives and souls of the millions” may very well be poor whites and poor free blacks from northeastern cities and black slaves from the south. In *Adonai*, Lippard develops his class-inflected critique of the

¹¹² Ibid., 84.

¹¹³ Ibid., 97.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 96-97.

wealthy classes through anti-slavery discourse that counts blacks among the disenfranchised and slave-holders among the oppressors.

Lippard's contemporary city-mystery writers also invoked the rhetoric of "white" slavery to represent the exploitation of their working-class and fallen middle-class protagonists, yet without the cross-racial sympathy that marks Lippard's writing. In Augustine Duganne's 1845 *The Knights of the Seal*, a penniless and desperate expelled college student Paul Gaskill is forced to help the villainous Augustus Rivingsby take revenge upon former friend Henry Hawthorne. When Gaskill refuses to play a part in the scheme, Rivingsby reminds him: "'No matter for that. You remember it. You were *starving*. Perhaps you did *sell* yourself—no matter. Now, look ye! to that very depth of misery, of *starvation*, you must bring the courted, the caressed, the rich Henry Hawthorne!...You must do this thing, Paul Gaskill.'"¹¹⁵ Duganne develops Gaskill's exploitation through the rhetoric of "white slavery" after the youth survives a shipwreck and pledges to give up helping the millionaire Bellingham ruin other men. "'I swear, my friend—here, with the memory of our pain and peril before me—here, by your bedside, I swear—to give up my future to repentance; to thwart the schemes of those of whom I have been the *slave*, and to rescue, even if it be by my own sacrifice, the victims of that arch-fiend, Bellingham.' Gaskill's *bronzed* and hardened features grew solemn, as he pronounced this oath."¹¹⁶ Although Gaskill's exploitation is figured through the rhetoric of "white slavery," the lack of sympathetic portrayals of blacks limits the

¹¹⁵ Augustine Duganne, *The Knights of the Seal; or, The Mysteries of the Three Cities*, (Philadelphia: Colon and Adriaance, 1845), 10-11.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 99—emphasis added.

potential for cross-racial identification in Duganne's city-mystery. After all, a merely "bronzed," not essentially black, Gaskill, can renounce his status as "white slave" and reclaim his freedom from his "masters." Similarly, in Ned Buntline's 1848 *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*, the rhetoric of "slavery" remains focused on the exploitation of whites. Charley Meadows, a young mercantile clerk with a penchant for gambling, steals from his employer and borrows money from the gambling-hall proprietor Carlton to cover up his theft. When Carlton explains that the money is counterfeit, Meadows realizes that he has become the gambler's pawn. "'Oh God—I am indeed in your power!' moaned the clerk. 'And now my ruin is certain—for the money will be refused when I go to deposit it!....Do as you wish with me!' groaned Meadows—'I am indeed your slave!'"¹¹⁷ Buntline, whose representations of blacks are even less sympathetic than Duganne's, utilizes the rhetoric of "slavery" for the sole purpose of representing the exploitation of northern whites.

Consistent with the multi-racial representation of the oppressed classes in *Adonai*, blacks and mulattoes mix with working-class whites in many of Lippard's scenes of urban squalor. In his realistic depiction of the multi-racial populace of the slums, Lippard challenges slavery advocates' claim that blacks and whites cannot co-exist peacefully and he posits a racially mixed working-class alliance against the white wealthy classes. One of many such examples appears in *The Nazarene; or, The Last of the Washingtons*, Lippard's 1846 city-mystery that takes as its backdrop the nativist riots of Philadelphia in 1844. The novel follows the treachery of arch-nativist and bank president Calvin Wolfe to incite violence between Protestants and Catholics

¹¹⁷ Ned Buntline, *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York: A Story of Real Life*, (New York: Berford & Co., 1848), Part IV, 83.

through his secret society. In a subplot prior to the riots breaking out, dissipated medical student and part-time body-snatcher Harry Blair leads a gang of fellow students to a gambling-hall—the Devil’s Grave—situated among dilapidated tenements. For many middle-class temperance reformers, temperance novelists, and southern defenders of slavery, race-mixing in northeastern slums signified whites’ ultimate moral degradation. Lippard, who could bank on increasing the sensational impact of describing racially mixed orgies of debauchery, nevertheless insists on viewing such degradation as the product of poverty rather than the result of racial amalgamation. “Creeping from the damp cellars, crawling from the narrow doors, staggering forth from the dens where maddening drugs were sold, these creatures would lay their loathsome shapes in the sunlight, along the curb, or over the sidewalk, clustering together in groups of wretchedness and squalor. White and black, young and old, man and woman, were mingled in the hideous prospect. Here an old creature—surely not a man?—with grey hairs, and a rag quivering over his narrow chest in the way of attire. By his side a bloated shape, swollen at the eyes, dark in hue, with loathsome tatters tied to his limbs; was this a Negro? Was ever slave so base as this?”¹¹⁸ Although Lippard’s description ends with a disingenuous comparison between a free and an enslaved black, he goes on to chastise nativist missionaries who neglect the city’s black and white poor children. “Then tottering along, with curses on their thin pinched lips, came little children, white and black together, almost naked, little children, maddened with draughts of fiery poison, howling the name of God, they had never known....Why did not one of those noble missionaries, who travel twelve thousand miles to translate God’s word into Chinese,

¹¹⁸ George Lippard, *The Nazarene*, 138.

or Sanscrit, only pause half an hour, ere he undertook his long journey, to walk twelve squares from Chestnut street, and translate the same word, into the language of the Heathens of the Quaker City?”¹¹⁹ In these passages, whites are not degraded through mixing with blacks; instead, whites and free blacks are mutually degraded because of the middle-class’s shameful disregard for their suffering.

In *The Nazarene* blacks and mulattoes appear as sympathetic fugitive slaves as part of Lippard’s representation of the seedy gambling-house. Inside this “low haunt,” a drunken mob of blacks, mulattoes, and whites flail to the music of a one-eyed fiddler named Black Samuel. When the white medical students arrive and force the slumbering mulatto women to dance, Lippard, consistent with temperance rhetoric, measures the immorality of these white future professionals against the racially mixed inebriates. “It was a melancholy proof of the debasing power of Alcohol, to behold this band of young men, who by their wealth and talent, were calculated to shine in any position of society, lowering themselves to the level of these human beasts, in the vilest den of the Quaker City.”¹²⁰ Yet with the revelation that some of the blacks and mulattoes in the room are fugitive slaves who suspect that the medical students are disguised slave-catchers, the racial politics take on a sympathetic tone. Challenging pro-slavery apologists who argue that blacks are content and better off under slavery, Lippard describes the fugitive slaves’ terror and desperation at the prospect of being re-captured. “With their half-curling hair thrown over their brows in shaggy masses, they looked like savage beasts preparing to spring on their prey....These were runaway negroes from the south, who had as lief eat a

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 138-139.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 142.

breakfast at any time as cut a throat, but sooner hack the hearts out of their bodies, than be taken to their masters as slaves again.”¹²¹ Lippard heightens the danger to the fugitive slaves by implicating the gambling-hall’s proprietor, ex-attorney Peter “Graveyard” Crow, in illegal slave-dealing. “Whether he trapped a pickpocket, sold a free negro into slavery, purloined a dead body, choked a convict for the Sheriff, or retailed a morsel of unclean meat and poisonous rum from his plank, he was still the same mild and persuasive Graveyard Crow.”¹²² Despite the racist caricature that accents the description of the black and mulatto characters, Lippard makes a class-inflected argument against middle-class corruption by representing the fugitive slaves’ antagonists as dissipated medical students and an immoral attorney.

While Lippard includes blacks among America’s “enslaved” poor and challenges the southern mythology of contented slaves in his city-mysteries, he also develops his class critique through a racially ambivalent investment in heroic black males. We have already seen how Lippard’s portrayal of Old Royal in *New York* parallels the virtues of Arthur Dermoyne: with manly forms strengthened through honest labor, the two men wield power over dissipated slave-owners from the south and corrupt clergymen of the north. Yet Old Royal is just one character in a long line of powerful black heroes who appear in Lippard’s texts and mirror the virtues of their white working-class counterparts. Eric Lott has shown how antebellum popular culture, particularly the “fistic duels” in blackface minstrelsy, enabled a sympathetic identification between black and white working-class males. Lott argues, “If white and black men assumed mastery and superiority through similar mechanisms of male

¹²¹ Ibid., 144.

¹²² Ibid., 143.

rivalry, such similarity, in [Philip] Cohen's words, implied 'some recognition that black and white [were] peers of the same proletarian realm.' The very activities white male workers used to assert that they were not at the bottom, that they were somebody, could produce instances of solidarity with black men."¹²³ The cross-racial identification Lott discovers in the rowdy male camaraderie of blackface minstrelsy can also be found in the popular penny press, and particularly in Lippard's class-inflected city-mysteries.

Although blacks are often caricatured and made the object of jokes in penny papers, weekly story papers, and almanacs of the 1830's and 1840's, there are notable exceptions that provide a useful context for reading Lippard's works. In the mid-1840's, the Boston weekly story paper, *Star Spangled Banner*, edited by Justin Jones, serialized two novels featuring a Herculean black hero, Richard Seaver, and nicknamed Big Dick (Figure 1). In 1845, Justin Jones, writing under his prolific pseudonym Harry Hazel, serialized *Big Dick, The King of the Negroes; or, Virtue and Vice Contrasted*, and, in response to popular demand, serialized its sequel *Fourpe Tap; or, the Middy of the Macedonian* a year later. The two class-inflected novels chronicle Richard Seaver's efforts to expose vice among the wealthy classes of Boston and to protect the virtue of honest working-class whites. Like Lippard's vigilantes Old Royal and Arthur Dermoyne, "[Seaver] was, in truth, a magnanimous and generous man, always to be found advocating the cause of the right, and preventing the strong from trampling upon the weak."¹²⁴ Over the course of the two

¹²³ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft*, 127.

¹²⁴ Harry Hazel, Author's Preface. *Big Dick, the King of the Negroes; or, Virtue and Vice Contrasted*. By Hazel., (Boston: "Star Spangled Banner" Office, 1846).



Fig. 1. "Fourpe Tap's Encounter with the Giant Negro," from Harry Hazel, *Fourpe Tap* (Boston: Jones's Publishing House, [1847]).

Courtesy of Wright American Fiction, 1851-1875, hosted by the Indiana University Digital Library Program

novels, Seaver rescues an orphan discarded in a winter snowstorm, thwarts a foreign aristocrat's seduction of a young virgin, and turns a wealthy villain into minced meat. When he leads a group of white mechanics to clean up a racially mixed gambling district known as "Nigger Hill," Seaver is attacked by the wealthy white villain Philip Peterson, and in turn, uses Philip as a human cudgel. "In another moment, Big Dick seized the assassin, and tossed him above his head, caught him by the ankles, whirled him once around, and rested him as he would have done a billet of wood, upon his shoulders. He now strode toward the thickest of the fight, and using the assassin as a club, swept down his foes at each whirl of this new and powerful weapon!"¹²⁵ The fact that Seaver spends the next chapter pondering the moral consequences of having killed Peterson during the fracas further humanizes this black character who serves—in perhaps unprecedented fashion—as a popular text's locus of virtue.

Lippard's earliest employment of Herculean black figures, the racially caricatured sentries Glow-Worm and Musquito of Monk-Hall in *The Quaker City*, have received the most attention in the scholarship devoted to the writer's racial politics. In terms of the sentries' appearance, David S. Reynolds has written that "Devil-Bug's helpers Musquito and Glow-worm seem the stereotypically brutish, comical blacks characteristic of antebellum popular culture."¹²⁶ Although he recognizes the virtue of their "honest brutishness" as they "punish bourgeois hypocrites," Reynolds does not delve further into the affinity the black sentries share with Lippard's heroic portraits of white male laborers.¹²⁷ To do that, we must place

¹²⁵ Ibid., 60.

¹²⁶ David S. Reynolds, "Introduction," *The Quaker City*, xxxviii-xxxix.

Lippard's black characters in the broader context of the period's artisan republican rhetoric and plebian culture.

In *Chants Democratic*, Sean Wilentz locates an implicit working-class consciousness among the raucous Bowery B'hoys who comprised lower-class fire companies. "As it developed, this culture acquired a new ideological significance as well, a sort of republicanism of the streets that connected the workingmen's pride, resentments, and simple pleasures to the language of republican politics. The fire companies were among the first to suggest the connections, in their Fourth of July parades and in their patriotic firehouse icons."¹²⁸ Working-class Bowery B'hoys appear in many of Lippard's city-mysteries clad in the traditional "red flannel shirts" associated with the local fire-companies. As just one indication of city-mystery writers' attempts to draw a parallel between white laborers and free black workers in northeastern cities, nearly all of their "Herculean" black males—from Lippard's Glow-worm and Musquito of *The Quaker City* to Duganne's murdered black laborer in *The Knights of the Seal*—don the classic red flannel shirt of the Bowery B'hoy.

But the similarities do not end with the characters' wardrobes. Lippard's black and white working-class heroes mirror each other in their class accents: all are brawny figures who tower over their aristocratic and effete antagonists; all fight on behalf of the virtuous dispossessed whom the law does not protect and against the power of the corrupt privileged classes; and all hold humble yet "honest" occupations. In the 1847 compilation of his Revolutionary War sketches, *The*

¹²⁷ Ibid., xxxix.

¹²⁸ Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 263.

Legends of the American Revolution, “1776”, Lippard juxtaposes two sketches of a black and a white reluctant soldier who fight the British at the Battle of Brandywine. The first sketch, entitled “Black Sampson,” chronicles the heroism of a Herculean fugitive slave from the south who takes revenge upon the British after they murder his northern employer and rape the man’s daughter. Like his white hero Arthur Dermoyne of *New York* six years later, Lippard describes Black Sampson’s form “with its breadth of chest, its sinewy arms, its towering height, [and] Herculean outline of iron strength,” and he infuses the black hero’s vigilante violence with class accents.¹²⁹ Armed only with a scythe and accompanied by his white dog named Devil, Black Sampson wreaks havoc on the British forces who share the aristocratic airs of the wealthy villains of Lippard’s city-mysteries. Lippard describes one of Black Sampson’s kills thus: “How a third gentleman, (who always went out to murder in clean ruffles and a wig, perfumed with *Marechale* powder,) was startled by the apparition of a giant negro, a whirling scythe, a white dog crimsoned with blood, and how he saw this apparition a moment only, he never saw or felt anything more.”¹³⁰ Although Lippard assures his reader that he is “no factionist” and by no means an abolitionist who “in order to free the African race, would lay unholy hands upon the American Union,” the class accents that mark his lionization of Black Sampson link the black hero to his white counterpart of the subsequent sketch.¹³¹

¹²⁹ George Lippard, *The Legends of the Revolution*, “1776”; or, *Washington and His Generals*, [1847], (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1876), 362.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 368.

¹³¹ Ibid., 361.

Immediately following the sketch of Black Sampson in *The Legends of the American Revolution*, “1776”, Lippard chronicles the heroic actions of a white laborer in “The Mechanic Hero of Brandywine.” Sharing the physical prowess of Arthur Dermoyne, Old Royal, Black Sampson, and Harry Hazel’s Big Dick, the unnamed white mechanic is a righteous family man who enters battle only after his wife and child are murdered by British soldiers. “Here, at the time of the Revolution, there dwelt a stout blacksmith, his young wife and her babe....What feared he for the peril of the times, so long as his strong arm, ringing that hammer on the anvil, might gain bread for his wife and child?”¹³² After his family is murdered while he spends the night reporting to General George Washington on the British army’s movements near his cottage, the mechanic—armed not with a scythe, but with a hammer—is infused with patriotic heroism. “Go there to Brandywine, and where the carnage gathers thickest, where the fight is most bloody, there you may see a stout form striding on, lifting a huge hammer into light. Where that hammer falls, it kills—where that hammer strikes, it crushes!”¹³³ The Mechanic Hero resonates powerfully with Black Sampson as he uses his Herculean strength to wreak vengeance against anti-republican forces.

Two other Herculean white working-class heroes, noteworthy for their racially ambivalent class accents, appear in Lippard’s later city-mysteries. In the two-part city-mystery *Memoirs of a Preacher* (1848) and *The Man With the Mask* (1849) serialized in *Quaker City Weekly*, Giant Peter, a “sun-burnt” white worker loyal to the novels’ primary hero, helps to prevent a slick-tongued Popular Preacher from

¹³² Ibid., 372.

¹³³ Ibid., 373-374.

seducing a young virgin. Lippard's description of Giant Peter resonates with images of both the Bowery B'hoy and the black Hercules:

Imagine a form at least six feet one inch in stature, with broad shoulders, bulky chest, and iron limbs, with sinews like whip-cords. This form is enveloped in a huge great coat, blazing red in color, with two rows of white buttons down the front, each the size of a dollar....Above [the coat], or rather above a handkerchief of some indescribable plaid, you catch a substantial vision of a sun-burnt face, with whiskers like the flakes of snow, and eyes flashing like hickory coals from underneath the front of a cap of coarse grey fur.¹³⁴

In his racial affinity with black characters, the working-class Giant Peter shares the red coat of Glow-Worm and Mosquito, the dialect of Black Sampson, and the snow-white hair and "flashing" eyes of Old Royal. In Lippard's last novel, *Eleanor; or, Slave Catching in the Quaker City*, serialized in 1854, the Mechanic Hero of Brandywine becomes Adam Smith, the white mechanic protector of fugitive slaves.

Adam was a stout man, who came through the gate with a huge hammer in his hand, and a big leather bag slung over his shoulder. His hardy face, with bold features, seemed packed in with soot or gunpowder. His close-cut hair (as he lifted his cap and shook the wet from it) disclosed his hard, bullet-shaped head, and the open collar of his check shirt, revealed the throat of a Hercules.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ George Lippard, *Memoirs of a Preacher; or, The Mysteries of the Pulpit*, [1848-1849], (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1864), 23.

The fact that Adam Smith, a white, working-class northerner, is a fierce opponent of the Fugitive Slave Law and risks his life to rescue the abducted fugitive slave Eleanor shows how Lippard's racially ambivalent characterizations ultimately express anti-slavery sentiment in a popular genre viewed heretofore as hostile or indifferent to black experience.

Although Augustine Duganne's novels do not develop a sympathetic cross-racial identification between working-class whites and black slaves as effectively as Lippard's novels, Duganne is distinguished among city-mystery writers for placing a fugitive slave at the center of a seduction plot. In *The Knights of the Seal*, corrupt and powerful men known only as the Statesman, the Millionaire, and the Honorable pursue a quadroon fugitive slave through three northeastern cities for sport. These larger-than-life villains operate in Boston, where the Statesman resides in luxury while poverty resides "with her chill fingers and icy breath";¹³⁶ New York, the "city of merchant-princes, the mart of the Western world" where the Millionaire first abducts the fugitive slave;¹³⁷ and Philadelphia, where the working-class eke out an existence and huddle to keep warm in what Duganne refers to ironically as the "City of Brotherly Love." While Lippard's seduction plots rest almost exclusively on middle-class white women and Buntline's black women appear in scenes of degraded miscegenation, Duganne makes the radical move of placing a quadroon at the center of a seduction plot who serves as the locus of virtue in a city-mystery. However,

¹³⁵ George Lippard, "Eleanor; or, Slave Catching in the Quaker City," *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury*, March 5, 1854, 1.

¹³⁶ Augustine Duganne, *The Knights of the Seal*, 6.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

seduction plots involving black women were not without precedence. Walt Whitman's popular temperance novel *Franklin Evans; or The Inebriate* was published in 1842, three years prior to Duganne's novel. Whitman's novel, which shares the sensationalism and the threatening urban space of city-mysteries, incorporates a sub-plot of the title-hero's marriage to Margaret, a Creole woman on a Virginia plantation. Initially a charming and attractive mate for Franklin Evans, Margaret transforms over the course of the novel into a hateful, jealous woman who murders a rival and commits suicide in shame. Consistent with southern mythology about black women's heightened sexuality, Whitman's potentially radical use of the Creole is mitigated by an essentialized "blackness" that is violent and threatening. "It seems to have been the case, that with this creature's good traits her heart had still a remnant of the savage."¹³⁸

The final chapter of *The Knights of the Seal* provides an accurate retrospective on what the fugitive quadroon slave Florine represents for Duganne: "Only the spirit of Virtue, like Florine's, can resist the spirit of Evil."¹³⁹ Throughout the novel, Florine acts the part of the True Woman who would come to populate the sentimental novels of the 1850's and who was already becoming idealized in the 1840's. In the seduction plot, the Millionaire, the Statesman, and the Honorable abduct Florine and throw dice to see who wins her body. Despite their extraordinary resources that allow them to track her from city to city with hired "bloodhounds," Florine's virtue protects her. When Florine comes under the Statesman's power, she remains true to her

¹³⁸ Walt Whitman, *Franklin Evans; or The Inebriate* [1842], in *Walt Whitman: The Early Poems and the Fiction* edited by Thomas L. Brasher, (New York: New York University Press, 1963), 224.

¹³⁹ Augustine Duganne, *The Knights of the Seal*, 203.

husband (a Spanish pirate) and resists her seducer through Christian prayer. Duganne writes, “The Quadroon knelt upon the floor. A small crucifix hung before her. Her eyes were closed, but her lips moved. She was praying to Heaven for succor! Need was there for prayer!”¹⁴⁰ In a subsequent confrontation between the Statesman and the quadroon, Florine, like other True Women, is invested with the power to reform rakes. “A feeling very strange to him began to steal across the libertine’s soul, a feeling as of the fragrance of flowers, which the bad may breathe as well as the good, and he paused irresolute beside the girl till her unspoken prayer was ended. The eyes of the Quadroon opened upon him, lustrous as the morn, while a tear rolled down her pale cheek, as she gazed, like a dew-drop upon the drooping lily.”¹⁴¹ By the end of this scene, the Statesman’s reformation is complete: “He lifted her as he would an infant in his arms, and placed her on a couch. Then kneeling by her side, he chafed her small *white* hand, and bathed her forehead till the returning life-blood warmed it. But when Florine opened her eyes, she was alone. The Statesman was gone!”¹⁴² Although Duganne emphasizes Florine’s “whiteness” as she overcomes her seducers, the fact that she is a fugitive slave and the novel’s only real vehicle of reform point to further racial ambivalence in the city-mystery genre.

Considering the appearance of these class-inflected black heroes and their white working-class counterparts, it is surprising that critics have suggested Lippard’s city-mysteries lack substantial representations of blacks and white mechanics. If Lott were correct that black characters rarely appear and Denning were correct that white

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 117.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 130.

¹⁴² Ibid., 132.

mechanic heroes are rarely developed, one wonders who would be left on the pages of city-mysteries other than rich nabobs and the middle-class angels of sentimental novels? It seems the critics have largely overlooked city-mysteries' black male heroes who regularly complement their white working-class counterparts; and, in the case of one city-mystery that is nearly devoid of sympathetic white working-class characters, blacks could even serve as the primary voice of class critique.

In Lippard's 1849 serialized city-mystery, *The Killers*, a fictionalized account of Philadelphia's Election Night race riots earlier that year, burly grog-shop owner Black Andy single-handedly frustrates the plots of the "aristocratic" white villains. When dissipated youth Cromwell Hicks foments a race riot in order to create a cover for robbing his licentious step-father who has come to the grog-shop to seduce a virgin he has paid Black Andy \$50 to restrain in an upstairs room, Black Andy defends his drinking establishment, rescues the girl he initially abducted, and thwarts the villains' schemes. Having killed the younger Hicks in self-defense and now preparing to defend himself against Hicks's Cuban partner Don Jorge, Black Andy strikes a defiant pose in a racially charged scene that looks ahead to Herman Melville's anti-slavery symbolism in *Benito Cereno* six years later (Figure 2).

Lippard writes, "In his rage, [Black Andy] planted his foot upon the back of the dead man's head, and showing his broad black chest, awaited the approach of Don Jorge. The Cuban had seen much of blood in his time, but this scene horrified him in every nerve. He felt for his revolver—it was not in its usual place, under his vest—he had left it in the room above. Unarmed, defenseless, he was at the mercy of the giant,



Fig. 2. The Negro, “Bulbine”: “Prostrate on his face, the blood from the wound trickling over the boards of the floor, and over him triumphant and chuckling stood the Negro, ‘Bulbine,’ the knife which he shook dripping its red drops upon his black and brawny arm,” from George Lippard, *The Bank Directors Son* (Philadelphia: E.E. Barclay and A.R. Orton, [1851]).

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society

whose brute strength was sufficient to grind him to powder.”¹⁴³ Then, in a scene reminiscent of Richard Seaver’s rescue of an abducted virgin in Hazel’s *Big Dick* and of Giant Peter’s rescue of a kidnapped virgin from a fire in Lippard’s *The Man With the Mask*, Black Andy appears on the roof of his burning groggery carrying the senseless young woman. “As a thousand eyes were uplifted, there appeared on the roof of the groggery a huge dark form, environed by flames, and bearing the form of a woman in his arms. She was insensible, perchance dead—her dress fluttered in a puff of air as he held her aloft in his brawny arms—and his black face, reddened by flames, was seen beneath the form which he held on high.”¹⁴⁴ As if Lippard was reluctant to explore further the dramatic scene’s sensational allusion to miscegenation, the groggery caves in, the girl is miraculously saved, and Black Andy, presumably dead, disappears from the text. And yet, despite the disappearance of the brawny black hero, Lippard concludes *The Killers* with anti-slavery sentiment. The rescued girl and her boyfriend flee unmolested to Panama because they have proof of illegal slave-trading between the elder Hicks and his business associates in Philadelphia. Following the conclusion to the narrative, Lippard appends an excerpt from President Zachary Taylor’s message of December 24, 1849 to Congress calling for action to prevent Americans from using Brazilian ships to participate in the illegal African slave trade.

The progressive nature of Lippard’s investment in Herculean black figures becomes clear when compared with similar representations of black males by his

¹⁴³ George Lippard, *The Killers. A Narrative of Real Life in Philadelphia*. By a Member of the Philadelphia Bar., (Philadelphia: Hankinson and Bartholomew, 1850), 42.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

contemporaries. Although Duganne's use of "white slavery" rhetoric in *The Knights of the Seal* does not encourage a cross-racial identification between working-class whites and black slaves, Duganne calls attention to the violence against northern free black workers in a racially charged murder scene in downtown Boston. The novel's arch villain Rivingsby kills a "Herculean" black laborer in broad daylight as a warning to his pawn Gaskill.

Sinking his eyes to the point which occupied the attention of his companion, Gaskill beheld, standing at the junction of two streets that slanted to the water's edge—with his broad breast, from which the flannel shirt had blown back, exposed naked to the sun—a tall, athletic negro. He seemed to have just emerged from his labor in one of the innumerable alleys that penetrated the rows of houses, and stood there—his arms folded on his waist, his bosom bare, cooling himself in the fresh breeze that blew from the water—a perfect type of the Herculean negro laborer.... 'A fine mark,' laughed Rivingsby, as he pulled the trigger of the pistol, while at the very moment the bells of the city pealed out the hour of one. The negro staggered a moment—threw his arms wildly upward—and fell dead to the earth.¹⁴⁵

Although the uncanny image of the murdered laborer haunts Rivingsby throughout the rest of the novel, Duganne's Herculean black laborer lacks the heroic agency of Lippard's Old Royal and serves primarily to measure the depth of the villain's depravity. Ned Buntline also incorporates Herculean black figures into his city-mysteries, although without the sympathy shown by Lippard or Duganne. In Buntline's *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*, a rowdy gang of white libertines

¹⁴⁵ Augustine Duganne, *The Knights of the Seal*, 36.

led by Butcher Bill descends upon a black bar in Five Points and harasses the patrons for sport. After forcing two black women to dance with him, Butcher Bill picks a fight with the strongest black man in the establishment. “Once more Butcher Bill defied any one of the negroes to fight him. None of them seemed desirous of being whipped by him. But he was not to be kept out of his fun in this way. He walked up to a Herculean negro, a fellow who stood full six feet high, and was built very heavily.”¹⁴⁶ Unlike Lippard’s Herculean black males who embody the value of physical strength and appear impervious as they fight heroically in the name of virtue, Buntline’s Herculean black male is subdued easily by Butcher Bill. “Placing his knees on the negro’s arms, so disabled him, that he had time to plant four or five terrible blows directly in the eyes and mouth of the latter. This settled him, for each blow was like that given from a sledge hammer, and bones were heard to crack and crush as he struck. The negro could stand no more, and he now cried enough.”¹⁴⁷ For Buntline, the Herculean black male appears in a scene of comic relief and serves only to establish the bravado of white ruffians. While Lippard’s progressive representations of stalwart black male heroes distinguish him among the many purveyors of antebellum popular fiction, the extent to which Lippard’s working-class protest relies upon a sympathetic engagement with blackness is best seen in his successful debut novel *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk-Hall*.

Race and Anti-Slavery Discourse in *The Quaker City*

Critics have been reluctant to view Lippard’s *The Quaker City* as mounting an effective critique of the wealthy classes on behalf of the working-class. Despite

¹⁴⁶ Ned Buntline, *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*, Part II, 84.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 84-85.

Lippard's claim in his preface to the 1849 edition of the novel that he "determined to write a book which should describe all the phases of a corrupt social system, as manifested in the city of Philadelphia," the primary seduction plot centers on a middle-class white young woman and assertive working-class white characters are scarce in the text.¹⁴⁸ In this regard, Michael Denning's criticism of the city-mystery genre would seem to apply to *The Quaker City*: "The narrative elements [Karl] Marx identified in [Eugene] Sue—the depiction of workers as passive victims, a world made up of the elite and the lumpen, and the quasi-aristocratic supermen heroes—prevent the emergence of an active working-class protagonist, a mechanic hero."¹⁴⁹ And yet, *The Quaker City* proves to be the novel in which Lippard creates his most powerful class critique of the "upper ten" through a combination of artisan republican rhetoric and cross-racial sympathy. Although *The Quaker City* lacks the white mechanic heroes such as Arthur Dermoyne and Adam Smith of Lippard's later city-mysteries in the 1850's, the novel's stalwart black heroes and its anti-slavery discourse serve to represent the fears and anxieties of the white working-class. Through a class-inflected forgery plot that implicates the north in chattel slavery and through an inheritance plot that involves the long-lost daughter of the racially ambiguous anti-hero Devil-Bug, *The Quaker City* relies primarily on racial discourse to advance its class critique.

The first third of the novel retells the crime at the center of the actual trial and acquittal in 1843 of a Philadelphian who murdered his sister's alleged rapist. Similar to Edgar Allan Poe's ruse in the preface to his 1838 *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon*

¹⁴⁸ George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 2.

¹⁴⁹ Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 106.

Pym, Lippard increases the sensational narrative's verisimilitude by relating how a dying attorney provided him with the details of the case in a packet entitled "Revelations of the Secret Life of Philadelphia." Yet after Mary Arlington is lured into a sham wedding ceremony and is raped by the rakish "Man of Pleasure" Gus Lorrimer, the novel devotes itself to unraveling a forgery plot that dramatizes how duplicitous anti-republicans can manipulate the marketplace and exploit the poor. In the forgery plot, worldly villain Colonel Algernon Fitz-Cowles and his "Jewish" accomplice Gabriel Von Gelt forge a \$100,000 letter of credit against the Philadelphia importing firm of Livingstone, Harvey, and Co. The northern importing firm has "made a large purchase in cotton from a rich planter" in Charleston, South Carolina, and the firm's partners try to apprehend the forgers before they escape the city.¹⁵⁰ The plot thickens as Fitz-Cowles plots to murder his accomplice, Von Gelt, with the help of Devil-Bug and to seduce merchant Albert Livingstone's wife, Dora; meanwhile, merchant Luke Harvey searches throughout the city for the forgers and exposes Dora's infidelity to his business partner. To compound the potential confusion of the interweaving plots, the forgers are also imposters. Colonel Fitz-Cowles is actually Juan Larode, the bastard son of a Creole slave in Louisiana and thus likely a fugitive slave; Gabriel Von Gelt, Lippard explains in his 1845 "Key to *The Quaker City; or, the Monks of Monk-Hall*," is "a fictitious name for a notorious personage, a pretended Jew, who occupied a large share of the public attention, some years since."¹⁵¹ With characters donning multiple disguises to either aid in the search

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 40.

¹⁵¹ George Lippard, "Key to *The Quaker City; or, the Monks of Monk-Hall*." In *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk-Hall* by George Lippard. Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1845.

for the forgers or to evade capture, the forgery plot becomes a class-inflected metaphor for the instability of the wage marketplace and the threat an unregulated marketplace poses to the laboring poor.

Early in *The Quaker City*, rakish Gus Lorrimer sums up the unpredictability of the urban marketplace: ““One moment you gather the apple, the next it is ashes. Every thing fleeting and nothing stable, every thing shifting and changing, and nothing substantial! A bundle of hopes and fears, deceits and confidences, joys and miseries, strapped to a fellow’s back like Pedlar’s wares.””¹⁵² Just as the value of bank notes fluctuated in response to economic depressions during the antebellum period, letters of credit—a form of paper money—could be manipulated and forged by criminals who lacked the republican principles of civic virtue. In this context, the episode of the confrontation between bankrupt laborer John Davis and haughty bank president Job Joneson reinforces wage-earners’ anxieties about the marketplace. While the bank president remains unscathed when his bank fails, John Davis has lost his life’s savings of \$600 and his young children subsequently starve to death. For Lippard, the brief subplot is also symptomatic of the “white-collar” crime that goes unpunished in the metropolis: “Our Episode will furnish to the world a pleasing illustration of that Justice, which in the Quaker City, unbars the jail to Great Swindlers, while it sends the honest Poor Man into the grave of the Suicide.””¹⁵³ While such explicit scenes of class-based suffering are rare in *The Quaker City*, the forgery scheme, figured through anti-slavery discourse, provides an extended indictment of society’s “upper ten.”

¹⁵² George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 23.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 404.

With the importing firm's large purchase of southern cotton implicating the north in chattel slavery, the forgery plot also performs the symbolic work of linking dissipated, effeminate southern slave-owners and aristocratic northern merchants as "non-producers." Fitz-Cowles, who dons the proud title of a colonel, gains the northern firm's confidence by assuming the role of a successful and flashy southern planter. Luke Harvey enthuses over Fitz-Cowles to his business partner Albert Livingstone, "Splendid fellow. Dresses well—gives capital terrapin suppers at the United States—inoculates all the bucks about town with his style of hat....Got lots of money—a millionaire—no end to his wealth. By the bye, where the d——l did he come from? isn't he a Southern planter with acres of niggers and prairies of cotton?"¹⁵⁴ David Anthony has shown how Fitz-Cowles's effeminacy, for which he compensates by wearing padding under his clothes, points to the professional male's crisis of "masculinity" in the antebellum period.¹⁵⁵ I would also argue that Fitz-Cowles's effeminacy links him with the moral corruption and dissipation that Lippard associated with southern slaveholders and ascribed to many of his villains. Such "southern" dissipation is reflected in Fitz-Cowles's facial features: "The brow of Fitz-Cowles was disfigured by a hideous frown, and his entire countenance, wore an expression, characteristic of a low bully, who has been accustomed to the vilest haunts, in the most corrupt cities of the South."¹⁵⁶ Lippard also mocks southern planters when Luke Harvey, disguised as a slave-owner ridiculously named Major

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 37-38.

¹⁵⁵ David Anthony, "Banking on Emotion: Financial Panic and the Logic of Male Submission in the Jacksonian Gothic," *American Literature* 76.4 (December 2004): 719-747.

¹⁵⁶ George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 155.

Rappahannock Mulhill, tries to gain Fitz-Cowles's confidence. Describing the state of affairs in South Carolina at the time he headed north, Harvey tells Fitz-Cowles: "“Lively! Roasted an Abolitionist the day afore I left, for tryin’ to steal my niggers. Lynched a Yankee, the day afore that, for sellin’ me some Jersey cider for champagne! Things is werry lively in our diggings, jist now.””¹⁵⁷ Although neither Fitz-Cowles nor Harvey is actually a southern planter, they rehearse the role of the dissipated southern non-producer that Lippard contrasts with the “honest” labor of his white and black working-class stalwart heroes of the north.

Artisan republican rhetoric characterizes Lippard's critique of the professional middle-class in the north, as he presents unflattering portraits of the duplicitous, “respectable” men who carouse and hatch plots as Monks in the subterranean caverns of Monk-Hall. Lippard describes the Monk's midnight debaucheries: “Here were lawyers from the court, doctors from the school, and judges from the bench. Here, too, ruddy and round faced, sate a demure parson, whose white hands and soft words, had made him the idol of the wealthy congregation. Here was a puffy-faced Editor side by side with the Magazine Proprietor; here were sleek-visaged tradesmen, with round faces and gouty hands, whose voices, now shouting the drinking song had re-echoed the prayer and psalm in the aristocratic church, not longer than a Sunday ago.”¹⁵⁸ Although white working-class characters (beyond the suicidal bankrupt John Davis) are not introduced into the novel to make Lippard's critique of the wealthy classes, *The Quaker City* figures the virtues and hopes of the northern white and free black working-class through the racially ambivalent representation of black

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 218.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 55-56.

characters. Just like Lippard would do with Black Andy in *The Killers* four years later, he relies heavily upon blackness in *The Quaker City* to express his class critique.

The novel's foremost voice of working-class protest belongs to the sardonically witty Devil-Bug. The racially ambiguous tenant of Monk-Hall and arguably the novel's hero, Devil-Bug is ubiquitous as he plays host to the corrupt "Monks" and figures in the resolution of nearly every subplot. David S. Reynolds has identified Devil-Bug as a "likable criminal" whose perverse criminality is at least preferable to the deceitful crimes of the wealthy classes. Reynolds writes, "The leering Devil-Bug supervises constant debauchery and crime among the upper-class Philadelphians who frequent his den of iniquity, Monk Hall....Paradoxically enough, this amiable devil is shown to have more honesty and integrity than the two-faced aristocrats he witnesses everywhere in American society."¹⁵⁹ Although Reynolds links Devil-Bug with the radical-democrat and black humor running through antebellum popular culture, he writes little about this "insanely sane" outcast's racial ambiguity and use of the class-inflected rhetorical devices of blackface minstrelsy. Dana Nelson has pointed out Devil-Bug's "tawny cheeks" and "swarthy visage" as suggesting the novel's middle-class anxieties about "the irregular and hybrid results of a forfeited pure group ideal."¹⁶⁰ But to appreciate the racial implications of the novel's *working-class* protest, we must consider Devil-Bug's racial ambiguity and his prominent role in the narrative events. Upon Devil-Bug's "stout and muscular frame,

¹⁵⁹ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 201. Reynolds links Devil-Bug with the "likable criminal" Davy Crockett on page 459.

¹⁶⁰ Dana Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 148.

with the heavy body, knotted into uncouth knobs at the shoulders,” rests the class critique of *The Quaker City*.¹⁶¹

In describing Devil-Bug, formally named Abijah K. Jones, Lippard suggests strongly that his novel’s hero is either black or mulatto. As for his family background, the reader learns the little that Devil-Bug knows. “Born in a brothel, the offspring of foulest sin and pollution, he had grown from very childhood, in full and continual sight of scenes of vice, wretchedness and squalor. From his very birth, he had breathed an atmosphere of infamy....No mother had ever spoken words of kindness to him; no father had ever held him in his arms.”¹⁶² Based upon Lippard’s portrayal of race-mixing in urban brothels and his occasional indulgence in temperance rhetoric’s sensational treatment of amalgamation, Lippard leaves open the possibility of Devil-Bug’s black heritage by linking his childhood to brothels. A more persuasive reading of Devil-Bug’s blackness is provided by Lippard’s physical description of Devil-Bug and his two henchmen. Devil-Bug has within his employ two black sentries, Glow-Worm and Musquito, who share the physical traits and garb of Lippard’s other black and white working-class heroes. “From either side of the fire-place, as [Devil-Bug] spoke, emerged a tall Herculean negro, with a form of strength and sinews of iron....These additional insects, nestling in the den of the other, were rather singular specimens of the glow-worm and the musquito. Their attire was plain and simple. Each negro was dressed in coarse corduroy trowsers, and a flaring red flannel shirt.”¹⁶³ Embodying the “mere brute strength” of “honest”

¹⁶¹ George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 227.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 105-106.

labor, Glow-Worm and Musquito are loyal to Devil-Bug and subdue rakish criminals when called upon. Devil-Bug's physical prowess links him to his henchmen, to Lippard's Black Sampson of *The Legends of the Revolution*, and to Harry Hazel's Big Dick. The dwarfish Devil-Bug's compact strength, Lippard writes, "all gave you the idea, of a Sampson, stunted in his growth; a giant whom nature had dwarfed from the regular proportion of manly beauty, down into an uncouth image of hideous strength."¹⁶⁴ Devil-Bug, referred to as an "insect" like Glow-Worm and Musquito, is described in terms consistent with racist caricature. "A flat nose with wide nostrils shooting out into each cheek like the smaller wings of an insect, an immense mouth whose heavy lips disclosed two long rows of bristling teeth, a pointed chin, blackened by a heavy beard, and massive eyebrows meeting over the nose, all furnished the details of a countenance, not exactly calculated to inspire the most pleasant feelings in the world."¹⁶⁵ Although Devil-Bug's garb is never described in the novel, a wood engraving by popular illustrator F.O.C. Darley for the 1845 edition shows Devil-Bug (identifiable by the fact he has use of only one eye) dressed similarly to his henchmen and with similarly shaded skin (Figure 3).

Devil-Bug, in his deformity and unusual upper body strength, is also linked with the racially ambiguous "freaks" exhibited in P.T. Barnum's popular museums in the 1840's. Paul Gilmore has argued that Edgar Allan Poe's depiction of the title character of his short story "Hop-Frog" would resonate with the audience members who saw white American actor Harvey Leach's "blackface" performances as an ape-

¹⁶³ Ibid., 52.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 227.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 51.



Fig. 3. "Frontispiece wood engraving," F.O.C. Darley, delineator, from George Lippard, *The Quaker City; or The Monks of Monk Hall: A Romance of Philadelphia Life, Mystery, and Crime* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, [1845]).

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society

like creature. Quoting from the *Selected Letters of P.T. Barnum*, Gilmore compares Hop-Frog and Leach's performed "ourang-ootang": "Like Leach, because of 'the distortion in his legs,' Hop-Frog 'could only get along by a sort of interjectional gait—something between a leap and a wriggle.' Similarly, despite his troubles walking, Hop-Frog is also a spectacular acrobat: 'the prodigious muscular power which nature seemed to have bestowed upon his arms...enabled him to perform feats of wonderful dexterity, where trees or ropes were in question.' And like Leach, who regularly preformed as an ape, Hop-Frog, it seems, 'resembled...a small monkey.'"¹⁶⁶ Poe's description of Hop-Frog in 1849 and P.T. Barnum's description of Leavy's "ourang-ootang" in the mid-1840's nearly mirror Lippard's description of Devil-Bug. "[Devil-Bug] was a strange thickset specimen of flesh and blood, with a short body, marked by immensely broad shoulders, long arms and thin distorted legs. The head of the creature was ludicrously large in proportion to the body."¹⁶⁷ By racially locating Devil-Bug as black or at the very least associating him with blackness, Lippard goes on to express his most powerful working-class sympathy through the rhetorical devices of blackface minstrelsy that Devil-Bug invokes.

Over the course of the novel, Devil-Bug, through minstrelsy's subversive strategies of mockery, burlesque, and cheeky wit, lampoons numerous emerging middle-class professions and thereby serves as the primary vehicle for Lippard's critique of abstracted power. David Roediger and Eric Lott have analyzed the racial ambivalence produced by blackface minstrelsy's class critique; that is, the white

¹⁶⁶ Paul Gilmore, *The Genuine Article: Race, Mass Culture, and American Literary Manhood*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 106.

¹⁶⁷ George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 51.

working-class audience and blacks were momentarily aligned through the minstrel's burlesque of the professional middle-class. According to Roediger, "By far the most common rebellious feature of antebellum minstrelsy was a partly cultural and partly political air of defiance toward authorities, snobs and condescending moralists."¹⁶⁸ Lott sees the same kind of social critique in a wide array of antebellum popular forms that include minstrelsy, popular museums, and dime novels. "They constantly deflated the pretensions of an emerging middle-class culture of science, reform, education, and professionalism."¹⁶⁹ It is therefore consistent with Devil-Bug's suggestive blackness and ironic tongue that he serves as *The Quaker City's* voice of middle-class critique. From mimicking medical discourse as he gleefully "prescribes" opium to hasten the death of Mary Arlington's brother Byrnewood, to assigning his two black henchmen as "defense lawyers" for his torture victim Reverend F.A.T. Pyne, the misanthropic Devil-Bug mocks the discourses of the hypocritical professionals who revel nightly in Monk-Hall. Devil-Bug's irreverent spirit is on display as he slices the throat of merchant Luke Harvey. Lippard writes, "There was a great deal of the philosopher in Devil-Bug. Never a doctor of all the school, with his dissecting knife in hand and the corpse of a subject before him, could have manifested more nerve and coolness than the savage of Monk-Hall.... Then as if to show that his spirits were not depressed by the solemnity of the operation, he laughed merrily to himself, and hummed the catch of some dismal song."¹⁷⁰ In another perverse scene in which he dominates the middle-class Byrnewood Arlington,

¹⁶⁸ David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 126.

¹⁶⁹ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft*, 64.

¹⁷⁰ George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 367-368.

Devil-Bug refers to the minstrel's plantation song as he prepares to bury his victim alive. Lippard writes, "As Devil-Bug turned round, he tossed the body of Byrnewood rather roughly on his shoulder, and the victim uttered a deep groan of pain and agony. 'Oh, groan, little children groan, as the nigger wot plays on the banjo ses, but it won't help you the least circumstance!'"¹⁷¹ While his black humor is directed mockingly at the professional classes, Devil-Bug performs his most subversive and heroic act when he dupes the wealthy classes and sacrifices himself for his long-lost daughter Mabel.

Devil-Bug's subversive mockery of the middle-class is rendered more effective through his own redemption in the text. In addition to being haunted by the spectral images of those whom he has killed in the past, Devil-Bug commits most of his crimes in the book for the sake of his recently re-discovered daughter and the current object of rakish Reverend Pyne's affections, Mabel. The girl's mother, Ellen, was seduced by wealthy merchant Albert Livingstone and gave birth to a child in 1824. A year later, that child having died unbeknownst to Livingstone, Ellen gave birth to a second child—Mabel—whom Devil-Bug sired. In hopes that he can present Mabel as the daughter and heiress of the wealthy Livingstone, Devil-Bug kills the forger Gabriel Von Gelt in order to protect Livingstone's fortune; he slays the confidence-man and cult leader Count Ravoni who has mesmerized Mabel; and he sets the fatal fire at Livingstone's country estate that engulfs the merchant and his adulterous wife Dora. In a scene reminiscent of the blazing pines in the haunted forest of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1835 short story, "Young Goodman Brown," Devil-Bug—associated with the antebellum "Black Devil" figure—ignites the pine trees under a blood red sky. Like the mysterious Satan figure who accompanies Young

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 307.

Goodman Brown through the woods, Devil-Bug devilishly celebrates his murderous handiwork: “With every infernal emotion, playing over his chaos of a face, mingled with the gleams of human feeling, for the space of fifteen minutes, dancing, hooting, yelling, or standing like a block of stone, with his arms folded over his breast, Devil-Bug watched the progress of the fire.”¹⁷² With Livingstone out of the way, Mabel’s identity as Livingstone’s daughter established, and the police closing in on Monk-Hall, Devil-Bug performs the ultimate self-sacrifice by standing in the path of a rock he has ordered his two henchmen to roll onto Von Gelt’s corpse. Despite the death of the socially ostracized host of Monk-Hall, Devil-Bug has duped all of the city’s wealthy citizens by placing his daughter Mabel among them. Just prior to his suicide, Devil-Bug reflects with relish: ““Ha! The g-a-l shall roll in wealth, dress in silks an’ satin’s, and be a lady all her life, old Devil-Bug’s daughter, with the mark o’ the red snake on her right temple! It’s all settled...ho, hoo! Old Devil-Bug’s daughter among the grandees o’ th’ Quaker City!””¹⁷³ Like Poe’s ostracized Hop-Frog who exacts revenge upon the aristocratic ministers who have insulted his lone love Trippetta, Devil-Bug has the last laugh.

Other notable moments of class protest that rely upon the burlesque of blackface minstrelsy occur between forger Fitz-Cowles and his Creole servant boy nicknamed Dim. A disgruntled servant who believes that he is underpaid and underappreciated by his employer, Dim mocks Fitz-Cowles who is asleep in their hotel room. ““Tink I shall hab to discharge Massa. Debbil of a flare-up ‘tween me and him some day when I tells him; ‘I don’t want you any more, you sah!—you kin

¹⁷² Ibid., 521.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 556.

take dem wages and go!’ Kep Dim up till broke ob day. Say dat Morroccor don’ shine? Break de lookin’-glasses heart—I tells you. Till broke ob day kep Dim a-waitin’, and den tumbles into bed, widout so much as giving de chile a-quataw! Oh—de High Golly!’”¹⁷⁴ Dim burlesques the exploitative employer-employee relationship a second time as he waits in the hotel room for his boss to return. Lippard writes, “Opening a drawer of the dressing bureau, the Creole drew from thence, a box of Lucifer matches and a cigar. ‘De young gemmen will take a smoke,’ said Dim, with quiet dignity as he lit the cigar, and seating himself on one chair, placed his feet over the back of another. ‘Dis Habanner am prime! Get out now! Who ses dis chile aint a gemmen born? ‘Look heah yo’ dam-nigger brack dem boots, right off, and den or-dah coachee to bring out de carr’ge, or I’ll smash yo’ jaw!’ Dats de talk! Now de young gemmen will read this news.”¹⁷⁵ While Dim lampoons his employer, Devil-Bug critiques corrupt politicians and judges through burlesque.

In the cellars of Monk-Hall Devil-Bug convenes and presides over a meeting of the Outcasts of the Quaker City, a motley crowd of poor vagabonds and the fallen middle-class. “The mass had been born in misery, Baptized by Starvation, and Confirmed at the altar of Poverty, by the good old Bishop Crime.”¹⁷⁶ Standing before the outcasts, Devil-Bug mocks Senator Daniel Webster, whom Lippard lampoons in the character of Senator Gabriel Godlike in *New York*. “As Devil-Bug uttered these words, in a tone of quiet gravity, he presented in his person and manner, a capital burlesque of some ‘Godlike’ Senator, while the vagabonds, grouped around him

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 153.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 548.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 478.

looked like Congressmen eager to pay their attentions to Judge Lynch.”¹⁷⁷ Devil-Bug’s subversive mockery of the wealthy and powerful members of society reaches a crescendo in the novel’s climactic “Devil-Bug’s Dream” sequence. Finding himself transported to an American dystopia in 1950 when a monarchy of Kings, cotton Lords, and factory Princes tyrannize the black and white laboring poor, Devil-Bug rejoices gleefully at the sight of spectral corpses which haunt and augur the demise of the aristocratic elite. “Devil-Bug beheld them, he alone of all that innumerable crowd, beheld the corpses in their shrouds. He beheld them and laughed in glee. It was a sight of glory, a sight of maddening glory to the King as he looked over the soldiers—but the corpse at his side, with its dull dead leaden eyes fixed upon his face—ah, ah! he saw it not.”¹⁷⁸ In Devil-Bug’s role as Lippard’s voice of working-class protest, his morbid jubilation as God’s wrath rains down and destroys the American dystopia is also the jubilation of the multi-racial oppressed classes. “Again like a spirit reigning over the evil which he had wrought, Devil-Bug raised his hands and laughed in glee.”¹⁷⁹

Conclusion

At the height of George Lippard’s popularity, *The Quaker City* sold 60,000 in 1845 and 10,000 copies annually for the next ten years.¹⁸⁰ Having published 23 separate books between the age of 20 and his premature death at the age of 31, Lippard spoke out passionately on behalf of the growing numbers of laboring poor in

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 479.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 387.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 393.

¹⁸⁰ David S. Reynolds, “Introduction,” *The Quaker City*, vii.

the urban northeast. Ironically, Lippard's popular success is in part responsible for his long exclusion from American literary history. Between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the twentieth century, Lippard's books gradually went out of print. With the institutionalization of American Literature during the 1920's and the rise of New Criticism, Lippard's sensational novels were rarely mentioned in scholarly criticism. Yet with the rise of cultural studies and the renewed interest in the diverse products of antebellum popular print culture, Lippard is relevant as never before. The cultural studies work of David S. Reynolds, Michael Denning, Eric Lott, and Shelley Streeby have established Lippard's importance to exploring questions of class, race, and gender in the antebellum period.

As this chapter has shown, Lippard, in order to articulate his sympathies for the laboring poor and to call attention to the urgent need for social reform, relied heavily upon racial and anti-slavery discourses. Stalwart black male heroes do not merely complement their white working-class counterparts as second-class characters in Lippard's novels, but they mirror the white working-class characters in their virtue, their defense of the weakest members of society, and in their physical strength that calls up the value of physical labor. Lippard protests the Fugitive Slave Law and explores the politics of the color line in his sensitive study of the self-hate that haunts tragic mulatto and fugitive slave Randolph Royaltan in *New York*. Lippard also revises the public perception of the Founding Fathers by revealing in *New York* that Randolph and his sister Esther are actually the grand-children of a Founding Father, an allusion to Thomas Jefferson. In a secret letter that finds its way into Randolph's hands, the Founding Father expresses his hope that revealing his private relationship

with a slave will ease the country's racial strife. "That packet contains matters which, carried into action by such a son, would do much, yes, everything, to establish the happiness of all the races on this continent."¹⁸¹ In addition to exploring the color line, Lippard also refutes slavery apologists' representations of the contented slave and challenges colonizationists' hysterical predictions of a race war.

Because Lippard aimed to portray the depth of the plight of the laboring poor, his city-mysteries rarely feature workers' triumphs over their employers and they do not imagine a radical reformation of urban labor practices. Instead, as evidence of the harsh realities of the labor market in the crowded northeastern cities, many of Lippard's novels conclude with the white working-class heroes relocating to open land in the west. Despite the absence of black characters in these closing scenes, anti-slavery discourse endures. At the end of *The Quaker City*, Byrnewood Arlington has relocated to a pastoral valley in Wyoming—a meaningful setting as Lippard's pastoral conclusions always take place in free states and territories—with his ruined sister Mary and his new wife Annie, the working-class daughter of the bankrupt suicide John Davis. In a bittersweet twist to the novel's seduction plot, Mary continues to pine for her seducer Gus Lorrimer whom Byrnewood has murdered and Byrnewood is haunted by the traumas he endured in Monk-Hall at the hands of Devil-Bug. In a closing description that looks ahead to the crushed spirit of Herman Melville's slave-ship captain Benito Cereno, Byrnewood's memories "dwelt like a shadow on his soul."¹⁸² Meanwhile, Devil-Bug, the novel's energetic voice of working-class protest, lies as a mangled corpse under a rock beneath the bustling

¹⁸¹ George Lippard, *New York*, 242-243.

¹⁸² George Lippard, *The Quaker City*, 575.

streets of the Quaker City. At the end of *New York*, mechanic hero Arthur Dermoyne, who does not receive any of the vast fortune central to the inheritance plot, leads a group of laborers west. “Three hundred emigrants, mechanics, their wives and little ones, who have left the savage civilization of the Atlantic cities, for a free home beyond the Rocky Mountains—such is the band which now moves on in the light of the fading day.”¹⁸³ In *The Man With the Mask*, the avenger Charles Lester, his rescued sister Fanny, and his side-kick Giant Peter leave Philadelphia for a farm in Wisconsin. In an allusive critique of chattel slavery, Lippard writes, “Wiskonsan! Among the latest-born of the great family of American Nations, this young state, by her code of humanity, shames the barbarous laws which yet prevail in the Atlantic States.”¹⁸⁴

Although in his editorials for *Quaker City Weekly* Lippard routinely criticized abolitionists whom he perceived as indifferent to the suffering of the laboring poor in the north, he became an outspoken critic of chattel slavery after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. In fact, Lippard’s clearest condemnation of chattel slavery comes in his final city-mystery, *Eleanor; or, Slave Catching in the Quaker City*. Serialized in the *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury* between January and March of 1854, *Eleanor* relates the efforts of a Quaker merchant of Philadelphia, Elijah Carwin, and a “reformed” southern planter, Blair Malcolm, to rescue a kidnapped fugitive slave before she is sold back into slavery. Prior to the southern planter discovering that Eleanor is his daughter and subsequently denouncing slavery, Carwin and Malcolm

¹⁸³ George Lippard, *New York*, 284.

¹⁸⁴ George Lippard, *The Man With the Mask; A Sequel to the Memoirs of a Preacher, a Revelation of the Church and the Home*, (Philadelphia: Jos. Severns and Company, 1849), 103.

debate the Fugitive Slave Law and the institution of slavery itself. Reflecting Lippard's view that the causes of labor reform and ending slavery are linked, Carwin argues, "I am no Abolitionist. I never liked their sectarian spirit....Until the Fugitive Slave Law, I thought of slavery as an evil afar off; as a matter belonging to you alone; and my attention was occupied by the hideous White Slavery of England, and the fear that it would in time, plant itself on our soil. But the Fugitive Slave Law woke me up, as it did hundreds of thousands of others, who had never mixed with Abolitionists."¹⁸⁵ While Lippard's protagonist distances himself from middle-class abolitionists who are preoccupied with the slavery question at the expense of labor reform, Carwin also realizes that labor advocates are preoccupied with the plight of the working poor at the expense of sympathy for the chattel slave. Carwin goes on to turn the disingenuous logic of "white slavery" on its head. "[The Fugitive Slave Law] taught us, that as terrible as is the White Slavery of English factories and mines; as fearful as is Wages Slavery, when it spoliates the poor of large cities, and great industrial districts; that Black Slavery is the very embodiment of all the evils of White Slavery, multiplied *ad finitum*; the great Sum of all villainies and tyrannies that ever existed beneath the sun."¹⁸⁶ Lippard, who praised the Gothic novels of his predecessor Charles Brockden Brown for their "power and truthfulness," pays homage to his idol in the character of Elijah Carwin.¹⁸⁷ Just as the ventriloquist Carwin of Brown's 1798 novel *Wieland* exposes the dangers of both religious

¹⁸⁵ George Lippard, "Eleanor; or, Slave Catching in the Quaker City," *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury*, February 12, 1854, 1.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁸⁷ George Lippard, "The Heart-Broken," *Nineteenth-Century: A Quarterly Miscellany*, Vol. I, (Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber & Co., 1848), 19-27. Lippard reprinted his encomium to Charles Brockden Brown in *Quaker City Weekly*, June 2, 1849, 2.

fanaticism and cold rationalism unmediated by human sympathy, Lippard's sober Quaker of the same name combines working-class activism and anti-slavery sentiment in a repudiation of "sectarian" abolitionists and opportunistic slave-catchers. By serving as Lippard's final spokesperson on the questions of labor reform and slavery, Carwin provides us with a lasting impression of the racial sympathy and the republican spirit central to Lippard's sensational writing.

Chapter Two

City-Mysteries and the Cultural Work of Nativism

Introduction

The first chapter of this study explored how city-mystery writers George Lippard and Augustine Duganne relied upon anti-slavery discourse and a sympathetic engagement with blackness to express their working-class critique of wage labor. In a popular genre ironically destitute of white working-class agents of change, Lippard employed black male heroes to develop his analogical argument against “wage slavery.” In contrast to Noel Ignatiev’s claim that “Lippard shared the common white-radical stance of pretending sympathy for the black slave while at the same time stressing the greater wrong done the white wage worker,” my chapter highlighted the racial sympathies central to Lippard’s city-mysteries.¹⁸⁸ His regular inclusion of sympathetic fugitive slaves, his insistence on linking the causes to abolish wage slavery in the north and chattel slavery in the south, and his spirited attack of the Fugitive Slave Act in his last city-mystery *Eleanor* of 1854, all point to the racial sympathy that lies at the heart of Lippard’s class-inflected sensational writing.

Augustine Duganne was less consistent in forging cross-racial alliances between working-class whites and free blacks in the half dozen city-mysteries he published between 1843 and 1857. As the first chapter indicated, Duganne’s 1845 *The Knights of the Seal* features a fugitive quadroon slave as the object of the primary seduction plot and documents the murder of a free black worker by a white villain. Duganne’s strategy of linking “aristocratic” villains with southern slaveholding in

¹⁸⁸ Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 217, n1.

The Daguerreotype Miniature (1846) and his subversive representation of the witty sailor Black Bill in *Eustace Barcourt* (1848) offer additional evidence of Duganne's racial sympathy. At the same time, Duganne's city-mysteries do not share Lippard's working-class protest strategy of linking the causes to end "wage slavery" and chattel slavery. Less suspicious of abolitionists than Lippard and a contributor of several poems to the abolitionist newspaper *The National Era* in the early 1850's, Duganne often invokes the uncritical rhetoric of "white slavery" in his city-mysteries and thereby privileges the plight of northern white workers over black slaves. Furthermore, the progressive representations of blacks that are scattered throughout Duganne's early city-mysteries of the 1840's give way to sentimental stereotypes of the "contented slave" in his writing of the 1850's.

The extent to which city-mysteries' working-class protest often relied upon a sympathetic engagement with blackness is underscored in Duganne's writing career. After joining the nativist Know-Nothing Party and serving one term as its representative to the New York State Assembly in 1855, Duganne promoted a middle-class program of Christian reform in his final city-mystery *The Tenant-House* of 1857. With representations of degraded whites and blacks living in crowded tenements and being reformed through Protestant teachings, *The Tenant-House* presents a middle-class idealization of the obsequious black male. In contrast to Lippard's Herculean black male heroes who reinforce the value of physical labor over abstracted forms of power, Duganne's Herculean servant Black Samson is shorn of his radical power and embodies the myth of contented servitude. Without a radically sympathetic engagement with blackness to bolster the artisan republican rhetoric in

The Tenant-House, working-class critique is displaced in favor of a middle-class celebration of Protestant reform and capitalist logic.

The failure of *The Tenant-House* to present an artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes through anti-slavery rhetoric is not to suggest Duganne had lost his sympathy for the working-class and for enslaved blacks. In the 1850's Duganne lectured regularly before workingmen's organizations in the northeast and gained notoriety for his lengthy poem "The Gospel of Labor" of 1854. As evidenced by his service as a colonel for the Union Army during the Civil War and his abolitionist text of 1866 *The Fighting Quakers*, Duganne was no friend to southern slaveholders. *The Fighting Quakers*, which contextualizes a series of letters exchanged between two real-life Quaker brothers who fought and died for the Union Army, views the Civil War as a moral battle over slavery. Duganne writes, "President Lincoln had asked for seventy-five thousand soldiers. He could have enrolled a million, and the Rebellion might, perhaps, have been strangled at its birth. But an all-wise Providence had its own purposes to develop through trial and suffering to the nation. It was necessary that our Republic should pass through a fiery ordeal. Slavery had taken the sword; it was to 'perish by the sword.'"¹⁸⁹ Based upon Duganne's anti-slavery activities, it may seem difficult to reconcile his abolitionist sympathies with the romantic racialism that plagues *The Tenant-House*. However, Duganne's foray into nativist politics in the 1850's offers a clue. With the slaveholding aristocratic villains of his earlier city-mysteries replaced by fanatical Catholic immigrants in *The Tenant-House*, Duganne invests in Protestant charity and immigration reform as the solution to the

¹⁸⁹ Augustine Duganne, *The Fighting Quakers*, [1866], (Farmville, Virginia: Patrick A. Schroeder, 1995), 15.

suffering of the native-born working-class. Preoccupied with an imaginary harmony between native-born working-class and middle-class whites, Duganne largely ignores the pressing issues of sectional strife and chattel slavery.

Anti-slavery rhetoric is only one of two powerful popular discourses through which city-mystery writers constructed white working-class identity. In order to expose the greed and corruption of the wealthy classes and to garner sympathy from the white working-class audience in northeastern cities, city-mystery writers regularly invested in the conspiratorial discourse of nativism. In the works of Lippard, Duganne, and Buntline, anxieties about the precarious state of the young republic and fears over the erosion of apprenticeship labor are projected onto the foreign immigrant. In nativist-inflected city-mysteries, haughty aristocrats of “upper ten-dom” and corrupt politicians are joined by drunken Irishmen, fanatical Catholics, and a host of foreign criminals in an oppressive alliance against fallen middle-class heroes and poor whites. Despite Lippard’s reluctance to demonize Catholic immigrants in *Quaker City Weekly* at the risk of fracturing working-class solidarity, he indulges in anti-Catholic nativism when it supports his mutual attack on wage and chattel slavery. Departing from Lippard’s measured use of anti-Catholic conspiracy plots to develop his working-class protest, Duganne and Buntline invest heavily in anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic nativism to help distinguish republican citizens from an anti-republican criminal element infiltrating and undermining the nation. Consistent with Lippard’s concern that nativism could fracture working-class solidarity, Duganne’s and Buntline’s class-inflected nativism is compromised by its lack of sympathy for the unskilled immigrant laborer. With Catholic, immigrant, and Catholic-immigrant

villains marked by their “passionate irrationality” and their unfitness for the demands of republican citizenship, Duganne’s 1857 *The Tenant-House* and Buntline’s 1848 *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York* ultimately serve the interests of middle-class reform.

Nativism has had a long history in the United States, dating from the anti-Catholic animus in the *New England Primer* and anti-Catholic laws during the Puritans’ initial settlement of the continent. Robert S. Levine has documented that anti-Catholic conspiracy plots, which circulated during the French-Indian War of the 1750’s, continued well into the nineteenth century. Anti-Catholic conspiracy plots, “during the period from 1790 to 1815, uncertainty about the nation’s perpetuity, which was exacerbated by sectional tensions, increasing immigration, and other social, political, and economic pressures, persisted at least to the end of the Civil War.”¹⁹⁰ Although the Constitution outlawed the legal disenfranchisement of Catholics at the end of the eighteenth century, anti-Catholic anxieties lived on in the popular imagination with the annual “Pope Day” parade which culminated in the burning of the Pope’s effigy.¹⁹¹ Yet Americans’ fear of the Other was extended beyond Catholics to include the millions of immigrants settling in the northeastern cities during the antebellum period. Robert Ernst notes that 5 million people—mostly Irish, German, and English—immigrated to America between 1815-1865 in search of political freedom and economic opportunity.¹⁹² More specific to the focus of this

¹⁹⁰ Robert S. Levine, *Conspiracy and Romance: Studies in Brockden Brown, Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 9.

¹⁹¹ Ray Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860*, (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1963), 15-16.

¹⁹² Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1979), 1.

study on antebellum popular novels of the 1840's and 1850's, foreign-born workers comprised 40 percent of Philadelphia's male labor force by the late 1840's.¹⁹³

The causes of nativism have been debated among historians and cultural critics. While Ray Billington sees anti-Catholic nativism born out of patriotic and religious concerns dating to the earliest settlers, Ernst emphasizes the economic factors that led to a spike in nativism during the antebellum period. Ernst argues that native-born tradesmen, mechanics, and seamstresses complained that the wave of Irish immigrants in the 1840's reduced the value of labor and was destroying the apprenticeship system of labor. These economic nativists viewed wage labor itself as a "foreign" practice infiltrating and disrupting the American economy. Sean Wilentz attributes the rise of antebellum nativism to the economic depression in the wake of the Panic of 1837, and he contends that nativism provided a means for native-born laborers to articulate their class concerns. Similarly, Bruce Laurie posits that nativism "conveyed a strong sense of class identity."¹⁹⁴ And yet, one wonders how effective the populist rhetoric of nativism, taken up and employed to some degree by all of the city-mystery writers, was in mounting a working-class critique of the wealthy classes. Both Ernst and Wilentz point out the irony that the odd partnership of native-born workers and class-conscious immigrant workers often combined their economic interests and unionized against their mutual employers. Wilentz also notes that nativists' attacks on immigrants suggested desires for an idealistic return to republican first principles without critiquing capitalism.

¹⁹³ Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 11.

¹⁹⁴ Bruce Laurie, "'Nothing on Compulsion': Life Styles of Philadelphia Artisans, 1820-1850," *Labor History* 15 (1974): 250.

Nativism, with its variant targets of Catholics, immigrants, or both, has proven a flexible and resilient rhetoric in American history. In her transatlantic study of nativist rhetoric and literature, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Susan Griffin argues that anti-Catholic American texts of the antebellum period were critiquing the dramatic changes in the republic as much as they were expressing hostility toward a foreign Other. Looking beyond the explicit diatribes against Catholics found in nativist texts, Griffin argues that “the cultural shorthand of anti-Catholic stereotypes and narrative structures provide 19th century writers with a means of depicting and discussing the changes and problems of the day, ranging from the controversy over vivisection to the professionalization of American letters.”¹⁹⁵ Although nativist novels of the 1850’s betray varying class allegiances, Griffin points out that they tend to stress “the fraternity’s artisan membership.”¹⁹⁶

One key to understanding how nativism could lose its working-class accents when employed in city-mysteries lies in the novels’ representations of blackness. Nativism leant itself to a critique of slavery and to a sympathetic view toward native-born black slaves. During the 1850’s in the northeast, where most city-mysteries were set and published, nativists formed an alliance among temperance reformers, proponents of extending the naturalization law from seven to twenty-one years, and abolitionists. Tyler Anbinder attributes the meteoric rise of the nativist Know-Nothing Party in the early 1850’s to the shared Protestant values that condemned

¹⁹⁵ Susan Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 17.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 104.

“‘rum, Romanism, and slavery’ as the three evils cursing the nation.”¹⁹⁷ In fact, nativist publications of the 1850’s often fused nativist anxieties with abolitionism. In the January 1852 edition of the nativist monthly magazine *The Republic*, published in New York City, editor Thomas R. Whitney attacks Catholics’ readiness for citizenship and argues against the colonization of African-Americans. In “Can a Roman Catholic Become a Citizen?,” Whitney laments that the Roman Catholic Church encourages its adherents to rebel against and destroy “heretic” governments. “From these extracts it would seem that a Romanist cannot renounce the Papal authority and yet remain a Roman Catholic; and if he cannot do that, how can he give allegiance to another government, that government being at the same time *heretical*? In a word, how can he become an American citizen?”¹⁹⁸ Defining the United States government as Protestant and thus “heretical” in the eyes of Roman Catholics, Whitney concludes that Catholics cannot be entrusted with American citizenship. In his editorial “The Colored People,” Whitney counters colonizationists by including African-Americans among the republic’s native-born populace and by suggesting that recently arrived immigrants should be repatriated. Defending African-Americans against colonizationists, Whitney writes: “America, the United States of North America, is the home of their birth, the land of their nativity, and they have no idea of being sent off to foreign lands. They are too patriotic, and know too well when they are well off, to leave this land of liberty, and health and happiness, for one which they

¹⁹⁷ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850’s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 106.

¹⁹⁸ Thomas R. Whitney, ed., *The Republic: A Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Politics, & Art*, New York, January 1852, 36-37.

neither know nor care anything about.”¹⁹⁹ As an alternative to repatriating African-Americans, Whitney suggests half-ironically, “Probably those who talk about sending the American-born negroes to Africa, to die with the coast-fever, would be horrified at the idea of sending the Irish, German, and other foreign residents of this country, back to their own lands; but we can assure those discriminating philosophers that such a procedure would be the more rational and politic of the two, and equally humane.”²⁰⁰ Whitney’s anti-colonization arguments, however, did not lead to wholly respectful representations of blacks. As Jenny Franchot points out in her discussion of the flexibility of nativist rhetoric in *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism*, abolitionists used anti-Catholic rhetoric to critique the South and yet “their rhetoric hardly accorded black slaves the purity of the Protestant martyr.”²⁰¹ Whitney never calls explicitly for an end to slavery and he stereotypes blacks for their adoration of “Massa Washington,” even as he insists that with proper education and a trade blacks can succeed in America through “honest industry.”²⁰² It is Whitney’s blend of nativist and anti-colonization sympathy that reflects the way nativism could support the anti-slavery and artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes in the city-mysteries of Lippard and Duganne.

Nativism and anti-slavery sentiment also share the pages of the Boston weekly newspaper *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, edited by Edward W. Hinks.

Among articles exposing the horrors of Alexander Borgia and warning against the

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 40.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 40.

²⁰¹ Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 103.

²⁰² Ibid., 40.

growing influence of the Roman Catholic Church in American life, Hinks condemns the Irish for “fulsomely praising the institution” of slavery.²⁰³ When rioting broke out in Boston during the highly publicized trial of fugitive slave Anthony Burns in June 1854, *The Know Nothing* partly attributes the violence to pro-slavery Irishmen and reprints a volatile placard that circulated among the crowd. “Americans to the Rescue! Irishmen under Arms! Americans! Sons of the Revolution!! A body of Seventy Five Irishmen, known as the Columbian Artillery: Have Volunteered to Shoot Down the Citizens of Boston!! and are Now Under Arms to Defend Virginia in KIDNAPPING a Citizen of Massachusetts!!!”²⁰⁴ Although Hinks’s newspaper condemns William Lloyd Garrison as a “fanatic Abolitionist, traitor and disorganizer” after he burned a copy of the U.S. Constitution in protest at a Fourth of July celebration earlier that year, advertisements for anti-Catholic and anti-slavery texts appear regularly throughout the run of the newspaper.²⁰⁵ The edition of June 10, 1854, for example, recommends Richard Hildreth’s abolitionist text *Despotism in America* in light of Anthony Burns’s fugitive slave case: “The Tyranny of Slavery. Does any Person Doubt It, after the scene exhibited in the city of Boston? If so, let him read *Despotism in America*, By Richard Hildreth, Esq.”²⁰⁶ On the same page, Hinks reprints from a London newspaper a report on disease among emigrant ships and offers this unsympathetic reflection: “We think John Bull would exhibit a great deal more consistency if, instead of getting up Committees, reports and plans to teach

²⁰³ *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, Vol. I, No. 3, May 13, 1854, 4.

²⁰⁴ *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, Vol. I, No. 7, June 10, 1854, 4.

²⁰⁵ *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, Vol. 1, No. 12, July 15, 1854, 2.

²⁰⁶ *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, Vol. I, No. 7, June 10, 1854, 3.

the United States what they know well enough now, they would just keep their emigrants, a great part of whom are from pauper-houses, at home. Let its Irish subjects, made poor by tyranny and infirm and useless by cruelty, be kept where they should, by all that is humane and Christian, and ship mortality, so dreadful in its havocs, would nearly cease. It is among this miserable clan that the sickness is almost exclusively confined.”²⁰⁷ The following week, the newspaper advertises William Hogan’s sensational tract *Popery Exposed!* alongside a list of abolitionist texts.²⁰⁸ Although nativist newspapers do not usually include free black workers in their defense of American mechanics against unskilled immigrant laborers, the editorials and advertisements reveal the potential shared sympathies between nativism and anti-slavery sentiment.

Such a coalition between nativist and anti-slavery rhetoric is evident in the nativist imagery and the heroic black Devil-Bug in Lippard’s *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk-Hall*, as well as in the anti-Catholic conspiracy plot and the sympathetic fugitive slaves in *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*. Just as the anti-Catholic nativism of these novels bolsters the depiction of the wealthy and anti-republican villains, the anti-slavery rhetoric provides a racially ambivalent metaphor for the plight of the white working-class. A similar configuration marks Duganne’s city-mysteries of the 1840’s, as criminal Catholic immigrants on the wealthy villains’ payroll share the pages with sympathetic fugitive slaves and free black laborers. As this chapter will show, Duganne’s employment of nativist and anti-slavery discourses in his 1840’s city-mysteries helps him to mount an artisan

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 3.

²⁰⁸ *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, Vol. I, No. 8, June 17, 1854, 3.

republican attack on the upper classes. However, Duganne's paternalistic portrayal of blacks and his investment in outright nativism in his later city-mysteries aligns *The Tenant-House* with the middle-class reform values of Buntline's works. When city-mystery writers directed nativism at unskilled immigrants, they lost sight of their critique against the wealthy classes and of the wage marketplace itself. Rather than pushing for labor reform and policies that might ease competition in the marketplace, nativists sought foremost to protect native-born workers against the competition posed by unskilled immigrants. How nativism shaped and affected the class protest of city-mystery writers Lippard, Duganne, and Buntline is the subject of this chapter.

Attraction and Repulsion: George Lippard's Popular Nativism

A decade after the apocryphal tracts of Samuel Morse and Lyman Beecher popularized anti-Catholic sentiment in the 1830's, Lippard drew upon nativist discourse to help develop his working-class protest in *The Quaker City* (1845), *Adonai* (1851), and *New York* (1853). In these three novels, multi-racial groups of working-class vigilantes thwart the schemes of corrupt northern aristocrats, dissolute southern slaveholders, and agents of the Roman Catholic Church. In each case, the grandeur and decadence associated in the public mind with Catholicism helps to distinguish the powerful villains from the virtuous republicans. Consistent with abolitionist ministers' equation of Catholicism and slavery as corrupt institutions, anti-Catholic rhetoric also helps Lippard to link the causes to abolish "wage" and chattel slavery. Yet in his writing for *Quaker City Weekly* and for his own semi-secret society the Brotherhood of the Union, Lippard provides a meta-critique of how anti-Catholic animus fractures working-class solidarity and ultimately serves the

interests of the wealthy classes, proving that Lippard was a flexible writer who both employed and questioned contemporary conspiracy discourse.

While Lippard invested in nativism in several of his city-mysteries to condemn what he viewed as the greed and corruption of America's wealthy and anti-republican "aristocracy," he publicly eschewed the political efforts of nativists to demonize and to circumscribe the rights of Catholic immigrants. Nativism, which Bruce Laurie points out "conveyed a strong sense of class identity" during the antebellum period, also threatened to fracture the working-class solidarity Lippard valued.²⁰⁹ A firsthand witness to the violent Kensington nativist riots of 1844 that pitted native-born artisans and their native-born employers against immigrant artisans and their immigrant employers, Lippard was unwilling to scapegoat Catholic immigrants in his class-inflected polemical writing.²¹⁰ In one of many defenses of Catholics in *Quaker City Weekly* Lippard reminds readers in an editorial entitled "A Thought for Bigots of All Colours" that Catholics died for General Washington at the Battle of Brandywine, and he denounces nativists' hateful rhetoric: "The name of Catholic with them is a synonym of devil; to hate the Catholic is their religion; Persecution is their God. It is against this blind rage, my friends, that I, a Pennsylvanian, a Protestant, appeal."²¹¹ A month later in an encomium to a solemn, century-old graveyard located in his hometown of Germantown, Pennsylvania, Lippard praises the peaceful spot's freedom from sectarianism. "Nor do I love it the

²⁰⁹ Bruce Laurie, "Nothing on Compulsion," 250.

²¹⁰ For a fuller discussion of the ethnic politics of the Kensington nativist riots, see David Montgomery's "The Shuttle and the Cross: Weavers and Artisans in the Kensington Riots of 1844," *Journal of Social History* 5 (1972): 411-446.

²¹¹ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, February 24, 1849, 2.

less, because on every blade of grass, in every flower, that wildly blooms there, you find written:—‘This soil is sacred from creeds. Here rests the Indian and the white man; here sleep in one sod, the Catholic, Presbyterian, Quaker, Methodist, Lutheran, Menonist, Deist, Infidel. Here, creeds forgotten, all are men and women again, and not one but is a simple child of God.’ This graveyard was established by men of all creeds, more than a century ago. May that day be darkness, when creeds shall enter this rude gate. Better had that man never been born, who shall dare pollute this soil with the earthly clamor of sect.”²¹² Rather than distinguishing people according to their personal religious beliefs, Lippard saw only large-scale economic differences between the haves and have-nots, as evident in a pithy editorial statement on page three of the same edition of *Quaker City Weekly*: “THE WORLD is divided into two great nations, the Rich and the Poor. All other distinctions of class or race are idle and inexpressive.”²¹³

Several years before the nativist Know-Nothings promoted themselves by advertising such products as “Know-Nothings Tea” in the nativist press, Lippard pokes fun at a cookbook entitled *Cooking on Protestant Principles*.

‘COOKING on Protestant Principles’ is making rapid progress in our city.

The demand for Protestant Cooks is daily made, in the most emphatic manner, in the columns of the Ledger. From the annexed advertisement, we should imagine that an important reform was about being introduced into the other branches of household labor: Wanted—A Protestant woman to do plain

Cooking and assist with Washing and Ironing in a private family. Not only

²¹² George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, March 31, 1849, 1.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 3.

cooking, but ‘washing and ironing’ are hereafter to be done on Protestant principles. We feel a thrill of terror creep through our veins, when we reflect that the very ‘Dickey’ which we wear, may have been ‘ironed’ by a Catholic. Are not prejudices conveyed through the medium of ‘starch,’ and religious opinions impressed on the juvenile mind by a ‘flat iron?’²¹⁴

Lippard’s satire in this passage also counters a common strategy of nativists who attacked immigrants by insisting native-born families hire exclusively Protestant servants. Robert Ernst notes that among the immigrants coming to New York City during the antebellum period, Irish women often worked as domestic servants. “In a city of countless boardinghouses, large hotels, and elegant mansions of the elite, servants were in constant demand. Domestic service, in most instances, required few if any previously gained skills and admirably met the needs of transplanted peasant women and girls. Thus, by 1855, nearly one quarter of all the immigrants in the city were household help, ‘nurses,’ laundresses, cooks, and waiters.”²¹⁵ In reaction to this increase in Irish domestic servants, nativist newspapers such as *Ned Buntline’s Own* politicked on behalf of native-born unskilled servants. In the first edition of *Ned Buntline’s Own* on November 4, 1848, Buntline prints a letter-to-the-editor that calls for giving domestic servant positions to native-born seamstresses; that way, the anonymous writer reasons, immigrants will be forced out of domestic servant positions and compelled to take up the lesser-paying position of seamstress. Five years later Buntline addresses the issue himself in a sensational editorial: “Protestants and Americans, do not employ Catholic servants! Remember they are acting as *Spies*

²¹⁴ George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, March 17, 1849, 2.

²¹⁵ Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City*, 65-66.

for the Jesuits—forget not that the dagger and the poisoned bowl is among us! Once warned you are thrice armed! *Beware*—BEWARE!”²¹⁶ That foreign labor competition motivated nativist political efforts is also evident in a broadside that the Native American Party circulated in Boston in 1845. Entitled “America against the World!,” the broadside appeals sensationally to native-born workers: “WORKINGMEN OF BOSTON! Are you content that the immense influx of needy foreigners shall remedilessly reduce your wages to the lowest pittance? Are you ready to sink to the degraded level of the laborers of enslaved Europe, and bid against the old world paupers for work?”²¹⁷ In contrast to Buntline’s appeal to the middle-class not to hire foreign-born domestic help and to nativists’ anxieties about foreign labor competition, Lippard condemns a bigoted hiring practice that drives a wedge between native-born and immigrant workers.

Lippard’s concern that middle-class evangelical reformers and nativists prevented working-class solidarity through their populist and impassioned pleas is highlighted in his two-part city-mystery serialized in *Quaker City Weekly* between 1848 and 1849, *Memoirs of a Preacher* and *The Man With the Mask*. The two novels chronicle the efforts of a charismatic confidence-man, Edmund Jervis, also known as the Popular Preacher, to make a living evangelizing to the masses and to seduce the innocent young women of his congregation. Charles Lester, the brother of one of Jervis’s earlier seductions in the Mid-west, has traveled to Philadelphia to locate the con man and avenge the tragic death of his broken-hearted sister. In *Memoirs of a*

²¹⁶ Ned Buntline, *Ned Buntline’s Own*, September 10, 1853, 2.

²¹⁷ Native American Party broadside, “America against the World!,” Boston, 1845. Graphic Arts Collection, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Preacher, Lippard dissects how evangelical Christianity exploits nativist anxiety at the expense of relieving the suffering of the poor. Jervis's feverish and charismatic preaching to the masses about the impending end of the world serves to mute class differences and thereby dampen working-class agitation. Lippard describes the throng of the Popular Preacher's eager listeners: "Young and old, rich and poor, the fashionable and the rude laborer, the poor woman who sold vegetables in the market, and the rich one who merely squandered her husband's money—all were there, presenting contrasts vivid and innumerable. Bankers and their clerks, merchants and their porters, mechanics and their employers, the ragamuffin from Baker street, and the millionaire from Walnut, were mingled in the dense throng, packed side by side, sighing, groaning, weeping together. Every soul hung on the Preacher's voice."²¹⁸ In addition to Jervis's duplicity as a libertine in pious disguise, he represents the threat that abstracted forms of power among the professional classes posed to the value of physical, "honest" labor. When the white, Herculean ally to Charles Lester, Giant Peter, attempts to frustrate Jervis's seduction of young orphan Fanny in his private study in *The Man With the Mask*, the Popular Preacher subdues the laborer through a kind of popular mesmerism. The physical contrast between the two men reflects their class differences: "Peter, strong and rugged, his huge form clad in a red overcoat, which displaced the magnitude of his burly chest. The Preacher, slender and diminutive—at least in comparison—his graceful form, enveloped in the folds of a loose dressing gown. One armed not only with a giant's strength, but with a deadly weapon; the other, altogether inferior in strength, and without pistol or weapon of any

²¹⁸ George Lippard, *Memoirs of a Preacher; or, The Mysteries of the Pulpit*, [1848-1849], (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1864), 46-47.

kind.”²¹⁹ Despite their differences in size, the Popular Preacher turns Giant Peter into a living statue by applying pressure strategically to the man’s hands and whispering incantations into his ear. “Stiffened in every nerve, palsied in every fiber of his giant frame, Peter stood with outstretched arms, closed lips and clutched hands—stood like a frozen man—without the power of speech or motion. The Preacher, flushed and triumphant, still raised his hand to heaven, and defied the palsied man to speak or move.”²²⁰ In Lippard’s city-mysteries, the dangerous power of evangelism embodied in the Popular Preacher works similarly—and often in tandem—with the anti-Catholic hysteria of nativism.

Although David S. Reynolds maintains that sensationalism becomes an unfortunate end in itself in Lippard’s city-mystery writing, Lippard expresses his own suspicions of unprincipled sensational rhetoric in *Memoirs of a Preacher* and *The Man With the Mask*. In a reflective chapter in *Memoirs of a Preacher* on the role of the penny press in creating and exploiting news events, Lippard lampoons the penny press’s self-serving coverage of the nativist riots of 1844 in Philadelphia. Lippard writes, “One day the Irish shot the Natives in Kensington; but tomorrow it was the Natives who shot the Irish, and the day after that—both Irish and Natives dropping the Daily Copper—it was discovered that nobody was shot at all.”²²¹ Such exploitation has its counterpart in *The Man With the Mask* in the figure of Lemuel Gardiner, another confidence-man who swindles the meager inheritances of dying

²¹⁹ George Lippard, *The Man With the Mask; A Sequel to the Memoirs of a Preacher, a Revelation of the Church and the Home*, [1849], (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1864), 65.

²²⁰ Ibid., 66.

²²¹ George Lippard, *Memoirs of a Preacher*, 20.

poor women by donning the alternate disguises of a Catholic priest and a nativist preacher. “Lemuel Gardiner—whose name was uttered with the curses by the dying woman—has returned to the Quaker City, after many years absence, and in a new character. Once known as a Converted Priest, then as a fugitive of justice—behold him now, in the character of a Converted Monk. For Lemuel has taken the No-Popery people by the inmost heart, and Lemuel delivers lectures against the Pope....sweet lectures, too, composed of all that is foul in thought or language, and refreshingly spiced with a fervent hate of Rome, and all that appertains to the very name of Rome.”²²² Like the penny press’s amoral coverage of the 1844 nativist riots, Gardiner’s manipulation of nativist anxieties is a con upon the most vulnerable members of the native-born working poor. The primary villain, Edmund Jervis, also serves as Lippard’s caution to the working-class against the seductive appeal of nativism. Instead of a Catholic priest fulfilling the seduction plot’s role of libertine, Jervis is an evangelical Protestant minister who preys upon congregants with his magnetic charisma. Just two years after publishing *The Man With the Mask*, Lippard addresses a double standard typical of nativist rhetoric in his short-lived periodical *The White Banner*. “They attack Catholicism, because under its influence ‘bachelor Priests’ propound questions to womanhood, at which modesty falls dead. Now, is this system of priestly interference with the welfare of families confined alone to the Catholic Church? Have you never heard of a Protestant Priest, not only propounding questions to, but corrupting the wives and daughters of good Protestants?”²²³

²²² George Lippard, *The Man With the Mask*, 50-51.

²²³ George Lippard, “Brotherhood vs. Atheistic Sectarianism,” *The White Banner: A Quarterly Miscellany*, (Philadelphia: George Lippard Publisher, 1851), 126.

In addition to exposing how evangelism and nativism exploit the working-classes in the two city-mysteries, Lippard provides positive images of Catholicism and immigrants. When orphan Ralph is asked to find a Catholic priest to give the final rites to his dying caretaker in *Memoirs of a Preacher*, the young man ventures into the Church of Saint John during its midnight mass. Lippard pauses to admire the church's "rich and gloomy" Gothic architecture and to pay homage to its awe-inspiring mass for the dead.²²⁴ In the same satirical tone with which he mocked the Protestant cookbook in the column of *Quaker City Weekly*, Lippard laments the bigotry of nativism. "Shall we enter the Church? It is a Catholic Church. We know that. A Roman Catholic Church. You are right. And you and I, as good Protestants, are bound to hate the Catholic Church, from its poorest Priest, its humblest Sister of Charity, up to the Pope himself, who, we all know, is the veritable Anti-Christ. Are we not? They tell us so in the Churches, those good Protestants who manifest their love of God, by hating heartily their neighbors."²²⁵ Lippard's reflections on the shame of anti-Catholic bigotry take on class inflections when the reader learns that the midnight mass is for a poor, friendless Irishman whom the Catholic Church has rescued from a miserable grave in Potter's Field. Among the congregants are "rude Irishmen, who, exiled from their native soil, by the curse of British rule, find a home and freedom for their hearts and church, on the shores of the New World."²²⁶ Lippard's sympathetic portrayal of the Irish laborers resonates with his earlier description of the humble Quaker woman who sits with the dying caretaker until

²²⁴ George Lippard, *Memoirs of a Preacher*, 63.

²²⁵ Ibid., 62.

²²⁶ Ibid., 64.

Ralph returns with a priest. In contrast with the evangelical Orthodox Quakers who were formed when the Quakers split at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Quaker woman Martha Lott—a thinly disguised nod to abolitionist Lucretia Mott—is concerned only with alleviating the dying woman’s suffering. Lippard’s sympathetic description of Martha Lott is marked with irony: “She was an Infidel—maybe an Atheist—her daily walks of life, it is true, defied, even sanctified scandal, but her belief, O! the belief of Martha Lott was terrible. It was even whispered she had said, that it was much better to feed the bodies of the Poor, before you attempted to save their souls.”²²⁷ Amidst all of the religious strife orchestrated by evangelicals and nativists in *Memoirs of a Preacher* and *The Man With the Mask*, the Quaker woman stands alone as Lippard’s exemplar of Christian duty which attends without condescension and without sectarianism of any kind to the physical needs of the poor.

Furthermore, Lippard’s critique of nativism is class-oriented in that he regularly presents nativism as serving the interests of the middle-class. In his article “Jesus and the Poor” published in the periodical *Nineteenth Century*, Lippard criticizes middle-class missionaries who are preoccupied with converting the “heathens” of distant lands to Protestant faith while the republic’s poor suffer in crowded cities. Lippard describes a scene of missionaries: “One night, I stood in a crowded church, and saw three missionaries, consecrated for a great work. They were about to cross the globe and preach the gospel to the poor of Hindoostan. To aid them in this work, some thousands of dollars were showered upon the altar.”²²⁸ After

²²⁷ Ibid., 46.

²²⁸ George Lippard, “Jesus and the Poor,” *Nineteenth Century: A Quarterly Miscellany*, (Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber & Co., 1848), 66.

showing the reader a cold tenement in which poor whites and blacks huddle together to keep warm, Lippard advises missionaries: “As there is a God, you need not go all the way to Hindoostan to find Perishing Heathen.”²²⁹ Later in the article, Lippard links missionaries with nativist sentiment as he sympathizes with poor widows.

“Who cares for their wrongs? Who demands from stony-faced Society their Rights? There are Missionary Societies for the Heathen of Hindoostan; Anti-Slavery Societies for the Slave of the South; Political Societies for the Manufacture of Presidents; Societies for every thing under the heavens, from the Police of a Market-House up to the Putting Down of a Romish Pope: but, as for the White Slaves of Philadelphia, these virtuous women, who work their nails from their finger’s ends—for just enough ‘*to keep body and soul together*’—where, oh Philadelphia Philanthropy, is your Society for them? In what vein of your Great Heart beats a throb for them?”²³⁰

Lippard continues to link nativists with the wealthy classes in his editorial for *The White Banner* entitled “Brotherhood vs. Atheistic Sectarianism.” Extolling the virtues of his communitarian and multi-sectarian Brotherhood of the Union, Lippard blasts nativist missionaries for attacking the Pope instead of alleviating the suffering of the poor. “These people are well known. To visit the sick, to unfold clear views of a future state to the dying, to feed the hungry, to educate the orphan,—these are tasks far beneath them. They strike at nobler aims. To attack the Pope and hallow the Gallows,—to insult every tradition which the humble Catholic holds dear as his life, and to invest the Gallows with the sanctity of divine Revelation,—such is their brightest task. ‘Down with the Pope and up with the Gallows!’—you have their

²²⁹ Ibid., 66.

²³⁰ Ibid., 72.

whole theology in these words.”²³¹ These articles mirror Lippard’s insights in *Memoirs of a Preacher* and *The Man With the Mask*: the bedfellows of middle-class evangelical reform and nativism, when they are not muting class differences, serve the interests of the middle-class to the detriment of the multi-racial poor. That Lippard’s critique of organized nativism is not mere posturing is evident when he declares that his communitarian Brotherhood of the Union welcomes everyone. Lippard concludes his first formal announcement of the semi-secret society, “[The Brotherhood of the Union] has no vague and bombastic titles. It prescribes no race, no sect.”²³²

Lippard’s proclivity to link nativists with the wealthy classes is on full display in his depiction of arch-nativist and bank-president Calvin Wolfe in *The Nazarene* of 1846. Wolfe, who is the leader of a secret nativist society, manipulates the native-born poor into joining the society and even infiltrates a secret Catholic society in order to foment religious strife in Philadelphia. Although Michael Denning argues that with *The Nazarene* “[Lippard] never fulfills his promise, never realizes the project” of showing the cruelty and senselessness of religious war, the novel’s anti-nativist credentials are strengthened by its racial politics.²³³ Lippard unites the plight of Catholics and the plight of blacks in the figure of likable criminal, Catholic Black Larry. A white man with a face “bronzed by exposure to a tropical sun,” Black Larry

²³¹ George Lippard, “Brotherhood vs. Atheistic Sectarianism,” 126.

²³² George Lippard, *Quaker City Weekly*, June 2, 1849, 2.

²³³ Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America*, (Rev. ed. [1987]. New York: Verso, 1998), 112.

is adorned with dazzling jewelry that calls up the grandeur of Roman Catholicism.²³⁴ “His broad chest was loaded with chains of massy gold, which wound along his scarf, and fell in many circles over his dark vest. A diamond of dazzling lustre, shone in the centre of that glittering mass of gold.”²³⁵ Despite his association with a group of depraved criminals in Philadelphia, Black Larry, whose mother is buried in a Catholic graveyard in Baltimore, gains sympathy as another victim of Calvin Wolfe’s greed. Years earlier, Black Larry and his sister, Alice, lost their father in an accident while he was under the employ of the wealthy reformer Stephen Girard. Black Larry explains how a dying Girard gave him a parchment guaranteeing an education in his College for Orphans; however, Calvin Wolfe, Girard’s executor, stalled the college’s construction and Black Larry subsequently fell into a life of crime. Instead of the nativist view of Catholics as inherently criminal and under the influence of designing priests, Lippard sympathetically unites Catholics and blacks as victims of a bigoted upper class in the figure of Black Larry.

Despite his public disavowals of organized nativism and his scathing critique of nativists in *The Nazarene*, Lippard did use nativist rhetoric in his fiction when it could reinforce his analogy between “wage” and chattel slavery. In this way, Lippard utilizes nativism only when it can reinforce his working-class critique. In the 1830’s and 1840’s, nativists regularly constructed Catholic immigrants as “enslaved” within the Roman Catholic Church’s hierarchy and thus unfit for the demands of republican citizenship. In his popular 1835 tract *Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the*

²³⁴ George Lippard, *The Nazarene; or, The Last of the Washingtons. A Revelation of Philadelphia, New York, and Washington in the Year 1844*, (Philadelphia: George Lippard and Co., 1846), 146.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

United States, Samuel Morse makes the case: “The great body of emigrants to this country are the hard-working mentally neglected poor of Catholic countries in Europe, who have left a land where they were enslaved, for one of freedom. However well disposed they may be to the country which protects them, and adopts them as citizens, they are not fitted to act with judgment in the political affairs of their new country, like native citizens educated from their infancy in the principles and habits of our institutions. Most of them are too ignorant to act at all for themselves, and expect to be guided wholly by others. These others are of course their priests.”²³⁶

By the early 1840’s, evangelical ministers could link Catholicism and the institution of chattel slavery as the two evils cursing the nation. In the 1843 collection of his speeches entitled *The Elements of National Greatness*, nativist and abolitionist minister George Cheever develops an analogy between Catholic immigrants and black slaves. “Bind a man in his religion, and you have bound him essentially, and may do with him what you please. The Romanists know this. Chain a man’s religious opinions to any court, church, council, or canonized father, to any thing but the Bible, and your fetters are upon his liberty, your iron has entered into his soul.”²³⁷

Later, offering evidence of Satan’s presence in America, Cheever writes, “The Enemy was there. This time it was not Idolatry, it was not Popery, it was SLAVERY.... Will it destroy our institutions? Manifold are the dangers which arise out of it, fearful are the evils which it brings in its train.”²³⁸ With Catholicism linked to chattel slavery in

²³⁶ Samuel Morse, *Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*, [1835], (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 57.

²³⁷ George Cheever, *The Elements of National Greatness: An address before the New England Society of the City of New York, December 22, 1842*, (New York: John S. Taylor and Co., 1843), 12.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

the nativist press of northeastern cities, Lippard could use anti-Catholic discourse to reinforce his class-inflected analogy between white “wage” slaves and black chattel slaves.

In his most popular novel *The Quaker City*, Lippard cites “Priest-craft” and “Slave-craft” as two ills plaguing the imagined American dystopia of 1950. In Devil-Bug’s apocalyptic dream, an old-timer explains what has become of America: ““In yonder ruined Hall, America was born, she grew to vigorous youth, and bade fair to live to a good old age, but—alas! alas! She was massacred by her pretended friends. Priest-craft, and Slave-craft, and Traitor-craft were her murderers!””²³⁹ Popular nativist tracts just a decade earlier in the mid-1830’s imagined the sensational usurpation of the republic’s President by a Romish monarch controlled from abroad. In *Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*, Morse distinguishes between American republicanism and the “foppery” of Roman Catholic influence in the nation’s political affairs. Drawing a contrast between “sturdy republicanism” and aristocratic pretension, Morse warns: “Again we have, still unsubdued, some weaknesses (perhaps they belong to human nature), of which advantage may be taken, to the injury of our republican character, and in aid of despotism....One of these weaknesses is an *anti-republican fondness for titles*.”²⁴⁰ Morse’s anxiety about the growing number of Catholic immigrants whom he deems unfit for the responsibilities for citizenship is dramatized in an apocryphal usurpation of the American Presidency. Accepting the popular view of the Leopold Association of

²³⁹ George Lippard, *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk-Hall*, [1845], (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 388.

²⁴⁰ Samuel Morse, *Foreign Conspiracy*, 66.

Austria as a front for Catholic control of the republic rather than as a benign attempt to establish Catholic schools in America for the education of Catholic children, Morse imagines a conspiracy at work. “They are the Pope and his Consistory of Cardinals, following the plans and instructions of the imperial cabinet of Austria,—plans formed in the secret councils of that cabinet, instructions delivered in secret, according to the modes of despotism....With a party thus formed and disciplined among us, who will venture to say that our elections will not be under the control of a Metternich, and that the appointment of a President of the United States will not be virtually made in the Imperial Cabinet of Vienna, or the Consistory of Cardinals at Rome? Will this be pronounced incredible? It will be the almost certain result of the dominion of Popery in this country.”²⁴¹ Lippard’s entwining of “Priest-craft” and “Slave-craft,” when placed in the context of the ragged procession of “wage” and chattel slaves, shows the potential class accents of nativist rhetoric. At the same time, Morse’s anti-Catholic hysteria highlights the force nativism lends to Lippard in imagining a dystopia ruled by a union of wealth and aristocracy.

Additional anti-Catholic tropes appear in Lippard’s novel-length parable *Adonai, The Pilgrim of Eternity*, in which the re-animated Roman sentinel and a re-animated George Washington travel through America to assess its republican values. In the climactic struggle between the republican and aristocratic forces on an American wasteland that serves as a battlefield, priests are counted among the oppressors of the world’s poor. “And when Washington and Adonai saw this circle of Kings, Priests, and Rich Men extending around the Sepulchre, like a wall, they

²⁴¹ Ibid., 49-50.

were stricken with deep wonder.”²⁴² Additionally, on their earlier travels through Boston, Washington and Adonai uncover a conspiracy against America from the soldiers of Loyola. With the Pope slaying countless Romans rather than preaching the Gospel to the poor and oppressed, the Loyola soldiers have immigrated to America and have begun plotting to overthrow the government. Calling their creed the Gospel of the Manacle in what is an allusion to the chains of chattel slavery, the Loyola soldiers announce: ““In the blood of Romans, slain by our Pope, we drink the subjugation of the American Continent to our Order, and to the Gospel of the Manacle.””²⁴³ Although these examples of anti-Catholic nativist rhetoric are exceptional for much of Lippard’s writing, they reveal the ease with which the popular analogy between Catholic and chattel slavery could be used to develop a class critique of the wealthy classes.

Lippard’s most powerful use of anti-Catholic rhetoric appears in his 1853 city-mystery, *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, his only novel to be published in the nativist hotbed of Cincinnati.²⁴⁴ Throughout *New York*, Catholic imagery serves as a metaphor for the decadence and the corruption of the aristocratic wealthy classes. The Temple, the novel’s equivalent to Monk-Hall of *The Quaker City*, is a “lofty mansion” of ill repute where duplicitous merchants, politicians, and

²⁴² George Lippard, *Adonai: The Pilgrim of Eternity*, (Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1851), 85.

²⁴³ Ibid., 74.

²⁴⁴ H. M. Rulison of Queen Publishing House, the publisher of George Lippard’s *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, also published the following class-inflected and nativist texts: B.J.A.’s *Mary Bean, the Factory Girl* (1850); Anthony Gavin’s *The Great Red Dragon; or, the Master-Key to Popery* (1854); Isaac Kelso’s *Danger in the Dark: A Tale of Intrigue and Priestcraft* (1854); and H.M. Rulison’s *The Mock Marriage, or, The libertine’s victim being a faithful delineation of the mysteries and miseries of the Queen City* (1855). These texts are listed in an advertisement at the end of Alvin Addison’s *Ellen Walton, or, The Villain and his Victims* (Cincinnati: H. M. Rulison, 1855), 82-94. As listed in the *Wright American Fiction 1851-1875* online database.

clergymen dressed in Catholic costume seduce helpless virgins.²⁴⁵ With rakes disguised as popes and cardinals and their seduced virgins disguised as dancing girls, the mistress and host of the Temple, the Midnight Queen, explains the festivities to one of her guests: “Masked and veiled, shut out from the world by impenetrable walls, they are commencing one of the orgies, which awoke the echoes of the Vatican, in the days of Pope Borgia.”²⁴⁶ With the south often constructed as aristocratic and decadent within anti-slavery discourse of the antebellum period, southern slave-owners are linked with Catholicism’s lavish ceremony in *New York*. Randolph Royaltan, a fugitive mulatto slave, disguises himself as a southern planter in order to woo Eleanor Lynn, a white young woman he met while traveling in Europe. In a mansion where Randolph and his sister Esther are hiding from slave-catchers, Randolph entertains Eleanor and her father Bernard in the luxurious dining room. “In the center stood the table, loaded with viands, and adorned with an alabaster vase, filled with freshly-gathered flowers.—Wax candles shed a mild light over the scene, and the air was imbued at once with a pleasant warmth and with the breath of flowers. The service of plate which loaded the table was of massive gold. Everything breathed luxury and wealth.”²⁴⁷ In response to this gaudy spectacle, Bernard Lynn whispers, ““You planters know how to live!....By George, friend Randolph, you are something of a republican, but it is after the Roman school!”²⁴⁸ Bernard Lynn’s intended compliment to the fugitive slave provides an explicit

²⁴⁵ George Lippard, *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, [1853], (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Literature House/Gregg Press, 1970), 35.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 147.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 85.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 85.

example of how Lippard links the ultimate non-producer, the southern plantation owner, with the aristocratic grandeur of Catholicism.

In addition to the Catholic imagery that he uses liberally to locate the decadence of the corrupt wealthy characters in *New York*, Lippard also develops a subplot in which Catholic conspirators plot to overthrow and subjugate the American government. Metaphorically, the Catholic conspiracy's hostility toward republicanism reinforces the artisan republican attack on chattel slavery in the novel. A mysterious Prelate of the Roman Catholic Church articulates how the conspirators hope to undermine the nation's republican virtues through controlling the educational system and the elective process. During the antebellum period, nativists politicked to establish the King James Bible exclusively in the public schools (as opposed to allowing Catholic students to use the Catholic Douay Bible) and complained that immigrants enjoyed undue influence at the polls by voting in a bloc for the Democratic Party. In this context, Lippard's Catholic Prelate articulates an anti-republican plot that would fulfill nativists' worst fears. "It is our true policy, then, to absorb and rule over the Republic of the North. To make our Church the secret spring of its Government; to gradually and without exciting suspicion, mould every one of its institutions to our own purposes; to control the education of its people, and bend the elective franchise to our will....The hour will come, when the flimsy scaffolding of Republicanism will fall, and as it falls, our Church will stand revealed, her foundation in the heart of the American Republic; her shadow upon every hill and valley of the Continent."²⁴⁹ Although Lippard argues that nativists unwittingly strengthen the Catholic Church's influence in America's political affairs by

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 68.

demonizing Catholic voters and Lippard distinguishes among warring factions within the Roman Catholic Church, *New York* ends on the ominous note that a cataclysmic religious war is brewing in America. ““The Pope and the church in the hands of crowned and mitred miscreants, who having crushed the last spark of Liberty in the Old World, will not be long ere they open their trenches before her last altar in the New World! Away to the New World then; if the battle must come, let us, let the friends of humanity, strike the first blow!””²⁵⁰ By presenting the coming religious war as a fight over republican principles, the threat posed by the “absolutist” faction within the Roman Catholic Church is the plot to “enslave” the American people. In *New York*, Lippard’s strategic use of nativism complements his anti-slavery rhetoric and contributes to his working-class protest.

The first chapter of this study showed how Lippard relied upon anti-slavery rhetoric and sympathetic representations of blacks to mount an effective class protest against “upper-tendom.” As I have shown in this chapter, Lippard’s use and critique of nativist rhetoric constitutes a conscious effort on his part to modify a popular, and often divisive, rhetoric. Lippard did not embrace the nativist anxieties of his contemporaries Duganne and Buntline, but he employed the popular antebellum discourse strategically to reinforce his mutual attack upon “wage” and chattel slavery. Furthermore, Lippard’s newspaper writing indicates the writer’s awareness of how easily nativist sentiment could serve the interests of the powerful classes he sought to critique. Instead of redirecting the native-born white working-class’s hostility away from the professional classes and onto the unskilled foreign immigrant, Lippard develops a meta-critique of how nativist rhetoric threatens to mute class differences

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 283.

and fracture solidarity among the working-classes. Ultimately, Lippard's sympathy for free and enslaved blacks and his refusal to denigrate disempowered Catholic immigrants comprise a progressive class protest that is unmatched within the city-mystery genre.

The Multiple Class Accents of Augustine Duganne's Nativism

While Lippard mediates his strategic use of nativism with a meta-critique that preserves its usefulness as a strategy of working-class protest, Augustine Duganne employs nativism much less ambivalently in his city-mysteries of the 1840's and 1850's. In his earlier city-mysteries, Duganne employs anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant nativism as cultural shorthand to distinguish vice from virtue among his characters. Although the nativism helps to develop an artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes, the lack of a meta-critique threatens to undermine working-class solidarity—and thus the working-class protest—in Duganne's city-mysteries. Moreover, nativist rhetoric dominates Duganne's city-mysteries of the 1850's as native-born working-class and middle-class characters are aligned against unskilled immigrant laborers. With middle-class values of Christian charity replacing artisan republican critique in these later city-mysteries, the subversive potential of black characters in earlier city-mysteries is replaced with paternalistic racialism. Duganne's writing reveals not only how unmediated nativism could serve the interests of the middle-class, but also underscores the important role that progressive representations of black characters play in city-mysteries' strategies of working-class protest.

Although Augustine Duganne may not be well-known today among canonical writers, he was a prolific writer who published in multiple genres from the early 1840's until his death in 1884. Cited foremost for his satirical poem of 1855, "Manifest Destiny," Duganne made a literary career publishing collections of poetry, producing several city-mysteries, writing for various newspapers, and contributing abolitionist poetry to *The National Era*. Born in Boston in 1823, Duganne released his first collection of poetry, *Massachusetts*, and his first city-mystery, *The Two Clerks*, in 1843. After moving to Philadelphia where he befriended George Lippard, Duganne published his city-mystery *The Knights of the Seal* in 1845 and started a short-lived newspaper *The Iron Man*. After moving to New York City around 1850, Duganne contributed poems to *The National Era*, served one term as a Know-Nothing in the New York Legislature, and published his final city-mystery *The Tenant-House*. During the Civil War Duganne served for two years as a colonel in the 176th New York Volunteers and spent the final year of his commission as a Confederate prisoner in Texas.²⁵¹ Like his contemporaries and professional friends Edgar Allan Poe, George Lippard, and Ned Buntline, Duganne lived among the three cities publishing the bulk of popular writing—Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. Although his poetry is overshadowed by Poe and his city-mysteries are overshadowed by Lippard, Duganne was a prolific contributor to antebellum popular print culture. As a man who lectured before workingmen's organizations and wrote poetry devoted to labor reform, Duganne proves an important figure in understanding how city-

²⁵¹ Albert Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels, Vol. II*, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), 85-88. Biographical information about Augustine Duganne is scarce in the literary scholarship. Details similar to Johannsen's entry for Duganne can be found in J. Randolph Cox's *Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000).

mysteries employed anti-slavery and nativist discourses to make their class critique. An avowed abolitionist and a political nativist, Duganne's city-mystery writing career reveals the potential and the limits of nativist rhetoric to build working-class consciousness.

Between 1843 and 1857, Duganne published more than half a dozen city-mysteries. Unlike his contemporary George Lippard who tempered his use of nativism with a meta-critique, Duganne often embraced and employed anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant nativism to help develop his artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes. From the Catholic conspiracy dramatized in his 1843 debut *The Two Clerks* to the fanatical Italian Catholic organ-grinders in his 1857 finale *The Tenant-House; or, Embers from Poverty's Hearth-Stone*, Duganne used nativism to help locate and distinguish the villains from the native-born, working-class heroes. In doing so, Duganne reinforced native-born whites' fears in the 1840's and 1850's that rising immigration posed a national threat to the security and health of the republic. According to Robert Ernst, native-born whites complained that immigrants lowered wages by working for cheap wages and eroded the apprenticeship system of labor among skilled trades.²⁵² The nativism of Duganne's city-mysteries of the 1840's reveals how these economic fears, coupled with the impression that immigrants taxed the nation's social services, could assist in developing an artisan republican condemnation of the wealthy classes. However, Duganne's city-mysteries of the 1850's realize Lippard's concerns that nativism harbored the potential to fracture working-class solidarity along ethnic lines. With artisan republican rhetoric replaced by sentimental paternalism in Duganne's city-mysteries of the 1850's, nativism

²⁵² Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City*, 102-103.

serves to reinforce middle-class reform values and to celebrate the logic of capitalism. Consequently, Duganne's last city-mystery patronizes as much as it sympathizes with its poor, native-born, white characters.

In his city-mysteries of the 1840's, Duganne often used anti-Catholic or anti-immigrant nativism as a means of distinguishing the republican, working-class heroes from the wealthy, dissolute villains. A classic case of anti-Catholic nativism developing artisan republican rhetoric occurs in Duganne's first city-mystery of 1843. *The Two Clerks, or The Orphan's Gratitude*, chronicles the lives of hard-working orphan, Henry Fowler, and his dissolute foster-brother, Richard Martin. Duganne establishes Henry Flower's artisan republican virtues by making him the favorite of Richard Martin's hard-working mother. "There are many in the wide world like Mrs. Martin. But they are not found among the prosperous and wealthy; they move not in the glare of fashion, and in the gardens of luxury. No, they must be sought where they are—in the lowly abodes of poverty—among those who earn by the sweat of the brow, a hard fare and a harder pillow."²⁵³ After Martin frames Fowler for stealing from their mutual employer, Fowler sails to Peru and joins the indigenous republicans' fight against Catholic Spanish invaders. The dissolute Martin ends up fighting against Fowler on behalf of the invading royalists at the historical Battle of Carabobo in 1821. In this setting where all Americans are themselves "foreigners," anti-Catholicism serves to reinforce Martin's anti-republican views. In a sensationally nativist passage, the royalists prepare Martin to assassinate the republican President through a Catholic ritual:

²⁵³ Augustine Duganne, *The Two Clerks, or The Orphan's Gratitude: Being the Adventures of Henry Fowler and Richard Martin*, (Boston: Brainard & Co., 1843) 5.

And what a sight was before him! Kneeling around the apartment, were the conspirators, each with his crosier-hilted sword erect before him, and a white-stoled priest, with a wafer in his hand, administered the rite of Christianity.

As he entered, they arose, and the cross was placed before him. ‘Swear, by the emblem of salvation, to be true. Kneel and swear—swear to strike deep to the heart of the tyrant!’

And as the oath of the conspirator to do a deed of murder came from his white lips, the solemn ‘Amen’ of the priest mingled with it; and the brows of the soldiers bent upon their cross-hilts.

And thus shall the bigot and the murderer call upon religion to bless his crime, and it is sanctified unto him.²⁵⁴

Although this scene takes place in South America, the exaggerated Catholic ritual in the service of subterfuge against the Peruvian natives reinforces the threat Catholicism poses to republican institutions. Furthermore, in a departure from Shelley Streeby’s observation in *American Sensations* that Duganne’s nativist and anti-imperialist convictions led him to oppose the Mexican War, we see that Duganne found virtue in American intervention abroad when it was in defense of republican institutions.²⁵⁵

Similar to the ambivalent use of nativist rhetoric in Lippard’s city-mysteries, Duganne continued to draw on anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant nativism in his works of the 1840’s to help develop his class critique. For instance, in *The Knights of*

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 43.

²⁵⁵ Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations*, 22.

the Seal; or, The Mysteries of the Three Cities, Duganne uses anti-Catholic imagery to depict an alliance between the wealthy classes and corrupt elected officials. One of the primary conspirators against the fugitive slave Florine is the Statesman, the consummate self-interested politician whom nativists increasingly feared would sacrifice the good of the republic for selfish ends.²⁵⁶ “A whisper seemed to sound in that Statesman’s heart—a whisper that appalled him. It asked him how he had used his power—if his country’s good was his only aim—if public means had not been the instrument of his private crime in his hands?”²⁵⁷ The threat the unscrupulous Statesman poses to the republic is solidified through anti-Catholic imagery. “Then the form of the Statesman was bowed down in anguish. A dream was before him—a dream of the deeds of bad men—and of their punishment. Many were around him—men with bishop’s robes upon their bodies, covering lust and hypocrisy—men, from the pulpit preaching chastity, and profaning God’s altars with abominable crimes—men there were, too, who had destroyed reputations, who had sold and bought souls!”²⁵⁸ Duganne also invokes nativist rhetoric in his depiction of the opportunistic penny press editor, Soleil, who edits “The Anti-Native Advocate” and is no friend to the native-born poor. Despite the nativist rhetoric in *The Knights of the Seal*, Duganne makes clear that the wealthy classes are ultimately the greatest threat to the

²⁵⁶ Tyler Anbinder explains that by the early 1850’s, the nativist Know-Nothings Party (of which Duganne was a member) expressed antipathy towards professional politicians as part of their ideology. “Know Nothings charged that unscrupulous demagogues, concerned only with gaining office, sold their influence to immigrants in return for the newcomers’ votes” (105). See Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850’s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

²⁵⁷ Augustine Duganne, *The Knights of the Seal; or, The Mysteries of the Three Cities*, (Philadelphia: Colon and Adriaance Arcade, 1845), 101.

²⁵⁸ Augustine Duganne, *The Knights of the Seal*, 102.

native-born poor. Duganne's mouthpiece, the mysteriously named Man in the Drab Coat, proclaims: "'This city is called a bad city—folks say the foreigners here, and the lower classes, are the very dregs of the world. But let me tell you, sir—there's more wickedness done in a single day by the aristocracy of this same city, than would drown ten Gomorrahs, at the lowest possible calculation.'"²⁵⁹ Although he attacks the "upper ten" in this passage, Duganne distinguishes between "foreigners" and the "lower classes" even as unskilled immigrants were entering the lowest-paying echelon of the marketplace.

While Duganne's city-mysteries of the 1840's share the nativist and racial ambivalence that mark Lippard's class-inflected novels, Duganne's city-mystery writing of the 1850's reveals a dramatic departure from the subversive anti-slavery and artisan republican discourses. Duganne's final city-mystery, *The Tenant-House* published in 1857, shares many of the plot devices and much of the sensational imagery typical of the popular genre; however, his unmitigated embrace of nativism, temperance reform, and middle-class philanthropy compromises the novel's purported sympathy for the working poor. Instead of presenting working-class characters enmeshed in wide conspiracies and incorporating sympathetic black characters who would draw attention to "wage" (and chattel) slavery, Duganne offers a conversion to Protestant Christianity and an acceptance of the logic of the capitalist marketplace as the panacea to the social ills plaguing northeastern cities.

If Duganne's earlier city-mysteries failed to imagine a viable alternative to wage labor, *The Tenant-House* provides a solution that compromises radical working-class reform and capitulates to middle-class hegemony. By investing so ardently in

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 121.

anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant nativism in *The Tenant-House*, Duganne prevents working-class solidarity necessary to the effective class resistance against market capitalism. Rather than corrupt authorities and greedy aristocrats playing the role of villain to the multi-racial working poor, villainy is located foremost in the fanatical and unassimilable Roman Catholic Italian organ-grinders. Through the moral improvement and the Alger-esque transformations of impoverished tenement-dwellers, *The Tenant-House* extends the promise of the American Dream and the modest goal of middle-class respectability to nearly every immigrant except Catholics. In these ways, *The Tenant-House*, Duganne's most ambitious novel and the last gasp of the waning city-mystery genre, has more in common with sentimental women's novels of the 1850's than its sensational predecessors. In retrospect, *The Tenant-House*, largely stripped of its working-class accents, reconfirms the genre's dependence on anti-slavery discourse for its radical class protest.

Influenced by such sentimental fiction as Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* and Maria Cummins's extremely popular *The Lamplighter* of the same decade, *The Tenant-House* chronicles for 490 pages the lives of three tenement children who have been either orphaned or abducted. One orphan, a homeless newsboy nicknamed "Bob the Weasel" because of his shabby appearance from street life, is transformed like Horatio Alger's Ragged Dick into Robert Morrison by a concerned, wealthy philanthropist named Mr. Granby. The other orphan, young seamstress Emily Marvin, fleeing the advances of an unscrupulous rent-collector, is taken in by another poor seamstress who proudly keeps a clean and spotless tenement. Both orphans become part of Granby's grand plan to improve the "moral" character of the

“crowded, reeking, pestiferous tenant-house of the poor.”²⁶⁰ Instead of viewing the crowded tenements as an economic consequence like Lippard, Duganne links tenements with the degraded culture of bar-rooms and bemoans the inhabitants’ disregard for the Sabbath. “We should behold children reared in localities of filth and disease—with vice and dissipation constantly before their eyes; born of parents steeped in the dregs of poverty and wretchedness, their earliest habit beggary, their first lesson profanity, their constant experiences hunger, and cold, and neglect.”²⁶¹ Granby’s solution to improving the squalid tenements born of poverty is to establish Sabbath-schools in each one and to teach the tenement children how to become “infant missionaries” to their degraded parents. Such philanthropy is consistent with the faith Duganne places in art to humanize degraded workers and bring beauty into the lives of the poor in his 1853 book *Art’s True Mission*. Calling for the government to invest in art institutes and to provide funding for poor students, Duganne places faith in the power of aesthetic beauty to succor the poor. “Let our school-houses, halls, churches, and homes become familiar with lovely things. A picture of a quiet landscape may be a silent monitor to the vexed mind—a sweet face gazing from the wall, may make us unashamed of the frown which darkens our brows. Even the humblest engraving, in a poor man’s chamber—if it possess but the symmetric proportions of beauty—may minister to the beholder’s taste, enlarge his heart, embellish, so to speak, his views of life.”²⁶² Duganne’s paternalistic and idealistic

²⁶⁰ Augustine Duganne, *The Tenant-House; or, Embers from Poverty’s Hearthstone*, (New York: Robert De Witt Publisher, 1857), 220.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 219.

²⁶² Augustine Duganne, *Art’s True Mission in America*, (New York: George S. Appleton, 1853), 24.

solution to class conflict is a far cry from Lippard's cooperative society the Brotherhood of the Union, and is a direct result of the nativist rhetoric that demonizes unskilled immigrant laborers in *The Tenant-House*.

Middle-class paternalism also marks Duganne's solution to squalid tenement life, a cause central to *The Tenant-House*. Although Duganne's city-mystery condemns rent-collectors for harassing the poor, *The Tenant-House* suggests that the real problem lies in heartless landlords' alienation from their degraded tenants. "In those dens, moreover, [poor tenants] ate and drank...blasphemed, toiled, prayed hopelessly, and died, year by year, scores upon scores of human beings, in the guise of men, women, and children, of whom the world knew nothing, save through coroners' inquests, police-reports, or pauper statistics, and of whom Mr. Kolephat and Mr. Ferret cared nothing, save to collect of them inexorably the monthly extortion of rent."²⁶³ Mordecai Kolephat, the owner of a dilapidated tenement ironically nicknamed "Kolephat College," discovers sympathy for the poor only after he is reunited with his long-lost and kidnapped daughter Rebecca. In addition, Kolephat College, which is destroyed by a climactic fire at the end of the novel, is replaced by a "Model Dwelling for the Poor" with a school-room and ventilated bedrooms. Yet the greatest improvement of the Model Dwelling for the Poor, Duganne suggests, will be a renewed sympathy between tenant and landlord: "The owners will behold their tenants, face to face, and landlord and tenant shall be happier in mutual confidence and respect."²⁶⁴ Consistent with the middle-class Christian reform movement of the 1850's, Duganne's solution to squalid tenement life relies on a shared sympathy

²⁶³ Augustine Duganne, *The Tenant-House*, 32.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 489.

between individuals rather than treating the economic causes of poverty that necessitate tenements in the first place.

In Duganne's city-mystery writing of the 1840's, immigrant characters help to distinguish the virtuous artisan republican heroes, but they are not yet singled out as the per-eminent threat to the native-born poor. For example, in *The Daguerreotype Miniature* of 1846, immigrant characters reinforce the anti-republican villainy of the wealthy forgers and serve as foils to the native-born, "honest" Bowery B'hoys. When Bowery B'hoy Dick Dolby begins to investigate the forgers Major Peyton Florence and Tom Barton, they hire inebriated Portuguese and Scottish immigrants to rough up Dolby. Duganne offers an ethnically specific description of the two immigrants as they carouse in a bar one afternoon: "One of these individuals was a copper-colored, low-browed, crisp-haired specimen of a Portuguese, the other a pock-marked, sandy-locked, pug-nosed, and blear-eyed Scotchman. The first wore a dark cotton blouse, much too soiled, much torn, and much too small for the wearer—the shoulders of the latter were covered with a green roundabout, very much indeed too wide."²⁶⁵ The immigrant ruffians on the villains' payroll lack the "heartfelt sympathy" of the virtuous and show no remorse when they pummel Dolby. "On, on, through the streets, the lanes, and avenues; on, amid the loafers and small boys; on, over the gutters and crossings—dragged those terrible men the hopeless Dick Dolby. No pity moved their remorseless hearts—no kindly throb of sympathy awoke within their unrelenting bosoms—On, and on, and on!"²⁶⁶ Nativism also serves as shorthand to

²⁶⁵ Augustine Duganne, *The Daguerreotype Miniature; or, Life in the Empire City*, (Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber, 1846), 25-26.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

identify the criminals in Duganne's city-mystery *Eustace Barcourt; or, The Illegitimate* of 1848. Dick, a Catholic robber who is murdered for his diamond-encrusted cross, and Mike, an Irishman who is regularly inebriated, are members of a gang responsible for terrorizing the Jersey Shore. For Duganne and for fellow nativist writer Ned Buntline, stereotyped immigrants become an easy means of distinguishing virtue from vice in a rapidly changing urban landscape.

In *The Tenant-House*, Duganne is preoccupied with the immigrant question. In 1855, two years before the novel was published, Duganne was elected as a Know-Nothing candidate to the New York State Assembly. The Know-Nothings, a secret society which sprung from the Order of the Star Spangled Banner in New York City, became an alternative political party to the pro-slavery Democratic Party and the disintegrating Whig Party. With orders of the Know-Nothing Party espousing nativist and anti-slavery positions in the northeast, the party won gubernatorial races in the early to mid 1850's and ran Millard Fillmore for president in 1856.²⁶⁷ The nativist elements of the Know-Nothing platform called for extending the naturalization period from five to twenty-one years (the number of years a native-born citizen had to wait before voting) and for encouraging voters to elect only native-born candidates to political office.²⁶⁸ Although Anbinder points out that the Know-Nothings "never actually sought restrictions or quotas on the flow of immigration," the *Know Nothing* weekly newspaper printed in Boston often singled out immigrants as criminals and as

²⁶⁷ In *Nativism and Slavery*, Tyler Anbinder notes that in the mid-1850's Know-Nothings candidates won the governorships of Maine and Pennsylvania. Furthermore, based on Know-Nothings candidates' success in California, Indiana, and Ohio in the election of 1854, "In every state where they had time to organize, they could claim some sort of victory" (73).

²⁶⁸ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 106.

a burden on social services.²⁶⁹ In an article entitled “The Know Nothing to the Public,” publisher Edward W. Hinks announces that the newspaper is committed to slowing down the negative impact of immigration:

Our country, the fairest, the first, the best upon the face of the earth, is approaching a crisis. For years the tide of emigration has been flowing and flowing to our shore, till our population has become materially changed—and changed for the worse. This vast emigration, or a very large part of it, these millions who have so increased our number, and who are found on every plain, and hill, and valley in the country, have brought with them sentiments and principles which are dangerous in the extreme. They are not here as Americans. They do not intend to become Americans. On the contrary, their policy, their speech, their conduct is anti-republican in every respect. They make open warfare on the Religion of the country. They attack the School System. Their aim is to crush free thought and free speech. They would unite Church and State, in order that ultimately the Church may struggle and crush the State. They oppose a true Democracy. They oppose the doctrines of Washington and all the early fathers. Against the spirit of an AMERICAN NATIONALITY they war with passionate malignity. It is that we may aid in staying this immense evil that we publish the KNOW-NOTHING.²⁷⁰

Although the *Know Nothing* employs artisan republican rhetoric and at times sympathizes with native-born mechanics, Anbinder shows through surviving membership rolls of Know-Nothing lodges that the party did not draw

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 106.

²⁷⁰ *Know Nothing: and American Crusader*, May 6, 1854, 2.

disproportionately from the working-class. Anbinder concludes, “When occupational data concerning Know Nothing lodge members is compared with random samplings of those eligible for membership in the Order, one actually finds that the Know Nothings attracted an approximately average proportion of both artisans and professionals.”²⁷¹ Therefore, the nativism and middle-class values in Duganne’s city-mystery writing of the 1850’s are consistent with his professional political activity in the Know-Nothing Party.

Despite its poignant depiction of hard-working seamstresses and struggling artisans, *The Tenant-House* ultimately reinforces middle-class values. Just as the Know-Nothing Party embraced the conventional temperance reform movement and fractured working-class solidarity through divisive nativist rhetoric, *The Tenant-House* singles out Catholic immigrants as the primary threat to the republic and encourages assimilation to the logic of capitalism. With the contrast between the rational, wealthy philanthropist Granby and the fanatical working-class family of Italian Catholic organ-grinders led by matriarch Monna Maria, Duganne offers only a paternalistic solution to the suffering of the working poor. In addition, the subplots that feature Jewish characters rewarded for performing “good deeds” not only reinforce a hegemonic Protestantism but also reinforce marketplace values. With this celebration of the middle-class and a nativist preoccupation with the moral reform of the indigent, Duganne’s novel presents the least sympathetic and the least radical portrait of blacks in the city-mystery genre. The text’s only developed black character, Samson, an obsequious servant to Granby, gives further evidence of the

²⁷¹ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 34.

extent to which earlier city-mysteries relied upon anti-slavery discourse to mount an effective class critique.

The novel's primary hero and villain, Granby and Monna Maria respectively, are constructed according to nativist and middle-class values. In the wealthy Protestant bachelor, Granby, Duganne provides a template for rational, middle-class reform. Having been made aware of homeless children struggling in the city through his chance encounter with a homeless newsboy, Granby muses on how to fight poverty and comes up with a paternalistic solution. "It is here, in the midst of these habitations, that reforming influences should be set at work; here, in the tenant-house, ought to be planted a school, wherein to gather, as in a sheepfold, the poor lambs who are outcast from the flock of society. Yes, Samson! the miserable and squalid offspring of these poor people might thus be made infant missionaries, to carry to their depraved homes an influence and power of good, whereby whole families should be reformed and elevated."²⁷² Surrounded in his home by middle-class trappings and a conspicuous Bible, Granby represents the sober philanthropist, and his modest reform plans mark the extent of the novel's relief for the working poor.

Monna Maria, the matriarch of the Italian Catholic organ-grinders, embodies nativists' anxiety toward immigrants. After kidnapping Jewish landlord Mordecai Kolehphat's infant daughter Rebecca (renamed "Ninetta") and training her to become a ballerina, Monna Maria grows desperate when Kolehphat's paid informants locate the girl. While philanthropist Granby resides pleasantly in a warm, middle-class home that lacks ostentation, Monna Maria lives the life of an ascetic. Her small apartment, which also houses Ninetta and more than a dozen organ-grinders, contains the

²⁷² Augustine Duganne, *The Tenant-House*, 226.

trappings of her Catholic faith. “Monna Maria’s household articles were, therefore, very few; but conspicuous among them was a sort of altar, opposite the fire-place, formed of an oblong packing-box, covered with a white cloth, whereon were a crucifix and a glass bottle, containing water from the church, and over which hung several colored prints, representing the agony of Christ, and the Virgin Mary. Here, in solitude, Monna Maria, a bigot and ascetic, was used to practise her superstitious devotions—here, in fanatical endurance, she framed new penances to undergo, new chastisements wherewith to torture her miserable body.”²⁷³ Exploiting Ninetta who performs on stage as a ballerina and turns over her earnings, Monna Maria abuses Catholic tenets to defend the kidnapping and convinces herself that she will be rewarded in heaven for raising the Jewish girl as a Roman Catholic. Monna Maria represents the threat that fanatical religion—without the rational guidance of a philanthropist like Granby—poses to the republic. When, ironically, Monna Maria dies in the fire she set to kill Ninetta and prevent the girl’s rescue, Duganne reflects: “Thus Monna Maria communed in the darkness, believing, in her superstition, that she did no wrong. O Human Heart! This poor Italian woman is not alone in her bigotry! Alas! How many of the refined, the educated, the gospel-taught are in our midst, who build up about their spirits a wall of fanaticism, like unto Monna Maria’s.”²⁷⁴ With Monna Maria’s sensational crimes dominating the plot and the denouement, *The Tenant-House* demonizes unskilled Italian immigrants and offers little social criticism on behalf of the working poor. *The Tenant-House* mutes class differences in its bigoted appeal to the native-born.

²⁷³ Ibid., 444-445.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 456.

With a nativist discourse that ignores the slavery question and is predicated exclusively upon temperance reform and anti-Catholic animus, *The Tenant-House* lacks the republican critique of chattel slavery that appears in Duganne's earlier city-mysteries and throughout Lippard's writing. Without the racially ambivalent metaphor of "wage slavery" to critique the abstracted power of middle-class professionals like many of its predecessors, *The Tenant-House* offers a paternalistic treatment of blacks consistent with its celebration of Protestant Christian charity. While Lippard's dynamic Herculean black laborers express working-class protest and Duganne's murdered black laborer of *The Knights of the Seal* calls up the horrors of chattel slavery, black Samson of *The Tenant-House* is similar in name only.

Unlike the heroic black males who mirror the white mechanic heroes of Lippard's radical city-mysteries, Duganne's black Samson is made virtuous through his dutiful service to philanthropist Granby. By suggesting Granby and Samson's relationship is one of patronage which began in the south rather than one of contractual employment, Duganne presents Samson as a "contented slave." Once Granby establishes a Sabbath school in seamstress Margery's tenement, the philanthropist and his servant pray together for its success. Samson, with "muscular breast" and "labor-seamed hands," shares the class-inflected physical strength of Lippard's heroic black males.²⁷⁵ However, Duganne makes clear that Samson's potentially subversive Herculean strength is contained by religious principles. "A weather-beaten, scarred, but honest and intelligent countenance was that of the negro, with a look of child-like confidence as he listened to the teachings of the 'Good

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 421.

Book.”²⁷⁶ In fact, Granby’s and Samson’s shared religious faith obscures their economic relationship and reinforces the south’s paternalistic view of race relations. “Together, with God’s holy Word before them, these earnest worshippers prayed in humility for the weary and way-worn of all His family. Master and servant—black and white—united in a heartfelt supplication for their common humanity....And as they stood thus together, with hands interclasped, one might not think that they were other than brothers—sons of the one great and eternal Father!”²⁷⁷ Although Duganne does not explicitly state that Samson was once Granby’s slave in the south, the intimation is clear as Samson helped raise Granby and now refuses to desert him. Granby compliments Samson: ““Did I not say, years ago, that I had found in my poor slave, as then you were, a friend who would never desert me?....We have been called ‘Master’ and ‘Slave,’ but your bondage to me, Samson, has been that of the heart.”²⁷⁸ In response to Granby’s offer for “freedom and competence” twenty years earlier, Samson swears he does not regret staying with Granby. ““Nebber! Nebber!’ sobbed the negro. ‘Samson hab a white heart in his black bosom, and close down dere is de face ob massa, jes’ like a lookin’-glass, forebber and ebber. Bress de Lord, dat put sense in de nigger’s head.”²⁷⁹ Even though black Samson is admitted into Granby’s “Christian family circle,” it is only in the role of a disempowered servant who speaks in stereotyped dialect. The working-class inflections that mark Lippard’s Herculean

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 421.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 421-422.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 423.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 423-424.

black heroes are replaced with sentimental racialism in Duganne's representation of black Samson.

Earlier in his career Duganne did provide progressive representations of blacks when he developed an artisan republican critique of the wealthy through anti-slavery discourse. In Duganne's 1848 city-mystery *Eustace Barcourt; or The Illegitimate*, the impoverished and fallen Isabel raises her illegitimate son in a lonely cottage outside of Philadelphia and with the help of a gang of robbers plots revenge against wealthy rake Ernest Barcourt who spurned her for another woman. The class conflict inherent in the seduction plot is developed with artisan republican rhetoric when Duganne contrasts the childhoods of the wealthy, legitimate Barcourt children and the poor, ostracized Eustace. "[The Barcourt's] are the children of the rich—wealth-nurtured, love-watched. No hard pillow they sleep on at night, but soft downy beds are their resting-places....Far away down in the deep well of the city's misery, mine eye has often penetrated....I saw pale poverty sitting, with corpse-like features, beside the threshold of vice—I beheld the wan features and dim eyes of white-cheeked infants, starving in their mothers' arms, with their lips shrunken and their thin blood dried up in their veins."²⁸⁰ When one of the robbers seduces Barcourt's wife and Isabel relishes the destruction of her seducer's happy marriage, Duganne expresses sympathy for his heroine through anti-slavery discourse. "But new thoughts came, like those which the slave feels, when after long years of misery and suffering, he bares his arm to the shoulder, and raises his knife over his fallen tyrant. Such thoughts as these—thoughts that come from wrong, nursed into revenge—

²⁸⁰ Augustine Duganne, *Eustace Barcourt; or, The Illegitimate. A Story of Conflict between Good and Evil*, (Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber and Company, 1848), 49.

thoughts that arise in a fair soul made foul by injury.”²⁸¹ Amidst the novel’s artisan republican and anti-slavery discourses, Duganne inserts a witty and clever black sailor among the gang of robbers who lure merchant ships to run aground along the Jersey Shore. Black Bill stands up to the other sailors when they verbally abuse him and he alone frustrates the schemes of a duplicitous Yankee sailor to turn over the robbers to the legal authorities. In a typical response to the jibes of the Irish sailors, Black Bill exclaims, “‘Brack rascal—de debbil! Who mak’ him white, I wonder!’”²⁸² Although Black Bill speaks in stereotyped dialect, he challenges racial distinctions in much the same way as the Creole servant Dim of Lippard’s *The Quaker City*. Over the course of Duganne’s city-mysteries from 1843 to 1857, the transition of black characters from subversive and dynamic to conventional and obsequious parallels the waning class protest in his novels. The disempowered black servants of *The Tenant-House* underscore the extent to which the popular genre’s working-class protest depended upon a sympathetic engagement with blackness and anti-slavery rhetoric.

Nativism and Ned Buntline’s Working-Class Postures

While Duganne’s later writing, notably *The Tenant-House*, indicates the intimate relationship between nativism and the middle-class values of paternalistic philanthropy, Ned Buntline’s city-mystery writing reveals the contradictions between nativism and artisan republican rhetoric. A writer equal to Duganne in his involvement with nativist political parties throughout the 1850’s, Buntline attempted to link anti-immigrant nativism and his professed sympathy for the native-born working-classes in his most successful city-mystery *The Mysteries and Miseries of*

²⁸¹ Ibid., 106.

²⁸² Ibid., 67.

New York. Buntline offers us a case study of a popular writer whose heavy reliance on nativist discourse compromises the working-class accents he nurtured in the columns of his weekly story paper *Ned Buntline's Own*.

Nine years prior to Duganne's reinforcement of middle-class values through nativist discourse in *The Tenant-House*, Buntline began his city-mystery career with a similar exposé of Gotham life in *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*. Buntline's sprawling 595-page novel, which was released in five parts between December 1847 and April 1848, includes artisan republican critique of "upper-tendom" and employs nativist rhetoric to posit the threat to the native-born working poor of the urban marketplace. With cruel Italian gypsies abducting the child of the white, middle-class Abingdon family for ransom and with a benevolent Christian philanthropist providing the novel's large-scale solution to class inequality, nativism compromises the artisan republican critique of the wealthy "aristocrats" who appear in *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*. In addition to the fact that Buntline experiments with nativism several years before its intense outbreak and the rise of the Know-Nothing Party in the northeast in the early 1850's, what is surprising about Buntline's use of nativism is the enthusiasm with which he positions himself as a defender of the working classes in his city-mystery writing and weekly story paper *Ned Buntline's Own*. Despite his self-professed role of defender of the working classes, Buntline develops an alliance between native-born workers and native-born professionals against unskilled immigrant workers and the wealthy classes. By contextualizing *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York* within the pages of *Ned Buntline's Own*, we can see how the uncritical employment of nativist discourse ultimately fractures working-

class solidarity as George Lippard cautioned in his own city-mystery writing and as Duganne would confirm in *The Tenant-House*.

The great divide between Lippard's ultimate rejection of nativism and Buntline's firm embrace of the bigoted discourse is evident in the two writers' contrary responses to the nativist riots of 1844 in Philadelphia. While Lippard lampooned and condemned the nativist mob in his novel *The Nazarene* and his newspaper *Quaker City Weekly*, Buntline invoked the native-born rioters as heroes in his 1856 political broadside written in support of filibustering efforts in "Catholic" Cuba. In a "Secret Circular" addressed to the Know-Nothings of Philadelphia, Buntline writes:

The Kensington and Southwark Natives of '44 understand the game, and are electioneering the Fillmore Ticket—not because they hope to elect him, but to elect Buchanan, who has promised not to interfere with a quiet filibuster descent upon Cuba. The Cubans and Mexicans are Catholics, and speak the Spanish language. Dead men tell no tales. This will be the death blow to the Church of Rome, and the only way to reach its great and increasing power and wealth. We burned and sacked their Churches in Philadelphia, in 1844; we can do it again in Havana and the City of Mexico, in 1857, where the Church property is estimated by Mr. Forney at ONE HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. By the memories of '44, I again say, Vote for Buchanan, and Cuba is ours.²⁸³

²⁸³ Ned Buntline, "Secret Circular to the Know-Nothings of Philadelphia," 1856. Rare Books Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Efforts during the 1850's to filibuster Cuba, Rodrigo Lazo explains, "brought together slaveholders in Cuba and the United States, northern U.S. expansionists, and soldiers of fortune."²⁸⁴ While some filibusterers in the U.S. viewed themselves as republican liberators of an "enslaved" Cuba, Buntline's support of slavery and the vitriolic nativism displayed in the circular indicate that notions of white superiority underlay his support to filibuster Cuba.

Born Edward Zane Carroll Judson in New York in 1821, Ned Buntline is known today more for his exploits as a free-lance adventurer and a progenitor of western dime novels than as a city-mystery writer.²⁸⁵ Judson, who chose the pseudonym "Buntline" in the early 1840's for its reference to the strongest rope on a ship, is credited with popularizing and mythologizing the frontiersman "Buffalo Bill" Cody in dime novels and stage plays after the Civil War. However, before he made a literary career publishing dozens of dime novels for *Beadle and Adams* and *Street and Smith's New York Weekly* between the late 1860's and his death in 1886, Buntline was a well-known figure in the popular literary world of New York City. After serving as a common sailor during his young manhood and publishing his earliest sketches in *The Knickerbocker* in 1838, Buntline landed in New York City in the mid-1840's and tried his hand at the then popular genre of city-mystery fiction. Buoyed by the popular success of *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York* in 1848, Buntline wrote three sequels based upon the initial novel and started his own weekly

²⁸⁴ Rodrigo Lazo, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 14.

²⁸⁵ Biographical dictionaries report various years for Buntline's birth, ranging from 1821-1825. Albert Johannsen argues for the year 1821 based on newspaper reports and the National Archives in Washington, D.C. See Albert Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams, Vol. II*, 168.

story paper *Ned Buntline's Own* in 1848. In 1849, the blustery Buntline found himself embroiled in the fall-out from the Astor Place Riots in which soldiers fired upon and killed at least 20 American civilians.²⁸⁶ Nativist politics informed the dispute that gave rise to the tragic rioting, as Bowery theater-goers were protesting a performance of the title character of *Macbeth* by British actor William Charles Macready and expressing their strong preference for native-born American actor Edwin Forrest. Although Buntline was the only person convicted in connection with the rioting and spent one year in jail on Blackwell's Island, Peter Buckley notes that the provocateur was actually convicted for exacerbating the tension in his weekly story paper *Ned Buntline's Own*. "His crime issued from words, not actions."²⁸⁷ Through editorials in *Ned Buntline's Own*, Buntline regularly reinforced his anti-immigrant, temperance, and anti-gambling positions that appear throughout his city-mystery writing. Like Duganne, Buntline participated in nativist politics: in 1847 in Philadelphia he helped to found the secret society the United Sons of America which was absorbed by the Know-Nothing Party in 1852.²⁸⁸

Despite the working-class inflections of the city-mystery genre as seen in the works of Lippard and Duganne, and despite Buntline's self-promotion in *Ned Buntline's Own* as a friend to the native-born mechanics and artisans of New York

²⁸⁶ Jay Monaghan, *The Great Rascal: The Life and Adventures of Ned Buntline*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1951). Monaghan indicates that local newspaper accounts reported 34 killed and 141 wounded during the violent suppression of the rioting. Most historical sources on the Astor Place Riots place the number of dead closer to 21. For Monaghan's treatment of Ned Buntline's role in the Astor Place Riots, see pages 147-159 in *The Great Rascal*. Also, see Peter G. Buckley's "The Case Against Ned Buntline: The 'Words, Signs, and Gestures' of Popular Authorship," *Prospects*, 13 (1988): 249-272. Buckley notes that Buntline was the only person convicted for conspiring to riot, which carried a \$600 fine and one year in jail (254).

²⁸⁷ Buckley, "The Case Against Ned Buntline," 253.

²⁸⁸ Albert Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams, Vol. II*, 170.

City, Buntline's strategies of class protest ironically reinforce middle-class values. Relying on anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic nativism to demonize unskilled immigrants as the greatest threat to the native-born workers and merchants of the republic, Buntline presents what amounts to a tepid artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes. Furthermore, lacking sympathy for free and enslaved blacks notwithstanding his service as a sergeant for the Union Army during the Civil War, Buntline does not engage blackness as a strategy for condemning "wage" slavery in the north. Perhaps the best-known writer of class-inflected popular fiction, Buntline is the genre's least effective critic of class inequality.

The Mysteries and Miseries of New York follows a number of interweaving plots and subplots typical of the city-mystery genre. Similar to Lippard's *The Quaker City*, a seduction plot provides the foundation of the novel: Isabella Meadows, a middle-class young woman with a "snow white neck," is pursued by two dissolute, aristocratic young men Harry Whitmore and Gustave Livingstone.²⁸⁹ Unbeknownst to the girl and her widowed mother, the two rakes have also fleeced Isabella's older brother Charley Meadows at the gambling-table and rendered him "enslaved" to the corrupt gambling-hall proprietor. While Buntline's novel traces Whitmore's and Livingstone's successful schemes to deflower Isabella and further corrupt Charley, the exploits of a dangerous band of foreign criminals comprise the bulk of the subplots. These socially ostracized characters, who are suggestive of David S. Reynolds's delineation of the subversive "likable criminal" figure and provide the book's lone expression of artisan republican rhetoric, ultimately draw Buntline's

²⁸⁹ Ned Buntline, *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York: A Story of Real Life*, (New York: Berford & Co., 1848), Part I, 24.

sharpest social criticism. Known collectively as Jack Circle's Gang or the Five Points Gang, French, Irish, Italian, and English immigrants prey relentlessly upon the middle-class as represented by bachelor philanthropist Mr. Precise and the Abingdon family. Each subplot involving Jack Circle's Gang provides Buntline an opportunity to showcase what he believes to be the most ominous threat to the republic: unchecked immigration. Over the course of the sprawling five-part novel, immigration, not wage labor, looms as the greatest and most far-reaching threat to the native-born working-class.

In a polemical appendix to *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*, Buntline cites the dangers of immigration as the primary lesson to be deduced from his narrative. In case the reader has somehow overlooked the connection he makes repeatedly between immigration and crime in the novel, Buntline writes: "To judge from the places of nativity of at least two thirds of the criminals, immigration must be one great cause [for the increase of crime]. All of the large gang of burglars, whom with their real names and characters, we have introduced in our work, are foreigners, and mostly Englishmen. The denizens of the horrible circle known as the 'Five Points' are principally Irish and negroes; some few Dutch, are also living there, but not one *American*, to a hundred foreigners, can be found there."²⁹⁰ In addition to attributing the bulk of city crime to foreign influence, Buntline laments that immigrants tax the city's social services. "Our Alms Houses are occupied, at the ration of about fifteen to one, by foreigners, the overflowings of the poor-houses in Europe. The street beggars are principally Irish, Germans, and Italians....The immense numbers of emigrants which fill our hospitals and alms-houses, is an evil

²⁹⁰ Ibid., Part V, 88.

which bears very heavily upon property-holders and tax-payers in this country, but there seems to be no remedy, although frequent complaints have caused legislative attention to the subject.”²⁹¹ The nativism of the appendix informs the novel’s numerous subplots, as immigrants serve as cultural shorthand for distinguishing vice from virtue.

Introduced in part one of the novel, Jack Circle’s gang plans to commit a variety of crimes against native-born members of the middle-class. Englishman Jack Circle plots to rob the philanthropist Mr. Precise who hopes to build a “Home for the Poor” beyond the city with his business profits; the Italian gypsy couple, the Genlis’s, abducts young Willie Abingdon for ransom; and the gang’s Jewish attorney Tarhound pulls strings to get imprisoned gang members released from jail. The reader learns immediately that the gang is comprised of emigrated criminals in flight from the legal authorities in their countries of origin. “Jack Circle seldom attended the bar himself, but either moved about among his customers, conversing with them, or absented himself in the back room, where none save himself and a chosen few could enter; for this was a kind of general assembling room for the English burglars and pickpockets, who, driven from their own land, pursued their ‘profession’ in New York.”²⁹² Circle plants a gang member, Frank Hennock, in Mr. Precise’s house as the philanthropist’s private secretary in order to pull off the heist. Although he criticizes reformers who “have beautiful theories” without the practical knowledge to implement them, Buntline ultimately views Mr. Precise’s Home for the Poor as the “nearest approach

²⁹¹ Ibid., Part V, 88-89.

²⁹² Ibid., Part I, 33.

to a useful and proper means of aid and reformation to the guilty and wretched.”²⁹³

Mr. Precise, a compulsively punctual individual in an ironic nod to Benjamin Franklin, proposes a temperance farm where he will manage the earnings of mechanics and will educate their children through Christian principles. Unlike Lippard’s wholly cooperative society the Brotherhood of the Union and yet similar to the philanthropy of Granby in Duganne’s *The Tenant-House*, Mr. Precise’s benevolent dream is marked with paternalism and self-interest. He explains to Frank Hennock, “I wish to accomplish it: to see it succeed, and to know that I have saved some miserable creatures from despair and crime; to see them happy, industrious and prosperous around me, and then I will be willing to do. Yes, to calmly go up to that God who will reward those who do their *duty* here below.”²⁹⁴ Although Mr. Precise’s Home for the Poor does not get built by the narrative’s close, he provides the novel’s only large-scale voice of what is essentially middle-class reform.

Aside from Christian philanthropy, tightening the naturalization laws is Buntline’s solution for relieving the plight of the native-born laboring classes. With the needs of workers addressed only tangentially through the claim that rising crime rates in the city are attributable to immigration, the novel sensationalizes the dangers to the middle-class through stereotyped immigrant characters. The cruelest members of Jack Circle’s Gang are the Genlis’s, an Italian gypsy couple who snatch middle-class child Willie Abingdon from the streets while he watches a local militia march past his house. Like Duganne’s xenophobic depiction of child-napper Monna Maria and her Italian clan in *The Tenant-House*, the Genlis’s are sharply racialized in

²⁹³ Ibid., Part IV, 25-26.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., Part II, 36.

contrast to the white Abingdon family. Buntline describes Genlis the Gypsy King as he visits Jack Circle to hatch the kidnapping plot: “Two persons entered. [Genlis] was a tall, dark complexioned, shrewd looking fellow, in whose jet black eyes could be seen the fire of villainy and deep cunning. His arched eye-brows, aquiline nose, thin lips and curling black hair, all bespoke him a native of a foreign soil. In fact, he looked like a gypsy, or an Italian....As he entered he spoke, his accent also being evidence of his foreign derivation.”²⁹⁵ After the Genlis’s kidnap Willie, they extort money from the boy’s desperate mother with the help of an Irish hack-driver, a Native-American Indian fortune-teller, and a black dwarf. The fortune-teller prophesizes that Genlis the Gypsy King alone can provide the whereabouts of the lost boy and the hack-driver takes the blindfolded mother to pay Genlis for information. When the mother confides to her husband about her mysterious visits to the Gypsy King, Mr. Abingdon directs a nativist rant at Irish immigrants. “‘Nearly all the hack-drivers in town are Irish, and saucy, cheating, good for nothing set of scoundrels they are too. If you were to take the dominions of his sulphuric majesty with a fine-toothed comb, you couldn’t find a more unprincipled, rascally set!’”²⁹⁶ After the police track down the Genlis’s and locate the child in a remote village in upstate New York, Buntline directs a nativist rant against fortune-tellers who prey upon honest laborers. “They make fortunes, absolutely *fortunes*, in their trade of lying, humbuggery and deception. They will take fifty cents or a dollar, the earnings of a whole week’s labor, from a poor girl....The city should be cleared of these *pests*;—it is a pity that so far as they are concerned, the old Salem ‘blue laws’ could not be

²⁹⁵ Ibid., Part II, 14.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., Part IV, 71.

revived.”²⁹⁷ Here Buntline drives a wedge between native-born and immigrant workers, while the Italian gypsies’ treachery is heightened by their violation of the white, middle-class Abingdon family.

At the same time Buntline constructs stereotyped immigrants as a threat to the native-born middle-class family, he uses a criminal Frenchman to critique the “aristocrats” of “upper-tendom.” David S. Reynolds argues in *Beneath the American Renaissance* that the rise of the “likable criminal” figure in antebellum American literature is tied to sensational fiction and its subversive accents.²⁹⁸ Just as Devil-Bug becomes the radical voice of artisan republican rhetoric in Lippard’s *The Quaker City*, French pickpocket artist Julian Tobin preys upon upper-class pretensions in Buntline’s *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*. An associate of Jack Circle’s Gang, Tobin is initially linked to the dangers of unchecked immigration. “He is, indeed, a perfect specimen of a chevalier of the old French school....He *was* a French Baron—was disgraced some twenty years since and driven from society in his own country for cheating at cards; he became a regular gambler, but was so expert in his tricks, that no one would play with him. He next assumed his present profession, and became a ‘gnof’ or pickpocket.”²⁹⁹

Tobin’s greatest haul comes when he dons the disguise of a French army commander and invites himself to a soiree held by the aristocratic Fitz Lawrence family of Astor Place. When Mrs. Fitz Lawrence learns that a French count will attend her exclusive social event, she enthuses: “‘We’ll show him what the

²⁹⁷ Ibid., Part V, 58-59.

²⁹⁸ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 178.

²⁹⁹ Ned Buntline, *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*, Part I, 61.

aristocracy of America is! We'll make him feel that we know what good breeding is!....Oh, I do wish that they had *rank* in this low country; counts and countesses—lords and lordesses! There's no tellin' who's who, nor nothin', the way society is!'"³⁰⁰ Buntline's subversive critique of the wealthy classes continues as Tobin works the pretentious crowd and steals their jewelry right out from under their noses. Among the haughty guests, Mrs. Klawke tries to impress Tobin with a piece of gossip about the Fitz Lawrence's: "'People do say—and I know it is true, that this same family who are giving this soiree were not many years ago only low grog-shop keepers!'"³⁰¹ Buntline underscores the hypocrisy among the "fashionables" of high society by revealing Mrs. Klawke's own background. "[Tobin's] guide during all this time had forgotten to say how the fortune which made her a lady had been gained—perchance she had forgotten her kitchen days, and the honest and frugal relatives who had toiled away their lives to amass that which she was now glittering upon."³⁰² While Lippard's and Duganne's artisan republican rhetoric is often linked to a condemnation of the exploitation of disempowered laborers by powerful and corrupt members of society, Buntline's artisan republican rhetoric is dislocated from a larger social critique and is sympathetic to the "less pretentious" middle-classes. Tobin's artisan republican critique is not political, but satirical. "How he managed with the class whom old Jack Circle terms 'the up-town swells,' perhaps because they have

³⁰⁰ Ibid., Part II, 90-91.

³⁰¹ Ibid., Part III, 16.

³⁰² Ibid., Part III, 17.

been suddenly *swelled* into importance by becoming wealthy, even as rice increases in size after being thrown into hot water.”³⁰³

Buntline’s editorials in his weekly story paper *Ned Buntline’s Own* reflect similar contradictions within his professed sympathy for the working-classes. On one hand, Buntline bemoans the impact of immigrant labor on the marketplace and regularly posits the virtue of honest labor. In an editorial of April 7, 1849, Buntline offers encouragement to a factory-girl who is struggling to start up a working-girls’ association, albeit with an enthusiasm that borders on grandstanding. “I prize the *working girls*, and the *working classes* of America, higher, and more, than I do the *monied*, alias the humbug *aristocracy* of the land. I am proud and happy to serve them—happier far, because it cannot be said that the *poor* can bribe my aid—and while I work for *them*, I cannot be accused of selfishness! Then whenever I *can* aid them, let them come forward and say *how*, and *I’m on hand!*”³⁰⁴ Just a few months earlier in the paper, Buntline condemned Irish laborers for striking for higher wages. After reprinting coverage of the labor strike from another newspaper, Buntline reflects: “There are our quiet, well-disposed, ‘excellent’ adopted citizens. Last week, I chronicled a case where they attempted to take the dead body of a wife from the hands of a mourning husband—and here is another proof of their *value* as citizens. When, in the name of Heaven!—*will* Americans awake to their *duty*! The tide of foreign insolence and pauperism—of ignorance and malicious revolutionism—is swelling in upon us. It *must* be stopped, or the downfall of this Republic is at

³⁰³ Ibid., Part III, 67.

³⁰⁴ Ned Buntline, *Ned Buntline’s Own*, April 7, 1849, 2.

hand.”³⁰⁵ While Buntline’s lack of sympathy for Irish workers is consistent with his nativism, a series of exposés of confidence men and women operating in the city which ran in *Ned Buntline’s Own* in the spring of 1849 shows his short-sightedness toward the poor. Each week defining two or three “lurks,” or cons, by which confidence men and women beg money from their victims, Buntline opens by exposing the Shipwrecked Sailor’s Lurk, the Foreigner’s Lurk, and the Accident Lurk.³⁰⁶ In the ensuing weeks, Buntline exposes the Collier’s Lurk by which confidence men claim to have worked in the coal-mines until losing their jobs or having an accident in the coal-pits.³⁰⁷ In the same edition in which he responds to the factory-girl, Buntline exposes the Cotton Spinners’ Lurk by which men and women claim to be out of work.³⁰⁸ Besides the fact that Buntline’s sensational exposés of “lurks” could actually deprive charity to the unemployed and homeless, the column is directed not at the working-classes but at middle-class readers who could afford to give charity on the streets. Just as in *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*, Buntline’s working-class sympathies are inconsistent and weighted down by anti-immigrant nativism in his weekly story paper. The ineffective class protest of Buntline’s city-mystery writing reveals the diversity of the popular genre’s class accents, which depended upon each writer’s unique handling of (anti-)slavery and nativist discourses.

³⁰⁵ Ned Buntline, *Ned Buntline’s Own*, January 20, 1849, 2.

³⁰⁶ Ned Buntline, *Ned Buntline’s Own*, March 10, 1849, 3.

³⁰⁷ Ned Buntline, *Ned Buntline’s Own*, March 24, 1849, 1.

³⁰⁸ Ned Buntline, *Ned Buntline’s Own*, April 7, 1849, 3.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, the popular antebellum discourses of anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic nativism pervade the city-mystery genre and perform a wide range of cultural work for the representative writers. George Lippard, a prolific writer who is both implicated in and critical of anti-Catholic conspiracy theory, employs nativist tropes strategically to augment his critique of chattel slavery and to develop his artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes. Augustine Duganne, an abolitionist and professional nativist politician, reveals the flexibility and the multiple class accents of nativism. While anti-Catholic discourse bolsters the artisan republican rhetoric of Duganne's early city-mysteries, unmediated nativist discourse of his later works reveals how easily nativism could reinforce middle-class values. Ned Buntline, who promoted himself as a "friend to the laboring classes" through anti-immigrant hostility and populist rhetoric, betrays the ideological contradictions inherent in nativism as a strategy of working-class protest. While Lippard's writing underscores the necessity of critically evaluating the arguments that are the foundation and the motivating force in his fiction, Duganne's and Buntline's writing highlights the ways in which nativist rhetoric, when applied uncritically, undermines the complex challenges of exposing hegemonic hypocrisies and imagining a realignment of allegiances built on class solidarity.

Although nativism could help to develop working-class sympathy in the sensational genre, the popular discourse just as often served the interests of the professional middle-classes and compromised the novels' radical class protest. The

first chapter of this study demonstrated how the working-class accents of popular city-mysteries depend, in part, upon a sympathetic engagement with blackness and anti-slavery discourse. The complex class, racial, and ethnic politics that pervade city-mysteries also register in the diverse products of the antebellum penny press and early black press. Many city-mysteries were originally serialized in cheap story papers before being compiled into affordable novels. These weekly story papers published in northeastern cities contain news reports, editorials on contemporary issues in the nation, and a myriad of serialized novels yet to be fully explored and in some cases even catalogued. Although the earliest black newspapers of the 1820's and 1830's did not serialize fiction in their weekly editions, they do engage many of the same social questions addressed in the penny press. The final chapter will investigate the potential for cross-racial sympathy that emerges between the penny press and the early black press as they engage the social issues important to their respective readerships through artisan republican, anti-slavery, and nativist discourses.

Chapter Three

Black and White Print: Cross-Racial Strategies of Class Protest in Antebellum

Popular Print Culture

Introduction

When technological developments with the steam press and the expansion of a literate public revolutionized the nation's print culture during the antebellum period, cheap penny papers and weekly story papers proliferated. Between the inaugural issue of Benjamin Day's penny paper the New York *Sun* in 1833 and the year 1840, the number of daily papers in the United States more than doubled from 65 to 138.³⁰⁹ By 1850, New York alone boasted fourteen daily papers with a total circulation of at least 150,000.³¹⁰ Promoted as "democratic" alternatives to the elite six-penny newspapers that were under the control of professional political parties, penny papers appealed to their mass readership with sensational crime news, exposés of hidden corruption among "respectable" public officials, and serialized fiction that blended Gothic imagery with artisan republican rhetoric. Developing simultaneously though haltingly with the penny press, black newspapers—edited by African Americans and intended primarily for African-American readers—flourished in northeastern cities and in the Mid-west during the antebellum period. Todd Vogel estimates there may have been as many as 100 black newspapers in print between 1827 and 1855.³¹¹

Black newspapers engaged social questions specific to their audience such as the

³⁰⁹ Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Rev. ed. [1990]. New York: Verso, 2003), 95-96.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

³¹¹ Todd Vogel, "The New Face of Black Labor," *The Black Press: New Literary and Historical Essays*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 38.

abolition of chattel slavery and voting suffrage; provided inspiration and practical advice for the social and economic uplift of the African-American race; and, challenging the racist caricatures found in the mainstream press, took pride in offering unbiased and realistic representations of free and enslaved blacks.

Despite the prevailing critical perception that products of the class-inflected penny press and early black newspapers had few shared interests and endured a generally antagonistic relationship, these diverse print sources reveal a strong desire for cross-racial solidarity as mediated through the period's dominant working-class discourses. Artisan republican rhetoric, extolling the virtues of education and "honest" labor over the scourge of wealthy privilege and abstracted forms of professional authority, informs the editorial spirit of the penny press and the black press. Both presses appeal to their artisan and mechanic readers by invoking the multi-racial heroes of the Revolutionary War and by expressing the radical anti-aristocratic republicanism of Thomas Paine. The resurgence of nativist rhetoric in the 1830's and 1840's provides another instance of shared, cross-racial discourse: while early black newspapers agitated for the right to vote without property qualifications through an insistence on native-born blacks' rights to citizenship, penny papers represented immigrants' voting blocs as a threat to the political interests of the native-born white (and black) populace. Salacious crime reports and sensational news items have been credited with playing a seminal role in the development of the working-class inflections and the "class" arguments of penny papers. But graphically violent reports of crime and workplace accidents also appear regularly in the early black press as a means of protesting the horrors of chattel slavery and attesting to the

dangers of the unregulated workplace. In addition to their mutual dependence upon the class-inflected discourses of artisan republicanism, nativism, and sensationalism, penny papers and early black newspapers make direct appeals to the necessity of cross-racial solidarity among the working classes. In the editorial “moments” when class concerns are pushed to the fore in these antebellum newspapers, the unlikely alliance among black activists and supposedly reactionary white labor activists becomes visible and offers the greatest testament of hope for class reform in an era noted for its lack of effectively organized class protest.

It is, of course, impossible and even dangerous to generalize about the class allegiances and the racial politics of such a diverse array of popular print sources. Yet that is precisely what much of the respective scholarship on the penny press and the early black press has done. Although critics Dan Schiller, David S. Reynolds, and Alexander Saxton have established the working-class accents of the penny press, they do not provide a complete analysis of the popular press’s complex racial politics. Revising Michael Schudson’s claim that penny papers were part of a middle-class revolution against aristocratic wealth, Schiller argues that cheap newspapers appealed to their predominantly artisan and mechanic readers through fiery artisan republican rhetoric.³¹² David S. Reynolds credits the sensational crime reporting of the penny press and early nineteenth-century crime pamphlets with helping to develop the class-inflected city-mystery genre. Reynolds argues that crime news gave rise to the subversive, oxymoronic literary figures of the likable criminal and justified pariah, which enabled city-mystery writers to express their “vitriolic bitterness against

³¹² Dan Schiller, *Objectivity and the News: The Public and the Rise of Commercial Journalism*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 9. For more information on Schudson’s line of argument, see Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*, (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

perceived inequities in nineteenth-century American society.”³¹³ Alexander Saxton contextualizes the rise of the penny press within the Jacksonian program of urban artisan ideology, democratic politics, westward expansion, and white egalitarianism.³¹⁴ In light of the first chapter’s demonstration that popular city-mysteries and serialized fiction of weekly story papers relied, in part, upon anti-slavery rhetoric to mount their working-class critique, it is surprising that the penny press’s racial politics have not received more critical attention.

Schiller’s focus on a predominantly white readership of frustrated artisans and mechanics overlooks representations of race that appear throughout penny papers. When analyzing the class inflections of crime reporting, Schiller argues that “blacks and women seemed to pose a mere external threat to the public good”; therefore, “[white men’s] deviations were significant and became a major focus of those who would protect the state.”³¹⁵ In *Beneath the American Renaissance* Reynolds lists anti-slavery sentiment among the reform impulses that galvanized subversive writing in the antebellum period; however, he does not develop an analysis of the complex racial representations in what he calls the “sensational press.” Instead, Reynolds attributes what he perceives to be the reticence of popular writers to deal with the slavery question to readers’ discomfort with the controversial topic. Furthermore, he notes, “Slavery was—horribly enough—exploited for its sensationalism by some reformers and editors who wished to provide arousing, masochistic fantasies to an

³¹³ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 184.

³¹⁴ For more information see the chapter, “The Jacksonian Press,” in Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, 95-108.

³¹⁵ Dan Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 153.

American public accustomed to having its reform well spiced with violence and sex.”³¹⁶ In *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic* Saxton engages the role of racial politics in the penny press, which he hastily characterizes as largely pro-slavery and reactionary. By viewing popular newspapers through the lens of Jacksonian Democratic politics, Saxton finds that penny papers “celebrated the marriage of democracy to white racism.”³¹⁷ Certainly, no one would argue that the penny press comprised a consistent voice of anti-slavery protest within antebellum print culture. However, penny papers did at times express anti-slavery sentiment; numerous exceptions of racial sympathy appear among articles and the serialized fiction; and the class-inflected, analogical critique of “wage” and chattel slavery points to racial ambivalence, not racial hostility, among working-class whites.

Just as the scholarship on the penny press has obscured the complexity of its racial politics, the critical treatment of the early black press has overlooked the diversity of its class politics. Although financial difficulties and low circulation numbers doomed the earliest black newspapers in the 1820’s and 1830’s, the three decades prior to the Civil War mark the initial flourishing of black weekly newspapers in the northeast and the Mid-west. Their format shaped by the major cheap newspapers from which they sometimes reprinted articles, black newspapers differed from penny papers most visibly in content as they agitated explicitly for the end of slavery, rigorously protested racial prejudice in all facets of daily life, and provided advice and encouragement for the racial uplift of their widely scattered brethren. The recent scholarship on the early black press has focused on identifying

³¹⁶ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 73.

³¹⁷ Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, 105.

the middle-class values implicit in black newspapers' pragmatic message of racial uplift. Although this scholarship succeeds in debunking the earlier critical assumption that black newspapers were largely abolitionist texts for a primarily white audience, it has in turn minimized the newspapers' working-class accents and uncanny resonances with the racially sympathetic white labor press.

During the 1990's, scholars revised the assumption that early black newspapers targeted white abolitionist readers by highlighting how editors appealed to the specific needs and interests of the black middle-class. In his 1992 study *Origins of the Black Press*, Bernell Tripp argues that "other factors besides slavery—such as improving the lifestyle of blacks or developing a type of racial cohesiveness—might have motivated many early black journalists."³¹⁸ Tripp reasons that because newspapers were not likely to reach slaves or free blacks living in the south, early black newspapers focused on providing guidance and racial uplift to northern free blacks. Just a year later in *The Early Black Press in America, 1827 to 1860*, Frankie Hutton links early black newspapers to the middle-class reform message of the Negro convention movement that held 11 national conventions between 1830-1861.³¹⁹ Hutton argues that the newspapers provided a positive message of racial elevation to northern middle-class blacks, even as the effects of slavery and racist legislation such as the Fugitive Slave Act were ravaging the free black community. "If we are guided by the reporting and commentary of the black press, the middle-class aspired almost constantly to respectability through education,

³¹⁸ Bernell Tripp, *Origins of the Black Press: New York, 1827-1847*, (Northport, Alabama: Vision Press, 1992), 10.

³¹⁹ Frankie Hutton, *The Early Black Press in America, 1827 to 1860*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), xiii.

temperance, industriousness, upright living patterns, and involvement in a variety of self-elevation organizations.”³²⁰ As part of her groundbreaking study of black literary societies in the pre-Civil War period *Forgotten Readers*, Elizabeth McHenry further complicates the view of early black newspapers as primarily abolitionist tracts. Instead, McHenry links the newspapers to the prevailing republican virtues of education and citizenship, as articles provided black readers with proper rules of conduct for participating in a democracy. McHenry writes, “The newspaper was designed as a medium of socialization that would disseminate to the black community the standards of behavior....Blacks must be encouraged to adopt and exercise visibly those habits that would help them to become and to be seen as useful in society; these included personal morality, temperance, industriousness, and, most importantly, an intellectual identity that was the result of the active pursuit of a literary education.”³²¹

Although early black newspapers’ appeals to “personal morality” and temperance would become middle-class discourses that helped employers to regulate the lives of free black and white workers in the 1840’s and 1850’s, the appeals to industriousness, education, and citizenship were key values within artisan republican rhetoric. Building upon McHenry’s observations, this chapter will show how early black newspapers expressed pragmatic concern for the rights of working-class free blacks through strategies that resonated with the white labor movement and that sought to impress upon working-class whites the expediency of cross-racial class solidarity. In the recent critical focus on black newspapers’ employment of middle-

³²⁰ Ibid., x.

³²¹ Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 90.

class discourses, the presence and the significance of working-class discourse has been virtually overlooked.

To date, many scholars of antebellum popular print culture have studied early black newspapers and the diffuse products of the penny press separately, coming to a consensus that the working-class sympathies in both sets of newspapers are either disorganized or inconsequential. Yet when we isolate the class-inflected discourses of artisan republicanism, nativism, and sensationalism that appear among prominent labor newspapers, black newspapers, weekly story papers, and nativist newspapers published in the northeast, evidence of shared strategies of class protest emerges among the newspapers and attests to the potential of cross-racial sympathy among the multi-racial working classes of the antebellum period. Moreover, a comparative analysis of the cross-racial strategies of class protest complicates the prevailing views that the early black press catered primarily to the black middle-class and that the popular press espoused largely reactionary racial politics.

Mechanics' Free Press and Freedom's Journal: City-Mysteries' Popular Print Predecessors of the 1820's

Exposés of depraved crimes committed under the cover of darkness; lurid descriptions of violent, bone-smashing, brain-splattering murders; titillating accounts of lascivious rakes stalking and deflowering meek, virgin seamstresses: all of these sensational tropes are commonplace devices by which city-mysteries appealed to their mass readership and mounted their artisan republican critique of “upper ten-dom.” Critics of antebellum print culture have already identified the sensational crime reporting of the penny press as a primary influence on city-mysteries’ Gothic

excesses. Dan Schiller credits the daily crime reports' incorporation of "dialect, impolite language, colloquialisms, slang, puns, and folklore" with contributing to the rise of popular urban literature.³²² David S. Reynolds points to the founding of the earliest penny papers as a watershed moment in the development of subversive literature: "The crucial transitional moment in American journalism was 1833, the year that the first penny newspapers, Horatio David Sheppard's New York *Morning Post* and Benjamin H. Day's New York *Sun*, appeared. Penny newspapers, aimed at the wallets and the tastes of America's increasingly rowdy working class, supplanted the respectable six-pennies of the past with a new brand of journalism that was brash, zestful, and above all sensational."³²³ Yet even before cheap dailies of the 1830's challenged the elite six-penny papers that were run by the dominant political parties and catered to the mercantile class, one of the earliest labor newspapers and the nation's first black newspaper articulated the interests of their respective, disenfranchised readers through class-accented sensationalism.

In 1828, five years before Day's New York *Sun* first appeared in New York City, working-class advocate William Heighton founded and edited the labor newspaper *Mechanics' Free Press* in Philadelphia. According to Schiller, nearly 50 labor newspapers were launched between 1827 and 1832 as craftsmen, increasingly frustrated by their forced entry into wage labor, viewed the elite political press as indifferent to their class interests.³²⁴ The four-page layout of the weekly *Mechanics' Free Press* is similar to later penny papers: pages one through three consist mostly of

³²² Dan Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 68.

³²³ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 173-174.

³²⁴ Dan Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 45.

polemical editorials, human-interest stories, serialized narratives, and reprinted articles from other newspapers, while page four is devoted to advertisements. The anonymous writer of an editorial entitled “Newspaper Reading,” which appears early in the newspaper’s run from 1828 to 1832, articulates the need for papers devoted specifically to the cause of labor.

Notwithstanding the diversity of character and object, discoverable in the aggregate of periodicals, with which this country is filled, they are all precisely alike, as regards the interests of the poorer classes, who are either entirely neglected by them, or noticed only with contempt. They pay their court to the rich, under whose guidance and control they have contributed much to the creation of injurious monopolies in trade and manufactures; to the maintaining and defending the system of exorbitant profits; and of late years to an illiberal and almost insufferable reduction in the price of labor.³²⁵

As a result of the wealthy class’s monopoly over the dissemination of public information, the writer concludes:

It could not be expected ... that the laboring classes should longer remain totally ignorant of the causes which have contributed to their degradation; nor is it a matter of astonishment, if perceiving the advantages obtained by the higher classes through the agency of newspapers, they should at length desire a journal of their own. The time has arrived that shall develop the energies of

³²⁵ “Newspaper Reading,” *Mechanics’ Free Press*, May 3, 1828, 1.

these classes, who are now beginning to discover the artifices by which they have been misled.³²⁶

This writer's passionate defense of artisan and mechanic laborers would fit seamlessly into the class-inflected polemics of Lippard's *Quaker City Weekly* published in that city twenty years later. In fact, *Mechanics' Free Press's* prominent strategy of class protest—artisan republican rhetoric—is expressed powerfully through Gothic narratives of exposé that would become central to the city-mystery genre. The following analysis will show how *Mechanics' Free Press's* sympathetic engagement with blackness as a strategy of class protest and its explicit anti-slavery sentiment can be linked to both city-mysteries and the first black newspaper *Freedom's Journal*.

Approximately twenty years before Lippard's shrouded Court of Ten Million punishes "respectable" wealthy men with perverse appetites, Duganne's mysterious Man in the Drab Coat reveals the awful oath of the Knights of the Seal, and Buntline's likable prostitute Big Lize tries to protect helpless seamstresses from rakish rent-collectors, a disguised vigilante known only as "The Night-Hawk" exposes the late-night offenses of respected public officials in a long-running weekly column in *Mechanics' Free Press*. Over the course of 61 weekly installments printed between July 5, 1828 and July 3, 1830, the clever and unflappable Night-Hawk narrates his nocturnal efforts to reveal and combat crime in the city of Philadelphia. In the initial installment which states the column is written expressly for *Mechanics' Free Press*, the Night-Hawk introduces his crime-fighting disguise and his commitment to defend the public good. "My object in these numbers will be to

³²⁶ Ibid., 1.

expose certain misdemeanors, done under the cover of night, certain adventures, in which I was either an actor or spectator. I am in full possession of every means calculated to prove my claim to a night hawk, and let it be perfectly understood, that the true meaning of the appellation, is applied to one who rambles at night, dives into the gloomy atmosphere that composes its sable curtains, and steals sufficient light to dish up the follies of others, for the amusement of himself and readers.”³²⁷ The titillating promise to expose vice and the intimate tone with which the Night-Hawk addresses his readers was a winning combination, as indicated by the column’s lengthy run, its regular location on the front page, the imitators it inspired, and the numerous fan letters reprinted in the newspaper. The Night-Hawk’s indignation at the perceived pervasiveness of crime in the Quaker City resonates with Lippard’s own characterization of the city two decades later. At the mid-way point of the popular column’s run, the Night-Hawk reflects: “The people may talk of this city until they are tired,—the Quakers may uphold it as one of brotherly love; but I do say more nightly crime,—more hidden villainy, does not disgrace any other place in the Union, than is practiced here....Talk of New York and her five points, we are blessed with ten points, added to the different points of the compass. In fact if deep hypocrisy, sly intrigue, and low cunning is to be found in the world, this goodly city has its share.”³²⁸

In response to the rising crime rate, the Night-Hawk valorously protects the poor and vulnerable members of society against corrupt authority figures and ambitious professionals. Consistent with the seduction plots that appear throughout

³²⁷ *Mechanics’ Free Press*, July 5, 1828, 1.

³²⁸ *Mechanics’ Free Press*, August 15, 1829, 1.

the city-mystery genre, many of the Night-Hawk's adventures relate how he single-handedly frustrated the efforts of aristocratic rakes to seduce unsuspecting virgins. In one such installment, the Night-Hawk comes late one evening upon "the daughter of poor but respectable parents" who is fleeing from her would-be seducer and finds herself lost in the city.³²⁹ The Night-Hawk presumably escorts the girl home safely, but is disheartened to discover the persistent rake—"this monster"—ultimately deflowered the innocent girl.³³⁰ The Night-Hawk's working-class sympathies are more pronounced when he expounds upon the hypocrisy within the city's judicial system and exposes duplicitous professionals. In the third installment, the Night-Hawk ventures into an oyster-cellar and attempts to rescue a young girl who has been led there for prostitution; amidst the confusion of the ensuing brawl, he is surprised to find himself hauled off to jail. While a poor sailor is unable to pay a steep fine and must spend thirty days in jail, the Night-Hawk is offered his release if he agrees to pay a bribe to the night watchman. The Night-Hawk reflects on the state of justice in the city: "All this may be law, but in my opinion, it is *base, partial, perverted* justice. Because a man is poor and friendless, he must stand up before the mayor and a crowd of *idle* vagrants—receive a lecture, pay a fine, and—go: he is a mechanic—nothing. But a gentleman is ushered into the *parlour*—treated like a lord, pays down extortion, and decamps."³³¹ Outrage at the judicial system, which protects the corrupt owners of failed banks and provides little recourse to hard-working mechanics swindled out

³²⁹ *Mechanics' Free Press*, September 27, 1828, 1.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

³³¹ *Mechanics' Free Press*, August 8, 1828, 1

of their life's savings, would become a common theme of class protest in the city-mystery genre.

In addition to exposing violations of the public's trust, the Night-Hawk reveals the hypocrisy among middle-class professionals. Dan Schiller argues that early labor papers viewed the elite press and the professional classes as equal threats to the health of a free republic. "The elite press was ... deeply implicated in the corruption of the republic. In this it had something in common with medicine, law, and religion, which, in the 1830's, were the objects of suspicion and animosity by working people."³³² In a passage that resonates distinctly with Lippard's own diatribe against lawyers, ministers, and physicians in *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million* of 1853, the Night-Hawk writes, "The name of profession, like the mantle of charity, covers a multitude of sins: it seems that crime becomes with them a virtue, base stratagem, lying, and hypocrisy a mark of the highest distinction, among the professional gentry. I need not name the Lawyer—his, alas! is proverbially bad,—nor need I name the Divine, for under the specious cloak of religion foul deeds hide their deformed heads,—nor need I mention the physician—his has been the theme of thousands."³³³ Twenty-five years later in *New York*, Lippard's mechanic hero Arthur Dermoyne provides a class-inflected soliloquy critical of duplicitous professionals:

“[The poor shoemaker] beholds the lawyer, with a conscience distinct from that given to him by God; a conscience that makes him believe that it is right to grow rich by the tricks and frauds of law. He beholds the doctor, also with the conscience of his class, sending human beings to death by system, and

³³² Dan Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 42.

³³³ *Mechanics' Free Press*, December 6, 1828, 1.

filling graveyards by the exact rule of the schools. He beholds the minister, too often also with but the conscience of a class, preaching the thoughts to those who do not work, and failing to give utterance to the agonies of those who do work—who do all the labor, and suffer all the misery in the world.”³³⁴

In comparing these two passages, we can see the distinct influence of early labor papers’ artisan republican criticism of corruption among high-ranking public officials on the working-class protest in the popular city-mysteries written by Lippard, Duganne, and Buntline: those who work by the “sweat of the brow” are virtuous, while those professionals who manage the lives of the laboring classes are untrustworthy and prone to abusing their power.

Like Lippard’s unflattering portraits of ambitious and rakish reverends in *The Quaker City* and *New York*, the oxymoronic figure of the corrupt clergyman receives special attention in the columns of the Night-Hawk and his imitator the Screech-Owl. In the sixteenth installment, the Night-Hawk relates a discussion he overheard among a preacher and two church elders as they plot to fire an elderly sexton. The preacher, who urges the sexton to be fired, represents the heartless employer who resents paying fair wages to laborers. ““He has served us long, and become useless.... This aged man has passed those years of activity necessary for church service; he must be placed aside for one more fit and suited to the station; or at least if we get an assistant, the wages for the *one* must be deducted from the *other*. My reasons for this arbitrary measure are already known—the funds of the church must be reserved for her

³³⁴ George Lippard, *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, [1853], (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Literature House/Gregg Press, 1970), 108.

preachers, for these once exhausted, the church will ultimately fall.”³³⁵ The figure of the corrupt and perverse clergyman is also a target of the Night-Hawk’s rival vigilante, the Screech Owl, whose column appeared at the end of 1828 and ran for only a few installments.³³⁶ The Screech Owl, who boasts of keen sight after nightfall, relates how he watched a clergyman sneak into a parishioner’s home late at night. “I had often heard of one Peeping Tom of Coventry, and as we feathered gentry are not much acquainted with the ways and manners of men, I thought that this was the same animal.”³³⁷ When the clergyman is discovered by the parishioner, the trespasser hurries home and laments, ““O my reputation, my reputation! what shall I do to save thee from destruction! My hypocrisy will now come to light, and the church will suffer on my account....I care not so much for the injury I have done to an innocent family, as the preservation of my good name. O let me not be exposed amongst the saints in my church, of which I am one of the pillars.””³³⁸ While the column may have titillated readers who are observing the Screech Owl’s own observations of the peeping clergyman, the column reinforces the working-class’s suspicion of professionals who violate the public’s trust.

As the first chapter demonstrated, anti-slavery discourse was a prominent strategy of class protest in antebellum city-mysteries. Through a racially ambivalent analogy between “wage” slavery and chattel slavery, the reliance upon Herculean

³³⁵ *Mechanics’ Free Press*, January 17, 1829, 1.

³³⁶ The authors of The Night-Hawk and The Screech Owl columns remain anonymous. Because the two columns never appear together in an edition of *Mechanics’ Free Press* and they share similar subject matter and style, it is very possible the same author is responsible for both columns.

³³⁷ *Mechanics’ Free Press*, December 13, 1828, 1.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

black male protagonists to represent the laboring classes, and the sympathetic treatment of fugitive slaves, Lippard and Duganne worked toward representing and advocating multi-racial working-class solidarity. Of course, an over-reliance upon the discourse of “white slavery”—as seen in some of the editorials in Lippard’s *Quaker City Weekly* and in Duganne’s city-mystery *The Knights of the Seal*—could privilege the plight of white workers over the horrors of chattel slavery. However, as David Roediger and Eric Lott point out, the racially ambivalent term “wage slavery” was in greater use than “white slavery” among anti-slavery working-class advocates of the 1830’s. The prevalence of anti-slavery articles in *Mechanics’ Free Press* indicates the desire for multi-racial class solidarity and reflects the racial ambivalence found in the Night-Hawk’s column. In the article “Freedom and Slavery” reprinted from the *Boston Working Man’s Advocate*, the anonymous writer’s comparison of wage and chattel slavery is fraught with racial ambivalence. On the one hand, the writer asserts that the difference between laborers and slaves is that “the black slave is secured from want and a necessity to crime, in lieu of which the free laborer sometimes has a choice of employers.”³³⁹ Yet this privileging of the needs of white laborers is followed by the recognition that black slaves lack the basic rights enjoyed by free workers. “There are three kinds of labor. By force, by fraud and voluntary. The first and second are used in the south in obtaining the labor of the blacks....The black must work or be flogged, and is kept ignorant of his rights. This is labor by force and fraud.”³⁴⁰ Although the writer concludes that so-called “free labor” is ultimately another form of “slavery,” the article is followed immediately by an

³³⁹ *Mechanics’ Free Press*, September 11, 1830, 1.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

exposé entitled “Slave Traders” reprinted from the *American Spectator*. The anonymous writer condemns slave traders and highlights their cruel practice of breaking up families. “If there is a class of men that ought to be regarded with universal and unmingled detestation, it is the miserable beings that are often barking in this City and District, in the character of slave traders.”³⁴¹ *Mechanics’ Free Press*’s decision to run these two articles consecutively reflects the labor paper’s preoccupation with the condition of its white working-class readers and its opposition to chattel slavery.

Although the newspaper is preoccupied with the plight of white wage-earners and artisans in Philadelphia, anti-slavery articles written expressly for *Mechanics’ Free Press* as well as reprinted from other newspapers appear alongside the popular columns of the Night-Hawk and the Screech Owl. For example, an editorial “On Slavery” attributed to “Delmont” appears on the same page as the Screech Owl’s exposure of the peeping clergyman. Delmont begins by linking slavery with economic greed: “Avarice and inhumanity are twin brothers, of the same parentage, their natures are so perfectly in unison, and their existence is so blended, that the latter is entirely subservient to the interests of the former; therefore we marvel not at the conflagrations, oceans of blood, and the pitiless barbarity, which have marked the course of those who have sought to enslave the world.”³⁴² While Delmont’s economic critique of “slavery” would resonate with white wage laborers, he goes on to make clear that he is discussing the unparalleled horrors of chattel slavery. “Let Columbia blush, and the birth day of our independence cease to be remembered

³⁴¹ Ibid., 1.

³⁴² *Mechanics’ Free Press*, December 13, 1828, 1.

among men, for the demon of slavery stalks unabashed among us. Chains and fetters clink o'er the soil, and the smack of the thong is heard in the air of a *free* country....Mothers are reft of their infant off-spring by the sacrilegious hands of legalized brutality; and their piteous shrieks fall, all unheard on a *freeman's* ear."³⁴³

In addition to this anti-slavery article, *Mechanics' Free Press* reprints articles that attest to the evil of chattel slavery. A reprint from a London newspaper reports the British government's efforts to end illegal slave-trading in foreign ports; and a reprint from *Maddon's Travels* relates the "horrid" slave market of Constantinople.³⁴⁴ But perhaps the most developed attack on slavery is found in the reprinted tale from the *New York Enquirer* entitled "The Slave," written by anti-slavery and working-class advocate Robert Dale Owen. In Owen's tale set on the island of Martinique, Antoine, the favored slave of the rich planter Monsieur Haima, secretly murders fellow slaves and a number of animals out of revenge. After Haima is devastated to learn that his most trusted slave could harbor animus toward him, Owen concludes the tale with the following anti-slavery lesson to the reader: "Haima's fellow-planters, as the story circulated among them, moralized on the danger of evincing partiality to a slave; and bade their overseers double their vigilance and increase their severity. While the philosopher and the friend of freedom thence deduced with greater reason, a striking argument against slavery itself, be its form or disguise what it may."³⁴⁵ This sampling of anti-slavery articles that appear in *Mechanics' Free Press* provides a

³⁴³ Ibid., 1.

³⁴⁴ *Mechanics' Free Press*, September 5, 1829, 2; *Mechanics' Free Press*, October 24, 1829, 1.

³⁴⁵ Robert Dale Owen, "The Slave," *Mechanics' Free Press*, March 27, 1830, 1.

useful context for analyzing the complex racial politics of the class-inflected Night-Hawk column.

Over the course of his adventures, the Night-Hawk expresses sympathy for the black slave and mocks southern slave-owners. Like Lippard's realistic descriptions of tenement life among the multi-racial poor in *The Nazarene*, the Night-Hawk laments the living conditions of the multi-racial poor through a sympathetic metaphor with slavery. "I *myself* was astonished, for really I had seldom gazed upon a scene like that; there were women among them clothed in rags; groans and curses of pain and agony escaped from the promiscuous heap; the faces of the *blacks* reflected back the light of the lamp, and gave it a coloring little less in character than what we could imagine a slave ship would present, filled with slaves from the coast of Africa."³⁴⁶ In another installment in which the Night-Hawk exposes the flirtatious behavior of the daughter of a wealthy man, he enlists the assistance of the black servant Old John, whom he calls "a long gone by acquaintance."³⁴⁷ In a column the Night-Hawk devotes to answering letters from fans and citizens seeking his advice, he satirizes a particularly angry letter requesting that he punish a wayward young woman. The letter-writer asks, "'King of Hawks,—As you are a *basher* of the vices of the town, please to lash the young lady, the daughter of a respectable merchant, whose conduct is unwarrantable: she meets a noted gambler once a week. Give her a good switching, and I predict her reformation. Enclosed you have her address."³⁴⁸ The Night-Hawk's curt reply alludes to the cruelties of chattel slavery: "My worthy

³⁴⁶ *Mechanics' Free Press*, November 21, 1829, 1.

³⁴⁷ *Mechanics' Free Press*, January 30, 1830, 1.

³⁴⁸ *Mechanics' Free Press*, February 13, 1830, 1.

correspondent is, no doubt, a native of one of our southern states.”³⁴⁹ That *Mechanics’ Free Press* looked unfavorably upon the southern states and chattel slavery is also evident in an article “The Mechanics,” reprinted from the *Spirit of the Age*. The anonymous writer, who laments the wealthy class’s lack of respect for the “honest” labor of mechanics, associates the south with idleness and foppery. “There is a class or order of men, that, in these United States—and particularly the Slave holding States—are, and long have been—too long—subjects of indignity—of contumely, for the light and flippant wearer of the embroidered petticoat, the stiff collared fop.”³⁵⁰ Similar to city-mysteries’ association of corrupt aristocrats with degraded slave-owners, the Night-Hawk’s column pre-dates the blend of working-class protest and racial sympathy that appears in the penny press and dominates the city-mystery genre.

In the most racially charged installment in the Night-Hawk series, the disguised crusader is mistaken for a black man and confronts a group of drunken Irishmen. Late one evening after playing a game of billiards, the Night-Hawk joins two “jovial sons of ‘woman, love and wine’” who are serenading beneath the window of a woman they adore.³⁵¹ Racial uncertainty attends the ensuing ruckus. “He had just got so far, when a window opened, and a dame or damsel, whether black or white, I could not distinguish, reared out most womanfully, ‘watch—watch.’”³⁵² Two night watchmen appear and salivate at the prospect of finding the Night-Hawk in a

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 1.

³⁵⁰ *Mechanics’ Free Press*, November 28, 1829, 1.

³⁵¹ *Mechanics’ Free Press*, October 11, 1828, 1.

³⁵² Ibid., 1.

compromising position, and a rowdy gang of twenty Irishmen arrive and insist that the Night-Hawk and his companions be taken to jail. When the serenaders insist they are on familiar terms with the young women of the house, the women claim that they called the watch because two black men tried to break into their house the evening before. To prove his innocence, the Night-Hawk asks, ““Are we negroes, watchmen?””, to which a night watchman replies, ““No, I believe you would pass for white.””³⁵³ The potentially subversive racial ambiguity of the Night-Hawk’s identity is not fully contained by the possibility that he “would pass for white,” but the ethnic identity of the Irishmen is calcified by their drunken boisterousness and their blind support for hierarchical law. Despite the night watchmen’s determination that the women indeed know their serenaders and the Night-Hawk and his companions should therefore not be taken to jail, ““To the watch house, by my faith,” cried one of the Irishmen, who yet stood their ground to see the issue. The matter was now settled to the satisfaction of all except the Irish, who went away muttering about the uncertainty of the law, and the feebleness of rulers.””³⁵⁴ This scene is especially intriguing for its racial politics that presage the tenuous alliance of native-born white and free black workers against unskilled Irish immigrants who threatened to lower wages and were associated with rabid pro-slavery sentiment in the 1840’s and 1850’s. The legacy of the Night-Hawk column’s complex racial and ethnic politics is evident not only in the rise of the city-mystery genre two decades later, but also in the early black newspapers of the 1820’s and 1830’s.

³⁵³ Ibid., 1.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.

In 1827, six years before the first penny papers went to press, Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm founded the first black newspaper in the United States. Cornish, a Presbyterian minister raised in New York, and Russwurm, a graduate of Bowdoin College, met in New York City and released the first edition of *Freedom's Journal* on March 16, 1827. The newspaper ran weekly from March 1827 until March 1829, and weathered the departure of Cornish in September 1827.³⁵⁵ In an introductory column entitled "To Our Patrons," the editors announce objectives specific to the cause of uplifting the black community. Like *Mechanics' Free Press's* desire to provide a voice for the laboring classes whose interests had been largely ignored and misrepresented by the mercantile press, *Freedom's Journal* seeks to challenge the prevailing racist treatment of blacks in contemporary print culture by providing accurate coverage of the community. The editors write, "We wish to plead our cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the publick been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly, though in the estimation of some mere trifles; for though there are many in society who exercise towards us benevolent feelings; still (with sorrow we confess it) there are others who make it their business to enlarge upon the least trifle, which tends to the discredit of any person of colour."³⁵⁶ Cornish and Russwurm concede that "there [are] many instances of vice among us" due to the effects of slavery, and they advance a solution that resonates with the artisan republican ideals expressed in the early labor press.

³⁵⁵ Although Cornish resigned from *Freedom's Journal* on September 14, 1827 for reasons that remain unclear, he continued to be listed as the newspaper's "General Agent" throughout its run. The two men's differing views of colonization, which Cornish opposed and Russwurm supported, and Cornish's health are just two possible explanations for the departure. See Bernell Tripp, *Origins of the Black Press: New York, 1827-1847*, 18-20.

³⁵⁶ *Freedom's Journal*, March 16, 1827, from the database *Accessible Archives, African-American Newspapers: The 19th Century*, Item 2.

In his article “The New Face of Black Labor,” Todd Vogel argues that early black newspapers utilized and revised mainstream republicanism by critiquing racist hiring practices in the marketplace and insisting on blacks’ ability to become virtuous participants in the republic. One of the few critics to consider questions of labor in the early black press, Vogel views the relationship between white and free black workers as predominantly hostile; in this configuration, editors of black newspapers, particularly *The Colored American* of the late 1830’s, wage rhetorical warfare against reactionary white workers who would circumscribe black workers’ rights in the workplace. Vogel writes, “In these free black newspapers, authors used narratives of elevation—stories about getting ahead in society through work—to create an alternative social understanding about jobs and citizenship that overturned the antebellum system of privilege given to those considered ‘white.’”³⁵⁷ Although the potential for cross-racial working-class solidarity would weaken (but still not dissolve completely) after the Panic of 1837, *Freedom’s Journal* of the late 1820’s embraces many of the working-class strategies employed in the contemporary anti-slavery labor paper *Mechanics’ Free Press*. Through artisan republicanism, sensational crime reporting, and vestiges of anti-immigrant nativism, *Freedom’s Journal* and *Mechanics’ Free Press* express mutual disdain for chattel slavery in the south and working conditions in the north. As my analysis will show later, even *The Colored American*, the main focus of Vogel’s article, attempts to reach out to and persuade white workers that the abolition of slavery is in their economic interests.

Consistent with artisans’ call for an informed citizenry through education and literacy, Cornish and Russwurm in *Freedom’s Journal* posit the value of educating

³⁵⁷ Todd Vogel, “The New Face of Black Labor,” 37.

the black youth: “Education being an object of the highest importance to the welfare of society, we shall endeavour to present just and adequate views of it, and to urge upon our brethren the necessity and expediency of training their children, while young, to habits of industry, and thus forming them for becoming useful members of society.”³⁵⁸ Similarly, an article entitled “The Mechanic” in *Mechanics’ Free Press* stresses the value of education and supports the establishment of mechanics’ and apprentices’ libraries. “To become an ingenious and enlightened mechanic, it is necessary that the youth who is destined for a trade, should bring to his employment a mind inquisitive, studious, busy, and inclined to mechanic pursuits.”³⁵⁹ Cornish and Russwurm, in their remarks on personal economy, launch an artisan republican critique of “finery” and “indulgent spending” that will remain a running theme throughout their newspaper’s advice columns. “The world has grown too enlightened, to estimate any man’s character by his personal appearance. Though all men acknowledge the excellency of Franklin’s maxims, yet comparatively few practise upon them.”³⁶⁰ The first edition of *Freedom’s Journal*, therefore, employs artisan republican discourse which was already a dominant mode of class protest within the labor movement of the late 1820’s and would persist into the class-inflected city-mysteries of the 1840’s and 1850’s.

Throughout its two-year run, *Freedom’s Journal* covered national politics with particular attention to debates over slavery. The newspaper regularly reported on the activities of anti-slavery societies and published the minutes and resolutions of

³⁵⁸ *Freedom’s Journal*, March 16, 1827, Item 2.

³⁵⁹ *Mechanics’ Free Press*, September 13, 1828, 1.

³⁶⁰ *Freedom’s Journal*, March 16, 1827, Item 2.

their meetings; reprinted articles critical of slavery and printed original editorials marked by rational argumentation and emotional restraint; and covered meticulously the 1829 debate in the House of Representatives over the existence of slavery in the District of Columbia. Increasingly mixed in among these sobering reports on national affairs are short sketches by Washington Irving, anonymously penned Gothic tales of haunted houses and somnambulism, and poetry. Significantly, from its first edition the newspaper provided weekly crime reporting under “Domestic News” and colorful human interest stories under “Varieties.” Although crime reporting noted for its working-class inflections and sensational excesses would proliferate in 1830’s penny papers, lurid crime pamphlets already circulated in the early nineteenth century and inspired such newspaper columns as The Night-Hawk in *Mechanics’ Free Press*. The sensational crime reports that appear in *Freedom’s Journal* may clash with the newspaper’s sober treatment of slavery and its initial pronouncement that the “columns shall ever be open to a temperate discussion of interesting subjects,” but the accounts of gruesome crimes committed against free and enslaved blacks function as a form of anti-slavery protest several years before the same phenomenon expresses class protest in the penny press.³⁶¹

Alexander Saxton argues that sensational crime reporting constitutes one of the main working-class accents of the penny papers. The best known example is the penny press’s excessive coverage of the Helen Jewett murder trial of 1836, in which a “respectable” young clerk Richard Robinson with a dubious alibi was acquitted of the hatchet-murder of prostitute Jewett. The New York *Sun*, for instance, stoked the public’s outrage over the acquittal by reporting that “an opinion is prevalent and

³⁶¹ Ibid., Item 21.

openly expressed that any man may commit murder, who has \$1500 to give to [attorneys] Messers Hoffman, Price and Maxwell.”³⁶² Saxton concludes, “By turning traditional morality against its upper-class sponsors, the penny dailies contributed to the construction of a counterculture that challenged upper-class culture on many forms.”³⁶³ Just as the Night-Hawk’s crime exposés in *Mechanics’ Free Press* constitute a form of class critique, crime reports involving slaves in *Freedom’s Journal* call attention to the evils of slavery as a form of exposé. A newspaper with a generally sober tone disinclined against irony and satire, *Freedom’s Journal* attaches brash, ironic headings to its reports of vicious attacks against slaves and white abolitionists. For example, *Freedom’s Journal* provides the headline “BLESSINGS OF SLAVERY!” to the following reprinted report: “Mr. John Hamlin of Lanesborough county, Va. was murdered on the 9th ult. by his slaves. Seventeen of them have been committed to the county Jail to await their trial.”³⁶⁴ Later that month, the headline “BALTIMORE JUSTICE!!” provides an ironic context for a case in which the man who beat Benjamin Lundy, the editor of the abolitionist newspaper *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, was fined only \$1 by the court.³⁶⁵ Four months later, the editors’ strategic pairing of two crime reports involving slaves reinforces the causal relationship between the institution of slavery and violence. On August 17,

³⁶² New York *Sun*, as quoted in Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, 100. Dan Schiller, in *Objectivity and the News*, develops the working-class accents of the Jewett murder trial by contextualizing the newspaper coverage with the simultaneous trial of twenty journeymen for conspiring to resist wage reductions. Judge Edwards, who also presided over the Robinson-Jewett trial, found against the journeymen and received a firestorm of criticism from the penny press. See Schiller, pages 57-65.

³⁶³ Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, 101.

³⁶⁴ *Freedom’s Journal*, April 6, 1827, Item 80.

³⁶⁵ *Freedom’s Journal*, April 27, 1827, Item 132.

1827, *Freedom's Journal* pairs the following news reports: "Near Raleigh, N.C. Mr. Stephen Low was stabbed by a slave in the field, while attempting to punish him. James Thorn, of the same county, has been apprehended for shooting a hired servant in a drunken frolic."³⁶⁶ Through the editors' use of ironic headlines and their strategic placement of sensational crime reports involving slaves, *Freedom's Journal* mounts a subtle yet potent critique of slavery.

In addition to its crime reports, *Freedom's Journal* exposes the horrors of slavery in the south and the dangerous working conditions in the north through sensational accounts of disfigured and dismembered bodies. In May 1827, *Freedom's Journal* provides its readers with the extraordinary case of a desperate runaway slave, Seymour Cunningham, as originally reported in the *New England Galaxy*. To aid his escape to Boston from Alexandria, Virginia, Cunningham borrowed his brother's certificate of freedom and mutilated his body so it would correspond with the ghastly wounds his brother suffered while serving the country in war. *Freedom's Journal* contextualizes the reprint for its readers thus: "The manner in which the body of the presented Seymour was made to correspond with the description in the certificate speaks volumes of warnings to the holders of slaves throughout our country. The facts in the case cannot give any additional impression beyond the simple narration which we copy from the *Galaxy*."³⁶⁷ The reprinted article "Seymour Cunningham" gives a blow-by-blow account of how Cunningham

³⁶⁶ *Freedom's Journal*, August 17, 1827, Item 412.

³⁶⁷ *Freedom's Journal*, May 25, 1827, Item 197.

cut off his own toe and paid a butcher to chop off half of his leg.³⁶⁸ “On [the butcher’s] arrival, Cunningham, to encourage him, and to display his own fortitude, had prepared a little melted pitch, and laying his foot on a chair with a mallet and chisel struck off his toe, and immediately applied the hot pitch, which stopped the bleeding. The butcher said no carpenter could have done the thing neater; the toe flew half across the room.”³⁶⁹ The editors of *Freedom’s Journal* provide a follow-up that Cunningham was not returned to Virginia due to the “people of colour in Boston caucus” who “passed sundry resolutions to protect him.”³⁷⁰ In the graphic account of “Seymour Cunningham,” *Freedom’s Journal* illustrates the desperate measures a slave will take to achieve freedom and credits the free black community of Boston for securing the young man’s freedom.

Sensational violence to the body also dominates the report of an incident in a New York cotton factory that *Freedom’s Journal* reprinted in its edition of May 30, 1828. “Fatal Accident,” reprinted from *Budget*, relates how sixteen year old factory worker Daniel Bobbs, Jr. died after he became entangled in a leather strap and was crushed by an immense, wheel-shaped machine. The gory details follow: “On the first evolution [of the wheel] his brains were literally dashed out and when he was taken down it was found that his head was broken to pieces, his neck broken, both arms and one of his legs broken in three places. So shockingly was he mangled that his blood, and even his brains flew in almost every part of the room. A young woman who was tending a machine near the shaft was nearly sprinkled from head to foot

³⁶⁸ Ibid., Item 197.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., Item 197.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., Item 197.

with blood.”³⁷¹ Such horrific descriptions of bodily mutilation would be matched in the penny press and in city-mysteries over the next fifteen years; already, however, sensational descriptions of disfigured laboring bodies call attention to the dangers of factory work. That such articles appear in *Freedom’s Journal* indicates that the demand for popular reading material, indifferent to squeamish middle-class sensibilities, was growing among black and white readers alike at the birth of the penny press.

In addition to artisan republicanism and sensational crime reporting, nativism serves the political purposes of *Freedom’s Journal* and *Mechanics’ Free Press*. Although nativist arguments on behalf of free and enslaved blacks would accelerate in Cornish’s *The Colored American* of the late 1830’s, Cornish and Russwurm invoke blacks’ native-born status and critique missionaries in *Freedom’s Journal*. In the second edition, they establish exigence for their newspaper by appealing to their native-born brethren. They write, “Born in this Republican country, constituting one of its constituent parts; attached to its climate and soil; we feel interested in the improvements of all its parts; more especially that to which we immediately belong.”³⁷² Cornish and Russwurm emphasize blacks’ native-born status to claim their right to citizenship, and they invoke that status to criticize missionaries’ work in foreign lands. After another paper reported that a social ball was organized by blacks to support the cause of Greek liberty, the editors clarify: “That any connexion existed between the manager, Mr. Thomas Downing, and the Greek Committee we deny: for does not the absurdity of the object as stated above, immediately appear to every

³⁷¹ *Freedom’s Journal*, May 30, 1828, Item 1145.

³⁷² *Freedom’s Journal*, March 23, 1827, Item 31.

reflecting mind—that any portion of our community, who are even more oppressed, degraded, ignorant and poor, should be raising contributions for the Greeks, (however deserving) while thousands of our own brethren linger out a life of hopeless bondage; in comparison to which Turkish despotism is nothing.”³⁷³ In a more direct attack on missionaries, an editorial signed “S.B.” laments that more attention is not paid to the suffering of blacks in America. S.B. argues, “I have for some time contemplated, with feelings of regret, the ardour and zeal with which Christians and Patriots engage in aiding the Greeks, and in sending Missionaries to the most remote parts of the earth; at the same time forgetting, or seeming to forget, that there are thousands in their own country, far more wretched and more deserving of compassion. They forget the old proverb, ‘charity begins at home.’”³⁷⁴ Just as Lippard, Duganne, and Buntline would roundly criticize middle-class missionaries for ignoring the needs of native-born laborers in their city-mysteries of the 1840’s, *Freedom’s Journal* works to focus the attention of religious reformers on the plight of native-born blacks struggling in the northeast.

Nativist discourse in the early black press of the 1820’s is most pronounced in the debate over colonization, an issue which divided the original editors of *Freedom’s Journal*, and in the protest of an Ohio law that legislated a \$500 tax against all blacks residing in the state. While Cornish vigorously opposed colonization efforts in his editorials, Russwurm wrote in support of repatriating blacks to Liberia. In fact, critics have pointed to this rift as a likely factor in Cornish’s resignation from the paper in

³⁷³ *Freedom’s Journal*, March 23, 1827, Item 57.

³⁷⁴ *Freedom’s Journal*, September 14, 1827, Item 471.

September 1827.³⁷⁵ After Russwurm resigned from *Freedom's Journal* in March 1829 and moved to Liberia, Cornish returned as editor and changed the paper's name to *The Rights of All*. Over the six, eight-paged monthly editions from May 1829 to October 1829 of the short-lived newspaper, Cornish denounced colonization and invoked blacks' native birthright. In the August 1829 edition Cornish writes, "Any coloured man, of common intelligence, who gives his countenance and influence, to that colony further than its missionary object and interests extend, should be considered as a traitor to his brethren, and discarded by every respectable man of colour, and every member of that society, however pure his motives...should in his efforts to remove the coloured population from their *rightful soil, the land of their birth and nativity*, be considered as acting gratuitously unrighteous and cruel."³⁷⁶

While Cornish's anti-colonization arguments assert blacks' rights to citizenship without denigrating newly-arrived immigrants, his outrage over the Ohio tax regularly invokes anti-immigrant nativist discourse. In an editorial entitled "Barbarism in America," Cornish reprints and counters the *Cincinnati Emporium's* proposal that colonization societies assist in the removal of blacks from the state of Ohio. Cornish suggests, "And why not send the Editor and the Authorities to their mother country, England, France, Ireland, Turkey, Algiers or Arabia, as may be, would there not be equal justice in it?"³⁷⁷ A month later in response to reports of mob violence against the blacks who refused to leave Cincinnati, Cornish writes, "Who does not wish to live in the goodly city of Cincinnati, we recommend all the outlaws

³⁷⁵ Bernell Tripp, *Origins of the Black Press*, 19; Todd Vogel, "The New Face of Black Labor," 40.

³⁷⁶ *The Rights of All*, August 7, 1829, 4-5.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

of foreign countries to go there, and as an inducement we are authorized to inform them that the mob governs four evenings out of five; furthermore, the authorities have driven away all the virtuous and respectable people of colour, to make room for the dregs of other countries. ‘*Hail Columbia, happy land.*’”³⁷⁸ Cornish’s characterization of immigrants as an unsavory, criminal lot anticipates the virulent nativism that appears in popular print culture between the 1830’s and 1850’s.

Just as *Mechanics’ Free Press* and the Night-Hawk column do not rely heavily upon nativist discourse as a strategy of class protest, *Freedom’s Journal* and *The Rights of All* are less preoccupied with immigrants and more concerned with asserting the rights of native-born blacks. However, with unprecedented numbers of immigrants arriving in the northeast during the 1830’s and 1840’s, nativism would play a larger role in uniting the working-class sympathies of black newspapers, weekly story papers, and nativist newspapers.

The Colored American, Star Spangled Banner, and The Know Nothing: Three Decades of Cross-Racial Fermentation

Eight years after *Freedom’s Journal* ceased publication due to low subscription rates, Samuel Cornish teamed up with black businessman Philip A. Bell to publish *The Weekly Advocate* in New York City. Re-titled *The Colored American* after just two months, the newspaper ran weekly from 1837 until 1841 under Cornish’s able editorship. Over the past fifteen years, critics of the early black press have viewed *The Weekly Advocate/The Colored American* as embracing middle-class values and eschewing the excesses of the class-inflected penny press in a strategic bid to enhance free blacks’ respectability in the eyes of the dominant white culture. For

³⁷⁸ *The Rights of All*, September 18, 1829, 6.

instance, Elizabeth McHenry observes, “In addition to articles giving general counsel on reading, the *Colored American* reprinted articles from European American newspapers like the *New York Observer* that instructed the middle class how to choose the ‘right’ books and chronicled the decline of ‘solid’ reading and the rise of genres of literature, such as the novel, which were considered ‘fanciful and imaginative.’”³⁷⁹ Quoting directly from *The Colored American*, Frankie Hutton points out that the editors criticized the morally suspect sensationalism of the penny press: “The *New York Morning Herald* founded by James Gordon Bennett in 1835, said to be one of the most profitable newspapers of its time, was criticized as being such poor journalism as ‘to vitiate all correct tastes, corrupt all the social and moral habits, and morally degrade human beings.’”³⁸⁰ Although articles and editorials in *The Weekly Advocate/The Colored American* espouse various middle-class reform projects of the period, the newspaper also proves that it is neither indifferent to the needs of free black laborers nor deaf to the class-inflected discourses circulating in antebellum popular print culture. Consistent with the working-class strategies of the penny press, artisan republican rhetoric condemns monopolies among powerful members of society and constructs the wealthy as corrupt, “aristocratic” idlers in the columns of *The Weekly Advocate/The Colored American*; additionally, nativist rhetoric structures arguments in support of black suffrage by pointing out the irony that immigrants gain voting rights within seven years while native-born black voters are disenfranchised through unfair property qualifications. Furthermore, the newspaper reaches out to working-class whites and tries to impress upon them the

³⁷⁹ Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers*, 104.

³⁸⁰ Frankie Hutton, *The Early Black Press in America*, 40.

expediency of cross-racial solidarity against the evils of slavery and the inequities of the wage marketplace.

In its first edition on January 7, 1837, *The Weekly Advocate* announces its objective to defend the rights of the multi-racial poor against the asymmetrical privileges of concentrated wealth. Philip A. Bell writes, “We shall advocate Universal Suffrages and Universal Education, and we shall oppose all Monopolies, which oppress the Poor and laboring classes of society. In fine, to make a long story as short as possible, we propose to make the Advocate a paper of general utility. It shall not only be the advocate of the rights of the man of color, but the true friend of all.”³⁸¹ Bell’s opposition to perceived monopolies and his appeal to the multi-racial poor resonate with the artisan republican rhetoric and the racial sympathy of George Lippard’s serialized popular fiction. Under the editorship of Cornish, the newspaper, renamed *The Colored American*, calls upon the professional and wealthy classes to act responsibly amidst the financial depression of 1837. Through aggressive artisan republican rhetoric typical of Lippard’s city-mystery and newspaper writing, Cornish advises employers to temper the pursuit of profits and protect their workers’ jobs in an editorial entitled “Money Pressure.” Cornish writes, “Mechanics should not, at the present time, have their eye so much upon the profits of business, as upon the employment and support of laborers. Merchants should deny themselves to some charitable extent, that they may give business to their clerks and dependents. Men of wealth, who have their thousands laid up in store, should remember that it is the Lord's treasure, and that as his honored almoners, they should liberally, in one way or

³⁸¹ *The Weekly Advocate*, January 7, 1837, from the database *Accessible Archives, African-American Newspapers: The 19th Century*, Item 2050.

another, administer to them that hath need.”³⁸² Additionally, intermingled with articles promoting temperance reform and moral responsibility, the newspaper provides practical information on where poor blacks can rent inexpensive tenements and where black orphans can go for assistance. For example, an advertisement in April 1837 reads: “HOMES, HOMES. A great number of our friends, have no place to move to on the 1st of May, and they will be out of house. Persons who have small houses, or tenements to rent, and would leave word at this office, we would undertake to procure good tenants for them.”³⁸³ Therefore, like the class-inflected penny press of the period, *The Colored American* does not call into question the right to individual property and does not call radically for a redistribution of wealth; nevertheless, the newspaper shows a pragmatic concern for the laboring classes even as it champions middle-class virtues.

In “The New Face of Black Labor,” Todd Vogel focuses on *The Colored American* to demonstrate how early black newspapers reworked the period’s mainstream Jeffersonian republicanism—which promoted “benevolence,” “affection,” and “virtue” among citizens—to protest widespread racism in the marketplace.³⁸⁴ Following David Roediger’s line of argument in *The Wages of Whiteness*, Vogel characterizes the workplace as largely hostile toward free blacks. Vogel writes, “White workers feared that wage slavery would make them appear as chattel slaves, and they created the term ‘white slavery’ to define a whiteness and a

³⁸² *The Colored American*, May 13, 1837, from the database *Accessible Archives, African-American Newspapers: The 19th Century*, Item 2464.

³⁸³ *The Colored American*, April 15, 1837, Item 2357.

³⁸⁴ Todd Vogel, “The New Face of Black Labor,” 40.

republic that secured their rights on the backs of blacks. This whiteness forged a link between skin color—race—and political status that locked the northern free blacks out of the political process.”³⁸⁵ Yet as the first chapter of this study shows in the city-mystery writing of antebellum labor activists, the white working-class’s view of blacks, which could also range anywhere from ambivalent to sympathetic, cannot be reduced so easily. While Vogel is right that *The Colored American* counters a then-pervasive republican discourse that extolled the white laborer at the expense of the free black laborer and the black slave, the newspaper also attempts to align the interests of northern and southern poor whites with black slaves against “aristocratic” and indolent slave-owners.

In an article entitled “The Aristocracy of Wealth” of April 1, 1837, Cornish calls attention to how the institution of slavery devalues free labor in the north and the south. He writes, “We have often noticed, in the South, the very low estimation, in which the honest laborer was held. His condition, if he have to labor for his living, is less enviable than that of the slave. In fact, half the States of the Union are shut against the honest laboring classes. If they have not money to buy slaves, and a slave-holding heart to hold them, they are of no repute whatever.”³⁸⁶ In what can be seen as another appeal to poor whites to recognize that chattel slavery runs counter to their own economic interests, an article “They Glory in Their Shame” of June 10, 1837 reports on a racist incident in which an Irish hack driver denied service to a free

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 42. See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, (Rev. ed. [1991]. New York: Verso, 1999). For a complete view of the white working-class’s racially ambivalent attitude toward free black workers, see Eric Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 60-61; also, Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 127.

³⁸⁶ *The Colored American*, April 1, 1837, Item 2295.

black man in New York City. After chastising the Irish emigrant for his lack of universal sympathy with the oppressed, Cornish insists that native-born whites and free blacks should align themselves against the wealthy classes. “But if the driver were a native citizen, and a POOR MAN, if he do not see, that his interests are identified with the down-trodden colored man, and the slave, he may yet have to learn, in the YOKE and SHACKLE, the estimation in which he is held, by the aristocrats of the land. The cause of the poor laboring man, white or colored, and the cause of the slave, is ONE and the SAME.”³⁸⁷ Although *The Colored American* protests racist hiring practices afflicting free black laborers in the north, the newspaper does not envision the white working-class as a reactionary monolith. Instead, through an economic critique of chattel slavery characteristic of Lippard’s anti-slavery polemics, the newspaper encourages a multi-racial alliance against the monied “aristocrats” thriving in the north and the south.

Another result of the Panic of 1837 on the white labor movement was the increase in nativist hostility toward poor—and particularly Catholic—immigrants. With immigration from Ireland and Germany increasing in the 1830’s and exploding in the 1840’s, native-born white workers began to express anxiety and xenophobia toward the unskilled foreign laborers whom they feared would undercut wages and further erode apprenticeships in the northeastern cities. This nativism typically took the form of calling for extending immigrants’ naturalization period from seven to twenty-one years and barring immigrants from holding political office; it did not actually propose ending or even placing caps on immigration. Instead, political nativists hoped to weaken immigrants’ influence at the polls and thus prevent

³⁸⁷ *The Colored American*, June 10, 1837, Item 2546.

immigrants from helping to pass legislation that favored them in a time of scarce economic resources. *The Colored American*, in its opposition to colonization and its support of black suffrage, regularly invoked blacks' native-born status as quintessential "Americans." In fact, Cornish changed the name of the newspaper from *The Weekly Advocate* to *The Colored American* to highlight blacks' right to American citizenship. In the first edition of the newspaper under its new title, Cornish writes, "Many would gladly rob us of the endeared name, 'AMERICANS,' a distinction more emphatically belonging to us, than five-sixths of this nation, and one that we will never yield. In complexion, in blood and in nativity, we are decidedly more exclusively 'American' than our white brethren; hence the propriety of the name of our paper, COLORED AMERICAN, in spite of our enemies, who would rob us of our nationality and reproach us as exotics."³⁸⁸ Editorials for black suffrage point out the irony that immigrants, who are "strangers to our institutions," can vote within seven years unimpeded by the racist property qualifications placed on free blacks.³⁸⁹ An editorial of July 22, 1837 states: "The tens of thousands of foreigners that annually come into our state, soon climb to all the rights and immunities of citizens, and we, who are natives, and have, some of us, fought and bled for the country, neglect to ask for inalienable rights, which have illegally and cruelly been taken from us."³⁹⁰ Similar to native-born white workers who resented middle-class missionaries' preoccupation with converting "heathens" in foreign lands, *The Colored American* also urges missionaries to assist the poor blacks who live in their midst. In

³⁸⁸ *The Colored American*, March 4, 1837, Item 2192.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Item 2189.

³⁹⁰ *The Colored American*, July 22, 1837, Item 2663.

these ways, *The Colored American* employs nativist discourse that was prominent among white labor activists and reveals another cross-racial strategy of class protest.

Although most labor papers begun in the early 1830's did not survive the economic depression of 1837, penny dailies and weekly story papers predominantly located in northeastern cities continued to represent the interests of their white and black working-class readers.³⁹¹ In *Objectivity and the News* Dan Schiller shows that the vast products of the penny press often defended the rights of white laborers to unionize and to strike for higher wages, and provided an artisan republican critique of the wealthy classes through sensational crime reporting. Although penny papers and the weekly story papers they spawned regularly presented blacks in cruel stereotypes when they reported on blacks at all, they did not always take firm or consistent stands on the slavery question. For example, the *Philadelphia Daily Ledger* defended abolitionists' right to free speech in the mid-1830's and the *New York Tribune* espoused anti-slavery sentiment in the 1840's; meanwhile, the *New York Herald* regularly sympathized with the south throughout the 1840's and 1850's.³⁹² Despite the absence of direct attacks on the institution of slavery and the propensity to exploit blacks for comic relief, many notable exceptions of sympathetic representations of blacks exist within the popular press and encourage multi-racial working-class

³⁹¹ In *Carnival on the Page*, Isabelle Lehuu points out blacks comprised part of the readership for the *New York Herald*. "In spite of Bennett's extremist editorials, the *Herald* reached a broad popularity, even among the black community. In a critique of how little support black writers could expect from their own class compared to the success of slave narratives among a white population, playwright William Wells Brown noted that 'the *N.Y. Herald* has more subscribers today and gets a larger support from the colored people than *Douglass' Monthly*, *The Anglo-African* and *The Pacific Appeal* put together.'" See Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 40.

³⁹² Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 250 Years, 1690 to 1940*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 229-240.

solidarity. Serialized fiction in Justin Jones's Boston weekly story paper *Star Spangled Banner* and George Lippard's Philadelphia newspaper *Quaker City Weekly* rely on a sympathetic engagement with blackness to mount working-class protest. Additionally, sympathetic and subversive representations of blacks converge with nativist discourse in such class-inflected popular print sources as *Ned Buntline's Own* of the late 1840's, the monthly nativist magazine *The Republic* of the early 1850's, and the nativist newspaper *The Know Nothing* of the mid-1850's. The artisan republican and nativist discourses that mark *The Colored American's* defense of the multi-racial poor reappear in the popular press and perform the same cultural work of helping to promote solidarity among white and free black laborers.

Justin Jones's *Star Spangled Banner* ran weekly in Boston from 1846 to 1857. Although it did not take a formal position on the slavery issue, the politics of race, ethnicity, and class pervade the serialized novels, anecdotes, and news items that appear throughout the paper. Exposés on the "Dungeons of the Inquisition," coverage of P.T. Barnum's "Horrors of Slavery" exhibit, anxious reports on the thousands of emigrants arriving from Ireland, and a regular column featuring the obituaries of "Eminent Mechanics," share the pages with such works as *Creola; or, The Slave and the Minstrel* and "Mackey; or, The Black Spy." Justin Jones's own serialized novel of 1846, *Big Dick, The King of the Negroes; or, Virtue and Vice Contrasted*, enjoyed such popularity that it was released as a complete novel later that year and was followed by a sequel *Fourpe Tap: or, the Middy of the Macedonian* in 1847. The two novels chronicle the efforts of Big Dick, a "Herculean" black pugilist formally named Richard Seaver, to expose wickedness among the wealthy classes of Boston and to

protect the virtue of honest working-class whites and blacks. Although Jones frames the first novel with an apology to southern readers that Seaver is technically a Chilean by birth, he provides his black hero with republican credentials that were valued by the multi-racial working-classes and extolled in the early black press. Seaver, an escaped slave from Chile who fought in the Revolutionary War and was held prisoner for several years by the British, becomes a testament that blacks could become virtuous citizens in the United States. Jones challenges his white southern (and northern) readers to honor Seaver's virtues: "Were it not that he had been born with a skin as dark as an Ethiop's, even [our southern friends] would have accounted him a hero of the age in which he lived, and admired every trait of his character, and applauded almost every act of his life."³⁹³

In the novel, set in 1816 on the streets of Boston, Seaver rescues a newborn infant discarded in a winter snowstorm and sets out to reunite the child with its mother. His virtuous efforts uncover dark secrets within a prominent Boston family, the Petersons: the infant's fallen and corrupt aristocratic grand-father has dumped her in the snow and has arranged for her mother (his daughter Cecile) to wed a lascivious Frenchman to whom he is in debt. That a black hero reunites mother and daughter and restores moral order in the novel may be remarkable enough within American fiction of the 1840's, but Jones also builds multi-racial class solidarity between Seaver and working-class whites in the two novels. In a sensational account of the historical riot on a multi-racial gambling district known as Negro Hill, Seaver leads a group of armed white mechanics to cleanse the area of vice. When Cecile's dissolute

³⁹³ Harry Hazel, *Big Dick, the King of the Negroes; or, Virtue and Vice Contrasted*. By Hazel., (Boston: "Star Spangled Banner" Office, 1846), 99.

brother and tormentor attacks Seaver during the fracas, the hero subdues him through sheer physical strength. “In another moment, Big Dick seized the assassin, and tossing him above his head, caught him by the ankles, whirled him once around, and rested him as he would have done a billet of wood, upon his shoulders. He now strode toward the thickest of the fight, and using the assassin as a club, swept down his foes at each whirl of this new and powerful weapon!”³⁹⁴ The image of Seaver, a virtual Hercules with a human-cudgel slung over his brawny shoulder, resonates with contemporary pictorial idealizations of the proud and white mechanic hero. The heroic leadership of black Seaver and the multi-racial inhabitants of Negro Hill in Jones’s account of the riot also contrast sharply with a popular broadside of 1827, “Dreadful Riot on Negro Hill!”, which lampoons a black couple as they are attacked by a group of white men. In Jones’s sequel, *Fourpe Tap*, Seaver protects a poor apprentice Melton who is framed for burning down his master’s workplace by two of his co-workers. Consistent with popular constructions of immigrants as criminals who prey upon native-born citizens and tax the nation’s public resources, the two co-workers are recently arrived “cockneys” in flight from the legal authorities in England. Seaver again restores moral order in the novel, hiding Melton from the local police in a cellar suggestive of the underground railroad until he has exposed the cockneys as the real arsonists. Jones’s progressive representation of a black hero provides a notable instance in the antebellum popular press of how shared economic interests could help to promote solidarity among the black and white laboring poor.

Jones’s construction of Seaver as a Revolutionary War hero resonates with editorials in the early black press, which regularly pointed to blacks’ participation in

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 60.

the war effort as a testament of their republican virtue. An editorial in *The Colored American* entitled “Return of Dr. Smith,” which heralds an accomplished black doctor’s return from practicing in Europe, counters the charge that blacks lack patriotism by citing their military sacrifice. “Had they accused us of the want of loyalty and patriotism to our country, we would have shown them the blood of our fathers, spilled in our revolutionary struggles, and in defence of our country, (in the last war,) as a TRIUMPHANT REFUTATION of the charge.”³⁹⁵ *The Colored American* also invokes blacks’ service during the Revolutionary War to advance its opposition to colonization and to proclaim blacks’ right to suffrage. In an article “Important Document” condemning the Colonization Society as a pack of “ragged wolves,” the editors write, “Who will not henceforth mark the Society and the men, who, with honey upon their lips, and gall in their hearts, would scheme the disfranchisement of forty thousand peaceable, virtuous, enterprising citizens?—some of whom were actors in the revolutionary struggles which achieved the independence of our country; and have ever since been among the most enterprising in carrying forward the interests and prosperity of the Republic. Instead of being disfranchised, such men should be denominated fathers, and respected and honored as patriots of the country.”³⁹⁶ Jones’s black protagonist Richard Seaver, through his virtuous defense of the poor and his pursuit of the truth, embodies the image *The Colored American* promotes of blacks as patriotic republicans. In its coverage of a meeting convened in support of blacks’ right to suffrage in the state of Michigan, the editors report the speaker’s invocation of the Revolutionary War. “Taking the ground taken by the

³⁹⁵ *The Colored American*, September 9, 1837, Item 2810.

³⁹⁶ *The Colored American*, March 29, 1838, Item 3450.

fathers of the Revolution—the right of the taxed to vote—the natural equality of rights, &c.—and that their fathers waded equally with others, through the revolutionary struggle, and the war of 1812.—that they were now taxed for the support of the government, and the education of the whites—that they had no voice or vote in the arrangements of the government and their children were thrown out of the schools.”³⁹⁷ The early black press’s valorization of Revolutionary War heroes, a class-accented strategy pervasive in the penny press and popularized in George Lippard’s 1847 *The Legends of the American Revolution*, “1776,” is also apparent among the printed obituaries. Both *Freedom’s Journal* and *The Colored American* ran obituaries of black men noteworthy for their participation in the Revolutionary War.³⁹⁸

In March 1852, *Star Spangled Banner* ran a short story by Edward Carroll written expressly for the newspaper, “Mackey; or, The Black Spy.” The story of nearly 2,000 words is set during the Revolutionary War, and it is rife with artisan republican rhetoric against the wealthy classes figured through an alliance of British royalists and their American sympathizers. A young and brave lieutenant of the rebel forces, Elliot, dresses in blackface in order to infiltrate the British forces who are occupying the residence of wealthy loyalist, Richard Foster. Elliot, mimicking black dialect and a stooped gait, gains access to the British colonel by claiming to have important news about the rebels’ movements. “As they advanced through the lines towards the house, the light of the camp fires shone on the negro, revealing a tall but

³⁹⁷ *The Colored American*, March 20, 1841, Item 7355.

³⁹⁸ See the obituary of Laban Lanson in *Freedom’s Journal*, October 31, 1828, Item 1568; and the obituary of William Stives in *The Colored American*, September 14, 1839, Item 5325.

ungainly and stooped figure, with a face blacker than the night itself. His eyes rolled about with that motion peculiar to his race, and as he strode along with huge strides, his awkward and shambling gait reminded one involuntarily of a dancing bear.”³⁹⁹ With such servile remarks as ““Yaw, massa,”” Elliot, performing as Mackey the Black Spy, earns the colonel’s trust and gives misinformation that the rebels are on the move—when, in fact, they are preparing to ambush the house. As the British soldiers rush off toward where they believe the rebels are amassing, Mackey transforms into Lieutenant Elliot. “It was strange how his bent form straightened up as they disappeared from his view in the darkness, and while he stood there with his really fine figure thrown into an attitude of scorn, he, with a low, bitter, contemptuous laugh, uttered the single word, ‘fools!’ in a tone and voice as unlike his former speech as could be conceived.”⁴⁰⁰ Elliot’s blackface performance enables his heroic infiltration of the British forces, and the racial transformation highlights the constructedness of race. Although Carroll utilizes black caricature in his description of Mackey, the ease and effectiveness with which Elliot performs “blackness” points to the permeability of race.

With Elliot’s true identity revealed, Carroll teases and titillates the reader with the “specter” of miscegenation. The wealthy, loyalist homeowner Foster has a “red hot liberalist” daughter, Ellen, whom he has forbidden to socialize with Elliot.⁴⁰¹ However, dressed in blackface, Elliot takes the opportunity to speak with Ellen as the British soldiers march from the premises. Carroll records the father’s shock when he

³⁹⁹ Edward Carroll, “Mackey; or, The Black Spy,” in *Star Spangled Banner*, March 27, 1852, 2.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

encounters Ellen sitting intimately in her room with “Black” Mackey: “[Foster] peered through the glass with which the upper part of the door was furnished, and was thunderstruck, as it were, by the sight which met his view.... Upon this sofa was seated the fair form of Ellen, and by her side, holding her hand and apparently in familiar conversation with her, was *the negro, Ben Mackey*—the hired spy of Col. Cramer.... When the Black Spy clasped the maiden in his arms and was about to imprint a kiss upon her lips, Foster dashed open the door and with a cry of rage confronted them.”⁴⁰² Foster’s horror at the prospect of miscegenation is stalled by the rebels’ attack on the British base, and he soon learns that his black servant Mackey is, in fact, Elliot. Foster, an anti-republican and wealthy loyalist who can afford to keep Mackey on the payroll, expresses horror at race-mixing, while Elliot is comfortable and adept at donning the disguise of a black man. Through Elliot’s blackface performance that exploits Foster’s racist assumptions about blacks, Edward Carroll aligns anti-republican loyalists with the wealthy classes and the rebel hero with (racially ambivalent) republican virtue.

Blackness is a complex and fraught category throughout the run of *Star Spangled Banner*. Advertisements for Barnum’s “Horrors of Slavery” exhibition and for J. H. Ingraham’s novel *The Quadroone* share the pages with a reprinted sketch on Abyssinian slaves that functions as an apologia to slavery. Its source listed only as *Melly*, “A Party of Slaves” describes a beautiful and demure group of slave women en route to Egypt to work in Turkish harems or wed affluent Arabs. “Their masters, from all we could learn, are uniformly kind to them, and whenever we encountered a

⁴⁰² Ibid., 2.

party, we found that the girls were much attached to the head of the caravan.”⁴⁰³ The horror of what amounts to the trafficking of sex slaves is buried beneath detailed descriptions of their beauty and the pretense that they are content in servitude. Amidst these mixed messages about the institution of slavery, *Star Spangled Banner* printed short anecdotes in which free black workers defend the Sabbath and serve to highlight the interests of the multi-racial, native-born working classes. Antebellum nativists often decried rowdy immigrants’ carousing on the Sabbath as justification to ban the sale of alcohol that day, when in fact such legislation would circumscribe immigrants’ political rights since bars and saloons were an important site of local politicking before the Civil War.⁴⁰⁴ In a short sketch entitled “Working on the Sabbath,” a black employee, Caesar, educates a family of white farmers about the importance of honoring the Sabbath. The anonymous writer, who is frustrated with people—presumably, newly-arrived Catholic immigrants—who work on the Sabbath, begins, “We have seen a capital anecdote lately, about a family of such people, who were pretty severely rebuked by a colored man in their employ.”⁴⁰⁵ When the farmer’s son calls upon Caesar to bale the hay, he refuses and explains, “I cannot work any more on the Sabbath; it is not right.”⁴⁰⁶ The precocious son argues with Caesar, asking, “But you would not pull your cow or sheep out of the pit on the

⁴⁰³ *Star Spangled Banner*, February 24, 1852, 2.

⁴⁰⁴ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 145. For more information about the political relationship between temperance reformers and the nativist movement, see Thomas Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998).

⁴⁰⁵ *Star Spangled Banner*, August 21, 1852, 2.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

Sabbath, Caesar?”⁴⁰⁷ To which Caesar cleverly responds at the sketch’s close, “No, not if I had been trying all the week to shove them in; I would let them lie there.”⁴⁰⁸

This humorous anecdote, in which a black worker upholds the sanctity of the Sabbath, resonates with the explicitly nativist defense of the Sabbath in *The Weekly Advocate/The Colored American* fifteen years earlier.

Consistent with nativists’ fears that newly-arrived immigrants committed a disproportionate amount of local crime, *The Weekly Advocate/The Colored American* links Catholics’ disregard for the Sabbath to an increased crime rate. In “Keeping the Sabbath,” the writer signed “R.S.” argues, “The light of history shows that in nominal christian communities in which the sabbath has ceased to be regarded as a day of holy rest, as is the case in all Catholic communities, crimes are as abundant, and moral principle is as much unknown, as in heathen lands.”⁴⁰⁹ In a letter-to-the-editor later that year, “S.A.” praises a report from the *Pittsburgh Anti-Slavery Newspaper* that black barbers have begun observing the Sabbath. “We observe that the perfumery store and shaving shop of Messrs. Vashon and Colder, are henceforth to be shut on the Sabbath day. Every friend of truth and righteousness, will be pleased to learn this fact, and it is to be hoped, for the honor of our holy religion, as well as for the spiritual interests and morality of our colored friends, that all besides will follow their example in this respect.”⁴¹⁰ The mutual respect for the Sabbath expressed by *Star Spangled Banner* and *The Weekly Advocate/The Colored American* can also be read

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁰⁹ *The Weekly Advocate*, January 28, 1837, Item 2126.

⁴¹⁰ *The Colored American*, April 1, 1837, Item 2284.

as an implicit critique of Catholic immigrant laborers, thereby marking another strategy of working-class protest shared by the penny press and the early black press.

The provincial humor that marks *Star Spangled Banner's* "Working on the Sabbath" is absent from the report "A Fight Between an Italian and a Negro" printed in July, 1849. In this sketch of a purportedly actual event in Boston, black employee Francis Russell confronts his Italian employer named Mordecai about his unpaid wages. In turn, the employer, equipped with a fashionable cane signifying wealth, assaults Russell. "The Italian remonstrated at this untimely application, when the negro commenced a volley of abusive language, whereupon the exasperated Italian struck him with a sword cane. The negro then seized the cane, leaving the blade in the hands of its owner. The Italian was then knocked down, and on regaining his feet, stabbed the negro several times in different parts of the body, causing blood to flow profusely, though none of the wounds were of a very dangerous nature."⁴¹¹ The sketch concludes that the Italian was arrested and released by the judge, who ruled "the parties about equally to blame."⁴¹² Like the humorous sketch "Working on the Sabbath," this report does not include any reflective editorializing by the anonymous writer. However, both short texts express sympathy for black workers who suffer under unethical employers, a theme likely to resonate with white working-class readers of *Star Spangled Banner* and suggestive of the potential of cross-racial sympathy.

Artisan republican and nativist discourses converge powerfully in George Lippard's 1849 serialized novel, *The Killers*, to construct a multi-racial critique of the

⁴¹¹ *Star Spangled Banner*, July 21, 1849, 3.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

wealthy classes. *The Killers*, which Lippard serialized in *Quaker City Weekly* over four weeks in December 1849, provides a fictionalized account of the October Election Night riots that left two black men and two white firemen dead in the streets of Philadelphia.⁴¹³ The novel's two protagonists, a brawny tavern-keeper nicknamed Black Andy and a meek white mechanic named Elijah Watson, frustrate the efforts of dissipated young aristocrat Cromwell Hicks and his Cuban sidekick Don Jorge to rob an equally corrupt merchant whose wealth derived from illegal slave-trading. Like Justin Jones's "Herculean" Big Dick, Black Andy heroically restores moral order as he kills the young aristocrat in self-defense, subdues the Cuban desperado, and rescues Elijah Watson's helpless girlfriend Kate from his burning tavern. Lippard writes, "In his rage, [Black Andy] planted his foot upon the back of the dead man's head, and showing his broad black chest, awaited the approach of Don Jorge. The Cuban had seen much of blood in his time, but this scene horrified him in every nerve. He felt for his revolver—it was not in its usual place, under his vest—he had left it in the room above. Unarmed, defenseless, he was at the mercy of the giant, whose brute strength was sufficient to grind him to powder."⁴¹⁴ Although Black Andy disappears suddenly from the text as he is presumed to have died in the fire, Lippard concludes the novel with anti-slavery sentiment. Elijah, revealed to be the rightful heir to the corrupt merchant's wealth, is able to escape the city with his girlfriend by threatening to publish papers which "implicated some four or five

⁴¹³ Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 156.

⁴¹⁴ George Lippard, *The Killers. A Narrative of Real Life in Philadelphia*. By a Member of the Philadelphia Bar, (Philadelphia: Hankinson and Bartholomew, 1850), 42.

respectable houses in the profitable transactions of the African Slave Trade.”⁴¹⁵ As in much of Lippard’s city-mystery and newspaper writing, artisan republican rhetoric against the corrupt “upper ten” and nativist rhetoric against a foreign criminal element help to develop a working-class protest that aligns the interests of white workers with free and enslaved blacks.

Just as Lippard’s city-mysteries routinely implicate the north in chattel slavery through representations of unscrupulous, slave-trading merchants, the early black press critiques the north’s willingness to do business with southern slave-owners. A spirited editorial in *The Colored American*, “Northern distress produced by Southern Slavery,” resonates with the anti-slavery arguments that Lippard directs toward the north in *The Quaker City* and *The Killers*. Amidst the financial Panic of 1837, Cornish appeals to his multi-racial northern readership that southern slavery contributes to the north’s economic woes. “We of the north are beginning to feel [slavery’s] blighting and withering influences. This cannot be longer disguised, and in proportion as we hide the facts, apologize for their existence and partake of the guilt, will its deadly influence be felt among us.”⁴¹⁶ Like *The Quaker City*’s arch-forger Fitz-Cowles who exploits northern banks’ financial transactions with slave-owners and *The Killers*’ aristocratic Mr. Hicks who acquires wealth through trading in slaves, northern merchants have sacrificed “the principles of their fathers.”⁴¹⁷ Cornish reminds his readers, “Who does not remember the slave-holding manes which pervaded the regions of the north, three years ago—the large meetings, the

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 50.

⁴¹⁶ *The Colored American*, May 13, 1837, Item 2465.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., Item 2465.

humiliating resolutions, and the deep and damning concessions, made by merchants and men in authority to the hydra system of Slavery, which carries God's blasting curse with it, wherever it goes.”⁴¹⁸ In addition to its criticism of northern merchants, *The Colored American* shares with *The Quaker City* a class-inflected distrust of banks and “monopolies”. The devastating effects of failed banks upon the working-classes, which Lippard dramatizes in *The Quaker City* through the subplot of suicidal mechanic John Davis, are addressed in the editorial “Our Banking System” in *The Colored American*. Cornish writes, “Our banking system has, for ages, been a system of monopoly and robbery. Rich men have fattened upon it, while poor men, have been kept exceedingly poor....When banking charters are obtained, it is very seldom, that a poor man can get any of the stock, though he may have the necessary funds. The rich play into each others hands, and secure to themselves the whole.”⁴¹⁹ The anti-slavery and anti-bank polemics of *The Colored American*, published several years before *The Quaker City* of 1845, presages the racial sympathy and class protest of Lippard’s city-mystery fictions.

As shown in chapter two’s analysis of class-inflected city-mysteries, nativism and anti-slavery discourses could be aligned during the three decades preceding the Civil War. The Know-Nothings, a nativist “third party,” enjoyed popularity in the northeast during the 1850’s due largely to dissatisfaction with the Whigs’ vacillation on the slavery question and Democrats’ perceived pandering to unskilled immigrants. Three particularly nativist print sources of the period, *Ned Buntline’s Own*, *The Republic*, and *The Know Nothing* reflect the combination of sympathy for the black

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., Item 2465.

⁴¹⁹ *The Colored American*, July 1, 1837, Item 2604.

slave and animus toward the immigrant. Although Ned Buntline, a staunch nativist and generally a pro-slavery advocate notwithstanding his service for the Union Army during the Civil War, rarely presents positive images of blacks in his weekly story paper *Ned Buntline's Own*, he did print stories critical of slavery. More typical news items involving blacks include the apprehension of a “black burglar” on Wall Street, a black prisoner stabbing a guard on Blackwell’s Island, and a black owner of an oyster-cellar being duped out of money by a confidence-man.⁴²⁰ The fictional sketches often portray blacks negatively or for the sake of enhancing a story’s sensationalism. For instance, in the first edition of the newspaper, a temperance sketch chronicles the ultimate degradation of Harper, a once proud white soldier who is now a drunken vagrant living outside of Chicago. Because an author is not listed for the sketch, the writer may very well be Buntline himself. In the sketch, Harper is sold for one shilling to the highest bidder, who turns out to be a black man named George. The auctioneer announces, ““To be sold to the highest bidder, as a vagrant, a creature, who was once a man, and occupied a high and exalted station in society; is related to one of the first families in England, was himself highly educated; he is now to be sold as one degraded on a level with the brute creatures. How much shall I have bid for him?””⁴²¹ Buntline enhances the sensationalism of the lesson in temperance, a preoccupation of nativists who targeted the drinking-saloons and political meeting places of Irish and German immigrants, by narrating a shocking role reversal between blacks and whites. In his short story “Walking the Plank: A Yarn of Pirate Times,”

⁴²⁰ “A Black Burglar” appears in *Ned Buntline's Own*, October 13, 1849, 2; “Stabbing by a Negro” appears in *Ned Buntline's Own*, November 17, 1849, 2; and “Important Correspondence” involving the oyster-cellar owner appears in *Ned Buntline's Own*, October 20, 1849, 2.

⁴²¹ *Ned Buntline's Own*, November 4, 1848, 1.

Buntline relates the dastardly deeds of an imposing pirate named Black Caesar. “A tall muscular man, dark as a mulatto, his face covered with a black beard and moustache, long black hair hanging far down his back....and that was ‘Black Caesar.’”⁴²² The story relates how Black Caesar captured a ship, made the ship’s crew walk the plank, and prepared to sexually assault the white and beautiful passenger Constance. With the threat of miscegenation heightening the terror and the sensationalism, Constance jumps overboard and deprives Black Caesar of her body. Unlike George Lippard’s Black Andy and Justin Jones’s Big Dick who both rescue white women from their aristocratic tormentors, Buntline’s Black Caesar threatens white womanhood and is shortly thereafter defeated by an American schooner.

Amidst the many articles ridiculing blacks, *Ned Buntline’s Own* ran pieces critical of the institution of slavery. In Otis Carmichael’s “The Rival Students; or, The Wreck of Genius” set at a college in New York, an ambitious but humble student from the north, Donald Donaldson, is manipulated by a jealous and mean-spirited student from the south, Edward Thompson. Like city-mysteries’ tendency to locate dissipated villains through their relationship to southern slavery, Carmichael signals Thompson’s degradation through slavery. “This one, Edmund Thompson by name, was the only son of a rich South Carolina planter, who furnished him with the amplest pecuniary resources. Inordinately ambitious, cunning, and passably talented, he had hitherto enjoyed almost undisputed sway. He was now, however, thoroughly deposed [by Donaldson]; but, determined to obtain the ascendancy by some means, he applied

⁴²² *Ned Buntline’s Own*, August 18, 1849, 1.

himself to scheming with vigor worthy a better cause.”⁴²³ At heart a temperance sketch, “The Rival Students” narrates how Thompson leads Donaldson to financial ruin at the gambling-hall and thus attempts to break up Donaldson’s engagement to the lovely Laura Barton. Prepared to throw himself over the Battery to certain death, Donaldson is visited by a disguised Laura who makes him swear to give up gambling and drinking forever. Although *Buntline* did not merge nativist and anti-slavery discourses like the editors of contemporary nativist newspapers, images of the dissipated southern slave-owner show the presence of an implicit anti-slavery sentiment in even one of the most racially insensitive weekly story papers of the 1840’s and 1850’s.

Newspapers and magazines committed to nativist politics are often ambivalent on the question of slavery, a position which Tyler Anbinder credits with forming and later destroying the nativist parties in the 1850’s. The Know-Nothing Party was comprised mostly of former Whigs who were dissatisfied with the party’s equivocation on slavery, as well as a number of Democrats who voted for the party’s anti-slavery and nativist platforms. An order of the Know-Nothing Party in Hartford, Connecticut, argued in 1856: “We contend for freedom as well as Americanism. We opposed the extension of slavery as well as the spread of Romanism. We are hostile to the march of the slave oligarchy as we are to the control of a foreign potentate over free America.”⁴²⁴ Although Anbinder concedes it is not clear how the party became identified with the anti-slavery cause, he speculates that it is because nativists viewed immigrants and the Roman Catholic Church as pro-slavery. Anbinder concludes, “In

⁴²³ *Ned Buntline’s Own*, January 20, 1849, 4.

⁴²⁴ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 46.

fact, slavery played the key role in transforming the Know-Nothings from a small nativist organization into a national political power.”⁴²⁵ With animus directed toward immigrants who were viewed as “enslaved” to the Roman Catholic Church and devoted to the pro-slavery Democratic Party, nativist newspapers and magazines regularly employed anti-slavery discourse and racially ambivalent representations of blacks.

In New York City in the early 1850’s, *The Republic: A Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Politics and Art* urged native-born workers to unite against the influx of unskilled immigrant laborers. In a dramatic display of nativists’ fear of foreign influence in the republic’s national affairs, the engraving “Kissing the Pope’s Toe” and an explanatory paragraph appeared in the third edition (Figure 4). The editor writes, “With this number of the REPUBLIC we present an engraving, exhibiting a ceremony which, at a glance, illustrates not only the unbridled ambition of the leaders of the politico-religious despotism of Rome, but the humiliating attitude into which it seeks to place those who come beneath its sway.”⁴²⁶ The editor goes on to link the horror of such “abject servility” to his concern for the American republic. “The spectacle of a monarch thus humbling himself—saluting with his lips the great toe of a man, arrayed in the mitre and scarlet robe—is typical of the prostration of his whole people before the power of Rome....The custom exists to the present day, and it is said that a representative of the United States, a few years since, so far forgot the

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 99.

⁴²⁶ *The Republic: A Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Politics and Art*, New York, March, 1851, 130.



Fig. 4. "Kissing the Pope's Toe," from *The Republic*, 1851.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society

dignity of his character as to submit to its operation.”⁴²⁷ The second chapter analyzed how *The Republic’s* editor, Thomas Whitney, opposed the colonization of native-born blacks through nativist rhetoric against immigrants. A travel sketch entitled “A Night in the Woods at Welden” by an author referred to only as “Baltimore,” features a sagacious group of southern slaves and makes a foreign traveler the object of ridicule. When a rainstorm wipes out a bridge among the swamps of North Carolina and the train’s occupants must spend the night in the woods, a small party of travelers asks the black cicerones to lead them to a drinking establishment. The slave-guide flatters the men by poking fun at abolitionists and insisting that the men must be truly aristocratic “gemman,” while he explains that he cannot provide his name because ““My massa aint hardly gim’e no name yet, sar.””⁴²⁸ The slave-guide takes the travelers to the “Jenny Lind Hotel,” a makeshift shanty deep in the woods, but the Frenchman among the group falls asleep by a fire in an attempt to escape the mosquitoes. The next morning, the Frenchman paints an amusing portrait: “Our friend of the pine-log-fire field-bedstead, made his appearance at the cars, dressed like an opera-monkey, elegantly begrimed with pitch-pine smoke, and swearing French oaths by the yard.”⁴²⁹ In an allusion to Alexis de Tocqueville, the sketch continues, “He proved to be a fashionably dressed mustachioed son of Gaul, taking notes of American travel, for publication in the metropolis of the French Republic, and I promise you the chapter of that night’s adventures was set in *italics*.”⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 130.

⁴²⁸ “A Night in the Woods,” *The Republic*, January, 1851, 35.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 36.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 36.

Through provincial humor that satirizes the foreigner and establishes the black slaves' "native" familiarity with their environment as they navigate the southern swamps adeptly, the sketch reflects nativists' suspicion of immigrants and ambivalent view of blacks.

The prominent nativist newspaper of the mid-1850's, Edward Hinks's weekly paper printed in Boston, *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, combines anti-slavery, nativist, and republican discourses. The newspaper's stated objectives in the first edition link the native-born with republicanism and link immigrants with anti-republicanism: "This cast emigration, or a very large part of it, these millions who have so increased our number, and who are found on every plain, and hill, and valley in the country, have brought with them sentiments and principles which are dangerous to the extreme. They are not here as Americans. They do not intend to become Americans. On the contrary, their policy, their speech, their conduct is anti-republican in every respect."⁴³¹ Two editions later, an editorial entitled "Ireland in America" criticizes Irish immigrants for their perceived support for slavery and singles out John Mitchel. "They have undertaken to teach the Americans how to cut gordian knots that have perplexed the wisest and the gravest, from Jefferson to Henry Clay; thus, John Mitchel has set the example of breaking through all difficulties connected with the subject of slavery, by fulsomely praising the institution, to the horror and detestation of the very men who protest against abolitionism. Talk to a man inconsiderately of the skeleton in his house, and he hears you with fright and disgust; but worship his skeleton—praise his weakness and flatter his vices—and he recognizes the human devil who contemplates some trap to make him sell his

⁴³¹ *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, May 6, 1854, 2.

soul.”⁴³² The newspaper’s combination of anti-slavery and nativist discourses is also implicit in its promotion of two poems published in 1854 by Samuel R. Phillips, “The Know Nothing” and “Nebraska.” In the same edition in which “Ireland in America” appears, the reviewer praises Phillips’s “The Know Nothing: A Poem, For Natives and Aliens”: “There is a vigor and fixedness of principle apparent in this poem, that we heartily admire and commend. It contains some most convincing truths, expressed in a terse, but truly poetical manner, which should become as familiar as ‘household words’ to all who love literary excellence, as combined with Native American principles.”⁴³³ A week earlier, *The Know Nothing* published a notice and a moderately positive review of Phillips’s “Nebraska; A Poem, Personal and Political”: “This ‘Poem’ is evidently the work of an abolitionist possessing the strongest kind of ‘free soil’ sentiments. It is written in a terse, pungent style that will commend it to all whose sentiments are akin to those of its nameless author; but we can do no less than characterize it as a work that reiterates old railings at a national evil, without pointing out a remedy.”⁴³⁴ Although nativist newspapers would eventually equivocate on the slavery issue in the mid to late 1850’s, a fact which Tyler Anbinder credits with contributing to the rise of the anti-slavery Republican Party, for the first half of the 1850’s they combined anti-slavery and nativist discourses to defend the rights of native-born workers.

The early black press, as shown in this chapter, employed nativist discourse to focus attention on the plight of the native-born black community. By criticizing the

⁴³² *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, May 13, 1854, 4.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴³⁴ *The Know Nothing and American Crusader*, May 8, 1854, 3.

preoccupation of middle-class missionaries with converting the “heathens” of foreign lands, pointing out the double standard by which immigrants but not native-born blacks could gain the right to vote within seven years, and insisting upon blacks’ right to citizenship on account of their contributions and military service to the nation, early black newspapers shared the penny and nativist presses’ hostility toward newly-arrived immigrants. *The Colored American*’s public support and inclusion of a virulently nativist speech by New York Mayor Aaron Clark speaks to its tacit support of anti-immigrant sentiment. In an urgent editorial entitled “The Nation must Awake,” *The Colored American* introduces the mayor’s speech: “ We insert below, a paragraph from our excellent Mayor’s Address to the Common Council.—It is a document worthy of all praise, and will immortalize its author. In point of sound judgment, true benevolence, national policy, and literary merit, it is unequaled by any thing, of the kind, that has gone before it.”⁴³⁵ In his speech, the mayor cites the rising number of foreign immigrants as the single greatest threat to the black community. ““Several thousands of colored people also remain among us, entitled to the protection of our laws. All these, or their parents, were slaves, until they were led forth to freedom by that great philanthropist, Daniel D. Tompkins. As they had been faithful in their humility, they naturally looked for attention from this country in the days of their liberty. But the increasing influx of needy emigrants has deprived them, from time to time of patronage, until, in many cases, they are thereby turned into the foulest conditions in life—driven into corners, cellars, and dens, where virtue cannot

⁴³⁵ *The Colored American*, June 17, 1837, Item 2565.

breathe, and where utter destruction is all they can obtain.”⁴³⁶ In its next edition *The Colored American* reprints the remainder of the mayor’s speech, which sympathizes with the multi-racial working poor. “[Newly-arrived immigrants are] viewed, of course, with no very ardent sympathy by those native citizens whose immediate ancestors were the saviours of the country in its greatest peril. Besides, many of them seem not to hold opinions in harmony with the true spirit of our Government. They drive our native workmen into exile, where they must war again with the savage of the wilderness....Idle male pauper emigrants have been furnished with food and fuel, whilst both have been denied to sober colored widows, with small, in extreme necessity.”⁴³⁷ The nativist impulses recorded in *The Colored American* provide an enduring link between the class politics of the black press of the late 1830’s and the nativist press of the early 1850’s.

Conclusion

The various rhetorical strategies of class protest in these newspapers constitute a surprisingly unacknowledged cross-racial fermentation among the diverse products of antebellum popular print culture. While the early black press expresses concern for the working poor through artisan republican rhetoric popularized in the penny press and city-mystery fiction, the popular and nativist presses utilize anti-slavery tropes to highlight the eroding status of free laborers in the north. Furthermore, anti-immigrant nativism, a flexible rhetoric which appears throughout antebellum popular print culture, helps to unite the interests of native-born black and white laborers. Although the shared employment of artisan republican, anti-slavery, and nativist

⁴³⁶ Ibid., Item 2565.

⁴³⁷ *The Colored American*, June 24, 1837, Item 2576.

discourses did not lead to sweeping economic reforms and did not resolve the nation's impending sectional crisis, the potential for cross-racial sympathy as demonstrated in this chapter should cause us to reconsider the efficacy of working-class protest and the prevailing assumptions about race relations during the antebellum period.

Coda

In *Beneath the American Renaissance*, David S. Reynolds asserts the importance of popular culture to the development of antebellum American literature. Within his broad and sweeping analysis of how a wide variety of understudied sensational and sentimental texts influenced the classic writers of the American Renaissance, Reynolds credits city-mysteries, distinguished by their fiery defense of oppressed minority groups, with helping to popularize the literary figures of the “likable criminal” and the “justified pariah.”⁴³⁸ For Reynolds, the value of the city-mystery genre lies largely in providing sensational and radical-democratic fodder for such classic texts as Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The House of Seven Gables*, and Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. Furthermore, implicit throughout Reynolds’s analysis is the assumption that city-mysteries comprise a second-class genre because they are “merely” radical forms of social protest. “The distinguishing quality of the [canonical] literary text is not radical subversiveness but unique suggestiveness and great reconstructive power,” Reynolds writes.⁴³⁹ And yet, in this configuration which privileges stylistic complexity over political and thematic complexity, city-mysteries’ frank and earnest construction of white working-class identity can be too easily dismissed. As objects worthy of study in their own right, city-mysteries—and the questions about class that they raise—are again swept to the margins of literary study.

⁴³⁸ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), 180-181.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 10.

My study, which privileges the popular *because* of its preoccupation with class issues, builds upon the scholarship that Reynolds's ground-breaking study inspired in the 1990's and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Continuing the work of Eric Lott, Shelley Streeby, and Susan Griffin, I show how authors of diverse and complex city-mysteries worked with anti-slavery and nativist discourses to construct white working-class identity. In light of the long-held critical view that racial and ethnic strife prevented effective protest from fully materializing in the pre-Civil War period, my study of city-mysteries provides important evidence of the potential for cross-racial solidarity and demonstrates that for this group of popular writers class did matter. With the exception of the work of Eric Lott and Shelley Streeby, the vast majority of city-mystery scholarship follows what has become a predictable and seemingly obligatory line of argument: despite the overt working-class "accents" of the novels, city-mysteries unwittingly and ultimately reinforce middle-class values.⁴⁴⁰ Perhaps it is not so surprising then that city-mystery scholarship often overlooks what I believe are the keys to the novels' expression of class protest—the employment of anti-slavery discourse and a sympathetic engagement with blackness.

Reynolds's observation that city-mysteries prompted "deep sympathy for various oppressed groups"—Native-American Indians, the working class, women, and criminals—surprisingly excludes free and enslaved blacks.⁴⁴¹ Wyn Kelley sees city-mysteries as placating the anxieties of their middle-class readers about race-

⁴⁴⁰ As shown in the earlier chapters of this study, the view that city-mysteries largely reinforce middle-class values is reflected most notably in the work of Michael Denning and David S. Reynolds. It also appears in the work of Susan Griffin, Wyn Kelley, and Leslie Fiedler.

⁴⁴¹ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 199.

mixing and offering no real solutions to the socioeconomic problems they raise. “The idea of the [city as] labyrinth allowed New Yorkers to map the city’s class, racial, and ethnic differences and contain them within the limits of a tight, though intricate, order.”⁴⁴² When she points out that city-mysteries also apply the image of the labyrinth to “houses of sin,” Kelley cites a passage from Lippard’s *New York* that describes a maze-like descent beneath a gambling-hall in Five Points.⁴⁴³ However, Kelley ends the quote just before the critical revelation of exactly what lies beneath the house: it is the room and meeting-place of the Black Senate led by the heroic black “giant,” Old Royal. As shown in chapter one, Lippard and, to a lesser extent, Augustine Duganne construct white working-class identity through sympathetic representations of Herculean free black workers and attempt to create cross-racial working-class solidarity. Although their progressive representations of free and enslaved blacks are complicated by the racially ambivalent metaphor of “wage slavery,” Lippard and Duganne rely heavily upon anti-slavery discourse to mount their critique of the professional middle-class and the “upper ten.” Through class-inflected nativist rhetoric against the “grandeur” and “slavery” associated with the Roman Catholic Church during this time, city-mystery writers reinforce their racial sympathy and develop potent working-class protest within the popular genre.

The classic writers of the American Renaissance, Reynolds argues, “followed a roughly similar career pattern of early experimentation with popular modes

⁴⁴² Wyn Kelley, *Melville’s City: Literary and Urban Form in Nineteenth-Century New York*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 97.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 104. Kelley does single out Lippard as the city-mystery writer who “goes beyond the conventional contrasts [between wealth and poverty] by examining closely the economic structure that creates them” (115).

followed by self-conscious mixture of the modes, then stylization of the modes in highly complex literary texts.”⁴⁴⁴ Not only does Reynolds’s study overlook the inherent value of the popular, but it also privileges the classic writers’ works that are the farthest removed from their popular sources. However, it is one of Melville’s early novels, *Redburn*, which proves particularly rich for analyzing the convergence of nativist rhetoric and working-class politics common in popular city-mysteries. Although scholars have already attributed *Redburn*’s working-class sympathies and overt urban sensationalism to the influence of popular fiction, Melville’s novel also performs a meditation on the potential of nativist discourse to both register and frustrate class protest.⁴⁴⁵ Like Lippard’s city-mysteries, *Redburn* engages, reworks, and ultimately rejects the assumptions of nativist logic without compromising a class-inflected critique of the urban marketplace. City-mysteries, which appropriated popular discourses to argue in favor of class solidarity at a time when ideas about class were fomenting, provide us with a new way to approach and understand how canonical texts addressed the period’s pressing social questions.

Redburn shares with city-mysteries many strategies for representing the instability of the urban marketplace. Like city-mysteries’ fallen middle-class protagonists who are exploited and “enslaved” by corrupt and powerful men, *Redburn* is raised in a fashionable home in New York City until his father dies bankrupt. Despite his proud heritage as the great-nephew of “Senator Wellingborough, who had died a member of Congress in the days of the old Constitution,” *Redburn* is swindled

⁴⁴⁴ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 10.

⁴⁴⁵ See David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 146; and Jonathan Cook, “The Historical and Literary Sources of *Redburn*’s ‘Mysterious Night in London,’” *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 6.1 (2004): 9-33.

out of the value of his hunting-rifle by a city pawnbroker and is denied his sailor's wages by the shrewd Captain Riga.⁴⁴⁶ City-mysteries, which lionized the Founding Fathers as republican heroes and viewed the breakdown of the apprenticeship system of labor as a threat to the health of the republic, regularly represent wage labor as a form of exploitation to help develop their class critique. Although Melville, in ways similar to city-mysteries' exposés of urban squalor, also details the suffering of the poor along the docks of Liverpool, he breaks from his sensational predecessors by satirizing Redburn's nostalgia for the agrarian past.⁴⁴⁷ However, in keeping with city-mysteries' exposé of working-class suffering, Melville also satirizes Redburn's perception that native-born Americans are exempt from extreme want: "This [the fact that the poor in Liverpool are 'native' Englishmen] conveyed a strong feeling: and more than anything else, reminded me that I was not in my own land. For *there*, a being as a native beggar is almost unknown; and to be a born American citizen seems a guarantee against pauperism; and this, perhaps, springs from the virtue of a vote."⁴⁴⁸ In satirizing both Redburn's final return to the pastoral enclave of his mother's cottage and the young man's naïve faith in American exceptionalism, Melville both appropriates and reworks material popularized in city-mysteries. Lippard, Duganne, and Buntline may close many of their novels in pastoral settings far removed from the problems and realities of northeastern cities, but they also challenge the myth of exceptionalism through their sensational and class-inflected plot lines.

⁴⁴⁶ Herman Melville, *Redburn: His First Voyage*, (Evanston and Chicago, Illinois: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1969), 7.

⁴⁴⁷ In *Melville's City*, Wyn Kelley argues that Melville satirizes Redburn for "prefer[ring] to escape to a provincial retreat" (135). I would add that Melville's satirizing of Redburn's faith in American exceptionalism places the novel in dialogue with the working-class protest found in city-mysteries.

⁴⁴⁸ Herman Melville, *Redburn*, 202.

In addition to its working-class sympathies, *Redburn* shares city-mysteries' preoccupation with ethnic difference and the politics of whiteness. As this study has shown, sensational fiction often employed nativist discourse to distinguish their native-born, working-class heroes from duplicitous villains and their immigrant henchmen. Lippard, however, stands alone as a city-mystery writer who tempered nativist rhetoric with a meta-critique of its power to undermine class solidarity; and it is Lippard's insights that resonate most clearly throughout *Redburn*'s adventures. Prior to completing his journey among a polyglot crew, *Redburn* holds a view of the world consistent with nativist beliefs: he views the Jewish city-pawnbroker in starkly ethnic terms; he has a romantic impression of the "exotic" peoples living in "remote and barbarous countries";⁴⁴⁹ he belongs to a temperance society, which ultimately had the effect of circumscribing immigrants' voting rights in the antebellum period; and he distinguishes the "American" sailors from the rest of the crew. *Redburn*'s description of the tyrannical Captain Riga, for instance, is couched in ethnic terms: "Though he spake English with fluency, and from his long service in the vessels of New York, was almost an American to behold, yet Captain Riga was in fact a Russian by birth, though this was a fact that he strove to conceal."⁴⁵⁰ However, after observing the emaciated bodies of the poor lining the streets of Liverpool and befriending the emigrants who return with the ship to America, *Redburn* develops sympathy for the casualties of industrialism that stretch across the ocean and recognizes the strength of his native land's racial and ethnic diversity. Melville's text also employs anti-slavery rhetoric typical of city-mysteries. In language that

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 219.

resonates with Lippard's mutual sympathy for immigrants and chattel slaves, Redburn sympathizes with the "friendless emigrants, stowed away like bales of cotton, and packed like slaves in a slave-ship."⁴⁵¹ Only through contextualizing *Redburn* among its sensational literary predecessors can we fully appreciate the strategies of class protest that distinguish Melville among his canonical peers.

Although this analysis of Melville's *Redburn* is a brief one, it speaks to the value of city-mysteries in helping us to understand the complex class, racial, and ethnic politics of classic texts of the American Renaissance. Furthermore, such a comparative study gives evidence that city-mysteries are not merely a fleeting and insubstantial popular genre, but rather the precursors of, and the inspiration for, later canonical works that engage issues of class and racial/ethnic sympathy. Continued study of popular city-mysteries can provide us with new avenues of research yet to be explored, and can enrich our understanding of the important efforts toward cross-racial working-class solidarity that were initiated during the antebellum period.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 241.

Bibliography

- "America Against the World!" 1845. Broadside. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.
- Anbinder, Tyler. *Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum*. New York: Plume, 2001.
- . *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Anthony, David. "Banking on Emotion: Financial Panic and the Logic of Male Submission in the Jacksonian Gothic." *American Literature* 76.4 (2004): 719-747.
- Asbury, Herbert. *The Gangs of New York*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1927.
- Ashwill, Gary. "The Mysteries of Capitalism in George Lippard's City Novels." *ESQ* 40.4 (1994): 293-317.
- Baym, Nina. *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.
- Beecher, Lyman. *A Plea for the West*. Cincinnati: Truman and Smith, 1835.
- Bergmann, Hans. *God in the Street: New York Writing from the Penny Press to Melville*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.
- Billington, Ray. *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860*. Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1963.
- Bradbury, Osgood. *Mysteries of Lowell*. Boston: Edward P. Williams, 1844.
- Bromell, Nicholas. *By the Sweat of the Brow: Literature and Labor in Antebellum America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Brown, Charles Brockden. *Wieland; or, The Transformation: An American Tale*. [1798]. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Buckley, Peter G. "The Case Against Ned Buntline: The 'Words, Signs, and Gestures' of Popular Authorship." *Prospects* 13 (1988): 249-272.
- Buntline, Ned [E.Z.C. Judson]. *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York: A Story of Real Life*. New York: Berford & Co., 1848.

- . "Secret Circular to the Know-Nothings of Philadelphia." 1856. Rare Books Collection. Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- . *Three Years After; A Sequel to The Mysteries and Miseries of New York*. New York: W. F. Burgess, 1849.
- Butterfield, Roger. "George Lippard and His Secret Brotherhood." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 79 (1955): 285-309.
- Carroll, Edward. "Mackey; or, The Black Spy." *Star Spangled Banner*. March 27, 1852: 2.
- Cheever, George. *The Elements of National Greatness: An address before the New England Society of the City of New York, December 22, 1842*. New York: John S. Taylor and Co., 1843.
- Chudacoff, Howard. *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Cohen, Patricia Cline. *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century New York*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.
- "Constitution of the State Council of the American Party of Massachusetts, August 7, 1855." 1855. Broadside. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.
- Cook, Jonathan. "The Historical and Literary Sources of Redburn's 'Mysterious Night in London.'" *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 6.1 (2004): 9-33.
- Cox, J. Randolph. *Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000.
- Cummins, Maria. *The Lamplighter*. [1854]. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988.
- Curti, Merle. "Dime Novels and the American Tradition." *Yale Review* 26 (1937): 761-778.
- Denning, Michael. *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America*. Rev. ed. [1987]. New York: Verso, 1998.
- Dimock, Wai Chee and Michael T. Gilmore. "Introduction." *Rethinking Class: Literary Studies and Social Formations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

- Dobkin, J.B. "Treatment of Blacks in Dime Novels." *Dime Novel Round-Up* (1986): 50-56.
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*. [1845]. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996.
- Duganne, Augustine. *Art's True Mission in America*. New York: George S. Appleton, 1853.
- . *The Daguerreotype Miniature; or, Life in the Empire City*. Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber, 1846.
- . *Eustace Barcourt; or, The Illegitimate. A Story of Conflict between Good and Evil*. Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber and Company, 1848.
- . *The Fighting Quakers*. [1866]. Farmville, Virginia: Patrick A. Schroeder, 1995.
- . *The Knights of the Seal; or, The Mysteries of the Three Cities*. Philadelphia: Colon and Adriaance, 1845.
- . *Secret Guilt; or, The Counterfeiters*. Boston: Brainard and Company, 1844.
- . *The Tenant-House; or, Embers from Poverty's Hearthstone*. New York: Robert De Witt Publisher, 1857.
- . *The Two Clerks, or The Orphan's Gratitude: Being the Adventures of Henry Fowler and Richard Martin*. Boston: Brainard & Co., 1843.
- Erickson, Paul. "Welcome To Sodom: The Cultural Work of City-Mysteries Fiction in Antebellum America." Doctoral Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin, 2005.
- Ernst, Robert. *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863*. New York: Octagon Books, 1979.
- Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. Normal, Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 1977.
- . "The Male Novel." *Partisan Review* 37 (1970): 74-89.
- Foner, Eric. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

- . "Workers and Slavery." *Working for Democracy*. Eds. Paul Buhle and Alan Dawley. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985. 21-28.
- Foner, Philip, ed. *The Factory Girls: A Collection of Writings on Life and Struggles In the New England Factories of the 1840's*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977.
- Foster, George. *New York by Gas-Light*. [1850]. *New York by Gas-Light and Other Urban Sketches*. Ed. Stuart M. Blumin. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. 65-197.
- Franchot, Jenny. *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Fredrickson, George M. *The Black Image in the White Mind*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1971.
- Gilmore, Michael T. *American Romanticism and the Marketplace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Gilmore, Paul. *The Genuine Article: Race, Mass Culture, and American Literary Manhood*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Gladman, Kimberly. "Upper Tens and Lower Millions: City Mysteries Fiction and Class in the Mid-Nineteenth Century." Doctoral Dissertation. New York University, 2001.
- Griffin, Susan. *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Hall, Stuart. "Notes on Deconstructing the 'Popular.'" In *People's History and Socialist Theory*. Ed. Ralph Samuel. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.
- Haltunnen, Karen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
- . *Murder Most Foul*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Young Goodman Brown." [1835]. *Great Short Works of Hawthorne*. New York: Harper and Row, 1967. 271-284.
- Hazel, Harry [Justin Jones]. *Big Dick, the King of the Negroes; or, Virtue and Vice Contrasted*. Boston: "Star Spangled Banner" Office, 1846.

- . *Fourpe Tap: or, the Middy of the Macedonian*. Boston: Jones's Publishing House, 1847.
- Huntzicker, William E. *The Popular Press, 1833-1865*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999.
- Hutchisson, James. *Poe*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2005.
- Hutton, Frankie. *The Early Black Press in America, 1827 to 1860*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993.
- Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Jacobson, Matthew. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Johannsen, Albert. *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels, Vol. II*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950.
- Kelley, Wyn. *Melville's City: Literary and Urban Form in Nineteenth-Century New York*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- The Know Nothing?* Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1855.
- Kolchin, Peter. "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America." *The Journal of American History* 89.1 (2002): 154-173.
- Laurie, Bruce. "'Nothing on Compulsion': Life Styles of Philadelphia Artisans, 1820-1850." *Labor History* 15 (1974): 250.
- . *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.
- Lazo, Rodrigo. *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Lehuu, Isabelle. *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Levine, Robert S. *Conspiracy and Romance: Studies in Brockden Brown, Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Lippard, George. *Adonai: The Pilgrim of Eternity*. Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1851.

- . *The Bank Director's Son, a Real and Intensely Interesting Revelation of City Life, containing an authentic account of the wonderful escape of the Beautiful Kate Watson*. Philadelphia: E.E. Barclay and A.R. Orton, 1851.
- . "Brotherhood versus Atheistic Sectarianism." *The White Banner: A Quarterly Miscellany*. Philadelphia: George Lippard Publisher, 1851.
- . "Eleanor; or, Slave Catching in the Quaker City." *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury*. Printed serially in 1854.
- . "The Heart-Broken." *Nineteenth-Century: A Quarterly Miscellany, Vol. I*. Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber & Co., 1848. 19-27.
- . "Jesus and the Poor." *Nineteenth Century: A Quarterly Miscellany, Vol. I*. Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber & Co., 1848. 57-81.
- . "Key to *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk-Hall*." In *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk-Hall* by George Lippard. Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1845.
- . *The Killers. A Narrative of Real Life in Philadelphia*. By a Member of the Philadelphia Bar. Philadelphia: Hankinson and Bartholomew, 1850.
- . *The Legends of the Revolution, "1776"; or, Washington and His Generals*. [1847]. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1876.
- . *The Man With the Mask; A Sequel to the Memoirs of a Preacher, a Revelation of the Church and the Home*. Philadelphia: Jos. Severns and Company, 1849.
- . *Memoirs of a Preacher; or, The Mysteries of the Pulpit*. [1848-1849]. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1864.
- . *The Nazarene: or, The Last of the Washingtons. A Revelation of Philadelphia, New York, and Washington in the Year 1844*. Philadelphia: George Lippard and Co., 1846.
- . *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*. [1853]. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Literature House/Gregg Press, 1970.
- . *Philadelphia Nineteenth Century: A Quarterly Miscellany*. Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber & Co., 1848.
- . *The Quaker City: or, The Monks of Monk Hall*. [1845]. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.

- . *The White Banner: A Quarterly Miscellany*. Philadelphia: George Lippard Publisher, 1851.
- Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Mann, Beth. "George Lippard: Germantown Romanticized." *Germantown Crier* 40.4 (1988): 77-83.
- McHenry, Elizabeth. *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Melville, Herman. *Benito Cereno*. [1855]. *Billy Budd, Sailor and Selected Tales*. Ed. Robert Milder. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- . *Redburn: His First Voyage*. [1849]. Evanston and Chicago, Illinois: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1969.
- Merish, Lori. *Sentimental Materialism: Gender, Commodity Culture, and Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Monaghan, Jay. *The Great Rascal: The Life and Adventures of Ned Buntline*. New York: Bantam Books, 1951.
- Montgomery, David. "The Shuttle and the Cross: Weavers and Artisans in the Kensington Riots of 1844." *Journal of Social History* 5 (1972): 411-446.
- Morse, Samuel. *Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*. [1835]. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- , ed. *The Proscribed German Student: Being a sketch of some interesting incidents in the life and melancholy death of the late Lewis Clausing*. New York: Van Nostrand and Dwight, 1836.
- Mott, Frank Luther. *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 250 Years, 1690 to 1940*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941.
- The Mysteries and Miseries of San Francisco. By a Californian*. New York: Garrett and Co., 1853.
- Native American Party. "America against the World!" 1845. Broadside. Graphic Arts Collection, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.
- Nelson, Dana. *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.

- "Newspaper Reading." *Mechanics' Free Press*. May 3, 1828: 1.
- "A Night in the Woods." *The Republic: A Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Politics, & Art*. New York: January 1852. 33-36.
- Owen, Robert Dale. "The Slave." *Mechanics' Free Press*. March 27, 1830: 1.
- Pegram, Thomas. *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998.
- "Platform of the American Party of Vermont." 1855. Broadside. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "Hop-Frog; or, The Eight Chained Ourang-Outangs." [1849]. *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004. 421-428.
- . *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. [1838]. *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004. 431-563.
- "Read and Circulate!! Hon. A.H. Stevens, of GA, on Know-Nothingism." 1844. Broadside. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.
- Reynolds, David S. *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- . *George Lippard*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982.
- . "Introduction." In *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk Hall*, by George Lippard. vii-xliv. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.
- Reynolds, David S. and Kimberly Gladman. "Introduction." In *Venus in Boston and Other Tales of Nineteenth-Century City Life*, by George Thompson. ix-liv. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002.
- Reynolds, David S. and Debra J. Rosenthal, eds. *The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance in American Literature*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997.
- Rice, Stephen. *Minding the Machine: Languages of Class in Early Industrial America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Ridgely, J. V. "George Lippard's *The Quaker City*: The World of the American Porno-Gothic." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 7.1 (1974): 77-94.

- Roediger, David. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. Rev. ed. [1991]. New York: Verso, 1999.
- Santamarina, Xiomara. *Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Saxton, Alexander. *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*. Rev. ed. [1990]. New York: Verso, 2003.
- Schiller, Dan. *Objectivity and the News: The Public and the Rise of Commercial Journalism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.
- Schudson, Michael. *Discovering the News*. New York: Basic Books, 1978.
- Scisco, Louis Dow. *Political Nativism in New York State*. New York: Columbia University, 1901.
- Stansell, Christine. *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982.
- Streeby, Shelley. *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- . "Haunted Houses: George Lippard, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Middle-Class America." *Criticism* 38.3 (1996): 443-472.
- . "Opening Up the Story Paper: George Lippard and the Construction of Class." *boundary2* 24:1 (1997): 177-203.
- Taylor, George Rogers. "Gaslight Foster: A New York 'Journeyman Journalist' at Mid-Century." *New York History* 58 (1977): 297-312.
- Thompson, George. *City Crimes; or Life in New York and Boston*. [1849]. *Venus in Boston and Other Tales of Nineteenth-Century City Life*. Eds. David S. Reynolds and Kimberly Gladman. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. 1-104.
- . *Venus in Boston; A Romance of City Life*. [1849]. *Venus in Boston and Other Tales of Nineteenth-Century City Life*. Eds. David S. Reynolds and Kimberly Gladman. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. 105-310.
- Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

- Tripp, Bernell. *Origins of the Black Press: New York, 1827-1847*. Northport, Alabama: Vision Press, 1992.
- Vogel, Todd. "The New Face of Black Labor." *The Black Press: New Literary and Historical Essays*. Ed. Todd Vogel. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001. 37-54.
- Warner, Susan. *The Wide, Wide World*. [1850]. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1987.
- Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860." *American Quarterly* 18 (1966): 151-174.
- Whitman, Walt. *Franklin Evans; or The Inebriate*. [1842]. *Walt Whitman: The Early Poems and the Fiction*. Ed. Thomas L. Brasher. New York: New York University Press, 1963. 124-239.
- . *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts, Vol. I*. Ed. Edward F. Grier. New York: New York University Press, 1984.
- Whitney, Thomas R., ed. *The Republic: A Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Politics, & Art*. New York: January 1852.
- Widmer, Edward L. *Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Wiegman, Robyn. "Whiteness Studies and the Paradox of Particularity." *Boundary 2* 26:3 (1999): 115-150.
- Wilentz, Sean. *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Winch, Julie. *Philadelphia's Black Elite: Activism, Accommodation, and the Struggle For Autonomy, 1787-1848*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.

Manuscripts and Archival Collections

American Antiquarian Society

Almanacs Collection
Broad­sides Collection
Manuscripts Collection
Miscellaneous Pamphlets Collection
Newspapers and Periodicals Collections

Historical Society of Pennsylvania

George Lippard Papers

Library Company of Philadelphia

Brotherhood of the Union, George Lippard Collection
Newspapers and Periodical Collections
Rare Books Collection

Newspapers, Story Papers, and Periodicals

Cincinnati Post and Anti-Abolitionist

Colored American (New York)

Freedom's Journal (New York)

The Know Nothing and American Crusader (Boston)

The Know Something; or, The Guard of Liberty (Boston)

Mechanics' Free Press (Philadelphia)

Ned Buntline's Own (New York)

New York Herald

Nineteenth Century: A Quarterly Miscellany (Philadelphia)

Philadelphia Sunday Mercury

Quaker City Weekly (Philadelphia)

The Republic: A Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Politics, & Art (New York)

The Rights of All (New York)

Star Spangled Banner (Boston)

The True American (New York)

The Weekly Advocate (New York)