

others that she mentions in passing is not immediately clear, despite early reference to a shared literary investment in “[r]epresenting the ‘romance’ of the nervous system thoughtfully and, at times, critically” (p. 6) through “the balance between romance and realism” (p. 5). Her invitation to consider the meaning of “sympathy” as a “physiological process” (p. 18) in chapter 1 has the potential to reinvigorate the critical readings of sympathy in nineteenth-century literature more broadly, but the implications of her claims remain somewhat buried in the context of an extended reading of *Sheppard Lee*.

In the end, my desire for more readings and bigger claims should indicate the intelligence, perceptiveness, and passion on display in this book. Brief references to representations of sympathy in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, invocations of the electrical body in Whitman’s poetry, and considerations of Ahab’s control over the *Pequod* in terms of mesmeric trance left me invigorated and ready to re-read in light of Murison’s findings. As much as she is interested in how and why literature registers the process by which “[n]ervous physiology, from Benjamin Rush to *American Nervousness*, makes of the self an energized yet susceptible body, poised at the vulnerable border between one’s inner domains and the social landscape of the nineteenth century” (p. 170), she is also invested in the act of “clarif[ying] [the] psychological stakes of literary historicism by placing ‘anxiety’—and the broader theory of the nervous system it registers—as the historical subject of analysis rather than its structuring frame” (p. 8). In that sense, Murison’s attention to “the role of embodiment in constructing social, historical, and most of all, fictional narratives” (p. 12) reflects the fact that her project is part of a very big, field-changing, post-“neuroscientific turn” (p. 175) methodological approach, and it’s exciting work to watch unfold.

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Lucretia Mott’s Heresy: Abolition and Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century America. By Carol Faulkner. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Pp. 292. \$45.00.)

Quaker abolitionist Lucretia Mott was one of the most important figures in the American and transatlantic women’s rights movements. Carol Faulkner’s new biography examines Mott’s public life and her willingness to challenge the received wisdom of conventional society

and mainstream religion in her pursuit of human justice, a propensity that both Faulkner and Mott characterize as “heretical.” Using Mott’s papers and those of her contemporaries as well as newspapers and the proceedings of reform groups, including the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society and the more loosely organized women’s rights movement, Faulkner traces Mott’s emergence as an abolitionist and women’s rights advocate. Like other Quakers, she was a pacifist who relied on moral suasion rather than direct confrontation in her struggle for social justice.

Born in 1793, Lucretia Coffin spent her early childhood on the island of Nantucket immersed in its commercial culture and the politics of the Quaker church. When she was eleven, her father moved the family to Boston, and two years later, her parents enrolled her in Nine Partners Boarding School in New York state. There she continued to imbibe the principles espoused by Quakers—simplicity, egalitarianism, and antislavery. At the same time, however, she also began to assert her independence and question authority: it was at Nine Partners that she met and fell in love with James Mott. They married in 1811 and made their home in Philadelphia. In the wake of her son’s death in 1817, she became a Quaker minister.

Mott’s religious activism led her to reject some of the practices of her Quaker brethren, and she eventually became a supporter of Elias Hicks, who questioned the propriety of buying goods produced with slave labor, argued that the inner light rather than scripture should serve as the basis of both faith and practice, criticized the way church elders used their disciplinary power, and championed the position of women as ministers. Lucretia and James Mott joined other Hicks supporters when they split with mainstream Quakers in 1827.

Mott launched her career as a reformer when she attended the first convention of the interracial American Anti-Slavery Society held in Philadelphia in 1833. Shortly thereafter she helped to found the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. In 1840 she traveled to England to participate in the World Anti-Slavery Convention, where she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Both witnessed the exclusion of female delegates by the sponsors of the convention, and Stanton later claimed that this incident was a pivotal event in her eventual decision to dedicate her life to the pursuit of equality for women. Faulkner argues that Mott’s support of women’s rights had less to do with that particular incident and more to do with her long-standing personal commitment to human equality. The result was that while Mott was perfectly willing to work with other women’s rights advocates to help

organize conventions, including the first one held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, she continued to focus most of her attention on abolition.

Faulkner argues that as time progressed, Mott became more and more rigid in her approach to social reform. Having become an ideological hardliner, she was so suspicious of any compromise that might threaten the principles upon which she based her life as a reformer that she opposed the practice of purchasing slaves in order to free them. Mott welcomed the secession of the slave states and continued her work on behalf of blacks during the Civil War by demanding fair treatment for black soldiers and trying to find ways to provide aid to former slaves. After the war, she worked to promote universal male suffrage and the integration of Philadelphia's rail lines. She continued to support the struggle for women's rights but split with Stanton over her choice of allies and her willingness to place the interests of women before those of freed men. As critical as she was of the strategies of some women's rights advocates, she never rejected their ultimate goal and did her best to smooth over disagreements that divided the movement during the postbellum period. In her later life, she expanded her reform activities by joining the Universal Peace Union and founding the Pennsylvania Peace Society.

Although there is nothing new in the narrative that Faulkner presents, the context in which she wrote her book is different from that of previous Mott biographers, who felt compelled to argue that Mott did not neglect conventional female roles in order to make a place for herself as a leading American reformer. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the rise of second-wave feminism encouraged the development of an intellectual and social environment in which a woman's public accomplishments did not have to be evaluated through the filter of her domestic competency. Faulkner uses that shift to her advantage. Even though she acknowledges Mott's skills as a housekeeper and her dedication to her familial responsibilities, Faulkner focuses on Mott as a public figure. What is lost in the process is some sense of the strategies and social networks Mott used to assure that her five children and her home were well cared for while she pursued her campaign to make the world a better place. That small quibble aside, Faulkner has produced a beautifully written and thoroughly researched biography that, when added to other recent studies of antebellum activists, provides a broader picture of the challenges that faced those who threatened a patriarchy determined to preserve a labor system

based on slavery and a social system based on the subordination of women.

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Making Slavery History: Abolitionism and the Politics of Memory in Massachusetts. By Margot Minardi. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. vii, 228. \$49.95.)

In this smart, creative, and provocative account, Margot Minardi resists the historiographical impulse to ground the black American experience in the African Diaspora. Looking inward rather than out, she presents a series of close readings dedicated to understanding how black and white residents of post-Revolutionary Massachusetts came both to remember and forget the history of slavery in the Bay State. One should not, however, confuse Minardi's preference for the micro over the macro with historical myopia; the questions she raises go to the heart of the discipline itself.

Minardi mines the end of slavery in Massachusetts to query the meaning of history: who makes it? Who makes it into it? And how is it made? In this respect, her book meditates more on the historical memory of slavery than on the institution. The definition of history she provides—both “what happened” and “that which is said to have happened”—speaks to her primary objective: to reveal “how people in a certain place and time thought about who makes history . . . and how their answers to that question shaped their ideas about what sort of future to call into being” (p. 5). With this goal in mind, she acknowledges that she is not “seeking to peel away the layers of historical memory in order to reveal a hidden history; rather, [she is] interested in how those layers themselves came to contribute to historical transformation” (p. 6). In *Making Slavery History*, the narratives themselves have agency; stories more than individuals function as main characters.

Those seeking to understand the inner workings of slavery and emancipation could find fault with this approach. Words like “freedom” and “enslavement” often appear more as terms to be deconstructed than as experiences to be understood. Even her definition of what it means to be emancipated relates more to narrative than to experience. Minardi defines the “emancipated person” as one who could “enact historical agency” and ensure that future generations “recognized, narrated, and commemorated” his or her experience