The Ethical Atlantic

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Advocacy Networking and the Slavery Narrative, 1830-1850

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
TREATING MEN AS BRETHREN[1]

A Text Crosses the Atlantic

In 1835 a slight pamphlet was published in Birmingham, UK: *Reuben Maddison: A True Story* told the life story of a Kentucky slave who tried to buy his and his family's freedom, only to be tricked out of his savings and to find his wife dead and his children sold downriver. Clearly intended as abolitionist propaganda, it was made available at cut price to Anti-slavery societies. By this time, slavery had come to an end in British colonies, so this English pamphlet was explicitly aimed at US slavery. A copy of *Reuben Maddison* was sent back across the Atlantic to the Ladies Anti-Slavery Association of Boston at cost. Reuben's story had its origins in a New York newspaper article, but had to be re-written by a British/Canadian (Charles Stuart 178?-1865), published in England and sent back across the Atlantic to be read by members of and converts to the abolitionist movement in the United States.[2] The American John Quincy Adams had thus been quite correct in predicting that British abolition would prove "an earthquake on this continent" (quoted in Frost et al 2009, 225).

Texts as Transnational Advocacy

As a small textual earthquake, *Reuben Maddison* was not alone: a trade in ethically conscious print sprang up in the 19th century—a trade that would have effects as far-reaching as trade in more practical goods like sugar or

[1] The phrase is from Charles Stuart's *The West India Question: Immediate Emancipation…* London: Simpkin & Marshall, 1832, 10.

[2] A version of Reuben's story also features in Abigail Mott's *Biographical Sketches and Interesting Anecdotes of Persons of Colour* (New York, 1826: 167-173), which was aimed at pupils in the New York system of African Free Schools. Mott spells the name "Madison."

tobacco. For the trade in words linked the two sides of the Atlantic by joining writers and readers in a conspiracy of caring for issues at a distance. In order to excite such care and foster its continuation across the Atlantic, a network of support was needed. From this point of view, a public print phenomenon such as *Reuben Maddison* forms part of a transnational advocacy network (David 2007; Khagram et al 2002), the kind of interchange that came to typify the anti-slave trade and abolitionist causes in the 18th and 19th centuries.[3] Historical and theoretical work on this trans-Atlantic phenomenon has established stages in the interaction, moving from more loosely organized networks, to coalitions and finally to full-blown social movements with the aim of influencing state policy and producing legislative change (David 2007 368-370; Khagram et al. 2002; Acosta 2012). The creation and exchange of the ethical texts that are of concern in this book would result in radical changes in public opinion and attitudes, as well as in crucial alterations in state policy on both sides of the Atlantic.

This exchange of letters, tracts, speakers, books and newspapers marks the onset of what is currently called "information politics." It would not have been possible without the "Atlantic community" (Anstey 1975, 200), i.e., that congeries of people, from merchants to preachers, whose concerns bridged the Atlantic Ocean.[4] In North America, the Atlantic community began as a narrow strip along the coast, from the old New England states down to the plantation states of the South, and later would include some provinces of what is now Canada.[5] Essentially this community began in the relation of colonies to mother country; however, the constituent regions expressed a degree of connection and even reciprocity that survived the War of American Independence and later the War of 1812 to flourish in the

[3] It has also been called the "transatlantic abolitionist nexus" (Orazi n.d., "Harriet Martineau and the Transatlantic Feminist Nexus").

[4] There is ample evidence that the anti-slavery and abolitionist societies on both sides of the Atlantic received and read each other's publications; for example, the Appendix to Volume 1 of *The Anti-Slavery Record*, an American publication, records in 1835 the receipt of the London *Anti-Slavery Society Reporter* for February 1835 (Appendix, *The Anti-Slavery Record*, 1 p. 155). The same Appendix announces the upcoming publication of a book by Charles Stuart (an Englishman) who has written a book on the great anti-slave-trade activist, Granville Sharpe, and the periodical even prints an excerpt of this British text with its British subject (*The Anti-Slavery Record* 1, no. 11 July 1835 2nd ed.: 128-129).

[5] The area that is now Canada's province of Ontario as well as Canada's Maritimes (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island) were "closely intertwined by commerce, family connections, politics, immigration, and slavery to the broader trends of New England, northeastern North America, and the British Atlantic" (Whitfield 2016, 7).

middle decades of the 19th century, as Atlantic ship passage made the ocean crossing speedier. During the period of abolitionist advocacy and north-south antagonism leading to the American Civil War, there was greater network connectivity between the states of the abolitionist north and the anti-slavery movement in Britain.[6] By 1801, most of the Atlantic north had abolished slavery, with the exception of New Jersey and the Canadian Maritimes (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island). The Maritime provinces of British North America experienced a gradual attrition in slave-holding that left some people enslaved "well into the nineteenth century" (Whitfield 2016, 86).

Early scholars like Antsey could call this a 'community' for several reasons: familial and social connections between the colony/ex-colony and the original home; sharing of print sources such as books, magazines, newspapers, tracts and letters; ties between church denominations necessitating exchange of church leaders; and much actual travel, not just by merchants, but also by public officials, scholars, orators and church ministers.[7] "Transatlantic itinerancy" (David 2007, 370) became almost mandatory for ministers in the new denominations of Protestantism, such as the Methodists, although the phrase is used by Huw David with specific reference to the Quakers.[8] This physical mobility, with its concomitant mobility of ideas, would facilitate mobilization in the politico-ideological sense; the transition from mobility to ideological mobilization forms a central concern of this study.

Genesis and Meaning of "Ethical Atlantic"

The word "Atlantic" in the noun phrase that forms the title of this book is modelled on the phrase "Black Atlantic," which gained currency in 1992, after Paul Gilroy's book: *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double*

[6] *The Emancipator*, edited by Elihu Ambree in Tennessee gave a limited range of states that could be counted on for any anti-slavery sentiment: "From what I can discover, it appears to be the general opinion of the citizens of the United States, from Maine to Georgia, that slavery is wrong" (*Emancipator* 1, no. 1 April 1820: 2).
[7] The provinces across the border in the Canadas were much more closely tied to Britain, which meant that government and military personnel were exchanged on a regular basis and even literature and the arts remained more oriented towards the imperial center than was true in the United States.
[8] By the 1840s, all Quakers were considered to be abolitionists, as evidenced by this advice to runaway slaves in Moses Grandy's *Narrative* of 1844: "[I]f they can meet with a man in a broad-brimmed hat and a Quaker coat, they speak to him without fear—relying on him as a friend" (Grandy 1844, 35).

Consciousness. Gilroy's phrase was resistant to then-current ways of reading and researching Black experience.[9] The concept has recently been revisited by scholar Winifried Siemerling in her monograph, *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered: Black Canadian Writing, Cultural History, and the Presence of the Past* (2015), which gives the Canadian sector of the Atlantic greater prominence and confirms the continuing relevance of the concept. My phrase "Ethical Atlantic"[10] seeks to harness both this sense of resistance, of counter-reading, as well as the notion of grouping patterns of experience that would normally remain disparate. Above all, this study aims to dissolve the artificial disciplinary boundaries separating "British," "American," "Canadian," and West Indian literature and history.[11] As Harvey Whitfield claims in his study *North to Bondage*, the pattern of connections includes, as well as *concerns* Africans and constitutes a "transnational history" (112), of which diasporic Africans were a significant part (Whitfield 2016, 7). Moreover, Whitfield stresses the complex currents of exchange that "funneled products and slaves between the West Indies, North America, Europe and Africa" (Whitfield 2016, 45), with an accompanying circulation in less tangible materials.

Following Gilroy, Siemerling and Whitfield, this study will continue to trace the circulation of ideas and people around the Atlantic margin, to reveal the essential reciprocity of influence between the Old World and the New. If it is true, as Barbara Solow argues, that "enduring trade links between Europe and America" were only forged through the introduction of the Atlantic slave trade (Solow 1993, 21), then this complex commerce is intimately bound up with both the genesis and the death throes of New World slavery.

Some years ago, while doing research on slave narratives, I noted how mobile people could be (even slaves and former slaves) in the 18th and 19th centuries. They moved around from island to island in the West Indies, crossed from the islands to the mainland of North America and, most surprisingly, made the crossing to Europe—and back again. Nancy Gardner

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[9] The phrase "Atlantic system" has been used by historians and economists to describe the triangular trade between Europe, Africa and the New World colonies; see, for instance, the title of Barbara L. Solow's collection of essays: *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (1993).

[10] I originally used the phrase in the title of a paper presented at an American Studies symposium at the University of Sarajevo, in Bosnia & Hercegovina in 2014. See Gadpaille, "Charles Stuart and the Ethical Atlantic."

[11] This concept owes something to the Inter-American Studies agenda of the summer school in Leibnitz, Austria, held by the Center for Inter-American Studies of Karl-Franzens University, Graz, Austria.

Prince from Massachusetts even made it as far as St. Petersburg in Russia in the 1820s, before returning to undertake charitable work in the West Indies (Winter 1997, 600). In the course of such perambulation, people carried their ideas, books, speeches, petitions and attitudes from one side of the Atlantic to the other. There was inevitably cross-pollination of experience from the new world with education and principles from the old world—and vice versa. In many cases, the ideas and principles were ethical in nature—concerned with that area of human welfare that later came to be called human rights. This was another Atlantic "trade", not the slave trade that underlay Gilroy's "Black" Atlantic or the "Atlantic system" but an exchange of ethical causes and positions that is most notable in the movements to abolish slavery and the slave trade. It was at this point that my concept of the "ethical Atlantic" was born.

Gilroy's work on the "Black Atlantic" had shown the way, with new forms for theorizing the contact zones of post-Africans with both new and old Worlds. The title evoked the foundational fact of passage from one continent to the other—forced passage in the case of African slaves. His book used the term "Atlantic" to indicate both a threshold and a place of suffering. My study builds on the dual concept of the oceanic contact zone and extends the trope of passage to include west to east—in particular, the many new world people who went "back" to Britain and Europe, to the place that gave them their language, culture and often religion.[12] In a similar vein, Kate Flint's monograph on the *Transatlantic Indian* (2009) had already traced similar voyages by Native Americans and traffic in their images and the concomitant impact on both the tribes and the political ideas and cultural concepts of Europeans.

Atlantic Mobility and Exchange

The "Atlantic" part of the title and of this book indicates that the emphasis will be on co-creation of the cultural exchange of ideas—the "reciprocal force" that F. B. Tolles identified as underpinning the meeting houses of the constantly travelling British and American Quakers (Tolles 1960, 14). Moreover, the study will reveal a surprising fluidity of personal identity in the lives of these itinerants—people like Charles Stuart (178? - 1865): born in Bermuda, he served in India, emigrated to Upper Canada, lived in Britain and the United States, visited the West Indies and made his

[12] Some of these 19th-century itinerants even went "back" to Africa. Well-meant colonization initiatives were backed by some anti-slavery activists on both sides of the Atlantic.

home more in principle than in place. In 1836, Stuart, identified as the Rev. Charles Stuart and listed as the Anti-Slavery society representative for England, offered the prayer in New York at the 3rd Anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society on May 10th (*Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society* 1836: 23; 27), and received further commendation as a "noble-hearted and devoted" (37) worker in the anti-slavery cause, one who had "given his time, and more than his time, gratuitously to this cause…" (*Annual Report* 1836, 37). A year previously, Stuart and his colleague George Thompson had been mentioned in the same sentence in *The Anti-Slavery Record* of 1835 (*The Anti-Slavery Record* 1, no. 3 March 1835, pp. 31-32). Both British orators were well known on the ethical speaking circuit in the United States, and their names recur in the abolitionist press. In 1838, for example, Thompson's two publications (*Lectures and Debates* and *Thompson in America*) are being advertised in the back matter of a successful slave narrative, John Stedman's *Narrative of Joanna: An Emancipated Slave of Surinam* (Boston, 1838). This dated but catchy, romantic story of the beautiful Surinamese slave, with its beguiling illustrations was being used to draw attention to the current trans-Atlantic advocacy of Thompson. This item serves to join Britain, North America and South America, while effectively eliding differences of date and time to create a seamless fabric of pro-abolitionist concern. In other words, readers and writers from both sides of the Atlantic were working reciprocally to forge an anti-slavery consensus.

In Boston, a hub of anti-slavery activity, William Lloyd Garrison's publication *The Liberator* reaches across the Atlantic for many of its reports and articles. It reprints letters from anti-slavery societies in Ireland (*The Liberator* Oct. 1842, p. 159),[13] reports on letters received from the Ladies of Glasgow, Cork and Dublin (*The Liberator* Jan. 28 1842: 15), and reports on a debate between Ireland's Daniel O'Connell and a Mr. Garahan of Mobile, Alabama on the topic of slavery (*The Liberator* Oct. 7 1842: 157). In 1841, other Scottish associations (Aberdeen and Banffshire) add their anti-slavery opinions to the pages of the *Liberator*, for example John Hill's "Remonstrance, addressed to the Christians of America on the Subject of Slavery, by the Aberdeen and Banffshire Association of Congregational Churches" on December 24th 1841 (Hill 1841, 205). The publication also reports the collection of funds towards Garrison's travel to Britain, at the

[13] The Ladies in Cork, Ireland were collecting donations towards "An Anti-Slavery Fair" which was to be held in Boston. They exhort their readers to bring their offerings to Cork so that they can be "forwarded to America" (*The Liberator* Oct. 1842: 159).

invitation of the Glasgow Emancipation Society (Jackson 1846, 107).[14] It is abundantly clear that, despite the native vigour of Boston anti-slavery sentiment and organization, connections and exchanges with Britain remain important.

Even more prominent as a cross-Atlantic engagement were the letters on the subject of slavery addressed by James Henry Hammond, Governor of South Carolina to Thomas Clarkson, the famous British abolitionist: *Governor Hammond's Letters on Southern Slavery Addressed to Thomas Clarkson, the English Abolitionist* (Charleston, Walker & Burke, Printers, 1845). Thomas Clarkson also features as the first British abolitionist mentioned in the fledgling Tennessee paper *The Emancipator* (Vol 1, no 2, May 31st 1820: 15-16).

In the figure of Charles Stuart, the web of relations between Britain, Upper Canada and the United States finds its nexus; he also unites both strands of ethical advocacy: anti-slavery and Native American rights. Stuart functions as one of those pivotal people needed by any network. Ex-slaves also ventured across the Atlantic, notably Mary Prince (see Chapter 2), Ashton Warner (see Chapter 3) and James Williams (see Chapter 4), but also lesser known figures, such as Moses Grandy of Georgia, who was planning to visit Liverpool and London in the early 1840s (Grandy 1844, 2), in a bid to raise funds to help free the remaining enslaved members of his large African-American family.

Then there is the work of the famous ex-slave Frederick Douglass; in his case, national identity is never an issue, but his writing and oratory did thunder across the Atlantic, first in the *Narrative* of his life (1845), and subsequently in direct address to British consciences, as in "A Call for the British Nation to Testify Against Slavery" (*Exeter Western Times* 5 September, 1846, in the *Frederick Douglass Papers*, Yale University Press, 1979); and "British Influence on the Abolition Movement in America," (*Renfrewshire Advertiser* April 25 1846 Frederick Douglass papers 1979). Douglass also crossed the Atlantic in person and addressed the British public directly: in "American Slavery, American Religion and the Free Church of Scotland", Douglass addressed the public at Finsbury Park in Moorfields on Friday May 22, 1846 (*The Frederick Douglass Papers* 1979). One of his addresses, in Leeds, was particularly outspoken: "England Should Lead the Cause of Emancipation" (*Leeds Times*, December 26, 1846, Frederick Douglass Papers 1979). Not just England and Scotland, but Ireland, too, attended to Douglass and his message ("Baptists,

[14] Only a few years later (1846), the American abolitionist newspaper *The Liberty Bell* would publish a poem by the English poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning: "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (*The Liberty Bell*, 1846).

Congregationalists, The Free Church and Slavery *Belfast News Letter* Dec 26 1845, The Frederick Douglass Papers, 1979). Douglass explicitly called his trans-Atlantic visit a "mission" ("My Experience and My Mission to Great Britain" *Cork Examiner*, October 15, 1845). Throughout Frederick Douglass's tour of Britain, during which he gave a great many speeches, it is clear that in his mind the "ethical Atlantic" operated in precisely the manner in which I argue that it did: exchange of ideas, personnel, books, expertise and moral influence, with each side launching "missions" to the other at varying times.

One crucial aspect of this study must be my contention that nineteenth-century participants in this trans-Atlantic network were fully aware of its existence and workings. Most of these men—and women—felt part of a larger community stretching back in time as well as across the ocean.[15] This becomes clearest when one reads the Reports, Minutes and Annual Reviews of the various anti-Slavery societies and associations on both sides of the Atlantic. For they make constant reference to one another—as in the case of support offered by the British parent society and movement to the burgeoning American societies.[16] In opposition to slavery, publications such as the *Nova Scotia Magazine* from the British colony of Nova Scotia followed the "growing trans-Atlantic trend" (Whitfield 2016, 8) by publishing articles aimed at rousing anti-slavery sentiment, e.g. "Manner of Selling Slaves in the West Indies" (Whitfield 2016, 8). South of the border, the American Lydia Maria Child had been reading British political documents; she cites, for instance, the British colonial reports that had been set before the House of Commons in 1826 (Child 1836, 90-91). Serial publications from both sides also exhibit awareness of the voices from the other side of the US/British North America border or the Atlantic. "A Voice from Great Britain to America" is a typical title of a brief piece from *The Anti-Slavery Record* (American) of 1835; it reprints an image of the famous

[15] Britain and the United States did not always agree on the degree to which women should participate in anti-slavery work. Female delegates were famously excluded from the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840, and American abolitionists sometimes stood accused of "bigotry" and "zealotry" (Huzzey 2012, 13-14).

[16] For example, in the 1836 meeting, we find Robert Purvis making a motion that the successful abolition of slavery in the British West Indies be taken as "proof of the safety and policy of such emancipation" (*Annual Report* 1836, 27). At the same meeting, William Lloyd Garrison makes the trans-Atlantic debt even clearer with the following motion: "…we honor and bless the philanthropists and Christians of Great Britain, for the noble example they have set in the emancipation of eight hundred thousand slaves in the British colonies, and for their untiring, faithful, and Christian efforts to abolish slavery and the slave trade throughout the world" (*Annual Report* 1836, 27).

British Wedgwood medallion "Am I not a slave and a brother?" together with the jubilee medallion ("Appendix" *The Anti-Slavery Record* Vol 1 1835: 162). These are eloquent *images* from the other side of the Atlantic, showing that advocacy could be pictorial as well as verbal. In coveting these images, the editor of the American periodical seems unaware of the smug, self-congratulatory iconography of the jubilee medallion. Apparently, the common interest in ending slavery elided other issues, such as the question of slave agency in their own freedom, or the problematic arrangement of Apprenticeship that replaced slavery (See Chapter 4).

Some of the awareness of trans-Atlantic ties, however, *was* negative in tone, as we learn from the *Annual Report* of 1836 (American), where there is mention of hostility to the presence of British representatives and activists at the New York event. "Our brothers [Charles] Stuart and [George] Thompson are accused of being foreigners, as if it was a crime for a foreigner, while submitting himself to our laws, openly to discuss with us, in our own halls and churches, the propriety of our institutions!" (*Annual Report* 1836, 38). These two British activists were reported to have received the taunt of "foreign emissary" in New York (*The Anti-Slavery Record*, Vol 1 # 3 March 1835: 31-32); however, even as trans-Atlantic nomads, Stuart and Thompson always found defenders for their ethical work.

American hostility to British anti-slavery interference is confronted directly by William Lloyd Garrison in his account of lectures given by the English activist, George Thompson (*Lecture of George Thompson…* Boston: John Knapp, 1836). Reporting his own earlier conversations with Buxton on the subject of cross-Atlantic exchange of anti-slavery speakers, Garrison shows full awareness of the utility, indeed the necessity, of instrumentalizing the trans-Atlantic network. Garrison's text gives the podium to Thompson, who deftly rebuts the pro-slavery arguments of his opponent Peter Borthwick, but it is Garrison's awareness of the trans-Atlantic link and its value that makes this text a key one in the present argument.

Deliberate interventions in trans-Atlantic exchange can also be traced in material such as the preface to the *Narrative of Moses Grandy, Late a Slave in the United States of America* (1844). There, George Thompson—the same Thompson who debated Borthwick in Liverpool and annoyed American abolitionists so severely in the 1830s—recommends Grandy and his story to British colleagues because it is "authentic" and "thrilling." "Could it be published," Thompson continues, "it would make a deep sensation in every quarter." (Grandy 1844, 2). The words *thrilling* and *sensation* stand out in this case, for Grandy's story is replete with the kind of horrific sensory details (floggings, wounds, maggots, starvation) that

demand attention. Though Grandy is illiterate, Thompson recommends him as a speaker for British audiences: "If you happen to have an anti-slavery meeting, let him tell his tale to a British audience" (2). The off-hand tone to this remark suggests the normalization of this kind of trans-Atlantic exchange—an ex-slave speaker is a valued but no longer unusual artefact in the ethical trade. The value to trans-Atlantic advocacy is seen to arise from its insider perspective, since it is "calculated to promote a more extensive knowledge of the workings of American slavery" (Grandy 1844, 3). Grandy's narrative concludes with a clear statement of the interdependence of the British and American sides of the struggle against slavery: "We look very much to England for help to the cause of the slaves" (Grandy 1844, 36).

A notable feature of the ethical advocacy movement, particularly as it concerned anti-slavery activity, was the commodification of particular life stories. Even at a time when self-written or at least dictated slave narratives were just beginning to be published, activists on both sides of the Atlantic used and re-used stories of atrocity and redemption, passing them around as prize exhibits in the anti-slavery argument. The case of Reuben Maddison was chosen to open this chapter, but this was not the only story thus exploited to arouse emotions and social indignation—even to raise money for the cause through the sale of pamphlets.

Take the tragic case of Kate, the Bahamian slave whose fatal punishment resulted in the conviction of her owners Mr. and Mrs. Moss. This story begins to appear in the anti-slavery press in 1829, in the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* (# 47, April 1829), but is then picked up in speeches on the anti-slavery circuit: by Andrew Thomson in Edinburgh October 19, 1830, Benjamin Godwin, in Bradford, York and Scarborough, 1830, and George Thompson in Liverpool. Kate's 17-day torture in the stocks, accompanied by flogging and the application of pepper to her eyes was also reported in *The Christian Observer* of 1829 in London. The cruelty of the case made it extremely effective as anti-slavery propaganda. More interesting for the current argument, however, is its subsequent appearance on the other side of the Atlantic, in Lydia Maria Child's *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (New York: John S. Taylor, 1836). Child cites the case of Kate's fatal treatment as an index of "the effects of slavery on the temper of [slaveowners]" (1836, 24), as part of an overall argument about the deleterious outcome for all participants in the slave system, whether master or slave.

Kate's case will be further discussed in Chapter 2, but here it is crucial to mention the degree to which Child's important American text depends on other British evidence, stories, authors and images. In particular, Child's

argument relies on the English essayist Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) in certain key parts (1836, 27; 83; 141; 146).[17] She cites a Methodist missionary from Jamaica (Child 1836, 190) and a story of family separation through sale "as related by Mr. T. Pennock at a public meeting in England" (Child 1836, 190). Clearly, the trans-Atlantic network is functioning efficiently if Child can confidently refer to the details of what was spoken at a meeting in England. In her exhortatory conclusion, Child inundates her American readers with citations from British literature, art and politics, dropping in the names of Cowper (the poet), Wedgwood (the designer of the anti-slavery medallion or cameo), Clarkson, Fox, Wilberforce, Mungo Park (the African missionary) and even the Duchess of Devonshire (Child 1836, 214-15). In 1836, American anti-slavery discourse was thus incomplete without reference to the words, ideas and personalities of the "mother country" (Child 1836, 201).

In the course of Chapters 2 to 7, I will study writing and writers who brought lived experience from one side of the Atlantic to the attention of readers in the other Atlantic arena. The ex-colonies, colonies and dominion (Canada after 1867) of the new World thus played a role in creating public opinion, public policy and imaginary capital in Britain and Europe—the results of which were often exported back to the new world in the form of texts, reports, policies or even concrete legal action. The two-way traffic in both people and ideas forms the main subject of this study. It is posited that the Atlantic formed both a barrier and a highway, symbolic and actual, and paradoxically one that allowed the formation of bold boundary concepts.

Ethical Agency through Texts

The "Ethical" portion of the title and the content of this book indicates that the relevant ideas will be moral ones—primarily concepts pertaining to Abolition, slave welfare, post-slavery resettlement, treatment of Native Americans/Canadians, along with aboriginal rights in general. A stream of discourse dealing with natural "rights" had been apparent in publications since the end of the 18th century, with the willingness on the part of at least some writers in the early 1830s to extend human rights to slaves and aboriginal peoples. In 1831, for instance, in a Christian, anti-slavery context, we find this agenda clearly expressed: "…we must remind our opponents,

[17] Martineau had written about slavery in the British colonies on the Caribbean coast of South America. Her "Demerara, a Tale" (Vol. 2 in *Illustrations of Political Economy*, 9 vols. 1832) was more a treatise on political economy and the workings of a free market than an anti-slavery text, *per se*, but the 1832 text had made a lasting impression on its American reader, Lydia Child.

that man has such things as natural rights. He has rights which are not granted to him by the will of others, or vested in him by the enactments of human law" (Thomson 1831, 12). One year earlier, Thomson had spoken out against slavery in similarly abstract terms "[S]lavery is hostile to the original and essential rights of our common humanity... to keep him a slave is to violate that charter of liberty which God has given to every human being" (Thompson 1833, *Speech* October 19, 1830, 3). That North American aboriginals also had rights was a concept slower to emerge or gain acceptance.

Nevertheless, these two concepts of ethical concern form great strands—one dominating the earlier part of the period (the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery) and the second prevailing in the latter part of the 19th century, when the western frontier would close and a booming United States push back its tribal inhabitants. The separation between the two agendas is not as complete as might seem, for the movements often shared their adherents (Flint 2009, 62).[18] Starting with the Quakers, who were fervent and early backers of abolition (David 2007, 373-378), there emerged a tendency for anti-slavery proponents also to take an interest in the "Indian" question. Take, for instance, the Aborigines Protection Society, founded in 1837, with strong interest from the group who had muscled through abolition of slavery and the slave trade (Buxton, Clarkson and Sturge), it would eventually merge with the Anti-Slavery Society in 1909. Or consider the career of William Barrows, whose writing included both work on slavery, *The War and Slavery*, (1862) and the well-known pamphlet *The Indian Side of the Indian Question* (1887). Moreover, both groups also tended to come from the evangelical denominations—although not exclusively. In the case of Quakers, it was their abstention from military and political endeavours that originally freed their intellectuals to concentrate on ethical issues (see David 2007 372), but the addition of Methodists and evangelical Anglicans to the cause helped to pull in more members of the public, while giving the whole movement a more acceptable, centralized social stance. "Abolition," as David summarizes, "could less easily be dismissed by its opponents as the utopian goal of a marginal and radical sect [the Quakers]" (David 2007,

[18] The intersection between the women's rights movement and anti-slavery activism has also been well established. See, for instance, Judith Resnick, *Sisterhood, Slavery, and Sovereignty: Transnational Antislavery Work and Women's Rights Movements in the U. S. during the 20th Century*. Yale Law School, Public Law Working Paper # 138. In the pages of the *Liberator*—an anti-slavery publication from Boston, Massachusetts—it is apparent that anti-slavery activism intersected with other issues of social and moral responsibility: temperance, Catholic emancipation, Negro education, etc.

379). After slavery and its trade has been vanquished in British possessions (1834) and in the United States (1865), anti-slavery activism continued, with a new focus on slavery within and between nations and regions in Africa and Asia. This extended ethical export has even been called "humanitarian Imperialism" (Fouclaz, 2015). Anti-slavery activity throughout the Victorian era must be considered a significant factor in British imperialism; Richard Huzzey argues that "the relationship between anti-slavery and imperial power helps explain Victorian foreign and colonial policies" (Huzzey 2012, 6), and finally that "anti-slavery shaped the moral and material interests of the globe's first modern superpower" (Huzzey 2012, 20).

Scope, Focus and Aims of the Study

This study will not attempt to cover the entire nineteenth century across all countries peripheral to the Atlantic Ocean. My focus is on a few key texts that each played a role in bridging the Atlantic and uniting issues and agents from more than one country. In the case of *The History of Mary Prince* (Chapter 2), the textual transaction involves a slave born in Bermuda, in the mid-Atlantic, transported to the West Indies, Turk's Island (today in the Turks And Caicos archipelago, near the Bahamas), and Antigua, and taken back across the Atlantic to London, where her story was taken down by a British woman who would herself then cross the Atlantic, to Upper Canada, and incorporate anti-slavery concepts into her own new world writing. The boomerang effect of this text and others seems both to overcome and to require the Atlantic, with its physical and cultural distance.

Mary Prince is only the best known of this genre of texts instrumentalized by the advocacy network of the Anti-slavery campaigners; *Reuben Maddison*, the text that opens this chapter belongs to this category, as does that of Kate, the slave tortured by Mr. and Mrs. Moss in the Bahamas. There is also the early story of Joanna, the mulatto taken as a "wife" by a Scottish soldier in a South American colony. John Stedman wrote up his new world adventures in *Narrative of a Five Year's Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (1806 [1796]), but the story of Joanna was later excerpted and took on a life of its own. As Jenny Sharpe documents, Joanna was "reborn as a literary figure in abolitionist pamphlets and romantic plays and shows" (Sharpe 2003, 82). Eventually Joanna resurfaced in Boston in 1834, with her name as the sole title of her story in a collection of anti-slavery literature (Sharpe 2003, 84). As in the case of Mary Prince, Joanna's story became packaged by the transnational advocacy network and entered the common currency of thought about the

degrading and tragic outcomes of slavery on females. Unlike Mary Prince, who sought to have her story recorded, Joanna never intended to become a "spokesperson for the abolitionist cause" (Sharpe 2003, 84); yet, her romanticized position as beautiful, deserted mulatto wife, along with some attractive early illustrations, guaranteed her marketability in anti-slavery circles, both male and female.

In the trans-Atlantic trade in ideas about aborigines and their rights, there is similar evidence of the transformation of information about "Indians" after the American George Catlin took his Indian Gallery to London. Once nine real Ojibway had joined the exhibit, the popular press in Britain provided many examples of how new conceptions of "Indian-ness" become part of British discourse.[19] The three main texts that accompany and (in two cases) emerge from the Indian Gallery exhibit form a broad link in the trans-Atlantic traffic in ideas. What emerges from a study of this second set of texts is the slippage away from a defensible ethical stance. As more images of and data about "Indians" crossed to Europe, the promulgators of this traffic lost control of how this data would be interpreted by the public, while also becoming tangled themselves in the commercial potential of their subjects. Unlike ex-slaves, "Real Indians" (Catlin 1848, 103) could be monetized. In combination with the impossibility of any single legislative solution to the plight of Native Americans, this allowed the erosion of the original ethical agenda in the writings of George Catlin and Charles Stuart.

It is the "packaged" nature of the Atlantic-crossing texts that I seek to explore: the conscious instrumentalization of life story texts (such as slave narratives or accounts of visiting tribes) in the mobilization of empathy across wide networks. Inevitably, appeal across a broad spectrum of ethical actors—male and female, rich and poor, British, American and Canadian—meant that such stories needed to be reduced to key functional elements. Some issues would be elided (sexual exploitation and immorality of any kind), while some would be highlighted (common humanity, respectability, loyalty to good masters/mistresses and to the British Crown). Some stories and texts experienced greater success than others;[20] I will linger on the case

[19] In 1848, for example, one British reviewer confidently asserted that "Catlin's books and other works have tended to make us acquainted of late with Indian customs…" ("Crimes and Remarkable Trials in Scotland. Kidnapping—Peter Williamson's Case" pp. 607-626, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* May 1848, 63, no. 391: 620).

[20] Minor texts and stories were also traded across the Atlantic; take, for instance, the slight article titled "Slave Auction at Richmond" which appeared in the American periodical *The Anti-Slavery Record* of 1835. Richmond being in the state of Virginia, there would seem to be no good reason why this text should not have originated in

of one text, *Negro Slavery Described by a Negro* (Chapter 3), to explore possible causes for differential appeal to the trans-Atlantic network. Additionally, I will consider in detail the packaging of ethically conscious stories dealing with the case of North American Indians, as in the diptych of *The Short History and Description of the Ojibbeway and An Adventure in Canada*. This key text unites both ethical strands in one morally problematic publication, but it will lead to an exploration of other works by George Catlin, the artist and ethnographer of American tribes. The intentions of writers and publishers often reside in the context and timing of their text's presentation to the public; moreover, authorial intention, as will be seen in Chapter 6, did not always translate seamlessly into the desired effect on the ethical thinking of the British or American public.

Nor must we deny that such implementation of life narrative in the cause of humanitarian agency and fund raising has gone away. Nowadays, any evening of television will be interrupted by appeals for donations to one or another worthy cause, each one fronted by the story of a named victim, whose image and situation have been carefully selected for maximum viewer impact. "We are all atrocitarians now," as Gary Bass has astutely pointed out (Bass 2008, 382).

At this point, I must also indicate one major exclusion from my research: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). This work exerted so enormous an impact on both sides of the Atlantic and in many languages that it deserves consideration by itself. Although it will not be analyzed in detail here, it does exhibit many of the characteristics of the instrumentalized life stories that are discussed. Like these, it was transformed, adapted, excerpted and illustrated to broaden its appeal and sometimes to alter the work's original ethos almost beyond recognition. It also aroused vehement criticism in the form of "anti-Tom" novels in the United States.[21]

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the United States, yet it is listed as having been reprinted from "a Scotch paper, called the *Dumfries Courier*" ("Slave Auction at Richmond" *The Anti-Slavery Record* (March 1835) 1, no. 3: 57). This account of the cruelty of a slave vendue originating in a letter from Richmond to a recipient in Scotland, had to cross the Atlantic *twice* before reaching its target and finding its ethical function.

[21] Some of these titles signaled their adversarial stance by echoing the word "cabin" in their titles: for example, Mary Henderson Eastman, *Aunt Phillis's Cabin; or Southern Life As It Is* (1852); Robert Criswell, *"Uncle Tom's Cabin" contrasted with Buckingham Hall, the Planter's Home* (1852); John W. Page, *Uncle Robin in his Cabin in Virginia, And Tom without one in Boston* (1853); other "anti-Tom" novels had subtler titles: Caroline E. Rush, *The North and the South; or Slavery and Its Contrasts* (1852); Mrs. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina* (1860). A contemporary echo occurs in Huzzey's

The research project unearthed the extent to which the same names, personalities, texts and even images kept cropping up in forums divided by the Atlantic. Philanthropic societies in London had members' lists peopled with names from New York, Delaware and Upper Canada; native preachers from British North America (now Ontario) turned up in British newspapers, and through the institutions of the British Empire, ethical operators passed through one colony and on to another as the work continued of ameliorating the lives of subject or marginalized peoples. The American abolition movements looked across the Atlantic towards the founding fathers of the British movement (such as Clarkson and Wilberforce) for inspiration and tactical support.[22] Even in 1846, Frederick Douglass could inspire British periodicals to maintain that "Emancipation Is an Individual, a National, and an International Responsibility" (*London Patriot*, May 26, 1946) and that "International Moral Force Can Destroy Slavery" (*Renfrewshire Advertiser*, March 28, 1846).[23]

In documenting this trade in ethical ideas, I have made extensive use of the 19th-century periodical press on both sides of the Atlantic. The explosion in small printed periodicals, particularly of the illustrated kind, (such as *The Pictorial Times*; *The Illustrated London News*) gave access to new ideas and images to the widest possible reading audience. When, for instance, the American artist and ethnologist George Catlin assembled his Indian Gallery of paintings and artefacts, took it to London in 1840 and added a display of nine Ojibway[24] from Upper Canada, the reaction of the British and American press was far from identical. The distinct difference in flavour between American and British reviews of the Gallery forms an index of the trans-Atlantic gap in perceptions about the "Indian question" and the changing ethical stance on this issue (See Chapter 7).

Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain (2012), where one chapter is titled "Uncle Tom's Britain" (Huzzey 2012, 21-39).

[22] One article from the *American Anti-Slavery Reporter* of 1834 shows two factions within the American movement (pro-and anti-colonization of Liberia) fighting over the issue of whether the Englishman Clarkson had or even would ever have given support to a movement that made freedom for slaves conditional on transportation back to Africa ("Review of the Speeches and Proceedings of the Recent Annual Meeting of the American Colonization Society." *American Anti-Slavery Reporter*. 1 (1834), 2- 13).

[23] These British speeches by and articles about Frederick Douglass are preserved in the Frederick Douglass Papers, at Yale University. Some are available on their website and some in the Frederick Douglass Papers, Yale University Press, 1979.

[24] Catlin spelled the tribal name "Ojibbeway" consistently, with the result that this spelling is reproduced in many of the reviews and comments at the time.

This study is not a historical work, although history forms the necessary background and many historical studies will be cited. It is primarily a cultural stylistic study of the selected texts associated with this trans-Atlantic traffic in ethical concepts. "Traffic" will also sometimes assume its concrete meaning, as the texts are sited as commodities within the imperial mercantile system that began to make trade a global affair as early as the 16th century (Sebek 2008, 1-3). Moreover, recent scholarship on anti-slavery movements has turned its attention towards the more contemporary form that slavery takes in human trafficking (see Quirk 2011), a designation that focuses attention, as this study will do, on the connection between human mobility and profit.

Throughout the argument, I will highlight the awareness among the agents of ethical intervention of the trans-Atlantic, inter-national nature of their endeavours. There is evidence on both sides of the Atlantic that one side needed the other and that a reciprocal trade in ethical goods had developed by the middle of the nineteenth century. The American Civil War and its aftermath (Lincoln's proclamation and Reconstruction) would divert and decrease the volume of this trade, and by the end of the century, one could even argue that the flow had become one-sided in favour of North America. However, this study will confine itself to the decades of the 1830s and 1840s, venturing occasionally into the very early 1850s, when the combination of transport innovations, printing technology and socio-political events inflated the value of ethical information politics.

I will explore individual instances of this proto-form of information politics in Chapters 2 to 7 of this monograph. Chapter 2, for instance, will ask how a book about a woman from Bermuda (*Mary Prince*), penned in London by an Englishwoman became the template for the female slave narrative and affect both the Canadian author's subsequent work and the topoi of all later slave narratives. Similarly, Chapter 7 will enquire what a slim pamphlet (*A Short History and Description of the Ojibbeway Indians Now on a Visit to England*) about Canadian Ojibway being exhibited in Manchester and London by an American can tell us about the differences between American and British concepts of the "dying Indians."

Some of the texts analyzed are fiction, while others are memoir, autobiography, documentary or polemic. I have chosen texts from two key decades (1830 to 1850) that reflect their author's and subjects' trans-Atlantic mobility, demonstrate concern with the welfare of post-Africans and aboriginals and contribute to the development of ethical ideas and Human Rights movements such as the Aborigines Protection Society. Particular attention has been paid to contextualizing each text in terms of its

commodification, instrumentalization by organized activism and reception on either side of the Atlantic.

Text Analysis

In analyzing each of the key texts of trans-Atlantic advocacy, I sought to provide context, not just historical but linguistic, as well. To this end, detailed insight into the workings of each text is facilitated through corpus analysis, using the software tool WordSmith. The Word List, Concordance and Key Word functions of the software generated new perspectives on these ethical texts as individual discourse selections. Equally significant was the ability of the software to place these texts in relation to other writing of the era. By comparing digitized versions of the key texts to each other and to a corpus of 19th-century periodical writing, I was able to establish key words, phrases and motifs that distinguished the rhetorical and discourse strategies of one ethical text from those of another. This acquires particular significance because in my argument, the texts comprise one great trans-Atlantic discourse exchange, not discrete efforts by individual authors. The methodology behind the creation and use of text corpora and background corpora is specified in Appendix 1. By employing the software, I aimed to achieve more objective insight into this set of highly emotive texts intended as utterances in an ongoing moral debate across the Atlantic.

From Atlantic to Global

While the explosion of feminist, gendered and other varieties of socially-contextualized scholarship has given prominence to a text like *The History of Mary Prince*, which is now widely read in high schools and university classrooms, such a star system should not be allowed to obscure the collective role of such a text in the broader quest for human rights in the 19th century. One of my aims here is to restore the sense of collaborative effort in the trans-Atlantic trade in ethical texts, the symbiotic borrowing and re-inscribing of tropes and narratives into the consciousness of those women and men who dedicated part of their lives to ethical advocacy. In the case of James Williams, for instance, it would need a transcriber/translator (from the Creole), an editor, a publisher and several local rescuers to bring this tale of Jamaican cruelty to the British public. Most slave narratives were collaborative efforts. To some extent, the texts discussed in detail here constitute a single mega-text in the creation of contact-zone reciprocity in a 19th-century world where distances were rapidly shrinking.

In our own time, since the turn of the millennium, we have come to accept an even more extreme globalization of our world as an established fact—however we may evaluate its consequences. Contemporary scholars of advocacy networks can now speak of "activists beyond borders" (Keck & Sikkink 2014). Immanuel Wallerstein even identifies ours as a "discourse of globalization" (Wallerstein 2000, 251-52). One outcome of the research in this book is the revelation that such global discourse has deep temporal roots: the "Atlantic" sphere of the title constituted much of the global imaginary at the time under consideration. For "global" is always a relative concept, despite its nominal claim to holistic coverage. One aim of this book is to explore the manifold strands that combined to create the lives and writings of the women and men who co-created the transnational human rights activism of the 19th century. Such global activism was necessarily more difficult in the age before satellite communication, jet travel, or even steamboat travel, for that matter.[25] Now, there is no longer an "Atlantic" in the sense used in the title and argument of this book; even the Pacific has lost its ability to polarize values between east and west. That we occupy one giant contact zone in the age of the internet might desensitize us to the traces of that nascent connectivity in the work of the "Ethical Atlantic": to uncover that river of mutually reinforcing exchange is the aim of the following chapters.

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[25] Contrast the rapid formation of an international Occupy movement in 2011, or the almost instantaneous coming together of the women's protest march at the time of the inauguration of US President Donald Trump in January 2017; the initiative united women from a variety of social causes. It began with Facebook and spread rapidly and contagiously as only the power of digital social networks can assure. See *Time Magazine*, January 2017.

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CHAPTER TWO

"TOO BAD TO SPEAK IN ENGLAND:" MARY PRINCE AND KITTY HYLTON

The Genuine Mary

From slave to spokeswoman—such was the journey of the woman known as Mary Prince, Mary Princess of Wales, Molly Wood or Molly/Mary James.[1] The story about how Prince came for help and employment to the London house of Thomas Pringle of the Anti-Slavery Society has been re-told many times in the past and from multiple angles in modern scholarship.[2] Contemporary scholars have seized on the immediacy of this text, its closeness to the actual slave speaking; some have sought within it Mary Prince's own words ("from her own lips" as Strickland says; e.g., Larrabee 2006); others have portrayed it as a highly mediated narrative of dubious authenticity (Sharpe 2003; Gadpaille 2011; Whitlock 1995).

Among the rest, I have researched and published on the topic, having a particular interest in the degree to which the transcribed narrative reflects the creole dialect that Mary Prince undoubtedly spoke. Everyone, it seems, clamored, as I had also done, to reach the genuine Mary, to touch the actual slave and her experience. In so feeling, we participate willy-nilly in the exploitation of Mary Prince's suffering. Just as her critics (and supporters) demanded to see her scarred back and buttocks (the vague phrase used in the paratext make it a certainty that flogging had affected her buttocks—a then unmentionable body part[3]), so do we turn over each phrase for evidence

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[1] See Gadpaille "Slave Names in Fact and Fiction" for a discussion of her complex naming; also Moira Ferguson, *The History of Mary Prince*, 1987, 50.

[2] See Ferguson 1987; Rauwendo 2001; Larrabee 2006; Pacquet 1992; Sharpe 2003; Gadpaille 2009; Whitlock 2000.

[3] In an Appendix, Strickland, along with several other ladies, testifies that "the whole of *the back part of her body* is distinctly scarred, and, as it were, chequered, with the vestiges of severe floggings" (*Mary Prince* 1831, 50; my emphasis). Hereafter, the text will be abbreviated as *MP* in references. See Baumgartner (2001) for more on the appropriated body in *MP*.

of the real. The parallel story of the Jamaican slave Kitty Hylton forms part of the corroborating evidence for cruelty, so I have chosen to lift Hylton's story from the footnotes to a more prominent position in the argument and in the advocacy strategy of the Anti-Slavery Society. In this chapter the textual analysis software, WordSmith, will be used to aid in the exploration of the main text's lexical composition and so facilitate our discussion of Mary Prince, Kitty Hylton and their editors.[4]

The evidence we seek in the 21st century is not identical to that of the 1830s. At that time, doubters wanted corroboration of the evils of slavery; they needed to know that Prince was not a charlatan pretending to have suffered in order to gain sympathy and financial support from unsuspecting British people. One charitable society, for instance, the Birmingham Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, offered help for Mary Prince, but only on condition that they could verify her whipping scars (Sharpe 2003, 129).[5] Nowadays, in contrast, we feel that the evils of slavery are firmly established; we have no reason to doubt Mary's testimony about lewd, cruel and indifferent masters and the practice of punishment by whipping. What we ask is whether we can trust the voice we hear coming from the text. Is Mary Prince's a credible voice for a woman of her place in life? Or, is this compelling voice primarily a creation of Susanna Strickland and Thomas Pringle, transcriber and editor, respectively?

In the context of this exploration of transnational ethical advocacy, this latter question must be answered—controversially—in the affirmative. And here we must make a bold claim: Mary Prince and her story were a joint creation of the Anti-Slavery Society—not because she never existed, but because her existence had no instrumental significance until the Society stepped in to record and market it. The evidence of heavy editorial shaping of the *History* is quite clear, sometimes in editorial declarations and sometimes in editorial denials. Thus, according to Pringle, "redundancies and gross grammatical errors" (*MP* "Preface" 1831, i) in Mary's account

[4] For the purposes of digital analysis, a pared-down version of the text was used, with all the paratext removed. WordSmith worked on the main narrative and its title, not on the Preface, Testimonials, notes etc.; this core text was transformed into plain text format for use with the software functions.

[5] In the United States, white testimonials were no less crucial as accompaniments to slave narratives, as Foster establishes for ante-bellum narratives, which often included letters of reference, affidavits, news clippings and legal documents (Foster 1994, x). *The Memoirs of Elleanor Eldridge*, for example included multiple certificates of character inserted by the author Frances H. Green to show that as many as 13 respectable white persons were willing to lend their names to the story (Green 1838, 7-10).