

# “Aunt Nancy Men”: Parker Pillsbury, Masculinity, and Women’s Rights Activism in the Nineteenth-Century United States

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Beginning in 1868 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Parker Pillsbury published a radical women’s rights newspaper appropriately entitled, *The Revolution*. Frustrated because the Fifteenth Amendment proposed to enfranchise Black men, but not women—and infuriated because almost all of their abolitionist colleagues continued to support the amendment despite its neglect of women, these radicals used their newspaper to construct an alternative vision of sexual relations grounded in economic, political, legal, sexual, and social equality.<sup>1</sup> In response to this aggressive call for women’s rights, the popular press attacked the radicals’ sexual identity in an effort to reinforce the traditional gender roles which the women’s rights movement openly challenged. “‘The Revolution,’” according to one Connecticut journalist, “is edited by two old and ugly ladies men, *Mr.* Elizabeth Cady Stanton and *Mrs.* Parker Pillsbury, and published by *Mr.* Susan B. Anthony. . . . Were we to select our own father from among the three it should be Stanton or Anthony in preference to Granny Pillsbury.”<sup>2</sup>

While attempts to humiliate publicly women’s rights activists reveal a basic fear of the threat posed by changes in gender roles for the entire social order, they underscore as well the connection between masculinity and the subordination of women. Pro-feminist men have often been represented as weak, impotent, and lacking in virility by opponents of women’s rights and Parker Pillsbury was no



**Figure 1: Parker Pillsbury. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society, #F3571.**

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exception.<sup>3</sup> Predominant visions of masculinity in the nineteenth century depended on male dominance and any man who questioned this invited accusations of effeminacy and became “Aunt Nancy men.”<sup>4</sup> Yet though this conservative reaction to women’s rights activists is well recognized, the historical connections between nineteenth-century pro-feminist activism and models of masculinity have scarcely begun to be explored.

This essay attempts to explain Pillsbury’s pro-feminist position by reconstructing his ideas on masculinity and contextualizing them within the evolving norms of nineteenth-century manhood. Highlighting Pillsbury’s subversion of traditional notions of manhood and his objection to male dominance (which he defined as unmanly), this essay reveals the deep-rooted connections between masculine identity and male support for women’s rights in the nineteenth century. Moreover, in focusing on a leading male Garrisonian this article furthers our understanding of the extensive support for women’s rights among abolitionist men.<sup>5</sup> Pillsbury developed his sense of manliness during his twenty-five-year career as a Garrisonian antislavery lecturing agent.<sup>6</sup> The Garrisonian strategy of moral suasion and philosophies of disunionism and anticlericalism, which engendered violent public opposition, greatly influenced many abolitionists toward an egalitarian masculinity and strong pro-feminist activism.<sup>7</sup> Pillsbury

thoroughly embraced these and other radical tactics and established a reputation as one of the most uncompromising Garrisonians—even alienating his own colleagues at times. When many Garrisonians moderated these radical policies during the Civil War they also diluted their support for women’s rights, leading to an eventual break with Pillsbury and other feminists over the issues of the Fifteenth Amendment.

When Pillsbury joined the antislavery movement in 1840 at the age of 31, popular visions of gender were in flux.<sup>8</sup> Masculinity proved to be a battleground in the nineteenth century, as various notions of manhood became representations of larger competing ideologies. As industrialization and urbanization changed the political, economic, and cultural terrain of U.S. society, gender became an important tool for classifying and ordering a fluid population.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, numerous traditions of masculinity and femininity competed throughout the nineteenth century, differing according to race, class, ethnicity, geographical location, and a variety of other classifications.<sup>10</sup> In particular, Euro-American middle-class notions of masculinity changed significantly during this period. The depth of a man’s commitment to his community and the quality of his spiritual life provided the framework for judging manhood in the late eighteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, as industrialism led to an increased focus on individual economic success, concerns with physical courage and individual accomplishment furnished the new guideposts of manliness.<sup>11</sup> Despite this shift in middle-class notions of masculinity, one issue remained constant: the presumption of male dominance. Although Pillsbury’s vision of masculinity included elements from both of these stages, he wholeheartedly rejected women’s subordination and he subverted these traditions of manhood to create his own pro-feminist sense of masculinity.<sup>12</sup>

Pillsbury was among a small group of men who denounced male dominance and joined women in their movement for equality. Prior to the Civil War many male Garrisonian abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass, Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, and Henry Clarke Wright, participated in women’s rights conventions and promulgated women’s full and equal participation in antislavery societies.<sup>13</sup> Other abolitionist men, such as Stephen S. Foster and James Mott, married feminist women and maintained relatively egalitarian relationships in which both partners continued their public work in antislavery.<sup>14</sup> All of these pro-feminist men rejected popular notions of manhood which glorified men’s unquestioned predominance in the public world.<sup>15</sup>

Even more reform-minded men joined Pillsbury in the budding women’s rights movement following the Civil War. Concerned with the growth of crime, corruption, and disease in an increasingly urban society, these reformers hoped that women’s empowerment would produce a more harmonious and virtuous society.<sup>16</sup> While most men responded to the women’s movement with defiance and hostility—some claiming the unnaturalness of women’s public activity, and others demanding an intensified separation of the sexes and glorifying an increasingly physical and violent manhood—late nineteenth-century pro-femi-

nist men criticized their male peers for their greed, aggressiveness, and debauchery. They envisioned women's public role as a cure-all for a diseased American manhood.<sup>17</sup>

The following presentation of Pillsbury's understanding of masculinity offers a window into the lives of these radical men and reveals the extent to which their motivation was rooted in their perception of manhood.

Parker Pillsbury grew up in rural New Hampshire, on what he described as "the hardest farm in the town."<sup>18</sup> Although typically speaking of his rustic working life with the emphasis on deprivation, Pillsbury took enormous pride in his background as a laborer. Indeed, his youthful farming experience helps to account for the first important element in his understanding of masculinity: strength of body.

Friends and admirers frequently commented on Pillsbury's imposing physical presence and his family's rugged New England homestead, where, according to one antislavery colleague, he taught himself "to be a man."<sup>19</sup> Although he regularly bemoaned his lack of refinement, Pillsbury made his backwoods upbringing a basic element of his identity. In describing his decision to secure a formal education at the age of twenty-six, for example, he wrote, "With hands calloused and irrecoverably bent, and shoulders bowed with the long and hard labors of the farm, I entered upon a course of Theological Study."<sup>20</sup> Pillsbury's brawny self-image also influenced his reputation within the antislavery movement. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, lauded Pillsbury's physical presence and his ability to dominate his opponents:

Pillsbury, whom I heard last night, is the very gift from New Hampshire which we have long expected, a tough oak stick of a man not to be silenced or insulted or intimidated by a mob, because he is more mob than they; he mobs the mob. John Knox is come at last, on whom neither money nor politeness nor hard words nor rotten eggs nor kicks and brickbats make the slightest impression. He is fit to meet the bar-room wits and bullies; he is a wit and a bully himself and something more; he is a graduate of the plough and cedar swamp and snowbank, and has nothing new to learn of labor or poverty or the rough of farming.<sup>21</sup>

Pillsbury also emphasized physical hardiness in fellow abolitionists: he lauded radical colleague Stephen S. Foster, not for his eloquent antislavery oratory, but for his farm work, "bending to rigorous field labor, with hands hard and calloused," where, Pillsbury explained, "he had come to his true dignity, his real greatness, as never when harranguing an admiring multitude in Boston."<sup>22</sup>

This emphasis on physicality reflected an older tradition of economic independence, and in glorifying and romanticizing labor-intensive occupations

Pillsbury often conflated “manly” economic independence with physical strength and activity. Such “physical” occupations, however, saw a decline in the nineteenth century as many young men moved into urban offices and the professions. Pillsbury regretted this transition because in his view it weakened men, both physically and morally. “The truth is,” Pillsbury asserted in a letter to his daughter, “honest, productive industry has become despicable, all who can shirk it, do.”<sup>23</sup> As occupations which required physical labor declined in status, Pillsbury’s conviction that manhood necessitated brawn and vigor increased.

Many radical abolitionists had other reasons to be concerned with the body: Most who lectured in the field relied on bodily strength to endure the physical demands of a lecturing agency, including mob attacks. Traveling from town to town, often by foot, and lugging heavy loads of meeting notices and anti-slavery material, antislavery lecturers were regularly forced to endure meager meals, dingy accommodations, and limited comforts. Moreover, although avowed advocates of nonviolence, Pillsbury and other abolitionists recognized that a strong body would aid them in enduring the physical abuse of their opponents. For example, during one meeting at Cape Cod Pillsbury and his colleagues were ejected from the platform “with many kicks and blows” by a “brutal and ferocious mob” who “dashed the platform all to pieces.” Dragged from the platform, the abolitionists had their clothes literally torn from their bodies.<sup>24</sup> Not surprisingly, Garrisonians often referred to themselves as “soldiers” in the “war” against slavery. Nathaniel P. Rogers described the “pitched battles” of antislavery work, and Pillsbury spoke of the “din and smoke of the entrenchments” during antislavery meetings.<sup>25</sup> Because Pillsbury spent twenty-five years lecturing in the field, more than any other Garrisonian, he expressed particular concern with the issue of physical endurance. Strong bodies, therefore, became symbolic among Garrisonian abolitionists of nonviolent resistance to those who supported the institution of slavery and employed violence to defend it.

On the surface this concern with physical sturdiness seemed merely to prefigure the growing nineteenth-century obsession with the male body.<sup>26</sup> However, Pillsbury and other Garrisonians, sensitized to the politics of gender because they themselves were so often accused of being weak and unmanly, strongly rejected the popular association of masculine strength with brute force. While the general public related physical courage with the Davy Crockett myth, which, according to Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, offered Jacksonian men “an outlet for hostility and frustration in the violence of jingoism and racism,” Pillsbury rebuked American men for their physical oppression of slaves, American Indians and women.<sup>27</sup> He clearly differentiated his call for male strength from traditional chivalry, which he considered “an outrage and insult.”<sup>28</sup> He denounced men’s exploitative use of physical strength to subordinate women under the guise of protecting them. “The difference between man and woman in governments and in society is at last, one of brute force,” Pillsbury explained in an equal-pay editorial. “It is the oppression of the weak by the strong.”<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps because he associated manly vitality with the decline of independent occupations, his own difficult youth, and resistance to anti-abolition mobs, Pillsbury identified bodily strength with a defense of the exploited. He called for true men to resist popular notions of robust manhood and employ their physical strength to protect the downtrodden of society. "From his experience in early manhood doubtless springs his never-failing sympathies for and his almost unparalleled labors in behalf of the working masses," one admirer summed up after Pillsbury's death in 1898. "Beginning with the slave, who was the lowest down, he has naturally continued to work with equal earnestness and ability for the liberation of woman."<sup>30</sup>

Pillsbury and other Garrisonian lecturing agents who were constantly exposed to the private lives of families while on the road also developed a feminist critique of the meaning of able-bodied masculinity within the home. They highlighted the contradictions between traditional notions of men's strength and the unequal household division of labor. Lodging in the homes of hundreds of families during his lecturing tours, Pillsbury observed that despite men's supposed superior strength women often engaged in the most difficult and labor-intensive chores in the household. In one editorial, for example, Pillsbury denounced the male members of a family with whom he had lodged for their failure to participate in the household labor. While two "feeble-looking women" arranged a meal for ten men, "the husband, with his hired man and two large boys, sat comfortably round the fire, not lifting one finger to assist; not so much as to bring the water or wood, or hold the unkempt, uncomfortable, and, of course, noisy and troublesome baby."<sup>31</sup> Although the husband offered to take care of the children so his wife might attend Pillsbury's lecture, the abolitionist considered this merely "insult added to injury," and he employed the incident as a text for his lecture. Pillsbury used traditional notions of masculinity and femininity—"two large boys" lounged while "two feeble-looking women" labored diligently. And yet he subverted these traditional gender stereotypes by employing them to call for a more equitable redistribution of household labor. Brawn became a badge of *unmanliness* when associated with the exploitation of women—or any oppressed group.

In denoting men's superior strength as a source of women's *oppression*, not their *protection*, Pillsbury exposed the roots of patriarchy and called on men to reverse the meaning of their physical manhood. He employed traditional ideas about men's bodies to guarantee women's equal position in society. In coordination with the Garrisonian condemnation of violence, both among anti-abolition mobs and slaveowners, pro-feminist abolitionists associated manliness with resistance to aggressive physical force.

If true manhood required a strong and healthy body, that body in turn required maintenance through prodigious self-control, the second element in Pillsbury's model of masculinity.

In espousing intelligent self-regulation as a requirement for true manhood, Pillsbury demanded both internal and external bodily restraint. For example, in

a letter to his daughter in 1853 Pillsbury lamented the lack of virtuous teachers in the west, providing a revealing description of disheveled and dissolute manhood: “[T]he teachers in some cases, are most ferocious fellows—Shaggy and ragged, dirty and uncouth, smokers and chewers of tobacco, swearing and swaggering, bearded and whiskered looking ruffians, I would as soon toss a child into a lion’s den, as to trust him under their care.”<sup>32</sup> These men appeared unruly in every way possible. They had unkempt and disordered clothing and filthy bodies, they indulged in the unsightly and noxious habit of tobacco use, they used repulsive language, and even their body hair proved out of control. Depicted as animal-like—ferocious and powerful lions—these men represented a danger to virtuous humanity, as embodied by children. Clean, neat and healthy, “manly” men ate, worked, and socialized with careful regularity and avoided excess of any kind—particularly intemperance.

Many social reformers perceived a distinct lack of self-control among American men and even within American institutions. The Garrisonians were especially disturbed with the lack of self-control they perceived among Southern men, who viciously abused slaves and also engaged in excessive drinking and violence.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the entire South seemed to lack self-discipline, according to the Garrisonians. And this sinful and decadent Southern slave system had infiltrated the nation’s politics and religions. Pillsbury expressed particular concern with “intemperate” American manhood as manifested in the nation’s political institutions. He discovered intemperance not only among individual politicians, but also within political parties and even republicanism itself. For example, he compared political parties to “the new fledged drunkard—every excess is a true and terrible prophecy of greater excesses to come, until the once gentle husband and tender father murders wife and children together, and then reels after them into eternity by drunken suicide.”<sup>34</sup> Intoxicated political parties, represented by the “once gentle husband and tender father,” threatened the existence of the nation, represented by “wife and children.” Highlighting this link between alcohol and the maltreatment of women and children, Pillsbury depicted a vision of American manhood which, while mendaciously claiming to protect womanhood, actually insulted and violated it. Just as drunken men abused women, so a drunken government abused its people. Although Pillsbury appealed to the stereotype of women as defenseless in order to gain the sympathy of his audience, he used this vision of womanhood to oppose violent “masculine” public policy.

Pillsbury had good reason to be anxious regarding intemperance. Improved technology, a booming economy, and an increased taste for whiskey led to an extraordinary rise in alcohol consumption in the first half of the nineteenth century. Americans drank more hard liquor between 1800 and 1830 than ever before or after.<sup>35</sup> Political celebrations were directly associated with public drunkenness and candidates relied on their ability to provide liquor as a powerful campaign tactic. This widespread alcohol abuse, along with tobacco fixation and

other “unclean” habits, galvanized Pillsbury’s conviction that manhood declined as impure bodily indulgences increased. “When men use tobacco as I saw some use it in New York,” asserted Pillsbury, “dollars and cents lose their value. It is not loss of money, but *manhood*, that is to be counted.”<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Pillsbury and many other Garrisonians linked abstinence with the noble temperament they believed necessary for antislavery work. “Alcohol has no charms for the genuine abolitionist,” explained Pillsbury, “and anti-slavery truth has less than none for the besotted drinker. Anti-slavery involves self-denial, and demands it, and self-indulgence will have no fellowship with our *stern anti-slavery fanaticism*.”<sup>37</sup>

While historians have accurately emphasized the conservative tendencies of many male reformers concerned with self-control, Pillsbury and other Garrisonians consistently employed this element of masculinity to promote radical pro-feminist goals.<sup>38</sup> A full-fledged teetotaler himself, Pillsbury saw temperance as a means of improving women’s lives—particularly women exploited by drunken husbands. However, he did not participate in the organized temperance movement of the 1830s and 1840s because he believed it failed to address the real problems created by drunkenness, and because many of its advocates proved to be exploitative and discriminatory themselves. Both Pillsbury and Frederick Douglass actively supported the creation of separate women’s temperance societies because, according to Douglass, women were “cramped and denied an equal share in the activities of other Temperance organizations.”<sup>39</sup> At a Tee-Total Convention in Concord, New Hampshire, Pillsbury introduced a resolution condemning all of the state’s temperance societies.<sup>40</sup> This castigation represented a careful negotiation of gender and power. Because Christian ministers, feminists’ and abolitionists’ most severe and persistent opponents, directed the early temperance movement, he maintained a critical position. Further, the language and focus of these temperance organizations highlighted the *maintenance* of sobriety among “respectable” middle-class men. Pillsbury and many female reformers, on the other hand, believed that temperance societies needed to directly confront drunkenness and its effects, such as wife- and child-abuse.<sup>41</sup> This focus on drunkenness tacitly singled out working-class men, especially immigrants, for chastisement, and reveals Pillsbury’s inability to escape the powerful pull of middle-class imperatives even as he tried to reconfigure middle-class manhood. Nonetheless, Pillsbury’s concern with self-control and sobriety distinguished itself from other middle-class male reformers who seemed more interested in maintaining middle-class hegemony than battling women’s oppression.

The Garrisonians’ focus on self-control was strongly influenced by their experience advocating radical antislavery among the people. Persistently attacked by out-of-control opponents—mostly men—Pillsbury and his peers associated self-restraint with virtuous manhood. The most faithful male advocates of women’s rights, like Nathaniel P. Rogers, Stephen S. Foster, and Pillsbury, were longtime field lecturers and nonresistants who learned the



practical and spiritual benefits of controlling one's passions, especially when outnumbered by unrestrained opponents.

Physical strength and self-control guided many Garrisonians toward a pro-feminist position, but "civic morality" sealed their position as uncompromising champions of the women's rights movement.

*It may be that right and wrong, truth and humanity, are but the misty dreams of moralists and poets. It may be that the nation can annihilate every remaining tribe of Indians, as it has most of them already, enslave all Africa, and seize all the Western Hemisphere as its own, and no Supreme Power hold it accountable. But woe is unto it, if the visions of prophets, the preaching of apostles, and the inward convictions of all true and honest men, shall ever, become reality.*<sup>42</sup>

In this powerful and prophetic warning Pillsbury linked radical reform, true manhood, and political action, with God, heaven, and the empowerment of the oppressed. Prophets and apostles, Pillsbury's preferred metaphors for radical reformers, vocally defended "truth and humanity," as represented by Indians, slaves and the colonized. However, radical reformers required the aid of virtuous American manhood. In his subtle summoning of all "true and honest men" to act on their "inward convictions" and thus protect justice and humanity, Pillsbury grounded American manhood in what I refer to as 'civic morality.'

Relying on Revolutionary-era notions of republicanism, Pillsbury emphasized three elements in civic morality: self-sacrifice, virtue, and independence. This definition of civic morality also represented a rejection of mid-nineteenth-century masculine values of self-interest and individualism, and a celebration of earlier notions of community and spiritual manhood. Pillsbury, however, modified these older visions of masculinity with a new progressive twist. He replaced the patriarchal and hierarchical elements of eighteenth-century society which had accompanied community-oriented manhood with a forward-looking vision of republican egalitarianism. Pillsbury firmly linked manhood and civic morality to a progressive political activism.

Distraught that young men seemed self indulgent and politically apathetic, Pillsbury confided to his daughter in 1878 his anxiety at the decay of American manliness. "What gives me profound apprehension as I travel is that so many native born American men seem growing up and getting old," he wrote, "without one noble impulse or aspiration, or apparent thought, to know any thing, to do any thing, to be any thing, or to suffer any thing beyond the most vulgar herd of rum drinking, tobacco chewing, blaspheming loafers and loungers, of fifty years ago."<sup>43</sup> Pillsbury, like most reformers, believed that men had a political and moral responsibility to improve their society. The key to this masculine responsibility,

and the linchpin to civic morality centered around self-sacrifice. Subordinating one's selfish interests for the greater good provided a virtuous foundation for political activity and American manhood. Garrisonians, in their willingness to set aside worldly success and endure the ostracism of their neighbors and communities, clearly set the standard for self-sacrifice. Pillsbury himself relied on the meager earnings of a lecturing agency—which often proved inadequate—to support his wife and daughter. Garrison regularly coaxed monetary “gifts” and loans from wealthy abolitionist patrons in order to support his family, while lecturing agents Stephen Foster and Abby Kelley Foster eked out a living on a small farm.

Just as most American men failed to practice self-sacrifice in their political lives, they also proved unwilling to exercise political independence, according to Pillsbury. Political participation in the nineteenth century changed dramatically in both practice and meaning. As political parties slowly discarded their reputation for corruption and anti-republicanism, they emerged as powerful new organizing forces in American politics.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, party loyalty became associated with manhood and political leaders chastised nonpartisan reformers as unmanly.<sup>45</sup> This transformation in the meaning of political participation and the gendering of party loyalty challenged radical Garrisonian abolitionists in particular because they adopted both an anti-government and anti-party position, and thus became vulnerable to charges of effeminacy. In response to these accusations Pillsbury denounced the privileging of partisanship and associated masculinity and virtue with earlier republican traditions of political independence. He adopted eighteenth-century criticisms of political parties as evil and sectarian because they encouraged men to vote the party line with little independent consideration of “public virtue” or “private morality.”<sup>46</sup> Only independent political activity, he argued, could “guard the old landmarks of truth, justice, honor and honesty,” and thereby promote virtuous social reform. Independence, in this case, denoted the opposite of nineteenth-century ideals of individualism; instead it symbolized selflessness and concern with the social good. Most feminists, at least following the Civil War, also embraced this definition of independence.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Pillsbury reversed the gendering of politics by denouncing partisanship as unmanly. “How much we need a host of independent, free, noble minded men, pledged to no party, no religious affiliation, no mere human ties of any kind—model men, in every high and divine sense of the word,” explained Pillsbury to William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., in 1892.<sup>48</sup>

Not surprisingly, American men in Pillsbury's view also failed to adhere to the final element of civic morality—virtue. Just as eighteenth century statesmen had feared that as society “progressed” it would become vulnerable to the corrupting influences of “civilization,” Pillsbury also bemoaned the corruption which he perceived as threatening society and manhood.<sup>49</sup> He located this corruption in part in the nation's political leaders, who he described as “anti-republican, anti-human, and anti-christian beasts of prey.”<sup>50</sup> Greedy and selfish,

these men personified the debilitating effects of individualism. Most Garrisonians agreed with Pillsbury, focusing particularly on the demoralizing influence of Southern slavery on political institutions and the nation itself. American politics (and manhood) desperately required an infusion of virtue.

Pillsbury's advocacy of civic morality, though distinctly radical for the period, reflected his class, regional, and religious background. Civic morality for Pillsbury, Foster, Rogers, and other pro-feminist men involved in part a paternalistic support for those disempowered by the institutions of American society. For example, Pillsbury employed a fatherly image of true manhood in his depiction of a fellow reformer: "A man with a conscience, singularly scrupulous and tender in behalf of justice and right for the lowliest and humblest of the human family, especially the colored race and women."<sup>51</sup> Real men understood and acquiesced in their obligation, as men, to protect, defend and support "the lowliest and humblest of the human family." Garrisonians based their philosophy of human rights activism at least in part on a Euro-American middle class understanding of uplift and improvement for the oppressed. They assumed that their definition of virtue, morality, and social justice had a universal appeal, and that those exploited and marginalized groups in society desired their advice and aid.

Civic morality, however, also proved very important in guiding Pillsbury toward a radical position on women's suffrage. In the antebellum period many Americans began to argue that women were, by nature, more virtuous and sacrificing than men. Therefore, in connecting self-sacrifice and virtue, two strongly "feminine" traits, to political participation and, further, in documenting the failure of men to practice these values, Pillsbury set the stage for women's suffrage. As men abandoned their duties of self-sacrifice and virtue, and political institutions suffered as a result, the nation required that women extend their influence to the public sphere. "Government languishes to-day for want of virtuous woman's influence and voice," argued Pillsbury in a women's suffrage editorial for the *Revolution*.<sup>52</sup> Many other Garrisonians also emphasized woman's moral nature as reason to enfranchise her (this would become a popular argument later in the decade). Theodore Parker, in arguing for women's political participation, claimed that while "men's moral action, at best, is only a sort of general human providence, . . . woman's moral action is more like a special human providence." Frederick Douglass claimed, "The vote of women is essential to the peace of the world."<sup>53</sup>

Even if men did adhere to civic morality in the political sphere, practicing virtue, self-sacrifice, and independence, these values *obligated* men to enfranchise women. Emphasizing paternalism *and* equality, Pillsbury contended that withholding suffrage from "the humblest human being" represented a "rebellion against the constitution of the moral universe."<sup>54</sup> "The question of suffrage is one of justice and right," he claimed. Although Pillsbury relied on an essentialist argument which assumed women's "natural" virtue and self-sacrifice, he also emphasized a moral argument which defined women as individuals who possessed political rights as independent citizens.

Pillsbury's employment of civic morality to support women's suffrage strongly reflected trends in the post-Civil War period among pro-feminist men. They believed that women's public participation would solve the problem of political corruption and public apathy during the Gilded Age. As William Leach has shown, many male reformers began to associate women's political role with the development of "social harmony" and the end to greed and self-interest within political institutions.<sup>55</sup>

Civic morality provided the spiritual and moral foundation to Pillsbury's model of manhood. True men certainly required strong bodies maintained through vigilant self-control, but without a spiritual and political commitment to human justice manhood shriveled. Rejecting individualism because it lacked even the slightest concern with virtue, Pillsbury instead embraced a more cooperative philosophy. He designed civic morality using older traditional elements of masculinity—self-sacrifice, independence, and virtue—but he built into these values progressive notions of egalitarianism and used them in support of radical politics.

These ideas about manhood certainly suggest a commitment to women's empowerment by Pillsbury and the Garrisonians. And yet Pillsbury eventually split with his abolitionist colleagues over the issue of women's rights. In order to understand this conflict, it is necessary to examine how ideas about gender affected Pillsbury and his pro-feminist peers in other areas of their lives, including sexuality, family life, and especially women's rights activism.

In March of 1863 Samuel May, Jr., the General Agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society, received a confidential letter from C. S. S. Griffing, a Western abolitionist, accusing Parker Pillsbury of the most scandalous impropriety. Griffing and his wife, Josephine, had often traveled and lectured with Pillsbury across the West during the 1850s. Griffing explained to May that during these lecturing excursions Pillsbury advocated and acted on a "free love" sexual philosophy.<sup>56</sup> Although Griffing admitted that Pillsbury publicly denied any support for free love, he contended that Pillsbury's opinions regarding marriage and women's rights were identical to those espoused by "free lovers." To prove his point, Griffing quoted extensively from an article penned by Pillsbury on the subject of marriage. In this article Pillsbury articulated the implications of the women's rights movement for the institution of marriage:

Equally connected with the enterprise [women's rights], are the subjects of Courtship, Marriage and Parenting and whatever pertains to the birth of children *who shall be their father, and* how they shall be reared and educated, *on none of these questions has woman yet been really consulted.* What ever may be the physical, moral defects and deformities of the husband, society holds her bound to transmit all these qualities to another generation.<sup>57</sup>

What seems like a critique of women's subordination within marriage and a call for women's full control over their bodies appeared to Griffing a declarative statement of free love. "*It was an advertisement of his position*" on free love, claimed Griffing, with the intention of gaining the confidence of the "*Liberals on the marriage question.*" Pillsbury, continued Griffing, even boasted "that he knew Women in Ohio who would be very glad to have him become the father of children for them."<sup>58</sup> If Pillsbury's own words (as filtered through Griffing's pen) were not proof enough of his heresy, Griffing also had both evidence and rumor to further his argument. During their last tour together in Indiana, Pillsbury exceeded the limits of Griffing's forbearance: "Myself, wife and Pillsbury were under the necessity of occupying the same sleeping apartment. The room was large and contained two beds some distance apart. In the morning, about sunrise, or a little after, Pillsbury got out of bed, *stripped himself, naked, washed himself, and walked about the room in a perfectly nude state*, entirely regardless of the presence of myself and wife."<sup>59</sup> As if this outrageous behavior might not be enough to prove his point (that Pillsbury gave antislavery a bad name), Griffing concluded his censorious missive by repeating the rumor that Pillsbury had engaged in sexual intercourse with one married and one unmarried woman.

Interspersed throughout this long diatribe was a running commentary on Pillsbury's role in the breakup of Griffing's marriage. Griffing clearly blamed Pillsbury for his wife's refusal to "receive me as her husband" and her eventual decision to leave him permanently. Despite the salient ulterior motives of Griffing, May decided to investigate the accusations. He wrote to the editor of the western *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, Marius R. Robinson, and requested his opinion on Pillsbury's moral character. Robinson dismissed Griffing's accusations, extolled Pillsbury, and added that Griffing had a history of condemning anyone who had befriended his estranged wife, going so far as to threaten those abolitionists who would consider hiring her as a lecturing agent.<sup>60</sup> With this confirmation, May explained to Griffing that he could not accept his accusations as reliable because he was not an unbiased observer.

This provocative incident raises the question of the function and status of sexuality for Pillsbury and its relation to masculinity. Like many reformers during this period, Pillsbury considered a healthy body absolutely necessary for individual and social improvement. As vegetarianism, Graham diets, water cures, and new advances in medicine fascinated the general population, radical reformers led the way in advocating rigid self-control in relation to the body.<sup>61</sup> This concern with bodily self-control motivated Pillsbury to support only reasonably regulated sexual relations as an element of true manhood. Abstinence was acceptable—and much preferred to lasciviousness.<sup>62</sup> Certainly the demand for individual self-restraint, especially among men, reflected a general trend in antebellum American sexuality.<sup>63</sup> Pillsbury, however, moved beyond popular trends to support women's control in the areas of sexual relations, marriage partner, divorce, and child-rearing—issues all of which helped to stimulate

Griffing's accusations. Long before moral educationists such as Lucinda Chandler advocated women's "self-ownership" and the "rationalization of sexual desire," Pillsbury, and a few other male and female radicals, called for the emancipation of women's bodies.<sup>64</sup> Clearly, Pillsbury's demand that men voluntarily yield such privileges to women frightened and enraged many—including Griffing, who found himself challenged by a wife who refused to engage in sexual relations and successfully sought a divorce.

Pillsbury considered the empowerment of women within marriage, particularly with regard to sexual relations, necessary for the progress and improvement of society. He articulated this conviction in an article written in 1853 (the same article Griffing cited)—complaining that women had no choice regarding sexual intercourse with their husbands. "To refuse compliance, is a violation of her marriage vows, even though she preserves herself as pure as vestal virgins."<sup>65</sup> The issue of women's sexual rights entered popular discourse in the early nineteenth century, as presumptions about women's supposed "passionlessness" seemed to entitle them the right to refuse intimacy, even with husbands. Historians have interpreted passionlessness as a useful tool for women because it was employed to limit procreation and because women's power consequently became associated with their moral and spiritual nature, not their sexuality.<sup>66</sup> Women's empowerment in the arena of marital sexual relations also became popular as an element of the nascent temperance movement, especially in the post-war period. Wives, temperance advocates argued, were entitled to refuse intimate relations with drunken and abusive husbands (but presumably not entitled to refuse sex with sober, responsible husbands). By the last third of the century even the courts acknowledged "sexual cruelty" as a legitimate means for divorce.<sup>67</sup> Pillsbury, however, eschewed "passionlessness" in his defense of women's sexual rights; instead, following the dictates of civic morality, he argued that justice and equality required that women, like men, ought to have complete control over their bodies. True men, he believed, respected women's sexual choices, even if this required abstinence.<sup>68</sup> Pillsbury and his wife Sarah probably acted on this conviction, as she had only a single child in their fifty-five-year marriage. A small family made sense for Sarah Pillsbury because she devoted much of her time to reform work, and because Parker traveled on average eight to ten months every year and barely earned enough to support even one child. Other abolitionist couples also had small families. Pillsbury's closest antislavery friends, Stephen Foster and spouse Abby Kelley Foster, for example, both active lecturing agents, also had only a single child in their long marriage.

Many male Garrisonian abolitionists joined Pillsbury in this vision of a feminist sexuality geared toward self-control and civic morality. Garrisonians emphasized the out-of-control sexual system which permeated southern slavery and called for a restrained sexual system in the North. Slaveowners, they argued, engaged in illicit sex with Black women and thus created a debauched system which affected everyone. Slave women had no control over their bodies or their

marriages. Garrisonians argued that self-control among men and self-ownership among women, in complete opposition to the sexual system which predominated in the South, was necessary in a democratic nation. Many radical abolitionists, therefore, proved to be sympathetic to women's sexual control.<sup>69</sup>

During the post-war period Pillsbury and other pro-feminist men also defended women's self-ownership in connection with the feminist trend toward "no secrets." Convinced that the concealment of sexual knowledge led to the exploitation of women's bodies and many unwanted pregnancies, feminists advocated the full and frank exposure of bodily functions as a legitimate element of young people's education.<sup>70</sup> Although such sexual openness sometimes made feminists vulnerable to public repudiation, as in the case of Griffing's harsh attack, Pillsbury and others persistently defended complete candidness in sexual matters. In 1879, for example, as the popular movement against "obscene" literature gained momentum, Pillsbury and other pro-feminist men defended the feminist journal *Truth Seeker* and its editor who was jailed for violating the Comstock law.<sup>71</sup>

Pillsbury defended a controversial philosophy of sexuality, but he did not advocate uninhibited sexual relations between men and women, as Griffing seemed to believe. Pillsbury's position on appropriate sexual behavior drew upon the position of free love advocates: he opposed the institution of marriage in its prevalent form because it subordinated women, and he advocated sexual intercourse only between two freely consenting people in love. For example, in an editorial entitled "Swapping Wives," written by Pillsbury in 1869, he described two couples, living in Salisbury, Massachusetts, who, unhappy in their marriages, decided to exchange partners, divorcing their first partner and remarrying their second. Both couples were "happy and harmonious" in their new partnerships. Bliss, however, did not last long: "A meddling community has just interfered and arrested all four, who, not able or willing to give sureties for appearance to court, are now in jail," Pillsbury explained. "The neighborhood could and did tolerate their matrimonial discords and contentions in a false union, for years," he continued, "but their felicity in the new and apparently real marriage, it could not endure."<sup>72</sup> Pillsbury's language resembled that of free love advocates who differentiated between "true" and "false" love. A marriage based on "false" love never received legitimization in the eyes of God or the experience of husband and wife. Any manifestation of "true" love, whether formalized in a first marriage or a second, was blessed with a virtuous legitimacy. Sarcastically highlighting the Calvinistic attitude of the community which disapproved of second marriages but approved unhappy first marriages, Pillsbury clearly dismissed any thoughtless adherence to unjust laws.

Pillsbury's notions of manhood imbued his understanding of sexuality. True men controlled their carnal urges and within healthy marriages sexual relations reflected the needs of both partners. Following the lead of progressive health reformers as well as women's rights activists, Pillsbury and his peers celebrated

a “feminine” sexuality, based on romantic love, egalitarianism, and full exposure of the body’s functions and desires. And yet, as Griffings’ free love accusations suggest, even in the 1850s many Garrisonian men did not approve of Pillsbury’s position on marriage and divorce. By 1860, as antislavery began to attract more converts and abolitionists like Garrison began to moderate their radicalism, even fewer men proved willing to advocate the unpopular cause of liberal divorce laws. While Pillsbury remained committed to his vision of masculinity and radicalism throughout the Civil War, other Garrisonians moderated their views of manhood just as they moderated their radicalism.

Pillsbury’s understanding of masculinity not only affected his perspective on sexuality, but it also influenced his relationship to his only child, Helen, and his wife, Sarah.

Writing home in December of 1851, far away on the eve of Christmas in the distant city of New York, Pillsbury penned a characteristically pedagogical letter to his daughter Helen, aged ten, encouraging her to dismiss the conventions of womanhood as defined by society, and concentrate on education, exercise, and ethics. “What progress are you making in the New Spelling Book, the New Testament and Plutarch?” he asked. “It is time for you to make study a part of every day’s business. . . . I hope by the time you are fourteen, you will have read all the books in the house that are worth reading and that you will have studied a great many things besides.”<sup>73</sup> Helen’s education was intended to discourage any tendencies toward conventional womanhood. “You won’t want to play with Dolls much more, because when you grow to be a woman, you will have more important work than to be nursing and tending babies,” Pillsbury advised. “Some, play with Dolls all the time till they grow to be women, and then with living babies afterwards; but such women never come to much.”<sup>74</sup> Pillsbury also discouraged the typical restrictive clothing and limited exercise usually dictated by womanhood: good health and a strong body were important. “I hope. . . that you can go out on the coldest days and walk a mile, facing the wind, and back again, with your cheeks as hot and red as a dish of cranberry sauce.” Further, he continued, “I want you to calculate on being somebody besides a puny, pale, paling, puckered up, froze up, and starched up and whaleboned up little mammy, afraid of a cow and of cold, and of damp and of dark, and of everything else.”<sup>75</sup> Pillsbury hoped that his daughter would be intelligent, strong and healthy, but most important, he wanted her to be virtuous. “O I am sick of almost all the girls I see, that I long for one to set the world an example,” he explained. “You must try and make something a little different from the common standards. You must be *good* first. . . . Then after you are good you must intend to be wise and learned. . . . You must strive for high degrees of goodness and knowledge.”<sup>76</sup> In delineating the elements of ideal femininity to his daughter Pillsbury generated a vision of womanhood distinctly similar to manhood—although he concluded his letter to Helen by encouraging her to “know how to keep house as well as any lady in Concord.”<sup>77</sup>

Predictably, Pillsbury’s advice to his daughter included strict body regulations—sobriety, cleanliness, and tidiness. He disapproved of fashion and



supported comfortable, quality clothing for women. Pillsbury went so far as to explain his personal preferences in fabric to his daughter: “Were I a woman, it now seems to me I would always wear the *standard* articles—that is, those *always in fashion*. . . . I would no more notice all the styles that come up from year to year, then I do the shape of all the withered leaves round a caterpillars nest.”<sup>78</sup> Fashion symbolized the uncontrolled and indulgent nature of popular visions of womanhood which Pillsbury hoped his daughter would reject. Moreover, as department stores increased in the 1850s and 1860s and fashion became widely available to middle-class women, Pillsbury and many other radicals interpreted this rising obsession with stylish dress as a threat to feminism.<sup>79</sup> While some progressive women, such as Jane Croly, saw in large department stores the democratization of fashion and the potential freedom of middle-class women, others like Pillsbury rejected fashion as restrictive and confining, and condemned department stores for their tendency toward monopoly and exploitative labor policies.<sup>80</sup> A longtime proponent of dress reform, Pillsbury taught his daughter that fashionable clothes reinforced women’s dependence by defining femininity as consumption and artificiality. He associated dress reform with nature, simplicity, and intelligence. In commenting on a British family’s visit to the United States, for example, Pillsbury wrote to his daughter, “I am told the Ladies could always be selected from almost any company of Americans, by the plain, solid, but rich quality of their dresses, and by having on no useless edgings, fripperies or ornaments. [This is] exactly what has long seemed to me the best style in which a lady can appear.”<sup>81</sup> Not surprisingly, many of the strongest male supporters for dress reform could be found among the Garrisonians, including pro-feminist men like Samuel J. May and Wendell Phillips.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to advocating comfortable and unrestrictive clothing, Pillsbury encouraged his daughter to hone her intellectual skills. Focusing on self-control, Pillsbury explained to his daughter that the development of critical thinking and writing skills required regular study and relentless concentration. The frivolous play of young womanhood had to be eschewed in order to develop one’s intellect. “We must learn to make ourselves happy by reading, and if we have no books, by writing, and if we have no pen and paper, by thinking. . . .” Parker wrote his daughter. “I have felt afraid that little girls of our neighborhood loved play and doll-dressing rather too well. You must try to set them good examples.”<sup>83</sup> Also emphasizing civic morality, Pillsbury argued that a strong education helped mold young people into responsible and *useful* citizens and Christians. “You must remember *the business* of life, is *work* and *study*, that is, something useful,” Parker cautioned Helen. “Something that does more lasting good to ourselves and others, than play or sport.”<sup>84</sup> With the growth of female education during the antebellum period, middle-class young girls like Helen had the opportunity to attend both public and private female schools for the first time. Although early educational reformers like Emma Willard and Catharine Beecher focused on the importance of domestic-training, these female schools often directed young



**Figure 2: Sarah Pillsbury. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society, #F4406.**

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women toward interests outside the domestic sphere.<sup>85</sup> Distinguishing himself from those who promoted female education in order to make women better daughters, wives, and mothers, Pillsbury pragmatically advocated female education in order to make women better citizens.

In teaching his daughter the dictates of virtuous humanity and responsible womanhood, Pillsbury remained true to his conception of masculinity. His concern with Helen's independence, education, activity, strength, and virtue reflected his assumptions about true manhood. She, too, needed to follow the requirements of civic morality. And yet Pillsbury never completely conflated femininity and masculinity to promote an androgynous vision of gender. A harmonious social system required intelligent, healthy, and self-restrained men *and* women, but each sex still had special and distinct roles. Men needed to employ their superior physical strength and endurance to protect and defend the downtrodden of society, while women had to use their superior moral instincts and sensitivity to guarantee a peaceful and virtuous society.

Pillsbury's relationship to his wife, Sarah, reflected his belief that men and women had particular kinds of roles. During their first two years of marriage Sarah and Parker developed a viable method for accommodating the antislavery lecturing tours which kept him away from home. Sarah sometimes accompanied

him, visiting with friends and relatives, and probably helping him prepare for his meetings.<sup>86</sup> During these early years Sarah and Parker managed to establish a relationship based on cooperation and respect, and centered around their participation within the antislavery movement, not unlike many other radical abolitionist couples.<sup>87</sup> Sarah not only traveled with Parker and participated in his career, but also developed her own leadership role within the female antislavery movement. She guided the small Concord Female Anti-Slavery Society, hosting meetings and directing fund-raising efforts in coordination with other women's antislavery organizations. She also influenced a small group of women to renounce their church membership due to the church's acceptance of slavery.<sup>88</sup> As Parker developed his radical position in the national movement, denouncing the church and state in meetings across New England, Sarah worked at the local level, attempting to cultivate a strong antislavery sentiment among Concord women. Laboring toward a common end, Sarah and Parker produced a "partnership of equals."<sup>89</sup> And yet from the onset this partnership presumed a distinct separation of roles based on sex. After the birth of their daughter, Sarah remained at home and cared for Helen while Parker continued his peripatetic lifestyle. The early partnership consequently developed into a gendered hierarchy. Many other radical abolitionist couples experienced similar problems linked to childrearing. Despite a firm commitment to women's rights many of these pro-feminist men took a secondary role in childcare responsibilities. William Lloyd Garrison's wife remained primarily within the domestic sphere, raising their children, while Stephen Foster, Henry Blackwell and other abolitionist men attempted to encourage their wives to maintain their public careers, but did little to relieve their childrearing duties.<sup>90</sup>

While the burden of raising her daughter almost completely on her own proved an arduous task for Sarah Pillsbury, Parker's longterm absences also left her lonely and insecure. Parker averaged at least eight-to-ten months away from home every year between 1840 and the 1890s. Although Sarah often entertained reformers and relatives visiting Concord, she did not establish close ties with many other people in the community besides her small antislavery group. Her own radicalism as well as Parker's probably accounted for their isolation in Concord. Moreover, Sarah often heard rumors about her husband's supposed illicit behavior from gossiping neighbors and newspapers. She wrote to Parker in 1856 that she often endured injurious remarks "intimating to me that you like other men and liked to be abroad where you could become familiar with other and many women."<sup>91</sup> Although Sarah claimed to disbelieve these rumors she did express some concern at Pillsbury's close relations with other antislavery women. During Parker's two-and-one-half year expedition to Europe in the mid-1850s, for example, he developed an intensely close relationship with the single and wealthy English reformer Mary Estlin, who helped nurse him back to good health after a very serious illness. Although Sarah responded with a glorification of Estlin in her letters to Parker, it became clear that she wondered about the nature

of this friendship. For example, in the same letter that Sarah denounced free love as “forbidding and repulsive” she also parenthetically asked, “Parker dear, do you ever give her [Mary Estlin] an affectionate and friendly kiss? If so, just put one sometimes upon her cheek for me.”<sup>92</sup> Parker showed little sensitivity to Sarah’s concerns in his responses, often lavishly praising Estlin and even encouraging Sarah to consider Estlin a role model! Although there is little direct evidence of Parker’s infidelity, it is clear that his longterm absences gave him a great deal of freedom and power in his relationship with Sarah and further cemented the gendered hierarchy in their home.

While Pillsbury’s progressive masculinity influenced him to push his daughter toward independence, it did not manifest itself so positively in his marriage. The paternalistic element of manhood which demanded that men protect the oppressed also led Pillsbury to treat his wife as one who required both protection and instruction. He did not view Sarah as an equal, but rather as a beloved student or child who needed his benign aid.

Pillsbury’s masculinity manifested itself not only in his private relationship to his family and his understanding of sexuality, but also in his public commitment to women’s rights.

Long before the struggle among feminists over the Fifteenth Amendment, Pillsbury and other Garrisonians faithfully supported women’s claims for legal, political, and social equality. Although abolition claimed most of Pillsbury’s time and energy between 1840 and 1865, he sporadically penned articles condemning women’s oppression and attended women’s rights conventions.<sup>93</sup> His feminist analysis as developed in his public writings prior to his work on the *Revolution* reflected a broad understanding of the diverse foundation of women’s oppression. During the debates over the appropriate role of women in antislavery societies, for example, Pillsbury, like many of his pro-feminist colleagues, compared women’s position in society to that of slaves. He denounced the opponents of women’s full participation in abolition as “infected with that kind of womanphobia, which holds the feminine gender of humanity where the slaveholder does his human chattels, in subserviency to the will of others.”<sup>94</sup>

By the late 1850s Pillsbury moved beyond his abolitionist colleagues in his denunciation of women’s subordination within the family and support for liberal divorce laws. At the 1860 National Women’s Rights Convention Elizabeth Cady Stanton introduced a resolution supporting a progressive divorce law. Wendell Phillips and Garrison opposed Stanton’s resolution because, Phillips argued, marriage and divorce were inappropriate issues for discussion at a convention intended to address *women’s* legal inequities. Divorce, they asserted, affected both men and women equally. Even *prior* to this convention, however, Pillsbury bemoaned the failure of the women’s rights movement to address the issue of marital injustices. In commenting on a women’s rights convention in 1859, for example, Pillsbury explained to Phillips: “I longed to hear some one hurl a thunderbolt into our present marriage and Divorce Laws, and whatever else needs

over-hauling in the social system.”<sup>95</sup> Male dominance within the institution of marriage, grounded in legal, religious, and cultural presumptions, ignited Pillsbury’s singular opposition because it flew in the face of civic morality and true manhood. While other radical men during the period around the Civil War moderated their radicalism, especially in regard to women’s rights, in order to appeal to a wide audience, and seemed threatened by even the discussion of these issues (Phillips wanted to have Stanton’s divorce resolution stricken from the records)—Pillsbury’s masculine identity thrived on such battles.

By the end of the Civil War Pillsbury’s vision of manhood and support for women’s rights diverged completely from his Garrisonian colleagues. He sided with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in opposition to almost every other active abolitionist over the issue of the failure of Radical Republicans to enfranchise women as well as Black men through the Fifteenth Amendment.<sup>96</sup> This feminist position led him to a full-time commitment to the cause of women’s suffrage, including five years of lecturing, traveling, and editing the *Revolution*. Pillsbury’s decision cost him the friendships of many of his abolitionist friends and devastated him for years. “It is more than kind and friendly in you still to remember me in my exile and low estate,” he wrote Ellen Wright Garrison, wife of William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., in 1869. “My Boston correspondence has long since ceased. It may be fault of my own, but I could not help it. I saw an opportunity to strike a blow for woman, and to resist the conviction I felt, was not possible.”<sup>97</sup>

Pillsbury’s conflict with his colleagues makes sense within the context of the changing conditions of antislavery in the late 1850s and 1860s. Even before this divide over the Fifteenth Amendment, Pillsbury had differed with his Garrisonian colleagues over other issues. His intense anticlericalism offended many of his Boston associates, as did his tendency to condemn more conservative abolitionists. This radicalism eventually led to a permanent rift with other Garrisonians, who embraced a more moderate antislavery in the 1850s. Throughout the Civil War Pillsbury rebuked the Garrisonians for their willingness to compromise their convictions, and their failure to maintain civic morality.<sup>98</sup> Even though all that was needed, according to Pillsbury, was a “stern manly resistance” to Southern tyranny, Garrisonians seemed to be bending with the wind.<sup>99</sup> As abolition became a more popular movement during the war Garrisonians proved willing to temper their radicalism in order to maintain the appeal of antislavery. Most abolitionists, for example, publicly supported Lincoln and his conservative policies during the war (but also pressured him privately to free the slaves). Pillsbury and a few other antislavery lecturers rejected this moderate approach and instead censured Lincoln for his refusal to immediately abolish slavery. Further, in their opposition to the war they rejected a direct connection between manhood and physical combat. In an editorial in 1861 entitled, “The Hour Without the Man,” Pillsbury anguished over the lack of true men courageous enough to act on civic morality and perform “the sublimest, divinest act of honor, justice and humanity”—emancipating the slaves.<sup>100</sup> He argued that until abolition was declared an

objective of the war it was *cowardly to fight*, and he challenged young men to stay home. “Die in the arms of your sisters, wives, sweethearts,” he cried. “Die martyrs, and get the burial of men, rather than go down there to die and be buried like dogs, in behalf of slavery.”<sup>101</sup> Subverting traditional images of manhood and war Pillsbury reminded his readers that the only legitimate war was that against slavery, and true men would not fight to defend a false union. Pillsbury’s division with his Garrisonian peers, therefore, came amidst a general moderating trend among the radicals which Pillsbury vehemently opposed.

In the nineteenth century Americans refashioned their ideas about gender to accommodate economic change and social dislocation, looking to establish new forms of authority and power where old hierarchical traditions had declined. Amidst this transformation women began to challenge their restricted role in society and, in so doing, redefined femininity. Men, too, developed alternative conceptions of masculinity—some celebrated a hyper-masculinity symbolized by the violent and individualistic Davy Crockett, while others looked back to older notions of manhood and longed for Christian self-restraint and community-oriented values.

Pillsbury and a small but noisy group of progressive male reformers developed a pro-feminist masculinity which, while incorporating many traditional elements of manhood, rejected male superiority. In fact, Pillsbury’s use of various characteristics of traditional masculinity allowed him to engage in a dialogue with his fellow citizens—he appealed to familiar meanings and practices while simultaneously subverting them to advocate a moral and progressive masculinity. He advocated manly vigor as a tool to defend the exploited; he employed self-control to support a pro-feminist temperance movement; and his call for civic morality included the championing of women’s suffrage, sexual freedom, the right to divorce, and many other feminist issues.

In the antebellum period many male abolitionists joined Pillsbury in supporting women’s rights. Certainly their radical politics predisposed them toward this position, and yet, their vision of manhood further explains their pro-feminist support. Many aspects of Garrisonian antislavery influenced them toward their understanding of manliness. Their interaction with mob opposition led them to associate bodily strength and self-control with aid to the oppressed, including slaves and women. Civic morality reflected their rejection of political parties and their strong focus on moral suasion as a political tool. During the Civil War, however, Pillsbury’s ideas about manhood and his radicalism no longer represented other Garrisonians. By this time many Garrisonians began to abandon the tactics which had led them to a progressive masculinity, including moral suasion, rejection of political parties, and nonviolent response to mob attack.

In the decades after the war most pro-feminist abolitionist men had either died or moved on to other causes and a new generation of pro-feminist men emerged. These men, as Michael Kimmel has shown, emphasized women’s

virtue and morality even more than the Garrisonians, and denounced the popular masculine ideals of competition and material gain.<sup>102</sup> They also celebrated a utopian vision of social harmony based on scientific progress. Pillsbury bridged this transition in pro-feminist men's history, steadfastly committed to the same masculine values he had embraced earlier, he simply adapted his views to the new emphasis on science and cooperation. He had always been concerned with the body and so comfortably supported efforts to control it even further through studies of heredity and evolution.

Although Pillsbury and his pro-feminist colleagues (both before and after the war) responded to the same social disorder which disturbed other conservative reformers, they adopted a more progressive solution. Influenced by a vision of manhood which seemed both backward-looking, focusing on community and social virtue, and forward-looking, concerned with equal rights and opportunities, these male reformers enthusiastically responded to the call of their female coadjutors and rejected male dominance in support of a harmonious and egalitarian society.

## Notes

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1. For more on the controversy between abolitionists and women's rights supporters over the Fifteenth Amendment see Bettina Aptheker, "Abolitionism, Woman's Rights and the Battle over the Fifteenth Amendment," in *Woman's Legacy: Essays on Race, Sex, and Class in American History* (Amherst, 1982), 9-52; Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869* (Ithaca, 1978), 162-202; Ellen Carol DuBois, "Outgrowing the Compact of the Fathers: Equal Rights, Woman Suffrage, and the United States Constitution, 1820-1878," *Journal of American History* 74 (December 1987), 836-62; and Lana F. Rakow and Cheri Kramarae, eds., *The Revolution in Words: Righting Women 1868-1871* (New York, 1990).

2. "What the Press Say of Us: In the Meriden, Conn., *Literary Recorder*," *The Revolution*, 30 July 1868. Emphasis added.

3. See the following: Michael S. Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective," in *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*, ed. Harry Brod (Boston, 1987), 121-153; and Michael S. Kimmel and Thomas E. Mosmiller, eds., *Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776-1990: A Documentary History* (Boston, 1992), 47.

4. Men who supported women's rights in the nineteenth century were often referred to as "Aunt Nancy" men or "miss Nancys" or "man-milliners." See Kimmel and Mosmiller, *Against the Tide*, 6.

5. The term "Garrisonian" refers to the group of radical abolitionists led by William Lloyd Garrison. In 1840 the antislavery movement divided between the more moderate abolitionists geared toward working with religious and political institutions, and the radical Garrisonians who pressured for immediate abolitionism and rejected working with established institutions. The Garrisonians also embraced a variety of other reform efforts, including women's rights and peace. For a discussion of the Garrisonians see Aileen S. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850* (New York, 1967). For more on the various groups within the antislavery

movement see Lawrence J. Friedman, *Gregarious Saints: Self and Community in American Abolitionism, 1830-1870* (New York, 1982).

6. For more on Pillsbury see Louis Filler, "Parker Pillsbury: An Antislavery Apostle," *New England Quarterly* 19 (September 1946), 315-37; and Stacey M. Robertson, "Parker Pillsbury, Antislavery Apostle: Gender and Religion in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Radicalism" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1994).

7. Garrisonians embraced disunionism and anticlericalism in the early 1840s. Both were based on the religious call to "come out" from sinful institutions. Believing the Constitution and Union to be proslavery, Garrison called for the North to secede from the Union and thus escape the sinful influences of the South. Religious institutions were equally proslavery and so Garrisonians encouraged abolitionists to abandon their church memberships as well. See John L. Thomas, *The Liberator: William Lloyd Garrison* (Boston, 1963), 328-37.

8. This paper relies on Joan Scott's two-part definition of gender in which she argues that gender is "a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes," but also a "primary way of signifying relationships of power." See Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, 1988), 42.

9. For example, women's historians have documented how definitions of femininity during this period seemed to aid in industrialization. The association of middle-class white womanhood with an exaggerated domesticity blended well with the new separation of the sexes caused by industrialization. Men's work moved to factories and offices and most women were left in the home. By glorifying women's domestic role and encouraging "true women" to offer working men a comfortable, pleasant, and safe home environment, this new gender ideology made the transition to industrial work more acceptable for both men and women. See Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven, 1977). Paula Baker argues that changing definitions of femininity were also related to the antebellum political context—as all white men gained the vote (thus clearly distinguishing political rights by sex) and as government decreased its role in regulating the "social behavior of its citizenry," women were encouraged to take on these duties which had been abandoned by the government, primarily through participation in moral reform societies. Moreover, definitions of womanhood conveniently became associated with public virtue. See Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984), 620-47.

10. For more on the variety of masculinities in the nineteenth century see all of the articles in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago, 1990), but particularly, Clyde Griffen, "Reconstructing Masculinity from the Evangelical Revival to the Waning of Progressivism: A Speculative Synthesis," 183-204; and E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York, 1993). On working-class masculinity see Ava Baron, "The Masculinization of Production: The Gendering of Work and Skill in U.S. Newspaper Printing, 1850-1920," in *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History*, ed. Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby (Ithaca, 1992), 277-88, and Mary H. Blewett, "Manhood and the Market: The Politics of Gender and Class among the Textile Workers of Fall River, Massachusetts, 1870-1880," in *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor*, ed. Ava Baron (Ithaca, 1991), 92-113. On race and masculinity see Gail Bederman, "'Civilization,' the Decline of Middle-Class Manliness, and Ida B. Wells' Lynching Campaign (1892-94)," *Radical History Review* 52 (Winter 1992), 5-30. On masculinity and antislavery see Kristin Hoganson, "Garrisonian Abolitionists and the Rhetoric of Gender, 1850-1860," *American Quarterly* 45 (December 1993), 558-95; Margaret M. R. Kellow, "'For the Sake of Suffering Kansas': Lydia Maria Child, Gender and the Politics of the 1850s," *Journal of Women's History* 5 (Fall 1993), 32-49; Ronald G. Walters, "The Erotic South: Civilization and Sexuality in American Abolitionism," *American Quarterly* 25 (May 1973), 177-201; and Donald Yacovone, "Abolitionists and the 'Language of Fraternal Love,'" in *Meanings for Manhood*, 85-95.

11. See E. Anthony Rotundo, "Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920," *Journal of Social History* 16 (Summer 1983), 23-38.

12. Although E. Anthony Rotundo has convincingly argued in *American Manhood* that the term "manhood" often meant "adulthood" in the nineteenth century, Pillsbury understood manliness as a gendered concept. True men achieved manhood through very particular activities and duties, according to Pillsbury. This article analyzes those activities and duties.

13. In fact, in May of 1840 the nation's premiere abolition organization, the American Anti-Slavery Society, split in two over the immediate issue of women's appropriate participation in the society. At their annual meeting longtime antislavery lecturer Abby Kelley became the first woman elected to the all-important Business Committee. Kelley's election outraged many conservative abolitionists and they left the meeting to create the rival Ameri-



can and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society which excluded women from voting or holding office. Although the conflict between these two organizations involved larger issues, including the meaning of reform, the question of gender proved volatile enough to spark an impassable divide. For a description of the election of Abby Kelley to the Business Committee see Dorothy Sterling, *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and the Politics of Antislavery* (New York, 1991), 94-106. For a more general discussion of women in antislavery see DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, Debra Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Anti-Slavery Society* (Amherst, 1993), Blanche Glassman Hersh, *The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America* (Urbana, 1978), Gerda Lerner, "The Political Activities of Antislavery Women," in *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York, 1979), 112-128, Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, *The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke* (Chapel Hill, 1974), Alma Lutz, *Crusade for Freedom: Women of the Antislavery Movement* (Boston, 1968), Dorothy Sterling, "The Antislavery Ladies," in *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1984), 119-150, Janice Sumler-Lewis, "The Forten-Purvis Women of Philadelphia and the American Anti-Slavery Crusade," *Journal of Negro History* 66 (Winter 1981-82), 281-88, Wendy Hammand Venet, *Neither Ballets Nor Bullets: Women Abolitionists and the Civil War* (Charlottesville, 1991), Carolyn L. Williams, "Religion, Race and Gender in Antebellum American Radicalism: The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1833-1870" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991), Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860* (Knoxville, 1992), Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven, 1989), and Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca, 1994).

14. For more on feminist-abolitionist couples see Hersh, *Slavery of Sex*, 218-51.

15. And yet, as the historian Kristin Hoganson has shown, despite their women's rights activism many pro-feminist men (including Pillsbury) employed traditional gender ideals in their antislavery rhetoric, emphasizing slave men's inability to protect their female dependents, and slave women's inability to fulfill their domestic roles as mothers and wives. Hoganson, "Garrisonian Abolitionists."

16. See William Leach, *True Love and Perfect Union: The Feminist Reform of Sex and Society* (New York, 1980).

17. For more on men's reactions to the women's rights movement see the following two articles by Michael Kimmel: "Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity"; and "Men's Responses to Feminism at the Turn of the Century," *Gender and Society* 1 (September 1987), 261-83.

18. Personal History Form for *Boston Journal*, John Eastman Pecker Papers, MSS, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N.H.

19. Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, "The Hancock Convention," *Herald of Freedom*, 21 October 1842.

20. Parker Pillsbury, "New England Correspondence," *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, 12 March 1853.

21. *Journal of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. E. W. Emerson and W. E. Forbes, 7 (Boston, 1912), 202.

22. Parker Pillsbury, "New England Correspondence," *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, 20 August 1853.

23. Parker Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 8 May 1878, J. G. Whittier Collection, Wardman Library, Whittier College, Whittier, Calif. Pillsbury's concern with the decline in popularity and status of yeoman farmers represented a common concern among many Northern reformers. See, for example, William Ellery Channing, *Lecture on the Elevation of the Laboring Portion of the Community* (Boston, 1840).

24. Parker Pillsbury, "The Mob and the Ministers on the Cape," *Liberator*, 24 November 1848.

25. Nathaniel P. Rogers, "Lecturing Agents," *Herald of Freedom*, 31 August 1839; Parker Pillsbury, "Convention at Livonia," *Liberator*, 15 February 1861.

26. On male athleticism see Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 222-46; and Rotundo, "Body and Soul." See also Susan Curtis' description of the emergence of a masculinized Jesus, "The Son of Man and God the Father: The Social Gospel and Victorian Masculinity," in *Meanings for Manhood*. On muscular Christianity in Britain see J. A. Mangan, "Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in late Victorian and Edwardian England," in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America*, eds. J. A. Mangan and James Walvin (New York, 1987).

27. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Davy Crockett as Trickster: Pornography, Liminality and Symbolic Inversions in Victorian America," in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York, 1985), 108.

28. Parker Pillsbury, "Woman's Work and Wages," *The Revolution*, 22 April 1869.

29. *Ibid.*

30. "Biographical: Parker Pillsbury, The Reformer," date and newspaper unknown, Parker Pillsbury Papers, Box 9, Folder 2, Concord Public Library Historical Materials Collection, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N.H..
31. "Letter from Mr. Pillsbury," *Liberator*, 16 November 1860.
32. Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 3 October 1853, J. G. Whittier Collection.
33. For more on the importance of self-discipline among abolitionists see Ronald Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York, 1978), 77-100.
34. Letter to the Editor from Parker Pillsbury, *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, 4 August 1848.
35. See W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (Oxford, 1979).
36. "Letter from Parker Pillsbury," *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 18 March 1852.
37. Parker Pillsbury, "Teetotal Convention," *Herald of Freedom*, 4 September 1840.
38. See Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millenium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York, 1978), and Clyde S. Griffing, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control, 1815-1860," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44 (December 1957), 423-44.
39. Philip S. Foner, ed., *Frederick Douglass on Women's Rights* (New York, 1992), 60.
40. His resolution stated: "Resolved, That the Temperance Societies in this State have proved recreant to their trust, and have suffered the great cause of Humanity to decline under their unfaithful management and want of zeal in its behalf." See "State Tee-Total Convention," *Herald of Freedom*, 18 September 1840.
41. By the middle of the century women, primarily concerned with protecting womanhood and punishing besotted manhood, dominated most temperance organizations. See Barbara L. Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in the Nineteenth Century America* (Middleton, Conn., 1981).
42. Statement of Parker Pillsbury, May 1845, Papers of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, MSS, Library of Congress, Washington D. C.
43. Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 8 May 1878, J. G. Whittier Collection.
44. See Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (Princeton, N.J., 1961), Ronald Formisano, "Deferential-Participant Politics: The Early Republics Political Culture, 1789-1840," *American Political Science Review* 68 (1974), 473-87, and Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System* (Berkeley, 1969).
45. See Baker, "The Domestication of American Politics."
46. Pillsbury to Gerrit Smith, 23 September 1868, Gerrit Smith Papers, George Arents Research Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y.
47. See Leach, *True Love*.
48. Pillsbury to William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., 12 February 1892, Garrison Family Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.
49. For a discussion of republicanism and the political economy see Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill, 1980).
50. "Ninth Annual Meeting of the Essex County Anti-Slavery Society," *Herald of Freedom*, 21 July 1843.
51. "Editorial Correspondence," *The Revolution*, 11 March 1868.
52. Parker Pillsbury, "Noisy Women and Gentle Women," *The Revolution*, 12 August 1869.
53. Kimmel and Mosmiller, *Against the Tide*, 216-17. Foner, *Frederick Douglass*, 96.
54. Parker Pillsbury, "The Mortality of Nations, an Address Delivered Before the American Equal Rights Association," 9 May 1867, Parker Pillsbury Papers, Concord Public Library Historical Materials Collection.
55. See Leach, *True Love*.
56. "Free love" in nineteenth-century America was a term of opprobrium. It was used by its detractors as a denotation of sexual impropriety. Its proponents, on the other hand, argued that free love involved opposition to marriage laws which denigrated women and support for sexual intercourse which was based on love, not economic or legal ties. It was not, they contended, a call for frequent and uninhibited sexual relations. See Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Boston, 1989), 127-36, Leach, *True Love*, Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet and Debility in Jacksonian America* (Westport, Conn., 1980), and Hal D. Sears, *The Sex Radicals: Free Love in High Victorian America* (Lawrence, 1977).
57. Emphasis in original. C. S. S. Griffing to Samuel May, Jr., 1 March 1863, Parker Pillsbury Collection, MS B.1.6 vol. 9, no. 87, MSS, Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass. Griffing accurately quoted Pillsbury's article, which appeared in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, 20 April 1853.
58. Griffing to May, 1 March 1863.
59. Ibid.

60. Marius R. Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., 24 April 1863, Parker Pillsbury Collection, MS B.1.6 vol. 9, no. 91, MSS, Boston Public Library.

61. On Pillsbury's concern with diet and good health see, for example, Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 7 March 1850, and Pillsbury to Sarah Pillsbury, 14 February 1856, J. G. Whittier Collection. For information on similar trends in relation to the body and health in Victorian England see Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978).

62. For example, Pillsbury told his wife in a letter from England that she should assure her bachelor brother, Charles Sargent "to hold his head and maintain his right to sleep alone as long as he pleases. A true man's history can be written in other characters *than baby hieroglyphics*." Parker Pillsbury to Sarah Pillsbury, 14 February 1856, J. G. Whittier Collection.

63. See John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York, 1988), 66-73, and Leach, *True Love*, 19-37.

64. See Leach, *True Love*, 85-106.

65. Parker Pillsbury, "New England Correspondence," *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, 20 April 1853.

66. During the colonial period women were considered dangerous as a result of their powerful and "uncontrolled" sexual nature. Although the nineteenth-century ideology of passionlessness disarmed women's sexual power they gained status as spiritual and moral beings. See Nancy Cott, "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790-1850," *Signs* 4 (Winter 1978), 219-36, D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 45-6, 70-71, and Ellen Rothman, *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 119-43.

67. See the following articles by Robert L. Griswold: "Divorce and the Legal Redefinition of Victorian Manhood," in *Meanings for Manhood*, 96-110, "The Evolution of the Doctrine of Mental Cruelty in Victorian American Divorce, 1790-1900," *Journal of Social History* 20 (Fall 1986), 127-48, "Law, Sex, Cruelty, and Divorce in Victorian America, 1840-1900," *American Quarterly* 38 (Winter 1986), 721-45, and "Sexual Cruelty and the Case for Divorce in Victorian America," *Signs* 2 (Spring 1986), 529-41. Even some physicians toward the end of the century expounded on the sexual exploitation of women and the need to regulate male promiscuity. See John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana, 1974), 236-70.

68. In his egalitarian perspective on sexuality Pillsbury distinguished himself from other antebellum male moral reformers whose concerns with controlling male sexuality, according to Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, reflected anxiety about "unattached and futureless young men" in a time of economic and social disruption. Unlike female moral reformers who were concerned with the double standard and sexual exploitation (much like Pillsbury), male moral reformers were motivated by the youthful male challenge to their own power. See Smith-Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast and the Militant Woman in Jacksonian America," *American Quarterly* 23 (October 1971), 562-84, and "Sex as a Symbol in Victorian Purity: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Jacksonian America," *American Journal of Sociology* 84 Supplement (1978), 212-47.

69. See Hoganson, "Garrisonian Abolitionists"; and Walters, "The Erotic South."

70. See Leach, *True Love*, 38-63.

71. See Leach's discussion of this event in *True Love*, 62-3.

72. Parker Pillsbury, "Swapping Wives," *The Revolution*, 24 June 1869.

73. Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 24 December 1851, Parker Pillsbury Papers, Box 12, Folder 9, Concord Public Library Historical Materials Collection.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Ibid.*

78. Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 18 August 1853, J. G. Whittier Collection.

79. See Leach, *True Love*, 213-62.

80. See Parker Pillsbury, "The Largest Store," *Revolution*, 3 September 1868.

81. Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 18 August 1853, J. G. Whittier Collection.

82. On May see Mari Jo and Paul Buhle, eds., *The Concise History of Woman Suffrage: Selections From the Classic Works of Stanton, Anthony, Gage, and Harper* (Urbana, 1978), 9. On Phillips see Andrea Moore Kerr, *Lucy Stone: Speaking Out For Equality* (New Brunswick, 1992), 63.

83. Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 17 April 1852, J. G. Whittier Collection.

84. Pillsbury to Helen Pillsbury, 3 March 1852, J. G. Whittier Collection.

85. On women's education see Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 101-25, and Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (1959;

reprint, New York, 1974). See also Catharine Beecher's writings in *The Limits of Sisterhood: The Beecher Sisters on Women's Rights and Woman's Sphere*, ed. Jeanne Boydston, Mary Kelley, and Anne Margolis (Chapel Hill, 1988).

86. See Letter to the Editor from Parker Pillsbury, *Herald of Freedom*, 9 July 1841; Letter to the Editor from Persis Seavey, *Herald of Freedom*, 14 October 1842; and Letter to the Editor from Peter G. Mason, *Herald of Freedom*, 28 October 1842.

87. Hersh, *Slavery of Sex*, 218-51.

88. Sarah and three other women excommunicated the entire South Congregational church in Concord, New Hampshire, and in response the minister excommunicated them. See Parker Pillsbury, *Acts of the Antislavery Apostles* (Concord, N.H., 1885), 157-8, Letter to Sarah Pillsbury from Daniel Noyes, minister of the South Congregational Church, 17 February 1841, Parker Pillsbury Collection, Box 11, Folder 19, Concord Public Library Historical Materials Collection. Parker also excommunicated his church in Henniker, although the exact date is unclear. The Henniker church officially excommunicated him in 1846, see *Acts*, 367.

89. Hersh, *Slavery of Sex*, 218.

90. See Hersh, *Slavery of Sex*, 218-51, and Sterling, *Abby Kelley*, 234-62.

91. Sarah Pillsbury to Parker Pillsbury, 6 April 1856, J. G. Whittier Collection. Garrisonian abolitionists and other radicals often found themselves accused of moral turpitude because they challenged political and religious norms.

92. Sarah Pillsbury to Parker Pillsbury, 24 December 1854, J. G. Whittier Collection.

93. Pillsbury attended women's rights conventions in 1850, 1858, and 1859. See Pillsbury to Wendell Phillips, 21 September 1859, Crawford Blagden Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., Alma Lutz, *Susan B. Anthony: Rebel, Crusader, Humanitarian* (Boston, 1959), 25, and "The National Woman's Rights Convention," *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 22 May 1858. Several other male abolitionists also regularly attended women's rights conventions, including Frederick Douglass, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Samuel J. May, and Gerritt Smith.

94. Parker Pillsbury, "The Annual Meeting at New York," *Herald of Freedom*, 23 May 1840.

95. Pillsbury to Wendell Phillips, 21 September 1859, Crawford Blagden Papers.

96. The only Eastern male abolitionists to side with Stanton and Anthony during this crisis were Pillsbury, Robert Purvis, and Samuel J. May according to the *History of Woman Suffrage*, ed. Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joselyn Gage, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 2 (Rochester, 1881), 265.

97. Pillsbury to Ellen Wright Garrison, 1 May 1869, Garrison Family Papers.

98. See James M. McPherson on conflicts among the Garrisonians, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton, 1964).

99. Letter to the Editor from Parker Pillsbury, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 14 September 1861.

100. Parker Pillsbury, "The Hour Without the Man," *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 6 July 1861.

101. "Parker Pillsbury on the Times," *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 26 July 1867.

102. Kimmel, "Men's Responses to Feminism."