4-3-1998

Maria W. Stewart: America's first black feminist

Jennifer Anne Garcia

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

MARIA W. STEWART: AMERICA'S FIRST BLACK FEMINIST

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

ENGLISH

by

Jennifer Anne Garcia

1998

To: Arthur W. Herriott
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Jennifer Anne Garcia, and entitled Maria W. Stewart: America's First Black Feminist, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgement.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Alfonso Hawkins

Phillip L. Marcus

Linda Strong-Leek, Major Professor

Date of Defense: April 3, 1998

The thesis of Jennifer Anne Garcia is approved.

Dean Arthur W. Herriott
College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Richard L. Campbell
Dean of Graduate Studies

Florida International University, 1998

This thesis is dedicated to my family, my mother Marta Valdes-Infante Garcia and in loving memory of my grandmother Martha Gallinat Ballmajo de Valdes-Infante.

Abuela, tu reciente muerte me ha dejado completamente pasmada sin poder darte las gracias por todo lo que me has hecho y por tu interes en mis estudios y magisterio. Lo peor sera no ver tu cara de admiracion y carino el dia de mi Graduacion que yo intentaba compartir contigo, maestra a maestra. Yo se que siempre estaras conmigo por todos los caminos en que mi vida me lleve.

Mom, your unconditional love, steadfast dedication, unending personal sacrifice, and deep faith have given me the strength to accomplish all that I have. When Boyz to Men sang "Mama you're the Queen of my Heart" and Celine Dion "I'm everything I am because you loved me," I thought of you. Thank you for everything.

Thanks Aunt Gracie and Aunt Cora for your love and encouragement. Thanks Dad for your support and telling me, "You can do anything you set your mind to."

> Today is a time to be grateful for all God has done in our lives... And a time to remember not to take anything for granted, not a single gift, or any person, or even one moment in time, for when God gives it, it is precious. -- Anonymous.

Thank you Jesus for your love, guidance, and the times when you've carried me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Deepest gratitude to my thesis committee, Dr. Linda Strong-Leek, Dr. Alfonso Hawkins, Dr. Phillip L. Marcus, and auxiliary reader Dr. Carole Boyce-Davies, for their critical comments, timely responses, and enthusiastic encouragement.

Thanks Dr. Strong-Leek, your class "19th Century Black Women Speak" opened the doors to an unexplored world of literature and to inspirational women like Maria W. Stewart. Your encouragement to present at academic conferences has provided me wondrous scholastic and travel opportunities.

Dr. Hawkins, thanks for your words of wisdom, honest concern, and spirited enthusiasm. I did "graduate in '98!"

Dr. Marcus, thank you for your dedication, support, and constant assurances that this is just the first step.

Thanks Dr. Boyce-Davies, Director of African New World Studies, for your suggestions, references to Oyeronke Oyewumi, Ifi Amadiume, and lending me All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave.

Most grateful appreciation to Dr. Maneck Daruwala, Associate Professor of English, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for the last six years as professor, mentor, and friend. Thank you Maneck for your words of encouragement, useful advice, and your confidence in me.

Thanks to FIU's English Department, Dr. Donald Watson, Chair, and the efficient and caring secretaries: Maezel Brown, Neta O'Connell, Ileem Beauchamp, Jeanne Ali, Bonnie Boddicker and Elaine Dillashaw.

Thanks to Robert Ratner, Instructor of English, you've been a great inspiration in my teaching, I hope to follow your example of putting students first.

Deep gratitude goes to the Office of Graduate Studies, in particular Dean Richard L. Campbell and Ruben Jaen, for their support, patience, and faith in me.

Thanks Dr. Gustavo Roig, Associate Dean of Engineering, for recognizing my potential and entrusting a class of high school students in my care.

Thanks to all my friends at the FIU Graduate Students Association, especially Maureen Sullivan for introducing me to e-mail, web pages, and the internet.

I owe a great debt to my good friend and colleague, Nanett A. Rojas, who stood by me through times of procrastination and frustration. She also shared my joy and excitement in exploring and writing about Maria W. Stewart. I have enjoyed our travels, most especially to England and Thailand. Thank you for everything.

"A true friend is one soul in two bodies." --Aristotle.

Thanks for permission to print goes to the Tate Gallery, London for Sonia Boyce's Missionary Position No.2, the Houghton Library, Harvard University for Logo from the Ladies Department of The Liberator, and Indiana University Press for "Mrs. Stewart's Farewell Address To Her Friends In The City Of Boston," Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer, Ed.Marilyn Richardson, 1987. 65-74.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

MARIA W. STEWART: AMERICA'S FIRST BLACK FEMINIST

by

Jennifer Anne Garcia

Florida International University, 1998

Miami, Florida

Professor Linda Strong-Leek, Major Professor

Maria W. Stewart was the first American-born and the first African-American woman known to address a mixed audience, from 1831 to 1833, and publish her essays and speeches. The purpose of this thesis is to examine Maria W. Stewart's acts of defiance--as the first public representation of Black Feminism: **demanding** that white America end slavery and grant rights to black men and women, **re-appropriating** the hegemonic, patriarchal codes which have significant social power by exposing their inconsistencies and deconstructing their ideologies, **voicing** the truth about the status of African-American women in early nineteenth-century America, and **challenging** Black women to become entrepreneurs and (as she did) acquire an education, establish schools, and take an active role in their community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

SILENCED VOICES HEARD

CHAPTER ONE: SILENCED VOICES HEARD

The study and analysis of African-American literature is essential in recovering some of the silenced voices in an effort to piece together the remnants of our American history, literature, and culture. However, until recently, studies focused mainly on the Black male experience. Historians Loewenberg and Bogin state that

> Omission of woman's role and woman's story shrivels the evidence at hand for analysis and dilutes the full validity of the segments presently available. Neglect of the history of black women...is a crucial instance of distortion (3-4).

This distortion occurs when African-American women's voices and experiences are deliberately omitted from history and literature.

African-American women suffered during slavery as did African-American men; but because of both biologically and socially-constructed differences, their experiences and reactions to their treatment were unique. These women endured sexual rape and strenuous physical labor. Women were often forced to work as hard as men, even during pregnancy (Hale 80). "After childbirth, when they suffered from full breasts because their infants could not join them in the fields to nurse, they were beaten raw by the overseer when they did not keep up with the men.."

(Hale 80-81). After suffering all this, many saw their children torn from their breasts and sold. Mary Prince, in her slave narrative, told of a slave named Hetty who was "stripped quite naked, notwithstanding her pregnancy, and [was] tied up to a tree in the yard...Hetty was brought to bed before her time, and was delivered after severe labour of a dead child" (7). Yet we do not read of African-American women's experiences in most history books or literature classes.

Black Feminist writer bell hooks contends that when Black women are written about by academics who do not belong to the same ethnicity, the distortion can occur in terms of interpretation. hooks urges academics to think about the ethics of their actions and consider whether or not their work could be used to reinforce and perpetuate domination (Talking Back 43).

All academics should develop a critical eye concerning their work, understanding that their interpretation may be different from scholars who are members of the ethnic group on which they are writing.

hooks contends:

> Arguing, as many feminist scholars do, against the notion of a definitive work or the very idea of "authority," can help to create a climate where scholarship from diverse groups could flourish and we would be better able to appreciate the

> significance of scholarship that emerges from a particular race, sex, and class perspective (45).

All perspectives have validity in that they add to the overall understanding of a text and the distinctive experiences of African-American women. Loewenberg and Bogin observe that

> Not only do black women seldom appear in treatments of black history, but historians have been content to permit the male to represent the female in almost every significant category. Thus it is the male who is the representative abolitionist, fugitive slave, or political activist. ... When historians discuss black abolitionist writers and lecturers, they are men (4).

Many historians and academics have chosen African-American men to represent the African-American community. Therefore, if the model of MAN is WHITE, and the model of WOMAN by feminist and non-feminist standards is WHITE, and the historical symbol of SLAVE/BLACK is MALE, what position does the African-American female hold?[1] As a subaltern female of a marginalized group she is often forsaken, spurned by all. Any study of African-Americans should view both genders' experiences, and any feminist approach ought to consider the unique position that African-American women have held. Yet, until recently, this had not been the case.

It is in recent years that literary studies have been conducted to uncover and discover the histories and writings of these women. Some women wrote of their hardships, thereby exposing and documenting the indignities and atrocities they endured, while others wrote of their enterprising efforts and triumphs both during and after the Civil War.

> Countless black women found creative ways to transcend and to transform the often harrowing circumstances that constricted their lives. Their strivings for liberty, and for the liberty to grow, were personal and inward as well as public and declamatory. ... Their words offer new insight into the variety of means by which these limitations on human potentiality were dissolved or overcome (Loewenberg and Bogin x).

The narratives, stories, essays, and speeches of these women should be read as an active influence within history, specifically within the context of 19th Century America and the institution of slavery. These women dared to speak out against injustice in order to effect a change in society. bell hooks speaks of the need for Black women not only to come into voice but to develop a critical speech which challenges the politics of domination. The title of her text, Talking Back, reflects the need to courageously speak "as an equal to an authority figure" (5). For hooks, her text is an opportunity to voice opinions which an

oppressive system had previously silenced. It is a test of her courage and a strengthening of her commitment (5-9). hooks explains:

> Moving from silence to speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of "talking back," that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject--the liberated voice (9).

Many Black women during the 19th Century spoke out in their communities at meetings and gatherings voicing the need for the abolition of slavery and the granting of civil rights to all African-Americans, regardless of gender. The earliest example of an African-American woman speaker working toward the abolition of slavery and encouraging women to "sue for..[their]..rights and privileges" was Maria W. Stewart (Stewart 38). This thesis will examine the life and works of Maria W. Stewart.

Born Maria Miller (1803-1879) in Hartford, Connecticut, Stewart was left an orphan at five years of age and bound out to a clergyman's family. In her early childhood, she had no education but had "the seeds of piety and virtue early sown in [her] mind" ("Religion" 29). She left the clergyman's family at age fifteen and attended Sabbath

school classes. To support herself, she worked as a domestic servant until 1826 when she married James W. Stewart, a "light mulatto," veteran of the war of 1812 (Richardson 3).[2] They were married by Rev. Thomas Paul of Boston's African Baptist Church which was located in the African Meeting house, where Stewart was later to give one of her speeches (3). She was widowed after only three years of marriage. Infused by the oppressed condition of those of her race, Maria W. Stewart became the first American-born woman and the first African-American woman known to address a mixed audience (both Black and White men and women) on the subjects of abolition and women's rights. Hence, "she is a significant figure in the U.S. rhetorical tradition and in the history of women's oratory" (Sells 339). Stewart's essays and speeches were not only determined by the context in which they were written, but they also helped to shape the social conditions of her time.[3] Her speechmaking and writing were an act of resistance, an attempt to speak the truth of the degraded, oppressed position of African Americans, free and slave, in the North and South. Her act was in defiance of those who attempted to silence her.

Stewart was significant because her speeches began the aspect of oral tradition which became the basis of Black activism. As Laura Sells notes,

> When Maria W. Miller Stewart addressed Boston's African-American abolitionist community between 1831 and 1833, six years prior to the Grimkes' acclaimed success, she became an important forerunner for many key abolitionists and woman's rights activists (Sells 339).[4]

In an era of illiteracy, especially of those denied the opportunity of an education, the spread of political activism relied on oral communication. Phillis Wheatley may have been the first African-American to express the following sentiments in poetry:

> "But how, presumptuous shall we hope to find
> Divine acceptance with th' Almighty mind--
> While yet (O deed Ungenerous!) they disgrace
> And hold in bondage Afric's blameless race?
> Let virtue reign--And thou accord our prayers
> Be victory our's, and generous freedom theirs"
> (Wheatley, "General Wooster" 149-150),[5]

but Stewart was the first Black woman to publicly vocalize this expression of freedom, justice, and rights for her people. Stewart was a proponent of human rights following the principle expressed in the Bible that "There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or freeman, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Stewart engaged in what hooks terms "critical speech," "[acts] of resistance, a political gesture that challenges

politics of domination that would render..[Black women].. nameless and voiceless" (Talking Back 8). Thus Stewart's speeches were courageous acts which represented a threat to those who wielded oppressive power (Talking Back 8). The Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation may have ended slavery, but they did not change the minds and hearts of individual men and women; the resurgence of lynchings and the creation of the Ku Klux Klan during the Reconstruction era were proof of this. Broad sweeping political actions merely replaced those who were in power; however, it was the efforts of Antebellum activists such as Stewart who enlightened individuals' minds that effected long term results. In Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer, Marilyn Richardson asserts:

> In both the formulation and the articulation of the ideas central to the emerging struggle for black freedom and human rights, Stewart was a clear forerunner to generations of the best known and most influential champions of black activism, both male and female, including Frederick Douglass..1841, Sojourner Truth, in 1843...and Frances Harper, 1854 (Richardson xiv).

Leaders such as these were catalysts within their own communities and this grew into the greater movements of abolition in the 19th Century and civil rights in the 20th Century. The heroic efforts of leaders from Maria W.

Stewart to Martin Luther King, Jr. have transformed the collective opinion and impacted political change.

The existing research on Stewart, however, is limited. In an essay on African-American women's oratory, Charles Nero observes that

> Doris Yoakam's essay, "Women's Introduction to the American Platform," completely ignored Maria W. Stewart. This omission is incredible when one considers Stewart's role in American women's oratory as the first woman to leave extant texts of her public lectures (269).

In addition, Russel Nye's book William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers, a biography of Garrison's life and a discussion of those with whom he worked, mentions various abolitionists and white female activists such as the Grimke sisters, Lydia Maria Child, and Lucretia Mott but no where is Maria W. Stewart mentioned. (This is true for more than one text on Garrison.) Yet, Stewart's essays and speeches were published in Garrison's paper The Liberator. These biographers have excluded Stewart because they deemed her contribution unimportant. This is another example of the silencing of African-American women.

Stewart is discussed in brief biographical/critical sketches of nineteenth century Black women and/or portions of her speeches and essays appear in books such as The Abolitionist Sisterhood (1994), When and Where I Enter

(1984), Black Women in White America (1972), Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life (1976), With Pen and Voice (1995), and Spiritual Narratives (1988). However, the few texts that provide an in-depth analyses of Stewart (mostly Master's theses) have focused on Stewart as a pioneer Black abolitionist and preacher, or analyzed her rhetorical style and her role as orator. The only text discussing all of the above is Marilyn Richardson's Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer (1987), which includes the actual texts of Stewart's essays and speeches.

In other discussions of Stewart's work toward the abolition of slavery and motivation of African-Americans, some researchers have referred to her as an abolitionist-feminist or an antislavery-feminist; yet, there is no thorough analysis of Stewart's position concerning Black women, women's rights, and Black women's role in their community. This thesis will conduct such an examination, placing Stewart within the context of early 19th Century activism, specifically the Black woman's struggle.

The roots of black feminism have historically been said to have begun with Sojourner Truth, who began preaching in 1843 and spoke at the Woman's Rights Convention in 1851, although researchers are dependent entirely on secondary sources for her speeches (Logan 17). Certainly Truth was an outspoken and active proponent for women's rights; but, she was not the first to publicly voice

the interests and concerns of African-American women. Stewart courageously spoke in Boston from 1831 to 1833 and was the first African-American woman to have her essays and speeches published, in 1831 and 1879 respectively. Since she predated the feminist movement Stewart has often been dismissed as solely contributing to the abolitionist movement. However, her essays and speeches questioned the "proper sphere" for women, challenged notions of both racism and sexism, and empowered Black women. Maria W. Stewart was the first Black Feminist public speaker.

The term "Black Feminist," like the term "feminist," expresses women's struggle to be given the same rights as men, both politically and economically (American Heritage Dictionary 496-497). Historically, African-American women had been excluded from the feminist movement. (Terborg-Penn, "Discrimination Against Afro-American Women in the Woman's Movement, 1830-1920" and hooks, Ain't I a Woman). One of the earliest examples of this was during the Woman's Rights Convention of 1851 where many women tried to stop Sojourner Truth from speaking, she having been the only black woman in attendance. "They implored, 'Don't let her speak, Mrs. Gage, it will ruin us. Every newspaper in the land will have our cause mixed up with abolition and niggers, and we shall be utterly denounced'" (Logan 18).

Yet Feminism is based on the theory that all women are oppressed and that these shared experiences should bind them

together for the common cause of equality (hooks Feminist Theory 5). However, Black Feminists, such as bell hooks, have argued that oppression isn't manifested uniformly nor can it be categorized ahistorically. Feminists have taken this unilateral view because historically they have been White middle to upper class women and have had the luxury to ignore issues of race and class. Stewart certainly addressed issues of oppression which all women encountered in the 19th century and promoted women's rights. However, to restrict Stewart's efforts to the term "feminism" would deny her struggle for abolition and rights for all African-Americans; and therefore, is insufficient in describing Stewart's philosophy.

"Black Feminism" has been used interchangeably with Alice Walker's "Womanism;" which was her answer to the exclusion of black women's issues from both the feminist and civil rights movements. According to Walker, Womanist is:

> A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility...and women's strength. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female (xi).

Stewart had a great concern and respect for women and particularly an admiration of Black women. Certainly Stewart stood for human rights; however, she spoke vehemently against slavery and demanded rights

specifically for all African-Americans. Womanism was coined to embrace issues of wholeness of a people and the union of women; however, the term itself does not denote a specific cultural heritage. Stewart addressed issues that concerned specifically African-American women.

In Black Women, Writing and Identity, Carole Boyce-Davies explains that "politically, the term "Black" is linked essentially and primarily with a vision of a (Pan-Africanist) Black World which exists both in Africa and in the diaspora" (7). In her text, she chooses to activate the term "Black" to address issues of racial difference and in opposition to White supremacy. The term "Black," defined by Boyce-Davies as the union of those of African heritage confronting racism, can definitely be applied to 19th Century African-American activists. Hence synthesizing the politicized term "Black" signifying Pan-Africanism (the political unification and embrace of all those of African heritage) with the term "Feminism" defined as the struggle for women's rights (the valorization of women, their work, their culture), the term "Black Feminist" accurately describes Maria W. Stewart.

The purpose of this thesis is to advance the current research on Maria W. Stewart by examining her acts of defiance--as the first public representation of Black Feminism: **demanding** that white America end slavery and grant rights to black men and women, **re-appropriating** the

hegemonic, patriarchal codes which have significant social power by exposing their inconsistencies and deconstructing their ideologies, **voicing** the truth about the status of African-American women in early nineteenth-century America, and **challenging** Black women to sue for their rights, become entrepreneurs, and (as she did) acquire an education, establish schools, and take an active role in their community.

To this end, Chapter Two of this thesis examines Stewart's "calling" to the platform, the roots of her ideology toward abolition and rights, and how she reinterpreted patriarchal, Biblical passages to justify her right to speak.

Chapter Three of this thesis discusses 19th Century standards of femininity, their ideals of womanhood, and the status of African-American women within these boundaries. Further, Chapter Three analyzes Stewart's response to these "feminine" standards, the roles she delineates for Black women, and her call to Black women to sue for their rights. Finally, Chapter Three examines the term "Black Feminism" as defined by the Combahee River Collective, a group of Black Feminists. and establishes Maria W. Stewart as the first to publicly advocate this philosophy.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IF I AM A WOMAN?

"they say keep politics out of religion
and religion out of politics
but when were they ever separate?"
Sonia Boyce, "Missionary Positions II"

CHAPTER TWO: WHAT IF I AM A WOMAN?

Two deaths led Stewart to the public arena: that of David Walker--a militant Black abolitionist--her political and intellectual mentor, and after a three year marriage, her husband James W. Stewart. Upon seeing her husband die and "his spirit ascended to God who gave it," Stewart bid, "O, my soul, forget not that awful scene; forget not that awful moment" ("Meditation X" 116). Stewart then "experienced a conversion to evangelical Christianity, which proved central to her political ideology and her rhetorical style" (Sells 339). These deaths forced Stewart to confront her own mortality. Stewart's choice was, as Shakespeare so eloquently stated:

> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing end them (Hamlet Act III Scene I)?

Following Walker's example, Stewart chose to use the time she had on earth to serve God and her people. For as Stewart proclaimed, "'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul'" ("Meditation X" 115)?[1]

Stewart's suffering brought her to Christ and Christ brought her to the lectern--the political realm, the masculine domain. Stewart now possessed a "spirit of

independence" for which she would dedicate her life to the "cause of God and [her] brethren:"

> Feeling a deep solemnity of soul, in view of our wretched and degraded situation, and sensible of the gross ignorance that prevails among us, I have thought proper thus publicly to express my sentiments before you (Religion 28-29).

Her sincere concern for the miserable condition of African-Americans and her holy zeal for liberty and equality caused her to cry out, "Away, away with tyranny and oppression! And shall Afric's sons be silent any longer" ("Religion" 29)? The poignant exclamation--reminiscent of Phillis Wheatley's lines "No longer shall thou dread the iron chain,/Which wanton Tyranny with lawless hand/Had made, and with it meant t'enslave the land"--expressed the ardor which infused Black activism from the 19th Century until the present (Wheatley, "Dartmouth" 74).[2] The remonstration called upon her people to speak out, as she did--to make their voices heard.

Stewart's public addresses and first treatise of 1831, "Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, The Sure Foundation on Which We Must Build," were published by William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp in their abolitionist newspaper The Liberator. "Stewart attributed her initial activism to William Lloyd Garrison's welcome to women in the early pages of The Liberator" (Bogin and Yellin 6). Her

principles were based on strong religious convictions and the belief that "it is not the color of the skin that makes the man or the woman, but the principle formed in the soul" ("Farewell" 70). Echoing this over a hundred years later, was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character" (529).

Stewart's political ideology, and thereby her speeches, were rooted in the principles, issues, and concerns discussed in David Walker's Appeal. Charles Nero observes:

> Walker's influence on Stewart can be seen in several recurring themes in her speeches, notably, deep religiousity, that education would help Blacks reverse their fortunes in this country, that American slavery was the most vicious form of bondage known to history, and that Blacks had a great past in Egypt (Nero 263).

Stewart thundered:

> Oh, America, America, foul and indelible is thy stain! Dark and dismal is the cloud that hangs over thee, for thy cruel wrongs and injuries to the fallen sons of Africa. The blood of her murdered ones cries to heaven for vengeance against thee ("Religion" 39).

Stewart, as had Walker, denounced American slavery as the most vicious form of bondage known to history. Stewart warned of the consequences should justice not come swiftly:

> But many powerful sons and daughters of Africa will shortly arise, who will put down vice and immorality among us, and declare by Him that sitteth upon the throne that they will have their rights; and if refused, I am afraid they will spread horror and devastation around ("Masonic Hall" 63).

Though not advocating violence, Stewart knew that the passions of men run deep and that they would endure suffering only for so long and would eventually revolt. This passage was predicting the chain of events that would occur should slavery continue. Walker, however, called for armed resistance in the first section of his Appeal entitled "Our Wretchedness in Consequence of Slavery, "They want us for their slaves and think nothing of murdering us to subject us to that wretched condition--therefore, if there is an attempt made by us, kill or be killed" (29). Walker asserted that slaves should revolt with a strong offense for their opponents would do the same. Little did Walker know that he would die under mysterious circumstances, very likely murdered for his passionate words.

Stewart, however, while addressing a white audience stated, "we will not come out against you with swords and staves" ("Religion" 40). Addressing African-Americans in the audience, she further stated, "Then, my brethren, sheath your swords, and calm your angry passions" (40). Stewart was adamant about suing for individual rights, advocating the adage: "the pen is mightier than the sword." Stewart was practical and understood that movements start from the ground up, and that from small efforts come major revolutions. She proposed the use of passive resistance, as she believed that violence only breeds violence. "[Stewart's] religious faith and Walker's political analyses provided a theoretical foundation upon which Stewart constructed a model of struggle for social justice" (Richardson 18-19).

Stewart argued that education was the key to achieving social justice, freedom, and rights. For if African-Americans could distinguish themselves intellectually, she believed that "able advocates would arise in our defence. Knowledge would begin to flow, and the chains of slavery and ignorance would melt like wax before the flames" ("Religion" 31). Walker, in the second section of his Appeal, entitled "Our Wretchedness in Consequence of Ignorance," argued that slavery kept African-Americans in a demeaned, inferior, and ignorant condition. He further proposed that this condition was not a part of their

history, asserting that it was "the sons of Africa or of Ham, among whom learning originated..." (22). It was vitally important that American men and women understood this and that African-Americans took pride in their heritage. Walker wanted to counter the accusations that African-Americans were no more intelligent than animals, a viewpoint which justified their enslavement. Most of Stewart's arguments were also meant to counter this type of thinking. She insisted that if African-Americans had the opportunity and education, they could succeed at whatever they set out to achieve. She maintained that slavery and discrimination kept them ignorant and degraded. Stewart poetically stated that

> continual hard labor deadens the energies of the soul, and benumbs the faculties of the mind; the ideas become confined, the mind barren, and, like the scorching sands of Arabia, produces nothing; or like the uncultivated soil, brings forth thorns and thistles ("Franklin Hall" 47).

In essence, the torture and oppression of slavery can only produce "thorns and thistles," but as water fertilizes the soil so would freedom produce roses. Freedom would grant African-Americans the opportunity of an education and other privileges which slavery did not afford.

Stewart had great faith in prayer, believing that God would deliver her people. She explained:

> Put your trust in the living God. Persevere strictly in the paths of virtue. Let nothing be lacking on your part; and in God's own time, and his time is certainly the best, he will surely deliver you with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm (41).

Stewart was eager to plead the cause of the oppressed regardless of personal risk. Stewart had faith that God would protect her "from the rage and malice of mine enemies... and if there is no other way for me to escape, he is able to take me to himself, as he did the most noble, fearless, and undaunted David Walker" ("Religion" 30). Stewart's faith sustained her through widowhood and the negative response she received at her public appearances. As Richardson observes,

> She drew from Walker's impassioned manifesto an ethic of resistance to physical and political oppression, as well as a synthesis of commitment to religion, education, and community organization intended to promote the welfare and survival, both physical and cultural, of blacks in America (19).

Stewart was dedicated to unifying African-Americans in the political struggle to end slavery. Although she was a free Black woman, she understood the systematic oppression of slavery. Personifying America as a queen, Stewart argued that

> She is, indeed, a seller of slaves and the souls of men; she has made the Africans drunk with the wine of her fornication; she has put them completely beneath her feet, and she means to keep them there..."Masonic Hall" 63).

Recognizing the hypocrisy of an America who sought its freedom from her king and yet enslaved an entire race, Stewart maintained that "whites have so long and so loudly proclaimed the theme of equal rights and privileges, that our souls have caught the flame also, ragged as we are" ("Franklin Hall" 47) This statement echoed Phillis Wheatley's letter to Samson Occum: "God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of Freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance... I will assert, that the same Principle lives in us" (177). Wheatley had also earlier comprehended American hypocrisy,

> ...the strange Absurdity of their Conduct whose Words and Actions are so diametrically opposite. How well the Cry for Liberty, and the reverse Disposition for the Exercise of oppressive Power over others agree, --I humbly think it does not require the Penetration of a Philosopher to determine (177).

In other words, Americans spoke of freedom but were greater oppressors than the Imperialists against which they fought. Walker similarly addressed the issue of hypocrisy

in the third section of his Appeal entitled "Our Wretchedness in Consequence of the Preachers of the Religion of Jesus Christ." Both Walker and Stewart denounced men who dared call themselves Christians but cruelly and viciously enslaved Africans. Being pious and truly believing in the principles of Jesus Christ, both Walker and Stewart abhorred those who claimed to be believers but who, in their actions, proved to be "heathens and devils." What is ironic is that "Christians" traveled to the "dark continent" to "civilize" the "primitive pagans" and teach them the Bible; however, by enslaving them, these "Christians" became barbaric brutes, vicious savages, and depraved degenerates. Stewart reproved these so-called Christians:

> I fear there are many who have named the name of Jesus at the present day...were our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, upon the earth, I believe he would say... 'O, ye hypocrites, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell [Matthew 23:33]' (52).

Stewart questioned how slavemasters could have the effrontery of calling themselves Christians and construing the Bible to justify their actions. Stewart became a prophetic Christian contradicting the slavemaster's theology which commanded that slaves obey their human masters (Ephesians 6: 5-9, Colossians , 1 Peter 2: 18-25). A particular Biblical passage states:

> To slaves I say, obey your human masters perfectly, not with the purpose of attracting attention and pleasing men but in all sincerity and out of reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with your whole being. Do it for the Lord rather than for men, since you know full well you will receive an inheritance from him as your reward. Be slaves of Christ the Lord. Whoever acts unjustly will be repaid for the wrong he has done. No favoritism will be shown (Colossians 3: 22-25).

Slaves were expected to await heavenly rewards while enduring their hardship on earth. With this, slavemasters justified their right to torture and terrorize their "property." Stewart believed not in these words written by man (though supposedly inspired by God), but in a just and loving God. Stewart exclaimed:

> You may kill, tyrannize, and oppress as much as you choose, until our cry shall come up before the throne of God; for I am firmly persuaded that he will not suffer you to quell the proud, fearless and undaunted spirits of the Africans forever; for in his own time, he is able to plead our cause against you, and to pour out upon you the ten plagues of Egypt (39-40).

She argued that the enslavement of Africans was unjust and that God would deliver them as he had the Israelites. According to the second Book of the Bible, Exodus, God sent ten plagues to the Egyptians and this was followed by Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt to freedom. White men had quoted the Bible to justify slavery but Stewart countered this by claiming that there was only one judge, God, and that He would condemn White men, as He did the Egyptians, for their actions.

Stewart believed that all men and women were equal in God's eyes. Stewart preached to her people:

> [God] hath formed and fashioned you in his own glorious image, and hath bestowed upon you reason and strong powers of intellect. ...He hath crowned you with glory and honor; hath made you but a little lower than the angels [Psalm 8:5]...(29).

Biblical passages were incorporated in her speeches but few were cited, so only those who were familiar with the Bible would have understood the references.[3] However, regardless of whether or not they could identify her references, Stewart's words were meant to educate and inspire. Stewart adapted the hegemonic concepts of religion to support her political agenda which rejected the Western tradition's ideas of the "other" and "womanhood." "In writing, she set precedence combining religious fervor, spiritual narrative, and political

argument common in 19th century Black political discourse" (Sells 340).

Stewart felt it her duty to speak out on behalf of all African Americans. Stewart, then, matured from Walker's protege' to proto-feminist (Nero 263). This was in part because her speeches called into question her authority as a woman. There were many who challenged her right to speak. In her "Farewell Address To Her Friends In The City Of Boston," she exclaimed:

> What if I am a woman; is not the God of ancient times the God of these modern days? Did he not raise up Deborah, to be a mother, and a judge in Israel? Did not queen Esther save the lives of the Jews? And Mary Magdalene first declare the resurrection of Christ from the dead (68)?

Deborah, from the Bible's Book of Judges, was a priestess, prophetess, poetess, general, and judge in Israel. According to the Bible, Deborah was a courageous woman who led her people into battle. The Israelites trusted her judgment in all things. Stewart's prophesying might similarly have armed African-Americans with faith enough to fight to end slavery and for the rights of all men and women.

Stewart was the first of a vanguard of women speakers and preachers to refer to ancient women, women of the Bible, and reinterpret the Bible to justify her public

speaking, but this became a trend in evangelism and activism in the nineteenth century. The most recognized reinterpretation of the Bible was Elizabeth Cady Stanton's The Woman's Bible. Stanton argued:

> If Deborah, way back in ancient Judaism, was considered wise enough to advise her people in time of need and distress, why is it that at the end of the nineteenth century, woman has to contend for equal rights and fight to regain every inch of ground she has lost since then ("Part II" 22)?

The second woman to whom Stewart referred was Queen Esther, another Jewish heroine. Esther, of the Bible's Book of Esther, averted the pogrom planned against her people and had the royal decree of extermination of the Jews reversed against Haman, the king's former advisor, and the enemies of the Jews. Mordecai, Esther's uncle, replaced Haman and together he and Esther worked for the welfare of their people. These events have been remembered during the annual Jewish observation called Purim. Stewart thought to similarly reach the minds and hearts of White and Black men and women for the welfare of her people.

Queen Esther was also mentioned in Sojourner Truth's speech to the Fourth National Woman's Rights Convention, in 1853,

> Queen Esther come forth, for she was oppressed, and felt there was a great wrong, and she said I will die or I will bring my complaint before the king....The women want their rights as Esther ...Now, women do not ask half of a kingdom, but their rights, and they don't get 'em (567-568).

Truth questioned the irony that a woman in ancient times rose to be a Queen and a leader of her people yet in Truth's time, women neither had rights nor could they speak their mind.

A similar sentiment was articulated in The Woman's Bible. Stanton admired Esther's determination and sacrifice:

> She prepared herself thus by fasting to receive and to exercise the power of spirit. Her high purpose was only equalled by her unfaltering courage and entire self-abnegation. Esther, so as to save her people from destruction, risked her life ("Part II" 91-92).

For Stewart, Truth, and Stanton, Queen Esther was their benchmark of what a female leader could accomplish. Stanton aimed to free women from the manacles of Victorian ethics, while Stewart and Truth sought to end the subjugation of their race and gender.

Third, Stewart referred to Mary Magdalene, the one chosen to pronounce the news of Christ's resurrection. Stewart viewed herself a prophet proclaiming the Word of

God. "She defended herself against criticism by emphasizing her religious motivation, assuming the role of speaking for God in the manner of the Old Testament prophets" (Horton 174).

The evangelist Jarena Lee, like Stewart, received a "calling," "..I distinctly heard..'Go preach the Gospel!' ...'Preach the Gospel; I will put words in your mouth, and will turn your enemies to become your friends'" (10). Jarena Lee similarly justified her right to speak, in her journal of 1849, by evoking the name of Mary Magdalene. Lee asked:

> Did not Mary first preach the risen Saviour, and is not the doctrine of the resurrection the very climax of Christianity--hangs not all our hope on this, as argued by St. Paul? Then did not Mary, a woman, preach the gospel? for she preached the resurrection of the crucified Son of God (11).

Lee understood the opposition toward women preachers and to this she argued:

> To this it may be replied, by those who are determined not to believe that it is right for a woman to preach, that the disciples, though they were fisherman and ignorant of letters too, were inspired so to do ("Journal" 12).

Jarena Lee stated then that she too was called by God to preach and would be unfailing in her duty.

Gerda Lerner, feminist literary critic, observes:

> Whatever route women took to self-authorization and whether they were religiously inspired or not, they were confronted by the core texts of the Bible, which were used for centuries by patriarchal authorities to define the proper roles for women in society and to justify the subordination of women: Genesis, the Fall and St. Paul (Creation 138).

Stewart thought to inspire Black women to sue for their rights by providing examples of Biblical heroines and ancient women who were prophets, warriors, divines, and scholars. Stewart referred to women who were considered divines and/or prophets such as the Oracles in Ancient Greece, the Sibyls in Ancient Rome, and the fact that even in, so-called, barbarous nations women practiced religious rites. Stewart asked, "Why cannot a religious spirit animate us now? Why cannot we become divines and scholars" (69)? Stewart posed this rhetorical question as a challenge to those who had so eagerly sought to keep her quiet, preventing her from speaking her mind.

Stewart gave an example of a 13th Century lady of Bologne, who devoted herself to the study of Latin and of the laws, became a great orator and earned the degree of Doctor of Laws (70). "At the age of thirty, her great reputation raised her to a chair, where she taught the

law to a prodigious concourse of scholars from all nations" (70). Stewart provided these examples to prove that Biblically and historically women have shown themselves capable of intelligent thought, religious inspiration, compelling oration, scholarly teaching, and effective leadership. Stewart sought to fire a holy zeal in Black women, and defy white men and women when she asked,

> What if such women as are here described should rise among our sable race? And it is not impossible....Brilliant wit will shine, come from whence it will; and genius and talent will not hide the brightness of its lustre (70).

Her words are reminiscent of the Negro spiritual which sings, "Oh, this little light of mine,/ I'm gonna let it shine./ ...Let it shine, shine, shine,/ Let it shine" (Norton Anthology of African American Literature 17-18)

These words from Stewart's final address were meant to leave an imprint on those who violently fought against her and on the Black women she hoped could change the future. Another Biblical passage to which she referred was in the Book of Proverbs where Wisdom was personified as a woman:

> Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the open squares she raises her voice... "how long will you turn away at my reproof? Lo! I will pour out to you my spirit. I will acquaint you with my words"

(Proverbs 1:20-23). "Give heed! for noble things I speak; honesty opens my lips. Yes, the truth my mouth recounts, but the wickedness my lips abhor" (Proverbs 8:6-7).

Stewart stated, "Come, let us incline our ears to wisdom, and apply our hearts to understanding; promote her, and she will exalt thee..let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life [Proverbs 4:13]" (36-37). Stewart was "Wisdom" calling her audience to listen to her truths, and the wisdom granted by God was above the words of any man.

The purpose of Stewart's speeches was to compel and motivate her audience to end domination, to end slavery, and grant civil rights. Her speeches moved her from object to subject as she hoped this would inspire Black women to do the same. Stewart asserted that her audience ought not be astonished that

> God at this eventful period should raise up your own females to strive, by their example both in public and private, to assist those who are endeavoring to stop the strong current of prejudice that flows so profusely against us at present (69).

With this statement, she was justifying her right to speak on behalf of her people and encouraging other Black women to do the same. In stating that these efforts should be in "public and private" she acknowledged women's influence in

the home and empowered women to tackle the masculine realm. Maria W. Stewart began a public speaking tradition which continued with Jarena Lee, Julia Foote, and other Evangelists such as Zilpha Elaw, Nancy Prince, and Amanda Berry Smith, as well as activists such as Sojourner Truth and the Grimke sisters, of referring to brave heroines and adapting Bible passages to support not only their public speaking, but also their civil rights. Gerda Lerner states:

> Historically, we find individual women reinterpreting the biblical core texts for themselves, each woman reasoning out, as best as she could, alternative interpretations of the patriarchal interpretations she had been taught (Creation 159).

Stewart consistently quoted the Bible to give authority to her message and to inspire others with a similar holy zeal. She referred not only to ancient women but to the disciples' messages in the New Testament. In her "Farewell Address To Her Friends In The City Of Boston," Stewart discussed the opposition she received during her public speaking career and affirmed that when her husband died, she experienced a vision, a calling to preach the Gospel. She asserted, "And truly, I can say with St. Paul that at my conversion I came to the people in the fulness of the gospel of grace" (66). Stewart compared herself to Saul who had

been struck blind and after a vision had the scales fall from his eyes (Acts 9: 1-19). Thenceforth known as Paul, he traveled as Jesus' disciple from Israel to Greece preaching the Word of God (Acts 9 and 16-20). Stewart believed that like St. Paul she was meant to prophesy and was given the ability to speak in tongues (Acts 2:1-4).

According to the Bible there are two spiritual gifts: the gift of speaking in tongues and the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14: 1-5). The distinction between the two is that the gift of speaking in tongues is communicating with God whereas the gift of prophecy is speaking "to men for their upbuilding, their encouragement, their consolation" (1 Corinthians 14:1-5).

Similarly, Mae Gwendolyn Henderson, in "Speaking in Tongues: Dialogics, Dialectics, and the Black Woman Writer's Literary Tradition," explains that the term "speaking in tongues" has two connotations (122). The first, also referred to as glossolalia, means to utter the mysteries of the spirit. This connotation emphasizes the particular, private, closed, and privileged communication between the congregant and the divinity (Henderson 122). Stewart's "calling," reinterpretations of the Gospel, and quoting Biblical passages were examples of this inner sacrosanct dialogue. Stewart asked her audience, many of whom may not have even believed in such things as revelations, to believe in her divine inspiration. If they did have faith

in revelations, could they have believed that God would inspire a Black woman?

The second connotation or heteroglossia is the ability to speak in a plurality of voices and in a multiplicity of discourses; it is public, social, dialogic discourse (Henderson 122). Stewart was empowered with the ability to speak to a varied audience. As a woman she faced the Biblical objections to her speaking and as a Black woman she confronted the prejudices concerning her race. "In their works, black women writers have encoded oppression as a discursive dilemma, that is, their works have consistently raised the problem of the black woman's relationship to power and discourse" (Henderson 124). Stewart's words while voicing the truth concerning the degraded condition of African-Americans had the tremendous task of motivating her audience to action.

Her reference to St. Paul was meant to address the passages in which he opposed women preachers. The specific prohibition against women speaking publicly can be found in two key passages of Scripture (Campbell, Man Cannot Speak For Her Vol.I 39). First:

> According to the rule observed in all the assemblies of believers, women should keep silent in such gatherings. They may not speak. Rather, as law states, submissiveness is indicated for them. If they want to learn anything, they

> should ask their husbands at home. It is a disgrace when a women speaks in the assembly (1Corinthians 14:34-35).

and second:

> A woman must learn in silence and be completely submissive. I do not permit a woman to act as teacher, or in any way to have authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was created first, Eve afterward; moreover, it was not Adam who was deceived but the woman. It was she who was led astray and fell into sin (1Timothy 2:11-14).

These texts have perpetuated women's submission to men and have been used to keep women silent and in their "place." Angelina E. Grimke, in her speech at the 1837 Antislavery Convention, argued against women's forced submission to silence:

> 'The time has come for women to move in that sphere which Providence has assigned, and no longer remain satisfied in the circumscribed limits with which corrupt custom and a perverted application of Scripture have encircled her; therefore it is the duty of woman to do all that she can by her voice and her pen and the influence of her example to overthrow the horrible system of American slavery' (Swerdlow 40-41).

Grimke questioned the authority of Scripture. Stewart similarly addressed these Pauline passages:

> St. Paul declared that it was a shame for a woman to speak in public, yet our great High Priest and Advocate did not condemn the woman for a more notorious offence than this; neither will he condemn this worthless worm. ...Did St.Paul but know of our wrongs and deprivations, I presume he would make no objections to our pleading in public for our rights. Again; holy women ministered unto Christ and the apostles; and women of refinement in all ages, more or less, have had a voice in moral, religious and political subjects (68).

Stewart defied the patriarchal words of St. Paul who bade women not to speak in an assembly or be teachers by her very presence at the African Masonic Hall. As Paula Giddings observes, she "simply went over his head" by suggesting that if Christ could forgive Mary Magdalene for prostitution, He certainly would not object to Stewart's public speaking (53). In addition, Stewart reappropriated St. Paul's message, by presuming that he would approve of her speaking, and introduced a revised interpretation of that Scripture. In so doing, she deconstructed the ideology that only men could preach, and that only men could interpret Scripture. Stewart understood

the particular structures of domination and oppression emphasized by Scripture and for this reason, transformed it in a way that supported her right to speak.

Although St. Paul supposedly prohibited women from speaking, the evangelist Julia Foote argued that there were women who assisted St. Paul in spreading the Gospel. In her autobiography of 1886 entitled "A Brand Plucked from the Fire," Foote justified her right to preach by referring to Priscilla and Aquila who St. Paul called his "helpers," and Phebe a "servant of the church" (79). Foote asserted, "When Paul said, 'Help those women who labor with me in the Gospel,' he certainly meant that they did more than to pour out tea" (79). Julia Foote praised their efforts and remarked that "the conduct of holy women is recorded in Scripture as an example to others of their sex" (79). Another example is in The Acts of Paul and Thecla, Thecla, a woman from St.Paul's home town, traveled with St. Paul teaching and baptizing (Leon 126-127). She built the first monastery for women at Beleucia on the Turkish coast and for this was canonized and revered by Turkish Catholics (Leon 126-127). Therefore it appears that St. Paul's words and actions were contradictory. Women such as Thecla spoke publicly and were teachers to a mixed audience. Was it acceptable for these women because they were assisting St. Paul? Stanton explains this contradiction thusly: "In dealing with this

question we must never forget that the majority of the writing of the New Testament were not really written or published by those whose names they bear" (158). Then it may be assumed that perhaps others and not St.Paul wrote these passages, allowing for various theological interpretations.

Stewart sought to inspire her audience, to fire them with a "holy indignation" at the injustice of slavery (57), to fire them with a "holy zeal for freedom's cause" (31), to fire their breast with a heartfelt interest in their rights and liberty (64). Instead, she met with "the fiery darts of the devil, and the assaults of wicked men" (50). "For her outspokenness and for what some members of the audience perceived as unwarranted criticism rather than divinely inspired prophesy, Maria Stewart was hooted and jeered and pelted with rotten tomatoes" (Horton 175).

James and Lois Horton, in In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest Among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860, argue that Maria W. Stewart may have carried her role as a prophet too far. Their assertion refers to a particular question in her speech before the African Masonic Lodge, when Stewart asked:

> I would ask, is it blindness of mind, or stupidity of soul, or the want of education that has caused our men who are 60 or 70 years of age, never to let their voices be heard, nor their hands be

> raised in behalf of their color? Or has it been for the fear of offending the whites? If it has, O ye fearful ones, throw off your fearfulness, and come forth in the name of the Lord...(57).

The Hortons theorize that Stewart's negative reception was because

> She was standing in the hall that was home to the Masons organized and led by men like Prince Hall, Primus Hall, and James Barbadoes, men who had fought in the Revolution, had been the first in the state to speak out against slavery, had won freedom for Massachusetts' slaves, and had organized black groups, including an antislavery society... she asked a question that could not have endeared her to the men in her audience (Horton 174-175).

These men had sacrificed themselves and yet there she stood accusing them of being immobilized by fear or ignorance. She recognized their past contributions but asked what they were doing at present. Stewart was also speaking of the men who had done little to advance the cause for freedom. Stewart hoped her message would spread. She urged her audience to continue their struggle and not be deceived by their past achievements into believing they had done all they could. Their mission and hers would not be done until all slaves were freed and granted civil rights.

Stewart was aware that she had made herself "a hissing and a reproach among the people" and was spurned for speaking the truth (48).[4] She asked her audience, "Be not offended because I tell you the truth; for I believe that God has fired my soul with a holy zeal for his cause" (52). According to the Bible, "'No prophet is without honor except in his native place, indeed in his own house'" (Matthew 13:57).

Stewart had struck a nerve provoking a violent response. bell hooks argues that when Black women speak, "It should be understood that the liberatory voice will necessarily confront, disturb, demand that listeners even alter ways of hearing and being. ..When one threatens--one is at risk" (16-17). Stewart threatened the core of her audience's very existence. The North may have been "free," yet that did not preclude antiabolitionist and antiblack sentiments from existing. Even if Stewart's audience supported abolitionism were they ready to hear this from a Black woman? Did African-Americans who she criticized of being fearful and idle wish to listen to her accusations? Did Black women in whom she put her faith believe that they could accomplish what she had intended? Considering their response the answer to these questions was a resounding NO.

Stewart's audience was obviously not ready to hear a woman, a Black woman speak. Campbell, in Man Cannot Speak

For Her Vol. II, explains that

> opponents sometimes argued that women should be excluded from public life on the grounds that the family rather than the individual was the fundamental unit of society. The family was to be represented in public by the husband, while the wife confined herself to domestic concerns (xiv).

This argument did not apply to Stewart for she had no family and therefore no domestic concerns. Since her husband had died, it was she who had to represent herself in public. Richardson explains:

> Widowhood allowed [Stewart] an intermediary position in the community in that she could move about in the world more freely than she could have had she never married, and still maintain her respectability. ...She had, after all, shown herself willing to assume the traditional female role, but was deprived by fate of the opportunity to continue in that life (25).

Although she held this special position, 19th Century ideology did not permit her to assume the male role of public speaking. Stewart was the first American-born and African-American woman to do so but some years earlier the Scottish immigrant Frances Wright had begun speaking for women's rights. She caused such a disturbance that any woman who followed her and was seen to emulate her in any

way was termed a "Fanny Wrightist." Around the time of Wright's July 1829 lecture in Philadelphia, a caricature depicted her standing in front of a podium with the face of a goose and below it read, "A Downwright Gabbler, or a goose that deserves to be hissed" (Lapsansky 223). Stewart made more than one reference at being hissed and was ready to suffer this as her lot for challenging the status quo. Phillip Lapsansky, in his essay "Graphic Discord: Abolitionist and Anti-abolitionist Images," explains:

> Early activists such as the emigre radical reformer Frances Wright, the Quaker leader Lucretia Mott, and the Boston African American political writer Maria Stewart had, in the late 1820s and early 1830s, violated "the appropriate sphere of women" by taking their ideas to the public lecture platform (Lapsansky 223).

This sphere constricted the boundaries of a woman's world. Their identity was constructed by the place they held in society. Carole Boyce-Davies in Black Women, Writing and Identity asserts, "For it is location which allows one to speak or not speak, to be affirmed in one's speech or rejected, to be heard or censored" (Boyce-Davies 153). Stewart's initial welcoming by Garrison placed her in a privileged position affording her the opportunity to speak. In a letter, written after Stewart's and Garrison's reunion in 1879, Garrison remembered when they first met:

> You will recollect, if not the surprise, at least the satisfaction I expressed on examining what you had written--far more remarkable in those early days than it would be now, when there are so many educated persons of color who are able to write with ability. I not only gave you words of encouragement, but in my printing office put your manuscript into type, an edition of which was struck off in tract form, subject to your order. I was impressed by your intelligence and excellence of character (89).

While Garrison admired Stewart, he expressed shock at her ability to write and at her intelligence, unmasking an underlying racism. By praising her character, he implied that this was something unusual--for those of African heritage. Nonetheless, Garrison did foster her enthusiasm and promoted her endeavors. In 19th Century Boston, Stewart gained access to the political realm and a place before the podium. Stewart utilized her space to unravel dominant cultural codes (among which were those prohibiting women's speech) and to articulate the issues and concerns of all African-Americans. However, her "social standing" was to be short-lived for her audience did not share Garrison's enthusiasm. The negative reception affected Stewart deeply:

> Thus far has my life been almost a life of complete disappointment. God has tried me as by

> fire. Well was I aware that if I contended boldly for his cause, I must suffer. Yet, I chose rather to suffer affliction with his people, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (73-74).

Stewart sought to preach Christian principles, to educate, and to encourage her brethren. "It is the word of God; and little did I think that any of the professed followers of Christ would have frowned upon me, and discouraged and hindered its progress" (52). The fact was that she had criticized her audience--White men for slavery and the raping of Black women, White women for not treating Black women as equals, Black men for not fighting for their rights, and Black women for their hopelessness-- and people felt more comfortable when the truth was being told about someone else. Stewart, however, believed what Jesus said: "If you live according to my teaching, you are truly my disciples; then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 9: 31-32).

Stewart had expected that antiabolitionists would reject her but was shocked to find that her own people were rising up against her. "The fact that others in the black community began to hold her in contempt was the final blow which led to her retirement" (Bormann 177) She "felt compelled to give in to what must have been great pressures from all sides to cease her campaign" (Bormann 177). Although some, like Garrison, supported her, the

overwhelming response was negative. Her speeches were not having the impact she had hoped and so, failing in her efforts, she chose to leave Boston.

In a letter to The Liberator of March 5, 1852, William C. Nell, a Black Boston abolitionist and historian, wrote to Garrison:

> In the perilous years of '33-'35, a colored woman--Mrs. Maria W. Stewart--fired with a holy zeal to speak her sentiments on the improvement of colored Americans, encountered an opposition even from her Boston circle of friends, that would have dampened the ardor of most women. But your words of encouragement cheered her onwards, and her public lectures awakened an interest acknowledged and felt to this day...(Garrison 90).

Stewart chose her words very carefully, calculating what she believed would move her audience. Whatever her audience's expectations may have been, she was not about to assuage them and sacrifice telling the truth. She had been given an opportunity to address society's ills and taking this charge seriously, she felt it her duty to speak out on behalf of the oppressed.

However, White men were not prepared to hear her bold attack against the raping of Black women. Certain subjects, namely sex, were not considered suitable for mixed company, for fear of offending a woman's delicate ear. To address

such a subject would have been considered highly innappropriate considering her audience, her gender, and it was an issue they would prefer to ignore. White women who had come in support of abolition could not have appreciated her comments concerning their prejudice toward Black women.

Black men, though, were probably the most shocked by her statements because they expected her to attack White men and women, not them. Some may have felt betrayed that she would criticize them for immobility and others perhaps felt guilty for not having done anything and turned their feelings of self-censure toward her.

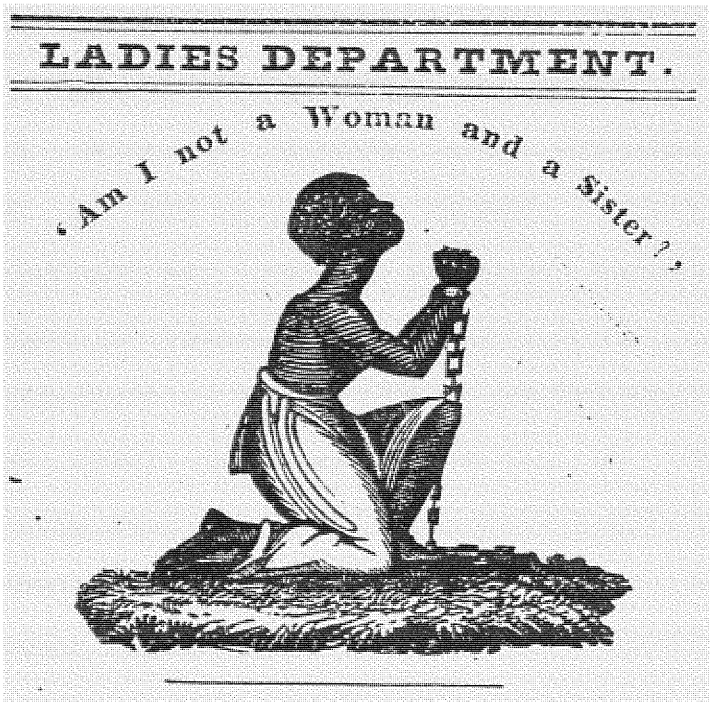
That these cutting remarks came from a woman, particularly a Black woman, could not have endeared her to them. Those who attended her speeches must have been wary of permitting a woman to speak and to have her speak so daringly would have only further affirmed their misgivings. Her audacity may have been accepted by some but the majority were not prepared to face the truths she was revealing. In her justification Stewart referred to the Greek Oracles, Jewish prophetesses, and the predictions of Egyptian women, and that is exactly what she was. She was the first to voice these concerns and to predict what would happen if a change didn't come. She was the first to publicly acknowledge Black women and encourage them to pursue and work toward liberty, rights, education, and a bright future for themselves and their children.

Ultimately the seeds of her wisdom were spread: there were those who misunderstood her message and scorned her; there were others who accepted what she said but when some setback occurred, gave up; while others were corrupt and rejected her altogether; but there were some who heard her message and took it in (Matthew 13:18-23). As Lapsansky points out, the examples of Stewart and other reformers:

> helped to inspire the formation of the female antislavery societies and led others such as Angelina and Sarah Grimke, Maria Weston Chapman, and Abbey Kelley to fight the enormous tide of public opinion for the right of women to engage in social activism (223).

Stewart's essays and speeches provided a precedent for future women public speakers so that they wouldn't have to ask, "What if I am a woman?"

CHAPTER THREE



The logo from William Lloyd Garrison's The Liberator

By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University

CHAPTER THREE: AM I NOT A WOMAN AND A SISTER?

Stewart had not only violated the "appropriate sphere of women" but had challenged notions of both racism and sexism. Her speeches demanded the abolition of slavery and rights for all African-Americans, men and women. She understood that abolition without rights would leave African-Americans in no better condition than before. Stewart also believed that African-American women deserved the same civil rights as African-American men. As Sojourner Truth explained "if colored men get their rights, and not colored women get theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before" ("American Equal Rights Association" 28). In her speeches, Stewart advocated the basic tenets of feminism which were first formulated by Mary Wollstonecraft in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman published in 1792; although there is no evidence of Stewart's having read it. Wollstonecraft's philosophy held: that women should be governed by the same moral standards as men; that women should have the same work opportunities as men; that women should receive the same education as men; that women were equal to men and therefore should be subject to exactly the same social, political, and personal treatment as men (273). For at that time, White women were subjected to deferring to their husbands and being politically, socially, and economically inferior. Radical

women such as Stewart, Wollstonecraft, and Truth did not wish to be similarly constrained.

The role of women in society had historically been determined by the Bible and, in the 19th Century, by Victorian standards of femininity. Nineteenth Century American society established the "Cult of True Womanhood" as presented by women's magazines, gift annuals, cookbooks, and religious literature of that time (Welter 21). In her study entitled "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860," in Dimity Convictions, Welter explains that

> The attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society, could be divided into four cardinal virtues--piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (21).

A proper lady, wife, and mother was expected to live up to these ideals. Those who dared to question the validity of these "virtues" could expect to be marginalized from society--to be "damned immediately as an enemy of God, of civilization and of the Republic" (21).

Suffering under these standards, a degraded, uneducated position, and the bondage of slavery, 19th Century Black women were precluded from achieving True Womanhood status. Understanding this, Stewart sought to shatter stereotypes, confront issues such as the mass exploitation of slave women, and empower Black women.

Laura Sells, however, maintains that to Stewart, "True Womanhood constituted a philosophical principle that she advocated in her discourse (341). Sells argues that Stewart's devout piety and support of virtuous behavior denoted acceptance of True Womanhood's tenets although they were a barrier to Stewart's own success as a speaker.

According to Welter, "Religion or piety was the core of woman's virtue, the source of her strength" (21). Welter suggests that religion was valued because it did not take women from their "proper sphere" namely the home. Welter quotes a male writer from The Ladies' Repository: "'Religion is exactly what a woman needs, for it gives her that dignity that best suits her dependence'" (22). In contrast, Stewart declared, "God is able to fill you with wisdom and understanding, and to dispel your fears. Arm yourselves with the weapons of prayer" ("Religion" 41). True Womanhood's tenets were antithetical to Stewart's objective nor did she, as Sells claims, support them. Stewart equally demanded piety of men and supported temperance societies. She asked men "to flee from the gambling board and the dance-hall; for we are poor and have no money to throw away" (60). She asked that they turn their attention to mental and moral improvement. Stewart preached the Bible to justify her right to speak and to inspire, uplift, and mobilize African-Americans to demand their civil rights.

Purity, according to Welter, was essential to achieve True Womanhood status to do otherwise would be considered unfeminine, unnatural, to be no woman at all but a member of a lower order (23). "A 'fallen woman' was a 'fallen angel,' unworthy of the celestial company of her sex" (Welter 23). As slave narratives have demonstrated, purity was not a virtue allowed the slave women who were raped by their slavemasters and later tortured by their vindictive slavemistresses.

Women, Biblically, had been divided into two archetypal roles: the Madonna, the Virgin praised and admired, and Eve, the wicked temptress, who supposedly by her very actions damned Adam from the Garden of Eden. In the 19th Century, White women became the Madonna archetype and Black women the Eve archetype. White women were depicted as virtuous, pure, and innocent, not sexual and worldly. According to Paula Giddings in <u>When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America</u>,

> The White wife was hoisted on a pedestal so high that she was beyond the sensual reach of her own husband. Black women were consigned to the other end of the scale, as mistresses, whores, or breeders (43).

Stewart accused White men of having "caused the daughters of Africa to commit whoredoms and fornications," making it pointedly clear that it was White men who sought

sexual relations with Black women (Stewart, Religion 39). However, White women often condemned slave women because they had been socialized by institutionalized sexual morality to regard **woman** as sexual temptress. bell hooks, in Ain't I A Woman notes:

> For many..white female abolitionists the sole motivating force behind their anti-slavery efforts was the desire to bring an end to sexual contact between white men and black female slaves. They were not concerned about the plight of enslaved black women, but about saving the souls of white men whom they believed had sinned against God by their acts of moral depravity (27-28).

Motivated by religious convictions, these women attacked the injustice of slavery not racism. It is hooks' contention that many abolitionist women were more concerned about themselves than the welfare of African-Americans. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn observes, "...antebellum reformers who were involved with women's abolitionist groups as well as woman's rights organizations actively discriminated against blacks" ("Discrimination" 17).[1] This is substantiated by the events of the first Abolitionist Women's Convention in 1837 where African-American women were initially prohibited from attendance. Angelina E. Grimke, a White abolitionist-feminist (among the few who had a sincere concern for Black women), opposed this

discrimination and as a result of her intervention African-American women were finally admitted (Swerdlow 40). Among those African-American women in attendance was Maria W. Stewart (Bogin and Yellin 10). African-American women had been refused membership in various antislavery organizations because of the assumption made concerning their virtue.

Black women's bodies were constantly subject to interpretation, being "re"-defined based on their gender and race. "The bodies of women and slaves were read against them" (Sanchez-Eppler 94). All women were deemed inferior because it was assumed that their brains were smaller and, because they were born with a uterus, it was thought that all they could do was conceive (Campbell, "Vol.II" xiv). Black women were not only subjected to this ideology but that which viewed the slave as animal or beast. These misconceptions prevented both women and slaves from political discourse. Thus,

> For women and slaves the ability to speak was predicated upon the reinterpretation of their flesh. Feminists and abolitionists share a strategy: to invert patriarchal readings and so reclaim the body. Transformed from a silent side of oppression into a symbol of that oppression, the body became, within both feminist and abolitionist discourses, a means of gaining rhetorical force (Sanchez-Eppler 94).

The female slave, whose body was sold, provided "feminism as well as abolition with its most graphic example of the extent to which the human body may designate identity" (Sanchez-Eppler 94). Although many feminists discriminated against Black women, it did not preclude their using Black women's bodies as political symbols for the feminist cause. By identifying with the slave, and by insisting on the muteness of the slave, feminists asserted their right to act and speak, thus differentiating themselves from their "sisters" in bonds. "The bound and silent figure of the slave metaphorically represents woman's oppression and so grants the white woman an access to political discourse denied the slave.." (Sanchez-Eppler 95).

The figure of the female slave also proved useful in abolitionist campaigns and was frequently employed to attract White women to abolitionist work. The logo for the "Ladies Department" of Garrison's The Liberator pictured a black woman on her knees and in chains; beneath it ran the plea, "Am I not a woman and a sister?" (Sanchez-Eppler 96). "The particular horror and appeal of the slave woman lay in the magnitude of her sexual vulnerability, and the Ladies' Department admonished its female readers to work for the immediate emancipation of their one million enslaved sisters.." (Sanchez-Eppler 96). African-American men needed white women's support

for their abolitionist work. In "Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolition, 92," Karen Sanchez-Eppler states,

> To the male abolitionist, the application of those notions of modesty and purity that governed the world of nineteenth-century ladies to the extremely different situation of the slave must have seemed a useful strategy for gaining female support on an economic, political, and hence unfeminine issue. Viewed from this perspective, the language of feminine modesty simply reinforces traditional female roles (Sanchez- Eppler 96-97).

Abolitionists emphasized the tradition of feminine modesty to gain white women's support for abolition while maintaining sexist Victorian standards. Therefore, in the crossing of feminist and abolitionist rhetoric, the status of the slave and the status of the woman could each be improved by an alliance with the body of the other. Both bodies were prisons in different ways, and for each the prison of the other was liberating (Sanchez-Eppler 96). White women associated the females slave's position with their own, asking that their husbands not be their masters. In turn, female slaves and free Black women could gain sympathy from white women by manipulating the 19th Century views on modesty. As Sanchez-Eppler illustrates,

> So for the female slave, the frail body of the bourgeois lady promised not weakness but the modesty and virtue of a delicacy supposed at once physical and moral. Concern for the roughness and impropriety with which slave women were treated redefined their suffering as feminine, and hence endowed with all the moral value generally attributed to nineteenth-century American womanhood (Sanchez-Eppler 96).

While constraining White women in a dutiful role, Victorian ethics allowed activists such as Stewart to condemn White men for raping African-American women. Stewart pleaded, "Let me entreat my white brethren to awake and save our sons from dissipation and our daughters from ruin" (63). Her aim was both to gain White female abolitionists' support for her cause and educate them by making it clear that any sexual intercourse between White men and Black women was not by choice but by force. Stewart was adamant that White men, not Black women, were the ones who were morally corrupt, for they terrorized Black women. Stewart further asserted that "They have obliged our brethren to labor; kept them in utter ignorance; nourished them in vice, and raised them in degradation" (63-64).

Stewart urged African-American women to cultivate "the pure principles of piety, morality and virtue" ("Religion" 30). Stewart believed that religion and faith

could unify them as a people to support, boost, educate, and love one another. Slavery had separated families by selling men, women, and children to various plantations. She believed that because they had been divided, it was vital for them to come together. For united, Stewart asserted, "their souls would become fired with a holy zeal for freedom's cause. They would become ambitious to distinguish themselves. They would become proud to display their talents" (31). For too long had they been oppressed, degraded, humiliated and kept in ignorance. Stewart sought to empower Black women, she called out to her sisters, "O woman, woman would thou only strive to excel in merit and virtue; would thou only store thy mind with useful knowledge, great would be thine influence" ("Religion" 31-32). The useful knowledge would be that which would gain their freedom and their rights.

In 1892, Anna Julia Cooper, Black feminist, educator, and public speaker, similarly stated "Oh, save [colored girls of the South], help them, shield, train, develop, teach, inspire them" (25)! Just as Stewart believed that Black women were central to the abolitionist effort, Anna Julia Cooper asserted:

> Now the fundamental agency under God in the regeneration, the re-training of the race, as well as the ground work and starting point of its progress upward, must be the **black woman** (28).

For Stewart, as for Cooper, piety and purity were meant to elevate and educate African-American women.

As to the virtues of submissiveness and domesticity, according to Welter, "Marriage was the proper state for the exercise of the domestic virtues" (37). Welter quotes George Burnap who, in his lectures entitled "The Sphere and Duties of Woman," argued that marriage was

> that sphere for which woman was originally intended, and to which she is so exactly fitted to adorn and bless, as the wife, the mistress of a home, the solace, the aid, and the counsellor of that ONE, for whose sake alone the world is of any consequence to her (Welter 37).

Submissiveness and domesticity was exemplified by being a good wife, and mother. Welter states, "Submission was perhaps the most feminine virtue expected of women" (27). Women were required to be passive, weak, timid, submissive and entirely inferior to men (Welter 28).

As to domesticity and submissiveness, slave women endured far more than these words could ever describe. They suffered torture, degradation, humiliation, toil, and agony; "femininity" was not an option. Yet, as Sojourner Truth so pointedly remarked, "I have plowed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me--and ar'n't I a woman" ("Convention, Ohio" 24)? Women they were, yet not accorded the pleasantries to

which Truth referred such as being helped into carriages and lifted over ditches (Truth 24). No, they worked and slaved as hard as any man. Stewart addressed this very issue to a primarily white audience in a speech delivered to the New England Anti-Slavery Society.[2]

> O, ye fairer sisters, whose hands are never soiled, whose nerves and muscles are never strained, go learn by experience! Had we had the opportunity that you have had, to improve our moral and mental faculties, what would have hindered our intellects from being as bright, and our manners from being as dignified as yours? ...And why are not our forms as delicate, and our constitutions as slender, as yours (Stewart, "Franklin" 48)?

The answer to the latter question is simple: hard labor, whether free or slave. Yet these rhetorical questions needed no answer for her point was made quite clear. How could Black women possibly achieve the "femininity" required of the Cult of True Womanhood when they were not treated as women, nor as humans?

For free Black women, the Victorian virtues of domesticity and submissiveness were a luxury not permitted them for economic necessity forced them out of the domestic sphere and into the workforce. Giddings asserts that "Abolition hadn't erased the taint of their alleged

immorality, and converging social and economic forces in the 1830's added a new challenge (46-47). The challenge was how to survive as a "free" people with little or no education and an overwhelming and overpowering prejudice and discrimination which prevented them from getting work. During the rise of industrialization, Black women were prevented from working in factories because white women did not want to work alongside them; thus, they were confined to the most tedious and degrading occupations. (Harley 7, 15 and Giddings 47-48). "Household work was considered demeaning to many white women, therefore the majority of household jobs were performed by black women, who had little or no choice of occupations" (Harley 6). Most worked as cooks, maids and nannies, a position which afforded them no education, little pay, and the 20th Century stereotype of the happy, contented "Mammy."

Stewart worked as a maid for many years before her marriage and after her husband's death. Stewart was, however, not satisfied to remain in this position: "Do you ask, why are you wretched and miserable? I reply, look at many of the most worthy and most interesting of us doomed to spend our lives in gentlemen's kitchens" (Stewart, "Franklin Hall" 48). Without education and opportunity, free Black women could do little else than remain in menial positions. Overworked, underpaid, uneducated, and oppressed, Black women were kept "in their place."

In her treatise published in The Liberator, Stewart challenged, "How long shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles" (Religion 38)? This statement boldly questioned the status of African-American women in a time when all but few were slaves and when white women, all women, were constrained under Victorian ethics to disguise what intelligence or talent they possessed, hiding "their talents behind a napkin" (Stewart "Encouragement" 44).

In referring to the "fair daughters of Africa," the very term "fair" to describe African-American women would have been considered contentious and nearly blasphemous on Stewart's behalf. The word had been used to describe White men and women, who were considered visually pleasing, of light colored skin and hair (American Heritage Dictionary, "fair" 486). Stewart was questioning American standards of beauty and femininity. The term "fair" can also refer to someone who is pure and free of blemishes or stains (486). African-American women were stained by widespread rape and sexual exploitation at the hands of White men. They were considered stained for women who were raped were seen as having lost value and worth as a result of the humiliation they endured (hooks Ain't I A Woman? 53). In addition, the raping of Black women had been justified by the assumption that Black women were the initiators of

sexual relationships and were therefore stereotyped as sexual savages, as non-human (hooks 52). Using the term "fair" to describe African-American women, Stewart was accusingly pointing the finger at White men and women for the conditions under which these women endured rapes, physical exploitation and humiliation, while freeing Black women from any blame for this treatment. Her mission was to uplift African-American women from their wretched and degraded condition.

Stewart made clear that her efforts were both for her time and the future. She was very concerned with improving life for the next generation. It is for this reason she placed great emphasis on motherhood. However, Bogin and Yellin, in The Abolitionist Sisterhood, argue that "Stewart, like those who followed her, blended the rhetoric of "true womanhood" and "republican motherhood" with the public sound of protofeminist speech.." (4). Republican mothers were supposed to be "responsible for the virtue and character of future generations, the Boston women wished specifically to preserve for their children the democratic ideals of their ancestors.." (Swerdlow 39). True Womanhood and Republican Motherhood valued motherhood as a means to keep women in their domestic sphere and satisfy their narcissistic need for the procreation of a new generation. Stewart did not share these values; hers was not merely the "sound" of a protofeminist, her speech was the genesis of Black feminism.

Speaking as one who had lost her mother at an early age, Stewart understood children's need for their mother and valued the role of motherhood. She exclaimed:

> O, ye mothers, what a responsibility rests on you! ..It is you that must create in the minds of your little girls and boys a thirst for knowledge, the love of virtue, the abhorrence of vice and the cultivation of a pure heart. The seeds sown will grow with their growing years; and the love of virtue thus early formed in the soul will protect their inexperienced feet from many dangers (Religion 35).

Stewart spoke from experience, knowing what dangers the world would hold for these children. Stewart was deprived of the love, attention, dedication and education provided by a mother. Stewart herself never had the opportunity of having children, her husband's early death preventing it. However, she understood the impact parents have on their children. Mothers could prepare their children for the inevitable battles of life. In particular, Black mothers had the opportunity to inculcate values such as piety and a yearning for education and improvement which was vital to the fight for freedom and rights. As Giddings argues, "For these Black women [Stewart, Terrell, and Bruce] the home was not so much a refuge from the outside world as a bulwark to secure one's passage through it" (100).

In her essay, "Womanhood a Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race," Anna Julia Cooper similarly expressed a deep respect for mothers:

> Woman, Mother,--your responsibility is one that might make angels tremble and fear to take hold! The training of children is a task on which an infinity of weal or woe depends (22).

Cooper was emphasizing that children were the next generation. Both Stewart and Cooper believed it was a mother's duty to provide their children with the opportunities that they had been denied; so as Stewart hoped, "their [children's] intelligence [would] become greater than [theirs], and their children [would] attain to higher advantages, and their children still higher..." (Stewart 36)

To encourage her audience, Stewart recognized those parents who had "discharged their duty faithfully, and their children now reflect honor upon their gray hairs" (36). She insisted on the importance for mothers to educate and inspire their children. She asserted "You are not too far advanced to instil[sic] these principles into the minds of your tender infants. Let them by no means be neglected" (32). In A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft, political writer recognized as one of the first feminists, explains that "the formation of the mind must be begun very early, and the temper, in

particular, requires the most judicious attention..." (151). Stewart and Wollstonecraft were aware that an individual's personality and basic values were formulated in early childhood, and stressed that parents should take care to instruct and guide their children from an early age.

Stewart's stress on motherhood did not stem from True Womanhood's circumscribed role of woman as wife and mother. Ruth Bogin and Jean Fagan Yellin, Paula Giddings, and Laura Sells assert that Stewart had internalized the values of True Womanhood (Bogin and Yellin 4, Giddings 50-52, Sells 341-347). This assertion neglects the power of motherhood to cultivate the love of freedom and ambition necessary to fight for abolition and rights. Moreover, they ignore the influences of Stewart's own cultural heritage in the formulation of her ideas and values. In "The Black Woman and Family Roles," Carrie Allen McCray explains that "contrary to the thoughts of earlier writers, [African-Americans] were not cut off completely from [their] African heritage;" behaviors, values and attitudes were transmitted from generation to generation (70). Stewart's emphasis on motherhood and community was rooted in West African culture.

According to McCray, "Africans placed great value on marriage, family unity, kinship bonds, and responsibility to the extended family and the broader society. There was a strong sense of social responsibility" (70). From childhood an African woman was raised in a society of women her own

age who she called sisters (McCray 17). African women spent more time with each other than they did with their husbands (17). When a woman became pregnant, she would leave her husband for at least three years in order to care for her baby (McCray 17-18). During the child's first years a woman's role of mother superseded that of wife. A woman had authority over her own house where she lived with her children, only visiting her husband's house to perform wifely duties (17). It is important to note, though, that West Africans lived in a polygynous culture so that a man would not be want of company, having more than one wife.

This stress on motherhood was true for various societies. In Male Daughters, Female Husbands, Ifi Amadiume explains that for the Nnobi society the importance of motherhood was evident in the specific rituals concerning motherhood (72-74). Amadiume describes these rituals. Some occurred upon matrimony such as the palm-wine ceremony and the **aja uke** which was for warding off evil spirits (74-75). Other rituals occurred during pregnancy such as **ima ogodo** involving the elaborate plaiting of the newly pregnant woman's hair and tattoing her body from throat to waist (74-75). Then there were those after the child was born, such as circumcision (for either sex) (77).

In The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses, Oyeronke Oyewumi analyzes the customs and practices of the Yoruba society. Oyewumi

reveals that for Yorubaland motherhood existed for all women, young ones and those who were menopausal. They lived in a communal culture where there were a multiplicity of mothers which meant that "child-rearing was not an individualized experience that devolved only to mothers" (73). Oyewumi asserts that "Many mothers were able to share child-care responsibilities among themselves, freeing large numbers of mothers of childbearing age to engage in whatever activities they pleased" (73). This was important because the Yoruba women were expected to financially support their children (73). Their culture recognized that if the mother was working, someone needed to watch over her children. According to McCray, the African woman was more than a mother:

> The West African woman was independent. She controlled the economic marketplace, often becoming wealthy. What she earned belonged to her, and, further she felt that her husband should not take care of her, rather, she must earn her own way (Rodgers-Rose 18).

The African woman was instrumental in the economic marketplace controlling various industries such as the making and selling of cloth, pottery, spinning, and selling other various goods (McCray 16).

This is quite different from Western culture where traditionally women were kept in the home while the men went

out to earn money. The exception to this was in the lower class families that needed two incomes, and for widows who had no means of support. In fact, women from poorer classes worked before, during, and after marriage. However, these women primarily performed servile labor and had little control over the money they earned.

Stewart worked as a housekeeper during the early part of her life and, in Boston, just after her husband's death. She observed that as servants, few if any free people of color had an opportunity of becoming rich and independent (47). Stewart stated "As servants, we are respected; but let us presume to aspire any higher, our employer regards us no longer" (47). In "The Darkened Eye Restored," Mary Helen Washington comments that "several generations of competent and talented black women, all of whom **had** to work, were denied access to the most ordinary kind of jobs and therefore to any kind of economic freedom" (36). Consistent with her heritage, Stewart encouraged Black women to "unite and build a store of [their] own...[to] Fill one side with dry goods, and the other with groceries" (38). She demanded they "possess the spirit of men, bold and enterprising, fearless and undaunted" (Religion 38). Stewart believed that if free Black women were denied jobs, then they should create their own. Stewart urged women to become entrepreneurs. Moreover, she criticized those business women who did not provide

Black girls with an equal opportunity for fear of losing public patronage (45). She declared "And such is the powerful force of prejudice" (46).

Although finances had forced her to work as a maid, Stewart was not content to bury her talents performing mean, servile labor ("Franklin Hall" 46). Stewart argued that it was indeed horrible "to possess noble souls aspiring after high and honorable acquirements, yet confined by the chains of ignorance and poverty to lives of continual drudgery and toil" ("Franklin Hall" 46). Being a free Black woman, Stewart understood that without an education African-Americans would remain in a degraded and menial position. She continued:

> Neither do I know of any who have enriched themselves by spending their lives as house domestics, washing windows, shaking carpets, brushing boots, or tending upon gentlemen's tables ("Franklin Hall" 46).

This was contradictory to the dictums of the True Womanhood which believed that a woman's education was never "finished" until she was instructed in the gentle science of homemaking (Welter 34). Stewart, however, believed that "there are no chains so galling as those that bind the soul, and exclude it from the vast field of useful and scientific knowledge" ("Franklin Hall" 45). Having been a maid, Stewart was well aware that housekeeping kept idle hands and

minds busy, so as to not allow women time to contemplate their fate in life. In A Voice From The South, written in 1892 (sixty years after Stewart), Anna Julia Cooper detailed the various objections men have had toward women's education and the very concept that women could think at all. She explained that women were expected to be pretty and flirty and have absolutely no aspirations, no inherent value, no duty to self (64-65). Cooper further noted that

> There were not only no stimuli to encourage women to make the most of their powers and to welcome their development as a helpful agency in the progress of civilization, but their little aspirations, when they had any, were chilled and snubbed in embryo, and any attempt at thought was received as a monstrous usurpation of man's prerogative (63-64).

Welter points out that even "literary women" were expected to keep these "feminine" standards and that their priority would be their home (34). Stewart neither cared to spend time in her own home or in the cleaning of others' homes. Stewart believed that these tasks were demeaning and promoted ignorance. She did, however, ask African-American women to "strive to excel in good housewifery, knowing that prudence and economy are the road to wealth" (37). Paula Giddings interprets this as Stewart's support of the "Womanhood" virtue of domesticity

(52). However, the term housewifery, read in context, meant the management of a household's budget. Stewart was asking that women be frugal and set money aside. This money could then fund the building of a high school; so as Stewart argued, the "higher branches of knowledge might be enjoyed by us" (37).

Resounding the Canticle of Deborah, "Awake, awake, Deborah! awake, awake, strike up a song," Stewart exclaimed (Judges 5:12):

> O, ye daughters of Africa, awake! Awake! Arise! No longer sleep nor slumber, but distinguish yourselves. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties. O, ye daughters of Africa! What have ye done to immortalize your names beyond the grave? What examples have ye set before the rising generation? What foundation have ye laid for generations yet unborn? Where are our union and love (Stewart, "Religion" 30-31)?

In this passage, as in her other speeches and essays, Stewart's questions set forth the personal and public roles to which she hoped and expected African-American women would aspire: to immortalize themselves by setting examples through their enterprising efforts, lay a foundation through education, and unite for the benefit and advancement of all African-Americans.

Stewart hoped that all Black women would take care to work hard, be enterprising, and save money. She strived to establish a sure foundation for the education of African-American men and women. She pleaded:

> Let our money, instead of being thrown away as heretofore, be appropriated for schools and seminaries of learning for our children and youth. ...The rays of light and knowledge have been hid from our view; we have been taught to consider ourselves as scarce superior to the brute creation; and have performed the most laborious part of American drudgery (60-61).

Anna Julia Cooper shared Stewart's convictions. Cooper stated:

> To be plain, I mean let money be raised and scholarships be founded in our colleges and universities for self-supporting, worthy young women, to offset and balance the aid that can always be found for boys who will take theology (79).

Cooper was addressing the inequity existing within the African-American community where funds were ready to support eager, ambitious young men but not bright, acquisitive young women. In answer to the question of why African-American men seem to surpass African-American women in mental attainment, Cooper commented that women are more

quiet, and "'They don't feel called to mount a barrel and harangue by the hour every time they imagine they have produced an idea'" (74). Cooper delivered her blows with a sarcastic wit while Stewart stung with a caustic tongue.

In Boston, Stewart spoke to the Afric-American Female Intelligence Society, an organization dedicated to educating and enlightening Black women. Anne Boylan explains, in her essay "Benevolence and Antislavery Activity among African American Women in New York and Boston, 1820-1840,"

> Members of Boston's Afric-American Female Intelligence Society...met to discuss literature or their own essays, thus improving their reading, writing, and speaking abilities...The society also collected books for a library and brought in guest lecturers for the members' edification (Boylan 122).

Stewart addressed this audience to show her support of their commitment to education and improvement and persuade them that their influence laid not only within their organization but in and around their community. In fact, this society and others provided aid to members, visiting them when sick and furnishing them with monetary assistance when needed (Boylan 128).

After leaving Boston in 1833, Stewart moved to New York where she studied sufficiently to begin her teaching career. "According to a history of the Williamsburg colored

school, 'by 1845 more than sixty Black scholars were taught by a Maria W. Stewart'" (Richardson xvi). This history further notes that "in 1847, she was appointed assistant to the school's principal, Hezekiah Green" (xvi). This was quite an accomplishment for a Black woman at that time.

While teaching in New York, Stewart continued her public speaking, was active in political women's organizations and a Black female literary society, and attended the Women's Antislavery Convention of 1837 (Richardson 27). Anne Boylan explains that "Literary and educational societies were important sources of self-education and self-improvement, although some also raised funds for children's education..." (Boylan 122). Stewart participated and promoted these societies because she maintained the following:

> We need never to think that anybody is going to feel interested for us, if we do not feel interested for ourselves (38).

Stewart believed in self-improvement and self-fulfillment. Mary Wollstonecraft expressed a similar concern when responding to Rousseau's comment, "'Educate women like men...and the more they resemble our sex the less power will they have over us'" (Wollstonecraft 62). Wollstonecraft declared, "I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves" (62). Stewart having been on her own understood the need for women to develop the self-reliance

and independence of which Wollstonecraft wrote.

In 1852, Stewart moved to Baltimore and opened a pay school (what would now be termed a private school) for African-American children where she taught reading, writing, and arithmetic (Stewart 98-102). However, Stewart accepted many students who could not afford the few dollars it cost. Finances eventually forced her to close the school and in 1863, she moved to Washington D.C., where she finally settled.

In Washington D.C., she established a school which the District chose to combine with a free school. Upon being asked to forsake her denomination of Episcopalian to continue teaching, she refused and was discharged (Bailey 96-97). Stewart had always proven to be a very devout individual of steadfast convictions and, regardless of personal cost, she would never place anything above her faith. Throughout these years, she had struggled to keep her schools open and found herself almost to the point of begging but it was her faith that gave her the courage to persevere (Stewart 98-109). She thereafter organized another pay school which was a Sunday school, day school, and night school (102-109).[3] Stewart had encouraged African-American women to acquire an education and to raise funds to found schools, and it was that to which she dedicated her life. Richardson points out that

> Hers is the earliest recorded call to black women

> to take up what would become one of the great traditions in their social and political history, their pioneering work as teachers, founders of schools, and innovators in many areas of black education (20).

Stewart was the predecessor of educators such as Anna Julia Cooper and Mary McCleod-Bethune. She understood the importance of an education and the need for women such as herself to raise money to build schools, for if she didn't who would? Stewart encouraged women to "exhibit the spirits of men...[and to]...turn your attention to knowledge and improvement; for knowledge is power" (41). Indeed so it was, as Loewenberg and Bogin explain:

> The written word was a means of practical liberation. It enabled a slave to forge a pass, read a notice, communicate with distant family. It helped a plantation preacher to learn the whole of the Bible and not just the limited portions his master wished him to know. In freedom it was the primary step to holding a job that was not mere drudgery; to reading the terms of a contract; to knowing the law; to following the news; to learning what others had written in books. ("Education" 282).

There was a crucial distinction between those who could read and those who could not, between those who understood

the law and the rights of men and those who did not. Nineteenth-century law relegated white women to their husbands and black women to their slavemasters. In principle, the same role was held by both for legally neither had rights.

> When married, they were civilly dead; unmarried, they were dependents with few possibilities for self-support; and regardless of marital and socioeconomic status, they were oppressed by the cult of true womanhood (Campbell, "Vol. I" 145).

Stewart understood this well for after the death of her husband she was left alone, abandoned, and in poverty. Her husband's wealth which he had willed to her was stolen by a White man who claimed that her husband James owed him money. In addition, her husband James had fought in the War of 1812 and as a veteran of an American war was due a pension but had been denied his legal pension.

It wasn't until 1878 that Congress granted pensions to the widows of the War of 1812. Louise Hatton who worked in the government pension office notified Stewart that she was entitled to James' pension. Stewart asked Hatton to investigate her case and in 1879 Hatton read her James' Will which had been made December 15, 1829 (Hatton 92).[3] Stewart had been denied her husband's money for fifty years of working and struggling, money she could have invested in her schools (Hatton 92). However, when she did receive the

pension she invested the money in publishing a new edition of her collected works with an added section entitled "Sufferings During the War" which was prefaced by a group of letters from friends and colleagues, among them Louise Hatton.

Stewart understood what a poor political position all women, but especially Black women, held. When in her speech at Franklin Hall she spoke to African-American men, saying "it is upon you that woman depends," Stewart was making clear that legally women had no recourse (48). Giddings suggests that this statement meant that Stewart was subscribing to the doctrine of submissiveness (50-51). Stewart, however, was just making a statement of fact, not a value judgment. As Sojourner Truth argued "In the courts women have no right, no voice; nobody speaks for them" ("American Equal Rights Association" 28). Stewart sought to motivate African-American men to fight for abolition and rights for all African-Americans. Stewart exclaimed:

> African rights and liberty is a subject that ought to fire the breast of every free man of color in these United States, and excite in his bosom a lively, deep, decided and heart-felt interest (56).

Stewart thought that whatever effort they made, however feeble, would be part of a larger collective struggle for freedom and rights (53). Stewart, though a free Black

woman, was aware of the rights Blacks had been denied. Stewart declared:

> We have pursued the shadow, they have obtained the substance; we have performed the labor, they have received the profits; we have planted the vines, they have eaten the fruits of them (59).

She poetically contrasted "we have" and "they have," terms which denote possession; yet for Stewart assumed different meanings. The first referred to searching and working toward an elusive goal, a metaphor for African-Americans' struggle for freedom and equality. The second referred to the privilege of having acquired something without having had to work for it. She was eloquently stating that African-Americans were overdue for what had been denied them.

Stewart gave several speeches to various abolitionist and literary societies in Boston and New York. A number of these were organized by Black women. Black women, having been excluded from male, and White female antislavery efforts, were compelled to create their own societies. In "Political Behavior of American Black Women," Jewel Prestage observes that

> Some indication of the political sensitivity of free Black women can be discerned from the variety of activities in which they were involved. Records of antislavery societies, letters to

> editors of newspapers periodicals, and public speeches reveal names of Black women whose energies and talents were devoted to the abolitionist cause (236).

Stewart was just such a woman who felt she had been called by God to deliver His message of freedom and human rights. She became His tool for uniting African-American men and women in the struggle. Stewart sought to advance the status of the African American community as a whole. Stewart declared:

> It is of no use for us to sit with our hands folded, hanging our heads like bulrushes, lamenting our wretched condition; but let us make a mighty effort, and arise; and if no one will promote or respect us, let us promote and respect ourselves" (37).

Stewart did not want African-Americans relying on White Americans; she believed that if they wanted rights, they should work toward them. She impressed upon free Blacks the need to unite to free their bound brothers and sisters. Together they could strengthen and champion one another. Stewart proclaimed, "Without these efforts, we shall never be a people, nor our descendants after us" (Stewart 53).

She called upon African-American women because she understood that they were the most oppressed and most denied of rights. Stewart called out:

> O woman, woman! Upon you I call; for upon your exertions almost entirely depends whether the rising generation shall be any thing more than we have been or not. O woman, woman! Your example is powerful, your influence great; it extends over your husbands and your children, and throughout the circle of your acquaintance. Then let me exhort you to cultivate among yourselves a spirit of Christian love and unity, having charity one for another...(55)

Stewart sought to empower African-American women with the strength, courage, and love necessary to unite in the struggle for the liberty and rights they deserved. Anna Julia Cooper similarly entrusted Black women with the task of advancing and promoting their brethren:

> Only the BLACK WOMAN can say 'when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me' (31).

Stewart encouraged Black women to become active and be aware of the prejudice, power, and politics which had denied women their rights and enslaved Africans. Belonging to both these groups, the political experiences of Black women had been reflective of their status of dual oppression (Prestage 245). For this reason, Stewart urged

Black women to "Possess the spirit of independence... Sue for your rights and privileges. Know the reason that you cannot attain them" (38). Maria W. Stewart was the first to empower Black women and as such is the first public representation of Black Feminism.

In All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave (1982), the Combahee River Collective, a group of Black Feminists, printed their landmark essay "A Black Feminist Statement" where they discussed the genesis of contemporary Black Feminism, their beliefs, and Black Feminist issues and practice. Although Maria W. Stewart lived over a century ago, her philosophy embraced the values and ideals of Black Feminism outlined by the Combahee River Collective.

According to the Combahee River Collective, Black Feminists need to be aware of sexual oppression and the sexual politics which are pervasive in the lives of Black women from within and without the African-American community (Collective 14-16). In her speeches and essays Stewart formulates her agenda based on deep religious and political convictions. Though Stewart predates the women's movement and in her time the term "Feminism" had not been coined, she, nonetheless, incorporated its basic tenets: supporting equal rights, education, and work opportunities. Laura Sells observes that "While she did not singlehandedly break the barrier of separate spheres for women, she was

part of a vanguard of women speakers who challenged prescribed gender roles" (347). Stewart was among the first women such as Frances Wright (1824) and the Grimke sisters (1836-1838) who sought to break gender barriers by placing women on an equal position with men (Campbell, "Volume I" 17-22). Stewart subverted patriarchal constructions of "womanhood" both in her words and in her actions. She believed that a woman had the right to a multiplicity of roles, not just those which men deemed appropriate. She discussed woman as mother, scholar, judge, Queen, student, teacher, preacher, speaker, worker, entrepreneur, activist, and leader. Stewart's life was an example of what a woman could accomplish having been, at one time or another, most of the above. Although Stewart specifically referred to these positions, she created a framework where the possibilities for women were endless.

Although Stewart advocated women's rights, her struggle was focused in ending slavery, fighting against prejudice, and acquiring civil rights. There stood the difference between early 19th century White and Black women activists. While White women sought to break away from the "True Womanhood" rules embedded in their culture, Black women struggled to break free from iron chains. Those who were free, such as Stewart, endured prejudice and hardship, and shared the pain suffered by their sisters in bonds. Having been excluded from most female antislavery societies,

Black women activists decided to establish their own organizations where women such as Stewart were actively fighting for abolition.

This segregation continued during the women's movement from the 19th to the 20th Century. During the women's movement of the 1960's, Black women's issues and concerns were still not being addressed. The Combahee River Collective asserts that therefore Black women need to develop a politics that is antiracist, unlike those of White women, and antisexist, unlike those of Black and White men (14). Above all, the Collective's politics sprang from the shared belief that Black women are inherently valuable and that their liberation is a necessity because of the human need for autonomy (15).

Stewart sought to unify and advance the status of the African-American community as a whole and in so doing demanded the legal rights they so deserved. Stewart understood, however, that for Black women to demand civil rights, they first had to be recognized as being human.

The shared experiences of discrimination, degradation, humiliation, torture and terror, endured by slaves and free persons fused African-American men and women. In her essay, "The Black Woman and Family Roles," Carrie Allen McCray explores the historic influences affecting African-Americans: "Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of our survival has been a deep resource of humanistic values"

(70). This, according to McCray, can be traced to the following sources: their African cultural heritage, the "caring roles" into which African-Americans were placed because of social and economic situations, strong religious beliefs, and recognition of the need for mutual aids in order to survive the oppressive societal forces they knew so well (McCray 70). This was true for slaves and those who were free, like Stewart.

The Combahee River Collective looks to the 19th Century to understand the historical, political, and economic positions African-American women have held and how this continues to affect them in the 20th Century (14). They stress the need for awareness of Black women's "place" in society. Stewart was very aware of Black women's political and economic status, their history, and her African heritage.

As stated earlier, Stewart's emphasis on motherhood, child rearing, and a community spirit was rooted in her African heritage. Africans placed great value on motherhood, family unity, kinship bonds, and responsibility to the extended family (McCray 70). Black slave women came from a culture in which the family structure expected some responsibility for others, and history placed them in a social situation which demanded extending her caring role to her children and the children of other slaves, as well as children of the master (McCray 71).

Also in keeping with her African heritage, Stewart encouraged Black women to become entrepreneurs and believed that they deserved equal economic opportunities. Stewart was angered that African-Americans spent their lives filling White men's coffers and not their own. The Combahee River Collective believes that in order to end oppression political-economic systems need to be destroyed. They stated, "We are socialists because we believe that work must be organized for the collective benefit of those who do the work and create the products and not for the profit of the bosses" (Collective 16). Stewart, however, did not subscribe to socialism, firstly because she predates Marx and was therefore never familiar with Marxist/ socialist philosophies. Secondly, Stewart encouraged African-American women to participate in the economic community, urging them to become entrepreneurs (38). However, she did believe that all individuals should be given equal access to jobs and have the opportunity for economic success. She criticized business women who denied Black girls jobs for fear of losing public patronage (45). Thirdly, Stewart believed, as do socialists, in giving mutual aid and support; however she, unlike Marx, was a devout Christian. Her desire to help others came from a belief in the Christian principles of love and charity.

Stewart's principles were founded upon the rock of Christianity. Many activists, such as Walker and Truth,

felt called by God to work toward freedom and rights. Strong religious beliefs unified slaves which is evidenced by their prayer meetings, discussed in various slave narratives, and the rise of evangelism, with examples such as Jarena Lee and Julia Foote.

The need for mutual aid, of which McCray wrote, was met by the helping of slaves escape via the underground railroad, and abolitionist and literary societies which provided support, education, and food and money whenever possible. African-Americans were tied by heritage, history, bondage, and suffering, which led female activists to join their brethren in their struggle.

However, women such as Stewart and Truth never placed the rights of African-American men above their own. Black Feminists from 19th Century women like Stewart to the 20th Century women of the Combahee River Collective challenge patriarchal notions of womanhood, confront hegemonic perceptions of non-European cultures, question those who seek to impose authority, and, most importantly, empower Black women. Loewenberg and Bogin reflect on the contributions made by 19th Century women such as Stewart:

> Black women addressed mankind. They spoke to all America about America: its issues, its evils, its meanings. They were partisans of every aspect of democratic reform: human rights, women's rights, black rights, the right to work, to vote,

and to study (35-36).

Their experiences afforded them the vision necessary to be a driving force in Black activism. Stewart was the first such African-American woman to dare take the podium to speak for the rights of African-American women, and have her essays and speeches published. In essence, Stewart bid Black women to be proud of their duality and face their oppressors and ask "Am I not a woman and a sister?"

****

Above all, her life stood as an example of the human will, the freedom of choice. Slaves were bound in chains, Free Blacks were circumscribed by prejudice, and women were bridled within the home, Stewart, however, was unfettered by these restraints. With faith, courage, and the strength of her convictions, she shook off these shackles to travel down a path of her own design, truly the author of her own life. Her words and actions continue to inspire individuals to commit themselves to these principles and to the struggle to see them become a reality in the lives of all humankind.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE: SILENCED VOICES HEARD

1. In this thesis, as a means of comparison, "White" or "White Americans" refer to Caucasian, U.S. citizens. Within the context of 19th Century America, this term is sometimes used interchangeably with Southern slaveholders or discriminating Northerners; however, acknowledging that many "Whites" were abolitionists. Stewart uses "Africans" when alluding to slaves; whereas, the author applies the term to the various tribes in [West] Africa. "African-Americans" are those living in America of African heritage. Whereas, "Black" conveys a Pan-Africanist vision of political unification opposing racism and fighting for civil rights, e.g. "Black activism" (Boyce-Davies 7).

2. Note that Maria's maiden name did not have a middle initial, it was her husband's. In an affidavit to claim her widow's pension she states, "ever since the death of my said husband I have written my name with a "W." as a middle letter..." This became her legal name. Stewart, Maria W. "Supplementary Affidavit to Claim of Widow for Service Pension." Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer. Ed. Marilyn Richardson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. Appendix D.

3. This is a paraphrase of Carby's discussion on Black women novelists. Carby, Hazel V. Reconstructing Woman-hood. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 95.

4. The sisters Angelina and Sarah Grimke were two noted White, antislavery-feminists speaking from 1836 to 1838 (Campbell "Volume I" 22).

5. In the supposed voice of General Wooster, Phillis Wheatley asked that the Americans be victorious in the American Revolution and that they (the slaves) should receive "generous freedom." Wheatley is the first African-American poet ever to be published.

CHAPTER TWO: WHAT IF I AM A WOMAN?

1. This expression is from Matthew 16:26.

2. This poem rejoices in the American struggle for emancipation from England. Wheatley's intention here is clear. She wishes for America's freedom and with that, her own. The image of the "iron chain" is an obvious referent to slavery and her message, the end of Tyranny for her sable race.

3. Please note that the Biblical sources in brackets are provided by the editor Marilyn Richardson and not by Stewart (Richardson "Textual Note" xix).

4. Richardson attributes this reference to Jeremiah 29: 18 where the Lord said he would pursue those who had abandoned him and would "make them an object of horror...ridicule, and reproach to all nations..." Yet, a Biblical passage in Amos seems more appropriate:

"They hate him who reproves at the gate/ and abhor him who speaks the truth" (Amos 5:10).

CHAPTER THREE: AM I NOT A WOMAN AND A SISTER?

1. In this essay "Discrimination Against Afro-American Women in the Woman's Movement, 1830-1920," Terborg-Penn argues that "Discrimination against Afro-American women reformers was the rule rather than the exception within the woman's rights movement from the 1830's to 1920" (17).

2. The New England Anti-Slavery society began as an all white, male abolitionist organization founded by William Lloyd Garrison, publisher of The Liberator where Stewart's speeches and essays were published. Later, Garrison's group agreed to admit Black males into their organization, although there existed unequal treatment and prejudice of Blacks. This seems quite ironic since the organization was meant to free Blacks from slavery and oppression. For information on anti-slavery organizations read: Yee, Shirley J. "Organizing for Racial Justice: Black women and the Dynamics of Race and Sex in Female Antislavery Societies, 1832-1860." Black Women in America. Ed. Kim Marie Vaz. London: Sage Publications, 1995. 38-53.

3. Stewart's pay school was among a number of such "colored schools," in addition to the government-sponsored Freedmen's schools established after the Civil War (Richardson 132n).

Works Cited

Amadiume, Ifi. Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society. London: Zed Books, 1987.

Bailey, Henry. "Letter From Henry Bailey." Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer. Ed. Marilyn Richardson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. 96-97.

The New American Bible. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1970.

Bogin, Ruth and Jean Fagan Yellin. Introduction. The Abolitionist Sisterhood. Ed. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. 1-19.

Bormann, Ernest G. "Female Antislavery Speakers." Forerunners of Black Power. Ed. Ernest G. Bormann. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971. 176-184.

Boyce-Davies, Carole. Black Women, Writing and Identity. London: Routledge, 1994.

Boylan, Anne M. "Benevolence and Antislavery Activity among African American Women in New York and Boston, 1820-1840." The Abolitionist Sisterhood. Ed. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. 119-137.

Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs. Man Cannot Speak For Her: A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric, Volumes I and II. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1989.

Carby, Hazel V. Reconstructing Womanhood. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

The Combahee River Collective. "A Black Feminist Statement." All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave. Ed. Gloria T. Hull. Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1982. 13-22.

Cooper, Anna Julia. A Voice From the South. Introduction. Mary Helen Washington. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

"Fair." The American Heritage Dictionary. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982. 486.

"Feminist." The American Heritage Dictionary. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982. 496-497.

Foote, Julia A. J. "A Brand Plucked from the Fire: An Autobiographical Sketch (1886)." Spiritual Narratives. Introduction. Sue E. Houchins. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. 1-124.

Garrison, William Lloyd. "Letter from William Lloyd Garrison." Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer. Ed. Marilyn Richardson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. 89-90.

Giddings, Paula. When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984.

Hale, Janice. "The Black Woman and Child Rearing." The Black Woman. Ed. La Frances Rodgers-Rose. Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1980. 79-87.

Harley, Sharon. "Northern Black Female Workers: Jacksonian Era." The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images. Ed. Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1978. 5-16.

Hatton, Louise C. "Biographical Sketch." Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer. Ed. Marilyn Richardson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. 91-93.

Henderson, Mae Gwendolyn. "Speaking in Tongues: Dialogics, Dialectics and the Black Woman Writer's Literary Tradition." Reading Black, Reading Feminist. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Penguin Books, 1990. 116-142.

hooks, bell. Ain't I A Woman. Boston: South End Press, 1981.

---. Feminist Theory from Margin to Center. Boston: South End Press, 1984.

---. Talking Back: thinking feminist, thinking black. Boston: South End Press, 1989.

Horton, James Oliver and Lois E. Horton. In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest Among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860 New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

JanMohamed, Abdul R. "The Economy of Manichean Allegory." The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, & Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 1995. 18-23.

King, Jr., Martin Luther. "I Have a Dream." The Winchester Reader. Ed. Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1991. 526-530.

Lapsansky, Phillip. "Graphic Discord: Abolitionist and Anti-abolitionist Images." The Abolitionist Sisterhood Ed. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. 201-230.

Lee, Jarena. "Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee, Giving an Account of Her Call to Preach the Gospel (1849)." Spiritual Narratives. Introduction. Sue E. Houchins. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. 1-97.

Leon, Vicky. Uppity Women of Ancient Times. Berkeley: Conari Press, 1995.

Lerner, Gerda. Black Women in White America. Ed. Gerda Lerner. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

---. The Creation of Feminist Consciousness. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

---. The Majority Finds Its Past. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

"This Little Light of Mine." Norton Anthology of African American Literature. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay. New York: Norton, 1997. 17-18.

Loewenberg, Bert James and Ruth Bogin. "To Get an Education and to Teach My People." Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life: Their Words, Their Thoughts, Their Feelings. Ed. Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976. 281-282.

---. Introduction. 2-36.

---. Preface. ix-xi.

Logan, Shirley Wilson. "Maria W. Stewart, (1803-1879)." With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women. Ed. Shirley Wilson Logan. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995. 1-5.

---. "Sojourner Truth, (c.1797-1883)." 17-23.

Lundberg, Ferdinand and Marynia Farnham. "Mary Wollstonecraft and the Psychopathology of Feminism." A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. Ed. Carol H. Poston. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988. 273-276.

McCray, Carrie Allen. "Black Woman and the Family." The Black Woman. Ed. La Frances Rodgers-Rose. Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1980. 70-78.

Nero, Charles I. "'Oh, What I Think I Must Tell This World!': Oratory and Public Address of African-American Women." Black Women in America. Ed. Kim Marie Vaz. London: Sage Publications, 1995. 261-275.

Nye, Russel B. William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers. Ed. Oscar Handlin. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955.

Oyewumi, Oyeronke. Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Prestage, Jewel L. "Political Behavior of American Black Women." The Black Woman. Ed. La Frances Rodgers-Rose. Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1980. 233-245.

Prince, Mary. "History of Mary Prince." Six Women Slave Narratives. William L. Andrews. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. 1-44.

Richardson, Marilyn. Introduction. Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer. Ed. Marilyn Richardson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. 3-27.

---. Notes. 121-132.

---. Preface. xiii-xvii.

---. Textual Note. xix-xx.

Rodgers-Rose, La Frances. "Introduction: The Black Woman, A Historical Overview." The Black Woman. Ed. La Frances Rodgers-Rose. Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1980. 15-25.

Sanchez-Eppler, Karen. "Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolition." The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America. Ed. Shirley Samuels. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. 92-114.

Sells, Laura R. "Maria W. Miller Stewart:(1803-1879) first African-American woman to lecture in public." Women Public Speakers in the United States, 1800-1925. Ed. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993. 339-349.

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet. Ed. R.C. Bald Northbrook, Illinois: AHM Publishing, 1946.

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. The Woman's Bible. Foreword. Maureen Fitzgerald. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993.

Stewart, Maria W. "An Address Delivered At The African Masonic Hall (1833)." Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer. Ed. Marilyn Richardson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. 56-64.

---. "An Address Delivered Before The Afric-American Female Intelligence Society of America (1832)." 50-55.

---. "Cause For Encouragement (1832)." 43-44.

---. "Lecture Delivered At The Franklin Hall (1832)." 45-49.

---. "Meditation X." 115-116.

---. "Mrs. Stewart's Farewell Address to Her Friends in the City of Boston (1833)." 65-74.

---. "Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, The Sure Foundation on Which We Must Build (1831)." 28-42.

---. "Sufferings During The War." 98-109.

Swerdlow, Amy. "Abolition's Conservative Sisters: The Ladies' New York Anti-Slavery Societies, 1834-1840." The Abolitionist Sisterhood. Ed. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. 31-44.

Terborg-Penn, Rosalyn. "Discrimination Against Afro-American Women in the Woman's Movement, 1830-1920." The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images. Ed. Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1978. 17-27.

Truth, Sojourner. "I suppose I am about the only colored woman that goes about to speak for the rights of colored women." Fourth National Women's Rights Convention, New York City 1853. Black Women in White America. Ed. Gerda Lerner. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972. 566-572.

---. "Speech Delivered to the First Annual Meeting of the American Equal Rights Association, 9 May 1867." With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995. 28-29.

---. "Speech Delivered to the Woman's Rights Convention, Akron, Ohio, 1851 [Gage Version]." 24-25.

Walker, Alice. In Search of Our Mother's Gardens. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1983.

Walker, David. David Walker's Appeal. Ed. Charles M. Wiltse. New York: Hill and Wang, 1965.

Washington, Mary Helen. "'The Darkened Eye Restored': Notes Toward a Literary History of Black Women." Reading Black, Reading Feminist. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Penguin Books, 1990. 30-43.

Welter, Barbara. Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976.

Wheatley, Phillis. "On the Death of General Wooster." The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley. Ed. John Shields. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988. 149-150.

---. "Letter to Reverend and Honoured Sir [Samson Occum]." 11 February 1774. 176-177.

---. "To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for North America,&c." 73-75.

Williams, Sherley Anne. "Some implications of womanist theory." Reading Black, Reading Feminist. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Pengion Books, 1990. 68-75.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. Ed. Carol H. Poston. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988.

Yee, Shirley J. "Organizing for Racial Justice: Black Women and the Dynamics of Race and Sex in Female Antislavery Societies, 1832-1860." Black Women in America. Ed. Kim Marie Vaz. London: Sage Publications, 1995. 38-53.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX -- A

Publishers for the Tate Gallery
London, Liverpool and St Ives

Tate Gallery Publishing Limited
Millbank, London SW1P 4RG
Tel: 0171 887 8869/70/71
Fax 0171 887 8878

TatePublishing

THE WORK YOU REQUESTED IS AVAILABLE IN THE FOLLOWING FORMATS:

Direct tel: 0171-887-8867
Direct fax: 0171-887-8900

Colour Prints

Size [inches]	Price
7x5	£ 16.00
10x8	£ 19.00
A4 [12x10]	£ 29.00
A3 [16x12]	£ 40.00
20x16	£ 54.00
20x24	£ 68.00
20x30	£ 81.00
24x36	£ 100.00
30x40	£120.00

Black and White

6x8	£ 8 23

Colour Slides

35mm	£7 00

Please note that the prints and the 35mm slides are supplied for lecture purposes and private use only. **Reproduction from both formats is strictly forbidden due to copyright regulations.**

In order to purchase any of the above please contact the **Tate Picture Library** at the above address. We accept payment by credit card [except Amex], cheques in sterling drawn on a London Bank, International money order or Eurocheque. Payment should be made to"Tate Gallery Publishing Ltd".

Registered in England and Wales
Company registration no.3179938

Jennifer Anne Garcia

March 22, 1998

Tate Gallery Publishing Limited
Millbank, London SW1P 4RG

To Tate Picture Library:

I would like to order a 7x5 print of Sonia Boyce's Missionary Position No.2 with permission to include it in my Master's thesis. My Master's thesis will not be published, this is for private use only. Please charge the sixteen pounds to my credit card:
Jennifer Anne Garcia expiration date: . Please send this as soon as possible. Should, due to processing, this not be sent until after April 10, 1998 please send the print via Express Mail and charge my credit card for the extra postage. If there are any queries please call me at ( ) or email me at:

Sincerely,

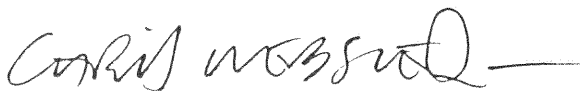
Jennifer Anne Garcia

Jennifer Anne Garcia

Publishers for the Tate Gallery
London, Liverpool and St Ives

Tate Gallery Publishing Limited
Millbank, London SW1P 4RG
Tel: 0171-887 8869/70/71
Fax: 0171-887 8878

TatePublishing



With Compliments

APPENDIX -- B

Jennifer Anne Garcia

March 22, 1998

Houghton Library
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To Houghton Library:

I would like to order a 4x6 print or copy of "Am I Not A Woman and a Sister" the Logo from the Ladies Department of William Lloyd Garrison's The Liberator with permission to include it in my Master's thesis. My Master's thesis will not be published, this is for private use only. Please let me know if there is any charge for the print or postage. I would appreciate it if you would please send this as soon as possible. If there are any queries please call me at ( ) or email me at:

Sincerely,

Jennifer Anne Garcia

Jennifer Anne Garcia

THE HOUGHTON LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY · CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS 02138 · TELEPHONE 617 495 2440

April 2, 1998

Jennifer Anne Garcia
8830 SW. 19 St.
Miami, FL 33165

Dear Ms. Garcia,

Thank you for your letter of March 22. We can supply you with a 4 x 5 b & w print of this logo from *The Liberator* for $29.00, including first-class mailing and handling.

We require prepayment by check, payable to the HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY, sent to me at the above address. Once I have received your payment, processing will take about three weeks.

I hope this is helpful and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jennie Rathbun

Jennie Rathbun
Houghton Reading Room

Jennifer Anne Garcia

April 7, 1998

Houghton Reading Room
Houghton Library
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

To Jennie Rathbun:

I would like to order a 4x6 print of "Am I Not A Woman and a Sister" the Logo from the Ladies Department of William Lloyd Garrison's The Liberator with permission to include it in my Master's thesis. Enclosed is a check for the amount of $29.00. I would appreciate it if you would process this as soon as possible. If there are any queries please call me at ( ) or email me at:

Sincerely,

Jennifer Anne Garcia

Jennifer Anne Garcia

Order Number:
№ 05104

Imaging Studio Services
Widener Library
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-495-3995 x 37

Date In: 4/15/95
Due Date: 5/1/95
Delivery Time: normal

Ordered by:

Ship to:
Jennifer Anne Carson
8820 SW 19 Street
Miami FL
33165

Paid by:

Phone:

#	Description of Original(s)	Shelf Mark / I.D. #	Service	Size	Quantity	Item Total
1	Am I Not a Woman & A Sister	Negative 0525S.42	print	4x5	1	1
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

1 Total number of originals

Notes:

Hughlen 7/25

Sub total	1
RUSH fee	
Postage	4
Total	17

PAYMENT
☐ Cash ☑ ID Invoice
☐ Check ☐ Prepaid
☐ Bill ☐ Pay when p/u

I.D. Coding
58 | 605 | 57 | 4251 | 7 | 46

Received by: Robert Zuck
Ship via:
FedEx Account #:

ORIGINALS
Return Originals To: Hh
Picked up by/delivered to:
Date:

NEGATIVES (that have been generated from furnished originals)
Negatives to:
Picked up by/delivered to:
Date:

5104, 10P 5/1

Mrs. Stuart's [sic] Farewell Address to the People of Color of this city, was delivered the 18th inst. at the School Room in Belknap St. to a crowded audience. The meeting was opened with a prayer by Mr. Dale, and the address was deeply interesting.[82]

The Liberator, 28 September 1833

Mrs. Stewart's Farewell Address To Her Friends In The City Of Boston

Delivered September 21, 1833

"Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?"

Ah, no! For it is with great tribulation that any shall enter through the gates of the holy city [Acts 14:22].

My Respected Friends,

You have heard me observe that the shortness of time, the certainty of death, and the instability of all things here, induce me to turn my thoughts from earth to heaven. Borne down with a heavy load of sin and shame, my conscience filled with remorse; considering the throne of God forever guiltless, and my own eternal condemnation as just, I was at last brought to accept of salvation as a free gift, in and through the merits of a crucified Redeemer.[83] Here I was brought to see,

'Tis not by works of righteousness
That our own hands have done,
But we are saved by grace alone,
Abounding through the Son.[84]

After these convictions, in imagination I found myself sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed in my right mind. For I had been like a ship tossed to and fro, in a storm at sea. Then was I glad when I realized the dangers I had escaped; and then I consecrated my soul and body, and all the powers of my mind to his service, and from that time henceforth; yea, even for evermore, amen.

I found that religion was full of benevolence; I found there was joy and peace in believing, and I felt as though I was commanded to come out from the world and be separate; to go forward and be baptized. Methought I heard a spiritual interrogation, are you able to drink of that cup that I have drank of? And to be baptized with the baptism that I have been baptized with [Matthew 20:22]? And my heart made this reply: Yea, Lord, I am able. Yet amid these bright hopes, I was filled with apprehensive fears, lest they were false. I found that sin still lurked within; it was hard for me to renounce all for Christ, when I saw my earthly prospects blasted. O, how bitter was that cup. Yet I drank it to its very dregs. It was hard for me to say, thy will be done; yet I was made to bend and kiss the rod. I was at last made willing to be anything or nothing, for my Redeemer's sake. Like many, I was anxious to retain the world in one hand, and religion in the other. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon [Matthew 6:24]," sounded in my ear, and with giant-strength, I cut off my right hand, as it were, and plucked out my right eye, and cast them from me, thinking it better to enter life halt and maimed, rather than having two hands or eyes to be cast into hell [Mark 9:43]. Thus ended these mighty conflicts, and I received this heart-cheering promise, "That neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, should be able to separate me from the love of Christ Jesus, our Lord [Romans 8:38, 39]."

And truly, I can say with St. Paul that at my conversion I came to the people in the fulness of the gospel of grace [Romans 15:29]. Having spent a few months in the city of —, previous, I saw the flourishing condition of their churches, and the progress they were making in their Sabbath Schools. I visited their Bible classes, and heard of the union that existed in their Female Associations. On my arrival here,

not finding scarce an individual who felt interested in these subjects, and but few of the whites, except Mr. Garrison, and his friend, Mr. Knapp; and hearing that those gentlemen had observed that female influence was powerful, my soul became fired with a holy zeal for your cause; every nerve and muscle in me was engaged in your behalf. I felt that I had a great work to perform; and was in haste to make a profession of my faith in Christ, that I might be about my Father's business [Luke 2:49]. Soon after I made this profession, The Spirit of God came before me, and I spake before many. When going home, reflecting on what I had said, I felt ashamed, and knew not where I should hide myself. A something said within my breast, "Press forward, I will be with thee." And my heart made this reply, Lord, if thou wilt be with me, then I will speak for thee as long as I live. And thus far I have every reason to believe that it is the divine influence of the Holy Spirit operating upon my heart that could possibly induce me to make the feeble and unworthy efforts that I have.

But to begin my subject: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, whoso is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whoso shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. But whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire [Matthew 5:22]." For several years my heart was in continual sorrow. And I believe that the Almighty beheld from his holy habitation, the affliction wherewith I was afflicted, and heard the false misrepresentations wherewith I was misrepresented, and there was none to help. Then I cried unto the Lord in my troubles. And thus for wise and holy purposes, best known to himself, he has raised me in the midst of my enemies, to vindicate my wrongs before this people; and to reprove them for sin, as I have reasoned to them of righteousness and judgment to come. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts [Isaiah 55:9]." I believe, that for wise and holy purposes, best known to himself, he hath unloosed my tongue, and put his word into my mouth, in order to confound and put all those to shame that have rose up against me. For he hath clothed my face with steel, and lined my forehead with brass. He hath put his testi-

mony within me, and engraven his seal on my forehead [Revelation 9:4]. And with these weapons I have indeed set the fiends of earth and hell at defiance.

What if I am a woman; is not the God of ancient times the God of these modern days? Did he not raise up Deborah, to be a mother, and a judge in Israel [Judges 4:4]? Did not queen Esther save the lives of the Jews? And Mary Magdalene first declare the resurrection of Christ from the dead? Come, said the woman of Samaria, and see a man that hath told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ? St. Paul declared that it was a shame for a woman to speak in public, yet our great High Priest and Advocate did not condemn the woman for a more notorious offence than this; neither will he condemn this worthless worm. The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. Did St. Paul but know of our wrongs and deprivations, I presume he would make no objections to our pleading in public for our rights. Again; holy women ministered unto Christ and the apostles; and women of refinement in all ages, more or less, have had a voice in moral, religious and political subjects. Again; why the Almighty hath imparted unto me the power of speaking thus, I cannot tell. "And Jesus lifted up his voice and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight [Luke 10:21]."

But to convince you of the high opinion that was formed of the capacity and ability of woman by the ancients, I would refer you to "Sketches of the Fair Sex." Read to the 51st page, and you will find that several of the Northern nations imagined that women could look into futurity, and that they had about them, an inconceivable something, approaching to divinity. Perhaps that idea was only the effect of the sagacity common to the sex, and the advantages which their natural address gave them over rough and simple warriors. Perhaps, also, those barbarians, surprised at the influence which beauty has over force, were led to ascribe to the supernatural attraction, a charm which they could not comprehend. A belief, however, that the Deity

more readily communicates himself to women, has at one time or other, prevailed in every quarter of the earth; not only among the Germans and the Britons, but all the people of Scandinavia were possessed of it. Among the Greeks, women delivered the Oracles; the respect the Romans paid to the Sibyls is well known. The Jews had their prophetesses. The prediction of the Egyptian women obtained much credit at Rome, even under the Emperors. And in the most barbarous nations, all things that have the appearance of being supernatural, the mysteries of religion, the secrets of physic, and the rites of magic, were in the possession of women.

If such women as are here described have once existed, be no longer astonished then, my brethren and friends, that God at this eventful period should raise up your own females to strive, by their example both in public and private, to assist those who are endeavoring to stop the strong current of prejudice that flows so profusely against us at present. No longer ridicule their efforts, it will be counted for sin. For God makes use of feeble means sometimes, to bring about his most exalted purposes.

In the 15th century, the general spirit of this period is worthy of observation. We might then have seen women preaching and mixing themselves in controversies. Women occupying the chairs of Philosophy and Justice; women writing in Greek, and studying in Hebrew. Nuns were poetesses, and women of quality Divines; and young girls who had studied Eloquence, would with the sweetest countenances and the most plaintive voices, pathetically exhort the Pope and the Christian Princes to declare war against the Turks. Women in those days devoted their leisure hours to contemplation and study. The religious spirit which has animated women in all ages, showed itself at this time. It has made them by turns, martyrs, apostles, warriors, and concluded in making them divines and scholars.

Why cannot a religious spirit animate us now? Why cannot we become divines and scholars? Although learning is somewhat requisite, yet recollect that those great apostles, Peter and James, were ignorant and unlearned. They were taken from the fishing boat, and made fishers of men.[85]

In the 13th century, a young lady of Bologne devoted herself to the study of the Latin language, and of the laws. At the age of twenty-three she pronounced a funeral oration in Latin, in the great church of Bologne. And to be admitted as an orator, she had neither need of indulgence on account of her youth or of her sex. At the age of twenty-six, she took the degree of Doctor of Laws, and began publicly to expound the Institutions of Justinian. At the age of thirty, her great reputation raised her to a chair, where she taught the law to a prodigious concourse of scholars from all nations. She joined the charms and accomplishments of a woman to all the knowledge of a man. And such was the power of her eloquence, that her beauty was only admired when her tongue was silent.

What if such women as are here described should rise among our sable race? And it is not impossible. For it is not the color of the skin that makes the man or the woman, but the principle formed in the soul. Brilliant wit will shine, come from whence it will; and genius and talent will not hide the brightness of its lustre.

But, to return to my subject; the mighty work of reformation has begun among this people. The dark clouds of ignorance are dispersing. The light of science is bursting forth. Knowledge is beginning to flow, nor will its moral influence be extinguished till its refulgent rays have spread over us from East to West, and from North to South. Thus far is this mighty work begun, but not as yet accomplished. Christians must awake from their slumbers. Religion must flourish among them before the church will be built up in its purity, or immorality be suppressed.

Yet, notwithstanding your prospects are thus fair and bright, I am about to leave you, perhaps never more to return. For I find it is no use for me as an individual to try to make myself useful among my color in this city. It was contempt for my moral and religious opinions in private that drove me thus before a public. Had experience more plainly shown me that it was the nature of man to crush his fellow, I should not have thought it so hard. Wherefore, my respected friends, let us no longer talk of prejudice, till prejudice becomes extinct at home. Let us no longer talk of opposition, till we cease to

oppose our own. For while these evils exist, to talk is like giving breath to the air, and labor to the wind. Though wealth is far more highly prized than humble merit, yet none of these things move me. Having God for my friend and portion, what have I to fear? Promotion cometh neither from the East or West, and as long as it is the will of God, I rejoice that I am as I am; for man in his best estate is altogether vanity. Men of eminence have mostly risen from obscurity; nor will I, although a female of a darker hue, and far more obscure than they, bend my head or hang my harp upon willows [Psalm 137:2]; for though poor, I will virtuous prove. And if it is the will of my heavenly Father to reduce me to penury and want, I am ready to say, amen, even so be it. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head [Matthew 8:20]."

During the short period of my Christian warfare, I have indeed had to contend against the fiery darts of the devil. And was it not that the righteous are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation, long before this I should have proved to be like the seed by the way-side. For it has actually appeared to me at different periods as though the powers of earth and hell had combined against me, to prove my overthrow. Yet amidst their dire attempts, I have found the Almighty to be "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother [Proverbs 18:24]." He never will forsake the soul that leans on him; though he chastens and corrects it, it is for the soul's best interest. "And as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him [Psalm 103:13]."

But some of you have said, "do not talk so much about religion, the people do not wish to hear you. We know these things, tell us something we do not know." If you know these things, my dear friends, and have performed them, far happier, and more prosperous would you now have been. "He that knoweth the Lord's will and obeyeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes [Luke 12:42]." Sensible of this, I have, regardless of the frowns and scoffs of a guilty world, plead [sic] up religion, and the pure principles of morality among you. Religion is the most glorious theme that mortals can con-

verse upon. The older it grows, the more new beauties it displays. Earth, with its brilliant attractions, appears mean and sordid when compared to it. It is that fountain that has no end, and those that drink thereof shall never thirst; for it is, indeed, a well of water springing up in the soul unto everlasting life.

Again, those ideas of greatness which are held forth to us, are vain delusions, are airy visions which we shall never realize. All that man can say or do can never elevate us, it is a work that must be effected between God and ourselves. And how? By dropping all political discussions in our behalf, for these, in my opinion, sow the seed of discord, and strengthen the cord of prejudice.[86] A spirit of animosity is already risen, and unless it is quenched, a fire will burst forth and devour us, and our young will be slain by the sword. It is the sovereign will of God that our condition should be thus and so. "For he hath formed one vessel for honor, and another for dishonor [Romans 9:21]." And shall the clay say to him that hath formed it, why hast thou formed me thus? It is high time to drop political discussions, and when our day of deliverance comes, God will provide a way for us to escape, and fight his own battles.

Finally, my brethren, let us follow after godliness, and the things which make for peace. Cultivate your own minds and morals; real merit will elevate you. Pure religion will burst your fetters. Turn your attention to industry. Strive to please your employers. Lay up what you can. And remember, that in the grave, distinction withers, and the high and low are alike renowned.

But I draw to a conclusion. Long will the kind sympathy of some much loved friend, be written on the tablet of my memory, especially those kind individuals who have stood by me like pitying angels, and befriended me when in the midst of difficulty; many blessings rest on them. Gratitude is all the tribute I can offer. A rich reward awaits them.

To my unconverted friends, one and all, I would say, shortly this frail tenement of mine will be dissolved and lie mouldering in ruins. O, solemn thought! Yet why should I revolt, for it is the glorious hope of a blessed immortality, beyond the grave, that has supported me

thus far through this vale of tears. Who among you will strive to meet me at the right hand of Christ. For the great day of retribution is fast approaching, and who shall be able to abide his coming? You are forming characters for eternity. As you live so will you die; as death leaves you, so judgment will find you. Then shall we receive the glorious welcome, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world [Matthew 25:34]." Or, hear the heart-rending sentence, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels [Matthew 25:41]." When thrice ten thousand years have rolled away, eternity will be but just begun. Your ideas will but just begin to expand. O, eternity, who can unfathom thine end, or comprehend thy beginning.

Dearly beloved, I have made myself contemptible in the eyes of many, that I might win some. But it has been like labor in vain. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone giveth the increase [1 Corinthians 3:6]."

To my brethren and sisters in the church, I would say, be ye clothed with the breast-plate of righteousness, having your loins girt about with truth [Ephesians 6:14], prepared to meet the Bridegroom at his coming [Matthew 25:1–13]; for blessed are those servants that are found watching.

Farewell. In a few short years from now, we shall meet in those upper regions where parting will be no more. There we shall sing and shout, and shout and sing, and make heaven's high arches ring. There we shall range in rich pastures, and partake of those living streams that never dry. O, blissful thought! Hatred and contention shall cease, and we shall join with redeemed millions in ascribing glory and honor, and riches, and power and blessing to the Lamb that was slain, and to him that sitteth upon the throne. Nor eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the joys that are prepared for them that love God. Thus far has my life been almost a life of complete disappointment. God has tried me as by fire. Well was I aware that if I contended boldly for his cause, I must suffer. Yet, I chose rather to suffer affliction with his

people, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And I believe that the glorious declaration was about to be made applicable to me, that was made to God's ancient covenant people by the prophet, Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people: say unto her that her warfare is accomplished, and that her iniquities are pardoned. I believe that a rich award awaits me, if not in this world, in the world to come. O, blessed reflection. The bitterness of my soul has departed from those who endeavored to discourage and hinder me in my Christian progress; and I can now forgive my enemies, bless those who have hated me, and cheerfully pray for those who have despitefully used and persecuted me.

Fare you well, farewell.
MARIA S.[sic] STEWART

New York, April 14, 1834

Date: Mon, 20 Apr 1998 14:43:30 -0500
From: Taylor Hess <phess@falstaff.ucs.indiana.edu>
To: garciaja@fiu.edu
Subject: MARIA W. STEWART, AMERICA'S FIRST...

Dear Jennifer Garcia,

As per our recent phone conversation (4/20/98), Indiana University Press grants you permission to reproduce material in pp. 65-74 from MARIA STEWART (M. Richardson, editor).

CONTENT SELECTED:
"Ms. Stewart's Fairwell Address to her friends in Boston"
pages 65 to 74

Permission is granted FREE OF CHARGE for use in the Appendix of your Master's Thesis under the following terms:

1) Acknowledgement shall include reference to the author/editor, the title, the page numbers cited, the publication year, and Indiana Univeristy Press as the publisher and owner of copyright.

2) Use shall be only for that stated within this document. Any other use must gain the prior consent of Indiana University Press.

Thank you for your interest in Indiana Univeristy Press publications. Please feel free to contact me if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,
Taylor Hess

~~~~~~

Permissions Manager
Indiana University Press
601 N. Morton Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47404-3797
812-856-4150
Fax 812-855-8507
email: phess@indiana.edu

~~~~~~^Ý^Ý