

A Feminist Abolitionist reads Plutarch, Euripides, and Plato: Periclean Athens and Nineteenth Century America in Lydia Maria Child's *Philothea* (1836)

CATHERINE CONNORS

University of Washington - Department of Classics
cconnors@uw.edu

Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880) was throughout her life a prolific author and important activist for Native American rights, the abolition of slavery, women's rights and religious tolerance. After she wrote *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans called Africans* (1833), often described as the first book published in the U.S. to advocate the abolition of slavery, public outrage at her abolitionist views made it difficult for her to publish further work. As part of a strategy to rehabilitate her career she wrote *Philothea*, a lively novel set in Classical Greece in the time of Pericles. The novel's

charmingly detailed scenes of life in Periclean Athens are constructed to explore the same issues of slavery, sexual violence, interracial relations and marriage, women's rights, and religious pluralism that were the focus of Child's writing and activism.¹ The novel sold relatively well, eventually appearing in five editions between 1836 and 1851.²

This paper provides a detailed demonstration of Child's transformations of her classical Greek source material. *Philothea's* plot, characters, and setting engage closely – and in startlingly modern ways – with Plutarch's *Pericles* and *Alcibiades* and Euripides' *Ion* as well as with research Child did for her *History of the Condition of Women* (1835). The novel, a resonant tale of the consequences of disruptively populist political discourse, ethnic restrictions on marriage and citizenship rights, and the consequences of a pandemic, focuses on Child's fictional characters Philothea, granddaughter of the philosopher Anaxagoras and beloved of Pericles' son Paralus, and Eudora, an enslaved³ woman owned by Phidias and target of Alcibiades' lust. Pericles' law restricting Athenian citizenship to the offspring of two citizen parents is a major issue and there is much discussion of the difficulties of Eudora's experiences of enslaved status. Child also explores, especially through characters from Ethiopia and Persia, religious and philosophical ideas about the soul, death and the afterlife and incorporates Platonic ideas of divine forms that lie beyond our world of sensory experiences. Child's spiritual approach has some features in common with the emerging ideas of the Transcendentalists, with whom she was connected through her brother Convers Francis, a Unitarian minister and professor of Divinity at Harvard. The works of Emanuel Swedenborg, which emphasized extensive correspondences between heaven and earth and openness to spirituality of various forms, and themselves looked back to Platonic ideas, were also a major influence on Child.

My discussion has three parts. To introduce Child's work and situate *Philothea* within it, I describe a few of her major works in fiction, non-fiction, and journalism that advocated for racial justice

1 — While the terms feminism and feminist were not widely used in the United States until the 1910s (adapted from the French terms *féminisme* and *féministe* that circulated in the 1800s) Lydia Maria Child's writings and advocacy for pluralism and women's rights were important elements in the development of feminist thought. See Moses 2012 and Pratt 2004.

2 — Wright 1939, 316, on the basis of *Philothea's* four editions before 1850, categorizes Child as one of forty-eight "bestsellers" in American fiction from 1774 to 1850. Initial sales were slow: Child herself, in sending a copy to Thomas Carlyle in 1838, wrote self-deprecatingly that the book "is what the booksellers consider an unfortunate book, for it does not sell. Had I not previously written a book upon cooking, I should probably be adjudged insane by all the sound part of the community; as it is, many shake their heads dubiously;" Holland, Meltzer and Krasno 1980 Fiche #5/134, LMC to Thomas Carlyle 7 April 1838.

3 — On vocabularies for describing slavery, see Foreman et al. n.d.

and gender equity especially in relation to laws that regulated marriage and citizenship. Then, I demonstrate that in *Philothea's* romance plot featuring the character Eudora, Child uses details available to her from ancient textual sources regarding Athenian laws about citizenship, marriage, and slavery with precision to encourage her readers to adopt an abolitionist perspective on slavery; this, I argue, is a significant part of what makes *Philothea* one of the very earliest antislavery novels published in the U.S. Finally, I argue that Child strategically and specifically uses allusions to Plato's *Republic* to construct in the novel her own version of a Republic. In *Philothea* she uses hard-won knowledge of the classical Greek past to think, in an open-ended and adventurous and highly accessible way, through – and beyond – the social, religious, and political constraints on bodies and souls in Pericles' Athens and her own America, and thus writes her own chapter in the broader history of how women interacted with Greek and Roman classics. Although Child did not learn to read ancient Greek, her *Philothea* is in some ways a kind of translation of Greek works; it can perhaps usefully be considered a precursor to Yopie Prins' expansive understanding of "Ladies' Greek" as a "performance of female classical literacy."⁴

Becoming an Abolitionist

Born in Medford, Massachusetts, in 1802 to Convers Francis, a prosperous baker, and Susannah Rand Francis, Child grew up in a strict Calvinist household.⁵ After the death of her mother from tuberculosis when she was 12, her father sent her to live in the household of her newly married sister Mary in Norridgewock, Maine, where she became interested in and visited with local Native American Abenaki and Penobscot communities. Her brother Convers, six years older, had been educated at an academy near their home and sent to Harvard. Excluded from Harvard on account of her gender, she had enthusiastically shared Convers' books while he still lived at home and exchanged letters with him from Maine about her reading in Milton, Homer and Shakespeare among others, remarking: "I have long indulged the hope of reading Virgil in his own tongue. I have not yet relinquished it. I look forward to a certain time when I expect that hope, with many others, will be realized... I usually spend an hour, after I retire for

4 — Winterer 2007; Wyles and Hall 2016, Prins 2017, 242.

5 — Major biographical studies of Child include: Clifford 1992, emphasizing the trajectory of her activism; Karcher 1994, setting detailed readings of her writings within their cultural context; Moland 2022, approaching Child as "someone taking on moral philosophy's thorniest questions" (xiv). Mills 1994 offers useful accounts of Child's major writings and their reformist aims. Moland 2023 considers *Philothea* as an exploration of deep philosophical questions. *Philothea* is cited from the 1836 edition unless otherwise noted.

the night, in reading Gibbon's 'Roman Empire.' The pomp of his style at first displeased me; but I think him an admirable historian. There is a degree of dignified elegance about this work which I think well suited to the subject."⁶

In 1824, back in Massachusetts and living with Convers (who evidently did not help her learn Latin or Greek, though it is impossible to know whether that was by her choice or his⁷), Child published her first novel, *Hobomok: A Tale of Early Times*, set in Puritan Massachusetts in the 1620 and 30s. Mary Conant, of Salem, Massachusetts, resists her austere Calvinist father's wishes by falling in love with Charles Brown, a member of the Church of England. After Brown is lost during a sea voyage, a distraught Mary enters into marriage with the Native American Hobomok, lives in his Wampanoag community near Plymouth and bears his child. When Brown returns, Hobomok renounces his love for Mary and allows her to reunite with Brown, taking little Hobomok with her, asking only that Mary pray for him "that when I die I may go to the Englishman's god, where I may hunt beaver with little Hobomok, and count my beavers for Mary."⁸ An initial review in *North American Review* pronounced the plot "revolting" "to every feeling of delicacy in man or woman"; a subsequent review in the same journal, while noting many strong qualities in the novel, remarked "there can be, we believe, but one opinion respecting this story; it is in very bad taste, to say the least, and leaves upon the mind a disagreeable impression"(87).⁹ These reviewers are censuring the marriage of Hobomok and Mary Conant, a relationship that was outlawed in Massachusetts at the time the novel was written. Modern critics note the limitations of *Hobomok's* vision, since it does not permit Hobomok and Mary to live happily ever after and their son grows up assimilated to white society. But even presenting interracial marriage as a possibility had the effect of arguing against Massachusetts' anti-miscegenation laws, something about which Child would become even more vocal and active in the coming years. As we shall see, the plot of *Philothea* is centrally concerned with the Periclean equivalent of such laws.

After *Hobomok*, Child determined to make her way in the world with her pen.¹⁰ She was one of the very first women in the United States to support herself by writing. Though she occupied a

6 — Child 1883, 4, 21 Nov 1819.

7 — Child describes herself as "quite unskilled in Greek and Latin" at Holland, Meltzer and Krasno 1980 Fiche #5/134, LMC to Thomas Carlyle 7 April 1838.

8 — Child 1986, 140, and 1824, 175.

9 — First review: "*Hobomok, A Tale of Early Times*, By An American," *North American Review* July 1824: 262-3 at 263; second review: "Recent American Novels" *North American Review* July 1825:78-104, at 87. See further Clifford 1992, 44, and Karcher 1994, 39, Moland 2022, 47-51.

10 — For a complete list of Child's works, see Karcher 1994 757-72.

privileged position as a white woman who had wealthy friends, she also experienced considerable precarity for many years, especially due to her husband's debts, lawsuits, and financial setbacks.¹¹ Her very numerous publications included *The Frugal Housewife* (1829), a manual designed to help women manage economical and efficient households that became a best-seller, and *The Juvenile Miscellany*, the first American periodical for children, which she founded in 1826. Her book *The First Settlers of New England* (1829) advocated for Native American rights. Thomas Wentworth Higginson described Child's *The History of the Condition of Women, in Various Ages and Nations* (1835) as "the first American storehouse of information upon that whole question."¹² Child argued that "the time will come when it will be seen that the moral and intellectual condition of women must be, and ought to be, in exact correspondence with that of man, not only in its general aspect, but in its individual manifestations..." (vol. 2, 211).

One of Child's major sources for *The History of the Condition of Women* was William Alexander's *The History of Women* (1779).¹³ Child departed markedly from Alexander by including a separate chapter describing, from an abolitionist perspective, the experiences of enslaved and free women in slave-holding societies. A second main source for the ancient Greek section of her history of women was John Potter's *Archaeologica Graeca*, nearly all of the details about Athenian laws and customs regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance, citizenship status, rituals, and other aspects of family life that she describes come from her reading of Potter (whom she cites once by name, 12).¹⁴ She adds to this a bit more information about a few notable women (Cynisca, 3; Corinna, 6; Arete, 7), and about women's roles in religious festivals (Panathenaea, 27; Adonis 28); she mentions the legend (preserved in Augustine's quotation of Varro at *City of God* 18.9) that in earliest times women could vote at Athens (4), and firmly asserts that "neither young men nor maidens presumed to marry without the consent of both father and mother" (9). Projecting her idea of the "frugal housewife" into antiquity, she addresses women's labor more than Potter does, with remarks on how Penelope tended sheep and Nausicaa washed clothes "and princess as she was, she carried her own dinner with her" (6). She also adds to what she gathers from Potter a reference to the custom (mentioned at Plutarch *Thes.* 36.2, though women are not specified there) that at Athens an enslaved person could appeal at the temple of Theseus against mistreatment by an enslaver (29).

11 — Holland 1981.

12 — Higginson 1899, 120; Karcher 1994, 221, describes Child's work as "a landmark text anticipating some of the most recent trends in feminist scholarship."

13 — Winterer 2007, 229 n. 7.

14 — For example, Child 1835, 1-3 = Potter 1825, 618-20.

Child was conscious that the limitations imposed on her education because of her gender had some advantages. Later in life, she published a comprehensive and pioneering work of comparative religion, *The Progress of Religious Ideas, Through Successive Ages* (1855). In her preface she noted, “I have written for the popular mind, not for the learned” (ix). She framed her lack of access to formal education as an advantage for formulating progressive ideas. “Doubtless, a learned person could have performed the task far better, in many respects; but on some accounts, my want of learning is an advantage. Thoughts do not range so freely, when the store-room of the brain is overloaded with furniture. In the course of my investigations, I have frequently observed that a great amount of erudition becomes a veil of thick clouds between the subject and the reader. Moreover, learned men can rarely have such freedom from any sectarian bias, as the circumstances of my life have produced in me” (ix).

In 1828 Child (who by this time went by her preferred name Maria, pronounced Ma-RYE-a) married her husband David Lee Child. Educated at Harvard and active in politics, law, and publishing in Boston, David was impressed by *Hobomok* and by Maria’s second novel *The Rebels, or Boston before the Revolution* (1825).¹⁵ Writing of their engagement to a friend he compared Maria to Pericles’ learned and witty beloved Aspasia.¹⁶ In the early 1830’s they met the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and became involved in abolitionist circles in Boston, activities that were building upon abolitionist work advanced by Black networks of organizing and advocacy already active in Boston and elsewhere.¹⁷ Child, using a neoclassical image of the winged soul Psyche, wrote that encountering Garrison shifted her focus from spiritual questions to practical activism: “I remember very distinctly the first time I ever saw Garrison. I little thought then that the whole pattern of my life-web would be changed by that introduction. I was then all absorbed in poetry and painting, soaring aloft on Psyche-wings into the ethereal regions of mysticism. He got hold of the strings of my conscience and pulled me into reforms.”¹⁸ As her correspondence and publications show, throughout her life Child maintained strong ties to other abolitionists. Her consistent preference was to work for reform through writing and publishing

15 — *Massachusetts Journal* 1, 3 Jan 1836:1 with Clifford 1992, 68, Karcher 1994, 47, Moland 2022, 70.

16 — Clifford 1992, 66, quoting D. L. Child to Lydia [B.] Child, 20 October 1827, Child Family Papers, Milton Ross Collection, Corona del Mar, California.

17 — On Black abolitionism see Foreman 2021, with remarks on Boston at 28, and Yee 1992, esp. 63. Salerno 2005 traces the organization of white, Black, and multiracial women’s anti-slavery societies beginning in the 1830s, with an account of earlier antislavery activities of benevolent and literary societies at 9-23. On Child’s interactions with Garrison, see Moland 2022, 91-97.

18 — Child 1883, 255, to Mrs. S. E. Sewall 17 June 1879.

rather than through public speaking or leadership roles in abolitionist organizing.¹⁹

Child's abolitionist book, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans called Africans*, published in 1833, uses a detailed survey of historical evidence about slavery and careful accounting of the laws and policies related to slavery in the southern United States to vigorously demonstrate that slavery in the U.S. was unjust and brutal and to argue for immediate abolition of slavery and for the recognition of the dignity and equality of all persons. An important precedent for Child's work was David Walker's publication, issued in Boston in 1830, titled *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in particular, and very expressly, to those of the United States of America, written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 29, 1829*. Walker, a Black man from Wilmington, North Carolina whose parents were an enslaved man and a free woman, made his way to Boston in the 1820s and became a leading figure in its vibrant abolitionist movement.²⁰ Walker begins his forceful arguments for the immediate abolition of slavery and his rejection of colonialist proposals that persons freed from slavery be deported to Africa with the assertion that slavery in America was more unjust and brutal than in ancient times:

Having travelled over a considerable portion of these United States, and having, in the course of my travels, taken the most accurate observations of things as they exist – the result of my observations has warranted the full and unshaken conviction, that we, (coloured people of these United States,) are the most degraded, wretched, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began; and I pray God that none like us ever may live again until time shall be no more. They tell us of the Israelites in Egypt, the Helots in Sparta, and of the Roman Slaves, which last were made up from almost every nation under heaven, whose sufferings under those ancient and heathen nations, were, in comparison with ours, under this enlightened and Christian nation, no more than a cypher--or, in other words, those heathen nations of antiquity, had but little more among them than the name and form of slavery; while wretchedness and endless miseries were reserved, apparently in a phial, to be poured out upon our fathers, ourselves and our children, by *Christian* Americans!

19 — On Child's participation in the multiracial Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society founded in October 1833 (shortly after Child's *An Appeal* was published in August of that year), and disbanded (except for its annual antislavery fair), in 1840, see Hansen 1994, noting that in December 1834 Child and Louisa Loring organized the first fair (48-9), and cf. Moland 2022, 148-54 and 160-63.

20 — On Walker's life and context see Walker and Hinks 2000, xiv-xxv; on *An Appeal* see Zamalin 2017, 23-48, and on its circulation and impact, Leavell 2015. McHenry 2002, 25-42 emphasizes Walker's understanding of the power of printed materials to be shared by literate individuals with their larger communities, and his connections to groups of African Americans, including the Prince Hall Masons and the Massachusetts General Colored Association, who worked to protest slavery and racial discrimination and to promote racial awareness, uplift, and education. Spires 2019, 6, argues that Walker's address to his readers as "colored citizens" is significant for its role in the way that "black theorizing insisted on and created black citizens in the act of insisting."

As Margaret Malamud notes, assertions that modern slavery was more brutal than ancient Greek and Roman slavery did not prevent Walker from going on to denounce Greek and Roman slavery: “For Walker, the Greeks and the Romans were the vicious antecedents of white American slaveholders.”²¹ Walker continues,

The *causes*, my brethren, which produce our wretchedness and miseries, are so very numerous and aggravating, that I believe the pen only of a Josephus or a Plutarch, can well enumerate and explain them. Upon subjects, then, of such incomprehensible magnitude, so impenetrable, and so notorious, I shall be obliged to omit a large class of, and content myself with giving you an exposition of a few of those, which do indeed rage to such an alarming pitch, that they cannot but be a perpetual source of terror and dismay to every reflecting mind.

Walker died in Boston in June 1830. During 1831, Garrison devoted several articles in his newly founded newspaper *The Liberator* to lengthy summaries and discussions of Walker’s arguments, noting but not fully endorsing his militant positions on the use of violence if necessary.²² Child took up what Walker had described as “the pen of a Josephus or a Plutarch” to research and write her *Appeal*, a work of some 232 pages.²³ She carried forward Walker’s denunciations of slavery while not going so far in countenancing violence. Child included extensive discussion of the laws and practices of slavery in ancient Greece and Rome as part of her argument that slavery in the United States was particularly brutal and morally unjust.²⁴ Her views that ancient laws about manumission and refuge made slavery less brutal derived especially from her reading of Thomas Clarkson’s 1786 abolitionist treatise; in Malamud’s words, Child’s “seeing leniency in Athens was a Hellenophile blindspot.”²⁵ In 1834 Child followed up *An Appeal* with her edited volume *The Oasis*, an abolitionist anthology with many items written by her.²⁶ On its title page is an engraving of the sun illuminating the pages of a book. Above the image is the text “Strike, but hear!” and below the caption reads “The Truth shall make us free.” The phrase “Strike, but hear me!” was famous as a quotation from Plutarch’s *Life of Themistocles* (11.3): when Themistocles was preparing Greek forces for the battle of Salamis

21 — Malamud 2016, 111.

22 — *The Liberator* 1 Jan 1831, 3; 30 April 1831, 1; 14 May 1831, 1-2; 28 May 1831, 1-2.

23 — On the question of whether Child was responding directly to Walker’s work, see Karcher 1994, 177 and 657 n. 14 and Gustafson 2011, 163.

24 — See Malamud 2016, 106-17, esp. 112-14, on Child’s embrace of the idea, influentially formulated by Clarkson 1786, that Greek and Roman slavery was less brutal than modern slavery.

25 — Malamud 2016, 114.

26 — In addition to Child’s editorial work on *The Oasis* and other anti-slavery anthologies, she held the post of editor of *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*, a national newspaper published in New York, from 1841-43 and published her collected *Letter from New York* columns for its pages as Child 1843 and 1845. A full accounting of Child’s editorial work is available at Karcher 1994, 757-61.

and the Spartan general Eurybiades wanted to withdraw, Eurybiades threatened to strike Themistocles with his staff. "Strike, but hear me!" said Themistocles. By quoting the phrase, Child makes her pen look quite Plutarchan.²⁷

While Child did not continually put her life at risk, as David Walker and others did, by writing and publishing abolitionist work, the consequences of arguing for immediate abolition of slavery were a significant strike against Child's writing and publishing career. The Boston Athenaeum had provided Child with free access to its extensive library holdings to support her work, but on publication of *An Appeal*, they had cancelled that privilege and perhaps did not allow a subscription fee to be paid on her behalf.²⁸ Readers of *The Juvenile Miscellany* cancelled their subscriptions in protest of *An Appeal*, thus making it impossible to Child to continue as editor. An early twentieth century biographer wrote that "Turning from the real world, which was becoming too hard for her, Mrs. Child took refuge in dreamland and wrote *Philothea*: a story of Ancient Greece."²⁹ But Child's dreams were always of freedom and equality and, as recent critics have argued, she constructed *Philothea* to disseminate ideas, and provoke conversations, about freedom, democracy, slavery, women's rights and patriarchy.³⁰ Existing discussions approach her use of classical Greek material in a rather generalized way. What I aim to do here is to document Child's engagement with her classical Greek sources and models in more precise detail so as to gain a better understanding of the sophistication and complexities of her abolitionist and feminist response to them.

Philothea is built mainly on a historical foundation of events recounted in Plutarch's *Life of Pericles*. By my reckoning, Child refers

27 — The edition of Plutarch available to Child was perhaps Langhorne, Langhorne and Wrangham 1813, which translates Themistocles' phrase exactly this way.

28 — The books Child borrowed from the Athenaeum formed the foundation of her historical account of slavery: Winterer 2007, 170. Child looked back on the incident in a letter to Samuel J. May in 1867 (Child 1883, 195), "I was quite surprised, one day, by a note from the trustees of the Boston Athenæum, offering me the free use of the library, the same as if I owned a share ... I had never asked such a favor, and I am not aware that any friend of mine had ever solicited it. My husband was anti-slavery, and it was the theme of many of our conversations while Garrison was in prison. About the time of the unexpected attention from the trustees, Mr. Garrison came to Boston [in June 1830, see Karcher 1994, 174], and I had a talk with him. Consequently the first use I made of my Athenæum privilege was to take out some books on that subject, with a view to writing my 'Appeal.' A few weeks after the 'Appeal' was published, I received another note from the trustees, informing me that at a recent meeting they had passed a vote to take away my privilege, lest it should prove an inconvenient precedent!" See Clifford 1992, 106, Karcher 1994, 220-21, and Moland 2022, 157-58.

29 — Beach 1905, 118.

30 — Clifford 1992, 122-25; Karcher 1994, 233-37, Mills 1994, 55-71, Gustafson 2011, 152-67, Duquès 2017, Moland 2023. Winterer 2007, 169-77, provides an excellent discussion although its characterization of *Philothea* as Athenian, *Aspasia* as Persian and *Eudora* as a "foundling from Persia" does not capture the nuances of Child's portrayal of ethnicity and status in the context of Athenian laws about citizenship.

directly or indirectly in her novel to all of the events I list here. Pericles rises to power as a smart and persuasive speaker and leader in Athens (5.1, 15). He was frugal at home (16.4-5). He was a student of the philosopher Anaxagoras, nicknamed “Mind” (*nous*) (4.4), whose teachings about the physical world gave Pericles a reverence for facts rather than superstitions (6.1); Plato remarked on the influence of Anaxagoras on Pericles’ thought (8.1). After laws were brought in allowing people to be prosecuted for impiety, Pericles feared for Anaxagoras and sent him away from Athens (31.1-2). Anaxagoras died a lingering death, and Pericles renewed contact with him near the end (16.7). Pericles’ populist appeal and policies changed the Athenians from being frugal (9.1). He restricted citizenship to the children of two citizen parents and some 5000 people were found not to qualify as citizens under the new law and were sold into slavery (37.3-4). His construction of the Parthenon and other buildings employed countless Athenians (12.4) and employed Phidias as manager of the project and sculptor of the huge statue of Athena Parthenos in the Parthenon (13.4, 13.9). Phidias was accused of using the pretext of viewing the artworks to procure women for Pericles (13.9) and he was prosecuted for embezzlement and convicted of impiety for including likenesses of himself and Pericles on the shield of Athena (31.3-4). Pericles divorced his wife to live with and marry the learned Ionian beauty Aspasia and had a son with her (24.3-6). Aspasia was eventually also prosecuted for blasphemy and Pericles made an emotional appeal to the jurors at the trial (32.3). A plague swept over Athens (36.3), taking among so many others Pericles’ two sons by his first (and citizen) wife: Xanthippus, with whom he had feuded (37.1-3), and Paralus (36.4). Pericles requested a suspension of the citizenship law in order to enroll his and Aspasia’s son as a citizen (37.2). Child draws on Pericles’ experience with the plague, that it consumed him slowly (38.1), to narrate the death of Paralus.

In *Philothea*, Child entwined plots about Philothea and Eudora that incorporate everything she had learned about slavery and citizenship at Athens from her research for *An Appeal* and for her *History of the Condition of Women*. Eudora’s romance plot, with its emphasis on vulnerability to sexual exploitation and her eventual achievement of freedom, employs devices that would become central in abolitionist narratives of slavery in the U.S. In Philothea’s encounter with Plato and her philosophical thinking and experiences of revelation, Child uses specific allusions to Plato’s *Republic* to ground her abolitionist ideas in concepts of eternal truth and justice. In *Philothea*, Child explores citizenship, gender, and slavery at Athens to write an antislavery romance and a philosophical Republic, one that might make its way into the hands

of people, especially white women and girls, who were not yet abolitionists.

Eudora's Romance

During the first half of the nineteenth century, as part of a strategy to encourage white women to adopt abolitionist views, Child and others developed sentimental narratives that emphasized the ways that enslaved women were subject to sexual exploitation and violence by their enslavers.³¹ Hazel Carby has trenchantly argued that these white abolitionist fictions emphasized narratives of “true womanhood” and sexual purity that subsequent Black feminist writing worked to challenge, especially Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), with its autobiographical narrative of choosing to have sex with a white man to avoid the perils of bearing children to her very cruel enslaver.³² In *An Appeal*, Child had spoken forthrightly about enslavers’ sexual exploitation of enslaved women, asserting that “the facts are so important, that it is a matter of conscience not to be fastidious.” She raised the issue in many other fictional and non-fictional works, and she would go on to play an editorial role in the publication of Jacobs’ autobiography.³³ In *Philothea*, Eudora does not experience the worst kinds of violence, but her enslavement exposes her to the potential for violence and exploitation in ways that share features with fictional and non-fictional narratives of enslaved women’s experiences in the U.S. by Child and others. In 1836, the same year as *Philothea* was published, Richard Hildreth published *The Slave, or, Memoirs of Archy Moore*, the first antislavery novel published in America. Child wrote (in a letter to *The Liberator* 18 Mar 1837, p. 3) that it was “a wonderful book,” adding, “If I were a man, I would rather be the author of that work, than of anything ever published in America.” Understanding the precision of Child’s handling of slavery and citizenship at Athens makes clear that *Philothea* too is an antislavery novel.³⁴

As the novel opens, dark-haired Eudora and blonde Philothea gaze together from a rooftop over Athens by moonlight.³⁵ Neither

31 — See Yellin 1989, 71-76, and Karcher 1992.

32 — Carby 1987, 26-39, on white narratives, and 40-61, on Jacobs and other Black women writers. See also Wallace 1990, 138-44, Sánchez-Eppler 1993, 83-104, and Nudelman 1992, and cf. Bennett 2003, 40-61, on the “sympathy politics” of abolitionist poems by women.

33 — Child 1833, 19; cf. 1835, 213-14. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Jacobs 2000) was thought by some to have been written by Child; Yellin 2004, xvi-xx, describes the process of definitively establishing that Harriet Jacobs was its author. On the complexities of Child’s editorial role, see Moland 2022, 349-63.

34 — Mills 1994, 54 terms *Philothea* “an embryonic antislavery romance.”

35 — The name Eudora is attested in Greek antiquity as one of the Dodonides, daughters of Atlas who nurtured Dionysus and served at the temple of Dodona (Lemprière 1812 s.v. Dodonides).

Eudora nor Philothea are Athenian citizens, and thus according to Pericles' citizenship law, which restricted Athenian citizenship to children of two citizen parents, they cannot produce Athenian citizen children, and consequently, practically speaking, cannot marry Athenian citizen men.³⁶ While Philothea is high-mindedly resigned to the fact that under Pericles' law her status as an Ionian, not an Athenian, will prevent her from marrying her beloved Paralus, son of Pericles (13), Eudora's situation is more complicated and is revealed gradually. In this opening scene, she and Philothea are watching out for the arrival of men coming from the court of Cynosarges. This was where cases of citizenship were tried: a man who is found not to be a citizen suffers confiscation of his property, as punishment and because non-Athenians were not allowed to own land. In some cases, men could be sold into slavery if found to be non-citizens (cf. *Philothea* 110).³⁷ The particular case that Eudora and Philothea are interested in is that of Philaemon: he is in love with Eudora and they hope to marry. Up until now he has been viewed as an Athenian citizen, which under Pericles' law would make marriage with Eudora impossible, even if Phidias did free her in order to marry. Because Philaemon's mother, who is dead but who lived for many years at Athens, was actually from Corinth he is now being prosecuted. Child sets things up so that if Philaemon is judged a non-citizen, "a sojourner" – her version of the Greek term *metic*, meaning resident alien – he is freed of constraint and can marry Eudora.

In Child's narrative, Eudora interacts with Philothea as a friend and peer. The fact that Eudora is an enslaved person, that Phidias purchased her after she was stolen with her nurse from the coast of Ionia by pirates, is revealed only when she says: "I am a slave, though, by courtesy, they do not call me one" (15, cf. 21). Eudora is thus somewhat analogous to characters in other works by Child who appear white because they have been fathered by sexually abusive enslavers and are disqualified from legal marriage because of their status as the descendants of enslaved mothers. Child

36 — On the citizenship law and its context see Kennedy 2014, 14–22, with further references, and Kennedy 2020. Child anachronistically compresses the time frame to intensify the conflicts her plot explores. *Philothea* is set in the 87th Olympiad, 432–428 BCE (193), and in the novel, the implementation of the citizenship law is quite recent: Eudora calls it "this new law against those of foreign parentage" (15). Philothea has spent six months on the acropolis preparing the ceremonial garment for Athena, the peplos, and then participated in the Panathenaic festival as a basket carrier or *κωνηφόρος*, a role restricted to Athenian citizen virgins (21), explained by Child's endnote (275, cf. Lemprière 1812 *s.v.* Panathenaea). In Child's anachronistic plot, presumably, Philothea can do this because the Periclean law has only just been implemented; Philothea says later that her participation in the ritual was "a tribute to that wise and good old man, my grandfather" (63).

37 — Cynosarges is also where he would have to do his exercising, at a gymnasium to be used by *nothoi*, illegitimate, and thus non-citizen, sons *Philothea* 120; cf. Plut. *Them.* 1.2; and Potter 1825, 636.

recounted a real-life anecdote about a similar situation in her *Anti-Slavery Catechism*, published in the same year as *Philothea*.³⁸ At the same time, the fact that it is recognized by all that Philaemon and Eudora could marry if Philaemon is not an Athenian citizen and, crucially, if Phidias frees Eudora, implicitly points to the possibility of manumission or emancipation in Athens. Prohibitions against emancipation were some of the laws that Child had forcefully denounced in *An Appeal*.³⁹

By linking Athenian identity defined by mythical narratives of autochthony to citizenship status, Pericles' law fostered ideas of "racial citizenship."⁴⁰ The Athenian law was thus precursor and precedent for statutes that prohibited interracial marriage, statutes against which Child and many other abolitionists were actively working during the 1830's. In 1705, Massachusetts had established a statute forbidding marriages between a white or Christian and an African or mixed-race person: a person of color who was found to have violated the statute could be whipped or put in prison and subsequently sold into slavery out of Massachusetts. The law also restricted the inheritance rights of free biracial children. In 1789, the law was renewed and expanded to also prohibit marriages between whites and Native Americans.⁴¹ Child criticized the Massachusetts statute and others like it in many works, including *An Appeal* in which she described the law as "a useless disgrace" (200), a narrative about an interracial marriage in Surinam drawn from the memoir of John Stedman included as a major section of her gift book, *The Oasis* (1834), her short story *The Quadroons* (1842), and, toward the end of her career, the novel *A Romance of the Republic* (1867). In this novel's lively and gripping plot, which extends from the 1840's or so to the end of the Civil War, Child ambitiously explores a complex set of interracial marriages involving characters of various, and variously mixed, racial backgrounds. In explaining why she wrote it, Child remarked "having fought against Slavery, till the monster is legally dead, I was desirous to do what I could to undermine Prejudice."⁴² Legal prohibitions on marriage and inheritance on the basis of race have immense and devastating practical effects on individual families and in the United States the work of dismantling these prohibitions took many years to complete. In 1843, Massachusetts' statute was repealed after years

38 — Child 1836b, 16-17, discussed by Sánchez-Eppler 1988. See also Child 1835, 263-64.

39 — Child 1833, 53-56.

40 — On the role of narratives of autochthony in racializing ideas about citizenship status see Isaac 2004, 118, and Lape, 2010, 95-136, and on the broader context of the complexity and historical contingency of racial constructs in the ancient Greek and Roman world, see Murray 2021.

41 — See further Moulton 2015, esp. 11-12, and Sánchez-Eppler 1988, 43-44.

42 — Meltzer, Holland and Krasno 1982, 482-83, quoted in Child 1997, vii.

of abolitionist activism, including a 1839 petition filed (as part of a wider petition drive) by Child remarking that “it is in all respects a disgrace to the Statute Book of a free and intelligent Commonwealth.”⁴³

Child’s explorations of interracial marriage in fiction have been critiqued for emphasizing assimilation rather than true equality (e.g. Karcher 1994, 31-33). Yet the interracial marriages at the center of her fiction are part of Child’s activist strategy for building support for overturning racist laws that had real impacts on real people in Massachusetts and elsewhere. Child constructed the characters Eudora and Philothea to explore the earliest evidence for such laws, Pericles’ law that to be an Athenian citizen a person had to have both an Athenian citizen mother and an Athenian citizen father. To cultivate a white abolitionist outlook in her readers, Child’s narrative encourages them to identify with Eudora and Philothea to see the difficulties and injustices such laws impose.

In the novel’s next scene, Aspasia has invited Eudora and Philothea to a symposium. Eudora is eager to attend; Philothea is reluctant. Their conversation about Aspasia explores intersections of status and gender and draws on nineteenth century discourses that compared the subordinate status of women to the status of enslaved persons.⁴⁴ According to Eudora, Aspasia “proves that they [women] are fit for something better than mere domestic slaves. Her house is the only one in all Greece where women are allowed to be present at entertainments” (16). Philothea disagrees, implicitly measuring Aspasia against the nineteenth century ideal of chaste fidelity and “true womanhood”: “such as Aspasia will never raise women out of the bondage in which they are placed by the impurity and selfishness of man” (16).

One of the other guests at Aspasia’s symposium is Hipparete, wife of Alcibiades, who wears, and boasts about, the grasshopper brooches that, as “the emblem of unmixed Athenian blood” (36), only Athenian citizen women are allowed to wear. The belief that grasshoppers were born from earth itself reinforced the myth that Athenians were autochthonous, that they descended from Erichthonius who had emerged from the ground of Athens itself. After some philosophical discussion whose participants include the Ethiopian Tithonus and the Persian Artaphernes, along with Plato,

43 — *Massachusetts Anti-Slavery and Anti-Segregation Petitions; House Unpassed Legislation 1839*, Docket 577, SC1/series 230. Petition of Lydia Maria Child. Massachusetts Archives. Boston, Mass. Collection Development Department. Widener Library, Harvard University. See further Moulton 2015, 111-12. For a nuanced treatment of Black abolitionist discourse about “amalgamation” see Nyong’o 2009, especially 69-102. In 1913 Massachusetts passed a law that prevented marriages in Massachusetts that would have been outlawed in the participants’ home states; this was not repealed until 2008.

44 — On the damage done by the racist trope of comparing the position of white women to that of enslaved persons, see hooks 2015, 119-58. Cf. Sánchez-Eppler 1988 and Yellin 1989, on Child at 53-58.

Phidias and Anaxagoras, the evening turns to songs, and Hipparete sings Anacreon's Ode to a grasshopper.⁴⁵ With Philothea after the party, Eudora is fed up with Hipparete and her grasshoppers: "I would walk to the fields of Acharnae [about ten miles north of Athens], on purpose to crush a grasshopper" (60), and "I never saw her [Hipparete] in my life that she did not remind me of being a slave" (60). Eudora mentions too that a slave who spilled wine on a favorite robe of Hipparete's was "whipped six days in succession" (60).⁴⁶ Philothea remonstrates that Phidias has "allowed you all the privileges of a daughter" (61) to which Eudora replies

but the very circumstance that I was bought with his money embitters it all. I do not thank him that I have been taught all which becomes an Athenian maiden; for I can never be an Athenian. The spirit and the gifts of freedom ill assort with the condition of a slave. I wish he had left me to tend goats and bear burdens, as other slaves do; to be beaten as they are beaten; starved as they are starved; and die as they die. I should not then have known my degradation. I would have made friends with the birds and the flowers, and never had a heart-wound from a proud Athenian fool.

In her other writings Child is a sharp critic of "happy" narratives of slavery.⁴⁷ Eudora's use of that narrative—her assertion that enslaved persons do not know their own degradation—here is part of the way that Child represents her as unreflective and naive. What Eudora is overtly regretting here is her entanglement with Alcibiades, whom she thinks is perhaps going to divorce Hipparete to marry her. She and Philothea go on to discuss the circumstances of when and how Phidias might manumit her. Philothea voices the patriarchal view that "Phidias continues to be your master merely that he may retain lawful power to protect you, until you are the wife of Philaemon" (64). Eudora points out "Some slaves have been publicly registered as adopted children" (64) but Philothea reminds her that in order to adopt at Athens, the father has to swear to the original parentage of the child, and this will be impossible since Eudora's parents are unknown.

Philothea warns Eudora that Alcibiades is not to be trusted, saying that Alcibiades saw her, Philothea, when as part of her ritual duties she was carrying a basket of sacred things down to the cave beneath the temple of Urania on the Acropolis at midnight. When she returned from the cave "a flood of light streamed from the Temple" (68) and it was this light that allowed Alcibiades to see her,

45 — Moore 1820, 168-70.

46 — Child's characterization of Hipparete is aligned with her accounts of women in societies based on slavery at Child 1835, 212-24, 264. The issue of the effects of slavery on enslavers is also explored in a conversation that Philaemon has about Spartans and Helots (113) that makes Spartans analogous to southerners; cf. Child 1833, 47, and see Winterer 2007, 174 and Malamud 2011, 301 and 2016, 138.

47 — E.g., Child 1833, 131-32.

whereupon he “poured forth the wildest protestations of love” (70). Later, after a foreboding dream, she catches and interrupts Eudora and Alcibiades mid-embrace in the garden by moonlight (82). And before long Philothea hears that Hipparete tried to apply to the magistrate for a divorce but Alcibiades, worried about losing access to her large dowry, picked her up and carried her home by force (92), an incident that is famous for being the main evidence for the possibility that wives could initiate divorce in Athens (Plut. *Alc.* 8.3-4). With marriage to Alcibiades now decisively out of the question, Eudora is left without a suitor when Philaemon, angry about Eudora’s entanglement with Alcibiades, decides to leave Athens and go to Persia.

Eudora too departs from Athens. The figure of the comic poet Hermippus had cast a foreboding gloom over the atmosphere at Aspasia’s symposium (35), because, as readers of Plutarch’s *Life of Pericles* knew, it was he who would go on to prosecute Aspasia for blasphemy (*Per.* 32.1); the penalties for those convicted in such cases could be exile or death. Phidias too was accused of blasphemy for depicting himself and Pericles on the shield of his Athena sculpture (120, cf. Plut. *Per.* 31.4), thus compromising the idea that his statues of gods were based upon supernatural visions of divinities.⁴⁸ As a result of these prosecutions, Eudora and Phidias relocate to Elis near Olympia because of Phidias’ work on the temple and statue of Zeus at Olympia. After Phidias’ death, Eudora lives as a free woman, having been awarded “the yearly revenues of a farm” by the citizens of Elis in recognition of her care for Phidias (146). This arrangement reflects Child’s abolitionist interest in public land redistribution to former slaves.⁴⁹ Because there is no explicit mention of Eudora being emancipated or manumitted by Phidias, Child’s readers would suspect that, as happens in *The Quadroons* and in *A Romance of the Republic* to women whose enslavers died without freeing them, someone could later claim her as a slave; a similar situation is at the center of Jacob’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

Child’s interest in emancipation narratives also emerges in her handling of the story of Geta, a man enslaved by Phidias. Philothea appealed to the Athenians not to confiscate Eudora and Geta as property from Phidias after his conviction. After Phidias’ death Geta was freed and received enough money from the Eleans to set himself up in the anchovy business near Athens (146); his successful transition from enslavement to marriage and economic

48 — Anaxagoras was vulnerable to prosecution for his belief that the sun is a physical object, not a god, and for his idea of a singular Divine Mind (νοῦς). Plutarch’s Pericles proactively sends Anaxagoras away (32.3); Child’s Anaxagoras is found guilty and is exiled (129, cf. Diogenes Laertius 2.3.12-14 and Lemprière 1812 *s.v.* Anaxagoras).

49 — On Child’s interest in the redistribution of land see Karcher 1994, 535-6.

productivity is in the tradition of ancient comic scenes of manumission and at the same time offers an optimistic abolitionist paradigm for a world freed from slavery similar to the emancipation and liberation narratives discussed by Child in her *Appeal* (1833, 88-104).

When Eudora returns to Athens, Alcibiades claims to own her in payment of a debt Phidias allegedly owed him and has her abducted and hidden in his estate on Salamis. Geta and his wife Milza work together resourcefully to extract Eudora from Alcibiades' control: Milza finds Eudora in Salamis and Geta brings her to Athens, whereupon, needing a place to conceal her temporarily, he hides her in what Child calls the Grotto of Creusa on the slopes of the acropolis (234), from which Milza retrieves her. The grotto is, like a stop on what would become known as the underground railroad, a temporary place of safety for Eudora as she seeks freedom from a life of slavery.⁵⁰ Indeed, around the time Child was writing *Philothea* she was staying in New Rochelle, NY, in the home of Joseph and Margaret Carpenter, Quaker abolitionists who became known for regularly helping freedom seekers on their journey north.⁵¹

In staging the crucial escape of Eudora from slavery in the Grotto of Creusa, Child also measures her narrative against Euripides' *Ion*. By alluding in this obvious way to the *Ion*, Child again invites readers to measure modern slavery against Periclean precedents in ways that anticipate modern investigation of how the *Ion* contributes to an Athenian discourse of racial citizenship.⁵² The story of *Ion* explains how Athenians remained authentically, indigenously, Athenian and also became Ionians: Apollo raped the Athenian princess Creusa in this cave on the acropolis, and she tearfully abandoned their baby in this cave; he was brought to Delphi and named Ion, and when he was grown up, he was, through the agency of the gods, recognized as her son. Ion is thus acknowledged as an authentic Athenian, able to transmit Athenian identity to subsequent generations. Before his true citizenship status is recognized, at the prospect of moving to Athens, Ion voices a clear account of the differences between citizen and non-citizen status there that reflects the policies of Pericles' citizenship law.⁵³ At the end of Euripides' play it is foretold that Ion's descendants, the Ionians, will move from Athens to the coast of

50 — On the Underground Railroad see LaRoche 2013, especially 87-102, with discussion of caves at 92-93.

51 — Karcher 1994, 231-3; Child 1982, 33-48.

52 — Lape 2010, 95-136.

53 — *Ion* is quoted frequently in the account of Greek customs in Potter 1825, 629, 634, 638, from which Child drew extensively in Child 1835. Child also mentions reading *Ion* in a stagecoach as five members of the legislature discussed abolition: Melzer, Holland and Krasno 1982, 63, LMC to Louisa Loring, March 1837.

Asia Minor and this myth was understood as a justification for Athens' allegiances with Ionians and wars against the Persians during the fifth century BCE.

As the light of the afternoon sun floods the cave, Eudora has a vision of Philothea and Paralus (each now dead, victims of the plague at Athens) who tell her to present herself to the wealthy and royally connected Persian visitor Artaphernes, whom she had already met at Aspasia's symposium. When Eudora does that she is recognized, and recognizes herself, as Artaphernes' daughter and returns to Persia with him. Eudora thus replays Ion's abandonment in and rescue from this very cave on the acropolis. Eudora's eventual happy ending with Philaemon in Persia rewrites Ion's descendants' expansion eastward as an Athenian-Persian marriage. The marriage of Eudora and Philaemon in Persia also overturns the norms of ancient Greek comedy, in which being able to marry an Athenian man happens only if both parties turn out to be fully qualified citizens. Child encourages her readers to imagine a bigger and more glorious world by leaving behind narrow Athenian views of who does and does not have the privileges of citizenship. In this, Child's Persia has a cosmopolitan, European quality.⁵⁴ Just as in *A Romance of the Republic* the mixed-race couple will move to Europe to have a dignified married life, so too in *Philothea* Philaemon and Eudora settle in Persia, far from Athens' laws about slavery and citizenship and the "troubled and unsettled state" of its democracy (272). At the same time, Eudora's return to her royal origins in Persia is parallel to the events of Child's very first fiction about slavery, her 1831 story *Jumbo and Zairee*, a tale of two Africans kidnapped and enslaved as children who eventually are brought home to their royal origins.⁵⁵

Child carefully mined the ancient data available to her, including Plutarch's *Life of Pericles*, Euripides' *Ion*, Lemprière's dictionary, and her own synthesis of Potter's *Archaeologica Graeca*, among other sources, to construct a plot that clearly voices her abolitionist concerns. Without discounting or contradicting any of Plutarch's record, Child writes a secret history of Eudora's enslavement and escape to encourage and cultivate an abolitionist point of view in her readers. Her strategy was subtle enough that Edgar Allen Poe, writing in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, a journal that was no friend to abolitionists, praised some of the book's classical Greek details and remarked "*Philothea* might be introduced advantageously into our female academies."⁵⁶ *Philothea* was designed to be a Trojan horse bringing abolitionist sentiments into the hands and minds or

54 — Duquès 2013, 178-80.

55 — Child 1831. See further Clifford 1992, 94-5, Karcher 1994, 162-5, Duquès 2020, 188.

56 — [Poe] 1836, with Karcher 1994, 237.

readers who would not necessarily pick up an overtly abolitionist tract.

As an enslaved white woman specifically constructed to encourage readers to become abolitionists, Child's Eudora shares some features with the literary trope of a character who is the child of an enslaved mother and an abusive enslaver and looks white.⁵⁷ Child's 1842 story *The Quadroons* is viewed as one of the earliest examples of this trope, which was taken up in a number of literary works. This trope is also at the center of abolitionist responses to Hiram Powers' sculpture the *Greek Slave*, several versions of which were widely exhibited in the 1840s and after. Powers presented the work, a beautiful nude woman in chains, as a white Greek woman captured and enslaved by Turks; abolitionists responded to it as a stimulus to work toward eliminating the horrors of slavery in the U.S.⁵⁸ Karcher describes the operation of the trope and the way it enabled the persistence of racist beliefs and actions in its white audiences: "sharing the sensibilities, tastes, and moral standards of the white readers she resembles, yet being subject to the sexual exploitation and abuse endured by the black slave women whom most readers refuse to acknowledge as their sister."⁵⁹ Eudora's romance displays the extent and also some of the limits of Child's abolitionist outlook.

Philothea's Republic

Child's impressively detailed exposition of the nuts and bolts of citizenship and slavery in Athens makes an abolitionist romance of Eudora's predicaments, and her eventual rescue, restoration to her identity and happily-ever-after marriage. Why is Philothea there at all, and why is the novel named for her? Child had metaphysical ambitions in the novel: to communicate moral and ethical truths to readers she used classical exemplars, especially Plato, to express ideas about life and death, body and soul, goodness and evil, that animate all of her literary and activist work. Child, whom Lydia

57 — Mills 1994, 56, noting that the novel "calls upon the emblematic power of a female slave narrative."

58 — Green 1982, 36, Yellin 1989, 99-124, Nelson 2007, 75-97, 105-12: "It was through the identification of white Negroes, the 'daughters of white men' whose bodies bore the symbolic signs of white female identity, 'white skins, fair hair, delicate beauty,' that the antislavery message of the Greek Slave was most widely deployed," 97. Describing similarities between *Philothea* and Powers' *Greek Slave*, Mills 1994, 58, mentions Child's 1827 story *The Little Greek Girl* set during the Greek Revolution about Greek girls (one named Aspasia) captured and sold as slaves, then rescued and adopted by Americans.

59 — Karcher 1994, 336, with further references; cf. Sánchez-Eppler 1988, 46, "antislavery fiction's focus on miscegenation evades the difficulties of representing blackness by casting the racial problematics of slavery into the terms of sexual oppression." Nyong'o 2009, 172, complicates this kind of thinking when in investigating the complexities of the long history of Black and white discourses of racial amalgamation, she argues, "Heterosexuality, marriage, and human reproduction are not the answer to 'race' or racism. Indeed, they form part of its historical drama."

Moland has recently described as a “deeply philosophical thinker,”⁶⁰ signals this engagement with metaphysical ideas when she writes in the novel’s preface “This volume is purely romance, and most readers will consider it romance of the wildest kind. A few kindred spirits, prone to people space ‘with life and mystical predominance,’⁶¹ will perceive a light *within* the Grecian Temple.”

Indeed, throughout the novel while Eudora is caught up in her romance, Philothea voices truths that lie beyond what we can see, the light within the temple. While Eudora consistently seeks pleasure in the moment, Philothea is more guarded, self-controlled, and focused on spiritual experiences. Because the Eudora plot uses the devices of abolitionist narrative, this contrast between the romance of the enslaved Eudora and the revelations of the educated Philothea also reveals complexities and limitations in Child’s attitudes toward race.⁶² Eudora’s escape to freedom requires the intervention of Philothea and Paralus from beyond the grave to tell her what to do.⁶³ Though Child herself denounces many manifestations of racial prejudice in her *Appeal*, the contrast between Eudora and Philothea in terms of spiritual life may have been shaped by and in turn implicitly reinforced pervasively circulating racist ideas about Black people’s humanity. Such ideas are evident, in the first instance, in centuries of practices and laws that denied the humanity of enslaved people, and they were part of what W.E.B. Du Bois was arguing against in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).⁶⁴

At the same time, Philothea’s revelations also overlap with and reveal Child’s own lifelong embrace of Platonic ideas. Later in life Child wrote to a friend, “I think there is truth in Plato’s idea of heavenly archetypes, of which all forms here are but dim reflections,” and later still, “My early enthusiasm for Plato imbued me with the idea of a dual existence, to which I cling tenaciously

60 — Moland 2023.

61 — The quotation is from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s translation of Schiller’s *Die Piccolomini*; Child quoted other lines from the same passage on *Philothea*’s title page.

62 — Limitations of Child’s attitudes about race are evident in her interactions with and her privately voiced criticisms of the sculptor Edmonia Lewis for not accepting her advice, discussed by Nelson 2007, 7-8, 13, 17-44, 163-64, and Buick 2010, 11-17, Moland 2022, 420-21.

63 — See Yellin 1989, 15-18, on Child’s role in disseminating an abolitionist emblem in which a white woman is the active liberator of an enslaved woman, and 123, on how Child’s other fictions narrativize this emblem.

64 — See Du Bois 1903, and the exploration of points of contact between Du Bois’ discussion of Sorrow Songs and Platonic ideas of cosmic harmony in Shaw 2013, 150-58.

amid all possible whirl of opinion.”⁶⁵ Throughout *Philothea* Child anachronistically uses Plato (who historically was only just born, if that, at the time of the dramatic date of the novel) to embody a way of seeing beyond the evidence of our senses to deeper truths; through clear allusions she constructs her own version of Plato’s *Republic* to encourage her audience to look forward to, and build, a better world. Indeed, she wrote to her close friend and fellow abolitionist Ellis Gray Loring in 1857, “As for Plato, how can I express my admiration for him? The most enlightened of modern socialists have scarcely gone beyond his prophetic glimpses of the social future.”⁶⁶

In 1836 Ralph Waldo Emerson, a friend of Child’s brother Convers,⁶⁷ published *Nature*, in which he considered the relation of the world of experiences to the world of ideas and formulated the main concerns of the group that became known as the Transcendentalists. When we are able to see through and beyond our senses, Emerson wrote, “the wise man doubts, if, at all other times, he is not blind and deaf; ... for the universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own, shines through it. It is the standing problem which has exercised the wonder and the study of every fine genius since the world began; from the era of the Egyptians and the Brahmins, to that of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Bacon, of Leibnitz, of Swedenborg” (Emerson 1836, 43). Child explores the “light of higher laws” in *Philothea* by engaging with the ideas of Pythagoras, Plato, and Emanuel Swedenborg.

She had found Swedenborgian ideas especially captivating since encountering them as a young woman. Swedenborg (1688-1772), born in Stockholm into a family whose money came from mining, pursued scientific inquiry in chemistry and geology and then in anatomy and physiology, where he was the first to formulate a theory of how nerves and neurons work.⁶⁸ He became interested in trying to discern the material basis of the soul. A spiritual awakening in middle age convinced him that he had divine revelations about the nature of heaven, hell, and the cosmos, and he composed

65 — Holland, Meltzer and Krasno 1980, Fiche #45/1219, LMC to Lucy Searle 15 May 1860, and Fiche #95, 2520, LMC to Anne Whitney 6 Sept 1880, quoted at Karcher 1994, 603. Child’s contemporaries noticed her ability to combine the ideal and abstract with the practical concerns of every day: Hart 1866, 128, “Indeed, the most remarkable thing in the mental constitution of Mrs. Child, is this harmonious combination of apparently opposite qualities—a rapt and lofty idealism, transcending equally the conventional and the real, united with a plain common sense that can tell in homely phrase the best way to make a soup or lay a cradle.”

66 — LMC to [Ellis Gray Loring] 10 Nov 1857, *Lydia Maria Child Papers*, William L. Clements Library, The University of Michigan. Moland 2023 lucidly places Child’s philosophical interests in *Philothea* in the context of her philosophical thinking throughout her life.

67 — On the connection between Emerson and Convers Francis, see Myerson 1978.

68 — Toksvig 1983, 98, 105, 161.

voluminous writings in Latin to communicate these revelations and the insights he derived from them. His interest in the connections between body and soul fueled his conviction that faith alone was not sufficient for salvation – it was necessary also to do good works in the world. His doctrine of correspondences was a way of understanding the interconnectedness of the material and spiritual worlds: in his view of the cosmos, everything in the material world has a corresponding counterpart in the divine realm. Heaven contains everything that the material world contains: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, touch, houses, cities, parks, companionship and marriage, including sex.⁶⁹ For Swedenborg, “Delighting the senses, once perceived as a frivolous pastime, becomes a major aspect of eternal life.”⁷⁰ This was all quite different from more austere Calvinist views of heaven.⁷¹

While Swedenborg did not establish a religion during his lifetime, after his death reading groups came together and eventually established Societies of the New Jerusalem to study and propagate his teachings. As a young woman living and teaching in Gardiner, Maine, Child encountered Swedenborgian teachings in a society that had been established there by 1820, and she joined the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem in 1822. In time, finding that the leaders of the Society were not as strongly in favor of abolition as she was, Child broke her connection with the group,⁷² but Swedenborgian ideas had a lasting impact on her: the doctrine of correspondences offered a model for how to understand the connections between the ordinary world and the realm of the divine. In explaining the doctrine she remarks, “I long ago found in the writings of Swedenborg the golden key that unlocks these mysteries, and ... my mind has been more or less busy with it ever since.”⁷³ She wrote of her conviction “that there is a real harmonious relation between all things natural and all things spiritual, descending from generals into the minutest particulars, and governed by laws as unchangeable as any of the outward sciences. This was first revealed to me, in early life, in the writings of Swedenborg. The subject took strong hold of my mind, and has ever since deeply and vividly coloured the whole fabric of my thought.”⁷⁴ Hobomok’s prayer “that when I die I may go to the Englishman’s god, where I may hunt beaver with little Hobomok, and count my beavers for Mary” (Child 1824, 175, 1986, 140)

69 — On Swedenborg’s heaven see McDannell and Lang 1995, 181-227; cf. Toksvig 1983, 285-301 on the doctrine of correspondences and 317-8 on marriage.

70 — McDannell and Lang 1995, 183.

71 — McDannell and Lang 1995, 185-6, 205-08.

72 — Kirven and Eller 2005, 203; Williams-Hogan and Eller 2005, 271; Clifford 1992, 36-8; Karcher 1994, 200.

73 — Child 1845, letter 12, 123.

74 — Child 1845, Letter 12, 114.

voices this Swedenborgian idea that heaven will correspond exactly to our experiences on earth, and may even hint at Swedenborg's ideas about marital companionship and sex after death, namely that one could be united in heaven with one's favorite romantic partner.⁷⁵ When Eudora says to Philothea "It is strange ... how closely you associate all earthly objects with things divine" (72), Child is signaling what Philothea's thinking has in common with Swedenborg's outlook and its ancestry in the thought of Plato and Pythagoras.

Child uses allusions to Plato's *Republic* in a structural way to construct Philothea's Republic. *Philothea* opens on the night after the torch race at the Panathenaic festival; the dramatic setting of the opening of Plato's *Republic* is just before a torch race, one in honor of the goddess Bendis (*Rep.* 1.328a). At Aspasia's gathering, Plato voices his own version of the doctrine of correspondences, describing "an everlasting harmony between the soul of man and the visible forms of creation," (40). Child's Plato traces these ideas back to Anaxagoras' belief that the sun is a "huge ball of fire"; this "leads the contemplative soul to the belief in one Pure Intelligence" (46). In this way Child explains Anaxagoras' view of the mind (*nous*) that infuses all of the cosmos. Child's Plato further explains, "Anaxagoras said wisely that material forms lead the contemplative mind to the worship of ideal good, which is in its nature immortal and divine" (47). To explain the limitations and capacities of human perceptions Plato goes on to say "we are like men in a subterranean cave" (47) and recapitulates the allegory of the cave from the *Republic* (7.514a-517b).

The closing movement of the *Republic* includes Plato's myth of Er (*Rep.* 10.614-621), the man whose soul travelled to see the structure of the cosmos while his body lay on a funeral pyre. Swedenborg understood the Myth of Er as a foundational narrative of this type and asserted and believed he was one such travelling soul.⁷⁶ Child was interested in such narratives,⁷⁷ and recast Er's journey as an out-of-body voyage taken by Paralus, Pericles' son and Philothea's beloved. Paralus is a student of Pythagorean doctrine, to which Child attributes his perfect complexion on introducing him into the novel: "being a strict Pythagorean, he never partook of animal food" (17). Child's Plato describes Paralus' illness in the plague at Athens: "Paralus breathes and moves, but is apparently unconscious of existence in this world" (140). Here

75 — Cf. Clifford 1992, 41.

76 — Swedenborg was reputed to have had several psychic experiences of knowing otherwise unknown things that fostered the notion that his soul had special abilities to transcend the limitations of the material world: Smoley, 2005, 34-36, Toksvig 1983, 183.

77 — Child wittily remade a similar ancient soul travelling narrative about Hermetimus, a predecessor of Anaxagoras, in her short story "The Prophet of Ionia," published in 1849: Child 1849, with Karcher 1994, 407-08.

Child is dramatizing the effects described in Thucydides' account of the plague: "Forgetfulness (*lethè*) of all things overcame others when they first arose from their illness and they did not recognize themselves and those close to them" (Thuc. 2.49.8).⁷⁸ Child continues, "He is silent and abstracted... Yet, beautiful forms are ever with him, in infinite variety" (141), at which point Plato further remarks that Tithonus and Artaphernes each have reports of similar soul-travelling experiences.⁷⁹ Paralus' family subsequently plans to bring him to Olympia for some therapeutic soul travel so as to meet Tithonus who "possessed the singular power of leading the soul from the body, and again restoring it to its functions, by means of a soul - directing wand" (177). During the travels, Paralus remains dreamy and detached: "When he spoke, it was of things unrecognized by those of earthly mould; yet those who heard him found therein a strange and marvellous beauty, that seemed not altogether new to the soul, but was seen in a dim and pleasing light, like the recollections of infant years" (182).⁸⁰ Philothea writes to Philaemon, now off in Persia, bringing him news of Paralus' decline: "Yet he is as one that dies while he lives; though not altogether as one unbeloved by divine beings. Wonderful are the

78 — The ways that Paralus fades away and the health tourism expedition that brings him to Olympia connects his suffering to the ravages of tuberculosis, the disease that Child had seen her mother die from, and a constant threat in Child's world during the nineteenth century: Snowden 2019, 269-291. Philothea too fades away and dies in a way that recalls narratives of tubercular consumption.

79 — Artaphernes told of a Magus in the mountains above Taoces "who recovered from the plague with a perpetual oblivion of all outward forms, while he often had the knowledge of the thoughts passing in the minds of those around him. If an unknown scroll were placed before him, he would read it, though a brazen shield were interposed between him and the parchment; and if figures were drawn on the water, he at once recognized the forms, of which no visible trace remained" (143). Writing elsewhere Child used this the same anecdote to assert that narratives of the soul leaving the body were part of the Swedenborgian doctrine of correspondences. In arguing that supernatural phenomena, mesmerism and animal magnetism — that is, narratives of the existence of souls outside the physical bounds of the body — should not be totally dismissed, she says "Between the laws that govern the higher and the lower, there is doubtless the most perfect harmony; and this we should perceive and understand, if we had the enlarged faculties of angels." She traces the phenomenon back to Athens, remarking "It is recorded that when the plague raged in Athens, in the days of Plato, many recovered from it with a total oblivion of all outward things; they seemed to themselves to be living among other scenes, which were as real to them, as the material world was to others," and describes the Persian Magus overlooking Taoces, with his powers of reading through bronze shields and on water: Child 1843, 119, 120, Letter 19. I have not been able to locate an ancient source for this anecdote, but it seems unlikely that Child invented it.

80 — Near Olympia the travelling party stays at the house of Proclus where Phidias (now dead) and Eudora stayed (182). Proclus is the name of one of the last neo-Platonic philosophers; Child thus writes a quasi-ancestor for this important figure in the Platonic tradition into her story. There is a child, Zoila, in Proclus' household, who calls the weakened and detached Paralus "the tall infant" (190), thus expressing Paralus' closeness to death and its divine revelations. Did Paralus' child-like qualities evoke the idealistic detachment from everyday concerns that characterized Maria's husband David *Child*? Cf. Clifford 1992, 123, Karcher 1994, 234, Moland 2022, 140.

accounts he brings of that far-off world, where his spirit wanders” (192).

On awakening from a long sleep Paralus describes his visionary dream of light within a temple: “I was in the temple of the most ancient god. The roof was of heaven’s pure gold, which seemed to have a light within it, like the splendour of the sun” (200). He continues, “The Oreades had music written on scrolls, in all the colours of the rainbow.” This out-of-body revelation of Paralus expresses Child’s interest in light, and especially the optics of the rainbow, as a metaphor for the perception of truth: the colors are potentially always there but can only be seen when sunlight strikes our eyes in a particular way. Child’s Anaxagoras had said to Plato: “You tell me that Truth acts upon the soul like the Sun upon the eye” (157), and Eudora and Philemon ultimately settle in Ecbatana which appears to them “girdled by seven walls of seven different colours; one rising above the other, in all the hues of the rainbow” (258). Child wrote elsewhere, with reference to Swedenborg, of the perception of truth as the contemplation of a “mansion of glories”, adding, “Light is one and unchangeable, but the objects on which it shines absorb and reflect its rays so variously, that modifications of colour therefrom are infinite. It is precisely so with truth, in its action on human souls. Truth is one and unchangeable, but no two minds receive it alike.”⁸¹

Child was also fascinated by the idea that children and those aware of approaching death are especially close to the divine realm and might remember or glimpse it.⁸² The notion of children’s closeness to the divine infuses Child’s description of Athens by moonlight at the very opening of *Philothea*: “The moon was moving through the heavens in silent glory; and Athens, with all her beautiful variety of villas, altars, statues and temples, rejoiced in the hallowed light... The earth was like a slumbering babe, smiling in its sleep, because it dreams of Heaven” (10). Philothea herself, at the moment she is introduced to the reader, partakes of a similar quality: “her expression had the innocence of infancy; but it was tinged with something elevated and holy, which made it seem like infancy in Heaven” (10). When Philothea is caring for her dying grandfather Anaxagoras, she is aware of his sense of being close to the point of his soul’s departure from mortal life: “the bright

81 — Child 1845, 120 Letter 12. On the phrase “mansion of glories” as a key term in Child’s approach to Swedenborgianism see also Karcher 1994, 118, and on her interest in rainbows and their optics, Child 1824 b, 31-32, Child 1883, xxiii, and 170, to Lucy Searle, 21 Dec 1862 and cf. Child 1841, Letter 24, 154 and Swedenborg 1811, 225. Child hung a prism in her home: Phelps 1897, 183, cited by Moland 2022, 459.

82 — For Child, the special association of an infant with the divine is because children are closer to the miraculous moment of first breath: “Is not *life* itself the highest miracle?” she wrote. “Everybody can tell you what it *does*, but where is the wise man who can explain what it *is*? *When* did the infant receive that mysterious gift? *Whence* did it come? *Whither* does it go, when it leaves the body?” Child 1843, 123, Letter 19.

tranquility he received from the world he was fast approaching shone with reflected light upon her innocent soul. At times, the maiden was so conscious of this holy influence, that all the earthly objects around her seemed like dreams of some strange foreign land” (137). On the brink of death Anaxagoras recalls Philothea as a very young child and traces his philosophical insights back to her childhood presence: “thy infant smiles and artless speech led my soul to divine things; when, without thee, the link would have been broken, and the communication lost”(166). In Child’s bold retelling the child Philothea is thus the catalyst for the development of the ideas expressed in Plato’s *Republic*.

In *Philothea*, Child draws on some of the most striking parts of Plato’s *Republic* to provide her own exploration of the relation of a good soul to a good state. As an abolitionist, Child saw slavery as an everyday evil that could only be defeated by the perception of the truth that it was unjust. As she was writing *Philothea* she wrote to Convers, “you charge democracy with being the mother of all evil. I do not wonder at it, for these are times when its best friends have need of faith. But I believe the difficulty ever is in a lack of republicanism,” that is, a lack of laws that allow aristocrats to manipulate or overrule the will of the people.⁸³ Throughout the novel Child uses critiques of democracy at Athens to construct what has been called “a republican corrective to what she saw as the failings of American democracy.”⁸⁴ Child’s Plato remarks that at Athens right and wrong are thought to exist by the vote of the people: “Of ideas eternal in their nature, and therefore incapable of being created or changed by the will of a majority, they cannot conceive” (148). Similarly, as Philaemon departs from Athens, he recalls seeing a rhetorician make the case that might makes right in the Athenian agora: “that justice, correctly defined, meant nothing more than the interest of the strongest” (104). He adds, “the real difficulty exists in that love of power which hides itself beneath the mask of Democracy, until a corrupted public can endure its undisguised features without execration (109).”⁸⁵ Child portrays Pericles as a populist in the mold of Andrew Jackson, albeit one with some self-awareness: he “knew that some of his best friends deemed he had injured the state, by availing himself too freely of the democratic tendencies of the people”(51). For Child and her abolitionist readers, these critiques comment on the American situation, in which democratically elected leaders presided over a legal system that allowed and protected slavery. Entwined within

83 — LMC to Convers Francis 19 Dec 1835, Melzer, Holland and Krasno 1982, 41.

84 — Gustafson 2011, 167.

85 — See also Mills 1994 165 n. 12 on Child’s allusion to Jackson and the Texas-Mexican War in this passage.

Eudora's "romance of the wildest kind," Philothea's Republic was the "light within the Grecian Temple" (1836, vi) Child hoped would ignite abolitionism in her readers.

In December of 1836, the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society held its third annual Anti-Slavery Fair. The ladies of the society procured and made items to sell to raise funds for the abolitionist cause. One of these items for sale was a crib quilt now in the collection of Historic New England. In the pattern quilters call Evening Star, small pieces of flowered fabric were stitched together into sixty-one stars. The central star contains two stanzas from a sentimental abolitionist poem titled *Remember the Slave* by Eliza Lee Cabot Follen. Lydia Maria Child had included the poem in her 1834 anti-slavery anthology *The Oasis* (p. 19):

Mother! when around your child
You clasp your arms in love,
And when with grateful joy you raise
Your eyes to God above,-
Think of the negro mother, when
Her child is torn away,
Sold for a little slave-oh then
For that poor mother pray!⁸⁶

The quilt was described in an article about the fair that was published in *The Liberator*⁸⁷ and on the basis of a letter written by Child in January of 1837 it is believed that Child herself made the quilt. "You have doubtless learned the success of our Fair... My cradle quilt sold for \$5."⁸⁸ In *Philothea*, written earlier that same year, Child made the abduction and enslavement of Eudora the center of the story. Just as she pieced together the stars in the quilt and put the abduction of a child at the center, so too in her novel about Philothea and Eudora she pieced together fragments of the past to make a compelling object with celestial light at its center. In both her goal was to move ordinary white women to take action to dismantle a system of oppression.

Teresa Goddu has described the ways in which such antislavery fairs and their discourses about suffering and injustice reinforced

86 — A related image of a Black mother protecting her child from a huge swooping eagle in front of the U.S. Capitol appeared on the cover of *The American Antislavery Almanac for 1843* edited by Child, on which see Goddu 2020, 168: "By sympathizing with the slave, who is figured as a racialized reflection of the white norther viewer, and hence identifying as antislavery (protecting her from the nation's cruelty, as she protects her child), northern viewers maintain their innocence without losing their scopie power." Hall 2011, 233, calls attention to the way that the image, also used in the 1844 edition of the *Almanac* "compiled by D. L. Child," evokes the myth of Prometheus under attack by Zeus' eagle.

87 — "The Ladies' Fair," *The Liberator*, 2 Jan 1837.

88 — See Carlisle 2012 and Meltzer, Holland and Krasno 1982, 60, LMC to Lydia B. Child, 17 Jan 1837. A comparable crib quilt took Child "one month of industrious sewing to complete it," Child 1883, 156, to Henrietta Sargeant 24 Aug 1861. On patchwork as a metaphor for Child's writing elsewhere see Hoeller 1999, and on the idea of sentimental abolitionist writings as a "variety of female handiwork" see Sánchez-Eppler 1988, 34.

white people's ideas about racial differences, arguing that the fairs' "representations of black servitude elevated whiteness through contrast."⁸⁹ Follen's poem, Child's quilt, and *Philothea's* abolitionist plot center a white woman's perspective on the spectacular violence waged upon Black women's bodies and families in ways that could and did reinforce the injustices they were trying to address. Importantly different perspectives emerge from the careful and critical archival work of listening to enslaved women's voices and acknowledging their experiences and material circumstances, work done in Saidiya Hartman's strategy of critical fabulation, Marisa Fuentes' reading of narratives of urban slavery "along the bias grain" and Tiya Miles' deeply researched study of a cotton sack given by an enslaved mother to her daughter when her daughter was about to be sold.⁹⁰ Child's radical aspirations toward equity and justice did not push her to wholly reject the paternalistic outlook common among white abolitionists. Still, most of her very numerous writings were designed to move a popular audience from their own narrow everyday perceptions to broader truths: slavery and unjust dealings with native Americans are wrong, religious pluralism should be embraced, all women should have equal rights with all men. In 1838, Child wrote to a friend, "Every shackle on every human soul not only arrests my attention, but excites the earnest inquiry 'What can I do to break the chain?'"⁹¹ As one of the many things she decided to do to try to break the chain, her *Philothea* is an important chapter in the reception of Greek and Roman classics.⁹²

Works Cited

Alexander, William, M. D. 1779. *The History of Women, from the earliest antiquity, to the present time; giving an account of almost every interesting particular concerning that sex, among all nations, ancient and modern*, 2 vols. London: Printed for W. Strahan and T. Cadell (also Philadelphia: J. H. Dobelbower, 1796).

Beach, Seth Curtis. 1905. *Daughters of the Puritans: A group of brief biographies*, reprinted 1967 Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, Inc.

89 — Goddu 2020, 121.

90 — Hartman 2008, Fuentes 2016, 7, 11, 78, 142, Miles 2021.

91 — Letter to Jonathan Phillips, 26 Feb 1838, Holland, Meltzer and Krasno 1980, Fiche 96 # 2533, cited in Karcher 1994, 615.

92 — I am grateful to Sandra Joshel, Deborah Kamen, Suzanne Lye, Lydia Moland, and Laura Zientek for their generous assistance of various kinds, to conference audiences at Feminism and Classics 2022 and the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association 2023, and to the anonymous readers for *Eugesta* for their helpful comments and suggestions.

- Bennett, Paula Bernat. 2003. *Poets in the Public Sphere: The Emancipatory Project of American Women's Poetry, 1800-1900*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Buick, Kirsten Pai. 2010. *Child of the Fire: Mary Edmonia Lewis and the problem of art history's Black and Indian subject*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Carlisle, Nancy. 2012. "Comfort for a Cause." *Historic New England* 12.3:2-3.
- Carby, Hazel. 1987. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Child, Lydia Maria. 1824. *Hobomok, A Tale of Early Times*. By An American. Boston: Cummings, Hilliard.
- _____. 1825. *The Rebels, or Boston Before the Revolution*. By the Author of Hobomok. Boston: Cummings, Hilliard.
- _____. 1827. "The Little Greek Girl," *Juvenile Miscellany* 3.1, 3.
- _____. 1831. "Jumbo and Zairee." *The Juvenile Miscellany* n.s. 5 (Jan./Feb. 1831): 285-99.
- _____. 1833. *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans*. Boston: Allen and Ticknor.
- _____. 1834. *The Oasis*. Boston: Benjamin C. Bacon.
- _____. 1835. *History of the Condition of Women in Various Ages and Nations*. Boston: John Allen.
- _____. 1836. *Philothea: A Romance*. Boston: Otis, Broaders; New York: George Dearborn. Reprinted as *Philothea: A Grecian Romance*. New York: C. S. Francis & Co. 1845.
- _____. 1836b. *Anti-Slavery Catechism*. Newburyport, MA.
- _____. 1842. "The Quadroons." In *The Liberty Bell*, vol. 3, by Friends of Freedom, 115-41. Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair. Reprinted in Child 1846, 61-76.
- _____. 1843. *Letters from New York*. New York: C. S. Francis & Co.
- _____. 1845. *Letters from New York*. New York: C. S. Francis & Co.
- _____. 1846. *Fact and Fiction*. New York: C. S. Francis & Co.
- _____. 1849. "The Prophet of Ionia." *Sartain's Magazine* 4.2:94-97. Published in revised form as "The Ancient Clairvoyant" in Child 1857, 269-90.

- _____. 1854. *Flowers for Children*. Includes vols 1, 2, and 3; vol. 2 first published 1844. New York: C. S. Francis & Co.
- _____. 1857. *Autumnal Leaves*. New York: C. S. Francis & Co.
- _____. 1883. *Letters of Lydia Maria Child*. With Biographical Introduction by John G. Whittier and Appendix by Wendell Phillips. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
- _____. 1986. *Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians*. Edited and with Introduction by Carolyn L. Karcher. New Brunswick, J. J.: Rutgers University Press.
- _____. 1997. *A Romance of the Republic*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. First published 1867, reprinted with an introduction by Dana D. Nelson. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Clarkson, Thomas. 1786. *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, particularly the African*. Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing Co. 1969.
- Clifford, Debora Pickman. 1992. *Crusader for Freedom: A Life of Lydia Maria Child*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 1903. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co.
- Duquès, Matthew. 2013. "To a Certain Degree": Northern Education Reform, Settler Colonialism, and the Early U.S. Novel, 1782-1872. Diss. Vanderbilt University.
- _____. 2017. "Women of Colour, Politics and the Plague in Lydia Maria Child's *Philothea: A Grecian Romance*." In *Transatlantic Literature and Transitivity, 1780-1850: Subjects, Texts, and Print Culture*, Annika Bautz and Kathryn Gray, eds., 93-111. New York and London: Routledge.
- _____. 2020. "Animating Athens: Frances Wright and Lydia Maria Child's Hellenic Haunts." In *Gendered Ecologies: New Materialist Interpretations of Women Writers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Dewey W. Hall and Jillmarie Murphy, eds., 171-90. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 1836. *Nature*. Boston: James Munroe and Company.
- Foreman, P. Gabrielle. 2021. "Black Organizing, Print Advocacy, and Collective Authorship: The Long History of the Colored Conventions Movement." In *The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century*, Sarah Lynn Patterson, Jim Casey and P. Gabrielle Foreman, eds., 19-71. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

- _____. et al. n.d. "Writing about Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help", community sourced document, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A4TEdDgYsIX-hlKezLodMIM71My3KTN0zxRv0IQTOQs/mobilebasic> (10 Oct 2023).
- Fuentes, Marisa. 2016. *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goddu, Teresa A. 2020. *Selling Antislavery: Abolition and Mass Media in Antebellum America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Green, Vivien. 1982. "Hiram Powers' Greek Slave: Emblem of Freedom." *The American Art Journal* 14:31-39.
- Gustafson, Sandra M. 2011. *Imagining Deliberative Democracy in the Early American Republic*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Hall, Edith. 2011. "The Problem with Prometheus: Myth, Abolition, and Radicalism." In *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*, Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell, eds., 209-46. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hansen, Debra Gold. 1994. "The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and the Limits of Gender Politics." In *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America*, Jean Fagin Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., 45-65. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Hart, John S. 1866. *Female Prose Writers of America*. Philadelphia: E. H. Butler & Co.
- Hartman, Saidiya. 2008. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe* 26:1-14.
- Higginson, Thomas W. 1899. *Contemporaries*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company.
- Hoeller, Hildegard. 1999. "A Quilt for Life: Lydia Maria Child's *The American Frugal Housewife*." *American Transcendental Quarterly* 13.2:89-102.
- Holland, Patricia G. 1981. "Lydia Maria Child as a Nineteenth Century Professional Author." *Studies in the American Renaissance* 1981: 157-67.
- Holland, Patricia G., Meltzer, Milton, and Krasno, Francine. 1980. *The Collected Correspondence of Lydia Maria Child, 1817-1880*. Millwood, NY: Kraus Microform 1980.

- hooks, Bell. 2015. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Isaac, Benjamin. 2004. *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Jacobs, Harriet A. 2000. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself*. Edited by L. Maria Child. Enlarged Edition now with "A True Tale of Slavery" by John S. Jacobs. Edited with an introduction by Jean Fagin Yellin. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.
- Karcher, Caroline L. 1992. "Rape, Murder, and Revenge in 'Slavery's Pleasant Homes': Lydia Maria Child's Antislavery Fiction and the Limits of Genre." In *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, Shirley Samuels, ed., 58-72. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1994. *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Kennedy, Rebecca Futo. 2014. *Immigrant Women in Athens: Gender, Ethnicity, and Citizenship in the Classical City*. New York and London: Routledge.
- _____. 2020. "Race and the Athenian Metic--Modeling an Approach to Race in Antiquity". <https://rfkclassics.blogspot.com/2020/12/race-and-athenian-metic-modeling.html> (10 Oct 2023).
- Kirven, Robert H. and Eller, David B. 2005. "Selected Examples of Swedenborg's Influence in Great Britain and the United States." In *Scribe of Heaven: Swedenborg's Life, Work, and Impact; Essays contributed by George F. Dole et al.*, Jonathan S. Rose, Stuart Shotwell, and Mary Lou Bertucci, eds., 195-244. West Chester, PA, Swedenborg Foundation.
- Langhorne, John, Langhorne, William and Wrangham, Francis. 1813. *Plutarch's Lives translated from the original Greek; with notes critical and historical, and a life of Plutarch*. Second edition by the Rev. Francis Wrangham, with corrections and additions. London: J. Mawman.
- Lape, Susan, 2010. *Race and Citizen Identity in Classical Athenian Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- LaRoche, Cheryl J. 2013. *Free Black Communities and the Underground Railroad: The Geography of Resistance*. Baltimore: University of Illinois Press.

- Leavell, Lori. 2015. "Not Intended Exclusively for the Slave States": Antebellum Recirculation of David Walker's 'Appeal'." *Callaloo* 38.3: 679-95.
- Lemprière, J. 1812. *Classical Dictionary*. London: T. Cadell and W. Davies.
- Malamud, Margaret. 2011. "The *Auctoritas* of Antiquity: Debating Slavery through Classical Exempla in the Antebellum USA." In *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*, Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell, eds., 279-318. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 2016. *African Americans and the Classics: Antiquity, Abolition and Activism*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris.
- McDannell, Colleen, and Lang, Bernhard. 1995. *Heaven: A History*. Second edition. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- McHenry, Elizabeth. 2002. *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Meltzer, Milton, Holland, Patricia G., and Krasno, Francine, eds. 1982. *Lydia Maria Child Selected Letters 1817-1880*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Miles, Tiya. 2021. *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake*. New York: Random House.
- Mills, Bruce. 1994. *Cultural Reformations: Lydia Maria Child and the Literature of Reform*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Moland, Lydia. 2022. *Lydia Maria Child: A Radical American Life*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 2023. "Lydia Maria Child on Truth, Beauty, and Reform." In *The Oxford Handbook of American and British Philosophers in the Nineteenth Century*, Lydia Moland and Alison Stone, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, Thomas, 1820. *Odes of Anacreon*, translated into English Verse with Notes, vol. 1. London: James Carpenter.
- Moses, Claire Goldberg. 2012. "'What's in a Name?' On Writing the History of Feminism." *Feminist Studies*, 38.3:757-79.
- Moulton, Amber D. 2015. *The Fight for Interracial Marriage Rights in Antebellum Massachusetts*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

- Murray, Jackie. 2021. "Race and Sexuality: Racecraft in the *Odyssey*." In *A Cultural History of Race in Antiquity*, vol. 1, Denise Eileen McKoskey, ed., 137-56. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Myerson, Joel. 1978. "Convers Francis and Emerson." *American Literature*, 50.1:17-36.
- Nelson, Charmaine A. 2007. *The Color of Stone: Sculpting the Black Female Subject in Nineteenth Century America*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nudelman, Franny. 1992. "Harriet Jacobs and the Sentimental Politics of Female Suffering." *English Literary History* 59.4: 939-64.
- Nyong'o, Tavia. 2009. *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart. 1897. *Chapters from a Life*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin.
- [Poe, E. A.] 1836. "Critical Notices," *Southern Literary Messenger* 2.10: 659-62.
- Potter, John. 1825. *Archaeologica Graeca or the Antiquities of Greece*. New York: Collins & Co.
- Prins, Yopie. 2017. *Ladies' Greek: Victorian Translations of Tragedy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pratt, Scott L. 2004. "Rebuilding Babylon: The Pluralism of Lydia Maria Child." *Hypatia*, 19.2:92-104.
- Salerno, Beth A. 2005. *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Sánchez-Eppler, Karen. 1988. "Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolition." *Representations* 24:28-59.
- _____. 1993. *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shaw, Stephanie J. 2013. *W. E. B. Du Bois and The Souls of Black Folk*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Smoley, Richard. 2005. "Swedenborg's Life." In *Scribe of Heaven: Swedenborg's Life, Work, and Impact; Essays contributed by George F. Dole et al.*, Jonathan S. Rose, Stuart Shotwell, and Mary Lou Bertucci, eds., 3-52. West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation.

- Snowden, Frank M. 2019. *Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Spires, Derrick R. 2019. *The Practice of Citizenship: Black Politics and Print Culture in the Early United States*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Swedenborg, Emanuel. 1811. *The Delights of Wisdom concerning Conjugal Love after which follow the Pleasures of Insanity concerning Scortatory Love*. 2 vols. Manchester: R & W. Dean.
- _____. 1812. *A Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell and of the Wonderful Things therein*, translated from the original Latin. Baltimore: Anthony Miltenberger.
- Toksvig, Signe. 1983. *Emanuel Swedenborg: Scientist and Mystic*. Introduction by Brian Kingslake. West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation Press 1983, First edition Yale 1948.
- Walker, David. 1830. *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in particular, and very expressly, to those of the United States of America, written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 29, 1829*. Third and Last edition, with additional notes and corrections &c. Boston: Revised and Published by David Walker.
- Walker, David, and Hinks, Peter P. 2000. *David Walker's appeal to the coloured citizens of the world*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Wallace, Michele. 1990. *Black Macho and the Myth of The Superwoman*. London and New York: Verso (reprint of *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*. New York: Dial Press 1979).
- Williams-Hogan, Jane and Eller, David B. 2005. "Swedenborgian Churches and Related Institutions in Great Britain, the United States, and Canada." In *Scribe of Heaven: Swedenborg's Life, Work, and Impact; Essays contributed by George F. Dole et al.*, Jonathan S. Rose, Stuart Shotwell, and Mary Lou Bertucci, eds., 245-310. West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation.
- Winterer, Caroline. 2007. *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750-1900*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Wright, Lyle H. 1939. "A Statistical Survey of American Fiction, 1774-1850," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 2.3: 309-18.
- Wyles, Rosie and Hall, Edith, eds. 2016. *Women Classical Scholars. Unsealing the Fountain from the Renaissance to Jacqueline de Romilly*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yee, Shirley. 1992. *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Yellin, Jean Fagin. 1989. *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

_____. 2004. *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.

Zamalin, Alex. 2017. *Struggle on Their Minds: The Political Thought of African American Resistance*. New York: Columbia University Press.