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Slavery, market censorship and US antebellum schoolbook publishing

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the representation and non-representation of slavery in US school textbooks from the late eighteenth century to the beginning of the US Civil War. It reviews the major readers, almost none of which mentioned slavery despite the anti-slavery sentiments of many textbook editors. The few readers that addressed slavery did so in limited terms and were not popular. Despite this, a myth arose in the US southern states that the treatment of slavery in school readers contributed significantly to the start of the Civil War and drove post-war textbook purchasing in those states. A concluding section considers the role of market censorship in shaping representation of slavery in early schoolbooks.

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The history of slavery as an originating force in US social history constitutes a massive educational problem for the United States, especially as it contributes so heavily to explaining the nation's racial and class divisions. US schoolbooks have long ignored, minimised or made excuses for this history. Contemporary issues of non-representation or failure to represent slavery in schoolbooks adequately arose from historical and ideological antecedents in the American colonies and early Republic. Editors, publishers and school authorities invested generations of effort in guarding schoolbooks against unpalatable social and historical intrusions.

There are substantial present-day stakes in recognising and discussing this history of suppressed discussion and misrepresentation in school textbooks and classrooms. A 2018 report by the Southern Poverty Law Center found that only 8% of high school seniors in its survey identified slavery as the central cause of the US Civil War; 68% did not know that the 13th Amendment formally ended slavery; and 22% recognised that provisions of the US Constitution advantaged slaveholders. Further, evaluated on a checklist of concepts, the report found that most popular history textbooks failed to provide adequate coverage of slavery.¹ Such inadequacies have been driven by the unwillingness of publishers to take market risks or school board rejection in influential large markets. Textbook change has been glacially slow and hard-fought. After

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NOTE: Eighteenth-century and antebellum nineteenth-century schoolbooks often employed lengthy, multi-part titles. For bibliographic economy, where appropriate this paper uses abbreviated full titles of schoolbook citations.

¹Southern Poverty Law Center, 'Teaching Hard History' (January 2018), <https://www.splcenter.org/20180131/teaching-hard-history> (accessed October 2, 2021).

a prolonged contest with the Texas State Board of Education and its social studies standards, only recently did Texas schoolchildren finally receive textbooks that acknowledged slavery to have been the central cause of the Civil War.² Still, many history scholars felt compelled to protest the Board's reintroduction of 'states rights' explanations.³ Political antagonism in the United States towards classroom discussion of the history of slavery, white supremacy and structural racism manifests heavily in current widespread legislative assaults throughout a majority of states against 'critical race theory'.⁴

Resistance to the inclusion of slavery, its history, social effects and white supremacy in the United States has pedagogical roots that trace back to the late eighteenth century, as we shall discuss in this essay. The exclusion and misrepresentation of slavery in schoolbooks in the United States involved both passive acceptance of market censorship – a concept we will discuss in the concluding section of this essay – and active efforts to suppress discussions of slavery. Public campaigns against targeted schoolbooks for allegedly misrepresenting slavery, race relations and the Confederacy started in the late nineteenth century when the United Daughters of the Confederacy and United Confederate Veterans began lobbying initiatives that lasted until the 1930s. Local committees scanned history and literature textbooks for negative references to slavery and objected loudly whenever they encountered such.⁵ The establishment of state textbook purchasing boards throughout the southern states facilitated application of political pressure, enabling committees to achieve great success in ensuring schoolbooks provided a white supremacist version of American history.

Exclusion or minimised reference to the history of slavery in the United States means that a schoolbook denies oppressive histories against minorities and so promotes an either explicitly or implicitly white supremacist pedagogy based on evasion, disappearance and falsification. These distortions magnify education as an agent of discriminatory effect and labour force segregation, because an absent history reads as an absence of social causality. The present paper begins with a review of the history of slavery's representation and absence in early US schoolbooks, paying particular attention to the contradictions of anti-slavery editors publishing textbooks that avoided the topic of slavery. A subsequent section considers the effect of pro-slavery advocates on textbook publishing, and a final section draws conclusions. By discussing this history, it is my hope that readers will gain a historical resource in challenging political efforts to minimise engagement with slavery and white supremacy in US school textbooks and classrooms.

²Jacey Fortin, 'Texas Students Will Now Learn That Slavery Was "Central" to the Civil War', *New York Times*, November 21, 2018. Recently the Texas state senate passed Senate Bill 3 to strip teaching about slavery, indigenous peoples, women's suffrage, Chicano history and the Civil Rights Movement from public school curricula. See <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/871/billtext/pdf/SB000031.pdf> (accessed October 2, 2021).

³Public letter to the Texas State Board of Education (November 12, 2018), signed by 200 scholars, <http://tfn.org/cms/assets/uploads/2018/11/Nov12-scholarletter.pdf> (accessed October 2, 2021).

⁴Rashawn Ray and Alexandra Gibbons, 'Why are States Banning Critical Race Theory?' Brookings Institution, August 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2021/07/02/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/> (accessed October 2, 2021).

⁵James M. McPherson, *This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 93–108. For further on textbook surveillance campaigns, see Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003) ch. 7, 188–240.

Early school readers and slavery

School readers were the best-selling genre and most widely available anthology form in the antebellum United States. Printed in editions that reached sometimes hundreds of thousands of copies, these readers were basic tools in the expansion of American education. It is difficult to overestimate their pervasive influence in shaping social attitudes. The term ‘reader’ was broad and covered the bulk of schoolbooks: reading practice anthologies, grammar books, composition books, rhetorical readers, elocutionary readers and geography books.⁶ Most adopted a hybrid genre form with instructional text prefacing a selection of reading materials. It is in these popular schoolbooks, not abolitionist children’s literature, plantation fictions or slave narratives, where young readers were far more likely to encounter mention of slavery.

From the late eighteenth century onwards, educational publishing was a crowded field that produced many competitors. A new social emphasis on education driven by the Enlightenment, American republicanism and an understanding of literacy’s value for commercial life generated a demand for primary-level schoolbooks. Beginning with Noah Webster’s three-part *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (1783), which comprised a grammar, speller and reader, a flood of new and culturally American schoolbooks flooded the market. Webster’s famous *Blue-Back Speller* sold millions upon millions of copies, an estimated 24 million by 1847.⁷ A lesser-selling volume such as Caleb Bingham’s *Columbian Orator* (1797), best remembered as the book Frederick Douglass used to teach himself reading, sold hundreds of thousands of copies.

Anti-slavery expressions were more common in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century schoolbooks. Caleb Bingham, an anthologist and Boston bookseller, published *The American Preceptor* in 1794. It eventually superseded Noah Webster’s schoolbooks in popularity because of its more appealing selection of extracts.⁸ Bingham’s reader featured several anti-slavery texts, including a William Pitt speech against the African slave trade, Morton’s often-reprinted poem ‘The African Chief’, and an anonymous poem condemning sugar as a product of slavery.⁹ William Goodell, a crusading abolitionist and twice Liberty Party candidate for US President, decades later remembered that poem in *The American Preceptor* as a source of inspiration for boycotting products of slave labour.¹⁰

Schoolbooks intended for northern markets could take greater liberties in their text choices. *The New York Reader* (1815) contained an extensive range of prose and poetry selections for oral reading at the eighth-grade level, including John Aikin and Anna Letitia Barbauld’s ‘Dialogue between a Master and Slave’.¹¹ This idealistic but naïve anti-slavery dialogue relates

⁶For an enlarged genre taxonomy of readers, see J. Michael Sproule, ‘Inventing Public Speaking: Rhetoric and the Speech Book, 1730–1930’, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 15, no. 5 (2012): 555–6.

⁷John Tebbell, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*, vol. 1 (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1972), 198.

⁸Noah P. Clarke, ‘Academic Education in the State of New York One Hundred Years Ago’, in *Ninety-eighth Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York* (Albany: Weed, Parsons, & Co., 1885), 118.

⁹Caleb Bingham, *The American Preceptor: Being a New Selection of Lessons for Reading and Speaking* (Troy: Parker & Bliss, 1808, original ed. 1794).

¹⁰Letter from William Goodell, August 29, 1838, in Louis Carstairs Gunn, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Required Labour Convention* (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Gunn, 1838), 17.

¹¹*The New York Reader*, No. 3 (New York: Samuel Wood & Son, 1815) 194–7. The unknown anthologist attributes the ‘Dialogue between a Master and Slave’ only to John Aikin. It cannot be determined whether authorship belongs to Aikin, his sister Anna Barbauld, or both. The dialogue was published first in their *Evenings at Home, or, the Juvenile Budget Opened* (London: J. Johnson, 1805), 6, 81–8 (‘Master and Slave’). This dialogue also appeared in John Lauris Blake, *The Young Orator, Consisting of Prose, Poetry, and Dialogues for Declamation in Schools* (Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman & Holden, 1833), 36–9, and well-respected abolitionist Eliza Lee Follen’s *Honesty the Best Policy, and Other Dramas for Parlour Pastime* (Boston: Tompkins & Co., 1863), 437–41.

a conversation between a master and re-captured fugitive slave where the slave's arguments convince the master to grant immediate emancipation to all his slaves. The dialogue had already achieved re-publication earlier in Bingham's *The Columbian Orator* (1797) and continued to appear in newer anthologies for decades.¹² By including the dialogue, Bingham joined his textbook to the liberal anti-slavery sentiments of Aikin and Barbauld, and treated opposition to slavery as one of the civic virtues the reader sought to inspire.

By the 1830s school textbooks represented approximately one-third of the US publishing market in dollar value, a proportion that increased to over 40% prior to the Civil War.¹³ Schoolbooks dwarfed all other book categories in sales. Publishers and printers ignored copyright and ran endless new editions and re-editions off their presses.¹⁴ Travelling agents – 'colporteurs' in the language of the era – flogged the latest schoolbooks to teachers, principals and school boards that required parents to buy selected books.

Religious book publishing helped to drive this growth. As religious movements evangelised, gained strength and opened schools, they printed their own schoolbooks and created denominational markets. Methodists were very active in the field from the early Republic, producing hundreds of Sunday-school book titles and thousands of tracts. The Methodist Book Concern, established in 1789 and renamed in 1839, became involved in an acrimonious division of its publishing business when the Methodists split over slavery.¹⁵ By the Civil War the New York office of the Methodist Book Concern claimed to have become the world's largest publisher.¹⁶ It had over 500 staff and more than 2000 colporteurs. Presbyterians, Unitarians, Congregationalists, Quakers, Mormons and others sponsored printing houses that published a vast range of religious materials.

While church-supported presses were a major force in US publishing, their tracts and school books rarely if ever mentioned slavery. When they did it was in the style of the English cleric Leigh Richmond's well-known conversion stories of grateful African slaves embracing Christianity.¹⁷ Abolitionist orator and minister Theodore Parker excoriated denominations and religious organisations that refused to address slavery in their publications. Parker charged that the Methodists printed 2000 bound volumes and 2000 tracts daily along with 'more than two hundred forty million pages of Sunday school books [annually, and] not a line against slavery in all of them'.¹⁸ The Orthodox Sunday School Union, he continued, printed books by the million and only one of them carried an anti-slavery poem by Cowper, all other slavery references having been purged. Parker ridiculed the occasion when the Sunday School Union received a complaint that the biblical story of the selling of Joseph could be interpreted as anti-slavery and responded by suppressing its own Sunday-school book. The conservative American Tract Society

¹²Caleb Bingham, *The Columbian Orator*, 10th ed. (New York: E. Duyckinck, 1811), 240–2.

¹³Nicolas Trübner, *A Bibliographical Guide to American Literature* (London: Trübner & Co., 1859), 89–90.

¹⁴For the most comprehensive list of readers, see Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 349–73.

¹⁵Charles Elliott, *History of the Great Secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Year 1845* (Cincinnati: Swormstedt & Poe, 1855), 713–20, 730–6, 1092–8. Litigation over Methodist Book Concern assets lasted more than a decade and reached the US Supreme Court: *Smith v. Swormstedt* 57 US 288 (1853).

¹⁶David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 156.

¹⁷Leigh Richmond, 'The African Servant', in *Annals of the Poor* (Springfield, MA: G & C Merriam, 1852), 57–79.

¹⁸Theodore Parker, *The Collected Works of Theodore Parker*, vol. 7: *Discourses of Slavery*, vol. 2 (London: Trübner & Co., 1864), 144–6.

and its prodigious output of evangelical pamphlets was no better: it remained notorious for avoiding the issue of slavery, despite increasing pressure to have the Society change its policy.¹⁹

Early educational publishing in the United States faced a dilemma of market versus conscience. Textbooks were hardly the only genre that faced this problem. Newspapers, magazines and novelists faced this issue regularly with regard to slavery. Textbooks, however, were different because they relied on community acceptance and adoption rather than individual opinion. Publishers resolved this dilemma overwhelmingly in favour of market acceptability. They were loath to include text selections that offended the market in southern states.²⁰ This fared well with many northern audiences too as they were anxious to avoid a controversial issue and, prior to the Civil War, there was no majority opinion in most northern states that opposed slavery.

In consequence, a small minority of books dealt with slavery. The vast majority ignored it, either as extraneous to their educational purposes or in the hope of improving market opportunities. Schoolbooks were divisible in two streams over the slavery issue: those that sought to be 'national' and remain acceptable throughout the United States, and those that published anti-slavery materials and rendered themselves unacceptable in southern, western and even many northern schools. In the decades prior to the Civil War, school readers were less divided than the United States itself over the question of slavery. While US political life roiled with opposition to slavery, American textbooks largely ignored the institution.

Absent reference to slavery did not necessarily identify an anthologist's personal views, creating contradictions we shall discuss later. Noah Webster introduced slavery into his *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* by including a passionate anti-slavery letter from Timothy Day, but then excluded anti-slavery material after renaming the volume *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking* (1787).²¹ His short-lived reader, *The Little Reader's Assistant* (1790), contained an impressive even if brief selection titled 'Story of the Treatment of African Slaves'.²² One of the most moving anti-slavery texts found in early readers, this piece describes the atrocious conditions of the Middle Passage, mass suicide by leaping off ships, and cruel mistreatment on plantations. Webster, republican in spirit but a conservative opponent of slavery expressed his opposition in his well-known treatise, *Effects of Slavery upon Morals and Industry* (1793).²³ Yet in his late career Webster managed a nearly impossible exclusion by writing a *History of the United States* (1832) textbook while mentioning slavery only as practised among Saxons and Aztecs.²⁴ This exclusion was consonant with Webster's 1830s denunciation of the abolitionist movement for disturbing the nation's peace by discussing slavery and demanding its end.²⁵

¹⁹David Morgan, *Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 79–88.

²⁰Richard L. Venezky, 'A History of the American Reading Textbook', *Elementary School Journal* 87, no. 3 (January 1987): 248.

²¹Noah Webster, *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language, Comprising an Easy, Concise and Systematic Method of Education; Designed for the Use of Schools in America. Part III* (Hartford: Barlow & Babcock, 1785), 176–82; Webster, *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking, Calculated to Improve the Minds and Refine the Taste of Youth* (Philadelphia: Young & M'Culloch, 1787).

²²Webster, *The Little Reader's Assistant*, 40–3.

²³Webster, *Effects of Slavery upon Morals and Industry* (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1793); see also K. Alan Snyder, *Defining Noah Webster: A Spiritual Biography* (Fairfax: Allegiance Press, 2002), 104–6.

²⁴Webster, *History of the United States* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1832).

²⁵Emily Ellsworth Fowler Ford, comp., *Notes on the Life of Noah Webster*, vol. 2, 'To the Abolitionists, So Called' (New York, 1912), appendix 21, 482–3.

Another early anthologist, Anthony Benezet, organised the first anti-slavery society in the American colonies and worked for African American education. When Benezet published *The Pennsylvania Spelling-Book* (1779), however, he did not include any reference to slavery and limited the compilation to religious content.²⁶ The occasional colonisation supporter also turns up among later anthologists, such as Samuel Willard who opposed slavery, beginning as a colonisation advocate and gradually becoming a non-Garrisonian immediatist.²⁷

Lindley Murray, compiler of *The English Reader* (1799), a best-selling schoolbook for decades before its eclipse in the 1840s, emphasised that his anthology's object was to improve reading and language skills, and 'to inculcate some of the most important principles of piety and virtue'.²⁸ In one of the many pirated American editions of Murray that contain varying content, the following statement appears: 'The compiler has been careful to avoid every expression and sentiment that might gratify a corrupt mind, or in the least degree, offend the ear of innocence'.²⁹ Controversy was anathema to such editorial purposes that sought to maintain innocence, or at least its illusion. Murray helped avoid difficulties by using only select English writers, without Americans.

Despite this reluctance to engage in controversy, Murray, like Benezet a Quaker and deeply opposed to slavery,³⁰ acknowledged his own opinion by including William Cowper's anti-slavery poem 'The Slave' in *The English Reader*. Excerpted from the opening lines of Cowper's long poem 'The Time-Piece', this anti-racialist passage reads:

... My ear is pain'd
My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart;
It does not feel for man. The nat'ral bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd, as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own. ...³¹

One poem only sufficed for Cowper, but was sufficient to excite antagonism among readers. American publishers of Murray's frequently pirated textbook often removed this Cowper excerpt, cleansing the compilation of controversial content.³² This followed common self-censorship practice among publishers, as when editions of Longfellow's poetry appeared without his anti-slavery poems so as not to upset southern readers.

²⁶Anthony Benezet, *The Pennsylvania Spelling-Book, or Youth's Friendly Instructor and Monitor* (Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank, 1779).

²⁷Samuel Willard, *Life of Rev. Samuel Willard, DD, AAS, of Deerfield, Mass* (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1892), 180–7.

²⁸Lindley Murray, *The English Reader, or Pieces in Prose and Poetry, Selected from the Best Writers* (Philadelphia: John Carson, 1818).

²⁹*Murray's English Reader: or, Pieces in Prose and Poetry, Selected from the Best Writers* (Sarasota Springs: Samuel Newton, 1825), vi.

³⁰Murray left a will establishing a trust fund whose primary purpose was financing the emancipation, support and education of enslaved black people: Lindley Murray, *Memoirs of the Life and Letters of Lindley Murray, in a Series of Letters, Written by Himself* (York: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1826), 183.

³¹William Cowper, *Poems by William Cowper*, vol. 2 (London: J. Johnson, 1800), 39.

³²For example, Jeremiah Goodrich's editions of *The English Reader* (Sarasota Springs: Samuel Newton, 1825, and Albany: S. Shaw, 1829) exclude 'Slavery' but retain different Cowper selections, as does another edition (Bridgeport: L. Lockwood, 1825). Other American editions reproduce Murray's organisation (Newark: Benjamin Olds, 1830, 1840, 1842, and New London: W. & J. Bowles, 1836). Adopting an opposite tack, Israel Alger's edition (Boston: Lincoln & Edmands, 1831) takes advantage of a typographic re-composition to introduce additional anti-slavery selections.

Vehement reaction against the appearance of Cowper's 'The Slave' in school-books continued for years. Edward Josiah Stearns complained in *Notes on Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853), a pro-slavery response to Harriet Beecher Stowe, that the poem deluded schoolchildren who did not know better. Black slaves lived in favourable conditions, according to Stearns. Because 'the teaching of New-England school-books' included this famous Cowper poem, 'The children there grow up under the *impression* that the slaves at the South go regularly to their work under the lash'.³³ In the same year, the editor of the *Southern Literary Gazette* denounced Cowper's poem for 'stamping its infectious poison' into schoolbooks such as the *National Reader*, *Scott's Lessons* and the *American First-Class Book*. He demanded their expurgation.

Many other schoolbook writers, editors and publishers shared Lindley Murray's aversion to controversy as inappropriate for texts that stressed pious virtues. There were compelling secular reasons to avoid controversy too. The Jacksonian era's nationalist ethos shifted the moral project of earlier school readers to more secular ground. From having been largely pietistic texts in the early Republic, nationalistic readers became texts of avoidance and civic myth. By anthologising extensively across American history, rhetoric and literature, however, these readers raised an implicit question concerning why major features of US society remained obscured. Sometimes the editorial avoidance was astonishing, as where a *Political Class Book* (1830), one intended primarily for Massachusetts students, avoided slavery with only a brief discussion of the US constitution's three-fifths clause.³⁴ White male citizens-in-the-making learned their exclusive centrality in readers that identified them as the sole empowered agents of public history. Self-censorship by anthologists enabled this lesson. When John Pierpont published the first edition of his well-regarded *National Reader* (1828), none of the texts selected addressed slavery except for Patrick Henry's 1775 'give me liberty or give me death' speech that invoked images of enslaved white men.³⁵ Ironically, Pierpont's major reputation was to come as an anti-slavery poet, not as a school reader anthologist. Nationalist ideology demanded affirmation of the nation as guarantor of liberty; an acceptable schoolbook could not point out how the nation ensured liberty's absence.

As conflict over slavery intensified in the United States with the growth of the abolitionist movement, schoolbooks that did not meet standards of nationalistic affirmation and silence over historical contradiction were phased out and silenced. Writing in 1837, Elizur Wright, a leading figure of the Garrisonian abolitionist movement, vividly described this shift:

On looking into our present generation of revised and improved school-books, it will be seen, that those faithful finger-boards which used to point the young mind towards righteousness and liberty, and away from SLAVERY, as from a den of abominations, are mostly

³³Edward Josiah Stearns, *Notes on Uncle Tom's Cabin: Being a Logical Answer to its Allegations and Inferences against Slavery as an Institution* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., 1853), 72. Emphasis in the original.

³⁴*Expurgated American Literature. Mutilation and Suppression of Works Containing Antislavery Sentiments* (Leeds Antislavery Series 20), in *Five Hundred Thousand Strokes for Freedom: A Series of Antislavery Tracts* (London: W. & F. Cash, 1853), 3.

³⁵William Sullivan and George Barrell Emerson, *The Political Class Book, Intended to Instruct the Higher Classes, in the Origin, Nature, and Use of Political Power* (Boston: Richardson, Lord & Holbrook, 1830), 60.

torn down, and in their stead, in some of the popular reading books and geographies, pleasant lanes are opened, through which 'Southern institutions' look beautiful in the distance. Here is poisoning at the fountain!³⁶

These widespread editorial and publishing difficulties were the same as those that in 1834 forced Lydia Maria Child to abandon editorship of *Juvenile Miscellany*, the first children's magazine in the United States, after her anti-slavery views became widely known and caused declining readership for the journal.³⁷ In encountering sharp limitations against free expression of anti-slavery sentiments, educational publishing during the 1830s and 1840s was little different from religion, journalism and politics where slavery's defenders made untiring efforts to suppress or alter discussion of the subject. Two major abolitionists confirmed that by the 1850s the elimination of anti-slavery content was an accomplished process. Wendell Phillips observed in 1853 that 'Old school-books tainted with anti-slavery selections had passed out of use, and new ones were compiled to suit the times',³⁸ the same year as Thomas Wentworth Higginson wrote that by mid-century slavery had 'torn the antislavery pages out of the schoolbooks'.³⁹

Perhaps the best example of compliance with this educational silence was the reader series edited by William Holmes McGuffey. These were by far the best-selling schoolbooks of the American nineteenth century. Well over 100 million copies were sold from the series' first appearance in 1836 until the end of the century. In the eastern United States, McGuffey's faced heavy market competition; in southern and mid-western states, it was the dominant reader.⁴⁰ McGuffey readers achieved this dominance by a reputation for avoiding the issue of slavery, and after the Civil War by limiting mention of Lincoln. The readers succeeded in doing this despite the fact that McGuffey placed more emphasis on historical texts than any other major reader, with over a third of readings in *McGuffey's Fifth Eclectic Reader* being devoted to history.⁴¹ Attention to the heavily debated issue of slavery not only would have meant commercial disaster, but conflicted with the patriotic historiography of McGuffey's readers that promoted belief in a virtuous American tradition of liberty. While McGuffey did not like slavery, neither was he known to protest publicly – particularly as it might have interfered with his employment as professor of moral philosophy at the University of Virginia, from 1845 until his death in 1873.

The readers and their several antebellum editors under McGuffey's supervision relied on a delimited concept of morality that sought to remain separate from contemporary affairs. They selected stories that exemplified religious morality for youth and framed an evangelical Christian worldview tempered by secular daily practice.⁴² The result was an uncomplicated social homogeneity that overlooked troublesome contradictions beneath this simplification. Avoidances such as these buried women, black individuals and indigenous peoples beneath a heavy wash of nationalism. Conformity was key to profitability. McGuffey and his publishers

³⁶ John Pierpont, *The National Reader* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little & Wilkins, and Richardson & Lord, 1828), 281–3.

³⁷ Elizur Wright, 'Fourth Annual Report of the American Antislavery Society', *Quarterly Antislavery Magazine* 2, no. 8 (July 1837): 352.

³⁸ Carolyn Karcher, *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 151–72, esp. 169ff.

³⁹ Wendell Phillips, 'The Philosophy of the Abolition Movement, before the Massachusetts Antislavery Society at Boston, January 27, 1853', in *The Antislavery Struggle: Representative Orations to Illustrate American Political History*, ed. Alexander Johnston (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1885), 176.

⁴⁰ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Contemporaries* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899), 282.

⁴¹ John A. Nietz, 'Why the Longevity of the McGuffey's Readers?', *History of Education Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (1964): 119–20.

⁴² George Callcott, 'History Enters the Schools', *American Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (Winter 1959): 471.

assiduously self-censored in order to avoid disturbing information that might interfere with marketing.⁴³ For example, the *Eclectic Fourth Reader* edition published in 1838 carried a short essay on Wilberforce, but revised 1853 and 1857 editions deleted this essay and its positive regard for a British abolitionist.⁴⁵ What distinguished McGuffey's readers was their faithful transmission of a placid vision of America as a nation characterised by inherent democratic nobility.

Alongside McGuffey's graded readers, Lyman Cobb's readers (see [Figure 1](#)) sold several million copies during some four decades by emphasising moral lessons, character studies, temperance and patriotism. Yet they did not mention the institution of US slavery in any of their editions beginning in the mid-1820s and onwards. Cobb readers located their educational approach specifically within American nationalism. The 1853 edition of Cobb's fifth-grade reader framed this nationalistic approach:

The pieces in this work are chiefly American. The 'English Reader', the book most generally used in the schools of our country, does not contain a single piece or paragraph written by an *American* citizen. Is this good policy? Is it patriotism? Shall the children of this great nation be compelled to read, year after year, none but the writings and speeches of men whose views and feelings are in direct opposition to our institutions and our government? Certainly, pride for the literary reputation of our own country, if not patriotism and good policy, should dictate to us the propriety of inserting in our School-Books, specimens of our own literature. . . .⁴⁵

Cobb pursued this policy through a circumscribed description of the US social landscape, one where the only selections involving racial alterity refer almost exclusively to 'Indians'. Several Cobb readers include an excerpt on racial variation from John Mason Good's *Book of Nature* (1826), a selection that posits an absence of imagination in black people and suggests a theory of human polygenesis.⁴⁶ Although Cobb readers include some writers known for their anti-slavery sentiment, such as William Cullen Bryant and John Pierpont, none of their writings on slavery appear.

Reader series formulated editorial policies concerning topic coverage and these carried over from one volume to the next. The *Standard Reader* series, published 1852–1874 and edited by poet, publisher and spiritualist Epes Sargent, provided students with moralistic poems, stories and dialogues, along with an approach that relied on lesson simplification and pedagogical improvement.⁴⁷ There was no coverage of slavery. However, Sargent changed with the times. During the Civil War, he published *Peculiar: A Tale of the Great Transition* (1863),⁴⁸ which one critic calls 'probably the most effective antislavery novel of the Civil War period'.⁴⁹ It remains a forgotten novel that contains emotional denunciations of slavery alongside racially stereotyped quadron characters. By 1871, during the Reconstruction,

⁴³Clarence William Perkins, 'Moral Culture in the McGuffey Readers, 1836–1901' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2011), 68–103.

⁴⁴Venezky, 'A History of the American Reading Textbook', 248.

⁴⁵William Holmes McGuffey, *The Eclectic Fourth Reader: Containing Elegant Extracts*, 6th ed. (Cincinnati: Truman & Smith, 1838), 76–7 ('Character of Wilberforce'); McGuffey, *Newly Revised Fourth Reader* (Cincinnati: Winthrop B. Smith & Co., 1853); McGuffey, *Fourth Eclectic Reader: Instructive Lessons for the Young* (Cincinnati: Winthrop B. Smith & Co., 1857).

⁴⁶Lyman Cobb, *Cobb's New North American Reader, or, Fifth Reading Book* (New York: J. C. Riker, 1853), vi. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁷Lyman Cobb, *The North American Reader* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1835), 277–8; *Cobb's New North American Reader, or, Fifth Reading Book*, 168–9.

⁴⁸See, for example, Epes Sargent, *The Standard Second Reader, Part Two* (Boston: John L. Shorey, 1855).

⁴⁹Epes Sargent, *Peculiar: A Tale of the Great Transition* (New York: Carleton, 1864).

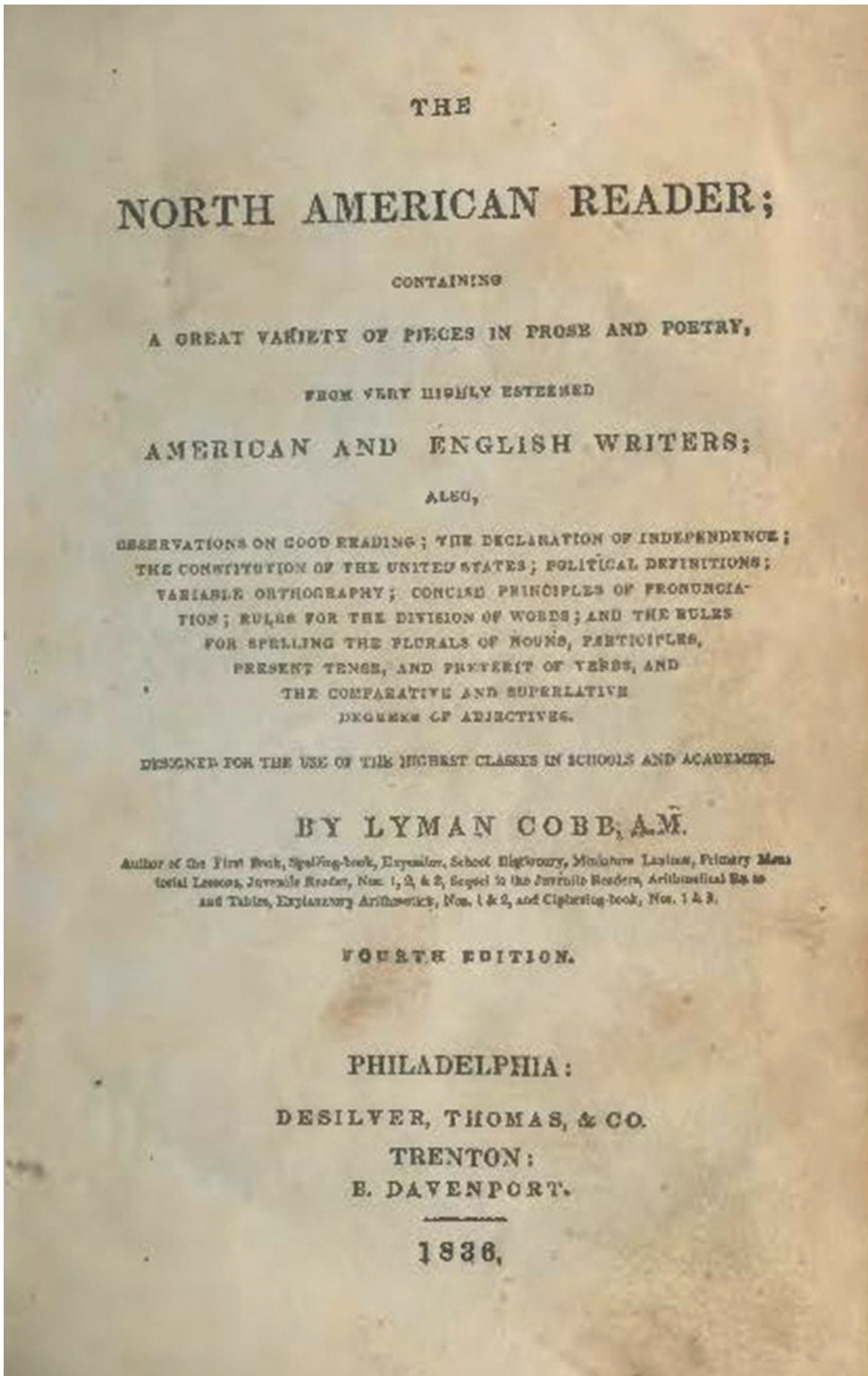


Figure 1. Title page from Lyman Cobb, *The North American Reader* (Philadelphia: Desilver, Thomas, & Co., 1836), 4th ed. Author's copy.

when he published a heavily revised edition of the *Standard Fifth Reader*, Sargent included extensive selections opposing slavery. Quite the editorial opportunist, Sargent's reader now included anti-slavery writings by William L. Channing, Henry Ware and several congressional speeches supporting passage of the 13th Amendment.⁵⁰ Sargent's *Standard Reader* series was influential beyond the United States; it appeared in Japanese editions during 1872–1882.⁵¹

In summary, the overwhelming majority of schoolbooks from the early Republic until the Civil War ignored the existence of slavery. When books carried one or two poems that touched on slavery, the resulting complaints dissuaded other editors and publishers from carrying similar materials. The cumulative record is one of avoidance.

Reaction against anti-slavery schoolbooks

At an education conference at Boston's Tremont Temple in 1867, a speaker praised Francis Wayland, noted educator and president of Brown University who had died two years previous, in these words:

Those subjects that most seriously agitated the public mind were always welcome to his recitation. At the time when the questions of slavery and protection were so prominent, and were made tests of political orthodoxy or heterodoxy, he never adopted the cowardly, or, as it was often termed, the '*prudent and cautious*' course, in dealing with them. Instead of dodging the question of slavery in the recitation room, he would give several extra hours to its discussion.⁵²

This was only one view of a man who, alongside Emerson, was a leading American moral philosopher of the antebellum era. There was another side to Wayland, one that sought to avoid the divisiveness of the slavery issue by banning its discussion at Brown University.⁵³ He was by no means a bold teacher confronting slavery as the above quotation suggests, but was rather a contradicted and anti-abolitionist opponent of slavery. Abolitionists were too vociferous for Wayland. As a leading Baptist, his concern over denominational schism on this issue caused Wayland to limit his public speech and that of university students and faculty.

Print was another matter. No rhetorical reticence inhibited Wayland's 1835 *Elements of Moral Science*, an influential and heavily reprinted text employed in secondary schools and colleges. It attacked slavery at length.⁵⁴ Academies and colleges banned the book from classrooms throughout the South and further.⁵⁵ In 1861, it occasioned a counter-attack in California's state legislature against the San Francisco High School for using *Elements of Moral Science* because of the book's disapprobation of slavery.⁵⁶ Wayland's

⁵⁰Lorenzo Dow Turner, 'The Civil War Period (1861–1865)', *Journal of Negro History* 14, no. 4 (October 1929): 478.

⁵¹Sargent, *The Standard Fifth Reader* (Boston: John L. Shorey, 1871).

⁵²The first and most reprinted edition in this series was 英学捷解, 一名, リードル独学 [*Eigaku shōkai, ichimei, Ridoru dokugaku – Sargent's First Reader*] (Osaka: Umehara Kameshichi, 1872).

⁵³Elbridge Smith, *An Address to the American Institute of Education, at Its Annual Meeting in Tremont Temple, Boston, August 1st, 1867* (Boston: Samuel Chism, 1867), 36.

⁵⁴Deborah Bingham Van Broekhoven, 'Suffering with Slaveholders: The Limits of Francis Wayland's Antislavery Witness', in *Religion and the Antebellum Debate Over Slavery*, ed. John R. McKivigan and Mitchell Snay (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 196–220.

⁵⁵Francis Wayland, *The Elements of Moral Science*, rev. ed. (Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, 1837 [1st ed. 1835]), 206–16.

⁵⁶Beriah Green, *Things for Northern Men to Do: A Discourse Delivered Lord's Day Evening, July 17, 1836* (New York: 1836), 16.

combination of opposition to slavery and efforts to limit the extent of anti-slavery speech were representative of an intellectual paradigm that opposed slavery but did not want such opposition carried too far.

Wayland's conundrum inhabited the minority of school texts in the early nineteenth century that treated slavery as anathema to civic virtue. When they did so, it was in the context of reading selections that depicted African American slaves as subordinate beings towards whom those who were white should direct sympathy and religious instruction due to dependants. Schoolbooks that took an adverse view of slavery generally treated it as a blot on the nation's moral order rather than as an offence against human equality.

White Southern readers took special offence that they became the model of immorality in a few anti-slavery schoolbooks published in the North. They were angered because they viewed expression of anti-slavery sentiments in schoolbooks as an effort to alienate their children from the 'peculiar institution' and their native Southern culture. One reviewer wrote in 1841 of seeing schoolbooks 'containing not only innuendos, but oftentimes open declamation against the South and Southern institutions. We know of many schools, where books are used for every day reading, containing representations wholly unfounded, and calculated to mislead the youthful mind.'⁵⁷ By mid-century calls for textbooks written by Southern authors with pro-slavery attitudes often were accompanied by suggestions that Southern students would do better to avoid higher education in the North in order not to encounter anti-slavery rhetoric during their education.⁵⁸

Did school readers that included anti-slavery texts have significant effect? It is difficult to provide a well-evidenced response to this question, but the social resistance to anti-slavery readers underlines how many people both before and after the Civil War believed these schoolbooks possessed great suggestive power for students. Politicians, school authorities and journalistic commentators in the slave-holding states attributed malignant and transformative influence to such schoolbooks. This belief ensured constant examination for unacceptable content of textbooks imported from northern states. South schoolhouses contained very few locally published readers prior to the Civil War, so northern textbooks were an issue of constant friction due to claims that they represented alien values.

Among the few available pro-slavery antebellum schoolbooks, as early as 1844 a new series of readers were offered for sale in Alabama to address southern demands for local textbooks. The publishers explained that 'Complaints have long been heard of the reading books of the North, made by people whose political institutions differ from ours, and thrown upon the children of the South, for their indiscriminating minds to peruse'. It guarantees that the new readers are 'free from all objectionable pieces'.⁵⁹ By the mid-1850s, the tone grew even sharper. Alabama governor John A. Winston, who was to become a Confederate army colonel, expressed his concern regarding textbooks in his 1857–1858 annual message to the state legislature:

Severe scrutiny should be exercised, in regard to the use of unsound textbooks, in every school in the State. Unfortunately, as yet, our school books and teachers are imported from a community in which the prejudices of ignorance and fanaticism, on subjects of vital importance to us, are propagated. By a *prohibition* of all books inculcating improper

⁵⁷*Second Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Sacramento: California Department of Public Instruction, 1865), 19.

⁵⁸Review of 'School Books', *Southern Quarterly Review* 1 (January 1842): 265.

⁵⁹For example, 'University of Mississippi', *De Bow's Review and Industrial Resources, Statistics, Etc.* 26 (1859): 335–7.

sentiments to be taught in the South, we may soon insure the possession of text-books, the works of our citizens; and build up institutions of learning among us, where the unwholesome heresies of fanaticism will not be inculcated in the minds of youth.⁶⁰

Schoolbook content disputes provided an open field for political conspiracy-mongering. North Carolina congressional representative Thomas Lanier Clingman, later a Confederate general, saw an aristocratic and imperial British hand in the ideas behind anti-slavery schoolbooks. In an 1858 speech, he claimed a transatlantic conspiracy: 'Looking far ahead, they sought to incorporate their doctrines into the school-books and publications best calculated to influence the minds of the young and ignorant'.⁶¹ By dividing the United States over the slavery question, according to Clingman, Britain could gain trade advantages and consolidate itself as the leading imperial power. A textbook with anti-slavery elements along with a Northern-born teacher, in Clingman's view, was an instrument of a vast, forward-looking and international subversive scheme. There was no small note of xenophobia, whether directed at domestic or foreign horizons, in these sectional debates over schoolbooks. Rising anti-northern attitudes helped foster a belief that southern states were better served by publishing their own readers.

One of the major rallying points in this campaign for Southern-origin schoolbooks came in the mid-1850s with leadership from Louisiana publisher James DeBow, publisher of *DeBow's Review*. He advocated development of indigenous southern schoolbooks and for discarding textbooks from northern publishers, even if they had to be temporarily replaced by English and translated European imports.⁶² This plan did not reach practical fruition. By late spring 1861, as the Civil War unfolded, DeBow's resolutely pro-slavery and secessionist journal specified the treatment of slavery in schoolbooks as a major cause for the rise of northern anti-slavery opinion and complained about schoolbooks in the hands of southern students. *DeBow's Review* charged that Charles Cleveland's *Compendium of American Literature* (1859) contained only five southern writers out of 109 writers represented, and that the choice of writers and content made 'Compendium of Abolitionism' a more fitting title.⁶³ The unsigned article, most certainly the work of DeBow, had a vituperative animus:

When we recollect that the pestilential doctrines of the Abolition party have gained almost universal acceptance at the North, as much by the teaching of the common schools as by any other agency, we see the danger to which we have been exposed by Yankee books in the hands of Yankee teachers. We have expelled the latter and it remains for us to complete the work.⁶⁴

⁶⁰'Alabama Readers', *Southern Educational Journal and Family Magazine* 1, no. 4 (January 1844): 126.

⁶¹*The Coventer* [Reformed Presbyterian Church], January 13, 1858, 148. Emphasis in the original. The unsigned editorial condemned Governor Winston for censorship comparable to despotic European regimes.

⁶²Thomas Clingman, *Selections from the Speeches and Writings of the Hon. Thomas L. Clingman, of North Carolina, with Additions and Explanatory Notes*, 2nd ed. (Raleigh, NC: John Nicols, 1878), 382.

⁶³'The Future of Southern Schoolbooks', *DeBow's Review* 30, no. 5/6 (May/June 1861): 606–14. Similar opinions appear earlier at 'Georgia School Books', *DeBow's Review* 25 (November 1858): 597. For further on DeBow's role in encouraging proslavery schoolbooks, see David B. Parker, 'To the Youth of the Southern Confederacy: Georgia's Confederate Textbooks', in *Breaking the Heartland: The Civil War in Georgia*, ed. John D. Fowler and David B. Parker (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2011), 94–6.

⁶⁴In a preface to the third edition of his anthology, Cleveland acknowledged his abolitionist opinions and replied to critics, 'I have not one word of apology to offer' for including many anti-slavery extracts: Cleveland, *A Compendium of American Literature* (Philadelphia: Parry & McMillan, 1859), 8.

Production of pro-Confederacy and pro-slavery schoolbooks became a major topic of discussion among southern educators. Michael Bernath usefully locates this discussion of education and textbooks within much broader calls for Confederate intellectual and cultural independence.⁶⁵ What began as a sectional desire for pro-slavery content, respect for southern institutions and autonomous publishing became a nationalist cause. As Bernath observes, despite this nationalistic desire there was little content that was ‘Southern’ in the new schoolbooks and much of this production came from reprinting lightly revised Northern textbooks.⁶⁶ As an example, one editor revised Webster’s speller and re-titled it *The Elementary Spelling Book, Revised and Adapted to the Youth of the Southern Confederacy, Interspersed with the Bible Readings on Domestic Slavery* (1863). His adaptation of Webster explained that the insertion into the speller of biblical passages justifying slavery was undertaken because ‘The people of these Confederate States of America will not henceforth withhold from their school-books, the teaching of the Scriptures on these subjects’.⁶⁷

The rise of the Confederacy provided opportunity for southern publishers to pursue DeBow’s dream. Several dozen new readers and subject textbooks appeared during the war years,⁶⁸ often of poor quality due to lack of good printing supplies caused by the Union blockade. As limited and inadequate as this effort proved by the war’s end, Confederate textbooks outnumbered all those produced in the South before the war. This small body of schoolbooks continued the antebellum practice of general silence on slavery, but now punctuated by occasional references that treated slavery as a normal feature of society. Over two decades of demands for native southern textbooks that treated slavery respectfully were realised, but as ‘the last gasp of a soon-vanquished system’.⁶⁹ More importantly, Confederate schoolbooks served as the foundation model for a new generation of racist texts that predominated in much US education.

During Reconstruction federal authorities attempted to reverse course, hiring northern teachers again, and introducing northern textbooks where they had been replaced. Belief in the powerful subversive influence of schoolbooks published in the northern states as a major cause of the Civil War resulted in post-war efforts to exert greater state control over schoolbooks. As white people recaptured political power after Reconstruction, it became a widely accepted article of social faith that northern schoolbooks bore heavy responsibility for the disaster that had befallen the South. Florida’s superintendent of public instruction, for example, in 1870 advocated for a uniform state-endorsed set of schoolbooks because of alleged damage that the anti-slavery movement had accomplished in less than 20 years by propagating its ideas using this educational avenue.⁷⁰ One major early twentieth-century pro-southern history attributed the alienation of the antebellum South to ‘the revolutionary utterances of Garrison, Phillips,

⁶⁵‘The Future of Southern Schoolbooks’, 614.

⁶⁶Michael Bernath, *Confederate Minds: The Struggle for Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 125–33.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 131.

⁶⁸Robert Young, *The Elementary Spelling Book, Revised and Adapted to the Youth of the Southern Confederacy* (Atlanta: Franklin Steam Printing House, 1863), 5.

⁶⁹Parker, ‘To the Youth of the Southern Confederacy’, 97. The exact number of Confederate textbooks published depends on the definition employed. See Paula T. Connolly, *Slavery in American Children’s Literature, 1790–2010* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013), 226, n.32.

⁷⁰Connolly, *Slavery in American Children’s Literature, 1790–2010*, 90.

Sumner' and others, alongside 'the suggestion in Northern schoolbooks that negro regiments from Jamaica and Hayti might be landed in the South to aid in a servile insurrection'.⁷¹

Such hysterical characterisation points to a widespread process of myth-making. Instead of general silence punctuated by a few anti-slavery textbooks containing carefully moderated opposition to slavery, a new myth arose of national divisions and civil war instigated by schoolbooks. Schoolrooms controlled by Yankee teachers and their subversive books bore the blame for the conflict leading to the South's defeat, not a secessionist conflict generated by slavery or choices southern politicians and white public opinion made in support of that institution. Politicians in southern legislatures drawing political lessons from this myth demanded state control in order to perpetuate white supremacy in schoolbooks, which ironically contributed to educational progress in the form of free book provision to public schools. The ahistoric and mythic power of the anti-slavery schoolbook helped propel forward post-war textbook publishing in the southern states, schoolbook warehouse and distribution systems, and state supervision of schoolbook contents.

Antebellum school readers and market censorship

The general refusal of antebellum anthologists and textbook writers and their publishers to produce schoolbooks with anti-slavery content due to lack of sales in one region of the United States exemplifies market censorship. Sue Curry Jansen argues that, distinct from legal or state censors, market censors decide what cultural products enter the marketplace given an estimated likelihood of profit.⁷² Classical liberal ideology opposes restrictions on speech as a limitation on the free exchange of ideas. Instead, liberalism endorses the marketplace as a democratic mechanism that decides what ideas or cultural products – schoolbooks, in the present instance – get published and achieve an audience.

In the case of antebellum schoolbooks with anti-slavery content, there was a contest over the admissibility of commodified humanity and its labour as a market good. At the centre of this dispute between white people were the terms of liberalism in antebellum US society. Would free speech or a defence of property claims against black humanity prevail in schoolrooms and schoolbooks? Opponents of slavery sought to use educational publishing to challenge the racial commodification of black people through the exercise of free speech. When pro-slavery critics examined the same schoolbooks they found an unacceptable challenge to purported property rights and claimed white racial privilege to define black individuals as property. Market censorship in the United States mediated between these two positions, favouring those with financial power accumulated through exploitation of enslaved African American labour.

⁷¹Florida Department of Public Instruction, *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Florida* (Tallahassee, FL: Charles H. Walton, 1870), 50–1.

⁷²Julian Alvin Carroll Chandler et al., eds., *The South in the Building of the Nation: History of the States*, vol. 2 (Richmond: Southern Historical Publication Society, 1909), 404–5. Chandler, who later became president of William and Mary College, took a special interest in schoolbooks. He worked from 1904–1907 as an editor at Silver, Burdett & Co. publishers in New York City, where his biography notes that Chandler revised textbooks in order that children might learn of US sectional disputes 'without prejudice'. See Solomon R. Butler and Charles D. Walters, *The Life of Dr. Julian Alvin Carroll Chandler and His Influence on Education* (Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1973), 12.

Where market censorship proceeded from a belief that these books had significant effect or potential against the institution of slavery, as we have seen, schoolbooks were silent or silenced. The few books that addressed slavery were attacked and discarded. None of the most popular books mentioned slavery, having achieved popularity in large part because they avoided the topic of slavery.

If the white population encountered censorship of schoolbooks, the black population suffered far worse through state-enforced illiteracy and slaveholders who prevented slaves from possessing books. Radical abolitionist James Redpath, one of the most militant opponents of slavery, met a literate slave in Augusta, Georgia, in 1854 who learned to read and write despite repeated efforts to stop him from learning. ‘My missus got hold of my spellin’ books thrice and burned them’, he told Redpath.⁷³ What is unusual in this story is that a slave was able to obtain schoolbooks three times, not that they were destroyed. Issues of African American literacy and education remained absent from antebellum discussion of schoolbooks. This was a white-on-white debate that reduced those who were black to represented subjects or onlookers. Yet censorship debates did not begin within the parameters of white society. They began with the exclusion of black people from the discussion, an exclusion in which white individuals on all sides of the debate participated in creating. The debates produced different forms of white supremacy, ranging from patronising advocacy of black inferiors to demands for the perpetuation of slavery and a naturalised alleged racial order. In essence, schoolbook content disputes were a contest within the master class about the extent and nature of black inclusion or exclusion, whether from society or book pages.

Minimal reference or silence on slavery, even by anthologists who made their anti-slavery views known elsewhere, points to a severely delimited concept of democracy. The breadth of silence on slavery in antebellum US schoolbooks is a measure of anti-democracy and the stifling of oppositional claims for human equality. Demands for schoolbook silence on slavery certainly had strong – although not exclusive – origins in the slave-holding states. Fulfilment of such demands came from textbook editors, authors and publishers, despite the fact that many – Benezet, Webster, Murray, Sargent and other popular anthologists such as Jeremiah Goodrich and Joshua Leavitt – were opponents of slavery. Like Starbuck in *Moby Dick*, they failed by remaining quiet in the face of tyranny. When Ahab observes about Starbuck, ‘Aye, aye! thy silence, then, that voices thee’,⁷⁴ this same observation pertains to anti-slavery intellectuals who saw but did not publish. What Ahab despised was capitulation despite professed liberal, humane ideals. Those who published antebellum schoolbooks that refused to speak about slavery engaged in self-silencing in order to sell books. They placed a lesser priority on speaking on behalf of equal black humanity than on profit.

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⁷³Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship: The Knot that Binds Power and Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 16.

⁷⁴James Redpath, *The Roving Editor, or, Talks with Slaves in the Southern States* (New York: A. B. Burdick, 1859), 162.

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