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Reading American Art

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Elizabeth Milroy

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8 Narratives of the Female Body: *The Greek Slave*

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No nineteenth-century artwork tells us more about the cultural construction of gender than Hiram Powers's *The Greek Slave* of 1844 (fig. 8.1). This life-sized standing nude woman whose hands are chained in front of her both displayed the beauty of the female body and, thanks to a cluster of narrative details, invited spectators to tell themselves a complex and disquieting story. The chain suggested violence and degradation, but the woman's expression was pensive and tranquil. These seeming contradictions spoke to some of the most fundamental concerns of its viewers, who responded to *The Greek Slave* with an outpouring of words—poetry, reviews, letters, and diary entries—that outline some of the deep conflicts within nineteenth-century culture.[1]

The Greek Slave reached an unprecedented audience. Over the course of fifteen years, Powers produced six full-length versions of the statue, numerous three-quarter-sized replicas, and scores of busts, many of which found their way into American homes and art collections.[2] Thousands of viewers saw the work when it was displayed at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London in 1851; a decade later, the plaster model could still be seen by visitors to Powers's studio in Florence. Traveling exhibitions brought the sculpture to more than a dozen American cities, where it was viewed by more than a hundred thousand people. With great fanfare, the Cosmopolitan Art Association offered a full-length version of the sculpture in a raffle for subscribers and then bought it back again at an auction attended by five thousand spectators.[3] In the middle years of the nineteenth century, no American artwork was better known.

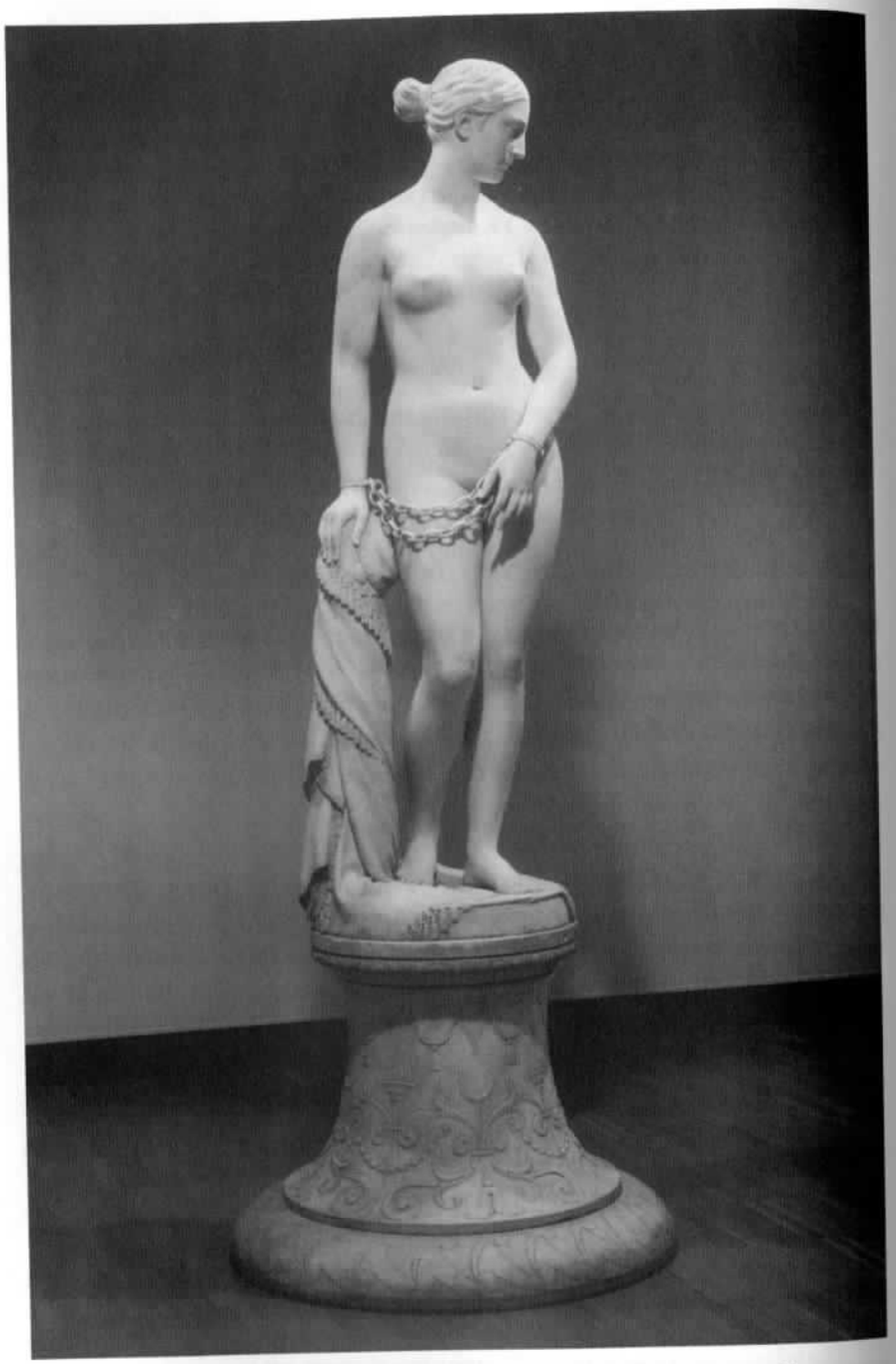

Figure 8.1 Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave*, 1851, after an original of 1844. Marble, 65½ inches. Yale University Art Gallery, Olive Louise Dann Fund.

By the end of the century, *The Greek Slave* had become synonymous with respectable, even staid, taste. Henry James, remembering its popularity in small and inexpensive reproductions, wryly described it as "so undressed, yet so refined, even so pensive, in sugar-white alabaster, exposed under little domed glass covers in such American homes as could bring themselves to think such things right."[4] Yet James's oxymorons—undressed yet refined, exposed yet protected under glass—suggest some of the ambivalence with which this sculpture was received. A nude woman in chains represented an explosive subject, shocking, titillating, potentially even pornographic, and the explanations by which Powers and his supporters sought to shape his viewers' response to the sculpture help us trace outlines of an ideology of gender as it came under pressure in nineteenth-century America. The problem of how to understand *The Greek Slave* was in some sense the problem of how to understand woman, in her complex spiritual and sensual nature. In their comments on this sculpture and the narratives they constructed to explain the enormous appeal it exercised upon them, Powers and his contemporaries sketched their sense of the symbolic significance of the female body. And since, as Mary Douglas has pointed out, images of the human body often reveal shared assumptions about the body politic, a careful examination of the reception of *The Greek Slave* also offers some insights into the complexities of a changing culture in nineteenth-century America.[5]

Powers's own views on the meaning of his celebrated statue are well documented. An entertaining talker and inveterate explainer, he offered detailed comments in letters and interviews on the genesis of the statue and the way it should be read. From the beginning, the construction and interpretation of a narrative was central in the artist's thinking about his sculpture.

When he began work on *The Greek Slave*, Powers was still a newcomer to the art world, hoping to move from notoriety as an adept portrait maker to success as a sculptor of ideal subjects. His first venture into the realm of the ideal revealed both the rewards and pitfalls of his aspirations toward a "higher" form of art. *Eve Tempted* (1842) received praise from the distinguished Danish sculptor Bertel Thorwaldsen and was much admired by visitors to Powers's studio in Florence.[6] But a prospective buyer later canceled his order, accused by his own brother of "indiscretion" in seeking to bring a nude sculpture home to "a quiet, old fashioned, utilitarian place" like Albany, New York.[7] The implications of this experience were clear: to succeed with an American audience unaccustomed to nudity in art, Powers would have to find a way to fit his conception of the ideal to an "old fashioned, utilitarian" frame of reference.

In *Eve*, Powers depicted a biblical figure whose nudity had an obvious sanction in an authoritative and morally irreproachable text, but the subject still

seemed too daring to some viewers. Eve, depicted with the forbidden fruit cradled in her hand, might have seemed to "old fashioned" Albany too active, too clearly culpable, too much the temptress (fig. 8.2). For *The Greek Slave*, Powers invented his own story, one which redressed this problem by stressing his subject's powerlessness rather than power. To "utilitarian" American culture he offered a modern tale of pathos and violence—the story of a contemporary Greek woman captured by invading Turks, abducted from her own country, and sold into slavery. The narrative had historical and literary echoes, for American and European interest in the Greek war of independence had run high; Byron had died supporting the cause of Greek independence, and Shelley wrote compassionately of Greek slave women.[8] But Powers did not draw his subject from a specific literary source. Rather, he created his own fiction. Visual details carefully informed the audience that the subject was a pious, faithful woman: a locket and a cross hanging on her abandoned clothing suggest a lost love and a sustaining Christian faith. Stripped naked, displayed for sale in the market place, her hands chained, the Greek slave, unlike Eve, was absolved from responsibility for her own downfall.

In constructing a narrative frame for his ideal sculpture, Powers demonstrated a finely tuned appreciation for the moral and intellectual context in which his work would be reviewed. Drawing perhaps on his experiences designing exhibits for the wax museum in Cincinnati, Powers had a keen sense of his audience and its expectations. He was particularly aware of the highly charged mixture of curiosity and suspicion that accompanied any public display evoking erotic or even sensual associations.

American audiences had been notably prudish in their response to nudity in art. Earlier in the century Adolph Ulrich Wertmüller's *Danae and the Shower of Gold* (1787) had caused a scandal when it was exhibited in New York and Philadelphia, as had other painted nudes in the first quarter of the century.[9] A pair of French paintings depicting the temptation of Adam and Eve and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden were criticized for their nudity during an American tour in 1832–35.[10] Horatio Greenough's *Chanting Cherubs* (1831) had been attacked as immodest when it was displayed in New York, and his bare-chested *Washington* ridiculed.[11] When Powers sent *The Greek Slave* on a tour of American cities in 1847, he made sure the sculpture was accompanied by texts that would instruct and direct the viewers' gaze. Press notices, poems, tributes by American diplomats and travelers stressed the propriety, even the nobility, of Powers's undertaking. The American tour, which earned twenty-three thousand dollars in receipts, thus introduced a large audience not only to a work of art but to a series of narratives, ostensibly describing the sculpture, but also

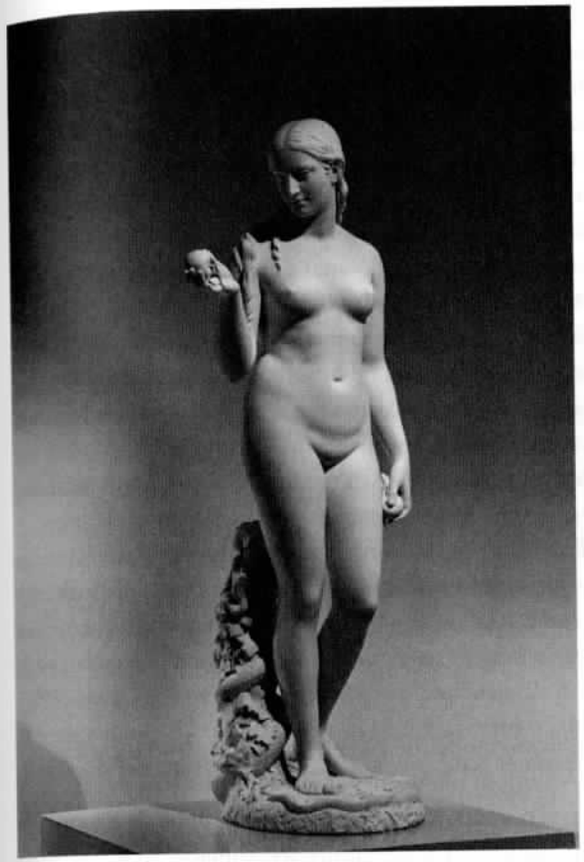

Figure 8.2 Hiram Powers, *Eve Tempted*, 1842. Marble, 68⅞ inches. National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, museum purchase in memory of Ralph Cross Johnson.

defining a morally and socially acceptable framework for the consideration of the explosive subject of a woman's body and woman's nature.

In *The Greek Slave*, Powers presented an attractive female subject that would simultaneously invite and repel erotic associations. His earliest description of the statue, in a letter to his benefactor, John Preston, recognized the need to balance a powerful appeal to the senses with an equally strong protection against charges of immorality. Perhaps thinking of the controversy aroused by the unembarrassed nudity of his *Eve*, Powers defended *The Greek Slave* by pointing out the greater modesty of its pose. Although the statue was nude, he wrote, "her hands [will be] bound and in such a position as to conceal a portion of the figure, thereby rendering the exposure of the nakedness less exceptionable to our American fastidiousness. The feet also will be bound to a fixture and the face turned to one side, and downwards with an expression of modesty and

Christian resignation."[12] Although Powers later changed some of the details, this description contains the crucial elements that made *The Greek Slave* a success: nudity combined with modesty, constraint, and Christian resignation.

By the time his statue was ready for public exhibition, Powers had refined his notion of how its nudity might be made acceptable to its audience. In an interview published at about the same time *The Greek Slave* was delivered to its first owner, Powers tried to define the moral uses of nudity in art. "It was not my object for interest's sake to set before my countrymen demoralizing subjects, and thus get even my bread at the expense of public chastity," he declared. He went on to insist that "a pure abstract human form tempered with chaste expression and attitude" was "calculated to awaken the highest emotions of the soul for the pure and beautiful." He even tried to argue that since the "society of chaste and well educated women has a tendency to exalt the mind," redeeming feminine influence is not "limited to the face alone," a suggestion whose humor was undoubtedly unintentional.[13]

In this same interview, Powers commented on the importance of narrative in the struggle to control the powerful emotions generated by his nude subject. Audiences could best experience the uplifting effects of the pure abstract form when they had access to a story that encased the nude figure in a protective web of explanation.

> The slave has been taken from one of the Greek islands by the Turks, in the time of the Greek Revolution; the history of which is familiar to all. Her father and mother, and perhaps all her kindred, have been destroyed by her foes, and she alone preserved as a treasure too valuable to be thrown away. She is now among barbarian strangers, under the pressure of a full recollection of the calamitous events which have brought her to her present state; and she stands exposed to the gaze of the people she abhors, and awaits her fate with intense anxiety, tempered by the support of her reliance upon the goodness of God. Gather all these afflictions together, and add them to the fortitude and resignation of a Christian, and no room will be left for shame.[14]

Powers now gave a more elaborate and nuanced narrative, focusing on the imagined emotions of his subject. In this description, he also instructed his audience on how to view a nude figure. Redirecting the viewer's gaze from the female subject's body to her face, he gave his audience something other than the woman's nudity on which to focus. His emphasis now fell not on the modesty of the slave's pose described in his letter to Preston, but on the narrative details that explained her situation.

Powers knew that his viewers were already prepared to respond emotionally to a story in which a character very much like themselves was threatened by a mysterious Other, in this case the "barbarian strangers" who conquered Greece, the cradle of Western civilization. Observing that the Turks considered this Greek woman too valuable to be thrown away, Powers suggested that other things of value might be in danger of being reduced to the status of a commodity and even thrown away in a conflict with another culture. Many nineteenth-century observers were fascinated by the often unsettling glimpses of foreign cultures brought to them through the expanding European colonial empires.[15] When cultural differences suggested that gender identity and sexual practice might be relative rather than universal, the very basis for Western civilization seemed to be at risk. Commentators were thus intrigued and disturbed by the institution of the harem, which suggested attitudes toward sexuality and female identity that were profoundly different from accepted Western ideas.[16]

Powers knew that his audience would be able to embellish the imaginative context to explain the nature of the threat faced by the Greek slave. Literary Orientalism abounded in the nineteenth century and included such poetry as Byron's "The Bride of Abdyos" (1813) and Thomas Moore's "Lalla Rookh" (1817) and such operas as *The Caliph of Baghdad,* which played in New York in 1827, and Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio.*[17] A classic work of English pornography, *The Lustful Turk* (1828), portrayed the sexual awakening of English girls captured by a Turkish bey; among the women of his harem is a Greek girl pining for her homeland.[18] Travel accounts of the seraglio and writings on sexual hygiene agreed with the pornographers that "Turkey is literally the empire of the senses" and suggested that Turkish women were seduced by luxury into a world outside morality.[19]

The French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres had been painting scenes from the Turkish baths since the beginning of the century and had worked in Florence in the same studio as sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini, who later became Powers's friend.[20] In 1839, Ingres painted a composition, *Odalisque with the Slave,* that made explicit the luxuriant sexuality that Westerners associated with the Turkish harem (fig. 8.3); the acquiescent, reclining figure suggests a world in which the female body exists only for man's pleasure. The painting was widely known in a contemporary engraving, and Ingres produced another copy in 1842.[21] In the same year that Powers began *The Greek Slave,* French sculptor James Pradier exhibited an *Odalisque* wearing a turban and looking back over her shoulder with a seductive glance (fig. 8.4).[22] Powers and his viewers were thus surrounded with a profusion of images that depicted the harem as the epitome of Eastern sensuality.

Figure 8.3 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Odalisque with the Slave*, 1840. Oil on canvas, 28⅝ × 39⅜ inches. Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop.

Art, pornography, and much reform literature shared a male perspective, viewing the harem culturally and sexually as the world of forbidden desire. The sensuous odalisques of Ingres or Pradier challenged the viewer to define his own responses, to decide whether he was similar to or different from the "lustful Turk." Popular Orientalism allowed Western observers to flirt with their own sensuality, still keeping it at arm's length as "foreign" or "exotic." As Edward Said has convincingly shown, Westerners have often seen in the Orient a projection of their own fears and desires.[23] For women viewers, Orientalism offered a glimpse of a world of passion and desire that was largely repressed in their own environment. In the figure of the odalisque, nineteenth-century women could contemplate a female sexuality that was doubly foreign, springing from another culture and coming to them as seen through men's eyes.

In alluding to the Turkish harem, Powers plunged his audience into an alluring and alarming world, a place of enslavement and sensual gratification, a forbidden realm in which viewers confronted their own erotic impulses. Yet, as he suggested in the interview published in 1845, the device of the imaginary Turkish captors enabled his audience to participate in the gaze of sensuality and to distance themselves from it simultaneously. By objectifying improper viewing, the unseen "barbarian" Turks absolved the audience from responsibility for her

plight. The viewers to whom the sculpture was addressed, the men and women of the nineteenth-century West, accepted the distinction between themselves and her captors and agreed to view her in a different way. Thus Powers could invite his audience to look without embarrassment at *The Greek Slave*, leaving intact the suggestion that the female nude would under other circumstances be synonymous with shame.

Powers, furthermore, offered viewers an opportunity to experience powerful emotions without having to contemplate a scene of violence and degradation. He expected his audience to be able to imagine both a past and a future for the Greek slave far removed from the tranquility and contemplativeness of the present moment. Powers did not, like Ingres or Pradier, depict a woman of the harem. He chose instead a subject that played upon his audience's assumptions about the harem without actually portraying it. His Greek slave pauses on the threshold of a momentous change in her life; her future in the harem is the great unstated drama that gives the sculpture its poignancy.

Similarly, viewers could imagine a violent past that brought the Greek slave to her present plight. Twenty years later, a Czechoslovakian artist would paint a picture that made explicit the horror and passion at which Powers had only hinted. Jaroslav Čermák's *Episode in the Massacre of Syria* (1861) depicts a woman struggling with two men who are trying to carry her away (fig. 8.5). Like the Greek slave, she has been stripped of her clothes, and a cross lies at her feet; in this ferocious painting she is surrounded by the corpses of her husband and child. The painter contrasts the whiteness of her skin with the swarthiness of her

Figure 8.4 James Pradier, *Odalisque*, 1841. Marble, life size. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon.

Figure 8.5 Jaroslav Čermák, *Episode in the Massacre of Syria*. Engraving. Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], *The Art Treasures of America*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1880), vol. 1, facing p. 137.

captors, who grasp her thighs and bind her arms. By 1879, when the painting was reproduced in *The Art Treasures of America*, it had found its way into the respectable collection of T. A. Havemeyer of New York.[24] Whereas Powers felt it necessary to muffle the drama that gave *The Greek Slave* its poignancy, later artists and patrons were willing to confront more directly what one commentator called the "hot energy" of the scene.[25]

Popular response to *The Greek Slave* indicated how well Powers had judged his audience and its imperatives. Soon after its completion, the first version of the statue was shipped to England, where its owner, Capt. John Grant of Devonshire, placed it in the showroom of Graves and Company, in Pall Mall. Here the sculpture attracted much attention, partly because it represented the debut of a previously unknown American sculptor.[26] The early reviews praised the work as "charming" and "sweet," and noted Powers's technical accomplishments.[27]

The event that established *The Greek Slave* as one of the most celebrated of American art productions, however, was the tour of American cities arranged by Powers in 1847–48. An American patron, James Robb of New Orleans, had offered to buy a replica of the statue in July 1847. Powers had on hand a copy he had executed for an English patron, Lord Ward, and he decided to send it to America under the management of Miner Kellogg, an American artist Powers knew in Florence, to earn fame and fortune by public exhibition before it was delivered to Robb. Eventually, this arrangement caused many legal complications and bitter recriminations between Robb, Kellogg, and Powers over who owned which version of the sculpture and who deserved what portion of the proceeds of the exhibition.[28] But the exhibition tour brought the sculptor favorable publicity throughout the United States and outlined the terms in which it would subsequently be discussed.

Miner Kellogg proved to be a shrewd and knowledgeable art publicist who clearly understood that American audiences would accept a potentially erotic subject only if it was encased in a suitably moral narrative. Under his guidance, *The Greek Slave* attracted favorable reviews, which were promptly gathered together into a pamphlet that was distributed to viewers in each of the cities where the statue was displayed. The pamphlet, published in 1848, included a biography of Powers by the popular orator and politician Edward Everett, testimony to the sculptor's technical skill by an Italian artist, A. M. Migliarini, an excerpt from a travel book, *Scenes and Thoughts in Europe*, by G. H. Calvert, and miscellaneous poems and reviews from English and American journals.[29] With such a guidebook, viewers in cities across the United States were soon admiring *The Greek Slave* as an exemplar of beauty and morality. Perhaps because of its successful American tour, *The Greek Slave* was given a place of honor in the American section of the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London in 1851, thereby establishing its standing in the international art world.

The most important single item in the 1848 pamphlet was an enthusiastic review by an influential clergyman, which Kellogg reprinted in full. The Reverend Orville Dewey, a Unitarian minister and associate of William Ellery Channing, had preached in Boston, New Bedford, and New York and was well known for the warmth and vigor of his oratory. "Palpitating with emotion," preaching with "fervid and tender appeal," Dewey himself seemed to understand the value of dramatic expressivity in the service of spiritual ends.[30] He was the ideal spokesman for the idea already formulated by Powers that art, properly seen, could arouse viewers to a higher state of moral consciousness.[31] In an article entitled "Powers' Statues" in the *Union Magazine of Literature and Art*, Dewey compared *Eve* and *The Greek Slave* to the standard examples of excellence in ancient sculpture, the Apollo Belvedere and the Venus de Medici, and pronounced Powers's superior. "There is *no* sentiment in the Venus, but modesty. She is not in a situation to express any sentiment, or any *other* sentiment. She has neither done anything nor is going to do anything, nor is she in a situation, to awaken any moral emotion. . . . There ought to be some reason for exposure

besides beauty." Insisting that Powers's sculpture expressed more than "the beauty of mere form, of the moulding of limbs and muscles," the clergyman explained that the sensuous appeal of the statue was justified by its higher moral purpose.

Dewey particularly emphasized the centrality of narrative to the interpretation of art. The story, he insisted, was more important than the appearance of the sculpture itself. Indeed, Dewey suggested that the "sentiment" evoked by the sculpture could change the very way the viewer looked at it. In looking at *The Greek Slave,* Dewey asserted, the receptive viewer—the Christian, he might have added, rather than the "barbarian"—ceased to see a nude sculpture at all. "The Greek Slave is clothed all over with sentiment; sheltered, protected by it from every profane eye. Brocade, cloth of gold, could not be a more complete protection than the vesture of holiness in which she stands." Whereas Powers had suggested that the viewer's gaze could avoid the subject's body and focus on her face, Dewey went one step farther, suggesting that the viewer could see *The Greek Slave* without seeing her body at all. The artist is able "to make the spiritual reign over the corporeal; to sink form in ideality; in this particular case, to make the appeal to the soul entirely control the appeal to sense."[32]

Despite such disclaimers, however, many other commentators revealed the statue's powerful appeal to their senses. Male viewers often wrote what amounted to love poetry when reflecting on *The Greek Slave.* "Why hauntest thou my dreams," asked one poet, describing the "maiden shape" and "lustrous brow," finding her "Severe in vestal grace, yet warm / And flexile with the delicate glow of youth."[33] Another writer sidestepped the captivity theme to imagine the marble maiden coming to life in the presence of true love:

> Ah, then I know should gush the woman's tears!
>
> The marble eyelids lift—the pale lips should
> Quick pant, as Love his flashing pinion bent.[34]

By removing the chain and imagining a welcomed lover, this poet allowed himself to experience the feelings of desire that other commentators had associated with the "barbarian" masters of the harem.

Female viewers could also participate in a pleasurable recasting of the narrative. One woman remarked that she could now for the first time understand the story of Pygmalion. "I could imagine the devotion with which the statue was gazed upon day after day . . . until he grew mad with love from the creation of his own genius!"[35] This comment legitimated the emotions of love and desire that the male viewer might be expected to feel. At the same time, interestingly, it suggested a corresponding response by the woman who is the focus of desire.

Viewing the "rosy tinge flushing the pure marble," the result of the light reflecting off the crimson drapery that surrounded it, the writer of the paragraph found herself responding with the same emotions she attributed to the Greek slave: "I could have wept with a perfect agony of tears."[36] Presumably the awakening Galatea felt some such emotion upon coming to life in Pygmalion's arms.[37]

The Greek Slave thus served viewers as a focus for their intensely ambivalent interest in the human body and female sexuality in particular.[38] As Peter Gay has argued, nineteenth-century reticence about sexuality does not mean that sexuality was not an important force in people's lives. "It is a mistake to think that nineteenth-century bourgeois did not know what they did not discuss, did not practice what they did not confess, did not enjoy what they did not publish."[39] In *The Education of the Senses,* volume 1 of *The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud,* Gay traces a history of sexual expressiveness in European and American bourgeois culture, arguing that works of nude sculpture like *The Greek Slave* played an important role in providing morally sanctioned erotic pleasure.[40]

Other modern critics have commented on the importance of *The Greek Slave* as a focus for sexual fantasy among its viewers, male and female. Like the popular literature that could be read in gift books and annuals and in the journals that reviewed *The Greek Slave,* the narrative suggested by the statue offered viewers an opportunity to identify with the desired-love-object-as-victim, as well as with her pursuer.[41] Suzanne Kappeler has argued that pornography is defined by conventions of representation in which the author and the spectator share an illusion of power over the victim.[42] Without suggesting that *The Greek Slave* was actually pornographic, we may speculate that the subject of a woman in bondage provided a similar kind of excitement for male spectators. Women spectators may have responded to the sculpture as a fantasy of domination. In fact, E. Anna Lewis reported sinking into a trance for five hours, and Clara Cushman declared that the sculpture put her into "a train of dreamy delicious revery, in which hours might have passed unnoticed."[43] Both these observers reported an experience that paralleled that of the slave herself: an emotional captivity, which they experienced as satisfying and pleasurable.

Furthermore, *The Greek Slave* provided, in an environment of self-conscious respectability, some of the same stimulation as the illicit forms of entertainment that were beginning to develop in American cities in the 1840s: dance halls with scantily clad or naked performers, restaurants that hung paintings of nude women on their walls, and the "model artist" shows, where naked women engaged in tableaux vivants illustrating scenes from history, literature, or even the Bible.[44] One writer reported in 1850 that he had visited an establishment called "Walhalla," where he saw a "brawny female" impersonating Venus, Psyche, the biblical Susannah surprised by the Elders, and the Greek slave.[45] Even as

pornography reached toward high culture for a veneer of respectability, a work like *The Greek Slave* that claimed for itself a high moral ground nonetheless provided audiences with a vehicle for the expression—and the repression—of deeply felt desires.

That desire was an important component of *The Greek Slave*'s appeal is suggested by one of Powers's most personal reminiscences. After hearing that his statue had been exhibited in Woodstock, Vermont, his birthplace, Powers wrote to a cousin, Thomas Powers, about an "oft-repeated dream" he used to have when he lived there as a child. "I used to see in my sleep . . . a white, female figure across the river, just below your father's house. It stood upon a pillar or pedestal; was . . . to my eyes very beautiful, but the water was between me and it, too deep to ford, and I had a strong desire to see it nearer, but was always prevented by the river, which was always high."[46] In this account of his childhood dream, Powers explicated his own conflicts of desire and repression. Drawn to the beautiful white figure (he does not allow himself to say whether it was clothed or naked), but prevented from reaching it by a deep and dangerous river, Powers was left with a sense of longing so profound that he remembered it some thirty years later. Female beauty seemed infinitely desirable but hopelessly unattainable, and the effort to face it directly would take him into waters "too deep to ford," metaphorically as well as literally.

Exhibitors seemed to recognize at least tacitly the erotic potential of the statue, for it was sometimes displayed with special viewing times for women and children.[47] But most commentators took special pains to deny the sculpture's sensual appeal. Hence the importance of the words *chaste* and *chastity* in poems about and descriptions of *The Greek Slave*. "O chastity of Art!" proclaimed the writer of the prize ode to Powers's *Greek Slave*, winner of a contest in the *New York Evening Mirror*. "Beneath her soul's immeasurable woe, / All sensuous vision lies subdued." The writer goes on to celebrate "Her pure thoughts clustering around her form, / Like seraph garments, whiter than the snows."[48] Dewey's insistence that the nude sculpture was clothed in morality was echoed by numerous other commentators. "Unclothed, yet clothed upon," began a poem by Unitarian minister James Freeman Clarke; he continued, ". . . She stands not bare— / Another robe, of purity, is there."[49] This insistence that the nude sculpture is really clothed, and that a woman who is about to be sexually violated is chaste, seems paradoxical, to say the least. A Freudian critic might see in this insistence on purity a repressed eroticism, with the viewers denying their own sense of the danger and appeal of the nude as a physical force by focusing on the opposite qualities of spirituality and ideality.

Many observers followed the lead of Powers and Dewey by insisting that the Greek slave's spirituality was essential to her appeal. Although an occasional critic wished she showed more anger and defiance (like the subject of Čermák's later painting), most observers praised her for her tranquility and found it appealing.[50] Art critic and poet Henry Tuckerman described the Greek slave as almost superhuman in her transcendence of her painful situation:

> Do no human pulses quiver in those wrists that bear the gyves
> With a noble, sweet endurance, such as moulds heroic lives?
>
> Half unconscious of thy bondage, on the wings of Fate elate
> Thou art gifted with being high above thy seeming fate!
>
> Words of triumph, not of wailing, for the cheer of Hope is thine,
> And, immortal in thy beauty, sorrow grows with thee divine.[51]

Tuckerman's poem stresses the subject's aloofness, her isolation in a spiritual state that puts her beyond the reach of her worldly woes. In this narrative, as in some of the others that reveal the writer's attraction to the female subject, the subject's remoteness and self-possession are seen as part of her appeal. In this sense she seems to embody the aspect of female sexuality that Freud described in his essay "On Narcissism: An Introduction": "Women, especially if they grow up with good looks, develop a certain self-containment which compensates them for the social restrictions that are imposed on them in their choice of object. Strictly speaking, it is only themselves that such women love with an intensity comparable to that of the man's love for them. . . . Such women have the greatest fascination for men . . . for it seems very evident that another person's narcissism has a great attraction for those who have renounced part of their own narcissism and are in search of object-love."[52] Freud suggested that female self-containment might originate as a response to social restrictions; the Greek slave in her dire extremity certainly could be seen as symbolizing the restraints placed on all women in society. If female narcissism was especially attractive to men who had renounced a measure of their own narcissistic impulses, as Freud suggested, then *The Greek Slave* might have been expected to speak particularly strongly to the bustling culture of nineteenth-century America which, a numerous commentators lamented, allowed so little time for aesthetic cultivation or reflection.[53]

In their ambivalent attitude toward the female body—as beautiful but dangerous, to be admired but not to be seen—Powers and his supporters reflected the complex and contradictory attitudes toward human sexuality that characterized antebellum America. As Stephen Nissenbaum has pointed out, American anxiety about the integrity of the body, and in particular about the dangers of sexuality, sprang into full force in the decade of the 1830s.[54] Medical literature of the same period stressed female vulnerability, woman's delicate nervous

system, and the way in which modern life posed a threat to her role as wife and mother.[55]

The Greek Slave addressed this anxiety about the body and sense of female vulnerability. Literally imperiled by a dangerous sexuality, the female subject represents woman's body at risk. The first published engraving of the sculpture made it seem leaner, less robust, and more conventionally pretty than it was, all of which suggested that the engraver responded to a sense of the subject's vulnerability and portrayed her more like a pale and wan heroine than a Venus-like figure (fig. 8.6).[56] By the 1830s, as Nancy Cott has suggested, the doctrine of female passionlessness had begun to gain widespread popularity, giving women moral authority at the cost of repression of their sexuality.[57] Of course, sexuality did carry risks for nineteenth-century women, ranging from death in childbirth to venereal disease.[58] The figure of *The Greek Slave*, chained and acquiescent in the face of imminent sexual violation, served as an epitome of female sexuality as many understood it at the time: resigned, aloof, passionless, and endangered.

The slave has also been deprived of her ability to serve as a wife and mother. Several of the written narratives focused on this aspect of the story: torn from her family and her home, the Greek slave represented the fragility of woman's domestic life, as well as of her physical integrity. One writer, E. Anna Lewis, reported the train of thoughts that rushed through her mind as she gazed at the statue: "The history of her fallen country, her Greek home, her Greek friends, her capture, her exposure in the public market place; the freezing of every drop of her young blood beneath the libidinous gaze of shameless traffickers in beauty; the breaking up of the deep waters of her heart; then, their calm settling down over its hopeless ruins."[59] Similarly, some of the poetry inspired by *The Greek Slave* stressed her separation from home and family. According to one poet, her

> . . . expressive, drooping,
> Tender, melancholy eyes, are vainly
> Looking for that far-off one, she fondly
> Loves in her deep sorrow, and her weary
> Heart is throbbing, with dear memories of
> Her distant, happy cottage-home in Greece.
> Alas! The spoiler came, and ruthless, tore
> The lily from its pearly stem, to bloom
> In base Constantinople's foul Bazaar![60]

Here the language of ravishment is applied to the removal of the young woman from her home, and the reader's emotions are carefully focused on past domesticity rather than future sexual exploitation.

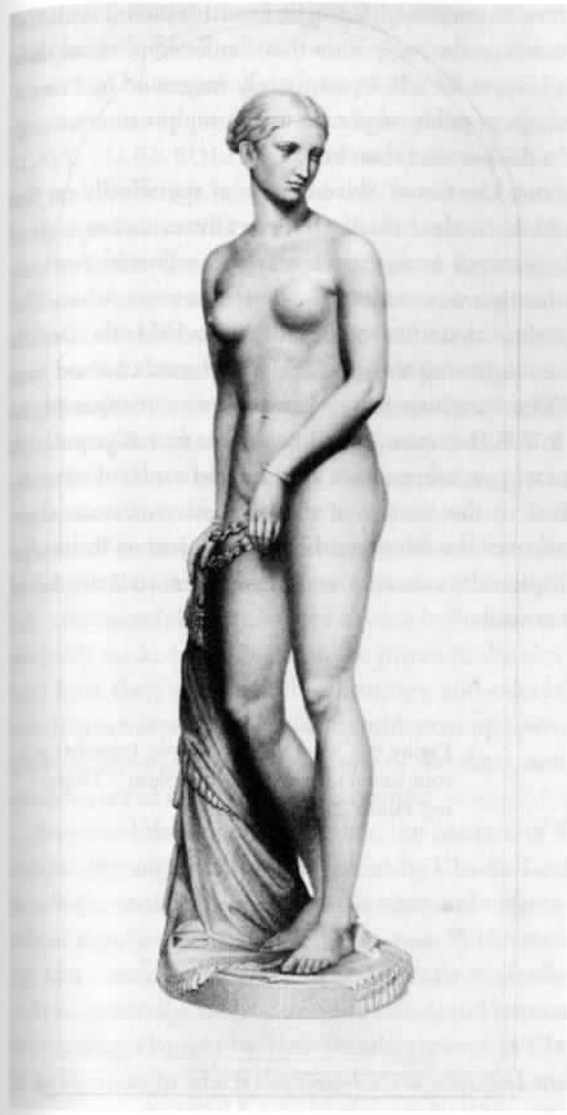

Figure 8.6 Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave*. Engraving. *Art Journal* 12 (1850): facing p. 56.

Construction of a sentimentalized, domestic past placed the Greek slave more securely in the realm of respectability, but it also reminded viewers of their own fears of domestic disarray. If, as Nissenbaum has argued, heightened anxiety about illness and sexuality correspond to enormous changes in the everyday life of most Americans—the shift from a household economy to a market economy and the creation of a woman's sphere apart from the world of work—

the image of a slave's disrupted domestic idyll might have resonated with the concerns of its audience as much as the suggestion that she faced physical danger. The note of nostalgia and regret for a lost past, barely suggested by Powers himself, appears so frequently in popular responses to the sculpture as to suggest that Powers had tapped a deeper vein than he knew.

Many of the narratives about *The Greek Slave* comment specifically on the fact that she is about to be sold in the slave market. One art historian has argued that the sculpture evoked the issue of American slavery and reflected Powers's abolitionist views.[61] The connection was evident to some observers: when *The Greek Slave* was displayed at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851, the British magazine *Punch* published an engraving showing a black woman chained to a pedestal, with the caption "The Virginian Slave. Intended as a companion to Power's 'Greek Slave'" (fig. 8.7).[62] However, *The Greek Slave* was as popular in New Orleans, home of one of its purchasers, as in Boston, and much of its audience was apparently oblivious to the ironies of driving past American slave marts to shed tears over the fate of the white marble captive. Just as the sculpture might be said to have displaced its viewers' sexual anxieties, so it displaced their anxieties about slavery as well.

THE VIRGINIAN SLAVE.
INTENDED AS A COMPANION TO POWER'S "GREEK SLAVE."

Figure 8.7 "The Virginian Slave. Intended as a companion to Power's 'Greek Slave.'" Engraving. *Punch* 20 (1851): 236.

An abolitionist framework was apparently far from the minds of New York newspaper readers in 1857, when the Cosmopolitan Art Association publicized its auction of one of the copies of *The Greek Slave* by humorously suggesting that the sale recapitulated the plight of the sculpture's subject. "THE GREEK SLAVE TO BE SOLD," proclaimed the headline in the *Cosmopolitan Art Journal*, and the article added that the "renowned statue" was about "to be brought to the ignominious block."[63] Indeed, the journal reprinted a facetious commentary from the *New-York Evening Express* deploring the sale of "not only a slave, but a woman; not only a woman but a young and exquisitely beautiful one—white as driven snow, with a most faultless form and most perfect features. Was ever such a thing heard of!" Apparently without recognizing that abolitionists might make the same comments about the quadroon markets of New Orleans, the journal frivolously seems to dismiss the idea of a serious antislavery interpretation of the sculpture, but its tone also suggests discomfort with the implied connection between viewing and possessing. Perhaps when the statue was treated as a commodity, the nineteenth-century audience sensed a dissolution of the distinction between themselves and the lustful Turks. "And still more awful," continued the article, "for a week before the sale this slave will be exposed, perfectly nude, in the most public places in the city . . . that all the rich nabobs may feast their eyes upon her beauties, and calculate how much she would be worth to ornament their palatial residences up town."[64] Sale of the statue, in this sense, is not so different from sale of the slave, and in both cases viewing is as much an act of appropriation as owning.

To extend the argument further, the position of *The Greek Slave* as a market commodity suggests the contention by Claude Levi-Strauss that women function in the social structure both as signs and objects of value, as a result of their role as signifying exchange between men.[65] The viewers' fascination with an image of a woman displayed for gaze and sale may reflect the position of women in culture generally, subject to observation and commodification. The special understanding claimed by such female viewers as Clara Cushman may suggest a broader sense in which the Greek slave, exposed and vulnerable, seemed an appropriate symbol for women in American culture.[66]

Finally, the recurrent comments on the "mart" in which the Greek slave stands for sale recall the fears of such critics as Henry Tuckerman and James Jackson Jarves that the commercial spirit was overwhelming other values in nineteenth-century American culture. In the *Book of the Artists*, Tuckerman lamented the dehumanizing effects of "the hard struggle for pecuniary triumphs."[67] Art, he suggested in his book, might provide and escape from the impersonal world of commerce. In his poem on *The Greek Slave*, Tuckerman had

characterized her as standing among "a herd of gazers, . . . a noisy mart," in imagery that recalled his description of Wall Street.[68] The rise of commercial culture brought about many changes in American life, and the image of a victim sacrificed to commerce struck a responsive chord on many levels.

Much of the energy behind the narratives generated by *The Greek Slave*, narratives constructed by the artist, his defenders, viewers, and critics of all sorts, centered on the subject's relationship to the exercise of power. On one hand, the sculpture seemed to depict the epitome of powerlessness: a woman completely at the mercy of others, stripped of her clothing, as well as her culture (represented by the locket, the cross, and the Greek liberty cap laid aside with her clothing on the post beside her). On the other hand, Powers and his supporters all insisted that the female subject transcended her suffering to become an example of spiritual power.

The chain is the clearest expression of her powerlessness. Although some reviewers criticized Powers's use of the chain, arguing that it was historically inaccurate as well as physically improbable (had her captors unchained her to undress her, then chained her again?), others recognized immediately its symbolic importance.[69] As sculptor John Rogers observed, "Look at Powers Greek Slave—there is nothing in the world that has made that so popular but that *chain. . . . There are plenty of figures as graceful as that and it is only the effect of the chain that has made it so popular.*"[70] The chain suggested hopeless constraint, overwhelming odds. It helped to hide the genitals of the statue even while it explained why they were exposed.

Interestingly enough, however, many of those who commented on *The Greek Slave* during the height of its popularity saw this enslaved female subject as a symbol of spiritual power. For many observers the narrative became one of the triumph of faith over adversity. "It represents a being superior to suffering, and raised above degradation by inward purity and force of character," declared the introduction to the pamphlet that accompanied the sculpture on its American tour. "The Greek Slave is an emblem of all trial to which humanity is subject, and may be regarded as a type of resignation, uncompromising virtue, or sublime patience."[71] For most observers, this spirituality gave the Greek slave a measure of superiority over her captors. The readers of these pamphlets apparently accepted the notion that the apparent powerlessness of this victimized woman could, from another point of view, be seen as a position of spiritual superiority, ascendance, even triumph.

Even the chain, the symbol of her powerlessness, to some commentators also represented her power. "What is the chain to thee, who has the power / To bind in admiration all who gaze upon thine eloquent brow and matchless form?" asked

Lydia Sigourney. "We are ourselves thy slaves, most Beautiful!"[72] For Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the slave's moral power had revolutionary implications:

> . . . Appeal, fair stone,
> From God's pure heights of beauty against man's wrong!
> Catch up in thy divine face, not alone
> East griefs but west, and strike and shame the strong,
> By thunders of white silence, overthrown.[73]

Like Browning, other commentators saw in the sculpture the possibility of a violent reversal of roles: the strong could be overthrown. Numerous observers elaborated upon *The Greek Slave*'s potential for working a transformation. A reviewer in the *New York Courier and Enquirer* reported that the statue's beauty "subdues the whole man. . . . Loud talking men are hushed . . . and groups of women hover together as if to seek protection from their own sex's beauty."[74] In this passage the language of conquest applied to the slave in the narrative version of her situation is directed toward the viewer, who is in turn conquered by her: the audience is subdued, held; they yield, they are hushed, they seek protection. A poet in the *Detroit Advertiser* made the analogy explicitly:

> In mute idolatry, spell-bound I stood
> MYSELF THE SLAVE, of her, the ideal of
> The Sculptor's inspiration! For I felt
> I was indeed a captive.[75]

In all of these examples, an encounter with the statue deconstructed the very notions of power and powerlessness, suggesting to its viewers change, overthrow, and the reversal of roles. The revolutionary implications sensed by Elizabeth Barrett Browning were not only political but social and suggested the uneasiness that underlay the delineation of gender in a transforming nineteenth-century culture.

Visual depictions of the experience of viewing *The Greek Slave* stressed the dignity and authority, and by extension the power, of the image. Although only the size of a small woman (65½ inches high), the statue appears to tower over the figures of the spectators in many engravings such as the one published in 1857 showing *The Greek Slave* on display in the Dusseldorf Gallery in New York (fig. 8.8). Spectators stand respectfully around the larger-than-life-sized sculpture. Although men elsewhere in the gallery are wearing hats, the men closest to *The Greek Slave* have removed theirs. Two groups are conversing quietly; a young girl walking past in the foreground has stopped in her tracks and looks back, fascinated. The catalogue of the Cosmopolitan Art Association, which sponsored the exhibition depicted in this engraving, emphasized the atmosphere of

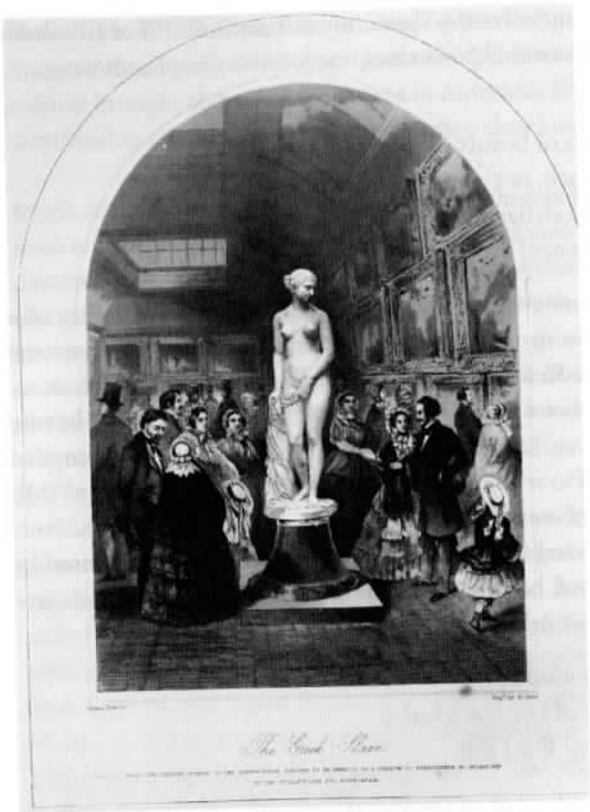

Figure 8.8 *The Greek Slave*. Engraving. *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 2 (December 1857): between pp. 40 and 41.

decorum, even reverence, that surrounded the sculpture. "Its presence is a magic circle, within whose precincts all are held spell-bound and almost speechless," one review read.[76] "It is curious to observe the effect produced upon visitors," wrote another viewer. "They enter gaily, or with an air of curiosity; they look at the beauteous figure, and the whole manner undergoes a change. Men take off their hats, ladies seat themselves silently, and almost unconsciously; and usually it is minutes before a word is uttered. All conversation is carried on in a hushed tone, and everybody looks serious on departing."[77] Such descriptions, of course, were prescriptive, informing readers of the attitude and decorum that would be expected of them in the art gallery. The descriptions, like the engraving, stressed the weight and solemnity of the occasion. Furthermore, the engraving emphasized the relationship between the women in the audience and the sculpture. Unlike other depictions of art spectatorship published at about the same time, this engraving shows women actively looking at the sculpture, appearing to explain and interpret it to their male companions, who look not at

the sculpture but at them. The sculpture appears larger than life, and its proximity enlivens the women who surround it.

Although overtly an image of submission and resignation, *The Greek Slave* thus suggested to its viewers a suppressed possibility of resistance, of overthrow, of the empowerment of the powerless. It is for this reason that the sculpture, judged vapid and bland, static and derivative by the standards of twentieth-century taste, seemed so vivid and moving to its contemporaries. *The Greek Slave* seethed with meanings for nineteenth-century viewers, who articulated many of their interpretations in the form of narratives: stories of loss and danger, faith and triumph. The narratives told the story of the female body as their authors understood it—vulnerable, dangerous, and endangered, representing beauty and shame, attractive in its self-absorption but threatening to overwhelm the viewer. By extension, they told the story of the body politic, which was undergoing transition to a commercial culture amid contemplation of unsettling changes in gender roles and family life. The contradictory meanings embodied in *The Greek Slave*—eroticism indulged and denied, passion and passionlessness, power and powerlessness—were the meanings with which its viewers themselves struggled in a rapidly transforming culture.

Notes

This is an abridged version of "Narratives of the Female Body: *The Greek Slave*," chapter 3 of *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

1. *The Greek Slave* has been much discussed by art historians, but few commentators have carefully examined the written record to analyze precisely what nineteenth-century viewers saw when they looked at the sculpture. See William H. Gerdts, *American Neoclassic Sculpture: The Marble Resurrection* (New York, 1973); Samuel A. Roberson and William H. Gerdts, "'. . . So Undressed, Yet So Refined . . .': *The Greek Slave*," *The Museum* 17 (Winter–Spring, 1965): 1–29; Linda Hyman, "*The Greek Slave* by Hiram Powers: High Art as Popular Culture," *College Art Journal* 35 (Spring 1976): 216–23; and Vivien Green [Fryd], "Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave*, Emblem of Freedom," *American Art Journal* 14 (Autumn 1982): 31–39.

2. See Roberson and Gerdts, "'. . . So Undressed, Yet So Refined."

3. See *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 2 (December 1857): 40.

4. Henry James, *William Wetmore Story and His Friends* (Boston, 1903), 1:114–15.

5. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (New York, 1966), 120–24.

6. Frances Trollope, *A Visit to Italy* (London, 1842), 1:144–45. See Sylvia Crane, *White Silence: Greenough, Powers, and Crawford, American Sculptors in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Coral Gables, 1972), 196.

7. Isaiah Townsend to Hiram Powers, Nov. 4, 1841, quoted in Donald Martin Reynolds, *Hiram Powers and His Ideal Sculpture* (New York, 1977), 135.

8. Green [Fryd] discusses some of the literary responses to the Greek war for independence in "Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave*." Greek captive women form the chorus in Shelley's verse play *Hellas*. See Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Hellas: A Lyrical Drama*, ed. Thomas J. Wise (1822; rpt. London, 1886).

9. William H. Gerdts, *The Great American Nude: A History in Art* (New York, 1973), 40–41, 44ff.

10. Kendall B. Taft, "Adam and Eve in America," *Art Quarterly* 23 (Summer 1960): 171–79.

11. Nathalia Wright, *Horatio Greenough: The First American Sculptor* (Philadelphia, 1963), 71–75.

12. Hiram Powers to Col. John Preston, Jan. 7, 1841, quoted in Reynolds, *Hiram Powers*, 137–38.

13. C. Edwards Lester, *The Artist, the Merchant, and the Statesman, of the Age of the Medici and of Our Own Times* (New York, 1845), 1:86–87.

14. Quoted in ibid., 1:88.

15. See, for example, the poignant description of a Western observer's combined horror and fascination at witnessing an Indonesian immolation ceremony so carefully analyzed by Clifford Geertz in "Found in Translation: On the Social History of the Moral Imagination," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983), 36–54.

16. Malek Alloula has recently analyzed the Western male fascination with the concealed women of the harem, combining titillation, voyeurism, and a desire to control what they could not understand. See *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis, 1986).

17. Julius Mattefield, *A Hundred Years of Grand Opera in New York, 1825–1925: A Record of Performances* (1927; rpt. New York, 1976), 81.

18. See the description of this novel in Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England* (New York, 1966), 197–216.

19. See William W. Sanger, *The History of Prostitution: Its Extent, Causes and Effects Throughout the World* (1859; rpt. New York, 1939), 442–43. See the accounts of travel to the seraglio described in N. M. Penzer, *The Harem* (London, 1936), esp. chap. 2.

20. See Reynolds, *Hiram Powers*, 262–67, 279–90, for a discussion of Ingres' influence on Powers.

21. See Georges Wildenstein, *The Paintings of J. A. D. Ingres* ([London], 1954), 210, 213.

22. See *Statues de Chair, Sculptures de James Pradier (1790–1852)* (Geneva and Paris, 1985–86), 131–33.

23. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

24. Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], *Art Treasures of America*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1879–82), 1:140. In its pose and subject, the painting also suggested the well-known subject of the rape of the Sabine women.

25. Ibid., 1:135.

26. A later review in the London *Art-Journal* reflected on that earlier exhibition: "We had not even heard of the name of Hiram Powers, and were consequently astonished to find so fine a work from one whose fame had not already reached the shores of England." "The Greek Slave," *Art-Journal* 12 (1850): 56.

27. "Greek Slave: Sculpture," reprinted from *Literary Gazette*, in *Eclectic Magazine* 5 (August 1845): 568.

28. The pamphlet *Vindication of Hiram Powers* offers testimonials to Powers's integrity in his dispute with Robb. Kellogg defended Powers in *Justice to Hiram Powers;* he stated his case against Powers in Miner Kellogg, *Mr. Miner K. Kellogg to His Friends.*

29. For example, the pamphlet published in Philadelphia was *Powers' Statue of the Greek Slave, Exhibiting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.* Virtually identical pamphlets were published in New York, Boston, and New Orleans.

30. Quoted from the entry on Dewey in *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York, 1894), 5:47.

31. Eleven years earlier, in a travel book called *The Old World and the New*, Dewey had made some awkward and thoroughly conventional comments about art. Orville Dewey, *The Old World and the New*, 2 vols. (New York, 1836), 2:108. Perhaps Kellogg helped him to refine his critical vocabulary.

32. Orville Dewey, "Powers' Statues," *Union Magazine of Literature and Art* 1 (October 1847): 160–61.

33. Augustin Duganne, "Ode to the Greek Slave, Dedicated to the Cosmopolitan Art and Literary Association," in *The Cosmopolitan Art Association Illustrated Catalogue, 1854* (New York, 1854), 25.

34. L. E., "To Powers' 'Greek Slave.'" *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 2 (March and June 1858): 68.

35. Clara Cushman in *Neal's Saturday Gazette*, quoted in *Powers' Statue of the Greek Slave*, 18.

36. Ibid.

37. See the description of the treatment of the Pygmalion story in Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (New York, 1985), 227–28.

38. In James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom inspects the private parts of classical statues to satisfy a similar curiosity. Joyce, *Ulysses* (rpt. New York, 1961), 176, 201.

39. Peter Gay, "Victorian Sexuality: Old Texts and New Insights," *American Scholar* 49 (Summer 1980): 377.

40. Gay, *The Education of the Senses*, vol. 1 of *The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud* (New York, 1984), 396–98.

41. See Hyman "*The Greek Slave* by Hiram Powers," 216–23.

42. Suzanne Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation* (Minneapolis, 1986).

43. Anna E. Lewis, "Art and Artists of America," *Graham's Magazine* 48 (November 1855): 399. Clara Cushman, from *Neal's Saturday Gazette*.

44. See Christine Stansell, *City of Women* (New York, 1986), 175, for a description of one such tableau, Susannah and the Elders.

45. G. G. Foster, *New York By Gas-Light* (New York, 1850), 12–13.

46. Hiram Powers to Thomas Powers, n.d., quoted in Reynolds, *Hiram Powers*, 141.

47. An announcement of such a showing is reproduced in Roberson and Gerdts, "'. . . So Undressed, Yet So Refined," 16.

48. Duganne, "Ode to the Greek Slave," 25.

49. James Freeman Clarke, "The Greek Slave," quoted in Roberson and Gerdts, "'. . . So Undressed, Yet So Refined," 18.

50. One critic demanded, "How can she stand thus serene and erect, when the sanctity of her nature is outraged by this exposure? Where is the bending and shrinking of her form, that expression in every feature and limb of her unutterable agony, which should make the gazer involuntarily to turn away his eyes . . . ?" W. H. F., "Art Review, The Greek Slave," *The Harbinger* 7 (June 24, 1848): 62. But another writer rebuked this critic in a later edition of the same journal, saying that a "cry of anguish would be a very poor subject for a work of art, and . . . the artist would naturally choose the serene moment following, when the triumph of the spirit was revealed in Godlike resignation." John Dwight, "Greek Slave," *The Harbinger* 7 (July 8, 1848): 78.

51. Henry Tuckerman, "The Greek Slave," *New York Tribune*, Sept. 9, 1847, quoted in *Powers' Statue of the Greek Slave*, 12.

52. Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols., ed. James Strachey and Alan Tyson (London, 1957), 14:88–89.

53. Bram Dijkstra has commented on the theme of female narcissism in nineteenth-century European and American art. He discounts claims for women's spirituality as part of a repressive misogyny that constituted a "cultural war on women." It should be evident that I view the cultural matrix as more complex and conflicted. Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York, 1988).

54. Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America* (Westport, Conn., 1980).

55. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of American History* 60 (September 1973): 332–56. See also John S. and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Champaign, Ill., 1974).

56. See *Art-Journal* 12 (1850): facing p. 56.

57. Nancy Cott, "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology," *Signs* 4 (1978): 219–36.

58. See Sheila Ryan Johansson, "Sex and Death in Victorian England: An Examination of Age- and Sex-Specific Death Rates, 1840–1910," in Martha Vicinus, ed., *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women* (Bloomington, Ind., 1977), 163–81. See also Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States since 1880* (New York, 1985).

59. Lewis, "Art and Artists of America," 399.

60. W. H. Coyle, "Powers' Greek Slave," *Detroit Advertiser*, quoted in Roberson and Gerdts, "'. . . So Undressed, Yet So Refined," 18.

61. Green [Fryd], "Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave*."

62. *Punch* 20 (1851): 236.

63. *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 1 (June 1857): 132.

64. *New-York Evening Express*, quoted in ibid., 133.

65. Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston, 1969); see discussion of this idea in Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Rayna R. Reiter, ed., *Toward and Anthropology of Women* (New York, 1975), 157–210. Also see Teresa de Lauretis. *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington, Ind., 1984), 18–22.

66. Clara Cushman in *Neal's Saturday Gazette*.

67. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists*, 25.

68. Tuckerman, "Greek Slave," quoted in *Powers' Statue of the Greek Slave*, 12.

69. See the debate over *The Greek Slave* in *The Harbinger*, cited in n. 50.

70. Quoted in David H. Wallace, *John Rogers, The People's Sculptor* (Middletown, Conn., 1967), 70.

71. *Powers' Statue of the Greek Slave*, 3.

72. Lydia Sigourney, "Powers's Statue of the Greek Slave," in *Poems* (New York, 1860), 112.

73. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Hiram Powers' 'Greek Slave,' *Poems, 1850* in *The Complete Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, 6 vols., ed. Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke (New York, 1900), 3:178.

74. Quoted in ibid., 16.

75. W. H. Coyle, quoted in Roberson and Gerdts, "'. . . So Undressed, Yet So Refined," 17.

76. *New York Courrier and Enquirer*, quoted in *Cosmopolitan Art Association Catalogue 1854*, 26.

77. Ibid.