

FIRM HUMANITY: *JOHN BROWN'S BLESSING* AND ITS ROOTS IN *ECCE HOMO*

by

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(Under the Direction of Janice Simon)

ABSTRACT

Shortly after the conclusion of the American Civil War, American artist Thomas Satterwhite Noble created a group of paintings dealing with themes of abolition and slavery. One of these, *John Brown's Blessing* (1867) was in commemoration of the eighth anniversary of the well-known abolitionist's execution. This thesis analyzes the connections to other objects that Noble likely based his painting on and establishes links to images of Christ. I argue that *John Brown's Blessing* has more overt connections to *ecce homo* imagery rather than simple comparisons of Brown and Christ as martyrs. With its many noble messages, *John Brown's Blessing* became an act of personal redemption for Noble who may have been seeking forgiveness for his role in the Confederacy.

INDEX WORDS: John Brown, Ecce Homo, Abolition, Thomas Satterwhite Noble, Civil War, History Paintings, American Art, Nineteenth Century

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IMAGERY

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## DEDICATION

*This thesis is dedicated to my parents,  
for encouraging me to be who I want to be and to pursue what is meaningful.*

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## I. Introduction

A writer for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Magazine* visiting John Brown (1800-1859) in prison before his execution described the wounded and bound man as follows:

Brown is a man of iron; he looks all sinews, there is not one unnecessary ounce of flesh on him, all pure muscle; to look at him it seems no marvel that he has endured so much. That his firmness will endure to the last cannot for an instant be doubted by those who know him.<sup>1</sup>

This response to Brown's internal and moral strength is reflected in Thomas Satterwhite Noble's (1835-1907) rendering of Brown less than a decade after he was executed for treason. In December of 1867, Noble exhibited his painting of the same year, *John Brown's Blessing* (Figure 1), in commemoration of the eighth anniversary of the well-known abolitionist's death.<sup>2</sup> On the night of October 16, 1859, John Brown led an attack on the United States Arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, now West Virginia, in an attempt to instigate a slave revolt in the area. The news of the attack spread through the town during the night, and by morning Brown and his men were surrounded. On October 19, a group of U.S. Marines, led by Brevet Colonel Robert E. Lee reclaimed the arsenal, killing ten men and wounding Brown.<sup>3</sup> Brown was tried by the state of Virginia on November 2

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<sup>1</sup> "The Harper's Ferry Insurrection, Harper's Ferry and Charlestown Revisited, Interviews with John Brown and the Other Conspirators," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 10, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> *John Brown's Blessing* debuted at DeVries, Ibarra & Co. in Boston. Here, the painting was joined by Noble's *Margaret Garner* (1867) which is discussed below. When Noble's painting appeared at the Cincinnati Academy from 1868-69, it was exhibited under the title *John Brown Going to Execution*. Nearly ten years after its creation, in 1875 the painting was exhibited in Salem, Massachusetts under the simple title of *John Brown*, indicating that Noble's painting was still easily recognizable and relevant at the time. This will be important another ten years later when Thomas Hovenden (1840-1895) creates an additional large oil painting of John Brown, looking upon Noble's painting as a significant source of inspiration for his own work. *John Brown's Blessing* now belongs to the New York Historical Society, which they acquired in 1939 as a gift from the children of Thomas Satterwhite Noble and his wife, Mary, in their honor. Since 1939 it has been known as its original title, *John Brown's Blessing*. James Yarnall and William Gerdtz, *The National Museum of American Art's Index to American Arts Exhibition Catalogues, From the Beginning through the 1876 Centennial Year* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1986), 4: 2592.

<sup>3</sup> David S. Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 326-327.

and exactly one month later Brown was escorted from the prison to his execution in Charles Town, Virginia. His exit from the prison into the custody of armed forces served as the inspiration for *John Brown's Blessing*.<sup>4</sup>

Noble's painting, at just over seven by five feet, is on the scale of history painting, but in this case depicts a moment in recent American history. At its center, soldiers lead John Brown away from a stone-walled prison. Brown's hair and beard are starkly white, and the end of his long beard is cleft in the middle, recalling depictions of Moses.<sup>5</sup> The whiteness of his hair, along with the bright light with which he is lit, provides a representation of Brown as a wise, intellectual person. His clothes are tidy: there are not any apparent rips, tatters, or dirt. Surely this would not be the case if Brown had spent over a month in jail. In this painting, Noble creates a heroic presentation of Brown who looks healthy and towers above all those around him. Other significant figures in the painting are an enslaved mother, an older woman read as the "Mammy type," and a military guard.<sup>6</sup> The slave mother and Mammy figure are especially important to *John Brown's Blessing's* abolitionist references, which this thesis will consider.

While scholars have referenced the religious allusions found in *John Brown's*

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<sup>4</sup> Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist*, 391. For detailed accounts of Brown's childhood, religious and political beliefs, as well as thorough discussions of the events leading up to the attack on Harpers Ferry, refer to David Goldfield, *America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011); "John Brown and Southern Politics," *New York Times*, Nov. 21, 1859; Louis A. DeCaro, *Freedom's Dawn: The Last Days of John Brown in Virginia* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015); Louis A. DeCaro, "Fire from the Midst of You," *A Religious Life of John Brown* (New York: New York University Press, 2002); Robert Kent Sutton, *Stark Mad Abolitionists: Lawrence, Kansas and The Battle Over Slavery in the Civil War Era* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2017); Ross Barrett, *Rendering Violence: Riots Strikes, and Upheaval in Nineteenth-Century American Art* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> See Michelangelo Buonarroti's *Moses* (Figure 2) for this comparison.

<sup>6</sup> The author would like to make clear that she does not intend to perpetuate terms, such as "Mammy," used during, and as a result of, the degrading institution of slavery which was deeply woven into the period and culture of the United States that this essay discusses. Nevertheless, the use of the term is necessary in this essay as it leads to a significant interpretation and furthers the visual analysis of *John Brown's Blessing*.

*Blessing* and the canon of John Brown imagery, such as his being a martyr, my thesis will go further by pointing out the direct comparisons of *John Brown's Blessing* to *ecce homo* images, a specific type of Christian imagery. *Ecce Homo*, translating to “Behold, the Man” references images of the biblical narrative of Christ presented to the people by Pontius Pilate (Figure 3). The images display Christ’s body in a way that negates his divinity as God’s son and places his mortality and imminent death in a stark light. In effect, *John Brown's Blessing* has a more exact link to Christ than previously explained in literature surrounding the painting, and this thesis will explain how and why they are tied together. Additionally, previous assumptions about military dress in *John Brown's Blessing* will be corrected.

The study of Noble’s career has been limited, punctuated by short periods of interest among a small group of researchers. Perhaps this is because, in some respects, Noble was not considered a successful artist.<sup>7</sup> In the early stages of his career from 1865-1870, Noble painted a series of slavery-related images, including *John Brown's Blessing*, for which he attracted critical attention.<sup>8</sup> After this period, Noble accepted a post at the McMicken School of Design as the institution’s principal, and from that point the frequency and success of his created works diminished.<sup>9</sup> Previous study of Noble’s early career primarily focused on his training under Thomas Couture in Paris, his service in the Confederate army, and his anti-slavery paintings.<sup>10</sup> Since Noble did not leave any

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<sup>7</sup> William J. Hennessey, “Preface,” *Thomas Satterwhite Noble, 1835-1907* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Art Museum, 1988), X.

<sup>8</sup> The term “series” is not used explicitly in the description of these paintings. They were not named similarly nor exhibited all together, and Noble did not write or indicate that he considered them a series. However, as they all deal with related themes and were created in chronological proximity to each other, they are referred to as a series by the researchers who have studied the paintings most extensively.

<sup>9</sup> Hennessey, *Thomas Satterwhite Noble*, X.

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed discussion of Noble’s art education, namely, his early artistic instructor through which he met Thomas Couture and his subsequent artistic education in Paris, refer to pages 42-28 of Tuliza Fleming,

personal writings, no one can be certain of his motivations and thoughts about the subjects in these paintings.<sup>11</sup> James Birchfield and Albert Boime spearheaded the first large study of Noble's career in an exhibition they organized at the University of Kentucky Art Museum in Lexington. In his essay for the accompanying publication, Birchfield took a biographical approach to Noble's life and reputation as an artist. Boime wrote the other essay for the catalogue, discussing Noble's "anti-slavery" paintings.<sup>12</sup> This exhibition in 1988 was the first sizeable exhibition focusing on Noble's career since 1910, when a memorial retrospective was held.<sup>13</sup>

Birchfield's and Boime's research created a path for Tuliza Fleming to build upon their foundation with her dissertation "Thomas Satterwhite Noble: Reconstructed Rebel," which is the most recent and extensive examination of Noble. Advancing on the previous biographical study of Noble's life as well as the catalogue entries Birchfield and Boime wrote for their exhibition publication, Fleming further researches Noble's family as well as the critical response to his slavery-related paintings, giving a clearer picture of how Northern and Southern audiences reacted to the divisive subjects of the paintings by using reviews from newspaper issues of the time.<sup>14</sup> Through analyzing key elements of *John Brown's Blessing* and its historical foundations, this essay brings to light the direct

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"Thomas Satterwhite Noble: Reconstructed Rebel," PhD. Diss., University of Maryland, 2007. ProQuest (3283401).

<sup>11</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 3.

<sup>12</sup> Writing the preface for the exhibition catalogue, William J. Hennessey, then the Director of the University of Kentucky Art Museum refers to a group of Noble's paintings as "anti-slavery." While this term correctly identifies themes in the paintings, it is important to note that, as previously mentioned, Noble did not leave any extant writings to imply that he specifically thought of these works as "anti-slavery," and as such, did not refer to them in this way. Also referenced in Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 41.

<sup>13</sup> Hennessey, *Thomas Satterwhite Noble*, X.

<sup>14</sup> For additional information on Noble's other abolition/anti-slavery paintings, please refer to Tuliza Fleming's dissertation, cited in full above. Fleming devotes chapters 3-5 of her dissertation to each of Noble's slavery-related paintings. Within each chapter she provides details on the circumstances under which the paintings were created, her own visual analysis of the paintings, and the critical contemporary comments made on the paintings.

links to *ecce homo* imagery and the many ties this painting has to an idea of redemption in relation to Brown and Christ and their goals of liberating groups of outcast people from bondage.

## II. *John Brown's Blessing* (1867)

During the raid on Harpers Ferry Brown was injured. Although these injuries were not fatal, they caused Brown considerable pain.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the sketch *The Trial of John Brown at Charles Town [Charlestown], Virginia*, by Porte Crayon from the November 12, 1859 issue of *Harper's Weekly* features a wounded Brown lying on a raised cot in the midst of his own trial (Figure 4).<sup>16</sup> Just behind him a long line of men sit deliberating Brown's actions, while a large crowd surrounds the scene on all sides. In contrast, Noble paints Brown standing tall and proud, seemingly without difficulty, despite his wounds.

In *John Brown's Blessing*, the noose is foreshadowed by the rope tying Brown's right arm behind his back, the rope visible just above his elbow. Brown raises his left arm to touch the head of the child in blessing, presented to Brown by its mother, who kneels before him. Brown's left hand, but our visual right, touching the child's head in blessing already establishes a link to Christ through his many gestural blessings. While the gender of the child cannot be determined through the clothes he or she wears, the viewer is able to understand that this child is likely a toddler, since he or she is propping its feet on their

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<sup>15</sup> Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist*, 334.

<sup>16</sup> From a sketch made in the court room by Porte Crayon, *Harper's Weekly*, November 1859. Porte Crayon was a pseudonym for David Hunter Strother. He was commissioned to write and illustrate an article on this event because he lived near Harpers Ferry. His uncle was a prosecutor of the trial, and, as such, Strother had full access and no competition whilst he sketched this, which is a verification of its accuracy.

mother's knee in an attempt to stand, indicating the child is old enough to physically support him or herself.<sup>17</sup>

Brown's gesture clearly references images of Christ throughout the history of art. Christ can be seen performing a blessing in Rembrandt's (1606-1669) *Hundred Guilder Print* (ca. 1649, Figure 5). On Christ's left is a group of people who are not interested in Christ's teachings, while those on the right are seeking out his healing help. In *John Brown's Blessing*, on the left, the front-most guard wears a blue jacket with yellow accents on the cuffs and lapels, and the color of the pants matches this yellow color. The guard also stands with a sword, the point pressed into the cobblestone ground. The other guards are less discernible, but at least seven must be present, due to the number of weapons visible. Of the seven long rifles, six have been fitted with a bayonet. The bayonets create a visual grid that is echoed in the metal grate on the right, as if trapping Brown on both sides. Behind the bayonets there is an empty space, the door the party has just exited. To the far left, a ragged woman is looking towards Brown, with an agitated expression. She is moving, evidenced by her wild hair, twisted apron, and raised right hand, so that the guard must block her with his sword. She is possibly an onlooker who hated Brown for the raid that he led, and this would make sense as to why she is grouped with the figures on the left side of Brown as opposed to the right side, where the enslaved women stand. On Brown's left, all the figures are white, placing Brown between freedom and enslavement, which is exactly how he viewed his role in life as a necessary bridge between enslaved and white people. The compositional divide evident in this painting is

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<sup>17</sup> Young boys and young girls were both clothed in dresses until boys were breeched around age seven, which makes the gender of this child difficult to determine. To further complicate this matter, the age of breeching was often extended for enslaved male children. Katie Knowles, "Fashioning Slavery: Slaves and Clothing in the U.S. South, 1830-1865," PhD. Diss., Rice University, 2014. ProQuest (3729570), 175.

just one of many examples of the links Noble has embedded in *John Brown's Blessing* to connect the abolitionist to Christ.

Particularly among its Northern exhibition venues, the painting largely received a favorable response both for its technique and noble message essential to history painting. A critic from New York's *Watson's Art Journal* noted that the painting "displayed a higher finish, a truer appreciation of nature, and a more thorough knowledge of the value and quality of color than has been seen in any of his former efforts."<sup>18</sup> In the St. Louis *Daily Democrat*, a critic wrote, "...there is here in St. Louis a picture painted by an artist formerly of our city, which does come up to the standard of Ruskin[,] we find material for exceedingly sweet reflection. Noble's historical picture, 'John Brown led to execution,' is in truth one of those productions from which the world sucks sweet instruction, and which makes the creator immortal..."<sup>19</sup> In 1868, a *Chicago Tribune* critic went so far as to call the painting "Noble's Best Work":

John Brown on his way to execution, represents with skill and power, one of the strongest characters and most stirring incidents in our late history, as will be admitted by all; while not a few contend that it is the noblest and most Christ-like of modern times. Such will feel thankful for the artist's appreciation of what they deem highest and best in human nature...In this act the stern iron-gray old man walked closely in the steps of his great Master, who, in the depth of His affection, stooped to do the lowliest service for his followers, and refused not to wash the feet of his disciples. John Brown, in his true and deep love for the outcast child of a despised race, seems to have caught something of the spirit, and to have followed not too far off in the path of that divine example of unspeakable humility and love.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Paletta, "Art Matters," *Watson's Art Journal* 7, no. 20 (Sept. 7, 1867): 310. Some critics were not favorable to Noble's techniques and coloration in his other paintings. Those reviews can be found in Fleming's chapters on the paintings, 49-94 and 97-112.

<sup>19</sup> 'Noble's Historical Picture,' *Daily Democrat*, May 28, 1868.

<sup>20</sup> "Art. Some New Pictures. Leutz's Godiva and Elaine-Noble's Contraband and John Brown- Le Clear's Portraits," *The Tribune*, January 12, 1868.

This quotation brings up those that are outcast, and the author is bringing out the horrors of slavery and taking America to task for its previous actions against African Americans. Full of high praise, this article equates Brown to the highest definition of pure love in the Christian faith, humbling oneself and dying for someone that cannot speak for themselves. As evidenced by this and other reviews of the period, it is interesting that art historical scholars only go so far as linking Brown to Christ-like martyrdom.

Other critics of the day noted that Noble was a southern man who served in the Confederate army during the Civil War. The *Quincy Patriot* of Boston termed Noble a “reconstructed confederate officer,” and stated that he “painted like a radical” in his depiction of John Brown.<sup>21</sup> Noble and Brown are equated here, the radical abolitionist and now Noble, a radical painter. Another article, unattributed, brings home these allusions of Noble’s redemption: “It adds to the interest of the picture to know that Mr. Noble, its painter, carried a sword in the rebel army for three years but has been thoroughly reconstructed, and knows what he is doing when he is bringing his pencil to bear against slavery, and in favor of freedom.”<sup>22</sup> The December 14, 1867 issue of *The Commonwealth* of Boston even noted Noble’s sacrifice in creating this painting, that he “regarded the execution of Brown as one of the great historic events of the century, and has lost friends and position at home [Kentucky] by representing SO unwelcome a matter to the South.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> “John Brown’s Blessing,” *Quincy Patriot*, December 1, 1867.

<sup>22</sup> Unidentified article, December 19, 1867. Noble Research Collection. As cited in Fleming, “Reconstructed Rebel,” 135. The Noble Research Collection and Archives were organized by Birchfield and are not accessible. Fleming communicated with Birchfield to access these records while she wrote her dissertation.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from James C. Malin, “The John Brown Legend in Pictures Kissing the Negro Baby,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (1939): 341. Cited in Fleming, “Reconstructed Rebel,” 136.

All of these make clear that it is important to the Northern viewer and critic that Noble had seemingly changed his viewpoint on the matter, although the authors of the articles had no way of knowing Noble's true feelings about his service in the Confederate army and whether he was drafted against his will or not. These quotes become a powerful statement—that perhaps Noble sought redemption and no longer seemed to be in agreement with the values of the Confederacy—and show that the critics were in support of the shift and the art resulting from it. These articles, and their terming of Noble as “reconstructed” and even implying the sacrifice of his position at home, add a layer of intricacy to the creation of *John Brown's Blessing* during the Reconstruction of the South. Boime wrote as well of the importance of Reconstruction for Noble's art, insinuating that this period of political reform was necessary for Noble's paintings to be possible:

Significantly, Noble did not begin his series until the period of Reconstruction, when the issues became clearer and much more sharply defined in his thought—as well as safer to treat. Nevertheless, it would seem that Noble was a citizen lost to Kentucky because of his loathing of its slave environment.<sup>24</sup>

Noble's early immersion in Southern slave culture is undeniable. Born into a prosperous Kentucky farming family, Noble was quite familiar with slavery and regularly interacted with enslaved people. Noble's father, grandfather, and uncle all owned slaves who produced ropewalks for the twisting of hemp cords that bound bales of cotton. Noble and his family therefore directly benefitted from plantation life in the South and the massive production of cotton.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Albert Boime, “Burgoo and Bourgeois: The Images of a Border-State Consciousness,” *The Art of Exclusion* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 126.

<sup>25</sup> Estill Curtis Pennington and Judith H. Bonner, “Thomas Satterwhite Noble,” *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 21: 483. The number of slaves owned by the Noble family is unknown because the Federal government did not survey the country's slave

After Noble's father moved the family to Louisville, Kentucky in the early 1850s, Noble, then approximately twenty-five years old, began studying art under Samuel Woodson Price (1828-1918), a portrait painter from Kentucky, who subsequently introduced Noble to Oliver Frazer (1808-1864). Frazer had studied art in Paris with Antoine Jean-Gros in the early 1830s, and also met Thomas Couture.<sup>26</sup> Noble wanted to continue his artistic education in Paris and after convincing his father to let him travel, Noble was advised by Frazer to "select a master by looking at the works of those who taught in Paris."<sup>27</sup> Noble left for Paris in 1856 and after viewing Couture's *Decadence of the Romans* (1847, Figure 6), chose him to be his teacher.<sup>28</sup>

In a diary entry, Noble wrote of his experience of working with Couture:

I went with unerring instinct to that which was purest in Art: I selected my own Master, he of all was the embodiment of my nearest ideal, Thomas Couture (Ah, revered master how much of the fresh love of my young life was given to thee). He made the earth teem with a fresher life, he opened my eyes to see the loveliness of the color world, and to seek without rest and with an ever-increasing love the subtleties of form. My Work was my greatest delight, for in it I was seeding and attaining what I most loved. The atelier, the Louvre, the Luxembourg [sic], these were the centers which gave my heart its most joyous pulsations. I had found the greatest happiness attainable to me in life with Couture for a Master.<sup>29</sup>

Noble returned from Paris in 1859, and moved to Rock Spring, outside of St. Louis, Missouri, where his family was then living. From the time of his return until the start of the Civil War in 1861, Noble apparently worked on small genre paintings and portraits, but his early attempt at an artistic career was cut short at the outbreak of the

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population until the second half of the nineteenth century. The Noble family's slave-owning records come from 1850 and 1860, which is when the United States published the first large-scale survey of the slave population in America, referred to as the Slave Schedules. Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 38 and 57.

<sup>26</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 44-46.

<sup>27</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 47.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 54-55.

Civil War.<sup>30</sup> When the war ended, he returned to St. Louis and began a series of paintings, which in the words of Boime “exposed the injustice of slavery and the plight of black people in North America,” and dealt with themes regarding the fight for abolitionism.<sup>31</sup> During the period of political reconciliation and rebuilding following the end of the Civil War in 1865, the United States government amended the Constitution granting African Americans citizenship and establishing the right for all males to vote.<sup>32</sup> Just as significant changes were occurring in the country, Noble was readjusting to civilian life following his repatriation into the Union after his service as a captain in the Confederate army.<sup>33</sup> With these changes to the government and Noble himself it is not surprising that the artist considered the topic of abolition.

From 1865-1870, Noble painted several large-scale history and genre paintings, dealing with themes of abolition and the status of African Americans.<sup>34</sup> Although *John Brown’s Blessing* is the main focus of this essay, the fact that it was the third of a series of abolition paintings is significant as it speaks to the mindset of the artist and the political climate of the country. *John Brown’s Blessing* is most closely related to the second of these, *Margaret Garner* (1867, Figure 7), which depicts the story of Margaret

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<sup>30</sup> Fleming, “Reconstructed Rebel,” 56.

<sup>31</sup> Boime, “Burgoo and Bourgeois,” 35.

<sup>32</sup> The three amendments ratified during the five years following the conclusion of the American Civil War are known as the Reconstruction Amendments. The Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude was ratified in 1865. The Fourteenth Amendment, which granted citizenship to all persons was ratified in 1868. The Fifteenth Amendment, prohibiting the discrimination of voting rights of male citizens, was ratified in 1870.

<sup>33</sup> St. Louis, Missouri provides an interesting topic for future research. As Noble lived and worked there for a time, the city and its political climate likely had an influence on Noble and his art, particularly since Missouri was a slave-holding state. Missouri’s Supreme Court decided Dred Scott’s lawsuit against the widow of his enslaver, and, as a border state, was not subject to the Emancipation Proclamation, though a state convention did vote to abolish slavery in 1865. This idea was recommended by Dr. Jeffrey Richmond-Moll, one of my thesis committee members.

<sup>34</sup> In addition to Fleming’s chapters (referenced above) about Noble’s other slavery-related paintings, please see Albert Boime, “Burgoo and Bourgeois,” 29-55.

Garner, an enslaved woman who, in 1856, fled with her family across the frozen Ohio river from Kentucky, to the home of a freed African American man in Cincinnati. When U.S. Marshals found Garner and her family, she had just killed one of her children and attempted to kill herself and her other children, lest they be forced again into slavery. Noble painted and exhibited *Margaret Garner* in the same year as *John Brown's Blessing*.<sup>35</sup> These two paintings in the series most plainly deal with a theme of sacrifice necessitated by slavery, and they are further related as they were reproduced in popular imagery immediately after their creation, allowing a large audience access to the reproduced works, as well as serving a financial benefit for Noble. In the case of *Margaret Garner*, Civil War photographer Matthew Brady (1822-1896) photographed the work, then an engraving of the photograph was made and published in the *Harper's Weekly* issue of May 18, 1867 (Figure 8).<sup>36</sup>

Noble commissioned William Endicott to make a lithograph of *John Brown's Blessing* in 1867 (Figure 9). In the lithograph's bottom margins, two verses of John Greenleaf Whittier's poem, "Brown of O[s]sawatimie" (1859, Appendix A) has been added. Further, three figures were included behind the African woman, a "Mammy" type, embracing two white children. This lithograph is an important document because

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<sup>35</sup> The painting, measuring at 20 x 16 inches is now held at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, in Cincinnati, importantly, the same place to which Margaret Garner and her family fled. For a thorough discussion of Margaret Garner and Noble's painting of her, see Leslie Furth, "'The Modern Medea' and Race Matters: Thomas Satterwhite Noble's 'Margaret Garner,'" *American Art* 12, no. 2 (1998): 37-57; Tuliza Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 97-112; and Albert Boime, "Burgoo and Bourgeois," 48. *Margaret Garner* was first exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1867. New York collector, Harlow Roys, commissioned this painting from Noble in 1866. Noble created several versions of the painting: a large painting, a small cabinet version, a preliminary pencil study, and a lithograph. The location of the large painting is unknown, but based on the lithograph of the work, the smaller cabinet version is a good replica. Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 103.

<sup>36</sup> *Harper's* titled the engraving, "The Modern Medea—The Story of Margaret Garner" in reference to the Greek myth of Medea. The image was accompanied by a re-telling of Garner's story. Furth, "'The Modern Medea,'" 37-57.

it shows us what the painting looked like in its original state. Although it is unclear why or when Noble chose to remove these three figures, Fleming speculates that their inclusion detracted focus from Brown.<sup>37</sup> A contemporary article solidifies the lithograph's importance: "To the right, a crowd of unsympathetic spectators; but one face alone expressing the slightest sympathy for the unfortunate old man, a young girl who gazes half tearfully, half curiously upon him."<sup>38</sup> Upon careful inspection of the painting, a pentimento of this sympathetic young woman is visible (Figure 10), affirming Noble's intention to fill the right side of his canvas with people who looked up to or were concerned for Brown.<sup>39</sup> This pentimento, never before mentioned, is the only current evidence we have regarding *John Brown's Blessing's* appearance in 1867, and ties together the Endicott lithograph and the *Watson's Art Journal* description.

As seen in Endicott's lithograph, one of the men has his arm in a sling. Noble's composition, with outcasts and sickly people on Brown's right, echoes Rembrandt's *Hundred Guilder Print* (Figure 5), in which sick and lame people are seeking Christ's healing touch, crowding the right side of the etching. People that doubt Christ occupy the left-most areas, just as Brown's left is thronged with militia men that will escort him to execution. It is clear that people here have "taken sides." The convincing division of those who support Brown and those who do not is amplified when considering the sympathetic woman and the man whose arm is in a sling, calling to mind the healing powers that the sick are seeking from Christ in the

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<sup>37</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 126.

<sup>38</sup> "Art Matters," *Watson's Art Journal* 7, no. 17 (1867): 262.

<sup>39</sup> My thesis advisor, Dr. Janice Simon, discovered the pentimento in Noble's *John Brown's Blessing*.

*Hundred Guilder Print.*

### III. Ties to Abolition

In *John Brown's Blessing*, alongside the people who support or admire Brown, Noble included a Mammy figure. Standing behind the kneeling enslaved mother, she protectively embraces two children, one clearly white and one of possibly mixed complexion, speaking to the extremely horrific treatment of enslaved women by plantation owners and overseers. This older woman, and in her fuller figure more mature than that of the young mother, she is likely the "Mammy" to these young children. In the antebellum South, a Mammy would be considered, mainly, as a house servant of the plantation, as this is where she would be taking care of the family's children. This explains her white headwrap, as opposed to the red and green one that the enslaved mother wears. In an article discussing the history of the African American woman's headwrap, Helen Bradley Griebel cites Louis Hughes, an enslaved man who worked in Virginia and Mississippi, speaking about various regulations regarding clothing for enslaved people:

The cotton clothes worn by both men and women (house servants), and the turbans of the latter, were snowy white. "After the family moved to the city," Hughes recalled, "Each of the women servants wore a new gay colored turban, which was tied differently from that of the ordinary servant, in some fancy knot."<sup>40</sup>

Based on Hughes's statement, it is possible that the enslaved mother in *John Brown's Blessing* wearing a more colorful headwrap is from an urban area as opposed to the rural plantation, which is represented by the Mammy, who wears the white headwrap

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<sup>40</sup> Louis Hughes, *Thirty Years a Slave: From Bondage to Freedom* (New York: Negro Universities Press) [1897] 1969, Reprint, 42. Quoted in Helen Bradley Griebel, *New Raiments of Self: African American Clothing in the Antebellum South* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 269.

that marked her as a house servant. Headwraps were in fact required by law in many Southern states, in large part to ensure that white females appeared definitively separate from African females. In 1786, the governor of Louisiana enacted dress codes that forbade “females of color” to wear jewelry or hats and required their “hair be bound in a kerchief.”<sup>41</sup> In addition to her colorful headwrap, the mother in Noble’s painting wears a white shirt, which is belted around her waist with a colorful string or tie, paired with a dark green skirt, as well as a small earring which was a marker of ownership or servitude.<sup>42</sup>

The relationship between the Mammy and children not her own who she routinely looks after is displayed in Noble’s painting, presenting an issue tied to Brown’s goal of emancipating slaves. As she is so frequently looking after other children, a Mammy would be unable to care for her own children.<sup>43</sup> If a house servant or Mammy had children, a younger woman would often take care of large groups of enslaved children while she worked outside, as the children’s own mothers could not.<sup>44</sup> Noble is therefore contrasting the Mammy figure to the enslaved mother presenting her child to Brown by showing two sides of the problem. The older woman has been charged with the care of

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<sup>41</sup> C. Gayarre, *History of Louisiana: The French Domination, Vol. III* (New Orleans: Armand Hawkins, 1885,) 178-179.

<sup>42</sup> Piercings used to mark a person as a slave or another person’s property are mentioned in the Bible, “<sup>6</sup> then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.” Exodus 21: 6, New King James Version. Deuteronomy references this as well: “<sup>16</sup> And if it happens that he says to you, ‘I will not go away from you,’ because he loves you and your houses, since he prospers with you, <sup>17</sup> then you shall take an awl and thrust it through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also, to your female servant you shall do likewise.” Deuteronomy 15: 16-17, New King James Version. An awl is a sharp, pointed tool used to pierce holes through materials such as leather.

<sup>43</sup> Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender and Southern Memory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 14.

<sup>44</sup> Deborah White, *Ar’n’t I A Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 48.

other children, while the enslaved mother seeks a blessing for her own child. The Mammy, mother, and child she is holding in *John Brown's Blessing* all work together to demonstrate this complicated issue. The Mammy is clearly seen embracing white children (one even has light, blonde hair), while the slave mother could be holding her child, who might also represent the children the Mammy is not allowed to care for. With these figures, Noble is presenting an entire structure of how plantation life and enslavement worked and the heartbreaking position of African women with children. As Brown is looking to the enslaved child, he is essentially noting that this child, an outcast in society, is the future, and because of his mission will soon be free.

Kimberly Wallace-Sanders lays out this duality of Mammy and mother well in *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender and Southern Memory*:

Our understanding and our expectations of the mammy stereotype take on a different shape through a comparison with the earliest depictions. *Mammy's role as a devoted mother-servant to white children creates friction against her life as slave mother of her own children...her motherhood is magnified until she becomes a site where slavery and motherhood meet in a cloud of struggle, despair, and triumph. The repetitive use of the mammy figures as the solitary or the most prominent representation of slave motherhood sets the stage for well-known authors like Stowe to use slave mothers as a powerful abolitionist trope.*<sup>45</sup>

Just as Stowe used enslaved mothers as an abolitionist trope through examples such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Noble presents two examples of the same trope in the painting: the young mother and the Mammy.

Additionally, the pose of the enslaved mother, kneeling to present her child to Brown, is no coincidence of composition. The pose serves a dual purpose, not only making possible Brown's blessing on her child's head, but symbolizing Brown's very fight—the abolition of slavery. This pose of an enslaved person, whether male or female,

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<sup>45</sup> Sanders, *Mammy*, 30 (emphasis mine).

in a supplicant position has further foundations in abolitionism and art history. Fleming notes the history of the pose, based on the creation of a medallion of 1787 by Josiah Wedgwood, an English potter. While this is important, Fleming does not elaborate upon the reasoning of the association of this symbol with abolitionism, or religious contexts for that matter. “Am I not a Man and a Brother,” the inscribed image of the kneeling male slave comes from a medallion by Wedgwood (Figure 11).<sup>46</sup> The use of this image on jewelry promoted abolitionism in easily transported items such as hairpins, necklaces and brooches.<sup>47</sup> Prior to his medallion, Wedgwood designed the seal, featuring the kneeling male slave, for the English-based abolition group Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (Figure 12).<sup>48</sup>

Following the original creation of Wedgwood’s image, it became adapted in America into a female version, often accompanied by the words “Am I not a Woman and a Sister?” as seen in the January 1832 issue of the Boston abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* (Figure 13). This well-known abolitionist image would have easily been called to mind by the viewers of Noble’s enslaved mother, highlighting the connection of abolition to *John Brown’s Blessing* through a female figure embodying the same famous pose. Not only does she establish a link to the history of abolitionism, but she also embodies another connection to Christ. Brown fought to emancipate this woman, or people like her. In turn, Christ wanted a similar outcome for humanity, liberating all from

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament* (New York: John S. Taylor, 1836), 2: 191-2.

<sup>47</sup> Saadia Nicoe Teresa Lawton, *Contested Meanings: Audience Responses to the Wedgwood Slave Medallion, 1787-1839* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 31.

<sup>48</sup> Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America: 1780-1865* (New Jersey, Routledge, 2000), 22. In addition to small ceramics, the image was inscribed on coins. The abolition image on coins or tokens was linked to John Brown when a group of French abolitionists presented medals to Brown’s widow and family memorializing his death (Figures 14 and 15).

sin and oppression. As in Rembrandt's *Hundred Guilder Print*, this kneeling supplicant figure at Christ's right is seeking help and expressing admiration (Figure 16).

Noble's enslaved mother figure expresses this reverence to another degree, as she is meeting Brown moments before his execution. She knows what Brown has sacrificed for her people, unlike the beseecher in the *Hundred Guilder Print*. In many ways, she is just as important as Brown in Noble's painting, teasing out the complicated narrative of being a Black mother in antebellum America.<sup>49</sup>

#### **IV. John Brown Imagery Before Noble**

As previously mentioned, upon his return from Paris in 1859, Noble moved to St. Louis with his family, painting small works of art but also working occasionally for his father.<sup>50</sup> We do not know the month in which Noble returned to America, but the time was close to when the raid on Harpers Ferry occurred. Whether Noble returned before or after October 16, he would have surely known about the event through its highly sensationalized coverage in newspapers. However, just because Noble knew about the event taking place does not mean that Noble would have any inclinations about Brown's appearance or demeanor, other than what he may have read in newspapers.

One article in particular stands out for its extensive implication for Noble's subject matter in *John Brown's Blessing*. Henry Olcott, a writer for the *New York Tribune* wrote a detailed account regarding the execution of Brown. His article, the first extensive writing on Brown's death, is highly specific about the execution.

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<sup>49</sup> Dr. Richmond-Moll also suggested, for future research, that I consider the implication of a kneeling enslaved person beneath a white emancipator. Additionally, other important meanings can be extracted from Edmonia Lewis's *Forever Free*, with a standing Black man and kneeling Black woman, which some argue shows emancipation as restoring the traditional roles and dynamics of Black families in the wake of slavery, whereas Noble show a family being kept apart, rather than together.

<sup>50</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 56.

Interestingly, *Frank Leslie's* claimed that their “special correspondent” who created sketches of the execution was the only member of the press allowed at Brown’s hanging (Figure 17). However, Olcott’s report clearly reveals that other reporters were there.<sup>51</sup> Olcott wrote,

As he stepped out of the door a black woman, with her little child in arms, stood near his way. The twain were of the despised race, for those emancipation and elevation to the dignity of children of God, he was about to lay down his life. He stopped for a moment in his course, stooped over, and with tenderness of one whose love is as broad as the brotherhood of man, kissed it affectionately.<sup>52</sup>

This report undoubtedly provides the inspiration for Noble’s painting, especially since it takes place at the prison door, not the execution, which we know was not possible as Henry Wise, then governor of Virginia, gave strict orders that no women or children of any race were allowed at the gallows.<sup>53</sup> As would be noted in the history books, “When the eventful day came, no disturbance, no demonstration of any sort was made, and old John Brown of O[s]sawatomie was quietly hanged.”<sup>54</sup>

In the *New York Times*, an account of the execution also provides further evidence that other reporters were present:

Mounted Scouts were stationed in the woods to the left of the scaffold, and picket guards were stationed out toward the Shenandoah mountains in the rear. The military on the field formed two hollow squares. Within the inner one was the scaffold, and between the inner lines and the outer lines, the citizens were admitted, no one being allowed outside of the lines, except the moneted [sic] guards.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Reasoning for this assumption is based on Fleming’s description of Henry Olcott, that he “clandestinely” attended Brown’s execution. Fleming, “Reconstructed Rebel,” 116.

<sup>52</sup> Henry Steel Olcott, “From Another Correspondent, Harper’s Ferry, Dec. 3,” *New York Tribune*, December 5, 1859.

<sup>53</sup> Benjamin Quarles, *Allies for Freedom & Blacks on John Brown* (Cambridge: De Capo Press, 2001), 121.

<sup>54</sup> John Bach, *History of the People of the United States* (New York and London, 1919), 8: 425.

<sup>55</sup> “Execution of John Brown. His Interview with His Wife. Scenes at the Scaffold. Profound Feeling Throughout the Northern States.,” *New York Times*, December 3, 1859.

This description gives further credibility to the images published in *Frank Leslie's* just seven days after the *New York Times* account stating that Brown's execution was conducted under very strict military supervision (Figure 18).

In the aftermath of Harpers Ferry, responses from both Northerners and Southerners were largely negative, viewing the raid as an act of terrorism, with many Northerners citing his actions as too violent as the means to an end.<sup>56</sup> However, immediately following Brown's execution and the publication of Olcott's article, the celebrated writer John Greenleaf Whittier, a staunch abolitionist, wrote a poem that would become a resounding influence on the canon of John Brown imagery.<sup>57</sup> His poem, "Brown of O[s]sawatomie," was initially published in the *New York Independent* on December 22, 1859, merely twenty days after Brown's death.<sup>58</sup> In William Endicott's lithograph of *John Brown's Blessing* two verses of Whittier's poem are included in the bottom margin: "John Brown, they led him out to die; And lo! A poor slave-mother with her little child pressed nigh: Then the bold, Blue eye grew tender, and the old harsh face grew mild, and he stooped between the jeering ranks and kissed the negro's child" (Figure 19). Obviously, Whittier was inspired by Olcott's article for his poetic celebration of Brown, which was reprinted many times following its initial appearance in the *New York Independent*.<sup>59</sup> Because the poem is fused with Olcott's article, which first printed a falsehood about John Brown kissing a baby at his execution, both the article and poem influence Noble's painted composition.

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<sup>56</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 118. Fleming directs readers to Paul Finkelman ed., *His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995).

<sup>57</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 119.

<sup>58</sup> Cecil D. Eby, Jr., "Whittier's Brown of O[s]sawatomie," *The New England Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1960): 455. Whittier misspells Ossawatomie throughout his poem.

<sup>59</sup> Eby, Jr., "Whittier's Brown of O[s]sawatomie," 455.

At the time Noble painted *John Brown's Blessing*, the Civil War—a war for which Brown was a catalyst—had ended. The abolitionist was well known, and Noble was not the first to paint him. The most obvious source of inspiration for Noble's image is a now-lost painting by Louis Ransom, *John Brown on His Way to Execution* from 1860 (Figure 20). Ransom painted this work shortly after Brown's death. A photograph of Brown shortly before the raid on Harpers Ferry shows him similar in appearance (Figure 21). Interestingly, Ransom's painting of Brown presents him in an extremely similar pose, facing slightly right with his hands held behind his back. Ransom sold the work to Oberlin College, which is fitting in that Oberlin, founded in 1833, was one of the first colleges to admit African American students. The painting was quite large, seven by ten feet, and eventually due to space constraints, Oberlin intended to loan the painting to Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. During its transport to its new location the painting was lost and has not been seen since.<sup>60</sup>

Currier and Ives, the nation's most popular lithographic firm, made a lithograph after Ransom's painting, giving us a clearer view as to what the painting looked like. The first lithograph, *John Brown Meeting the Slave Mother*, made in 1863, predates Noble's painting by five years (Figure 22). Here, Brown is on the steps of the prison, with several figures surrounding him. The foreground figure is a guard, in odd military dress for the time. A enslaved mother, with furrowed brow looking down at her child, is seated on the bannister with the child facing her on her lap. To the far left below the bannister a broken statue of blind justice stands. The twisted flag above Brown's head includes the words "Sic Semper Tyrannis," or "Thus always to tyrants," part of the seal and flag of Virginia,

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<sup>60</sup>John Fletcher, "Ransom's John Brown Painting," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1940): 346.

a shortened version of the phrase Brutus uttered upon the assassination of Julius Caesar, suggesting that tyrants will always meet a dire end.

Another resource Noble may have used to create *John Brown's Blessing* is a biography of Brown, written by James Redpath in 1860. Redpath, a *New York Tribune* journalist and editor, worked with Brown's family to create the successful book, which included Olcott and Whittier's references to Brown's kiss. Fleming cites the wide circulation of this book, as well as the likelihood that this book was offered for sale during the exhibition of *John Brown's Blessing* at the De Vries Gallery in Boston, as another probable source from which Noble became familiar with the falsified story surrounding Brown's execution.<sup>61</sup>

Revealingly, Currier and Ives made another lithograph three years after the debut of Noble's *John Brown's Blessing* in 1867, *John Brown—The Martyr* (1870, Figure 23). Just as Noble drew from Ransom's painting, this lithograph draws from *John Brown's Blessing* as Currier and Ives eliminated things Noble himself does not include in his painting, such as the flag of Virginia and the broken statue of justice. Most notably, the child in Noble's work and this 1870 lithograph faces Brown. Neither Ransom's painting of John Brown nor the 1863 lithograph show the child facing Brown, but rather, its mother. Significantly, in all but Noble's painting, the enslaved woman does *not* take the abolitionist pose of the enslaved person kneeling in supplication, indicating that Noble certainly knew the importance of this pose to the cause of abolitionism, for which Brown fought. With this second lithograph, a twofold influence is at play. Noble was

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<sup>61</sup> "The Martyrdom of John Brown," *Quincy Patriot*, December 1, 1867. Quoted in Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 123-124.

undoubtedly influenced by Ransom's painting, while this second lithograph of Ransom's painting echoes Noble's choices in composition of his *John Brown's Blessing*.

The earliest known photograph of Brown was taken in 1846 or 1847 by Augustus Washington (Figure 24). This image shows Brown much younger, lacking the radical facial expression and long beard. Many images of Brown from closer to the date of his death feature the dramatic appearance and beard that is represented in all the paintings of him. In contrast, the sketches of the execution included in *Frank Leslie's*, which are the only images produced on that day, do not show Brown with this long beard and wild hair. In fact, Brown's head is covered, so we are unable to know if he was clean shaven or not upon the day of his execution (Figure 25).

Although Olcott, Whittier, and Redpath mention Brown kissing the toddler, this is clearly not what Noble chose to represent. Instead, Brown places his left hand on the child in blessing solidifying Brown's association with Christ through this gesture. *The Commonwealth* offers more thought on Noble's artistic decision: "The tradition (somewhat aprocrual [sic]) is that he kissed the little fellow, but as the labial process in the picture would hide his [Brown's] countenance, the artist has kindly taken the usual license and represents him as laying his hand on the child's head."<sup>62</sup>

## V. Ecce Homo

Throughout this essay, *John Brown's Blessing* has been analyzed in order to establish the various religious allusions that can be made in both the painting and John Brown's martyrdom for the sake of abolition. Adding to these references, however, is the fact that previous scholars have failed to connect *John Brown's Blessing* to a particular

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<sup>62</sup> Malin, "The John Brown Legend in Pictures Kissing the Negro Baby," 341. Cited in Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 136.

type of image representing the Passion, the *ecce homo* images of Christ.<sup>63</sup> These moments show Christ as fully human and suffering, overshadowing his innate divinity as God's son. In this moment, Christ's humanity is put on display and manipulated not only through Pilate's words, the crowd of Jews and judges mocking him, but through the prospect of his imminent crucifixion. Through this discussion, the elements of *ecce homo* imagery in *John Brown's Blessing* will be brought to light.

*Ecce homo* refers to the biblical narrative in which Pilate presents Christ to a crowd of Jews, judges him, and sentences him to death. As told in the book of John:

<sup>1</sup>Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged him. <sup>2</sup>And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him purple robe, <sup>3</sup>And said "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they smote him with their hands. <sup>4</sup>Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him." <sup>5</sup>Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, "Behold the man!" <sup>6</sup>When the chief priests there and officers saw him, they cried out, saying "Crucify him, crucify him." Pilate saith unto them, "Take ye him, and crucify him."<sup>64</sup>

As such, *ecce homo* images depict an event of the Passion, but occasionally some *ecce homo* images conflate multiple events of the Passion into one scene. The oldest surviving example of an *ecce homo* scene is found in Trier, Stadtbibliothek, circa 977-998 (Figure 26). Although there are earlier examples, the *ecce homo* type was not widely adopted until the fifteenth century.<sup>65</sup> Figure 26 is an example of how an *ecce homo* scene can conflate multiple events of the Passion into one image. Christ is presented to the people, the specific narrative that the term *ecce homo* refers to, but he is also shown

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<sup>63</sup> Dr. Shelley Zuraw, a member of my thesis committee, first suggested that I consider relating *John Brown's Blessing* and *ecce homo* imagery.

<sup>64</sup> John 19: 1-6, King James Version."

<sup>65</sup> Colum Hourihane, "Defining Terms: Ecce Homo, Christ of Pity, Christ Mocked, and the Man of Sorrows," in *New Perspectives on the Man of Sorrows*, eds. Catherine Puglisi and William Barcham (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications and Western Michigan University, 2013), 24. Hourihane directs readers to Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* (London: Lund Humphries, 1972), 2: 74.

wearing the crown of thorns, while his body is covered in slashes from being whipped. This is understandable, as the flagellation and the crowning occurred *before* Christ was presented to the people. Just as there is a narrative attached to *ecce homo* imagery, *John Brown's Blessing* is irrevocably linked to multiple narratives: the events of Brown's own life and the Olcott narrative written about Brown, Whittier's poem, Redpath's biography, and abolitionist iconography.

While there are many examples of *ecce homo* images this essay will primarily utilize Rembrandt's etchings of *Christ Presented to the People*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art holds two impressions of this drypoint etching (1655, Figures 27 and 28) from among the eight different states of the copper plate he used for the print. In an impression of the second state, Christ is standing atop a platform of sorts, with his hands bound in front of him and his clothing disheveled.<sup>66</sup> His tormentors surround him, including guards behind him, to his left and right, as well as onlookers milling around on all sides of the platform, and people peering out from the windows above. Christ stands out of doors, as Dutch prisoners were forced to do when they were being sentenced to death.<sup>67</sup> In an impression from the eighth state, Rembrandt eliminated the people standing beneath the platform and replaced them with two arches. These arches are actually an entrance to the dungeon cells for Christ and Barabbas. Barabbas was held prisoner with

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<sup>66</sup> A. Hyatt Mayor, *Rembrandt and the Bible* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 31. Mayor includes an example of a print by Lucas van Leyden, whom we know Rembrandt frequently looked back to. When van Leyden created his version of *Christ Presented to the People* in 1510 (Figure 29), Mayor notes that plays about the miracles of the Bible were still being staged on large platforms in the city squares. Leyden placed Pilate and Christ on this platform in his engraving, and, so too they appear in Rembrandt's etching. In his engraving and the second state of Rembrandt's etching, the crowd is seen surrounding all sides of the platform.

<sup>67</sup> Mayor, *Rembrandt and the Bible*, 30-31.

Christ and was then chosen, over Christ, by the crowd and Pontius Pilate to be released in a pardon that was customary before the feast of Passover.

In her article discussing Peter Paul Rubens's *Ecce Homo* (1612, Figure 30), Christine Göttler explains that an *ecce homo* image is one that most emphatically foregrounds the human body of Christ. Rubens's *Ecce Homo* presents Christ with a "powerful, heroic, and athletic body, a haptic representation of skin texture and anatomical detail. Despite the clearly visible marks and wheals on his flesh, Christ's body seems almost uninjured."<sup>68</sup> Similarly, while Christ does appear saddened and dejected in Rembrandt's images, he does not seem to be in physical duress. At this point in the Biblical narrative Christ has already been scourged and crowned with thorns when he is presented to the people. As such, Christ's body should appear brutalized and broken, but in these examples, this is not the case.<sup>69</sup>

The same can be said for Brown in Noble's depiction. As previously mentioned, Brown was severely injured during the raid, spent a month in jail, and as a result underwent his trial bedridden on a cot. However, in Noble's painting, as well as in Ransom's precedent, we do not see a frail, injured man, but rather a clean and prominent figure, hardly emaciated from lack of food, and one who stands above all others. It is through Noble's dignified portrayal of Brown that he is an *ecce homo* figure, at the moment when his mortality is put on the utmost display, walking to his death. He is

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<sup>68</sup> Christine Göttler, "Rubens's 'Ecce Homo' and 'Derision of Silenus': Classical Antiquity, Images of Devotion and the Ostentation of Art," in *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Reindert L. Falkenburg, Walter Melion, and Todd Richardson (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007), 432.

<sup>69</sup> Earlier examples of *ecce homo* images, from the eleventh to the thirteenth century lack an emphasis on Christ's bodily suffering that later examples from the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries show. Here, Rembrandt is reaching back to the tradition of not highlighting Christ's physical trauma he has already endured. Hourihane, *New Perspectives on the Man of Sorrows*, 28.

firmly linked to Christ when he too is presented to a crowd shortly before his death.

Rembrandt and Noble made choices against depicting a figure downtrodden. Instead, by highlighting their physical presence, the artists underscored Brown's and Christ's inner nobility, which resulted from their desire to free people from bondage and sin.

While Brown is never shown in physical suffering, as Christ may have been represented in later versions of *ecce homo* imagery, we are directed to Brown's suffering in other ways, through the accoutrements Noble adds to his image, such as Noble's rope and Whittier's poem in the margins Endicott's lithograph. So too, the prominence of Brown as a figure on display reiterates the power of the *ecce homo* type. Göttler notes the significance of Pilate's words during the Passion event:

Pilate, who finds no guilt in him [Christ], shows him to the people with the words 'behold the man.' The words 'ecce homo' mark a short moment of silence and hesitation during which everyone's eyes were directed at Christ; this moment of stillness was then broken by the shouts of the crowd to 'crucify him.' In John's account of the ostentation Pilate speaks the words three times: when he presents Jesus to the people to show that he sees no cause to condemn him, when he presents him to the crowd, and when he takes a seat on the Lithostrotos [stone pavement or seat] searching for a last means to avoid condemnation. *Ecce*, 'see,' 'behold,' 'look,' serves as an appellative figure or noun, calling attention to something which is right there. Pilate's words 'ecce homo' thus magnify and exaggerate the humanity of Christ.<sup>70</sup>

These words convey the contemplative nature of the *ecce homo* image, which is echoed in *John Brown's Blessing*. The reflection is two-sided, as Brown, the enslaved mother and her child all look to each other in a moment of exchange, at the same time the audience is taking in this occurrence, reflecting, in our own space and time, about the connections to Christ that are apparent simply through looking upon this painting. In their nature, *ecce homo* images draw attention to and present a physical relationship between

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<sup>70</sup> Göttler, "Rubens's 'Ecce Homo,'" 444.

the spectator and the work of art. Göttler stresses this experience, “His or her position in front of the image corresponds to that of a member of the crowd; feelings of compassion are associated with those of culpability and guilt.”<sup>71</sup> In these *ecce homo* images of Christ and *John Brown’s Blessing*, both the figures of Christ and Brown are rendered with an emphasis on physical presence, thus making the body, the *ecce homo* figure, the central theme of the compositions.

## VI. Discrepancy in Military Dress

Noble’s changes and decisions regarding Brown’s gesture are not the only significant alterations he made to his sources of inspiration. Beyond giving a clear picture of what the execution may have looked like, the *Frank Leslie’s* images provide information about the military uniforms worn by the guards at the execution, as this is something that is odd and unclear in Ransom’s and Noble’s paintings.

The men are depicted in military dress; however, the clothes are clearly not uniforms worn during this time period. In James Yarnall and William Gerdts’ *Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues* from 1986, the description of *John Brown’s Blessing* includes the following identifier of the uniform: “The guards on this occasion were a company of Continentals and were dressed in the uniform of the Revolution” (Figure 31).<sup>72</sup> On the same issue, Boime writes, “The Virginia militia, wearing the Continental uniform of the American Revolution, is conspicuous in both pictures [referencing Louis Ransom’s painting],” reminding the audience of the disparity between national promise and its unfulfillment, without further mentioning the dress of the

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<sup>71</sup> Göttler, “Rubens’s ‘Ecce Homo,’” 445.

<sup>72</sup> Yarnall and Gerdts, *Index to American Arts Exhibition Catalogues*, 2592.

military figures.<sup>73</sup> Fleming, takes this issue a bit further: “On the left side of Brown stands a Virginia militia man with sword drawn.” In her footnote for this, she does not offer a citation but explains that the uniforms worn by the militia men in the painting are the Continental style of uniform which were still worn by Virginia militia men prior to the Civil War.<sup>74</sup> However, it is important to remember that Noble was not present at this event, and, while he undoubtedly drew from Ransom’s painting, the uniform is not one of the details he borrowed.

The images of the execution in *Frank Leslie’s* are completely different than the uniforms presented in Ransom and Noble’s images, with the note “from an accurate drawing made on the spot by the artist” at the execution (Figure 32). These are the correct uniforms, not only because they seem to match the time period, shortly before the Civil War, but there is concrete evidence that the uniform worn by the military guards was *not* what we see in the John Brown images.

An item for sale at Heritage Auctions, lot #52293, is a uniform of the Virginia Militia ca. 1859-1861 (Figure 33). The uniform in question belonged to Lt. Henry Bedinger Davenport. Davenport, a lieutenant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virginia Infantry was born in Charles town, Virginia, the location of John Brown’s execution. Additionally, Davenport served as a lieutenant in Captain Rowan’s company of militia involved at the capture and trial of John Brown himself in Charlestown, Virginia.<sup>75</sup> As this example, worn by Davenport, of Virginia Militia dress very closely matches the uniforms depicted in the

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<sup>73</sup> Boime, “Burgoo and Bourgeois,” 35.

<sup>74</sup> Fleming, “Reconstructed Rebel,” 125.

<sup>75</sup> Heritage Auctions, Dallas, December 8, 2012. Virginia Militia Uniform C. 1859 - 1861 of Lt. Henry Bedinger Davenport (Civil War and Militia Auction), lot 52293. Accessed on October 22, 2020. <https://historical.ha.com/itm/military-and-patriotic/civil-war/virginia-militia-uniform-c-1859-1861-of-lt-henry-bedinger-davenport-co-a-2nd-virginia-inf-total-3-items-/a/6083-52293.s>

image of Brown's execution in *Frank Leslie's*, this serves as visual confirmation that Ransom and Noble incorrectly painted the uniforms, for unknown reasons of course, because Noble would surely know what the uniforms of the time looked like as a captain in the Confederate army.

A possible source of inspiration for Noble's choice in depicting this uniform was *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague House at Jaffa* (1804, Figure 34) by Antoine-Jean Gros. Several points link this painting to *John Brown's Blessing*. Noble's instructor in Paris, Thomas Couture, was one of Antoine-Jean Gros's students. Further, one of Noble's artist friends in Kentucky, Oliver Frazer (1808-1864), was also one of Gros's students, which may have lead Frazer to make the suggestion that he seek Couture out while in Paris.<sup>76</sup> Gros's painting was commissioned by Bonaparte himself and purchased by the state shortly after its debut at the Salon of 1804 and then either remained in Paris or went to Versailles. Additionally, this painting was reproduced in an engraving in 1830. By the time Noble traveled to Paris in 1854, the highly successful painting had been circulated through reproduction, and whether it was kept in Paris or went to Versailles, Noble would have surely visited these places while in Paris studying art for three years.<sup>77</sup> This is relevant because of the many comparisons to be made to *John Brown's Blessing*. The dress worn by the Virginia militia in Noble's painting are Napoleonic in nature, with the color and style of the uniform jacket similar to that worn by Bonaparte in Gros's

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<sup>76</sup> Fleming, "Reconstructed Rebel," 44, 46.

<sup>77</sup> The painting is now held in the Louvre, although the date of its transfer there is unknown. According to Joconde, the French Ministry of Culture's database for objects in the collections of French public and private museums. Inventory No: INV 5064. Accessed on October 22, 2020. <https://www.pop.culture.gouv.fr/notice/joconde/000PE001377?mainSearch=%22bonaparte%20visitant%20les%20pestiferes%20de%20jaffa%20%22&idQuery=%22660aaeb-5e5e-a3b8-2dde-2b7d62aac7e%22>

painting.<sup>78</sup> The most convincing similarity between the uniforms is that both Bonaparte and the militia man in Noble's work are wearing light-colored pants (Figure 35). This is not seen in Ransom's work, nor either of the lithographs made after it, nor the sketches in *Frank Leslie's*. This means that Noble made a firm choice to differentiate the uniform in this way even though he had several examples where the uniform is depicted with dark pants.

Again, Noble gave pose a deep importance in his image. The front most militia man's pose, with his arm extended down holding his sword, is reminiscent of Napoleon's own hand, except that Bonaparte holds a glove. Compositionally, the sick men in *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague House in Jaffa* are located on the right of the paintings, the people who are supposedly receiving the Christ-like healing touch of Bonaparte. Noble may have been inspired to confer similar qualities on Brown with purposeful echoes of Gros's well-known exultation of Bonaparte. Similarly, the mother and her child receiving John Brown's blessing are also on the right side of Noble's painting. All of these details shed light on Noble's reasons for painting a uniform that is not correct.

## VII. *John Brown's Blessing's Afterlife*

Noble laid incredible groundwork in his memorialization of John Brown. He inextricably linked the abolitionist to Christ in a manner far more advanced than the simple comparison of them both as martyrs. Through each aspect of the painting, Noble was able to reference a key element of Brown's narrative, such as the great movement of abolition through the two mother figures, again linking Brown's death to Christ's as we

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<sup>78</sup> During a conversation with Dr. Patricia Johnston, the Rev. J. Gerard Mears, S.J. Chair in Fine Arts at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, she noted that the military uniform in Noble's painting appeared "Napoleonic."

are reminded that, often, in images of the Crucifixion, the Virgin is kneeling on the ground just as the enslaved mother does whilst seeking a blessing for her child.

Through this explanation of *John Brown's Blessing*, with so many connections to Christ and the noble cause of abolition, this painting seems to be an act of personal redemption. While Noble never explicitly wrote how he felt about serving in the Confederate army, it seems that John Brown and his fight for emancipation served as a model for Noble during a difficult time of repatriating into the Union. As stated earlier, Noble took a risk, considering the subject matter was so hated in the South, when he painted *John Brown's Blessing* as an act of repentance for his involvement in the very atrocities that Brown tried to eradicate. Göttler's ideas of the contemplative nature of the *ecce homo* image plays a significant role in Noble's relationship with his own painting. She discussed the role of the viewer partaking in an act of culpability and guilt, which Noble himself did as he stood before *John Brown's Blessing* during its creation. With this painting, Noble created a work on par with European history painting, which frequently depicted Biblical scenes, not only to elevate himself to that high level of status, but John Brown and his message as well.

Brown's afterlife was eternalized through the various resources available at the time, such as newspapers, which were then crucial to the creation of *John Brown's Blessing*. As time and life progress, new methods of creation become available, and artists naturally look to the past for inspiration, as in the case of Thomas Hovenden. John Brown's representations in the artistic world have been carried on long since Noble painted his powerful tribute. The most well-known coda to Noble's is Thomas Hovenden's (1840-1895) *The Last Moments of John Brown* (1882-84, Figure 36).

Hovenden, too, is able to make a connection to *ecce homo* images by announcing the finality of Brown's life through the title of the work; however, in contrast to Noble, Hovenden's figure of Brown is stooping to kiss a black child. A small sketch by Hovenden depicts the shoulders and head of John Brown lying against a pillow, as he would as if he were wounded in jail (Figure 37).<sup>79</sup> Hovenden, an Irish immigrant and abolitionist, worked on this painting during a period in which Civil War memorials were being erected throughout the country, particularly memorials of Lincoln. Similar to Noble's methods, Hovenden had his image reproduced in print, first in an engraving by Frederick Juengling, entitled *Soldiers and Prisoners* (Figure 39). Additionally, Hovenden himself created an etching of *The Last Moments of John Brown* (Figure 40) just one year later, and in the bottom margins included a reference to another martyr to the cause of abolition, an image of the great emancipator, Abraham Lincoln's head.

Further into the twentieth century, a monumental image of Brown appeared, a mural in the Kansas State Capitol building by John Steuart Curry (Figure 41). This mural features an angry Brown, with arms outspread and evidence of Civil War behind him, marked by pillars of fire and cloud as in Exodus. Brown's life and efforts for abolition, while eventually successful, are still a relevant point of discussion in today's global

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<sup>79</sup> This small sketch by Thomas Hovenden, owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was clearly made for Hovenden's painting *John Brown at Harper's Ferry* (Figure 38). This painting was sold at Christie's East on October 1, 1998, Lot 27. The Metropolitan Museum has no record of *John Brown at Harper's Ferry* in their research material collection other than a Lot Detail sheet from the Christie's East auction, including a poor quality, black and white photograph of the painting. However, the sketch of John Brown closely resembles the image of John Brown in the auctioned painting. The soldier holding a bayonet also appears in both the sketch and the painting. A small note on the Lot Detail sheet reads "Chapelier Galleries, NY," but searches for the painting at a gallery named Chapelier, or even Chappelier, yield no results. The author is presuming that the painting, *John Brown at Harper's Ferry*, was bought by a private collector and has not since been photographed and reproduced. Artnet also has a record of the auction, but it does not offer any additional information on the painting. <http://www.artnet.com/artists/thomas-hovenden/john-brown-at-harpers-ferry-Qa6g22tc1JFjqDnmbh2bGQ2> .

climate, as the Black Lives Matter movement echoes the fight for civil rights during the 1960s. John Brown's desire for equality of all people is still marching on.

## Appendix A

## John Greenleaf Whittier, Brown of O[s]awatomie, 1859

John Brown of Osawatomie spake on his dying day:  
 'I will not have to shrive my soul a priest in Slavery's pay;  
 But let some poor slave-mother whom I have striven to free,  
 With her children, from the gallows-stair put up a prayer for me!'

John Brown of Osawatomie, they led him out to die;  
 And lo! a poor slave-mother with her little child pressed nigh:  
 Then the bold, blue eye grew tender, and the old harsh face grew mild,  
 As he stooped between the jeering ranks and kissed the negro's child!

The shadows of his stormy life that moment fell apart,  
 And they who blamed the bloody hand forgave the loving heart;  
 That kiss from all its guilty means redeemed the good intent,  
 And round the grisly fighter's hair the martyr's aureole bent!

Perish with him the folly that seeks through evil good!  
 Long live the generous purpose unstained with human blood!  
 Not the raid of midnight terror, but the thought which underlies;  
 Not the borderer's pride of daring, but the Christian's sacrifice.

Nevermore may yon Blue Ridges the Northern rifle hear,  
 Nor see the light of blazing homes flash on the negro's spear;  
 But let the free-winged angel Truth their guarded passes scale,  
 To teach that right is more than might, and justice more than mail!

So vainly shall Virginia set her battle in array;  
 In vain her trampling squadrons knead the winter snow with clay!  
 She may strike the pouncing eagle, but she dares not harm the dove;  
 And every gate she bars to Hate shall open wide to Love!

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## Images



Figure 1. Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *John Brown's Blessing*, 1867, oil on canvas, 84.25 x 60.23 inches, New York Historical Society Museum and Library, New York.



Figure 2. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Moses*, ca. 1513-1515, marble, 92.5 x 82.6 inches, San Pietro in Vincoli (Saint Peter in Chains, Rome, Italy).



Figure 3. Peter Paul Rubens, *Man of Sorrows (Ecce Homo)*, 1612, oil on canvas, 49.4 x 37.9 inches, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.



Figure 4. Porte Crayon/David Hunter Strother, *The Trial of John Brown, at Charles Town, Virginia*, *Harper's Weekly*, November 1859, New York Public Library, Archives, John Brown Collection.



Figure 4B. Detail of *The Trial of John Brown, at Charles Town, Virginia*, showing the wounded John Brown lying on a cot, New York Public Library, Archives, John Brown Collection.



Figure 5. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Hundred Guilder Print*, ca. 1649, etching, engraving and drypoint, second state of two, 11 x 15 ½ inches, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 6. Thomas Couture, *Romans of the Decadence*, 1847, oil on canvas, 472 x 772 cm., Musée d'Orsay.



Figure 7. Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *Margaret Garner*, 1867, oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati, Ohio.



Figure 8. *Harper's Weekly*, *The Modern Medea- The Story of Margaret Garner*, 1867, woodcut engraving.

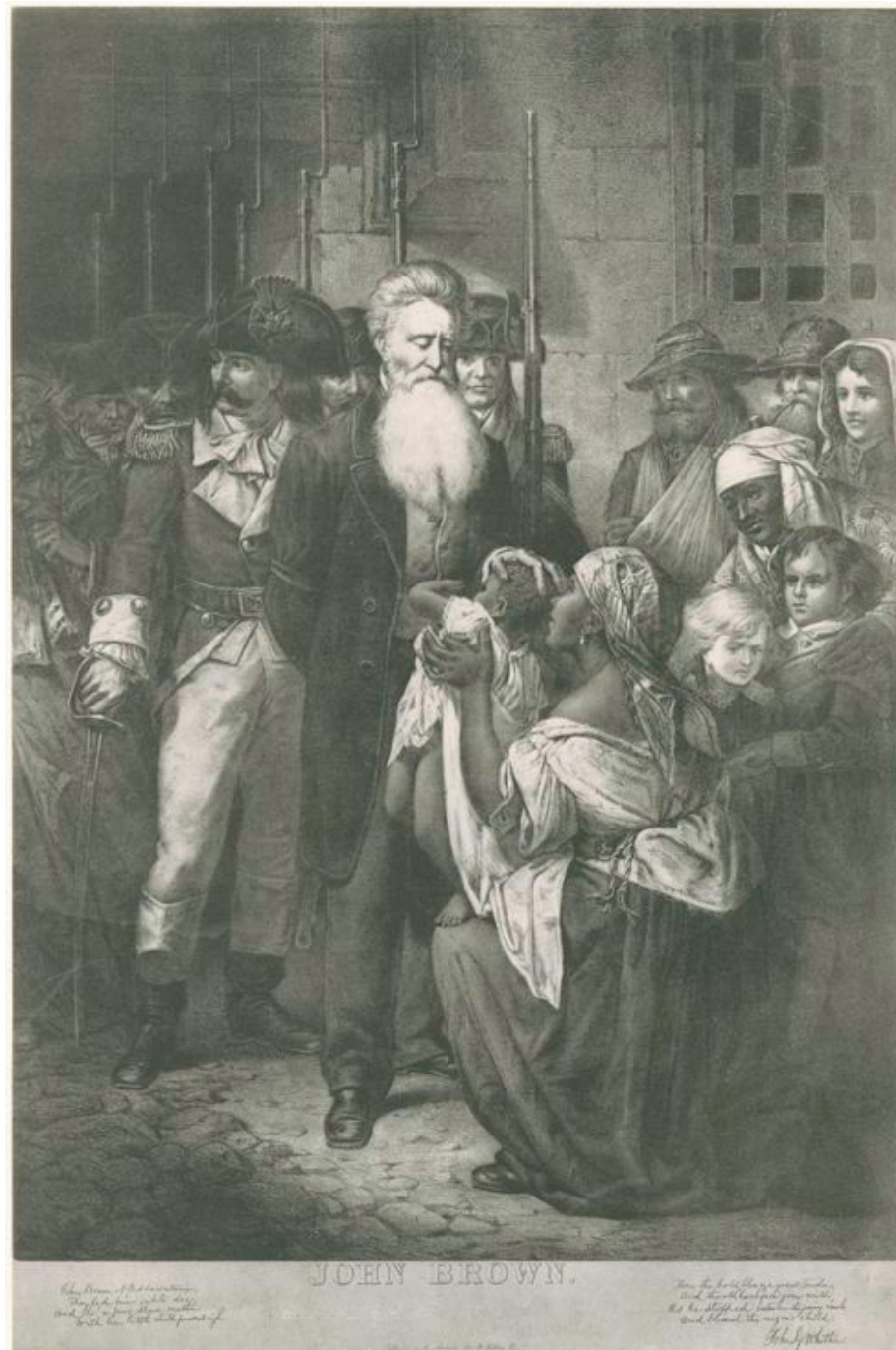


Figure 9. Endicott and Co., *John Brown*, 1867, lithograph, New York Public Library.



Figure 10. Detail of *John Brown's Blessing* (Figure 1) showing pentimento of woman's face.



Detail from Figure 9 shown for reference.





Figure 13. Unidentified artist for *The Liberator*, featuring “Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?” January 7, 1832. Full page of the newspaper, and detail image of the “Ladies Department” with image. Photomechanical reproduction, Boston Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

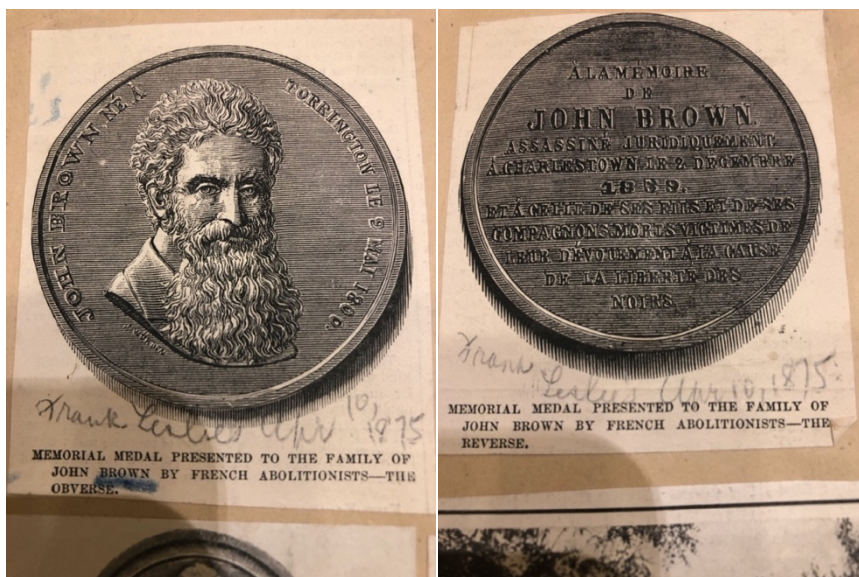
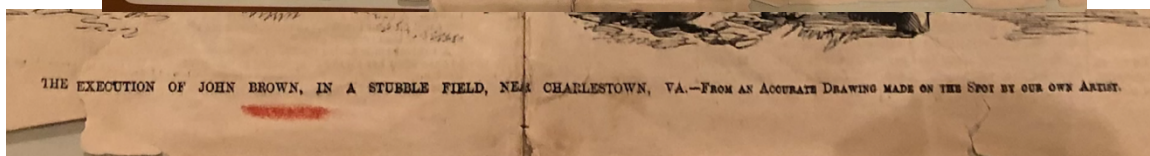


Figure 14 and 15. Memorial medal presented to the family of John Brown by French Abolitionists. Published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 10, 1875. Translation of the reverse: In memory of John Brown, legally murdered in Charlestown, December 2, 1859, and that of his sons and his fellow victims of their devotion to the cause of the liberation of blacks. New York Public Library, Archives, John Brown Collection.



Figure 16. Detail from Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Hundred Guilder Print*, ca. 1649, etching, engraving and drypoint, second state of two, 11 x 15 ½ inches, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Dec. 10, 1859

Text: Dec. 10, 1859.

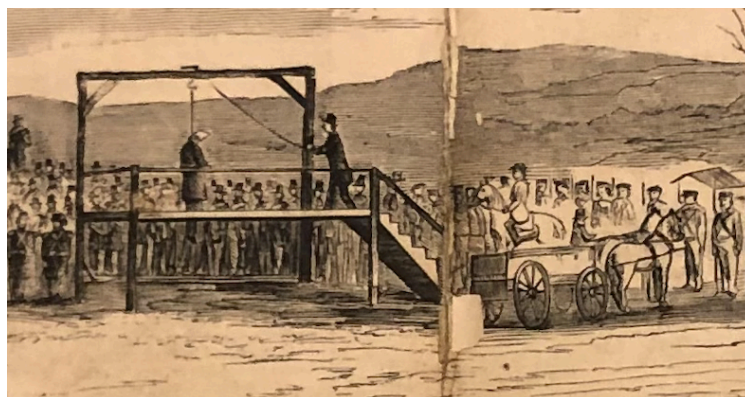


Figure 17. Unknown artist, *The Execution of John Brown*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 10, 1859, New York Public Library, Archives, John Brown Collection.



18A

18B



18C

18D

Figure 18A, 18B, 18C 18D. Detail Images. Unknown artist, *The Execution of John Brown*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 10. 1859, New York Public Library, Archives, John Brown Collection.

John Brown of Ossawatimie,  
 They led him out to die,  
 And Ho! a poor slave mother  
 With her little child pressed nigh.

Then the bold blue eye grew tender,  
 And the old harsh face grew mild,  
 As he stopped between the jeering ranks  
 And blessed the negro's child.  
 John G. Whittier

Figure 19. Verses from John Whittier's poem, "Brown of O[s]sawatomie" in the margins of William Endicott, *John Brown*, 1867, lithograph, New York Public Library.



Figure 20. Louis Ransom, *John Brown on His Way to the Execution*, 1860, 7 x10', oil on canvas, now lost. This photograph of the image was produced while the painting was still at Oberlin College.

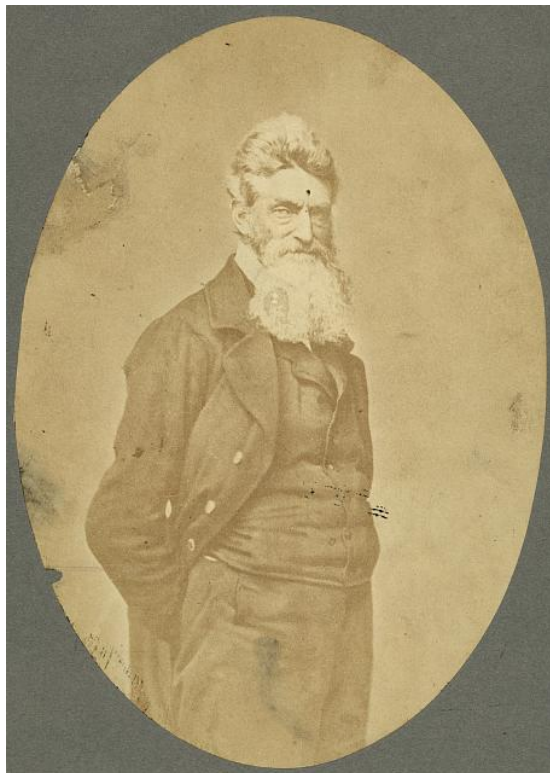


Figure 21. James Wallace Black (1825-1896), *John Brown*, December 12, 1859, photographic print on salted paper, held in Library of Congress Print and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2009633569/>.

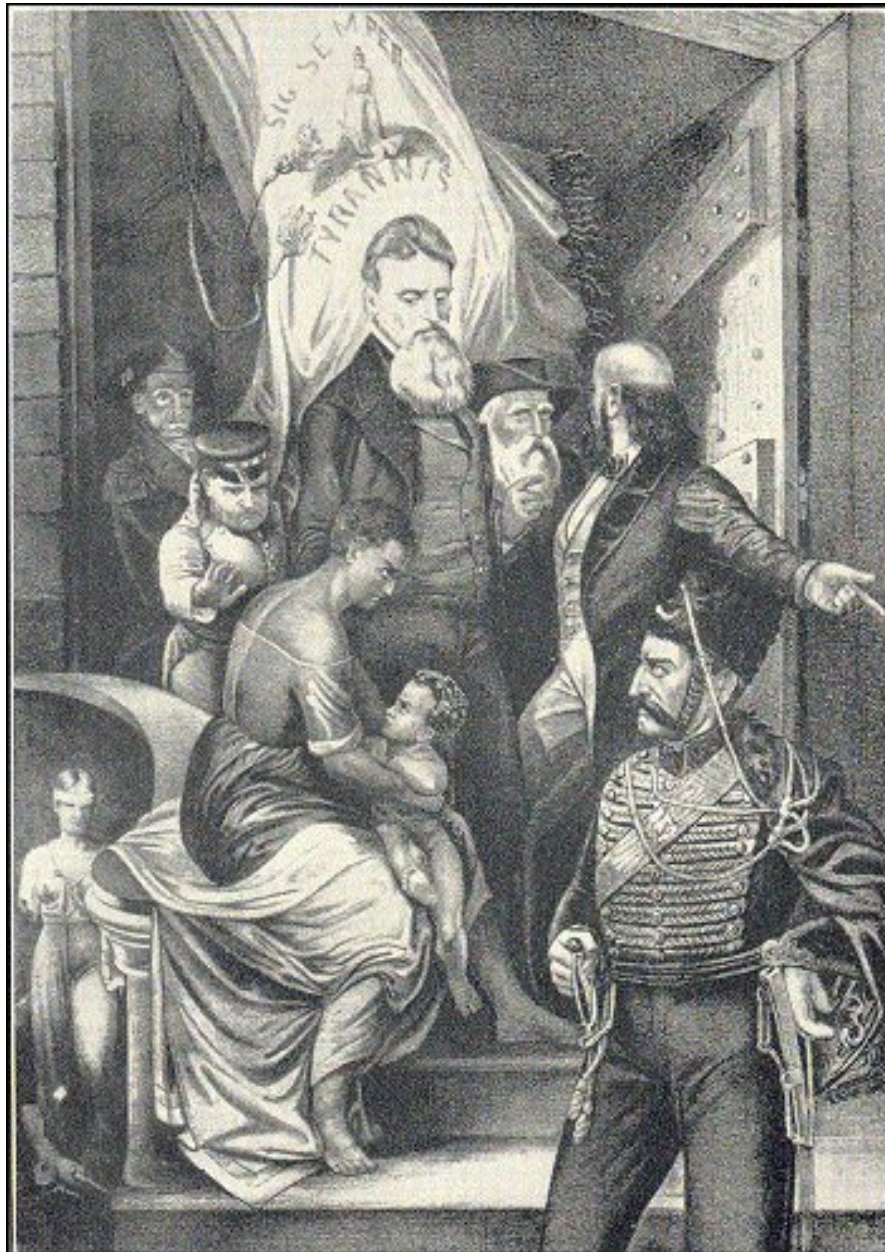


Figure 22. Currier and Ives, after Louis Ransom, *John Brown Meeting the Slave Mother*, 1863, lithograph, 12.99 x 8.58 inches, Library of Congress.

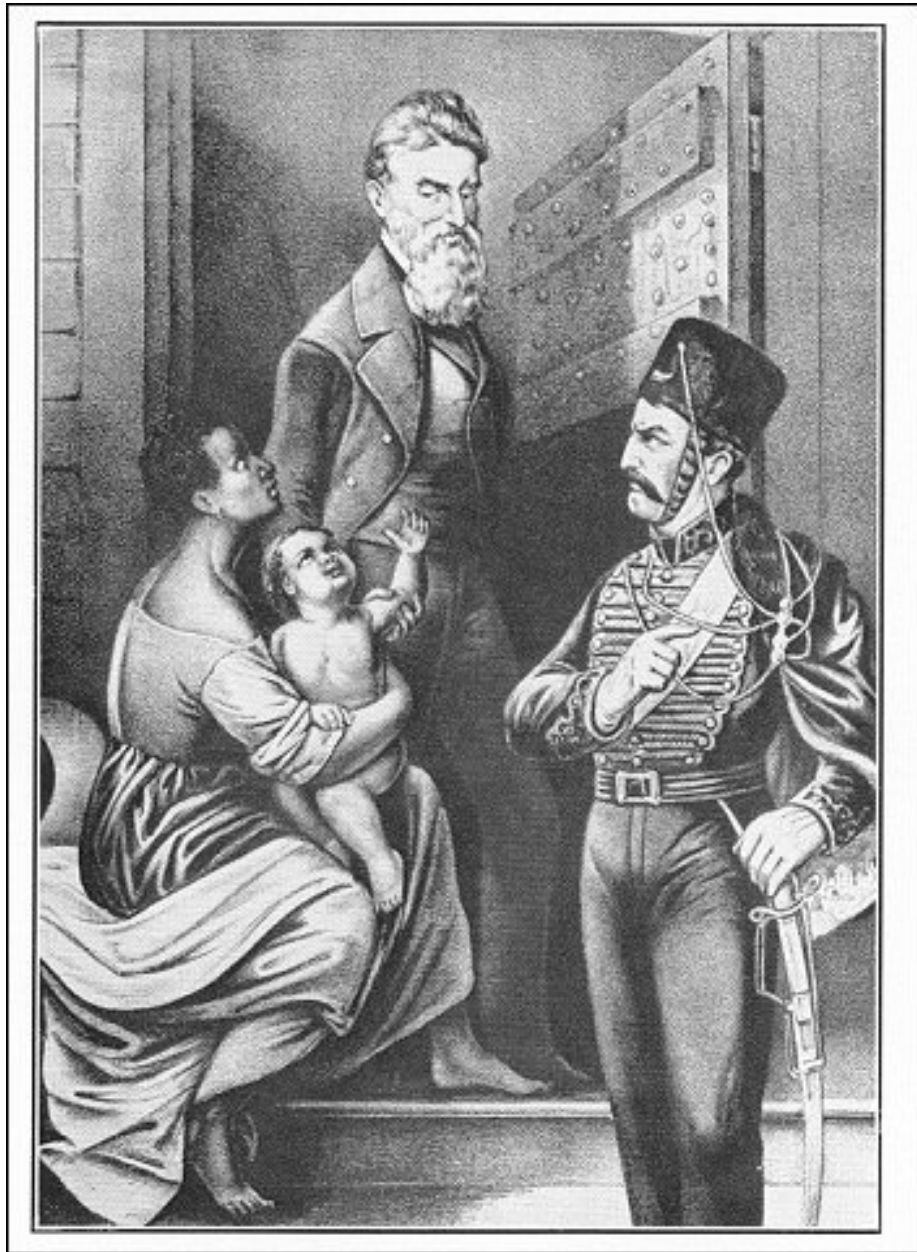


Figure 23. Currier and Ives, after Louis Ransom, *John Brown-The Martyr*, 1870, Library of Congress.



Figure 24. Augustus Washington (1820-1875), *John Brown*, quarter-plate Daguerreotype, ca. 1846-47, 4 ½ x 7 ¾ x 7/16 inches, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.



Figure 25. Unknown artist, *The Execution of John Brown*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 10, 1859, New York Public Library, Archives, John Brown Collection.



Figure 26. Workshop of the Master of the Dark Eyes Workshop (?) *Ecce Homo*, Book of Hours, Princeton University Library, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Robert Garrett Collection No. 57, fol. 11v., ca. 977-993



Figure 27. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Presented to the People or Ecce Homo*, Second State of Eight, drypoint on japan paper, 38.4 x 44.9 cm., MMA, 1655.

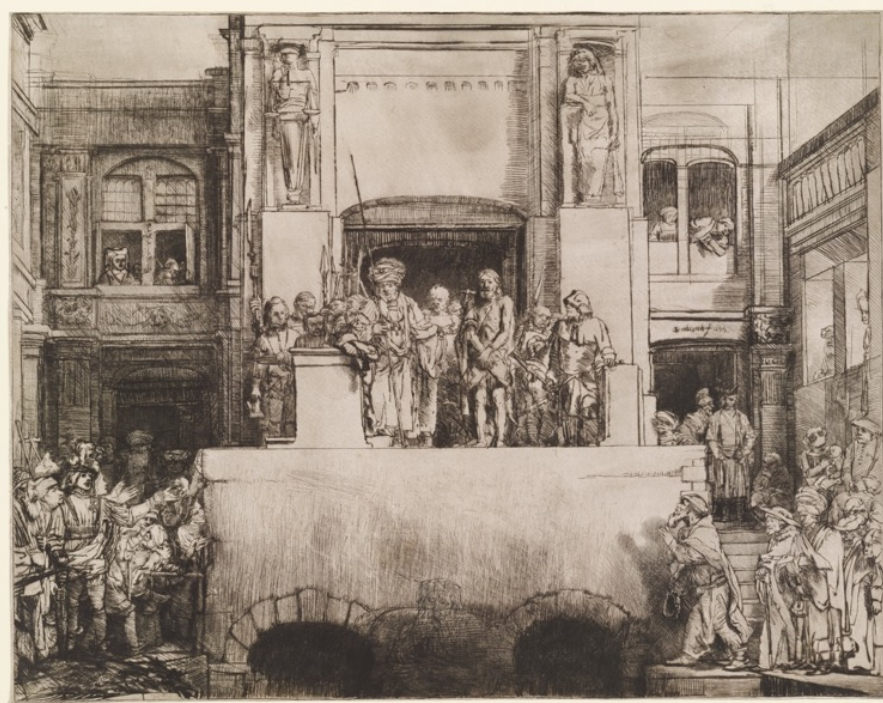


Figure 28. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Presented to the People or Ecce Homo*, Eighth State of eight, drypoint on japan paper, 38.4 x 44.9 cm., MMA, 1655.



Figure 29. Lucas van Leyden, *Large Ecce Homo*, engraving, first state, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1510.



Detail of Figure 29.

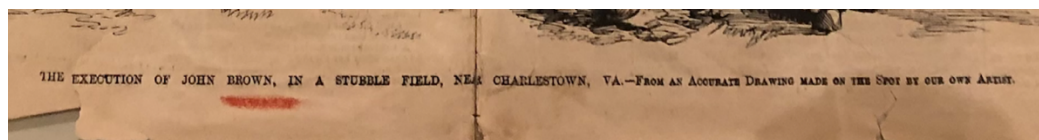


Figure 30. Peter Paul Rubens, *Man of Sorrows (Ecce Homo)*, 1612, oil on canvas, 49.4 x 37.9 inches, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.



Figure 32. Detail Image.  
Unknown artist, *The Execution of John Brown*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 10, 1859, New York Public Library, Archives, John Brown Collection.

Figure 31. Detail. Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *John Brown's Blessing*, 1867, oil on canvas, 84.25 x 60.23 inches, New York Historical Society Museum and Library, New York.



Detail of Figure 17. Unknown artist, *The Execution of John Brown*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 10, 1859, New York Public Library, Archives, John Brown Collection.



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Figure 33. Virginia Militia Uniform ca. 1859 - 1861 of Lt. Henry Bedinger Davenport (Civil War and Militia Auction), lot 52293. Heritage Auctions, Dallas, December 8, 2012. Accessed on October 22, 2020.



Figure 34. Jean Antoine-Gros. *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague House at Jaffa*, 1804, oil on canvas, 209 x 280 inches, Louvre, Paris.



Figure 31. Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *John Brown's Blessing*, 1867, oil on canvas, 84.25 x 60.23 inches, New York Historical Society Museum and Library, New York.



Figure 35. Detail of Figure 28. Jean Antoine-Gros. *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague House at Jaffa*, 1804, oil on canvas, 209 x 280 inches, Louvre, Paris.



Figure 36. Thomas Hovenden, *The Last Moments of John Brown*, oil on canvas, 84.25 x 60.23, New York Historical Society Museum and Library, New York, 1867.




Figure 37. Thomas Hovenden, *Study for "John Brown in Prison,"* ca. 1884, graphite and Chinese white on tan paper, 9 5/16 x 11 3/8 inches, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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	Thomas Hovenden
Title	John Brown at Harper's Ferry
Sale Of	Christie's East : October 01, 1998 [Lot 27] American Paintings and Sculpture
Size	12.5 x 20.0 in. / 31.7 x 50.8 cm
Medium	Oil on Canvas laid on masonite en grisaille <i>Chapelier Galleries, N.Y.</i>
Sold For	Bought In
Estimate	7,000 - 10,000 US\$
Misc.	Signed
Specialist	Elizabeth Hendej
Phone	(212) 606 0563
Fax	(212) 452 2063

Figure 38. Lot Detail sheet of the auction of Thomas Hovenden's *John Brown at Harper's Ferry*, accessed through artnet.com. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Curatorial Files, Thomas Hovenden Papers, accessed by the Author August, 2019.

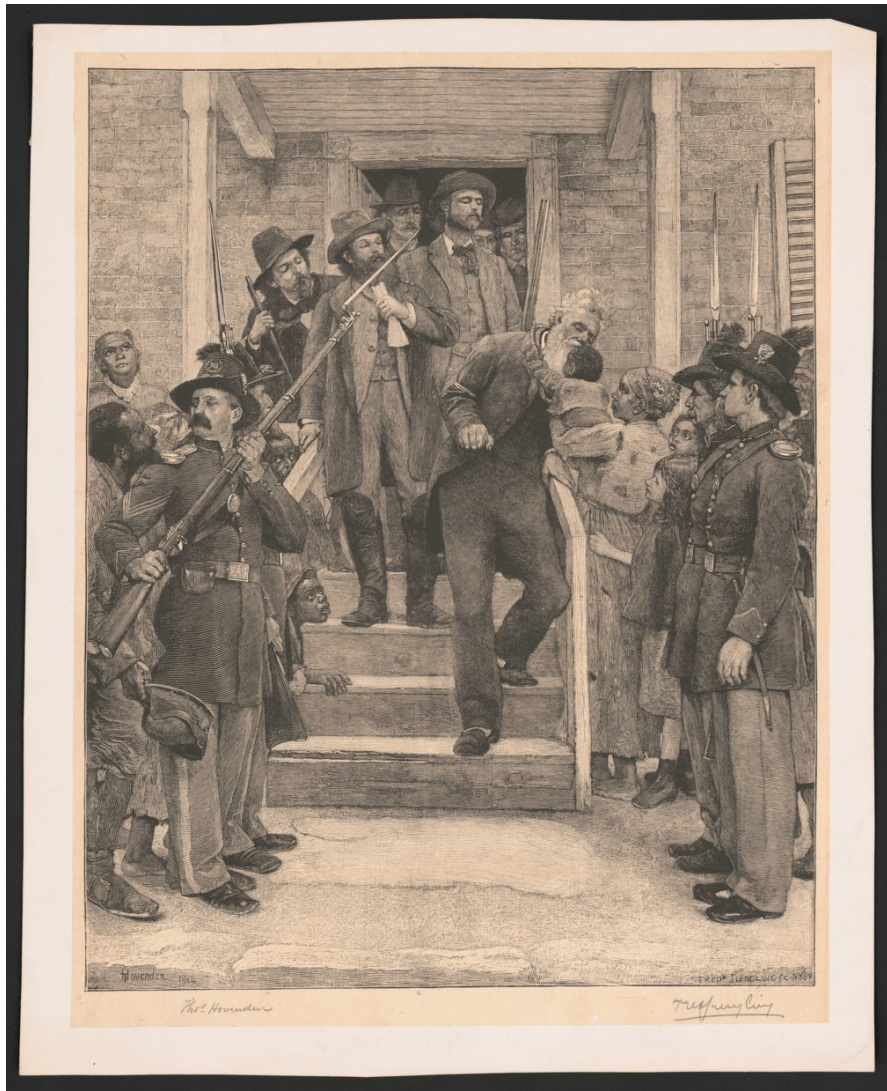


Figure 39. Frederick Juengling after Thomas Hovenden, *Soldiers and Prisoner*, 1884, wood engraving, 18.85 x 15.47 inches, Library of Congress.



Figure 40. Thomas Hovenden, *The Last Moments of John Brown*, 1885, etching, 26 x 20.78 inches, Library of Congress.



Figure 41. John Steuart Curry, *Tragic Prelude*, ca. 1938-40, oil and egg tempera, 11 feet and 4 inches x 31 feet, Kansas State Capital Building.