(NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; PURCHASED WITH MAJOR ACQUISITION FUNDS AND WITH FUNDS DONATED BY BETTY ADLER SCHERMER IN HONOR OF HER GREAT-GRANDFATHER, AUGUST M. BONDI)

▲ John Brown, ca. 1846–47, photographed by Augustus Washington.

"AN ETERNAL TRUTH?"

THE LIFE AND LEGEND OF JOHN BROWN

Rusty Monhollon

"WAS JOHN BROWN SIMPLY AN EPISODE, OR WAS HE AN ETERNAL TRUTH? AND IF A TRUTH, HOW SPEAKS THAT TRUTH TO-DAY?"

—W.E.B. Du Bois[1]

In the east corridor on the second floor of the Kansas Statehouse in Topeka native Kansan John Steuart Curry painted his epic mural *The Tragic Prelude*. The mural symbolized "Bleeding Kansas," the antebellum crisis over the spread of slavery which soon plunged the nation into Civil War and gave the Sunflower State much of its identity. The focal point of Curry's allegorical mural, which he began in 1937 as one of a series of paintings symbolizing the state's past, is John Brown. It was in Kansas that Brown became a national figure—revered by abolitionists and reviled by slaveholders—for his militant and sometimes bloody opposition to slavery. Curry depicted Brown larger-than-life, wild-eyed, mouth open, arms outstretched in a Christ-like repose, one bloodied hand clutching the Bible and the other a rifle, dead Union and Confederate soldiers beneath his feet while a tornado and a prairie fire raged in the background, the harbinger of the irrepressible conflict of the Civil War. While some Kansans praised the painting, others were outraged. Brown stirred the emotions of Kansans like no other; a martyr and a hero to some, to others, a madman and a pathological killer. In 1941,

▼ The Harpers Ferry raid, as depicted in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, November 5, 1859.

(LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

the Kansas Legislature—which had funded the mural—dismissed Curry before the full project was completed.[2]

Few historical figures are as controversial or as polarizing as John Brown in Kansas, or anywhere in the United States, for that matter. Since his death in 1859, popular and scholarly assessments of Brown, which have run the gamut from hagiographic veneration to scornful contempt, reveal a great deal not only about changing historical interpretations but also the impact of contemporary events in shaping our understanding of those events. In the hands of his supporters and fellow abolitionists, John Brown became a martyr to their cause and his legend was born. Between the end of the Civil War and 1900, as the North and South sought to bind up the nation's wounds, Brown was portrayed as a troublemaker and madman, and his luster dulled. In the early twentieth century, as blacks vigorously challenged Jim Crow and racial violence, Brown's star rose again. From the 1930s to the 1960s, most scholars—writing in the context of two World Wars and the Cold War—viewed the Civil War as a needless conflict, and Brown nothing more than a deranged killer. The civil rights movement inspired yet another revision of Brown, who now was seen as a man of principle who sacrificed his life in the cause of racial equality.

Similarly, over the past two decades events such as the bombing at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, the sniper-like murder of a New York physician by an opponent of abortion, and the events of September 11 have renewed both scholarly and general interest in John Brown, the man and the myth. Like Brown, the perpetrators of these violent acts were religious zealots who claimed their actions were directed toward "sinners" and justified by their God as part of a holy crusade. In light of these events, Brown's life and legacy has taken on new significance and scrutiny. The historian David Blight sees Brown as "one of the avengers of history who does the work the rest of us won't, can't, or shouldn't." For Blight, Brown's life and legacy thus raises important questions about many issues that have relevance for the contemporary world: the use of revolutionary violence; the politics of race; the meaning of martyrdom; and our ambivalence toward individuals who espouse "high ideals" but commit "ruthless deeds."[3]

Within both academic and public audiences, Brown is an enigma. Many justify—and some

even admire—Brown's zealous abolitionism (although not necessarily his means) because slavery was an abhorrent and violent institution. Others reject both his fanaticism and his means, which suggest that Brown was psychologically imbalanced, perhaps even mentally ill. Many scholars agree that violence was in fact necessary—the Civil War is the proof—to bring an end to the "peculiar institution," although not all give much credence to the logic and efficacy of Brown's "Holy War" against slavery. What seems clear, however, is that slavery was the context in which John Brown's life and legacy were given meaning.

Indeed, the issue of slavery was never far from John Brown at any stage of his life. His father, a strict Calvinist, imparted to his son that slavery was a sin against God. When he was twelve Brown allegedly witnessed the beating of a young slave with an iron shovel, an apocryphal event he claimed haunted him the rest of his life. When his business ventures in New England failed, Brown relocated to Ohio, where he became immersed in the region's abolitionist network. The murder of Elijah Lovejoy, the abolitionist publisher killed in 1837 by a proslavery mob in Alton, Illinois, radicalized Brown and prompted his decision to dedicate his life to abolishing slavery. Soon thereafter, he began formulating plans for leading a slave insurrection.[4]

In the 1840s, Brown, again near financial destitution, returned to New England, which put him in the heart of the national anti-slavery movement. There he forged relationships with many influential abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass, with whom he shared his nascent plans for inciting an insurrection in the South. Backed by wealthy abolitionists, Brown relocated to North Elba, New York, a harmonic, interracial community. Between 1849 and 1851, Brown's plans for a slave insurrection began to focus on Harpers Ferry, Virginia.[5]

The political turmoil of the 1850s brought John Brown closer to his destiny. In 1854, the controversial Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed the residents of a territory to decide the issue of slavery in new territory. Kansas Territory soon became a testing ground for what became known as popular sovereignty. While slaveholders from Missouri were crossing the border to settle in Kansas, the New England Emigrant Aid Company was raising money to settle Kansas with antislavery men and women. Brown himself arrived in Kansas in October, 1855, amid the depths of "Bleeding Kansas," a state of near anarchy with two separate territorial legislatures—one pro-slavery, one anti-slavery—each claiming to be the legitimate governing authority.[6]

Bleeding Kansas is crucial to both Brown's life and legend, more so perhaps than the events of Harpers Ferry. In 1856, the free-state stronghold of Lawrence was sacked by proslavery men, who killed dozens and burned much of the town to the ground. The attack convinced Brown that the region now was at war and that abolitionists must strike preemptively to defend themselves. On May 26, Brown and six others murdered five proslavery settlers with broadswords at Pottawatomie Creek. News of the massacre alarmed southerners, who saw Brown as typical of all northern abolitionists. Later that summer Brown and his badly-outnumbered men defeated proslavery forces at Osawatomie, Kansas, which enhanced Brown's reputation as a military leader. Brown was commonly called "Osawatomie Brown" or Captain Brown thereafter.[7]

A month later, Brown left Kansas for Boston, where he met with the so-called "Secret Six," the wealthy abolitionists who funded Brown's antislavery crusade. Brown also began recruiting both blacks and whites for his planned attack on the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry. In June 1958, Brown returned briefly to Kansas before raiding two farms in Missouri and leading slaves on an eighty-two day, 1,500 mile trek to freedom in Canada.[8]

In the spring of 1859 Brown traveled widely seeking money and support. In July, Brown arrived in Maryland, scouting the arsenal at Harpers Ferry from a nearby farmhouse rented from Dr. Booth Kennedy. In August Brown met with Fredrick Douglass in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where Brown unsuccessfully tried to convince Douglass to join him in the attack on Harpers Ferry.

On October 16, Brown and twenty-one men launched the ill-fated attack on the armory at Harpers Ferry. They met little resistance and quickly captured their objective, taking hostages from nearby farms, including George B. Shope of Frederick. The news of the raid reached Washington early on October 17, and a detachment of Marines, led by Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee, embarked for Harpers Ferry. President James Buchanan authorized three militia companies from Frederick to Harpers Ferry, and they arrived before Lee's troops.[9] Meanwhile, local residents pinned Brown down and cut off his escape route. The raiders retreated to the firehouse, a small brick building in the armory, which became immortalized later as "John Brown's Fort." Soon after their arrival on October 18, Lee and his men surrounded the engine house and, when Brown refused to surrender, stormed the building. They killed ten, including two of Brown's sons, and took the severely wounded Brown and five others into custody.

The raid was an abysmal failure militarily, mostly due to Brown's incompetent planning and execution. Many scholars, Bertram Wyatt-Brown among them, have suggested that Brown's real objective was not to incite the slaves but merely to strike at the South and stir up sectional discord. Brown biographer Stephen Oates agrees, positing that Brown's critics overlook his "alternative objective at Harpers Ferry," which was to foment sectional tensions. Oates argues that although critics often dismiss Brown as a "demented dreamer," the abolitionist understood clearly the extent of southern apprehension about slavery. As a northern abolitionist, Brown intuitively knew that all he had to do was "to step into Dixie with a gun, announce that he was here to free the blacks, and the effect on the South would be cataclysmic. He was right."[10]

The State of Virginia charged Brown with murder, conspiracy, and treason. His trial began on October 27 in Charles Town, just south of Harpers Ferry. It is here that the writing of the John Brown legend began, and it was much the work of the man himself. Brown shrewdly and cleverly defended himself, articulating his convictions with grace and aplomb. During his month in jail, he wrote and received many letters, some of which were published by northern newspapers. Brown's correspondence exhibited deep convictions, which began to win him support in the North while alarming much of the South. Perhaps the most radical of Brown's convictions—especially in the context of the era in which he lived—was his empathy for blacks. Brown's belief in the social and political equality of blacks and whites shaped how he conducted his life, and drove his fierce opposition to slavery.[11]

It was also during his month in jail that Brown may have come to see his value to the anti-slavery crusade as a martyr. When asked during his trial, "Do you consider yourself an instrument in the hands of Providence?" Brown unflinchingly avowed, "I do."[12] Brown later declared that "if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions of this Slave-country, whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say let it be done."[13] Others also saw the value of Brown the Martyr. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, one of the "Secret Six," wrote to his mother, "Of course, I *think* enough about Brown, though I don't feel sure that his acquittal or rescue would do half as much good as his being executed."[14]

On November 2, the jury declared Brown guilty on all three counts and the court sentenced him to be hanged. On December 2, Brown rode to the gallows on his own coffin. As he left his cell, Brown handed his jailer a note that read: "I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away, but with Blood. I had vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done." Just after 11:00 a.m., and in front of 2,000 spectators, Brown was executed. His widow transported his body back to North Elba for interment. One year later, South Carolina seceded from the Union.

Although Brown's raid and execution eventually electrified much of the North and outraged most of the white South, initially he was generally dismissed in both regions as a madman. Brown's assertion that he was God's instrument no doubt contributed to this response, as did his professed belief in racial equality, a view few—including many abolitionists—shared. But many simply could not fathom the audacity of his plan; only a madman would lead a small band in what seemed a futile and desperate attack. Fearful that Brown's extremism would damage them at the polls Northern Republicans especially took care to distance themselves generally from Brown, and specifically the raid itself and the use of violence. *The Examiner*, a Republican-leaning paper published in Frederick, decried Brown's violence but not his hatred of slavery. It, like

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▲ "John Brown—The Martyr. Meeting a Slave Mother and her child on the steps of Charlestown jail on his way to Execution," a Currier and Ives print from an original painting by Louis Ransom, 1863.

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▲ John Brown in May 1859, five months before his raid on Harpers Ferry.

other pro-Republican papers, refuted claims that Brown was a Republican or linked with the party, noting, for example, that Brown's army consisted of both Democrats and Republicans. The paper acknowledged, however, that the raid had struck "terror" into the region.[15] Abraham Lincoln disapproved of Brown's actions, too, but admired the abolitionist's honesty, courage, and convictions. Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew also condemned the raid but declared "John Brown himself is right."[16]

In death Brown became a national symbol over the issue of slavery. In 1859, a melodrama entitled *Ossawatomie Brown, or the Insurrection at Harpers Ferry* debuted at the Bowery Theater in New York. In 1861, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, William Dean Howells, and Edna Dean Proctor, among others, composed poems to his memory. By this time, many abolitionists had abandoned their commitments to peaceful means, and some seemed to embrace a confrontation which appeared more and more unavoidable. Longfellow wrote in his journal on December 2, 1859, that "This will be a great day in our history; the date of a new Revolution,—quite as much needed as the old one. Even now as I write, they are leading Old John Brown to execution in Virginia for attempting to rescue slaves! This is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind, which will come soon."[17] The Quaker John Greenleaf Whittier respected Brown's courage and conviction, but could not praise him fully: "Perish with him the folly that seeks through evil good!"[18]

The historian Eyal Naveh argues that after his death Brown's supporters—Emerson, Thoreau, Phillips, and Garrison foremost among them—"portrayed" him "as someone who had not really died, but had joined God in battle against the sin of slavery."[19] Emerson remarked that Brown "will make the gallows glorious, like the Cross," and Thoreau's "A Plea for Captain John Brown" struck a similar tone. Thoreau defended Brown as a "transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles," who risked his life to liberate the slaves. Thoreau proclaimed later that Brown "is more alive than ever he was.... He is no longer working in secret. He works in public and in the clearest light that shines on this land."[20] The journalist George William Curtis made a similar declaration, writing that "John Brown was not buried but planted. He will spring up hundredfold."[21] The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher declared, "Let no man pray that Brown be spared. Let Virginia make him a martyr. Now, he only blundered. His soul was noble; his work miserable. But a cord and gibbet would redeem all that and round up Brown's failure with a heroic success." Wendell Phillips eulogized Brown during the funeral at North Elba. "We see him walking with radiant, serene face to the scaffold, and think what an iron heart, what devoted faith! Thank God for such a master," exhorted the abolitionist. "Could we have asked for a nobler representative of the Christian North putting her foot on the accursed system of slavery?... How can we stand here without a fresh and utter consecration."[22]

As Scott John Hammond describes him, Brown was "a practitioner of the Christian

ethic framed by the imperative of universal love and compassion for others, especially those who suffer under the yoke of oppression and injustice." Brown frequently commented on the necessity of sacrifice—the spilling of the blood of innocents—for the remission of sin. "Brown judged society," Hammond notes, "according to the laws of God."[23] The point is reinforced by Paul Finkelman, who argues that "[b]y transforming Brown into a martyr, the antislavery movement helped prepare the North for a future that would create hundreds of thousands of martyrs."[24]

African Americans declared December 2, the date of Brown's execution, "Martyr Day." In New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Detroit, black-owned businesses closed for the day, and African-American men walked down the streets of these cities wearing black armbands. Throughout the urban North, African American families and community leaders held vigils of prayer and fasting in their churches. Others convened in meeting halls and sent financial donations to the widow and family of John Brown.[25] Charles H. Langston, a black abolitionist, issued a statement denying that he had a hand in the Harpers Ferry raid. But he went on to express his solidarity with the attempt at slave liberation: "But what shall I deny? I cannot deny that I feel the very deepest sympathy with the immortal John Brown in his heroic and daring effort to free the slaves." Most African Americans, argues the historian Benjamin Quarles, shared Langston's sentiment.[26]

For W.E.B. Du Bois, whose 1909 biography of Brown set Brown's legend squarely in the heart of the struggle of African Americans, Brown's life and actions proved that the "cost of liberty is less than the price of oppression." Slavery was wrong, immoral, evil; the only way to abolish it was to "kill it." Speaking in Harpers Ferry in 1932, Du Bois identified Brown as the necessary catalyst to the Civil War and articulated the abolitionist's disconcerting legacy:

> Some people have the idea that crucifixion consists in the punishment of an innocent man. The essence of crucifixion is that men are killing a criminal, that men have got to kill him ... and yet that the act of crucifying him is the salvation of the world. John Brown broke the law; he killed human beings... . Those people who defended slavery had to execute John Brown although they knew that in killing him they were committing the greater crime. It is out of that human paradox that there comes crucifixion.[27]

The response in the South was quite different. At first, Southerners were terrified, then relieved, that Brown had not inspired slaves to revolt. As expanding Northern support and approval of Brown's deed filtered into the South, the southern temperament changed, fearing that Brown had been but one cog in the great Northern conspiracy against slavery. Ironically, Southerners played an important role in the creation of the Brown mythology and Brown's martyrdom, notes Paul Finkelman, and the quick verdict and harsh punishment were crucial. Virginia Governor Henry A. Wise, who had hastened to Harpers Ferry upon hearing the news of the raid, interviewed Brown before he was taken to Charles Town for trial. Wise later in Richmond addressed the citizens of the commonwealth, congratulating those who had thwarted Brown's raid while also exhorting Virginians to organize and arm for such attacks in the future. Wise warned the commonwealth not to dismiss Brown as a lunatic. "They are mistaken who take him to be a madman," the governor declared. "He is a bundle of the best nerves I ever saw—cut and thrust and bleeding in bonds. He is a man of clear head, of courage, of simple ingenuousness. He is cool, collected, and indomitable."[28]

Brown's death did little to assuage southern suspicions of the North nor did it ease the region's fear of a slave insurrection. In fact, the raid seemed to inure southern convictions that abolitionists would stop at nothing to incite an insurrection. "We rejoice that old BROWN has been hung," read an editorial in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. "He was not only a murderer of innocent persons, but he attempted one of the greatest crimes against society—the stirring up of a servile and civil war. He has paid the penalty for his crimes, and we hope his fate may be a warning to all who might have felt inclined to imitate his aggressive conduct."[29] The *Charleston [South Carolina] Mercury* called the raid "a portentous omen of the future," and concluded that there was little left for Southerners to do but arm themselves.[30] The *North Carolina Whig* struck a similar tone, issuing a call for volunteers "to defend our homes and firesides from the incendiary and murderous attacks of Northern Abolitionists."[31] The *Baltimore Sun* opined just before Brown's execution that the South could not live "under a government, the majority of whose subjects or citizens regard John Brown as a martyr and a Christian hero, rather than a murderer and a robber."[32]

The southern response to Harpers Ferry, according to the writer Russell Banks, catapulted Brown from a "very minor figure" to the "emblematic"—if not the "defining figure"—of the abolitionist struggle against slavery.[33] Southerners regarded the raid as evidence of a Northern conspiracy. The plot included men from Maine to Kansas, which, argued the *Richmond Enquirer*, proved the extent of the conspiracy to incite "servile insurrection in Virginia." Moreover, the *Enquirer* asked, "Who funded Brown's attack?" The answer, it suggested, "would reveal the extent of the conspiracy." For the Union to be preserved, Southerners asserted, Northerners had to vigorously repudiate Brown and his beliefs. Only this would illustrate to the South that the North had "no sympathy with these Abolition incendiaries and will in no manner tolerate either their diabolical teachings or their diabolical conspiracies."[34]

John Brown achieved more in death than he did in his fifty-nine years of life. Union soldiers marched into battle singing "John Brown's Body," a tune to which Julia Ward Howe, the wife of Samuel Gridley Howe, one of the Secret Six, wrote the words to *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. The historian David Reynolds asserts that the imagery in

Howe's lyrics—"As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free;" "His truth is marching on;" a just God "trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;" "the fateful lightnings of His terrible swift sword"—captured the "essence" of the messianic Brown, the self-professed "instrument of God." Without Howe's anthem, Reynolds concludes, Brown may not have become infused into the American mythological imagination.[35]

By the end of the war, even among some southerners Brown's public image had changed, and many regarded him as both a "great man" and a "hero." "From the time of his capture," writes William Keeney, "John Brown's body became public property. No longer an actor in society, Brown had become a text to be written, a writing that even he recognized was all that was left to him and his cause, a writing that he began participating in from the first moment of his capture."[36]

What has always been clear is African Americans' near-unanimous admiration of John Brown. As Paul Finkelman argues, at a time when most whites "doubted the equality of blacks or their innate abilities, Brown was willing to stake his life on the abilities of his black recruits to take orders, execute commands, and fight bravely."[37] George Washington Williams, one of the first great African-American historians, contends that Brown "ranks among the world's greatest heroes." Speaking to students at Storer College in Harpers Ferry in 1881, Frederick Douglass opined, "Did John Brown fail? ... John Brown began the war that ended American slavery and made this a free Republic.... His zeal in the cause of my race was far greater than mine—it was as the burning sun to my taper light—mine was bounded by time, his stretched away to the boundless shores of eternity. I could live for the slave, but he could die for him."[38] W.E.B. Du Bois, also speaking in Harpers Ferry at the second meeting of the Niagara Movement, avowed that blacks "do not believe in violence, neither the despised violence of the raid nor the lauded violence of the solider, nor the barbarous violence of the mob, but we do believe in John Brown, in that incarnate spirit of justice... . And here on the scene of John Brown's martyrdom we reconsecrate ourselves, our honor, our posterity to the final emancipation of the race which John Brown died to make free."[39]

Perhaps the depths of black adulation for Brown is best represented in the tale of Brown kissing the slave baby on his way to the gallows, a scene that never took place but has nonetheless been immortalized in the Brown mythology. John Greenleaf Whittier first put the image on paper, published in the *New York Independent* a few weeks after the execution:

> John Brown of Ossawatomie 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 Ossawatomie, 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![40]

Later, several artists created visual images of the legend. Louis Ransom completed a seven by ten foot painting entitled *John Brown on His Way to Execution*, which was first displayed in 1860. The painting, which Ransom based on newspaper accounts of the execution, is rife with symbolism, including a banner with Virginia's state motto, *Sic Semper Tyrannis*, forming a halo above Brown's head. In 1863, Currier and Ives published a lithograph based on the Ransom painting, simply entitled *John Brown*. In 1870, Currier and Ives released another version, titled *John Brown, The Martyr*. In 1867, Thomas S. Noble painted his version, *John Brown's Blessing*. Thomas Hovenden, a European-trained artist, painted *The Last Moments of John Brown*.[41] The legend is powerful, suggesting Brown's commitment to racial equality. These images are the "personification" of Brown's significance to African Americans, argues the historian Margaret Washington. Brown was willing to die, not for himself but for the slave.[42] The depth of this devotion can be seen in other ways, too. Oberlin College, which purchased the Ransom painting, later erected a monument to the memory of three Oberlin men who died at Harpers Ferry. Western University in Quindaro, Kansas (near Kansas City) erected a statue of Brown in 1911. The inscription reads "from a grateful people."[43]

Despite his iconization during the Civil War, Brown's memory once the conflict ended did not go uncontested. Indeed, argues the historian Merrill Peterson, between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the twentieth century Brown's reputation measurably suffered, in large measure the consequence of efforts to reconcile the North and South. Whereas many had once depicted the war as an irrepressible struggle between good and evil, that view was soon amended by a sense that perhaps the war—and the attendant suffering and tragedy—had not been necessary. Thus, Brown's image as an "American archetype" had to be altered to fit the new historical paradigm.[44]

One of the first biographies of Brown was *The Public Life of Capt. John Brown*, written by James Redpath, a Brown family friend. Described as "an eyewitness account," Redpath's account was hagiography at its best. Subsequent scholarship, however, began depicting Brown as bloodthirsty and deranged, the antithesis of the heroic martyr. "Brown's detractors viewed him as a false martyr because he had promoted fragmentation and disintegration instead of social cohesion and unification in American society." Lincoln, not Brown, was "the great martyr who had atoned for the nation's sin in life and death."[45]

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Poster for "Battle Hymn," a Federal Theatre Project play about John Brown, 1936.

This was especially true for southern interpretations of Brown, whose commitment to racial equality represented the deepest fears of the South: miscegenation and the threat to white womanhood. The northern response to Brown's death, observed North Carolina Senator Thomas L. Clingman, made "a strong impression on the minds of Southern people" and resulted in fear and revulsion. The symbolic power of John Brown's body, notes Peter Wallenstein, was not limited to the North. "Southern perceptions of Northern responses" to Brown's execution "had great political significance in the South as well."[46] A.R.H. Ranson, a former Confederate officer who lived most of his life near Harpers Ferry, asserted in 1913 that Brown falsely believed slaves wanted freedom. Brown did not understand the true nature of slaves and slavery. Had he, Ranson wrote, Brown would have realized that blacks were "comfortable and happy, [and] there was such a thing as love between master and slave." Consequently, Ranson noted, no slaves came to Brown's side during the raid on Harpers Ferry.[47]

It is nearly impossible to separate the legend of John Brown from Kansas's own legends and mythology. Yet, Brown's character also suffered in Kansas, impugned by those seeking to rewrite the past and claim their own stake to the state's founding. As the abolitionists who organized and led the emigrant aid companies to Kansas wrote their memoirs, according to Peterson, they vilified Brown. Charles Robinson, the first governor of Kansas, once likened Brown to Jesus Christ. Speaking at the dedication of a monument to Brown at Osawatomie in 1877, Robinson declared "The soul of John Brown was the inspiration of the Union armies in the emancipation war, and it will be the inspiration of all men in the present and distant future who may revolt against tyranny and oppression... . To the superficial observer John Brown was a failure. So was Jesus of Nazareth. Both suffered ignominious death as traitors to the government, yet one is now hailed as the Savior of the world from sin, and the other of a race from bondage."[48] By the 1890s, however, Robinson tried to elevate his own role in Kansas's history by diminishing Brown's, calling him "a liar, a coward, a thief, and a murderer." Rather than being a positive force for change, Robinson now argued Brown was in fact the cause of Kansas's troubles, making a bad situation worse.[49] Franklin Sanborn, another member of the Secret Six, defended Brown's reputation vigorously in *The Life and Letters of John Brown*, published in 1885. Even a moderate like Kansas's own William Allen White, the influential publisher of the *Emporia Gazette*, opined that Brown's "life settled no controversy; his deeds accomplished no great results; but nevertheless, he was needed, and without him the abolition of human slavery might have been postponed for many years. Every great movement needs an agitator. Every leader of spiritual ideals needs a John the Baptist."[50]

The historical profession's assessment of Brown was at times sympathetic, at others derisive, although most historians acknowledged—if sometimes grudgingly—that Brown was a significant (although not a necessary) factor in the coming of the Civil War. The question of Brown's sanity was a central preoccupation, as it would be for later generations of historians. Professional historians focused typically on Brown's involvement at Harpers Ferry rather than his deeds in Kansas, viewing the latter as only a minor factor in starting the war. Some, mostly northerners with clear pro-Union sympathies, suggested that it was Brown's Virginian captors and executioners, rather than the abolitionist himself, who were responsible for elevating the significance of Brown's raid. Others, especially those from the South, agreed with Woodrow Wilson, who characterized Brown's actions at Harpers Ferry as "sinister."[51]

Brown was not without his defenders, however. Several works of historical fiction, with Brown as a central character, appeared in the late nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries. Perhaps the two most important works on Brown were biographies. In 1909, the same year he helped to found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), W.E.B. Du Bois published *John Brown: A Biography*. Du Bois's book placed Brown's life and legend squarely within the struggles of African Americans for freedom and equality. A year later, another NAACP founder, Oswald Garrison Villard (the grandson of William Lloyd Garrison) published what one historian calls the greatest American historical biography written up to that time, *John Brown, 1850–1859: A Biography of Fifty Years After*. Villard's opus became a touchstone for both scholarly and popular critiques of the Brown legend. Both Du Bois's and Villard's work reflected the symbolic importance of Brown for the civil rights movement and the NAACP, and to African Americans more generally.[52]

This symbolism was perhaps most evident in works of art and literature. Brown was a frequent subject in the poems and paintings of artists during the Harlem Renaissance, often portrayed Christ-like, crucified to take away the nation's sin of enslaving human beings. Jacob Lawrence, for example, produced in his distinctive style a twenty-two piece series entitled *The Legend of John Brown*; the first painting in the series depicted Brown crucified on the Cross. Lesser known are works by Horace Pippin and William H. Johnson, both American primitive or folk painters. One of Pippin's best-known paintings is of Brown sitting on his own coffin on the way to his hanging. Brown is a central figure in two of Johnson's paintings, both group portraits. In *Three Great Freedom Fighters*, Brown and Frederick Douglass stand on either side of Harriet Tubman, their hands in hers. In *Three Great Abolitionists: A. Lincoln, F. Douglass, J. Brown*, Johnson depicted Brown alongside Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.[53]

Writers of the Harlem Renaissance found Brown a worthy subject, none more so than Langston Hughes. Hughes, who grew up in Lawrence, Kansas, and was the grandson of Charles Langston, an alleged accomplice of Brown's, composed "October 16th: The Raid."

Perhaps
You will remember
John Brown.
John Brown
Who took his gun,
Took twenty-one companions
White and black,
Went to shoot your way to freedom
Where two rivers meet
And the hills of the
North
And the hills of the
South
Look slow at one another—
And died
For your sake.
Now that you are
Many years free,
And the echo of the Civil War
Has passed away,
And Brown himself
Has long been tried at law,
Hanged by the neck,
And buried in the ground—
Since Harpers Ferry
Is alive with ghosts today,
Immortal raiders
Come again to town—
Perhaps
You will recall
John Brown.[54]

Lawrence's paintings and Hughes's prose illustrate vividly the high regard African Americans had for Brown, at a time when whites generally dismissed or denigrated the abolitionist. There were exceptions, of course. In 1928, the poet Stephen Vincent Benét published *John Brown's Body*, the bestselling, Pulitzer Prize-winning, 377-page epic poem. While Brown is the central character, the piece was as much about the moral burden of war as it was Brown himself. Benét insightfully identified the difficulty of finding Brown's place in the nation's historical consciousness:

You can weigh John Brown's body well enough,
But how and in what balance weigh John Brown? ...
He had no gift for life, no gift to bring
Life but his body and a cutting edge,
But he knew how to die.[55]

Despite the critical acclaim and popular success of Benét's *John Brown's Body*, generally Brown's reputation between 1920 and 1970 changed very little. Typically among scholars he was regarded as a deranged or mad fanatic. In large measure this view resulted from revisionist interpretations of the Civil War, which posited that extremists—both northern abolitionists like Brown and Southern nationalists—fanned the winds of war, into which inept and blundering politicians plunged the nation. Perhaps the harshest appraisal of Brown appeared in 1942, written by James C. Malin, a historian at the University of Kansas. *John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six* was a scathing indictment of Brown that shifted the historical lens from Harpers Ferry to Bleeding Kansas. Malin denigrated Brown as a ruthless murderer and decried his "devious career of falsehood and bloodshed lacking any redeeming purpose." Like many scholars today, Malin could not reconcile Brown's participation in the 1856 massacre at Pottawatomie Creek with his strident crusade to abolish slavery. For Malin, Brown was a troublemaker, an agitator who sought not peace and reconciliation but personal fame. Rather than a martyred hero, Malin's Brown is an anti-hero, a mere "parenthesis in the history of Kansas" and the United States.[56]

Popular culture portrayed Brown similarly. He was a central character in two Hollywood films, *Santa Fe Trail* (1940) and *Seven Angry Men* (1955). *Santa Fe Trail*, which took many liberties with the historical record, starred Errol Flynn as J.E.B. Stuart, Ronald Reagan as George Armstrong Custer, Olivia de Havilland as Kit Carson Holliday, and Raymond Massey as John Brown. Assigned to Kansas Territory during the depths of Bleeding Kansas, Stuart and Custer are the film's principal characters, with Brown as the protagonist that drives the personal competition between Stuart and Custer, and their romantic interest in Holliday. Through most of the film, Brown is depicted as a villain and a terrorist, although by the final scene he is redeemed as a martyr to a just cause. Fifteen years later, Massey, who also toured for two years in a stage production of *John Brown's Body*, again portrayed Brown in *Seven Angry Men*. Brown is depicted as a devout Christian who turns to violence only out of his frustration with the continued existence of slavery. While Brown is a more sympathetic character than in *Santa Fe Trail*, he remains, as the historian Peggy A. Russo notes, an incomplete historical figure. In both films, Russo concludes "some aspect of the 'real' Brown comes through," yet he remains an elusive historical character. Both films are products of their time and Russo posits that at least part of the reason for the change in how Brown is portrayed resulted from the impact of the civil rights movement on American culture. The producers of *Seven Angry Men*, released a year after the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, could portray John Brown more favorably because popular attitudes about African Americans, Russo suggests, had changed.[57]

This subtle change in the depiction of Brown in popular culture perhaps anticipated broader changes in American society, although this altered view was not held universally. As centennial observances of the Harpers Ferry raid were held in 1959 Brown was still characterized by writers and scholars as a bloodthirsty fanatic. The struggle for racial

"John Brown was found 'Guilty of treason and murder in the 1st degree' and was hanged in Charles Town, Virginia on December 2, 1859," No. 22 in Jacob Lawrence's *John Brown Series*, 1941.

equality, as Russo noted above, perhaps did more to rehabilitate Brown's popular image and recast his legacy. Brown had always been a significant figure to African Americans, a stature that only grew during the 1960s. This was especially true among the more strident voices, such as black nationalists and advocates of Black Power. Many regarded Brown as "the blackest white man," and the abolitionist reemerged as a symbol during the era. Malcolm X frequently evoked Brown's memory, and used Brown's actions as a yardstick by which to measure whites. If whites wanted to help blacks, Malcolm said, ask them what they think of John Brown. "Do you know what John Brown did? He went to war. He was a white man who went to war against white people to help free slaves."[58]

The New Abolitionist Society (NAS) is an example of how Brown's legend carries on. The NAS, which publishes the journal *Race Traitor*, has held several "John Brown Days" with events held in North Elba, New York, Osawatomie, Kansas, and Altadena, California. The 1999 event, for example, was proclaimed as a day of ritual, reflection, remembrance, and renewal. For the NAS, Brown "made war against slavery, working closely with black people. Those who think it saner to collaborate with evil than to resist it have labeled him a madman, but it was not for his madness that he was hanged; no, it was for obeying the biblical injunction to remember them that are in bonds as bound with them. For those who suffer directly from white supremacy, John Brown is a high point in a centuries-long history of resistance; for so-called whites he is the hope that they can step outside of their color and take part in building a new human community." Among the members of NAS are Russell Banks, Derrick Bell, John Bracey, Robin D.G. Kelley, Toni Morrison, David Roediger, Pete Seeger, Cornel West, Howard Zinn, and the editors of *Race Traitor*.[59]

What then do we make of John Brown's life and legacy? Since 1970, Brown has been the subject (by one scholar's count) of at least forty-three biographies, numerous scholarly studies, many works of fiction, including Russell Banks' best-selling novel *Cloudsplitter*, and eighteen children's books.[60] Clearly, interest in Brown has not waned. Given the increase of political violence worldwide over the past thirty years it is likely that John Brown will remain a figure of historical interest for some time.

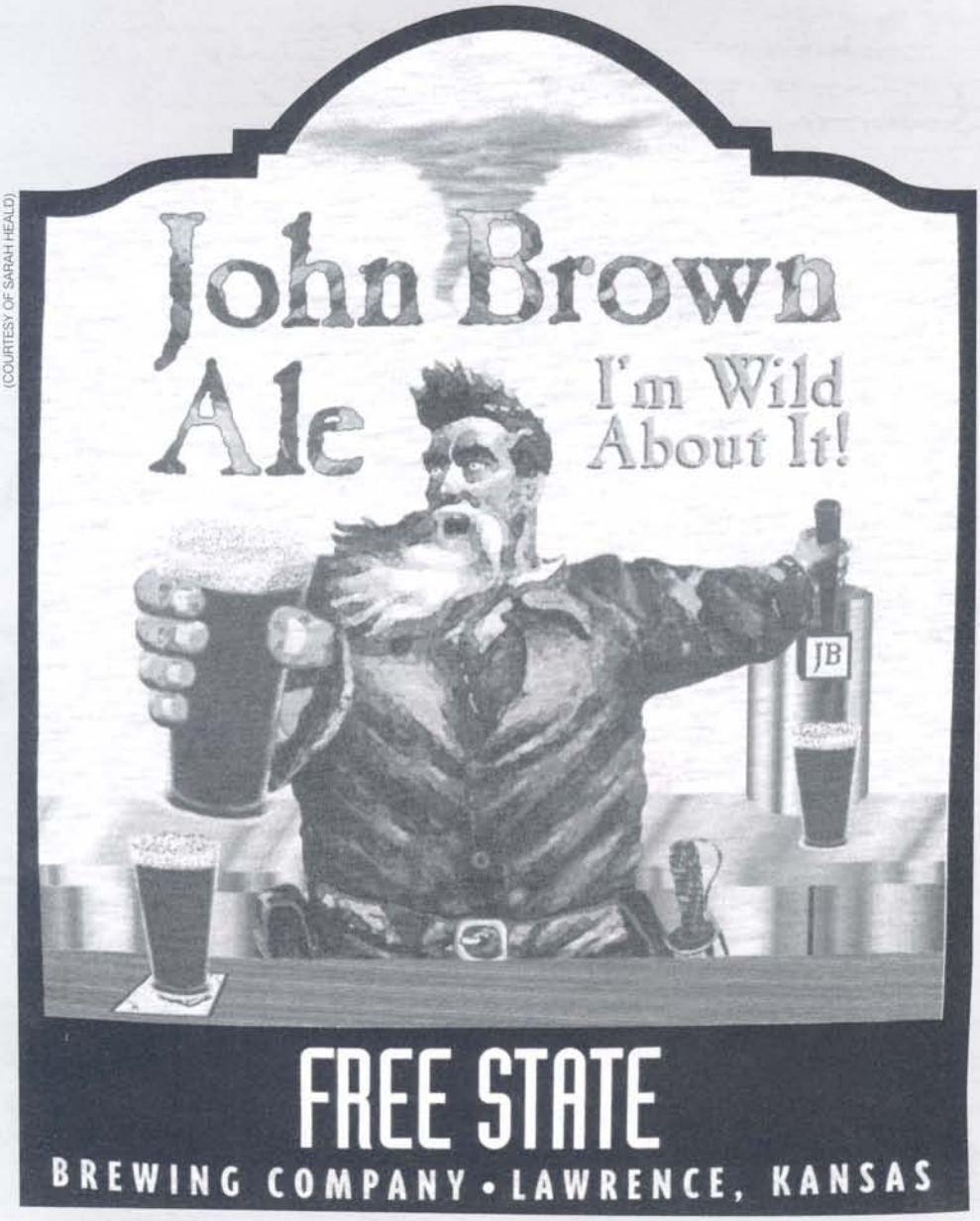
The question remains, perhaps asked best by Stephen Vincent Benét: "How and in what balance weigh John Brown?" Of what significance is he for our modern world? The political scientist Scott John Hammond concludes that Brown is "more relevant" today than Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, or Martin Luther King because "in his perpetually frustrated zeal for freedom and justice, he embodies the core of the American story; we see in the growth of the nation writ large the same constant buffering between the ideas of freedom and the reality of interminable frustration that created a similar tension in the turbulent psyche of the Osawatomie Prophet."[61] Similarly, the novelist Russell Banks contends that Brown's "life raises very basic and ongoing questions about political violence, violence in the service of an ideal, of a principled cause... And that, to me, makes him so tragically revealing and emblematic of our history and of our culture and our nature today."[62]

Many Americans—in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—have dismissed Brown because of his religious zealotry, while ignoring, as Stephen Oates points out, "the fact that Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee—to name only two other figures of this extremely religious time—also came to regard themselves as instruments of God."[63] It is difficult, too, to embrace Brown fully because of the violence he used to achieve his goals. Bertram Wyatt-Brown notes that while "the historian can perceive Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry as the political and moral equivalent to contemporary guerilla and terrorist campaigns[,] ... such zealotry and indifference to the life of innocents strikes us as inhuman, not to mention personally threatening." Brown is enigmatic for the contemporary world. Yet, Wyatt-Brown concludes, we are the "beneficiaries" of Brown's war against slavery. "Americans of every race must honor Brown for his immense contribution to the eventual outcome."[64]

Perhaps Stephen Oates best expresses the contemporary significance of John Brown's life and legacy. "In our own uncertain time, we can learn a great deal from Brown's life," Oates posits, "if we avoid glorifying or denigrating him and try to understand the man in the context of his own era." Brown turned to violence, Oates argues, because the world in which he lived had "institutionalized a monstrous moral contradiction; the existence of slavery in a Republic that claimed to be both Christian and

"IN OUR OWN UNCERTAIN TIME, WE CAN LEARN A GREAT DEAL FROM BROWN'S LIFE, IF WE AVOID GLORIFYING OR DENIGRATING HIM AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE MAN IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS OWN ERA."

—Stephen Oates



(COURTESY OF SARAH HEALD)

▲ John Brown T-shirt from the Free State Brewing Co., Lawrence, KS.

free, a Republic founded on the enlightened ideal that everybody is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Why, Oates asks, did Brown turn to violence? Oates posits that "out of the whirlpool of his own agonies and aspirations, Brown became a revolutionary who rejected peaceful alternatives in favor of violent means to remove injustice. And we can learn something about the society that produced him, too. For the United States of his day had been unable (or unwilling) to resolve such a contradiction, the country invited a messianic rebel like Brown to appear with his sword."[65] By seeking to understand the world that created John Brown—and not simply dismissing him as deranged extremist—we might discover how our own world has produced men, women and children who see violence as the only answer.

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1 W.E.B. Du Bois, *John Brown: A Biography*, ed., John David Smith (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 190.

2 For a scholarly assessment of Curry and his work, see Patricia Junker, *John Steuart Curry: Inventing the Middle West* (New York: Hudson Hills Press: 1998).

3 David W. Blight, "John Brown: Triumphant Failure," *The American Prospect* 11:9 (13 March 2000), 44.

4 The historiography on Brown is quite large, and includes many biographies. The details of Brown's life are widely available, but I have drawn generally on the following: Richard Owen Boyer, *The Legend of John Brown: A Biography and a History* (New York, Knopf, 1973); Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge This Land With Blood; A Biography of John Brown*, 2nd ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984); 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); and *John Brown's Holy War*, Robert Kenner, prod. and dir. (PBS Home Video, 2000).

5 On Brown's relationship with Douglass, see Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, adapted by Barbara Ritchie (New York: Crowell, 1966).

6 For a recent assessment of "Bleeding Kansas," see Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); see also Gunja SenGupta, "Bleeding Kansas: A Review Essay," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* (Winter 2001): 318–341.

7 One of Brown's men in Kansas was a native Marylander, James Townsley from Harford County.

8 The "Secret Six" were: Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a minister; Gerrit Smith, who had given Brown the farm in North Elba; the Reverend Theodore Parker, the controversial Unitarian minister; Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, an educational reformer for the blind and insane; George Luther Stearns, a leading backer of the Emigrant Aid Company; and Franklin Sanborn, who later became Brown's biographer. See Edward J. Renehan, Jr., *The Secret Six: The True Tale of the Men Who Conspired with John Brown* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997).

9 "'In Readiness To Do Every Duty Assigned:' The Frederick Militia and John Brown's Raid On Harper's Ferry, October 17–18, 1859." ed., Gregory A. Stiverson. Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland, 1991. Governor (Miscellaneous Papers), 1859, MSA S1274-37-1. Jacobsen Conference on Maryland History Document no. 1. available http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/msa/speccol/sc2200/sc2221/000030/html/sc2221_30.html

10 Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "'A Volcano Beneath a Mountain of Snow': John Brown and the Problem of Interpretation," in *His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and The Harpers Ferry Raid*, ed., Paul Finkelman (Charlottesville : University Press of Virginia, 1995), 26–27; Oates, *To Purge This Land*, ix.

11 Merrill D. Peterson, *John Brown: The Legend Revisited* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 3.

12 Brown quoted in Louis A. DeCaro, Jr., *"Fire From The Midst of You:" A Religious Life of John Brown* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 266.

13 As quoted in Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, 14.

14 Higginson, as quoted in Wyatt-Brown, "'A Volcano Beneath a Mountain of Snow,' 30–31.

15 *The Examiner* [Frederick, Maryland] 19 October 1859; 26 October 1859; 23 November 1859; 30 November 1859; *Hagerstown [Maryland] Herald and Torch Light* 30 November 1859.

16 [Thomas Drew], *The John Brown Invasion, an Authentic History of the Harper's Ferry Tragedy* (Boston, 1860), 97, as quoted in Paul Finkelman, ed., *His Soul Goes Marching On*, 3–4.

17 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Boston, 1886), 347.

18 John Greenleaf Whittier, "Brown of Ossawatomie," *The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston: Houghton, Miflin, and Co, 1883), 201.

19 As quoted in Eyal Naveh, "John Brown and the Legacy of Martyrdom," in *Terrible Swift Sword: The Legacy of John Brown*, eds., Peggy A. Russo and Paul Finkelman (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 83.

20 Henry David Thoreau, "A Plea for Captain John Brown," and the "Last Days of John Brown," in *Thoreau: Political Writings*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 140, 169.

21 As quoted in Eyal Naveh, "John Brown and the Legacy of Martyrdom," 83.

22 Beecher and Phillips both quoted in Charles Joyner, "'Guilty of Holiest Crime': The Passion of John Brown," in Finkelman, *His Soul Goes Marching On*, 299.

23 Scott John Hammond, "John Brown as Founder: America's Violent Confrontation With its First Principles," in Russo and Finkelman, *Terrible Swift Sword*, 62–63.

24 Paul Finkelman, "Manufacturing Martyrdom: The Antislavery Response to John Brown's Raid" in Finkelman, *His Soul Goes Marching On*, 61.

25 Daniel C. Littlefield, "Blacks, John Brown, and a Theory of Manhood," in Finkelman, *His Soul Goes Marching On*, 67, 70.

26 Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 240, as cited in Karen Whitman, "Re-evaluating John Brown's Raid at Harpers Ferry" *West Virginia History* 34:1 available http://www.wvculture.org/history/jb11.html

27 Du Bois, as quoted in David W. Blight, "John Brown: Triumphant Failure," *The American Prospect* 11:9 (13 March 2000), 44.

28 As quoted in Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, 2.

29 "Our Harper's Ferry and Charlestown News," *Enquirer* (Cincinnati, Ohio) 3 December 1859, available http://history.furman.edu/~benson/docs/ohcejb59c03a.htm

30 As quoted in Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, 12.

31 As quoted in Charles Joyner, "'Guilty of Holiest Crime': The Passion of John Brown," in Finkelman, *His Soul Goes Marching On*, 313–314.

32 Peter Knupfer, "A Crisis in Conservatism: Northern Unionism and the Harpers Ferry Raid," in Finkelman, *His Soul Goes Marching On*, 123.

33 Russell Banks, quoted in *John Brown's Holy War* (PBS Home Video, 2000). transcript available http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/brown/filmmore/transcript/transcript1.html

34 As quoted in Peter Wallenstein, "Incendiaries All: Southern Politics and the Harpers Ferry Raid," in Finkelman, *His Soul Goes Marching On*, 151.

35 David Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 4–5.

36 William Keeney, "Hero, Martyr, Madman: Representations of John Brown in the Poetry of the John Brown Year, 1859–60," in Russo and Finkelman, *Terrible Swift Sword*, 145.

37 Paul Finkelman, "Introduction," in Russo and Finkelman, *Terrible Swift Sword*, xxvii.

38 Frederick Douglass, "John Brown: An Address by Frederick Douglass, at the Fourteenth Anniversary of Storer College, Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, 30 May 1881," in *African American Perspectives: Pamphlets from the Daniel A.P. Murray Collection, 1818–1907*, Library of Congress; available on-line, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/murray:@field(DOCID+@lit(lcrbmrpt2309div1)):

39 Du Bois quoted in Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, 101–102.

40 John Greenleaf Whittier, "Brown of Ossawatomie," *The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston: Houghton, Miflin, and Co, 1883), 201.

41 James C. Malin, "The John Brown Legend in Pictures: Kissing the Negro Baby," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 8:4 (November 1939): 339–34; Malin, "The John Brown Legend in Pictures: Kissing the Negro Baby," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 9:4 (November 1940): 339–341.

42 Washington quoted in *John Brown's Holy War* (PBS Home Video, 2000). transcript available http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/brown/filmmore/transcript/transcript1.html

43 See Benjamin Quarles, *Allies for Freedom and Blacks on John Brown* with an introduction by William S. McFeely (New York: DeCapo Press, 2001), 149–150, 192–193; and Harriet C. Frazier, *Runaway and Freed Missouri Slaves and Those Who Helped Them, 1763–1865* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2004), 147.

44 Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, passim; Eyal Naveh, "John Brown and the Legacy of Martyrdom," 85.

45 Eyal Naveh, "John Brown and the Legacy of Martyrdom," 87.

46 Peter Wallenstein, "Incendiaries All: Southern Politics and the Harpers Ferry Raid," 152.

47 As quoted in Charles J. Holden, "John Brown as 'Lawless Fanatic': A Usable Past for the Postwar South, in Russo and Finkelman, *Terrible Swift Sword*, 92.

48 Robinson quoted in James C. Malin, *John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six* (New York: Haskell House, 1971), 355.

49 Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, 61.

50 White quoted in Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, 79.

51 Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, 82–83.

52 W.E.B. Du Bois, *John Brown: A Biography, ed.*, John David Smith (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997); Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown: A Biography, 1800–1859* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929).

53 See Ellen Harkins Wheat, *Jacob Lawrence: American Painter* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986); Peter Nesbett, ed., *Jacob Lawrence: Thirty Years of Prints (1963–1993): A Catalogue Rasonné* (Seattle: Francine Seders Gallery, 1994); Sharon F. Patton, *African-American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

54 Langston Hughes, *The Collected Works Of Langston Hughes, Volume 2: The Poems: 1941–1950*, ed. Arnold Rampersad (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 84–85.

55 Stephen Vincent Benét, *John Brown's Body* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1929), 55, 57.

56 Peterson, *The Legend Revisited*, 123; Malin, *Legend of Fifty-Six*, 23; "parenthesis" quote from L.W. Spring, as quoted in Malin, 759.

57 Peggy A. Russo, "John Brown Goes to Hollywood: *Santa Fe Trail* and *Seven Angry Men*," in Russo and Finkelman, *Terrible Swift Sword*, 205–208. Brown also appears as a character in several other films and television programs, including *The Skin Game* (1971), *Touched with Fire* (2005), and the television miniseries *North and South*, in which he was played by Johnny Cash.

58 Malcolm X, "Speech at the second rally of the Organization for Afro-American Unity, July 5, 1964," as quoted in Louis A. DeCaro, Jr., *"Fire from the Midst of You:" A Religious Life of John Brown* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 3.

59 New Abolitionist Society, http://racetraitor.org/naindex.html

60 Steven Mintz, Eye on "John Brown," *History Now: American History Online 5* (September 2005) http://www.historynow.org/09_2005/historian6.html

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63 Oates, *To Purge This Land with Blood*, ix.

64 Wyatt-Brown, "'A Volcano Beneath a Mountain of Snow,'"11.

65 Oates, *To Purge This Land With Blood*, x.