

Bringing Lippard Back: Biblical Allusions, Narrative Structure, and the Treatment
of Women in George Lippard's *The Quaker City*

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ABSTRACT

George Lippard, a name scarcely recognized in today's American literature classrooms, was the author of the most popular American novel prior to the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852 – *The Quaker City; or, the Monks of Monk Hall*. Despite producing such a popular and risqué novel, Lippard and his work have been curiously absent from the American literary and historical canon. In this paper I have chosen to focus on three aspects of the novel that I believe to be important for analysis – Biblical parallels, narrative structure, and female characters. Lippard uses the narrative structure and plot to incite curiosity in his readers and to appeal to audiences' instincts of sexual curiosity, pleasure in revenge, and the punishment of "evil." I will explain how Lippard uses two of the themes to reflect major issues of the time period and one as a metaphor for the plot of the novel.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	page 1
Chapter Two: Wo Unto Sodom: The Destruction of Philadelphia and How It Parallels Sodom, Babel, and the Final Judgment in Devil-Bug's Dream	page 8
Chapter Three: Trapdoors, Chambers, and Labyrinths: <i>The Quaker City's</i> Narrative Form	page 19
Chapter Four: "You know I'm a devil of a fellow among the girls": Treatment of Women, Seduction, and Voyeurism in <i>The Quaker City</i>	page 27
Chapter Five: Conclusion	page 39
Works Cited	page 42

Chapter 1:

Introduction

George Lippard, a name scarcely recognized in today's American literature classrooms, was the author of the most popular American novel prior to the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852. David S. Reynolds, one of the few scholars set on bringing Lippard's work back as classics, states that *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk Hall* (1845) "sold 60,000 copies in its first year and 10,000 copies annually before the next decade" (Intro. vii). While revealing the corruption and violence of capitalism and city life, Lippard's novel was praised by most, criticized by many, and pirated in several European countries, especially England and Germany. Lippard's writing became so popular by 1848 that *Godey's Lady's Book* claimed "This author has struck out on an entirely new path, and stands isolated on a point inaccessible to the mass of writers of the present day. He is unquestionably the most popular writer of the day, and his books are sold, edition after edition, thousand after thousand, while those of others accumulate, like useless lumber, on the shelves of the publishers" (qtd. in Reynolds). Given Lippard's broad readership in his own day and his originality as a novelist of the urban experience, his absence from the canon of American literature and history is both surprising and regrettable. In this study I seek to recover Lippard's *The Quaker City* for an audience unfamiliar with the author and text, and in the process suggest some ways this nineteenth-century literary blockbuster raises issues of enduring interest to twenty-first century scholars.

What makes Lippard's novel so powerful is the fact that he supplies a plethora of characters and plots, providing multiple representations of class and gender in 1840 Philadelphia. As we become absorbed in the characters' stories, demonstrating Lippard's literary entertainment value, we also realize Lippard's appeal for social reform based on the murders, dishonesty, and

betrayal among friends, acquaintances, husbands, and wives. Weaving his complex plot with feminist ideals, rantings against moral corruption, patriotism, as well as Biblical allusions, Lippard powerfully portrays Philadelphia as a city filled with corruption and sin. Gavin Callaghan expresses his own amazement at Lippard's lack of current popularity by claiming "[t]his is odd, given the writer's intense and enthusiastic style, his rampant Americanism, his extreme Gothicism, unrelieved except by gore, and his nightmarish, absurdist surrealism" (1). While some critics refer to *The Quaker City* as a city-mysteries novel, others place it under the category of urban porno-gothic, while still others claim the novel to be sensationalism. *The Quaker City* can be placed in all three categories, but the major goal for Lippard was to expose the corruption and sin of capitalism and urbanization.

Lippard's goal was not to analyze the goings-on of Philadelphia life; rather, he wanted to expose "the grim side of life in America...through passionate, often unbridled, poetic expression" (Intro. viii). Lippard took corrupt people from Philadelphian society and transformed them into characters for his novel, exposing them for what they were. This method not only brought attention to the corruption of Philadelphia, but raised his novel in popularity because everyone was gossiping about the local celebrities Lippard was sketching for characters in his novel. Lippard states that he based *The Quaker City* on an actual court case. In the case, a man named Singleton Mercer was acquitted of the murder of Mahlon Heberton, who seduced Mercer's sister after promising her marriage. Lippard uses this court case as the basis for *The Quaker City* and surrounds the seduction with numerous shocking, and confusing, plots that reveal the corruption amongst Philadelphia's most "reputable" citizens.

In order to further appeal to his readers, Lippard uses, and critiques, religion throughout the novel through the immoral and sexual actions of Reverend Pyne and in "Devil-Bug's

Dream.” Larzer Ziff claims that Lippard “experienced more than one disillusioning discrepancy between profession and practice on the part of his religious mentors in the areas of both social action and sexual conduct” (92). Disenchanted by his religious experience, Lippard criticizes religion and the hypocrisy he witnesses on the streets. In one scene, Lippard expresses his disgust with religion by having a poor mechanic beg the Bank President for monetary assistance. The Bank President, fixing his checkbook with donations to the Society for promoting Bible Christianity at Rome and preparing for a journey to his Patent-Gospel Association meeting, refuses any kind of assistance and merely laughs at the mechanic’s situation.

The publication of *The Quaker City* quickly divided Philadelphia “with poor workers taking Lippard’s side” (Intro. xiii). While many people applauded Lippard for exposing the underside of Philadelphia and fighting for the struggling working class, others criticized Lippard for such an immoral work of literature. Critics dubbed him a “redhot locofoco,” a “licentious popinjay,” and a “political pothouse brawler” because of the highbrow people he attacked.

Reynolds claims that

In his city novels he angrily attacked nearly every type of “respectable” Philadelphia: capitalists, clergymen, lawyers, politicians, bankers, editors, and merchants. He depicted such pillars of society as guilty of the most heinous sins – including incest, rape, and murder – and portrayed their crimes with brutal detail in his books. (Intro. xvi)

Seeing how influential *The Quaker City* was, whether that influence was good or bad, led Lippard to create the *Quaker City* weekly – a newspaper dedicated to social reform. Lippard used his paper to appeal, particularly, to the working class, “where women as well as men participated in the literary public sphere” (Streeby 188). Lippard frequently addressed women in

his columns and encouraged them to seek work and contribute to his paper. Many times, “Lippard printed the political essays and short stories of...a woman writer whom he particularly admired,” offering women a place to voice their opinions and concerns about Philadelphian society and woman’s place in that societal sphere (188).

Lippard provides another angle for women in *The Quaker City*, however, and pokes fun at the sentimental and domestic genres of literature. Devil-Bug, nominated by many to be the most sadistic and evil character in American literature, pretends to host a family party in his “basement,” which is actually a torture chamber and (sadly) tries to be a protector for his daughter, Mabel, using sweet words and promises of friendship to gain her trust. Mother Nancy, a character who appears first to the reader as a sweet, old lady, is “a charade to undermine female virtue; Lippard tells us that hundreds of women have been driven to prostitution and suicide by the wily, pleasant-seeming Nancy” (Intro. xxiv). Two other women, Dora and Bess, possess strong, independent personalities and completely go against the stereotypical domestic woman of most sentimental novels. Reynolds claims that “both of these fallen women gain great power in the novel” and stand up to the male characters multiple times (Intro. xxxviii). Unlike characters such as Mabel and Mary who are passive and weak, Bess and Dora “are spirited and forceful” and defy many of the gender roles of the time (xxxviii).

Lippard makes readers aware of several issues going on in Philadelphia during the 1840s, providing a range of topics to analyze in *The Quaker City*. In order to share his dark, chaotic interpretation of urban life, Lippard appeals to readers’ base instincts – sexual curiosity, pleasure in revenge, the security of seeing “evil” justly punished – tying everything together with a climactic, tension-filled narrative that further appeals to his audiences’ sense of adventure. Lippard diverts from the typical linear plot in order to accurately represent the pandemonium of

Philadelphia. In this thesis I will discuss the corruption that Lippard sought to expose and how he uses Devil-Bug, the most violent character in the book, to dream about Philadelphia's destruction. I will also look at the narrative form Lippard constructed for the novel, pointing out how Monk Hall acts as a metaphor for the book's structure and plot, and will conclude with a focus on the diverse female characters in the book, which also reflects the corruption prevalent in the city.

Although George Lippard's name has become virtually forgotten in current American literature classrooms and *The Quaker City* is now a title scarcely recognized, the novel is extremely important and should be included not only in the American literature canon but in American history courses as well. Lippard provides an accurate portrayal of nineteenth-century urban America and reveals several problems big cities were facing in regard to class, gender, and religion. Combining *The Quaker City* with other pamphlets and papers that Lippard published would provide historical background and evidence for the corruption that was taking place in Philadelphia. Including Lippard's work in the classroom would establish a better insight to the issues that America was facing.

Because there is limited scholarship available on *The Quaker City*, I hope to bring attention to Lippard's novel and reveal why it is so important to American literature. Although there are numerous angles from which to approach *The Quaker City*, I will be focusing on three major themes: how Lippard uses Biblical parallels to demonstrate Philadelphia's corruption, the narrative structure of the novel and how it reflects the plot and events within the novel, and the treatment and roles of women characters. Although these topics appear unrelated, I have chosen to specifically focus on them in order to highlight the importance of Lippard's novel to American literature and history. In order to understand literature of a time period, it is imperative to

understand the real-life situations that invoked the writing. Therefore, my second chapter, which analyzes how Lippard compares the sin of Philadelphia to that of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Babel, emphasizes the actual corruption that was taking place in large cities and the impact these events and people had on the poor and naïve. My third chapter focuses on the narrative structure of the novel because I believe the narrative choices Lippard makes are significant to the plot and reflect the events within the novel. Lastly, I chose to focus on the treatment of women characters in the novel because of Lippard's known feminism and the numerous personalities that he creates for his female characters.

All three topics that I dedicate chapters to would provide intriguing and thought-provoking discussions in an American literature and/or history course and would increase the knowledge about American urban life in the 1800s. Although we cannot be sure if Lippard is telling the absolute truth about Philadelphia's immorality, his literary presence would provide a better representation of social and cultural interaction between classes and would provide an interesting and (perhaps) accurate representation of religion, as well as the roles and treatment of women in nineteenth-century America. In addition to my own claims, a handful of scholars have argued that Lippard needs to be included in American Studies. According to Dana D. Nelson, the book "will have a terrific appeal in American literature courses, given the current focus on both canon expansion...It should also find a home in courses in American Studies, U.S. history, and women's and gender studies." For Sheila Post-Lauria, "Lippard is essential to any revisionist study or examination of nineteenth-century American literature, to nineteenth-century social history, to popular culture, to historical cultural studies, and to working-class history and literature" (Reynolds Intro.). My ultimate goal in this paper is to revive the work of George

Lippard by focusing on three major themes which stem from the narrative choices in his most popular novel and bring him and his work back into the American canon.

Chapter 2:

Wo Unto Sodom: The Destruction of Philadelphia and How It Parallels Sodom, Babel, and the Final Judgment in Devil-Bug's Dream

Perhaps the most powerful chapter in *The Quaker City*, “Devil-Bug’s Dream” is a commanding reflection of Lippard’s feelings about what Philadelphia has become and is a warning to his 1840s readers of Philadelphia’s fate. In order to demonstrate the corruption and sin of Philadelphia to his readers, Lippard creates a nightmare in which the city is destroyed, annihilating both the righteous and the wicked, and attempts to foreshadow what will happen to Philadelphia if its society does not endeavor to change. Lippard’s description of the city demonstrates that the rich and the poor are strictly divided, lawyers and judges accept bribes, and priests seduce young, naïve women and swindle their congregations for money – the “city of brotherly love” is only filled with hate, dishonesty, and malice. Framed within the chapter is a description of the dream, sectioned off as “The Last Day of the Quaker City,” with Devil-Bug taking part as a viewer of Philadelphia’s destruction. The dream, Devil-Bug’s participation, and the events that go on in “The Last Day of the Quaker City” coincide with and mimic Genesis 18-19, as well as Genesis 11 in the Bible, which tell the stories of God’s destroying Sodom and Gomorrah and scattering the people of Babel, who built a tower to honor themselves before God. Lippard reconstructs the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, includes themes from “The Tower of Babel,” and constructs the Final Judgment by using similar imagery and text from the Bible to foreshadow Philadelphia’s last day. The corruption that caused both cities to be destroyed suggests a larger moral frame within which Lippard is writing, and the scenes and images from the “Devil-Bug’s Dream” chapter reflect the apocalyptic vision of Biblical texts. The historical landmarks in Philadelphia that have been built over in the dream not only suggest parallels

between Lippard's story and Biblical texts, including the Final Judgment, but provide an historical context for understanding Lippard's attacks on the abandonment of American ideals of justice, freedom, and democracy.

Based on the events in the novel leading up to "The Last Day of the Quaker City," the sin, greed, and corruption intertwined in the events reveal to the reader that Philadelphian society has become extremely immoral. During the time that Lippard was writing, the population of America was increasing, particularly in cities. Larzer Ziff explains that

the American city was moving toward definition as it encountered those problems that were to become the explicit concerns of social writers and activists after the Civil War: the visible distress of the urban poor (in 1829 throughout the country 75,000 persons had been jailed for debt, over half for amounts of less than twenty dollars); the violent clash of ethnic and religious groups; and the moral bleakness of alienated labor. (88)

The rich get richer as the poor get poorer, and no one is willing to offer any assistance or aid. Women are constantly being seduced and raped, and deception in the form of disguises, pseudonyms, and fake letters make it impossible to know who is trustworthy. The master of sin and immorality, Devil-Bug, is the reader's guide through his dream, and sadistically applauds whenever he sees mistreatment, violence, and suffering. Although he is dreaming, Devil-Bug participates in his dream, gets an aerial view of Philadelphia and its occupants, and observes everything that is taking place. Devil-Bug is led by a spirit, who reveals that the year is 1950, and takes Devil-Bug through the city and later whisks him away to see its final destruction.

Lippard provides a lengthy description of the sin Devil-Bug first sees being committed in the “magnificent city”:

Here was the lady in all the glitter of her plumes, and silks, and diamonds, and by her side the beggar child stretched forth its thin and skinny arm, asking in feeble tones, for the sake of God, some charity good lady! And the lady smiled, and uttered some laughing word to the man of fashion by her side, with his slim waist and effeminate face, she uttered a remark of careless scorn, and passed the beggar-child unheeded by. Here passing...was the lordly Bishop, whose firm step and salacious eye betokened at once his arrogance and guilt; here was the man of law with his parchment book and his cold grey eye; here was the Judge with his visage of solemnity and his pocket-book crammed full with bribes, and here, hungry and lean, was the mechanic in his tattered garb, looking to the clear blue sky above, as he asked God’s vengeance upon the world that robbed and starved him. (372)

All the people who are supposed to fight for liberty and justice are only focused on increasing the size of their wallets. While sexual immorality plays a big role in Lippard’s critique of Philadelphia, he mainly focuses on the injustice of the system and the large separation between classes. The book of Genesis does not provide such detailed descriptions of Sodom’s errors; however, God tells Abraham that “the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and...their sin is very grave,” concluding that the only way to cleanse the city of evil is to destroy the city and its inhabitants (*Spirit Filled Life Bible*, Gen. 18.20).

Devil-Bug's role is similar to that of Abraham and Lot. Two angels come to Sodom in order to protect Lot and send him away from the city before its destruction. Similarly, a spirit guides Devil-Bug through the city, pointing out the injustices and changes while explaining how the city has become so corrupt. As the dead rise to warn, unsuccessfully, the living of the impending doom, Philadelphia's fate is written in the sky: "[t]he angel of the Judgment writes the doom of this proud city, from the heavens his hand is extended, behold the words of flame on yon glistening cloud.' WO UNTO SODOM" (Lippard 377). Michael Warner, in *New English Sodom*, states that "Puritans referred to Sodom as an example of judgment and a warning. The fable of Sodom represented, in a way that no other image could, an entire society open to discipline and in need of saving" (19, 20). Lippard, assuming that most of his readers are still familiar with the story of Sodom, makes a powerful statement by referring to Philadelphia as Sodom, insinuating that because of careless living, Philadelphia will have the same ending and need the same type of saving.

As the spirit leads Devil-Bug through the streets of Philadelphia, they discuss the buildings that are being turned into palaces and the chariots embellished with gold. When Devil-Bug questions how such wealth came about, the spirit points out that the people have "[c]heated the poor out of their earnings, wrung the sweat from the brow of the mechanic and turned it into gold, traded away the bones of their fathers, sold Independence Square for building lots, and built this palace for a King!" (Lippard 374). As Devil-Bug realizes that the kings and dukes are nothing but "a pack o' swindlin' Bank d'rectors," he finally starts to understand that the democracy and independence that America fought for is now despised and unimportant – money and power have replaced the ideals that Philadelphia was built upon (374). Devil-Bug then encounters an old man who reveals that the American flag has been banned: it "[w]as the

American flag, I say! There is no America now” (Lippard 388). Adrienne Siegel, when analyzing the rise of nobility in the American city during the 1800s, claims that wealth was a threat to democratic America: “[s]uch upstarts were an affront to two of the most powerful forces of mid-nineteenth-century America – democracy and nationalism” (74). America was still a fairly young country at the time of Lippard’s publication. The banned American flag and abuse of historical buildings and monuments as reflected in this scene represent a threat to the young country and its ideals. Lippard uses this threat to inflict fear in his readers, particularly his patriotic readers who would have been frightened and concerned by a scene that depicted everything “American” being destroyed and disrespected.

Lippard also compares Philadelphia to Babel. Genesis 11 explains that as people traveled from the east, they dwelt in a plain in Shinar. Gathered there, they said “‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’ But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built” (*Spirit Filled Life Bible*, Gen. 11.4-5). The people of Babel did not build the tower in order to worship and praise God; the tower was built for their own fame in order to make a name for *themselves*. Like the people of Babel, Philadelphians are destroying sacred landmarks in order to build palaces, structures that glorify materialistic humans rather than honoring God or serving the poor and needy. The spirit leads Devil-Bug to Independence Square, the site of a monument honoring General Washington. Upon their arrival, “they stood upon Independence Square, all cumbered with heaps of marble and piles of building timber. The greater portion of the square was occupied by the royal palace” (Lippard 374). As they continue walking and observing the people focused on things, money, and pageantry, Devil-Bug asks about the building where Washington Square used to stand.

Lippard provides an ironic explanation through the spirit, one that surely evoked emotion for his patriotic contemporary readers: “It is indeed a gaol, built on the ground of Washington Square. Within its gloomy cells, all those brave patriots are confined, the brave men who struck the last blow for the liberty of the land, against the tyranny of this new-risen nobility” (Lippard 374). In order to target the patriotism of readers, Lippard smartly locks up the patriots who had fought for the freedom and independence of the (still fairly new) country and has them greatly looked down upon by the rest of society.

In addition to the brave patriots, Lippard uses a historically important landmark as a form of irony to represent the lack of respect for America’s past and to demonstrate the obsession with materialism and self-interest that has consumed this “pleasure-loving world” (Lippard 376). Washington Square, a park honoring George Washington that eventually served as a tribute to soldiers from the Revolutionary War, is the perfect spot for Lippard to use as a jail site for patriots who fought a second time against monarchy. The fact that it pays homage to soldiers who fought for democracy and liberty only adds to the power and irony of the chapter.

The final allusion to the Bible appears later in Devil-Bug’s dream as he and the spirit stumble upon a mass of rising corpses. As Devil-Bug watches in horror, the spirit reveals that tomorrow will be the last day of the Quaker City: “‘To-morrow’ shrieked the spirit, ‘To-morrow will be the last day of the Quaker City. The judgment comes, and they know it not’” (378). Judgment Day, also referred to as the Last and/or Final Judgment, is believed and interpreted by many to follow the resurrection of the dead and the Second Coming of Jesus. Lippard creates a scene in which the dead rise in order to warn their loved ones of the event that is to come; however, no living person can see or hear the cautions of the dead. The spirit explains why the

Judgment is coming and we again see how Philadelphia has become materialistic and self-absorbed. The spirit explains that “[i]t [Philadelphia] has burned the Churches of the Living God. It has torn His Cross from the Altar, it has soiled His banner with dust and ashes! Even the graves of the dead it has not spared. The hands of violence have torn the bones of the dead from their graves, and flung them mockingly beneath the hoofs of the horses. Cursed be the city. Wo unto Sodom!” (379). Lippard stresses the separation between rich and poor and constantly provides examples of the wealthy and able refusing assistance to those in need. The spirit explains that Philadelphia must be destroyed because of its sin and corruption; comparably, the Gospel of Matthew claims that the Judgment will go as follows:

All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats... Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”... Then He will also say to those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me”... He will answer them, saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.” And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (*Spirit Filled Life Bible*, Matt. 25.32, 34, 41-43, 45-46)

According to Matthew, the wicked and the righteous will be called forth from the earth, and Lippard incorporates the prophecy of the Gospel by having everyone in the city destroyed; the good will go to Heaven, while the evil will be cursed and sent to Hell. Lippard is revealing that Philadelphia's fate is completely determined by its unconcern for the destitute and the poor. Proverbs 19:17 claims that "He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given." However, Philadelphia has earned only God's wrath and destruction. The ideals that were once so highly valued and fought for, such as religion, freedom, and justice, are now overlooked as long as there are fancy clothes, golden carriages, palaces of marble, and lots of money. Philadelphia is constantly referred to as "Sodom" in the "Devil-Bug's Dream" chapter, which foreshadows what will take place by the end. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah placed worldly possessions, self-interest, and physical pleasure before God and suffered the consequences. As the dead chant "Wo unto Sodom," Philadelphia's fate is inevitable.

Continuing with the prophecy of the Final Judgment, Lippard has Devil-Bug view a magnificent figure in the sky, which clearly alludes to the Second Coming of Jesus: "[f]rom the sky, shadowy forms of grandeur looked down upon the scene, and suddenly a figure of awful and majestic beauty, bent from the dim azure and waved a flaming sword across the heavens" (379). Several descriptions of God illustrate him giving a flaming sword to a cherubim to guard a gate, or more well-known, the Tree of Life. God is also referred to several times as a "consuming fire" (*Spirit Filled Life Bible*, Hebr. 12.29). Because Lippard uses the two events that will take place signaling the arrival of Judgment day, there is no doubt that readers are expected to connect *The Quaker City* with the Bible, ultimately realizing that if their concern for *things* is not

changed to concern for *people*, Philadelphia will be doomed and destroyed by those committing the crimes.

Judgment Day and the Second Coming are supposed to be a joyous occasion, a day when believers will be freed from worldly constraints and rewarded for living a life pleasing to God. As the Quaker City's final day draws near, the dead who have returned to the earth send up a joyous lament for those who have been mistreated and distressed. The lament "was a lament for young maidens, for grey-haired and helpless men, for smiling and sinless babes. All were to be mingled in the destruction of the morrow, all were to share the doom and the death of the Last Day of the guilty and idolatrous city" (Lippard 383). Devil-Bug and the spirit then witness the crowning of the new king as the rest of Philadelphia rejoices in order to celebrate "the anniversary of the death of Freedom" (386). The focus on nobility and wealth "showed the death of the Jeffersonian dream" (Siegel 78). Although the righteous are to share in Philadelphia's final day, Lippard is using this powerful scene to express his concern for what Philadelphia has become and the truth about its fate if the treatment of humankind is not altered soon.

The destruction of Philadelphia reflects both the Final Judgment as well as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. During the king's crowning, the crowd finally sees the dead among them and is horrified when they all realize they are surrounded by corpses. The king, angry that all attention has been taken away from his ceremony (highlighting, again, the trait of self-importance that Lippard gives to the nobility of Philadelphia), "muttered a curse upon his God. At the very instant, from the clear sky leapt a red bolt of thunder; - the King lay on the earth a blackened corpse" (Lippard 391). According to Genesis, when Sodom is being destroyed "the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what

grew on the ground” (*Spirit Filled Life Bible*, Gen. 19.24-25). Lippard recreates this scene by adding his own interpretation and twists; the king is struck from the heavens with a red bolt of thunder which mimics the fire sent to annihilate Sodom and Gomorrah. After the destruction, Abraham looks to the two cities and sees “the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace” (19.28). Likewise, Lippard describes the Quaker City’s last day with similar imagery: “[t]hen from the earth burst streams of vapor, hissing and whirling as they spouted upward into the blue sky...That steam smote the living to the heart, it withered their eye-balls; it crisped the flesh on their bones” (391).

Why, exactly, is it important that Lippard creates a chapter that so closely ties with, and takes from, stories of destruction and judgment from the Bible? David Reynolds states that “*The Quaker City* has the atmosphere of a nightmare[;] it is largely because Lippard regarded American society as a nightmarish realm of class divisions, economic uncertainty, and widespread corruption” (Intro. xxxii). The fact that Lippard distrusted organized religion only adds to the curiosity of why he alluded to so many Biblical stories. However, despite his distrust, Lippard had “a fascination for early Christianity” and used that interest to fuel his fight against the threat to American democracy via wealth (Erickson “George Lippard” 241). Focused mainly on the improvement and critique of social and political issues which gave favor to the rich and left the poor homeless and hungry, Lippard was probably aware that most Americans were at least vaguely familiar with the stories of Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Final Judgment. If they were not, however, Lippard provided enough imagery and warning in “The Last Day of the Quaker City” to frighten people and incite some form of change. Despite the elaborate details and gruesome imagery of Devil-Bug’s dream, Lippard’s message is a simple

one: return Philadelphia to the city it once was, void of violence and dishonesty, and “[l]et brotherly love continue” (Hebr. 13.1).

Chapter 3:

Trapdoors, Chambers, and Labyrinths: *The Quaker City's* Narrative Form

The Quaker City not only reveals the crime and corruption of Philadelphia, but it reveals an entirely new world that George Lippard has created. Reynolds claims that “[l]ike today’s soap operas, the novel proceeds by episodes, with rapid shifts in time and perspective, creating a disorienting effect for the reader” (Intro. xxi). As the novel proceeds, however, characters and plots become interwoven with each other, and by the end of the story, Lippard combines *everything* and *everyone* in order to culminate them into one explosive ending. Lippard cleverly mimics the chaotic plot of his novel, begging for readers and scholars to explore the way Monk Hall and the winding streets and alleyways of Philadelphia reflect the narrative structure of the novel. In addition to the confusing structure and plot, it is necessary to investigate why and how Lippard acts as an intrusive narrator by inserting his own comments and opinions into the body of the novel.

The Quaker City contains “three main plots, loosely connected,” which sounds like a basic plot for a novel (Intro. xx). Lippard, however, makes sure that keeping up with the plots and characters is not quite as simple as it appears. Included in the plots and narrative are several authorial interruptions by Lippard, sometimes stating that the opinions of the characters do not reflect those of the author, and occasionally to further explain passages or lend sympathy to a particular scene or character, and many times to provide lengthy descriptions of a person’s physical features. Gavin Callaghan states that “Lippard attacks and speaks directly to his critics in his works. Sometimes using footnotes, and sometimes in the main body of his work, Lippard often breaks out in digressions, sometimes citing personal experiences, and sometimes

responding to criticisms before they can even occur” (12). In this way, Lippard acts as an intrusive narrator, which Gerald Prince defines as “a narrator commenting in his or her own voice on the situations and events presented, their presentation, or its context; a narrator relying on and characterized by commentarial excursions or intrusions” (*A Dictionary* 46). In chapter nine, Lippard asterisks the passage that describes the love Mary feels for Lorrimer as she prepares for their “marriage.” Lippard remarks “[t]he reader who desires to understand thoroughly, the pure love of an innocent girl for a corrupt libertine, will not fail to peruse this passage” (84). Comparable to conduct manuals and morality tales which warned young ladies to be wary of men with impure sexual intentions, Lippard is providing a warning for his female readers who may fall prey to rakes and libertines like Lorrimer. In another authorial interruption, Lippard actually introduces the reader to the scene change that takes place in the first chapter of the second book. Lacking the emotion that was involved in the previous intrusion, Lippard matter-of-factly describes the chamber of Fitz-Cowles, “a Chamber in the fourth story of the TON HOTEL, which arises along Chesnut street” (151). Complete descriptions of the characters, chambers, and streets are always provided, and, apparently, necessary for Lippard in his goal to accurately portray the people and places he is mocking and critiquing.

The most interesting authorial interruption occurs when the reader is introduced to Ravoni the sorcerer in the third chapter of the fourth book. Ravoni describes himself as immortal and expresses several extreme opinions on life and religion. Lippard attempts to separate himself as an author from what he is writing in order to avoid controversy or finger pointing about how he uses Ravoni in the novel. Drawing attention to his intrusion with another asterisk, Lippard states

The sentiment expressed in this chapter; are *not* the opinions of the author, but of the character, which it is his object to delineate. The author does not hold himself responsible for a single word or line. This note is made in order that all critics with weak eyes and tender consciences, may be spared the trouble of abusing the author for the opinions of one of his characters. (422)

His intrusion here is a way to keep himself from being liable for what Ravoni “says,” but also gives off some subtle sarcasm via the message in the interruption. Of course Lippard is responsible for the words of Ravoni; nevertheless, Lippard cleverly removes himself with the narrative intrusion from any accusations that may arise in order to protect himself from his loyal and especially his critical readers.

To focus more on the actual structure of the novel, Lippard organizes the narrative much like Monk Hall is organized – a series of mazes, trap doors, and hidden passageways. In a description of how to find Monk Hall, Lippard’s directions resemble the chaotic and confusing structure of the novel:

In his attempt to find the Hall, he would have to wind up a narrow alley, turn down a court, strike up an avenue, which it would take some knowledge of municipal geography to navigate. At last, emerging into a narrow street where four alleys crossed, he would behold his magnificent mansion of Monk-hall. (Lippard 48).

When the reader expects the plot to go one way, Lippard surprises us and drops in a twist that leaves our hearts racing and our jaws on the floor. Trapped inside the dark passageways of

Monk Hall, Byrnewood Arlington (referred to strictly as Byrnewood throughout the novel), like the reader, is completely unaware of what (or who) waits for him in the Rose Chamber. Denied a complete name and details about his family relations, Byrnewood appears to be just another obnoxious comrade of Lorrimer's. However, Lippard increases the drama by revealing Byrnewood's shock (at what we are unaware at the time), ending the chapter, and introducing a new plot between the Livingstones and Fitz-Cowles. Lippard leaves the reader in chapters of suspense before revealing that Byrnewood is the brother of the recently fallen Mary.

Ziff argues that what started as the main plot for the novel (the trial between Mercer and Heberton) soon became bombarded and connected with additional plots and characters in each monthly installment. Ziff further explains by stating, "[t]he episodes were held together by setting more than plot: they all occurred in or were connected with Monk Hall, a mansion within a retired part of the city maintained as a club and house of assignation by prominent male citizens, the 'Monks'" (96). Following a pattern that Charles Dickens used in his own early serialized novels, Lippard ends most chapters at the peak of the climax. A person is revealed as someone else, a trapdoor is triggered, or a knife hanging in mid-air are all examples of how Lippard creates cliff-hangers at the end of chapters, and especially at the end of a book. In the final chapter, Byrnewood is living in peace with Annie, his child, and Mary (who, because of her seduction, has committed herself to being single) in the isolated mountains of Wyoming. Referring the reader to a newspaper propped beside Byrnewood's armchair, Lippard lets us know that the criminals have met their punishment (Reverend Pyne is awaiting trial, Fitz-Cowles has been arrested, and Lorrimer shot by Byrnewood). Lippard acts as our guide as we follow Byrnewood to a secret, locked room where he has hanging on the wall a portrait of Lorrimer. As Byrnewood stands and admires the face of the man that he killed in revenge for the dishonor of

his family, Mary walks in with two women. Providing us with our last surprise, the three women gasp in shock, one yelling “My child!” another screaming “My brother!” and the third barely uttering “Lorraine!” (Lippard 575). Concluding with the greatest shock of all, the meeting of three women so closely tied together coincides with the climactic moments throughout the novel, but leaves the reader completely wanting more information. While most novels or movies that end with a cliff-hanger are followed by a sequel or prologue, Lippard leaves us to form our own conclusions to this unexpected surprise.

Adding to the chaos of the plot, Lippard creates a narrative structure to mimic the plot and the actual mayhem of the city. Ziff claims that “[i]n Lippard’s handling, the conventional castle of gothic horrors becomes a metaphor of the city, in which the wealthiest and most respectable have direct communication with the most vicious, who serve them in exploitation of the majority in the middle” (96). Wyn Kelley explains how writers such as Lippard used urban literature to represent the city as a labyrinth. Kelley argues that turning the city into a maze makes “it an emblem of a whole social system...suggesting that the hapless wanderer in the labyrinth may never, or only with difficulty, escape” (101-2). Luke Harvey, in an attempt to reach Widow Smolby before her murder, finds himself the victim of the twisting and confusing narrative:

Luke gained the head of the stairway; all was dark as a tomb. No light glaring from an open door served to illumine his way...He entered the dark chamber, his hands outspread, while he listened with painful intensity for the slightest sound. He passed over the carpet, he was moving in the direction where he supposed the bed was fixed, when his foot slipped from under him, and he fell to the floor.
(Lippard 237).

Kelley further explains that the reader, bewildered and at a loss for direction, turns to the narrator as a guide (101-2). Luckily for us, we have Lippard to guide us through Monk Hall, helping us find our way through the vaults and passageways. If we don't keep up, we could "fall through that trap-door...[and] stand in danger of bein' eat up by rats and all sorts o' wermin" (Lippard 225).

Without Lippard as a narrator and guide, the reader would be deprived of crucial information about characters and the plot. According to Prince, "[i]f we eliminated every narrator's intrusion...we would be left with relatively little" (*Narratology* 10). Lippard directs the reader to specific events that will be important later in the novel and even foreshadows future plots, such as when he alludes to Byrnewood's "terrible future" in the Oyster Cellar (13). Prince, when explaining the intrusiveness of a narrator, states that "intrusions commenting on some of the events recounted may bring out or underline their importance in a certain narrated sequence or their intrinsic interest" (*Narratology* 13). Lippard warns readers prior to voicing extreme opinions (distancing himself from what he claims to be the character's opinion) and encourages the reader to pay special attention to specific passages in order to understand the plot and the personalities of the characters.

Time is also skewed in *The Quaker City*. The plots take place within the three days leading up to Christmas. Reynolds comments on the time frame of the novel, stating that "[c]ompressing complicated narratives into a short time span, he [Lippard] isolates the three days leading up to Christmas 1842 and traces the tangled activities of his characters" (Intro. xxi). Lippard never reveals whether the events are taking place during the day or night, except through an occasional chapter title, and time is never revealed through the characters. The only information Lippard provides concerning time is at the start of each book, such as "The Day

After the Night” (Book the Second), “The Second Day” (Book the Fourth), and “The Third Night” (Book the Fifth). Prince explains that in narratives, the narrator is usually in charge of explaining the duration of time the narrative takes place: “In many narratives...the duration of the narration is not mentioned at all, as if the activity took no time or were situated out of time” (*Narratology* 31). So many things occur during the undesignated time periods that it is difficult to keep up with the passage of time. Lippard intertwines the confusion of the plot with the time structure of the novel.

Returning to Lippard’s role as narrator in the novel brings up another interesting narrative structure that focuses on the Preface to the book. In the Preface, Lippard explains the origin and object of *The Quaker City*, setting up a frame for the story he is about to unfold. Lippard claims that at his friend’s deathbed, he was given a packet revealing all the secrets of Philadelphia. Lippard’s friend asked that he write the stories down in order to expose the “crimes that never came to trial, murders that have never been divulged” (3). From this story, Lippard sets up a frame narrative, which Prince describes simply as “[a] narrative in which another narrative is embedded” (*A Dictionary* 33). Although Lippard does not conclude by returning to the outer frame, he establishes a frame in the beginning which sets up the narrative that is *The Quaker City*.

The narrative structure of the novel requires attention because Lippard uses it to develop the plot and characters of the book. Like many authors of the 1800s, Lippard published *The Quaker City* as a series. In order to keep readers interested and anxious to purchase the next issue, Lippard ends each chapter at a climactic moment. There is so much tension and anxiety in the plot of the novel that the reader is never sure of characters’ intentions, who will show up at the wrong time, or what event will take place in the twists and turns of Monk Hall. Like modern

day soap operas that always end with unanswered questions – that will be answered in the next episode, of course – Lippard keeps his audience interested and constantly reading with a plethora of unanswered questions. Will Byrnewood save his sister? Will Dora betray, maybe even kill, Livingstone? Lippard intertwines so many plots and characters throughout the novel to add to the confusion of the structure. Lippard does not create a linear structure; the characters take turns as the focal point of the chapter and the same plot is not given two chapters in a row. Like the hallways of Monk Hall, the structure of the novel is difficult to navigate through until the floor plan – or in the reader’s case, the narrative pattern – becomes familiar.

Lippard sets the dark and tense tone of the novel through his narrative structure. In order to create a sense of confusion and chaos like that of the plot and Monk Hall, Lippard establishes an unorganized structure, peeling away one layer of the plot or character at a time because nothing is what it seems in Monk Hall.

Chapter 4:

“You know I’m a devil of a fellow among the girls”: Treatment of Women, Seduction, and Voyeurism in *The Quaker City*

The Quaker City provides multiple personalities and situations for comparing the characteristics of the female characters throughout the book. The types of women range from the innocent and naïve virgin to the fallen woman who becomes the heroine. Notorious for being a feminist and a fighter for female rights, Lippard uses his novel to expose the treatment of women, especially by men with power. According to Gavin Callaghan “Lippard wanted to change the world: ‘Literature merely considered as an art is a despicable thing...A literature which does not work practically, for the advancement of social reform...is just good for nothing at all’” (1). Disgusted with the way the lower class, women, and minorities were being treated, he set out to expose the evil and corrupt. Reynolds describes Lippard as “a man with feminist leanings, he supported women’s self-organization, believing that the woman’s lot was as bad as the slave’s” (Intro. viii). Because of Lippard’s reputation with women’s rights, the numerous female characters in the novel and the various personalities of each woman, this chapter will explain Lippard’s own beliefs about equal rights for women and will then analyze the treatment of women in the novel. Seduction and “owning” are major themes in *The Quaker City*; therefore, it is imperative to the understanding of the novel and Lippard’s beliefs to examine the male treatment of women in regards to women as objects as well as the wealthy male view of seduction based on the class of the female. In addition to the females’ personalities and the way they are treated by male characters, Lippard also provides lengthy descriptions of the female body, which eventually leads readers to the most voyeuristic scene of the novel, which unravels in Ravoni’s temple.

In order to aid women in their fight for rights and equality in society, Lippard printed many women writers in *The Quaker City* weekly and “often addressed or ‘hailed’ female readers, especially ‘women who work,’ in the columns of his story paper” (Streeby 188). Lippard also reprinted several speeches by Lucretia Mott which he felt were “worthy to be in the hands of every female in the land who feels an interest in the question of the social elevation of their sex” and would encourage women to find work outside the home and strive to elevate themselves above the gender constrictions of the time (Streeby 190). Lippard’s interest in and encouragement of women’s equality, however, do not appear often in *The Quaker City*. The only women who are independent and have jobs are the women who run brothels, such as Mother Nancy, and Dora, who has money and independence because of her marriage to Livingstone. Dora is the only woman who asserts her independence and makes strong decisions; unfortunately, those decisions lead to her death when her husband poisons her as revenge for her infidelity.

Although many of the women in *The Quaker City* appear weak and unable to take care of themselves, Lippard creates them that way in order to expose the monstrosity of masculinity. Streeby states that

Lippard represents wealthy and powerful men as monstrous seducers who threaten the virtue of his heroines and, by extension, the virtue of the American republic: monstrous wealth makes for a monstrous masculinity, which threatens women in particular and the American republic in general. (192)

Each of Lippard’s seducers in *The Quaker City* is in a powerful position and is well-known in society. The men are referred to often as respectable and influential, but ultimately expose their

true identities in the confines of Monk Hall. Adrienne Siegel confirms that the libertine was a common character in urban literature, as well as urban life, always dressed in fine clothes and jewels, fermented with the scent of wine and liquor. Siegel writes that

The rake's occupation in life was to chase "dainty morsels of virginal sweetness" and abandon them with all haste, once conquered. In a nation devoted to the work ethic, he was a wealthy do-nothing who dedicated his life to pleasure. When not seducing maidens, he dissipated a vast estate on liquor, gambling, and horse racing. He scoffed openly at the reigning morality by wrecking happy homes and mocking religion...he was an object lesson on the emptiness of worldly vanities. (112-13)

Lippard's characters reflect the exact libertine that Siegel describes – the only concern is the success of the conquest – and looking good doing it.

Comparing the plot and characters in several of Lippard's novels, Streeby concludes that "Lippard divides [men] into villains and heroes who represent opposing social types. His villains are 'the aristocracy of the money power,' which he defines as 'that aristocracy which the French know as the 'Bourgeoise' [sic], which the English style the 'Middle Classes,' and which the Devil knows for his 'own,'" (194). Dora, a woman who has worked her way up from the daughter of a very poor man to the wife of a high-class merchant, is also a villain. Her obsession with material goods and a desire to rise even higher in class trigger her infidelity to a faithful husband and eventually lead to her death. Siegel contends that "[a]s women acquired new freedom and dignity, sentimental authors enshrined the pure maiden and pious mother. Instead of coming to grips with the economic and social forces which were transforming institutions like

the family and the social status of females, they focused their rage on the seducer and on weak women” (49). Lippard provides several different looks at women in *The Quaker City*, but he most certainly raged against the libertines and sought to expose those who committed crimes against women.

Women are often seen as sexual conquests throughout the novel. The men who appear to be in trustworthy positions, and men who are excellent actors, such as Reverend Pyne and Gus Lorrimer, use their titles and wealth to gain the trust of naïve and innocent women. If the women are not willing, the men often use force or poison in order to rape the women they are after. Lippard gives the women detailed descriptions and personalities, but the men in the novel who are only after sex merely see the women as beautiful objects. In the twelfth chapter of the third book, Fitz-Cowles and Reverend Pyne are entranced by the beauty of Mabel. Aware that her purity is in danger, Mabel is led by Bess and Mary away from Monk Hall in “a race for maiden purity, a race for woman’s honor!” (Lippard 344). Fitz-Cowles and Pyne are in rapid pursuit to “win her,” with Fitz-Cowles demanding “I’ll have you, by Jove, I’ll have you yet!” (344). Fitz-Cowles and Pyne constantly use language that refers to Mabel as a thing to be owned, rather than as a woman. Even Devil-Bug, in his chase to keep Fitz-Cowles and Pyne away from Mabel, demands that he “will have the child, his darter agin!” (343). In his attempt to keep his daughter protected from the rakes of Philadelphia, even Devil-Bug makes the mistake of referring to Mabel as a possession, something to be owned.

In the Preface to *The Quaker City*, Lippard discusses his intentions for incorporating seduction into his plot. He states that his goal was to write a book based on the following idea:

That the seduction of a poor and innocent girl, is a deed altogether as criminal as deliberate murder. It is worse than the murder of the body, for it is the assassination of the soul. If the murderer deserves death by the gallows, then the assassin of chastity and maidenhood is worthy of death by the hands of any man, and in any place. (2)

Lippard successfully achieves his goal as Byrnewood is acquitted in his trial after killing Lorrimer for his sister's honor. Lippard also contends that while brainstorming a plot for *The Quaker City*, "I knew too well that law of society which makes a virtue of the dishonor of a poor girl, while it justly holds the seduction of a rich man's child as an infamous crime" (1). Lippard creates an interesting and hypocritical role for Byrnewood based on his relationships in the novel and in accordance with the previous statement in Lippard's Preface. Before he is aware that the woman Lorrimer is trying to seduce is his sister, he laughingly encourages and applauds Lorrimer for the false marriage he has planned in order to seduce Mary. Reynolds explains that

[i]rony controls the story of Byrnewood Arlington, who, despite his eventual disgust over the seduction of his sister, had actually facilitated that seduction by encouraging and laying a bet on Lorrimer's plans for a sexual escapade. Also ironic is the fact that Byrnewood is a seducer in his own right; Annie, the young servant he has impregnated, haunts his mind even as he tracks down and kills his sister's seducer. (Intro. xxiii)

In the first chapter Byrnewood excitedly questions Lorrimer for details pertaining to the maiden he plans to ruin: "Let's have your story, Gus!...Damme – life's but a porcelain cup – to-day we have it, to-morrow we hav'nt – why not fill it with sweetness?" (12). We later find out that

Byrnewood has his own shameful seduction story; however, not until his sister's fall does he realize the damage he has done to the woman and her family.

Byrnewood, upon finding Lorrimer with his sister, begs Lorrimer to stay away from her. Lorrimer points out Byrnewood's story of seducing one of his father's servants, but Byrnewood feels that the two situations are completely different, based on the class of the women. Lippard makes a valid point that men do not think about the consequences of rape or the many people they may be harming. Lorrimer shuts Byrnewood up quickly by stating "[w]hat have I done with the girl, that you, or any other young blood about town, would *not do*, under similar circumstances. Who was it, that entered so heartily into the joke of the *sham* marriage, when it was named in the Oyster Cellar?" (100). Byrnewood's thought, though, is that he and Mary are from a *respectable* family – their father is a merchant and clearly wealthy enough to attract the attention of Lorrimer. Byrnewood believes that because Annie, his father's servant, is from the lowest class in Philadelphia, it is perfectly acceptable to use her, seduce her and refuse to treat her like a human being. When Byrnewood's father finds out that Annie is pregnant, he turns her out of the house and fires her, which has a detrimental effect on Annie and her family. Without any income, Annie and her father starve; and when Annie dies, her father commits suicide after being denied assistance from any of the wealthy in Philadelphia. Lippard inserts a sympathetic note for the innocent women of Philadelphia by describing Annie as "[t]he wronged woman, holy because trusting, innocent because loving with a pure love, that flung the world of her honor at her lover's feet, the wronged woman glided like a phantom between the seducer and the light" (417). Byrnewood realizes the wrong he has committed, and he actually feels remorse for the fate of the woman and her family.

After witnessing the depressing fate of Annie, Byrnewood begins to think about the male “rules” regarding seduction and class. Lippard, while not excusing Byrnewood for his chauvinistic actions, explains the thought process of many middle- and upper-class men:

He had only followed out the law which the Lady and Gentleman of Christian Society recognize with tacit reverence. Seduce a *rich* maiden? Wrong the daughter of a *good* family? Oh, this is horrible; it is a crime only paralleled in enormity by the blasphemy of God’s name. But a poor girl, a *servant*, a domestic? Oh, no! These are fair game for the gentleman of fashionable society; upon the wrongs of such as these the fine lady looks with a light laugh and supercilious smile. (417)

Many people believed that low-class women were merely objects to be practiced on. Men were expected to seduce poor girls in order to gain experience for when they married and settled down with a *good* woman from a *respectable* family. Lippard questions that belief in the novel and has Byrnewood realize how wrong the “law” really is. Having a fallen sister and knowing what it is like to have his family dishonored give him a completely different view toward women. Byrnewood is ashamed for his actions when he thinks back to Annie and how he treated her, particularly because he knows that she actually loved and trusted him. Lippard brings up the “law” in order to strike the same realization in his male readers and as a way of warning women against libertines, or any man who may take advantage of them.

Lippard produces an ending that allows most of the characters to live “happily ever after.” Byrnewood and Annie marry and move to the wilderness of Wyoming, taking the fallen Mary with them. By allowing Annie to have a safe and prosperous future, Lippard is sending the

message that “[e]ven the fallen can rise from their former depravity” (Siegel 48). Lippard uses his authorial interruptions several times throughout the novel to comment on the disgrace of seduction and attempts to convince men that raping a woman is the worst crime one can commit. During the rape scene between Mary and Lorrimer, Lippard mentions the Judgment Bell that tolls for the libertine and explains that his soul will be darkened by the “prospect of an eternity of wo” (135). Lippard provides an additional warning to libertines of Philadelphia through a legend:

In the sky, far, far above the earth...there hangs an Awful Bell, invisible to mortal eye, which angel hands alone may toll, which is never tolled save when the Unpardonable Sin is committed on earth, and then its judgment peal rings out like the blast of the archangel’s trumpet, breaking on the ear of the Criminal, and on his ear alone, with a sound that freezes his blood with horror. The peal of the Bell...announces to the Guilty one, that he is an outcast from God’s mercy for ever, that his Crime can never be pardoned. (135)

Despite all the murder and betrayal throughout the novel, Lippard makes a point to highlight seduction and rape as the most reprehensible form of sin – unpardonable in the eyes of God. Lippard uses the description of the archangel and Judgment day to emphasize the importance of this warning.

Moving away from the focus on seduction, Lippard includes extensive descriptions of the female body for every female character that he introduces. Paul Erickson comments that “[d]epending upon the predilections of the author, street scenes in city-mysteries novels offered narrators ample chances to describe in great detail women’s feet, teeth, hair, and, above all,

women's breasts" (430). In our very first physical description of Mary, Lippard writes "[t]he fair round neck, and well-developed bust, shown to advantage in the close fitting dress of black silk, the slender waist, and the ripening proportions of her figure, terminated by slight angles and delicate feet, all gave you the idea of a bud breaking into bloom," describing exactly what captured men's interest in a woman (18). Although he writes physical descriptions of the male characters, Lippard mainly focuses on their faces, while he goes into great detail outlining the female body, and, as Erickson states, focuses mainly on women's breasts – the shape, the color, and the movement. In another description of Mary, this time right before her rape by Lorrimer, Lippard goes into great detail about her breasts: "her bosom rose no longer quick and gaspingly, but in long pulsations, that urged the full globes in all their virgin beauty, softly and slowly into view. Like billows they rose above the folds of the night robe" (131). Lippard uses the description to focus on the female body, but also highlights and sets the erotic tone for the horrendous act that follows the imagery.

Erickson argues that city-mysteries thrive on simple voyeurism. Gazing at women was not an opportunity people from rural settings had, which made the cities exotic and exciting (431-2). It is difficult to answer why Lippard was so obsessed with descriptions of the female body – breasts in particular – but perhaps Erickson's argument provides some explanation. Being raised in a rural setting, as Lippard was, could have made him shocked and amused by the way women were exposed through their clothing in the city. In a description of a sleeping Dora Livingstone, Lippard again focuses on physical description, highlighting Dora's bosom. He writes that "over that full bosom, which rose and fell with the gentle impulse of slumber, over that womanly bosom...the dark tresses...hung drooping over the breast, as its globes rose

heaving into view” (138). David Reynolds, in *Beneath the American Renaissance*, claims that Lippard was the master of the voyeur style. Reynolds asserts that

In Lippard’s hands, the voyeur style created an atmosphere of lust around even the most apparently virtuous heroine, so that whatever pious associations have gathered around the moral woman are negated by the lascivious “caress” of the aroused author...Lippard instinctively grasped a concept that Hugh Hefner would later exploit: the American public is most excited not by explicit views of depraved women as by peekaboo glimpses of the girl next door...His descriptions resemble the early *Playboy* centerfolds: glossy portraits of impossibly lovely women who are all the more tempting for not being fully revealed. (216)

Ravoni the sorcerer brings another interesting view on women into the novel in chapter five of book five. The scene opens and Lippard, of course, provides an extensive description of the temple and its beauties – including a group of maidens who are dancing around the temple. Mimicking a harem, these “twenty-four beautiful young women, made up of female mental patients clad in white transparent robes,” are “girls Ravoni has ‘rescued’ from around the world” (Callaghan 5). Ravoni refers to the women as “the chosen of God” and claims that he has saved them from a world of suffering and isolation (Lippard 529). Although he claims to be saving the women, Ravoni has them in a trance, following his every order and serving as objects to be looked at. Voyeurism is very evident in this chapter because of the male followers of Ravoni who sit around and watch the women dancing. The women, because of the trance they are in, are unaware of being watched. Carl Ostrowski claims that because he “saves” the women from their lives, “Lippard suddenly positions Ravoni as a humane reformer of treatment for the mentally ill” (11). Ravoni kidnaps Mabel, freeing her from Fitz-Cowles and Reverend Pyne, and giving

her the title of Priestess. Ostrowski argues that “[i]n a trajectory similar to the plot of many sentimental novels, the virtuous orphan is catapulted from penury (with the threat of prostitution) to something resembling marriage and social prominence” (11-12). Ravoni has good intentions in wanting to save the women from difficult futures; however, the trance he puts over them transforms them into possessions that are unable to think and act for themselves. Lippard writes that the women’s eyes, as they twirl around the temple, were “vacant...fixed in wonder on the face of Ravoni” (529). Ravoni additionally uses the women to transfix his male followers, focusing again on the voyeurism. The men cannot take their eyes away from the beautiful harem.

While most of the women appear passive and submissive, Dora Livingstone is a completely different female character. Connected with several characters (her husband, Fitz-Cowles, and Luke Harvey), Dora has climbed the social ladder. Previously engaged to Luke, she turned him down because of the promise of wealth and social standing when Livingstone proposed. In the first chapter of *The Quaker City*, the reader realizes that Dora is now having an affair with Fitz-Cowles, who promises her greater wealth and even higher social standing when they run away to England. Dora, unlike Mary and Mabel, is not innocent and angelic, but rather “animalistic” and not bothered by having more than one sexual partner. Reynolds writes that “Dora Livingstone, the principal wife figure in the novel, abandons domestic virtue in her deluded quest for aristocratic status, for which she willingly gives herself to illicit sex and murderous schemes” (xxii-i). Participating in the events that are mostly tied with men, such as infidelity and murder, Dora defies the gender role that she has been given. Unwilling to remain in the house and take care of her domestic duties, Dora (greedily) sets out to get even more than she already has.

Lippard incorporates several different views of women in *The Quaker City*. Because of his fervent belief in women's rights, Lippard uses his novel to point out how women are mistreated. Lippard powerfully warns men against the crime of seduction and uses several different male characters to highlight how women are constantly referred to as possessions. The entire novel has a voyeuristic view on the reader's part, and by including such detailed descriptions of the women's bodies, Lippard plays up the reader's role as a viewer. Ironically, in the conclusion of the novel the women – except for Dora, who has ultimately chosen to die rising on the social ladder – find themselves with financial stability and a man to watch over them. Lippard encourages women to be independent and self-supporting; however, the ending to *The Quaker City* reflects a completely different mindset on Lippard's part. Rather than rewarding the woman who sets out to make a name for herself (even if it is with dishonorable intentions), Lippard rewards the women who have been wronged and act submissively.

Chapter 5:

Conclusion

George Lippard's *The Quaker City* exhibits a bizarre and distinctive vision of American urban life in the 1800s – a vision that has been denied the recognition it deserves. Bringing Lippard back to the American literary and history canon would provide necessary insight to the corruption and treatment of people from differing classes and genders. By focusing on Biblical allusions to highlight the corruption, the narrative structure that mimics the plot, and the treatment of women throughout the novel, I hope to bring attention to Lippard's work and reveal the novel's importance for understanding the literature and history that stemmed from events in the 1800s.

The Quaker City contains numerous avenues for exploration and analysis. I chose to focus on three separate themes from the novel because of the obvious importance the issues present to readers and how the themes address problems that were prevalent in the nineteenth century.

Although Lippard was not a strong supporter of organized religion, he used Biblical parallels because he understood that religion was an important and relatable belief for many of his readers. Comparing Philadelphia to cities from the Bible gave people a better understanding of his message – that corruption and sin would ultimately destroy the city as it did Sodom, Gomorrah, and Babel. Lippard effectively uses Biblical parallels to warn society of its fate and to encourage the return of morals and values to certain professions and the church, charity for the

less fortunate, and a better appreciation for the ideals of freedom and justice that America was founded upon.

Lippard's narrative choices strongly replicate the plot and character development and are ways of removing himself from risqué social and political statements. By incorporating narrative intrusions throughout the novel, Lippard blames his characters for statements that may infuriate his readers, thus giving himself free range to critique society, religion, politics, and what- (or whom-) ever else he feels the need to criticize. Lippard creates a clever structure for the novel by having it reflect the nature of the events that take place. Because there is nothing calm, organized, or logical about the plot and characters, Lippard structures his novel in a tense and chaotic manner. Chapters end at climactic moments and Lippard does not provide closure to one plot before concocting another one. Even the final chapter leaves us without answers as the end closes on a dramatic and question-raising scene. Lippard knew how to draw his audience in and demonstrates that talent through the novel's structure, which is just one more reason to allow Lippard into the canon.

Lastly, if Lippard's feminist leanings are not enough reason to incorporate him into the canon, the way females are characterized and treated in *The Quaker City* is. Women characters range from the submissive and weak to the aggressive and strong. Seduction, betrayal, and revenge revolve around the women, and the choices Lippard makes regarding their actions and choices create interesting, and sometimes even questionable, situations for the women at the end of the novel. *The Quaker City* is vital reading in order to get a better understanding of how women were treated and what options were available, or not, to them in nineteenth-century urban America.

George Lippard is a major part of American history and has captured a unique and revealing understanding of urban life in *The Quaker City*. Lippard presents interesting and critical issues about American life, both socially and culturally, that are vital for analyzing the literature and history that emerged from his time period. American literature and history courses would greatly benefit from George Lippard and *The Quaker City*, so let's create some room in the canon and bring Lippard back.

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