

## Anti-Slavery and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Britain

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CLARE MIDGLEY

In seeking to demand equal rights with men while revaluing the 'feminine' and to foster political alliances among women whose present positions are manifestly unequal, contemporary feminists confront difficult dilemmas. In this essay I bring a historical perspective to bear on these issues through an exploration of women's participation in the British anti-slavery movement and its links to the development of feminism in the period between the 1780s and the 1860s.

Drawing on my research into women anti-slavery campaigners in Britain, I explore two different but interrelated boundaries which women's involvement in anti-slavery created both opportunities for, and obstacles to, crossing.<sup>1</sup> The first boundary separated the private circles of homes and families from the public and political arenas outside; it was a gender-based boundary which women abolitionists and feminists attempted in various ways to cross.<sup>2</sup> The second boundary divided women by assigning them to different and unequal social categories; separating white from black and 'free' from enslaved, it was a racially defined boundary which female anti-slavery campaigners attempted to some extent to challenge.<sup>3</sup>

This essay is arranged in four sections. In the first I trace the uneven development of the link between anti-slavery and feminism in Britain. In the following sections I successively explore the meanings of the terminology of 'duties' and 'rights', of feminine 'privilege', and of sisterhood in which white middle-class British women abolitionists couched their opposition to the enslavement of black women. Finally, I discuss some of the issues this study raises concerning 'maternalist' and 'egalitarian' strands in both abolitionism and feminism.

In exploring these issues the essay as a whole raises questions about the nature of feminism, the meanings of sisterhood, and the precise historical interconnections between domestic and colonial politics and ideology.

Looking back on the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the founders of the women's suffrage movement in the United States, recalled that the exclusion of American women delegates from the Convention by the male leadership of the British movement had 'stung many women into new thought and action' and given 'rise to the movement for women's political equality both in England and the United States'.<sup>4</sup> The more general link between abolitionism and feminism to which Stanton's specific statement pointed has been the subject of considerable study in relation to the United States,<sup>5</sup> but until recently the lack of detailed research into British women anti-slavery campaigners precluded any informed assessment of their links with feminism.<sup>6</sup>

In assessing the accuracy of Stanton's assertion a number of questions arise. Was there indeed a link between anti-slavery and the development of feminism in Britain? Does it date from 1840, can it be traced earlier, or did it only occur later? And did events in the anti-slavery movement give rise to 'the movement for women's political equality', or to rather different developments among women which may nevertheless be labelled feminist?

In chronological terms, women's involvement in the organized anti-slavery movement spanned the period in which modern feminism originated. The first action against slavery taken by women in Britain was the resistance by enslaved women themselves to their chattel status, and the position of such runaway slaves prompted the first legal action against slavery in the 1760s.<sup>7</sup> However, the first wave of intensive popular campaigning by white women, directed at the abolition of the British slave trade, did not take place until between 1787 and 1792, the date of publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's key feminist work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. The second wave, directed at the emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies, spanned the period from 1823 to 1838, overlapping with the flourishing of Owenite socialist-feminism. The third wave, the campaign for universal abolition which focused increasingly on slavery in the United States, covered the period between 1834 and 1868, encompassing the growth and demise of Chartism with its minority support for women's suffrage, the publication of key early feminist tracts, and the formation of the first feminist organizations.<sup>8</sup>

Chronological coincidence does not in itself prove a link, and it is necessary to look also for evidence of common personnel, organizational ties and ideological influences between the two movements. It has proved easiest to establish a link at the end of the period, in the late 1860s. As Judith Walkowitz has pointed out, many of the leaders of the Ladies' National Association, which launched a feminist campaign against the persecution of women under the terms of the Contagious Diseases Acts, were former anti-slavery activists, and indeed they adapted the rhetoric of anti-slavery to their new 'abolition' movement.<sup>9</sup> My own research has confirmed that these women formed part of a wider group of mainly Liberal middle-class women, many of them Quakers or Unitarians, who in the 1860s combined

anti-slavery organization with a range of developing feminist campaigns. The strongest early women's suffrage societies, for example, were in London, Manchester, Bristol and Edinburgh, and in all cases women who had led the major female anti-slavery societies in these cities became leading members of the local suffrage committees.<sup>10</sup>

The question that now needs to be explored is whether there was a similar simultaneous involvement by women as individuals or in groups in both anti-slavery and feminism prior to the 1860s; or whether it was rather that anti-slavery activists moved into the feminist movement with the winding down of the anti-slavery movement. This second possibility is suggested by the formation of the first women's suffrage groups at just this time.

To return to origins: Mary Wollstonecraft condemned slavery as an integral part of her advocacy of 'the rights of man', and in extending radical ideology with her call for women's rights she made frequent analogies between the positions of women and slaves.<sup>11</sup> Women became most involved in abolition in Manchester, where the local anti-slavery society was the most radical in political complexion. Political radicalism, abolition and feminism did not comprise a neat egalitarian package, however. Wollstonecraft herself was not actively involved in the anti-slave trade campaigns. Manchester abolitionists, while they accepted that women formed part of the anti-slavery public, did not adopt her egalitarian language in appealing for women's support. Rather they echoed conservative Evangelical abolitionists, such as Hannah More, in stressing women's distinctive feminine qualities and duties—their role as moral guardians and their special sensibility.<sup>12</sup>

Women's participation in the anti-slavery movement became much more extensive in the 1823–1838 period, when over seventy ladies' anti-slavery associations were established throughout Britain. Women organized independently, they founded a national female network with increasingly strong international connections, they petitioned Parliament en masse, they influenced key aspects of national policy, and they were highly effective canvassers and pamphleteers.<sup>13</sup> *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, published in 1824 by the radical Quaker, Elizabeth Heyrick, is a landmark in the development of anti-slavery as the first call by a white British author for the immediate emancipation of slaves.<sup>14</sup>

Women played crucial roles in one of the key public and political campaigns of the early nineteenth century. The meaning of these activities for the development of feminism is, however, ambivalent, and interpretation raises questions about definitions of feminism. On the one hand, ladies' anti-slavery associations developed a specifically feminine perspective and sphere of interest and expertise based on their concern for the suffering of other women. They acted independently and on the crucial issue of immediate emancipation they went so far beyond a simply supportive role as to challenge male authority on a matter of principle, arguing that women 'ought to obey God rather than man'.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the benefits that

women gained from working within single-sex organizations have to be weighed against their disinterest in challenging their exclusion from positions of formal power within the movement. Having no voice on national anti-slavery committees, at national conferences or at public meetings made it difficult for them to promote policy changes effectively.

A similar problem in interpreting the nature of women's involvement in anti-slavery is raised by examining the relationship between female anti-slavery and female philanthropy. On the one hand, as a movement for political reform rather than a charitable endeavour, anti-slavery broke with philanthropy. On the other hand, many women moved from philanthropy into anti-slavery and represented this move as a smooth and logical progression from the missionary societies, Bible societies and other religious and philanthropic organizations that had burgeoned in Britain from 1790 onwards. The middle-class women who dominated ladies' anti-slavery organizations stressed their respectability and justified their activism as an acceptable extension of their domestic and religious duties.

Distanced by class, political perspective and concern for conventional respectability from the Owenite socialist-feminists who were their contemporaries, the majority of anti-slavery women of the period up to the late 1830s may be described as 'maternalist activists'. They can be seen as modelling themselves after the model put forward by Hannah More, who stressed women's unique qualities and roles, the domestic basis of both their private and their public *duties*, and their spiritual rather than social equality. Few were 'egalitarian feminists', the term which may be applied to women who followed Mary Wollstonecraft in advocating women's *rights* and campaigning for economic, social and legal equality.

When an 'egalitarian feminist' element did emerge in the British anti-slavery movement, it was mainly as a result of links with America. From the late 1830s onwards British women anti-slavery campaigners established close contacts with their counterparts in the United States. Some of these American women, whose initial attempts at organizing were strongly influenced by British women, rapidly moved beyond their British sisters in claiming their right to equal participation in the anti-slavery movement—their right to act as delegates and to vote at mixed meetings, to sit on committees, and to speak in public.<sup>16</sup> Stanton was correct to claim that the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention in London brought the American controversy over women's rights into open debate in the British anti-slavery movement. The positions that British campaigners adopted on the 'woman question' influenced their decisions either to follow the leadership of the national British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in aligning with the wing of the American movement under the leadership of Lewis Tappan which opposed 'women's rights', or to form independent local societies allied with the more radical and pro-feminist wing of the American movement which was led by William Lloyd Garrison.

British women sympathetic to the Garrisonians did not, however, initially make any attempt to follow their American sisters' example by asserting their right to an equal role in the British anti-slavery movement. Thus the link between events at the Convention and the beginnings of organized feminism was less striking and immediate in Britain than Stanton's statement implies.

It was not until the 1850s, when British women were already beginning to gain a more equal status in a number of philanthropic organizations and to initiate campaigns around education, employment and property rights, that a few attempts were made by female anti-slavery activists sympathetic to the Garrisonians to achieve equality within their movement. These efforts were generated by developments within Britain occurring outside the anti-slavery movement in combination with the influence of American abolitionist-feminists.

The moves towards equality were limited in both scope and impact. Their beginnings can be placed in 1853, when a mixed anti-slavery society with both male and female officers and committee members was founded in Leeds in Yorkshire.<sup>17</sup> The following year two Manchester women presented themselves as delegates at a national anti-slavery convention in London and were accepted without argument by its organizers, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>18</sup> Between 1859 and 1861, African-American abolitionist and feminist Sarah Parker Remond (1826–1894) became the first woman to undertake public anti-slavery lecture tours of Britain.<sup>19</sup> Sarah Parker Remond, together with several other women activists including women's education pioneer Elizabeth Reid and American fugitive slave Ellen Craft, became members of the Garrisonian-aligned London Emancipation Committee, formed in 1859 and the first national anti-slavery committee in Britain to be mixed in both sexual and racial composition.<sup>20</sup>

Women's participation in the British anti-slavery movement raised central questions concerning women's role and position in society both through debate on the role of women in the movement and through the debate these campaigners stimulated on the sufferings of enslaved black women.

The debate on women's rights within the British anti-slavery movement was most explicit in the 1837–1843 period, as British abolitionists responded to the controversies racking the American movement. By 1833 British women anti-slavery campaigners had succeeded in establishing that their public and political activities were an acceptable extension of their domestic and religious duties as defined in the dominant and mutually reinforcing ideologies of 'separate spheres', domesticity and evangelicalism.<sup>21</sup> However, from the late 1830s, in response to calls for women's rights within the American movement, some British activists moved to break with this ideology. Other women activists responded by reaffirming their commitment to their established campaign rhetoric of women's duties. When the cases of particular women are studied, however, it becomes clear that any attempt at classification into dichotomous categories of 'egalitarian

feminist' supporters of 'rights' versus 'maternalist activist' supporters of 'duties' carries the danger of obscuring the complexity of individual reactions. As the following necessarily brief examples will suggest, the differing political positions adopted by particular women need to be understood in the context of their individual lives and the influence of such factors as religious belief, friendships, family background, marital status and personality.

Writer Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) fits most neatly into the category of 'egalitarian feminist'. A single woman who earned her living from her own writing, a supporter of women's education in the Unitarian tradition, and a close friend of American abolitionist-feminists from the 1830s, she was most decisive in her rejection of 'separate spheres' arguments against full participation by women in anti-slavery. Defending American women's public actions on the grounds that 'fidelity of conscience' must take precedence over false notions of 'retiring modesty', she followed the Grimké sisters in arguing that women's sphere should not be that appointed for them by men and 'bounded by their ideas of propriety' but rather 'the sphere appointed by God, and bounded by the powers which he has bestowed'.<sup>22</sup>

Anne Knight (1786–1862), another single woman, was a feminist of a rather different type. Born into a middle-class Quaker family from Chelmsford in Essex, Knight spent several years living in France and was strongly influenced by the Saint Simonians and by French feminists in the 1830s. Knight gave public lectures in France in opposition to slavery and she was involved in 1851 in founding the first women's suffrage society in England, the Chartist-aligned Sheffield Female Reform Association. Her 'womanism', as she referred to her feminist beliefs, stressed women's special qualities, which she argued made them complementary, and in some ways superior, to men. Passionately identifying with women who broke with convention for the sake of a worthy cause, she praised American women activists as 'brave Amazons'.<sup>23</sup> After the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention she put forward the view that women 'driven to the forefront of the battle' in anti-slavery in both Britain and the United States could no longer be excluded from full participation with 'the puny cry of *custom*'.<sup>24</sup>

Among Knight's surviving papers is a heavily annotated copy of Marion Reid's important feminist tract, *A Plea for Woman*, which provides further evidence for the links between anti-slavery and the development of British feminism. The *Plea* was published in Scotland in 1843, three years after Reid had attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention, and it had on its title page the quotation, 'Can man be free, if woman be a slave?'<sup>25</sup>

Knight's friend Elizabeth Pease (1807–1897) was also of Quaker background and remained single throughout most of her years as an anti-slavery activist. Lacking Martineau and Knight's experience of independent travel, she lived with her father, Joseph Pease, in Darlington until his death, working as his assistant in anti-slavery and other reform causes. Such family involvement in anti-slavery was common. Women's subordinate position

and role in the family was reflected in the familial division of anti-slavery labour, and apparently reinforced women's reluctance to introduce women's rights into abolitionism.

Certainly Pease herself was initially very ambivalent. In the late 1830s Pease expressed her admiration of her fellow Quaker, Angelina Grimké, for moving 'steadily onward in your path of duty' in speaking out publicly against slavery just as 'any female minister in our Society is required to preach the Gospel'. She was, however, concerned to distinguish women's duty to the anti-slavery cause from advocacy of women's rights for its own sake. Thus she was startled to hear of the Grimkés' intention to advocate the 'rights of women', feeling that it was a '*delicate* subject' which she had rather 'remained unassailed by *words* at least'. For

is not the right of woman to act on all moral questions, and her determination to maintain that right *most* securely established, by a modest yet resolute and unflinching perseverance in *doing all she can* heedless of the scorn and the jeers, the ridicule of the opposition of those who are striving to build up the kingdom of darkness?<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to Anne Knight, whose image of the female abolitionist was the embattled public heroine, Pease's ideal image was the Quaker woman unostentatiously but faithfully following the quiet voice of her conscience.

Events at the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention had a major impact on Pease, and for her Stanton's assessment seems to hold good. Angered by 'the spirit of exclusion manifested towards those noble women' who attempted to attend the Convention as delegates and frustrated by her powerlessness to organize any formal meetings with the excluded women, Pease was propelled towards unequivocal support for women's right to an equal role in the anti-slavery movement.<sup>27</sup> During the 1850s and 1860s Pease became a leading figure in the women's movement.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast to Martineau, Knight and Pease, a number of other leading British women anti-slavery activists recoiled from the intrusion of the 'woman question' into their movement. Several were married to Independent ministers, whose evangelical counterparts had proved most hostile to women's public activism in the United States. For example, Eliza Conder described the 'vulgar clamour' at the Convention and ridiculed the American women as 'most untidily arrayed'. She clearly identified public speaking and advocacy of women's rights with lack of respectability. She saw such activities as a threat to the whole ordering of society, as incompatible with the fulfillment of domestic obligations and as leading to confusion in gender roles: 'if we are thus to start out of our spheres, who is to take our place? Who, as "keepers at home" are to "guide the house", and train up children? Are the gentlemen kindly to officiate for us?'<sup>29</sup> Taking a similarly hostile position, Mary Caroline Braithwaite, Quaker secretary of the Kendal Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, stressed that her own anti-slavery activities were

'consistent with needful attention to other duties', in contrast to those of the women delegates, whom she described as 'inconsistent representatives'.<sup>30</sup>

Anne Taylor Gilbert (1782–1866), an evangelical hymn-writer who, like Eliza Conder, was married to an Independent minister, was similarly concerned about the disruption of gender roles. She had organized a mass women's petition against slavery in Nottingham in 1833 and had stated then that she had 'no scruple, as to female petitions, in the cause of humanity'. However, when asked by Anne Knight to lend her support to a campaign for women's rights, she replied that she was not in favour of women having the vote. She explained that she considered women adequately represented by their menfolk and that the 'division of labour' and of 'spheres' was both the natural and the scientific way to organize society. This scheme, she believed, avoided creating conflict within the family and burdening women with extra responsibilities on top of their already heavy load of domestic and philanthropic duties.<sup>31</sup>

What is evident in the stance of these women campaigners alarmed by 'the woman question' is the intertwining of principled opposition with practical concerns about the difficulty for women of combining political and domestic activities. Even among those women most hostile to women's rights, tensions arose between a desire to adhere to conventional female roles and dissatisfaction with men's performance in the more public roles of the movement. Sarah Dymond, Quaker secretary of the Taunton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, wrote defensively but also defiantly to the secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society: 'I will engage to get up a public meeting, which I think I can do without stepping out of my *proper* sphere; I am decidedly opposed to the woman question, but when *men will* not work in the cause *women must*.'<sup>32</sup> Indeed there is evidence from throughout the history of the anti-slavery movement that male apathy acted both as a spur to female activism and as an excuse and justification for that activism.<sup>33</sup>

While an examination of selected individual women activists indicates a broad spectrum of opinions concerning women's rights and duties, the limited and late challenges made by women to male domination of the British anti-slavery movement suggest that in practice the views of women like Conder, Dymond and Gilbert prevailed over those of Martineau, Knight and Pease and are probably more representative of the hundreds of women whose names appear in the subscription lists of ladies' anti-slavery associations.

Middle-class women in Britain encountered a major ideological obstacle in moving from anti-slavery to women's rights. The language in which they articulated their anti-slavery commitment had from the beginning been couched within the terms of the dominant 'separate spheres' ideology rather than framed as a challenge to that ideology. Women consistently expressed not dissatisfaction with their own social position but rather a desire to extend to enslaved women the privileges and protection that they themselves claimed to enjoy.

British women's vision of freedom in a post-emancipation society was rooted in the dominant middle-class ideology that was centrally concerned to promote proper gender relations as well as proper relations between the classes and different 'races'. While this vision was shared by male and female campaigners alike, women placed particular stress on women's position and family relations in post-emancipation society. In terms of class, campaigners agreed that slave labour should be replaced by 'free'—that is, waged—labour, but in terms of gender they envisioned a society in which women would have largely withdrawn from the plantation field labour that was their primary occupation under slavery. Instead, women's role was discussed in terms of family life. Emancipation would mark the end of the sexual exploitation of women and of the disruption of family life, and the creation of a society in which the black woman was able 'to occupy her proper station as a Daughter, a Wife, and a Mother'.<sup>34</sup>

Education was seen as vitally important in achieving this objective. Ladies' anti-slavery associations were founded at a period of intense middle-class concern for the education of working-class girls within Britain, an education intended to fit them for their 'proper' roles as good wives and mothers, as reliable domestic servants and as teachers of the poor. The associations were frequently entitled 'negroes' aid' societies, and combined advocacy of emancipation with fund-raising for missionaries involved in the education of black girls in Africa and the West Indies.<sup>35</sup> This stress on education was linked not only to the class position of campaigners but also to their racial ideology, for they envisioned a society in which control had passed from white planters degraded by slavery to a benevolent colonial empire fulfilling its mission of bringing the light of Western civilization, legitimate commerce and a Christian way of life to the 'benighted races'. As women had stated in their 1825 Appeal from British Ladies to the West India Planters: 'It has wounded us to read of woman's suffering and woman's humiliation in Countries which acknowledge British laws, which are governed, not by some half-wild, benighted Race, but by those who are connected with us by the closest ties.'<sup>36</sup>

In British women campaigners' analysis of the problem of gender relations in colonial society, enslaved men were denied 'the authority and rights of husbands' over their womenfolk, and were thus unable 'to protect them from insult'. The 'hapless and forlorn' lot of enslaved women was contrasted with women campaigners' own 'high privileges' as 'British females'.<sup>37</sup> Women campaigners' condemnation of slavery and vision of freedom in the colonies was thus tied to their view about the proper ordering of British society. David Brion Davis has convincingly linked the contrast drawn between slave labour and 'free' labour to industrial capitalists' quest to consolidate their position of control over their employees through the 'free' contract rather than coercion—what Davis, using Gramscian concepts, describes as the hegemonic function of anti-slavery ideology.<sup>38</sup> In a parallel way, campaigners' contrasting of British family life and gender relations with

those characteristic of slavery can be linked to middle-class preoccupation with moulding working-class family life in their own idealized image. Douglass Lorimer has persuasively suggested that debate on race in nineteenth-century Britain acted as a focus for expressing class anxieties. This analysis needs extending to encompass gender anxieties aroused both by women working and campaigning outside the home and by feminism.<sup>39</sup>

If advocacy of 'free' labour buttressed middle-class people's dominant social position in Britain in relation to the working class, idealization of the position of women in British society obscured the lot of underpaid and overworked working-class women. It also reinforced middle-class women's own subordinate position in relation to men. For behind the rhetoric of female privilege and male protection lay the reality that in early nineteenth-century Britain married women of *all* classes lacked an independent legal existence. This made them almost defenceless against domestic violence and sexual abuse, financially dependent on their husbands or fathers, and deprived of property rights and rights to their children in case of divorce or separation.<sup>40</sup> In this context, the 'proper station' that white women sought to extend to black women was premised on subordination to their menfolk. Most women campaigners themselves seem to have been blithely unconcerned by this. They noted without comment that at a reception to celebrate the emancipation of slaves held after the Emancipation Day wedding of leading female anti-slavery activist Priscilla Buxton, their male colleagues toasted the bride with the wish 'that she might long rejoice in the fetters put on that day as well as over those which she had assisted to break'.<sup>41</sup>

When many white middle-class British women campaigned against slavery they *contrasted* their own position with that of enslaved women, emphasizing difference, whereas campaigners for women's rights—and working-class rights—*compared* their position as women with that of slaves, emphasizing similarity. There were basic discursive obstacles to combining anti-slavery commitment with egalitarian feminism.

Such obstacles were not insurmountable, however, for a number of key abolitionists were also leading feminists and forged ideological links between the two causes. In *Society in America* (1837) Harriet Martineau combined support for female, working-class and black rights, asserting that arguments against women engaging in politics on the grounds of its incompatibility with their other duties were as invalid as Tory arguments against the enfranchisement of artisans and as unprincipled as planters' opposition to the freeing of slaves.<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Pease found that her support for the Grimké sisters' campaign against racism among American Quakers gave her a new perspective on women's position, and in 1843 she compared the exclusion of women from public assemblies with the racial prejudice that segregated black people in the 'negro pew' in Quaker meeting houses.<sup>43</sup>

African-American activist Sarah Parker Remond provides an interesting example of the way in which women tried to analyze the specific forms of oppression suffered by different groups of women and to campaign

simultaneously on several different fronts. Lamenting the plight of poor English seamstresses in one of her public speeches, Remond nevertheless stressed that the position of enslaved women was far worse because of the public and legal sanction given to their sexual abuse and exploitation by their white male owners. She supported middle-class white women's campaign for rights while urging these women to 'demand for the black woman the protection and rights enjoyed by the white'.<sup>44</sup>

For black women in Britain, freedom did not in practice lead to the acquisition of the 'privileges' enjoyed by middle-class women but rather to facing the problems of working-class women. Mary Prince, who left her owners when she was brought to Britain from the West Indies in the 1820s, moved from the status of household slave to a subordinate and dependent position as domestic servant in the household of leading anti-slavery activist Thomas Pringle and his wife.<sup>45</sup> Ellen Craft, a fugitive slave from the United States, publicly asserted that she would 'much rather starve in England, a free woman, than be a slave for the best man that ever breathed upon the American continent'.<sup>46</sup> However, she and her husband, William, showed by their actions that they saw freedom not as the acquisition of privilege but rather as the first step towards social and economic independence. Having of necessity relied on white abolitionist patrons and 'matrons' on arrival in Britain, they soon chose self-employment as lodging-house proprietor and cabinet-maker rather than remaining in secure positions as resident teachers at the industrial school of a wealthy female benefactor.<sup>47</sup> In a parallel development, the Crafts moved from telling their own life histories to anti-slavery audiences to policy-making roles in the British anti-slavery movement as members of the London Emancipation Committee.

Middle-class white women articulated their concern and identification with enslaved black women such as Mary Price and Ellen Craft in a language of sisterhood, a language that was also adopted by feminist campaigners.<sup>48</sup> Given the very different experiences and unequal positions of 'free' and enslaved women, how are we to interpret this language of sisterhood?

In the first place, it is evident that at the root of the women's anti-slavery commitment lay their concern for other women, a gender-based sympathy that was believed to cross lines of race and class. The framers of the largest anti-slavery petition ever presented to the British Parliament, the 1833 national female petition, explained that their campaign was motivated by 'a painful and indignant sense of the injuries offered to their own sex'.<sup>49</sup> Eight years earlier, reporting the formation of the first female anti-slavery society in 1825, its founders stated:

A few individuals who commiserated the unhappy condition of British negro slaves, and wished to 'remember those in bonds, as bound with them', and who particularly felt for the degraded condition of their own sex, ranked as they are, in the West-India colonies, with the beasts of the field—determined to endeavour to

awaken (at least in the bosom of English women) a deep and lasting compassion, not only for the *bodily sufferings* of Female Slaves, but also for their *moral degradation*. . . .<sup>50</sup>

The women pledged to continue their exertions 'till the time may come when the lash may no longer be permitted to fall on the persons of helpless Female slaves, . . . and when every Negro Mother, living under British Laws, shall press a free-born infant to her bosom.'<sup>51</sup>

The slogan 'Am I not a woman and a sister' put into the mouth of a kneeling black woman slave was adopted by British women campaigners by 1828, several years before their American co-workers. It emphasized both the sympathy and empathy that women felt for female suffering and the essential humanity of enslaved women.<sup>52</sup> Against a planter stereotype of sexually rapacious, beast-like African women, female abolitionists countered with writings such as Charlotte Elizabeth's verses 'On the Flogging of Women', which decried planters for assaulting 'the female's modest pride'. They challenged planter stereotypes of Africans as polygynous and lacking proper family values with verses and engravings delineating the anguish of mothers torn from their children.<sup>53</sup>

White women campaigners thus drew attention to the specific sufferings of women under slavery as victims of sexual exploitation, highlighting that slavery was not only a system of extreme labour exploitation but also a system that destroyed the personal and private lives of its victims.

The rhetoric of sisterhood was, however, clearly not intended by white women as an assertion of cultural or social equality with black women slaves. Rather, campaigners were preoccupied with 'elevating' women of African origin through supporting missionary education. In countering planter stereotypes abolitionists constructed their own stereotype, that of the passive and silent victim—'the weakest and most succourless of the human race'.<sup>54</sup> On the positive side, this accorded with the Christian ideal of the suffering victim with which British women could themselves identify. On the negative side, it offered British women a sense of power over their West Indian sisters. British women campaigners considered that it was up to them 'to plead for those of their own sex, who have less power to plead than ourselves, who cannot speak their Misery and their shame'.<sup>55</sup> In putting their own words into the mouths of enslaved black women they were, on the one hand, exhibiting their emotional identification with these women, while on the other they were effectually silencing enslaved women's own words.

The representation of black women as passive and silent victims obscured their long history of resistance to slavery in both Britain and the British West Indies, which is only now beginning to be fully researched.<sup>56</sup> White women were not entirely ignorant of black women's resistance. Collecting evidence about the flogging of women, for example, also entailed acquiring information about the forms of female resistance that frequently prompted such punishments. Women also heard stories of female resistance from the



Figure 1. Engraving by Samuel Lines included in the Album of the Female Society for Birmingham etc. for the Relief of British Negro Slaves, c. 1825.

Reproduced by courtesy of Birmingham Central Library.

mouths of fugitive slaves themselves, such as the autobiographical account in *The History of Mary Prince*, published in Britain in 1831. The *History* not only detailed Prince's sufferings under slavery but also described her day-to-day resistance to degrading and cruel treatment. She decided to make public her story in order to 'let English people know the truth' about slavery 'that they may break our chains, and set us free'.<sup>57</sup> This was not the pathetic appeal of the kneeling and enchained woman depicted in the propaganda of ladies' anti-slavery associations; rather, it was the impassioned and articulate call of a woman who had broken her own bonds.

The image of the sexually oppressed sister as helpless victim purveyed by white women abolitionists has parallels in the image of English working-class prostitute women promulgated by feminist campaigners for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, many of whom had been anti-slavery activists.<sup>58</sup> It contrasts sharply with the image of sister as co-worker manifested in the transatlantic sisterhood of British and American women anti-slavery campaigners. These women referred to each other as 'coadjutors in the holy cause', with 'powerful and binding interests in common'.<sup>59</sup> They also declared themselves united by 'a common origin, a common faith'.<sup>60</sup> This

transatlantic sisterhood was based on both personal contacts and mutual correspondence, which involved the development of personal friendships and the exchange of information, ideas and 'aid and encouragement and strengthening sympathy'.<sup>61</sup> It was this transatlantic sisterhood, dominated by white middle-class women, rather than the distanced and limited form of sisterhood offered by white women to enslaved black women, that provided a fertile ground for the development of white Western feminism from the 1830s onwards.

It should be remembered, however, that a few black women did form a distinctive part of this transatlantic sisterhood. Sarah Parker Remond acted as a crucial transatlantic link between black and white women activists in both the anti-slavery and feminist movements. When presented with a watch inscribed from 'Englishwomen, her sisters', she received this token of sisterhood 'as a representative of my race' and pledged that 'I shall be faithful to that race now and for ever.'<sup>62</sup> In this way she articulated her black feminist perspective, her dual sense of alliance to women as a whole and to men and women of her race.

Working-class women were excluded from the transatlantic anti-slavery sisterhood even more completely than black women. They were not usually recruited as members of British ladies' anti-slavery associations. These societies functioned in part as social clubs, binding together women from a circumscribed range of backgrounds as members of a philanthropic middle-class sisterhood, and indeed contributing to the definition of such a class-specific feminine identity. Working-class women's support was called upon in specific instances, and tens of thousands of them joined in the boycott of slave-grown sugar and signed petitions to Parliament, but their full participation in organizations was in general not encouraged.

Politically radical middle-class women who formed alliances with working-class women risked social ostracism. Elizabeth Pease, who described herself as an '*ultra radical*', explained that expressing support for Chartism was considered to be an 'almost outrageous' stance for a 'lady'.<sup>63</sup> Radical political militancy by women of any background was considered particularly reprehensible by the 'respectable'. Elizabeth Fry's daughter, after attending an anti-slavery meeting in Norwich in 1840 which was disrupted by Chartists calling for the rights of English working people, wrote in horror: 'I also saw some women who excited the men, and whose shrill voices out screamed the roar of the men. I heard they were three well known Socialist sisters, the vilest of the vile.'<sup>64</sup> Clearly these 'vile' women were not seen as sisters.

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Most of the middle-class campaigners who ran ladies' anti-slavery associations in Britain were concerned to maintain ladylike respectability and distance themselves from such 'shrill' women. Motivated by genuine concern for women more oppressed than themselves, female campaigners,

especially at the height of the popular agitation against slavery in the 1820s and 1830s, idealized their own subordinate social position and held it up as a model for all women.

In developing anti-slavery work as an extension of their roles as wives and mothers, the majority of women campaigners adopted what I have termed a maternalist approach. Stressing the special suffering of women under slavery, they represented their most public and political actions as extensions of their domestic duties and feminine roles. Anti-slavery maternalism also involved the extension of the mother-child relationship to the relation between white 'free' women and black enslaved women: it was white women's duty to care for and protect the weakest victims of slavery and to promote their Christian education. This approach was linked to an image of Britain as benevolent mother country to her colonies. British women were obligated to extend their own supposed privileges to black women through a combination of abolition and education.

There was always a tension within anti-slavery thought as a whole between this philanthropic approach and a radical approach that stressed slaves' right to freedom. As we have seen, one of the key contributions to this 'rights' approach, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, was written by a woman. Elizabeth Heyrick and her female supporters combined promotion of the rights of slaves with an assertion of their own right as women to challenge male authority within the movement. From the late 1830s onwards an influential minority of women abolitionists developed this strand in anti-slavery thought even further, openly advocating women's rights and challenging the ideology of 'separate spheres'.

Discourses of duties and rights and perspectives of maternalism and egalitarianism operated in creative tension in female anti-slavery thought. This was one of the ambivalent legacies of abolitionism to organized feminism. In both movements women campaigned in the public and political arenas about issues generally designated as domestic and private. In so doing they were as concerned with fulfilling their duty to other women as with asserting their rights, with women's need for protection as with their desire for freedom, with developing a separate female culture within women's organizations as with attempting to gain access to traditionally male spheres.

White feminism also inherited from female abolitionism an ambivalent view of the black woman as both sister and slave, as both spiritual equal and cultural inferior. Beliefs in black cultural inferiority had buttressed white abolitionists' generally pro-imperial stance. The abolitionist and missionary racial stereotype of Africans as childlike proved a weak basis from which to combat the growth of virulent anti-black sentiment in Britain in the post-emancipation period, linked to the popularization of polygenesis, a form of scientific racism based on the belief that blacks were a separate species inferior to whites.<sup>65</sup>

In this post-emancipation context, it is revealing to compare white and black women's responses to events in Jamaica in 1865, when Governor Eyre reacted to disturbances among rural blacks by imposing martial law and calling in the troops. His actions led to the death of over four hundred black people, the flogging of hundreds of men and women, and the burning down of over one thousand homes. During the acrimonious public debate that took place in Britain over Eyre's actions, leaders of the Birmingham Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society responded within a 'maternalist' framework.<sup>66</sup> They counterposed the anti-black stereotype of the ferocious savage with the missionary stereotype of 'a race naturally impulsive and imitative in a high degree'.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, black abolitionist-feminist Sarah Parker Remond's reaction was based on an 'egalitarian' rejection of racial stereotyping. She condemned the growth of racial prejudice in Britain, placing the blame on the pro-slavery lobby rather than on black behaviour, and pointed out that even those blacks suspected of breaking the law should, like whites, have been entitled to a fair trial.<sup>68</sup>

To leave women's reactions to racial problems after emancipation on a stark note of black-white division would oversimplify matters. On the one hand, British ladies' anti-slavery associations did not transform themselves into leaders of a popular campaign against the harsh racial inequalities that persisted in the Caribbean and the United States, and white women's move out of anti-slavery into feminist organizations was marked by a shift in their focus of concern from black women to white women. On the other hand, in the mid-1880s a number of key British feminist campaigners who had also been leading anti-slavery activists formed a Society for the Furtherance of Human Brotherhood. Society founders Eliza Wigham, Elizabeth Pease Nichol and others appealed to the British people, including former anti-slavery activists, to 'complete the work of the Anti-Slavery Movement by securing, not mere declarations of emancipation, but the enjoyment of FREEDOM, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, AND BROTHERHOOD within the pale of the one great human family'.<sup>69</sup>

The Society seems to have had little public impact, but its formation is nevertheless an indication that the legacy of anti-slavery to British feminism comprised elements of opposition to racial discrimination and support for black equality as well as elements of acceptance of negative racial stereotypes and beliefs in black social and cultural inferiority.

## Notes

1. This article grew out of a paper originally delivered at the Eighth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women at Douglass College, Rutgers University, 9 June 1990. My thanks to all those who made valuable comments on that and subsequent versions. For a full account of British women abolitionists see Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: the British campaigns, 1780–1870* (Routledge, London, 1992).

2. For the ideology of 'separate spheres' and its relationship to the lives of nineteenth-century middle-class families in Britain, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes. Men and women of the English middle class, 1780–1850* (Hutchinson, London, and the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987).

3. Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: white women, racism and history* (Verso, London, 1992), explores issues of feminism and racism from a historical perspective and includes a section on the anti-slavery movement.

4. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More* (London, 1898), p. 82.

5. The major recent study of the links between anti-slavery and feminism in the US is Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: the antislavery feminists in American culture* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1989), which focuses on the iconography of female anti-slavery to explore the place of abolitionist feminism in American culture. See also Blanche Glassman Hersch, *The Slavery of Sex: feminist-abolitionists in America* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1978), which draws on the lives of 51 individuals to reconstruct the relation between abolitionism and feminism, but ignores black women's contribution. Important recent articles considering the debate on links include Ellen DuBois, 'Women's rights and abolition: the nature of the connection', in *Antislavery Reconsidered: new perspectives on the abolitionists*, ed. Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1979); Karen Sanchez-Eppler, 'Bodily bonds: the intersecting rhetorics of feminism and abolition', *Representations*, 24 (Fall 1988), pp. 28–59.

6. For a comparison of British and American women's reactions to the Convention see Kathryn Kish Sklar, "'Women who speak for an entire nation': American and British women compared at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, London, 1840", *Pacific Historical Review* (1990), pp. 453–99. The study of British women abolitionists and their connections with feminism was initiated by Louis Billington and Rosamund Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness": women in the British anti-slavery movement, 1820–1860', in *Equal or Different: Women's Politics, 1800–1914*, ed. Jane Rendall (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1985), pp. 82–111. For a fuller discussion see Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, and for a literary perspective see Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British women writers and colonial slavery, 1670–1834* (Routledge, London, 1992). See also Ware, *Beyond the Pale*, Part 2, and Karen Halbersleben, "'She hath done what she could": Women's Participation in the British Antislavery Movement, 1825–1870' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1987). Clare Taylor is writing a study of the transatlantic nature of the Anglo-American women's anti-slavery movement.

7. For the presence of black slaves in Britain up to the passage of the Emancipation Act in 1833, their resistance, and the series of legal cases brought on their behalf by reformer Granville Sharpe see Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: the history of black people in Britain* (Pluto, London, 1984). Further research specifically on black women slaves in Britain is needed; see Ziggi Alexander, 'Let it Lie Upon the Table: the status of black women's biography in the UK', *Gender & History*, 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 22–33.

8. For a general account of feminism in this period see Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780–1860* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1985).

9. Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: women, class, and the state* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980). Walkowitz identifies 10 of the 33 members of the female leadership of the Ladies' National Association as involved in anti-slavery (see Table I, pp. 126–7).

10. Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, pp. 172–77.
11. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (London, 1790); Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London, 1792).
12. Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, ch. 2.
13. Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, ch. 3, 4, 5.
14. [Elizabeth Heyrick], *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition; or, an inquiry into the shortest, safest, and most effectual means of getting rid of West-Indian slavery* (London, 1824).
15. *Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Sheffield, 1827), p. 10.
16. For a useful account of these developments see Hersch, *The Slavery of Sex*.
17. The moves to form this society can be traced in the series of letters from Sarah Pugh to Bristol anti-slavery activist Mary Estlin, ref. nos. 24.121.19, 20, 24, 25, 27 among Estlin Papers, Dr Williams Library, London.
18. See 16 and 24 Nov. 1854 entries in the Minute Book of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, Estlin Papers, Dr Williams Library.
19. A series of reports of her lectures appeared in the *Anti-Slavery Advocate* and the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* between February 1859 and February 1861. For short accounts of Remond's life see Dorothy B. Porter, 'Sarah Parker Remond, abolitionist and physician', *Journal of Negro History*, 20 (July 1935), pp. 287–93; Ruth Bogin, 'Sarah Parker Remond: black abolitionist from Salem', *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 110 (April 1974), pp. 120–50.
20. Minutes of the London Emancipation Committee, George Thompson Papers, John Rylands Library, Manchester. For further information on Ellen Craft, see William and Ellen Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (London, 1860); R. J. M. Blackett, 'Fugitive Slaves in Britain: the odyssey of William and Ellen Craft', *Journal of American Studies*, 12 (1978), pp. 41–62.
21. Extensive recent discussion of these linked ideologies is found in Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism*, and Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.
22. Martineau, *Society in America* (London, 1837), vol. 3, p. 112, vol. 1, p. 206. See also Valerie Kossew Pichanick, *Harriet Martineau: the woman and her work, 1802–76* (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1980).
23. Anne Knight to William Lloyd Garrison, Paris, 14 March 1838, MS A.1.2. v. 7, no. 13, in Anti-Slavery Collection, Boston Public Library (hereafter, BPL).
24. Letter from Anne Knight to Maria Weston Chapman, England, 4 Aug. 1840, MS A.9.2. v. 13, p. 49, in BPL. For further information on Knight's feminist activities see Gail Malmgreen, 'Anne Knight and the Radical Subculture', *Quaker History*, 71 (Fall 1982), pp. 100–13.
25. Marion Reid, *A Plea for Woman* (1843; repr. Polygon, Edinburgh, 1988).
26. Letter from Elizabeth Pease to Angelina Grimké, Darlington, 12 Feb. 1838, printed in *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822–1844*, ed. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (American Historical Association, New York, 1934), vol. 2, p. 545.
27. Elizabeth Pease to John A. Collins, Darlington, 14 Dec. 1840, MS A.1.2. v. 10, p. 93, in BPL.
28. Anna M. Stoddart, *Elizabeth Pease Nichol* (London, 1899).
29. Eustace R. Conder, *Josiah Conder: a memoir* (London, 1857), p. 318.
30. Mary Caroline Braithwaite to Joseph G. Birney, Kendal, 28 Nov. 1840 and 3 Feb. 1841, microfilm of J. G. Birney Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

31. *Autobiography and Other Memorials of Mrs Gilbert, (Formerly Ann Taylor)*, ed. Josiah Gilbert (2 vols, London, 1874), vol. 2, pp. 185–88.
32. Sarah Dymond to John Tredgold, Taunton, 10 Aug. 1840, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 6/120a in Anti-Slavery Collection, Rhodes House Library, Oxford (hereafter, RHL).
33. Examples include: letter from 'C' printed in *Manchester Mercury*, 6 Nov. 1787; a Lady, *A Dialogue Between a Well-Wisher and a Friend to the Slaves in the British Colonies* (London, n.d.), p. 11.
34. Petition of the women of Spilsby in Lincolnshire to the House of Lords, 28 March 1833 (see *Journal of the House of Lords* [London], session 1833, vol. 65, p. 121).
35. Felly Nkweto Simmonds, 'The role of the Birmingham Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves in supporting the education of women in the West Indies and Africa', unpublished paper presented at the Eighth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Douglass College, Rutgers University, 9 June 1990.
36. Lucy Townsend's Scrap Book on Negro Slaves, p. 127, in RHL.
37. Birmingham women's 1830 Address to the Queen as recorded in the Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves (Birmingham Central Reference Library), entry for 23 December 1830; 1833 petition from the ladies of Market Lavington to the House of Commons, printed as Appendix no. 675 in *Nineteenth Report from the Select Committee on Public Petitions* (London).
38. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1975); David Brion Davis, 'Reflections on Abolitionism and Ideological Hegemony', *American Historical Review*, 92 (Oct. 1987), pp. 797–812.
39. Douglas A. Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English attitudes to the negro in the mid-nineteenth century* (Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1978).
40. Ray Strachey, *The Cause. A short history of the women's movement in Great Britain* (Virago, London, 1978).
41. Extract from the journal of Anna Gurney and Sarah Buxton, Buxton Papers, vol. XII, pp. 111–13, MSS Brit. Emp. S.444, in RHL.
42. Martineau, *Society in America*, vol. 1, p. 203.
43. Letter from Elizabeth Pease to W. L. Garrison, Darlington, 1 May 1843, printed in the *Liberator*, vol. 13, no. 21 (26 May 1843). In 1840 Pease wrote and privately circulated a pamphlet opposing racial segregation entitled 'The Society of Friends in the United States—their views on the anti-slavery question and treatment of the people of colour' (copy in Library of the Anti-Slavery Society, London).
44. Report of Remond's lecture in the Music Hall, Store Street, London, 1 June 1859, *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 3rd Series, vol. 7, no. 7 (July 1859), p. 150.
45. Moira Ferguson (ed.) *The History of Mary Prince* (Pandora, London, 1987).
46. *Anti-Slavery Advocate*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Dec. 1852), p. 22.
47. Blackett, 'Fugitive Slaves in Britain'.
48. For an illuminating discussion of female abolitionists' rhetoric of sisterhood in the United States context, see Yellin, *Women and Sisters*.
49. *Twentieth Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions* (London, 1833), appendix no. 701.
50. *The First Report of the Female Society, for Birmingham, West-Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall, and Their Respective Neighbourhoods, for the Relief of British Negro Slaves* (Birmingham, 1826), p. 3.
51. *Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Founding Meeting Held West-Bromwich, 8th April 1825* (Birmingham, 1825), eighth resolution.

52. For the earliest evidence of the use of the slogan in Britain and Ireland, see description of the seals supplied by the ladies' society at Birmingham in the *Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society* (Dublin, 1828), p. 16.

53. See the 'Album of the Female Society for Birmingham', a copy of which is held by the Birmingham Central Reference Library.

54. *The Second Annual Report of the Ladies' Association for Calne* (Calne, 1827), p. 4.

55. 'Appeal from British Ladies to the West India Planters' (1825), hand-written text in Townsend's Scrap Book on Negro Slaves, p. 127.

56. Fryer, *Staying Power*; Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650–1832* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1990); Hilary McBeckles, *Natural Rebels: a social history of enslaved black women in Barbados* (Zed Books, London, 1989).

57. Ferguson (ed.) *The History of Mary Prince*, pp. 84, 64.

58. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*.

59. Copy of letter from Angelina Grimké Weld to Elizabeth Pease, 17 Mar. 1837, New York, MS 957, 1st letter, in BPL; letter from Abby Cox to George Thompson, New York, 9 Dec. 1835, as quoted in Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society, *Three Years Female Anti-Slavery Effort, in Britain and America* (Glasgow, 1837), p. 24.

60. Opening of the 'Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of the Women of England to Their Sisters, the Women of the United States', as printed in the *London Times*, 29 Nov. 1852, p. 8.

61. *Right and Wrong in Boston. Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society . . . in 1837* (Boston, 1837), p. 39. Around 1500 items of correspondence between 66 British and Irish women campaigners and American Garrisonian abolitionists are preserved in the Anti-Slavery Collection in Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass. A selection of these letters is printed in Clare Taylor (ed.) *British and American Abolitionists: an episode in transatlantic understanding* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1974).

62. C. Peter Ripley, *Black Abolitionist Papers*, vol. I (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1985), document 74.

63. Letter from Elizabeth Pease to Anne Warren Weston, London, 24 June 1841, printed as item 109 in Clare Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 154.

64. Letter from Katherine Fry to Mrs Louisa Pelly, Earlham, 19 Nov. 1840, Buxton Papers, vol. 20, pp. 37–43, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.444, in RHL.

65. For the history of scientific racism see Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Britain, 1800–1960* (Macmillan, London, 1982).

66. For an interesting discussion of white British men's responses to the Governor Eyre controversy, see Catherine Hall, 'Competing Masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the case of Governor Eyre', in her *White, Male and Middle Class* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992), ch. 10.

67. *Forty-First Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham* (B. Hudson, Birmingham, 1866), pp. 6–10.

68. Letter from Sarah P. Remond to the editor of the Daily News, 22 November 1868, as quoted in Ripley, *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, vol. I, document 102.

69. *To the Friends of Justice and Humanity Everywhere, Especially Those who Interest Themselves in the Future of the Coloured Race; also to the remnant of the anti-slavery workers, and the members of the Society of Friends*, printed pamphlet among Estlin Papers, Dr Williams Library, London.