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Periodicals, 1866–1914

Slavery and the Woman Question

In 1868, liberal German women's rights periodical *Neue Bahnen* printed an American letter which discussed some of the connections between antislavery and women's rights advocacy. It explained that the agitation for African Americans had 'shake[n] the subservience and servitude of women' and that the call of reform would escape 'no age, no colour, no sex, no climate' now that '[t]he slave [i.e., woman] and the philanthropist work together for the benefit of the whole human family'.[1] Like other European progressive commentators, Louise Otto, founder and editor of the journal, was eager to supply her readership with news from the US and on a first glance her inclusion of this article bears resemblance to the calls for universal emancipation heard in Paris in 1849 ('Ein Meeting' 1866; Gehring 2020; see also Cosset and Malandain 2016). The article continued, however, in a different vein from the dulcet messages of peace and harmony which Deroin had tried to popularise. It praised women's efforts in the American Civil War and, far from a call to universal solidarity, asked: 'The Negro is now free; the most uneducated immigrant will soon achieve the vote. Are our own white mothers, sisters, daughters worth less?' ('Ein Stimme' 1868, 59).[2]

[1] 'Wieder ist die reformatorische Sturmglocke erschallt, und zwar dies Mal in vollem Ernst und mit entschiedenem Klange. Kein Alter, keine Farbe, kein Geschlecht, kein Klima entgeht diesem Rufe […] Die Agitation zu Gunsten einer schwachen, befreiten Klasse der Neger rüttelt auch an der Unterthänigkeit und Dienstbarkeit des Weibes. Der Sklave und der Menschenfreund wirken vereint für die ganze menschliche Familien' ('Ein Stimme' 1868, 58–59).

[2] 'Der Neger ist jetzt frei; der ungebildetste Einwander erlangt bald das Stimmrecht. Sind unsere eignen Weißen Mütter, Schwestern, Töchter weniger würdig?' ('Ein Stimme' 1868, 59).

Much like Deroin, Otto had been a Forty-Eighter struggling to run a *Frauen-Zeitung* in 1848–1851. By the time she founded the more subdued *Neue Bahnen* in 1866, however, the landscape in which women's rights advocates operated had changed. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the 'Woman Question', as it came to be known, was becoming the subject of structural debate in the European public sphere. Some prominent antislavery figures took up the mantle of women's rights during this period, including Frederick Douglass in the US and Victor Schoelcher in France and other, less known women's rights advocates joined the cause of antislavery in the US, such as Mathilde Franziska Anneke (Offen 2018, 16ff.; Wiegmink 2022, 223ff.). These figures were eloquent and prolific, but not major contributors to the afterlife of antislavery in later women's rights discourse. Major political and cultural developments had brought a new set of stories to households in Europe. The story of how the fight against slavery had driven the United States to civil war served as a creative wellspring for all manner of women's rights advocates in Europe and America.

Taking the burgeoning Continental feminist periodical landscape as its point of entry, this chapter examines how memories of antislavery became the subject of animated debate among emergent, transnational communities of readers.[3] As in the 1840s, women's rights advocates often imagined common cause with the antislavery movement. By the 1890s, however, there was also an increasing tendency to reject

[3] This chapter is based on study of reference to slavery and patterns in the commemoration of antislavery in an indicative sample of moderate, radical, and socialist circles. Main sources were the radical *Evolutie* (Dutch, years under consideration: 1893–1914), *La Citoyenne* (French, 1881–1891; continued as *Le journal des femmes* 1891–1911), and *Die Frauenbewegung* (German, 1895–1919); socialist *De Vrouw* (Belgian/Dutch, under consideration: 1893–1914) and *Die Gleichheit* (German: under consideration 1890–1914); and moderate bourgeois *Ons Streven* (Dutch, 1870–1878), *Le droit des femmes* (French: under consideration 1869–1870 and 1879–1881), *La femme* (French, 1879–1912), and *Neue Bahnen* (German, 1866–1899). Besides journals which overtly advocated political reform regarding women's rights, some publications which counted these questions within their purview but were devoted to related reform issues were also included, such as the Dutch anti-prostitution publication, *Orgaan van den Nederlandsche Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn*, which ran between 1883 and 1938. A confluence of factors, not least of which were the historical ties between the French agitation for the Woman Question and for the Worker Question, meant that France did not have a stable socialist-feminist periodical at the time (Sowerwine 1976; Offen 2018, 163–167). For a fuller picture of the women's rights periodicals active at the time, Wegner 1908; Verzeichnis 1917; Dzeh-Djen 1934; Sullerot 1966; Langlois 1979; Wischermann 1984; Willems-Bierlaagh 1992; Jensen 2001; Zelfel 2004.

this connection. The role cultural memories of antislavery played in women's rights discourse in this period was more complex than simply emotion-rousing (though they did that, too). Instances of remembrance were anchored in strategic considerations and in the imagined alliances writers wished to convey. Beyond the individual rhetoric produced, the narratives that were recalled shaped emergent women's rights debates by fostering selective emphases and structural gaps in the usable past of the international women's movement. There were five commonplaces of women's rights rhetoric that prompted recall of the history of antislavery. Before moving to analyse these, this chapter will first briefly discuss two important developments of the 1860s, the rise of women's rights periodicals and the arrival in Europe of new narratives about slavery in America.

PERIODICALS AND PUBLIC DEBATE OF THE WOMAN QUESTION

The 1860s can and have been pinpointed as the beginnings of the 'first' wave of public feminist agitation which would end with the achievement of women suffrage.[4] By now, the question enjoyed the celebrity endorsement of distinguished names such as John Stuart Mill, Victor Hugo, and Édouard Laboulaye and, within the limits of the censorship laws in place in the various European contexts, liberalisations allowed associational initiatives and durable periodicals to spring up, producing lively national and transnational debates.[5] This chapter does not seek to overstate the similarities between women's rights initiatives in different

[4] Bidelman 1982; Rendall 1985; Gerhard and Wischermann 1990; Jansz 1990; Levine 1990, 295; Gerhard 1994; Jensen 2001; Bock, 2002, 119; Riot-Sarcey 2002, 54; Offen 2017, 233.

[5] Censorship laws had a defining impact on the development of durable feminist initiatives. Britain had abolished licensing of the press in 1695, but a variety of restrictions, such as strong libel law, remained in place. The 1850–1860s saw the repeal of various government duties. Belgium (1831) and the Netherlands (1848) adopted freedom of the press into their constitutions, but leveraged prohibitive taxes (until 1848 and 1869 respectively). The Second Empire (1851–1871) practised both preventive and repressive censorship, with some significant liberalisations in 1868 and a brief spell of freedoms during the Commune. In 1881, the Ferry government liberalised freedom of assembly and freedom of the press, allowing for more lasting feminist initiatives: Goldberg Moses 1984, 151, 173, 189, 198. In the German context, though the Frankfurt parliament had abolished preventive censorship, the decades after saw the building of suite of measures trammelling the press in the German states. Surveillance continued, but with the new Reich Press Law of 1874 a process of liberalisation that would last until 1914 began; Lenman 2000, 49ff.

national contexts, as their chronology and strategic emphases were textured by specific class and political circumstances, not to mention powerful personalities. But local episodes took place against the backdrop of a development of a surprisingly hardy 'common language', on which even staunchly government-oriented advocates drew and against which their activities took on extra-parliamentary significance (Rendall 1985, 321). Journalists and periodical editors were key brokers who often explicitly sought to bring this language into being, treating the 'soft power' occasioned by this work as equally, if not more, significant than agitation against the legislature (Van Remoortel et al. 2021, 1).[6] By taking a bird's-eye perspective of a longer period and a broad swathe of women's rights discourse of differing orientations, and by placing the discourse itself, rather than individual speakers, at the centre, this analysis seeks to foreground the formation of this shared language, a process which was cumulative, cosmopolitan, and, most importantly, subject to intense debate.

Broadly, students of nineteenth-century women's rights agitation distinguish between (bourgeois) liberal and socialist movements and heuristic distinctions are also usually drawn between moderate claims, which included, for instance, demands for educational and employment opportunities and radical feminist claims for women's suffrage or sexual equality.[7] These distinctions are indispensable to historical description, but understate the dynamism of the discussion. Despite occasional fierce animosities, borders remained porous and disagreement about the purpose and shape of women's emancipation connected and animated, rather than isolated and clipped, public debate of the Woman Question (Delap 2000; 260ff.; Carlier 2010; D'Eer 2019).

The beginnings of this account are dated to 1866, when both the *Englishwoman's Review* and the aforementioned *Neue Bahnen* began operations, inaugurating a new era of longevity in women's rights publishing, with periodicals that were able to continue operations sometimes for decades. The *Englishwoman's Review* (1866–1910) was the more durable successor to the *Englishwoman's Journal* (1858–1864). These publications were especially interested in women's employment, while journals like *Shafts* (1892–1900) positioned themselves more radically by prioritising questions of political representation and sexuality. In France,

[6] For a detailed examination of different dimensions of this brokerage Gehmacher 2024.

[7] Bidelman 1982; Wischermann 1984; Gerhard and Wischermann 1990; Jansz 1990; for a critical reappraisal of the bourgeois/socialist distinction, Carlier 2010.

freethinkers Léon Richer and Maria Deraismes spearheaded the question in the liberal press and edited the monthly *Le droit des femmes* from 1869 until 1891 (Bidelman 1982; Offen 2018). In 1881, their more radical former collaborator Hubertine Auclert left their collective and set up the pro-suffrage *La Citoyenne*, which ran between 1881 and 1891. The founding of *La Fronde* (1897–1905), the first feminist daily in France, points to the momentum the movement had gained by the late nineteenth century. In the Dutch context, after some progressive periodicals had entertained the Woman Question, two rival moderate feminist periodicals, *Ons Streven*, running between 1870 and 1878, and *Onze Roeping*, which ran between 1870 and 1871, first saw the light (Jansz 1990; Jensen 2001, ch. 5). More radical feminist periodicals began to appear in the 1890s. The outspoken and unorthodox freethinker Wilhelmina Drucker and her colleague Dora Haver founded *Evolutie* (1893–1926) in 1893, while *De Vrouw* (1893–1900), co-edited and founded by Dutch Nellie van Kol and Belgian Emilie Claeys, offered socialist analyses of the Woman Question. In Leipzig, Louise Otto founded the *Allgemeine Deutscher Frauenverein*, which campaigned for equal education and employment opportunities in 1865, and soon began the journal *Neue Bahnen*, which ran between 1866 and 1919. Later, Helene Lange and Gertrud Bäumer's publication *Die Frau* (1893–1944) became an important vehicle for bourgeois moderate feminism, while Minna Cauer and Lily von Gizycki's *Die Frauenbewegung*, published between 1895 and 1919, represented more radical feminist viewpoints. Germany also had a powerful socialist feminist movement, led by Clara Zetkin, who also directed its organ *Die Gleichheit*, which ran between 1890 and 1923 (Sowerwine 1976). Some vigorous feminist argument was put forth by journals affiliated with the movement to combat prostitution and trafficking, such as Josephine Butler's *The Shield* (1870–1886), *La femme* (1879–1937), and the journal of the Dutch Women's Union for the Raising of Public Decency (*Orgaan*, 1884–1905).

Though still an embattled and generally derided minority, by the 1890s women's rights organisers had brought into being a varied landscape of periodicals to 'inspire, inform and integrate' women's rights audiences (Harrison quoted in McAllister 2015, 44), ranging from elaborate journals to simple news bulletins. Readers could keep abreast of organisational news and feminist interpretations of political developments and engage with doctrinal questions posed by movement leaders both at home and abroad. The journals often offered a variety of genres, including programmatic statements, political analyses, reviews, printed

lectures, reader letters, prose and poetry, and epigrams.[8] The periodicals served tactical, infrastructural, and affective functions: as they engaged with these media, women organised into transnational imagined communities, equipped themselves with arguments, and informed and invigorated their commitment to the cause at regular intervals (Delap 2000; Beetham 2006; DiCenzo et al. 2011; Webster 2019; see also Fraser 1990 and Warner 2005). Cross-cutting the different genres, memories of antislavery served this ongoing conversation as a shared, versatile resource from which women's rights advocates strategically selected elements to reference, reprint, and retell.

NEWS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR AND *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*

By the 1860s, cultural and technological developments had made antislavery a significant touchstone for many European readers. The main cultural factor which had popularised new canonical plots and images had been Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Written in response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and first published in the abolitionist newspaper *The National Era* in 1851, the protest novel quickly broke records as the nineteenth-century global bestseller, selling half a million copies in the UK alone within the year (Meer 2005, 4; Huzzey 2012). An engaging diorama of plantation life in America that furnished the reader with horrific scenes of violence against the enslaved and sentimental bottom lines, the novel quickly caught the imagination of readers across the world for whom America had become a place of imaginative potential, as well as of frequent migration (Kohn et al. 2006; Davis and Mihaylova 2018). Although American readership of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* fell after the Civil War and the novel was not reprinted until 1948 (Gates 2006, xliv), this decline did not occur in Europe (see Wilson 1962, esp. 4–5) where the relevance of *Uncle Tom* persisted in popular culture. More lasting even than the novel itself were its re-mediations on the stage and in countless illustrations and commercial objects (Hart 1854; Drummond and Moody 1952; Meer 2005; Parfait 2010; Frick 2012; Paul 2018). These retellings often kept little of the original antislavery message, focused as they were on the commercial appeal of stereotypical depictions of American slave life and the enslaved (Baldwin 1984 [1955];

[8] For a close analysis of the functions poetry could serve in this political context, Van Remoortel, in press.

Davis 2011 [1981], 27 ff.). Stowe's wide-reaching, cross-class reputation as the most significant defender of the enslaved, however, was unmarred by these changes to her original message (McFadden 1999, ch. 4; Absillis 2022, 161).

Another development which brought the discussion over slavery to European dinner tables was media-technical and changed readers' relationships to world events. The American Civil War, which devastated the US between 1861 and 1865, was one of the first events which the global public could follow nearly in real time, at only a little over a week's delay. It was covered beginning to end for audiences all over the world by Reuter's war correspondents, who transmitted their transatlantic dispatches by steamship-powered express mail service, while telegraph connections linked news agencies, enabling news to travel at unprecedented speed (Read 1999, 37–45; Britton 2013; Osterhammel 2014, 38). The rise of the mass illustrated press, which had become technologically feasible in the early 1840s, transformed the informed public into second-hand witnesses, changing the affective relationship of readers to foreign news and nurturing new expectations of truth and objectivity from the press (Osterhammel 2014; Smits 2019). The events of the war and unique political challenges of the American Reconstruction era between 1863 and 1877 were avidly discussed in Europe and the mass periodical press brought American debates of slavery and abolition to the general public (Karsky 1974; Blom 1975; Blackburn 1997; Blackett 2000; Nagler et al. 2016).

As the range of German, French, and Dutch-language periodicals of different ideological feather studied in this chapter indicate, against the background of these developments, the history of slavery and abolition became a lively topic in the discourse of women's rights. There were four main vehicles for memories of antislavery. First were the passage-length discussions of slavery and abolition in service of other arguments. Secondly, periodicals published biographies of 'feminist abolitionists' such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other prominent figures, particularly Harriet Beecher Stowe.[9] Thirdly, one finds (re)printed texts associated with the antislavery movement or substantially using its themes, such as *Die Frauenzeitung*'s serialisation of 'Der Weiße und der Neger', a stereotypical tale of a European saving a black family in Africa in 1852 and *Evolutie*'s serialisation of Édouard Laboulaye's 'Le Prince-Caniche' ('The

[9] For the different functions interviews and biographical sketches could have in the women's rights press, Van Remoortel 2018.

Poodle Prince') (1868; republished in *Evolutie* in 1893).[10] Finally, there are many shorthand references, usually taking the form of a name, obituary notice, quotation, or instances of the woman–slave analogy.

Shifting focus from individual agents to collective conversations, this chapter explores how these texts shaped the memory of antislavery within the international movement for women's rights. It identifies five rhetorical commonplaces that structured the recall of memories of antislavery into clusters of intensified reference and debate. These are: identifying woman's subjection as a form of slavery; associating women with abolitionism; claiming the shared origins of women's oppression and slavery in a historical class struggle; promoting racial antagonism; and accounts of the 'white slave trade', that is, prostitution. The first three encouraged readers to identify with the history of antislavery in different ways, while the latter two, which became increasingly prominent from the 1890s onwards and were closely related, worked against this affiliation, denying historical parallels and contesting the place of antislavery in the feminist usable past. Of these, the sudden surge in public discussion of prostitution as white slavery was particularly noxious in crowding out other modes of engagement with antislavery.[11]

Memories of antislavery were used to foster affiliation with specific imagined collectives and suggested different tactical repertoires for women's rights advocacy. Even though the majority of references were shorthand, they were by no means offhand. Bolstered by underlying commonplaces, instances of recall communicated particular reasoning and advocates engaged in generative dispute both over the meaning and appropriateness of specific memories for their campaign and over the manner in which they were recalled.

As the discussion later in this chapter indicates, the commonplaces and their critical reception cut across genre divides, national contexts, and ideological lines in the sand, cementing the status of antislavery as a focal point of the shared usable past connecting women's rights agents across factional and national borders. The next sections will discuss each commonplace in detail, before reflecting on some of the collective effects they had on the remembrance, and the forgetting, of antislavery history.

[10] 'Der Weiße und der Neger' was serialised in vol. 5, nos. 8–14 of *Die Frauen-Zeitung* (1852). *Evolutie* printed Édouard Laboulaye's allegorical fairytale 'Le Prince-Caniche' in 1893, vol. 1, no. 1–45. Part of the story is set in Liberia, where the main character observes the previously enslaved build a just republic (vol. 1, nos. 42–43).

[11] For a classic account of how commonplaces structure (intellectual) discourse, Curtius 1990, 70.

WOMAN–SLAVE COMMONPLACE

As previous chapters have shown, drawing parallels between women and the enslaved had been a fixture of women's rights discourse and this rhetoric continued in the journals of the later nineteenth century. The comparison was particularly well established when it came to critiques of marriage, where it occurred to women as early as the sixteenth century (Offen 2000). Now that women's rights claims had become part of public debate, however, and a wider range of voices participated in the discussion, the analogy was more widely applied and effectively became a shibboleth for advocates' radicalism. As such, it drew considerable polemic, not just from outside detractors, but also within women's rights circles themselves. This controversy explains why, so often, writers opted to rely on citing passages by authoritative public voices like Mill and August Bebel that drew the comparison, rather than formulate it anew themselves. *La Citoyenne* and *Evolutie* often printed articles that drew parallels, as did the German radical publications *Frauenberuf* and *Frauenwohl*. Overall, however, German periodicals featured it less, even those considered more radical. This possibly had to do with editors' heightened concern with avoiding pushback and keeping the movement 'respectable'.[12]

The first common practice was to invoke memories of antislavery to discuss women's married life, focusing on their drudgery in the house or their subjection to unjust husbands. *De Vrouw* often used a header consisting of a shortened version of John Stuart Mill's phrase that 'No slave is a slave to the same extent and in such a full a sense of the word as a wife is' (2002 [1869], 155; Figure 4.1).

Evolutie printed a host of articles drawing this comparison, occasionally referencing the Dutch Civil Code from 1838, which stipulated that slavery 'and other forms of personal subjection of any kind' were illegal

GEEN SLAAF IS ZOO TEN VOLLE SLAAF ALS DE VROUW.

FIGURE 4.1 Regular header of Belgian-Dutch socialist journal *De Vrouw*. 'There is no slave so enslaved as woman.'

[12] *Neue Bahnen* shows a distinct worry about being identified with the *Emanzipirten* of 1848; at least four articles addressed this concern in the first year alone (1866), 'An die Leserinnen', no. 1, 'Blicke in die Runde' no. 3, 'Über Frauen-Emanzipation' no. 7, 'Unserer Reform', no. 24. See also Anderson 2007, 89. Compare the similar concern of *Le droit des femmes* with the Saint-Simonian ideas of the *femme libre* in their inaugural issue. 'À M. Léon Richer' (1869).

('Binnen' 1896, 53; see also Braun 1992, 15–20, 56). One of the authorities whom the editors of *Evolutie* gladly cited in this regard was Belgian lawyer Louis Frank. In several of his writings, he emphasised that 'under marriage, she (woman), reverts to slavery' and, acknowledging that the comparison sounded 'strange, unpleasant, disgusting' to some, the editors clarified that rather than plantation slavery, woman lived under a 'moderate slave regime, reminiscent of latter-day Rome'.[13] Another contributor defended the woman–slave analogy by referring to the corporal punishments administered in American slave states. Calling them the outgrowth of a corrupt system, the author suggested that marital abuse, however rare, similarly indicated a corrupt institution:

> I am speaking of the law … for which married woman is a slave, nothing more. If you see it differently, this is because you do not understand slavery. People usually imagine slavery as a man working with sweat on his brow, while another man behind him drives him on with his whip. Where slavery was instituted, this could occur, but it wasn't the rule. When we were shown the darkest scenes, it was to show that the system could occasion such excesses. ('Rede' 1902, 54)[14]

This comparison drew on a shared imaginary of slavery and of the excesses of physical violence the slave system brought forth. At the same time, however, it intervened in this collective memory by criticising the mental image as a shallow understanding, shifting the conception of women's situation and that of chattel slavery at the same time.

Besides analyses of marriage, the parallel was also frequently drawn to refer to women's inability to fully develop their character or educate themselves, leaving them especially vulnerable to exploitation and without means of defence. This line of reasoning built on Enlightenment

[13] 'Voor wie het slavenstelsel schouwt in zijn juiste verhoudingen, klinkt er dan ook niets vreemds in Louis Frank's woorden, waar hij zegt: "In gehuwden staat vervalt zij (de vrouw) in slavernij." Maar voor wie het wel klinkt vreemd, onaangenaam, weerzinwekkend, wordt de zaak daarom toch niet anders. De getrouwde vrouw is slavin, alhoewel dan ook onder een gematigd slaven-régime, hetwelk doet denken aan de laatste dagen van het oude Rome.' 'Afschaffing' 1909, 97. For another elaborate example, Audouard 1870, esp. 8.

[14] '[Ik] bespreek hier geen particuliere zaken, maar slechts de wet, niets anders als de wet. En voor deze is de gehuwde vrouw slavin, niets meer. Zoo gij het anders beschouwt, is het wijl gij de slavernij niet begrijpt. Gewoonlijk stelt men zich den slaaf voor als een man werkend in het zweet zijns aanschijns, met achter zich een andere man die hem voortdrijft met een zweep. Waar slavernij heerschte kon zoiets plaatshebben, maar regel was het niet. Zoo men ons daaromtrent schetste de donkerste toestanden was dit om aan te toonen dat het systeem tot dergelijke uitspattingen kon aanleiding geven' ('Rede' 1902, 54). See also *Evolutie*'s review, 'Literatuur' (1898), and Frederick van Eeden, 'Vrouwenkwestie en socialisme', 1870, 252–254.

predecessors like Mary Wollstonecraft, as well as the reasoning displayed in the novels of Chapter 2, and was especially frequent in *Evolutie* and *La Citoyenne*. An example is this elaborate description featured in *La Citoyenne*, again relying on a mental image of slavery in which violent scenes of corporal punishment took centre stage:

> The white race decidedly proclaimed its superiority over the coloured races, like the masculine sex proclaimed his over the female sex. […] To prove these ideas, so tickling to their self-esteem, they had the noble thought that their superiority could not survive freedom, and so they reduced to a fatally degrading slavery, both the negroes and women, the ones by the whip, the others by intellectual inaction. Black slaves and so-called free white women, your causes are sisters. […] This is to say that neither colour nor sex influence intellectual capacities, and to repeat, once again, that coeducation and the equality of instruction are the first guaranties for marital happiness. ('À travers' 1887, 2)[15]

Even though the writer distinguished between the physical torture of the enslaved and the intellectual subjection of European women, she composed the passage for visceral impact by yoking the two together into a close parallel, by referring to her readers as only 'so-called' free and calling their position 'fatally' degrading as well. One of the first articles that appeared in *Evolutie* shines a light on the fictionalised sources from which much stock scenes of physical violence among European audiences derived. The editors responded to a common criticism of their initiative – that the majority of women were not interested in women's rights claims – by referring to the mischievous, racialised black figure Topsy from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*:

> That remark: 'Woman does not wish to emancipate, she has no wish for political influence.' Well, what does that matter? Does not Topsy say, in Stowe's *Cabin*, 'Oh Missis, you ought to whip me, I am used to being whipped. I believe

[15] 'La race blanche a décidément proclamé sa supériorité sur les races de couleur, comme le sexe masculin proclamait la sienne sur le sexe féminin, c'est-à-dire sans tenir compte des milieux différentiels tout puissants. Pour faire la preuve de ces idées, chatouillant si bien l'amour-propre, on eut la noblesse de songer que la supériorité n'existe pas dans la liberté et de réduire à l'esclavage fatalement dégradant, les nègres et les femmes, ceux-ci par le fouet, celles-là pas l'inaction intellectuelle. Noirs esclaves et blanches soi-disant libres, vos causes furent sœurs et ce fut également l'excès qui fit déborder la coupe d'injustices. En un effort désespéré et en vertu du principe: on n'a que ce qu'on arrache, les races de couleur accomplirent donc l'évolution, qui a rempli nos écoles de nègres et de japonais, et pour commencer, les femmes prirent d'assaut l'école de médecine, ce phalanstère jadis exclusivement masculin. […] Cela pour dire que la couleur, pas plus que le sexe, ne peut influer sur les capacités intellectuelles, et répéter, une fois encore, que la coéducation et la similitude d'instruction sont les premières garanties de bonheur conjugal' ('À travers' 1887, 2). Compare 'Afschaffing', 1909, 98.

it's good for me. Negroes ought to be whipped.' Would these words have come from the mouth of later Topsy, the developed, knowing, self-aware missionary? ('Gemaakte Opmerkingen' 1893, 2)[16]

The remarkable choice to use a fictional character to illustrate a supposedly socio-psychological trait points to the editors' confidence in their Dutch readership's familiarity with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. What is more, while in some contexts a supposedly fanciful understanding of plantation life was criticised, in this context Stowe's fiction was afforded due reverence. In their psychologisation of Topsy, the editors not only reaffirmed the novel's reputation as a reliable resource to understand the realities of slavery, but also invited readers to consider its value as a means of challenging their perception of the condition of women in Europe.

As suffragism became a dominant current within women's rights activism, references to slavery increasingly began to be used with regards to women's lack of political representation. The woman–slave analogy was a potent visual theme in transnational suffrage imagery and also often served as propaganda for a woman's right to work. The analogy was often invoked through images of physically restrained and supplicating women as well as women breaking chains.[17] But in contrast to the critiques of marriage made the first half of the century, the emphasis was now generally not on women's bodily denigration. As the example of Willy Pogány's poster for the International Women Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) showcases, by depicting them as physically strong, illustrators conveyed instead that women were perfectly capable of putting their powers to work for the benefit of society, but were unjustly restrained by the force of law.

According to the logic of this imagery, the chains of subjugation would only finally be 'broken', and freedom achieved, once women got the vote. Framing of suffrage as the finishing line of emancipation begged the question of whose emancipation ought to be prioritised. It invited notorious racist diatribes in the US context, addressed in the next chapter, and did so in Europe, too. Hubertine Auclert's pamphlet *Le vote des femmes* (1908),

[16] 'En nu nog die eene opmerking, die laatste: De vrouw zelve verlangt niet te emancipeeren, zij begeert geen stem in het kapittel. Welnu, wat betekent dat? Zegt ook niet Topsy in Beecher Stowe's Negerhut: "Och, Missis, u moet mij slaag geven, ik ben gewoon aan slaag. Ik geloof dat het goed voor mij is. Negers moeten gezweept worden." Zouden die woorden echter ook gevloeid zijn uit den mond van de latere Topsy de ontwikkelde, de wetende, de zelfbewuste, de zendelinge' ('Gemaakte Opmerkingen' 1893, 2).

[17] Bosch 2019 contains several examples, 18, 168, 179; Lange 2020, 56. The *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht* used a woman breaking her chains as their logo ([Masthead] 1908); see also Willy Pogány's poster design discussed in Chapter 2.

for example, contained a chapter titled 'Women are Blacks'. It argued not only that it was essential to reshape the 'social pact' and give women the vote to 'stop Frenchmen from treating Frenchwomen like blacks [*de traiter en nègres*]' (Auclert 1908, 197–198), but also suggested that it was an affront that 'wild negroes' in the colonies could vote, while this right was withheld from 'educated white women in the metropole' (197).[18] This use of the slave analogy in a competitive frame, and the logical and affective implications of this, are examined in more depth in the next chapter.

While it is difficult to estimate to what extent readers, and especially rural readers, appreciated the comparison with slavery, correspondence to the radical journals indicates that, on the whole, the woman–slave analogy had become popular among their readership. *De Vrouw* published a regular section devoted to short messages from readers who had made a donation. It suggests that the comparison was common among socialist women, with the frequent appearance of phrases such as 'making women work in factories and mines makes them into slaves twice-over' ('Strijdpenning' 21 January 1894) and 'resist all slavelike and humiliating female labour ('Strijdpenning' 4 March 1894).[19] However, other reader letters indicate that the woman–slave analogy did not gain serious consideration among other parts of the population. For example, a reader lamented to the editors of *La Citoyenne* that 'she remained misunderstood', as women in the 'bad little village in the Alps' where she was 'buried' seemed to 'enjoy their slavery' ('Correspondance' 1881, 4).[20]

More elaborate instances of the woman–slave analogy often featured depictions of the violence perpetrated on the enslaved. This positioning of the history of women's emancipation vis-à-vis another, violently victimised community, then, was intended to invoke visceral emotive reactions. The comparisons, however, also made important tactical assertions: implicit and explicit claims about what means of action were suitable, acceptable,

[18] This is despite Auclert's anti-imperialism, Eichner 2022, ch. 2. Eichner contextualises Auclert's argument within her experience in Algeria and critique of French imperialism. These arguments also had a life outside of European imperialisms, resonating with suffragist internationalist discourses. The phrase *traiter en nègre* was idiomatic in nineteenth-century French, but explicitly literalised by Auclert.

[19] '[M]et de vrouwen in fabrieken en mijnen te doen werken maakt men er dubbele slavinnen van' ('Strijdpenning' 21 January 1894); 'verzet tegen allen slavelijken en vernederenden vrouwenarbeid' ('Strijdpenning' 4 March 1894).

[20] 'Enfouie dans un mauvais village des Alpes, livrée à toutes les tortures qu'une créature humaine peut endurer, je voudrais communiquer mes idées libérales aux femmes qui souffrent comme moi et qui se plaisent dans l'esclavage. Je suis incomprise' ('Correspondance' 1881, 4).

and preferable to pursue women's rights. A telling example of this occurred in an article in *Evolutie* in which editors described what they saw as different currents within the feminist movement. Distinguishing between the 'methodical' approach of old-fashioned lawyers, the 'utility' approach of preachers of other social reforms, and the 'radical' feminism of the 'children of the Steam Age [*Kinderen der stoomeeuw*]', they explained that, though all flawed, they identified themselves with last category. They prefaced their piece by explaining their use of a new coinage, 'féminisme':

> If the word was not generally associated with a particular view on colour, brown or white, we would see 'abolitionism' as the true representation of the quintessence of the women's movement; as it is, we think it is better to use the current term '*féminisme*'. ('De stroomingen' 1894, 290)[21]

This remark worked on two levels. It invited readers to map the distinctions between abolitionist factions onto the women's movement, giving their classification more universality and, hence, authority. At the same time, the editors signalled their own radicalism by nonchalantly defining the 'quintessence' of their struggle as a form of abolitionism, a pursuit of radical equality and rejection of compromise, beyond the institution of slavery.

Auclert's biting accounts of men's behaviour towards women also had strategic implications. Suggesting that men's self-interestedness precluded their support – a point John Stuart Mill also made, though in a different tone, as will be seen later in this chapter – she discouraged the search for male allies. This conceptualisation of women's oppression bolstered the idea that women should have their own political representation. Conversely, memories of antislavery could also be used to argue the potential of men's sympathy, as in this open letter in the socialist women's rights periodical *De Vrouw*:

> Would the slaves in America have yet received their freedom, would they have ever received it, without the noble help of the whites, who even spilt blood on their behalf? And one shouldn't forget that woman is the slave of society. ('Eene Vraag', 1893, 3)[22]

More commonly, though, especially among radical groupings, references to slavery were used to argue for the importance of vocal,

[21] 'Zoo daar niet aan was verbonden een zekere opvatting omtrent kleur: bruin of blank, zouden wij in "abolitionisme" de ware weergeving vinden van de quintessence der vrouwenbeweging; thans lijkt het ons beter het reeds burgerrecht verkregen hebbende "féminisme" [te gebruiken]' ('De stroomingen' 1894, 290).

[22] 'Zouden de slaven van Amerika nu reeds hunne vrijmaking verkregen hebben, – zouden zij die ooit verkregen hebben, zonder de edelmoedige hulp der blanken, die voor hunne

uncompromising vanguardism by leading feminists strong enough to face public outrage and ridicule. In shorthand, these references often took the shape of reminders of women's warped character as a result of having her 'neck bent by slavery [*den door slavernij gekromden nek*]' ('Het Vredig' 1894, 172). *Evolutie*'s reference to Topsy made this case in more elaborate fashion.

The importance of vanguard feminist leadership was further illustrated with references to key figures from antislavery. Like the *Almanach des femmes* had done decades before, writers reminded their audiences that uncompromising 'martyrs' of the antislavery movement, particularly William Lloyd Garrison, were vilified and ridiculed in the early stages of the movement, while later, 'truth and justice prevailed' ('À la Chambre' 1890, 1; see also 'Echo' 1892, 18). In *Evolutie*, readers were reminded that Garrison too had been called a 'madman, but was now an example to thousands and thousands' ('Binnen' 1896, 53).[23] Auclert repeatedly discussed the martyred antislavery insurrectionist John Brown in *La Citoyenne* to make a case for the importance of vanguardism.

Auclert's choice to recall John Brown was an outlier among the general landscape of memories of antislavery, inspired as it was by homegrown Parisian coverage of events in America. The immediate cause for Auclert's interest in Brown was news of the discovery of the scaffold on which Brown had been executed, which received attention in several Parisian newspapers.[24] The papers erroneously reported that nobody among the enslaved rallied to help him – in fact, five of his twenty-one-man posse had been black and among them was a fugitive slave. Nevertheless, this factoid sparked Auclert's interest and occasioned her article in the April 1884 issue of *La Citoyenne*, entitled 'Slaves' Cowardice':

The scaffold has just been found on which John Brown was hanged on 16 December 1859 for having tried to free the slaves of Southern America. He

zaak zelfs bloed vergoten? En men verlieze niet uit het ook dat de vrouw de slavin in de maatschappij is' ('Eene Vraag' 1893, 3).

[23] '[D]en man destijds eveneens werd uitgemaakt voor zotskap, doch thans wordt ten voorbeeld gesteld aan duizenden en duizenden' ('Binnen' 1896, 53).

[24] *Le Rappel* (25 March), *L'Intransigeant* (29 March), and *Le Petit Parisien* (1 April). Recalling Brown as a significant figure in the pantheon of antislavery, the editor also positioned *La Citoyenne* in a tradition of French radical Republicanism. Victor Hugo's admiration for Brown was well known; in 1860, he had published an open letter requesting his pardon, with a dramatic frontispiece by Hugo's own hand. Other French radicals had also embraced the figure. Élisée Reclus published a pamphlet on Brown in 1867 and Communard Pierre Vesnier published a work on Brown in 1864, which he dedicated to all the suffering and degraded of the earth (Drescher 1993, 521).

wanted to arm the Negroes so they could deliver themselves, but not one of them responded to his call. The cowardice of blacks caused the liberator's death. How many white slaves [*esclaves blanches*] who bear the name Frenchwomen, do just as little for those who vindicate their rights as the Negroes of America did for John Brown! ('Lâcheté' 1884, 4)[25]

Auclert used this false account of Brown's story as a bitter parable for the relationship between enlightened progressive leaders and the unenlightened masses they fight for and, into the bargain, herself furthered the pervasive myth about the passivity of the enslaved. She returned to this vignette the next year, to criticise a woman who had declined to take part in a suffrage campaign: 'Oh madame! You insult yourself! Do you then love liberty so little as did those Negroes who got their emancipator, John Brown, hanged?' ('Candidatures' 1885, 3).[26]

The rhetoric of Auclert's account relied on a strong contrast between Brown's bravery and what she emphasised to be the passivity of the victims for whom he fought, as these further two instances document:

We who collect, as reward for our efforts to free our sex, taunts from men, and, from women, that which John Brown himself received from the cowardly slaves whom he insisted on wanting to emancipate: a jealous hatred; we are repaid for all our efforts and our sufferings when we see a woman prevail by her personal value, get out of line, so to speak, to prove what we are saying: that woman is the equal of man, and to force her contemporaries to say of her: this is somebody! ('Séverine' 1886, 2)[27]

[The journal] *Le Voltaire* is disgusted that we vindicate our rights in a tone that is decidedly different from the slave's [...] [the editor] is so furious that he advised women to get together so he could 'knock us out'. John Brown was very well hanged for having wanted to deliver the Negroes from slavery, did that prevent the Negroes from becoming free? Threats and insults will

[25] 'On vient de retrouver l'échafaud sur lequel John Brown a été pendu le 16 décembre 1859 pour avoir essayé de libérer les esclaves du Sud de l'Amérique. Il voulait armer les nègres pour leur propre délivrance, mais pas un répondit à son appel. La lâcheté des noirs causa la mort du libérateur. Combien d'esclaves blanches qui portent le nom de Françaises, n'agissent pas mieux pour ceux qui revendiquent leurs droits que les nègres d'Amérique n'ont agi pour John Brown!' ('Lâcheté' 1884, 4).

[26] 'Oh madame! vous vous injuriez! Aimeriez-vous donc aussi peu la liberté que les nègres qui ont fait pendre leur émancipateur John Brown? [...]' ('Candidatures' 1885, 3).

[27] 'Nous qui recueillons, en récompense des efforts que nous faisons pour affranchir notre sexe, les railleries des hommes, et, des femmes, ce que John Brown lui-même recueillait des lâches esclaves qu'il s'entêtait à vouloir émanciper: une haine jalouse; nous sommes payées de toutes nos peines et de toutes nos souffrances quand nous voyons une femme s'imposer par sa valeur personnelle, sortir du rang, pour ainsi dire, afin de prouver ce que nous avançons, à savoir: que la femme est l'égale de l'homme, et forcer ses contemporains à dire d'elle: "C'est quelqu'un"!' ('Séverine' 1886, 2).

do nothing [...] knock us out, the cause of women will triumph nonetheless. ('Voltaire' 1884, 2)[28]

In pursuit of her argument that the women's advocacy in France rested, more or less thanklessly, on the shoulders of a few militants like herself, Auclert repeatedly promoted a characterisation of enslaved African Americans as weak, ignorant, and ultimately reprehensible. This characterisation of difference in kind between Brown and the enslaved, cinched by her distinction between her journal's tone and that of the 'slave', became pre-eminent in her retellings of the story. Auclert kept returning to this rebuke of the general population of French women, nursing a sense of community among the self-appointed vanguard to which she belonged.

The associations of the woman–slave analogy with fringe radicalism meant that, strikingly, even within women's rights periodicals, the analogy was often invoked by way of citation of prominent thinkers, rather than assertions of the writers themselves. By explicitly citing a figurehead, women could circulate this radical idea without personally having to face the full measure of potential criticism or ridicule. It is little wonder that the thinkers usually cited were male, well-established social theorists, including Charles Secrétan (1815–1895), Louis Frank (1864–1917), Louis Bridel (1852–1913), Victor Hugo (1802–1885), and, especially, the socialist August Bebel (1840–1913) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873).[29] The latter two had written renowned studies on women's emancipation that made intensive use of the analogy: *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1879) and *The Subjection of Women* (1869).

The establishment of the woman–slave analogy as a watchword of radicalism relied as much on its detractors in the moderate wing of the women's movement as it did on its radical proponents. These critics often complained of what they saw as the omnipresence of slavery, the 'beloved catchword [*eines der beliebtesten Schlagwörter*]' in the women's

[28] 'Le Voltaire est révolté que nous revendiquions notre droit sur un ton qui n'est point celui de l'esclave. [...] il entre dans une si grande fureur qu'il va jusqu'à conseiller aux femmes de se réunir pour "nous assommer".

John Brown a bien été pendu pour avoir voulu délivrer les nègres de l'esclavage, cela a-t-il empêché que les nègres soient devenus libres? Les menaces et les injures n'y feront rien [...] assommez-nous, la cause des femmes n'en triomphera pas moins' ('Voltaire' 1884, 2).

[29] For example: Secrétan in 'Pouvoir d'abolir' 1887; Bridel in 'Die Frauenbewegung' 1893. The citation practice was certainly not exclusively male: *Frauenberuf*, for instance, reprinted Marya Chéliga's usage of the commonplace ('Zwei Vorträge' 1890, 71), while Léon Richer's book of quotations *Le livre des femmes* reprinted Harriet Taylor's comparison of female suffrage with the abolition of slavery in the US (Richer 1872, 164).

movement ('Weiße' 1888).[30] The international reception of Mill's work demonstrates how the conflict over what comparisons were legitimate actually resulted in a more sustained recall of American slavery in the discourse, as women's rights advocacy's relationship to the history of antislavery was being negotiated.

Mill's essay on *The Subjection of Women* came out in 1869 and was soon translated into French (*De l'assujettissement des femmes*, trans. Émile Cazelles, 1869), Dutch (*De slavernij der vrouw*, trans. R. C. Nieuwenhuijs, 1870), and German (*Die Hörigkeit der Frau*, trans. Jenny Hirsch, 1872), becoming a foundational text for women's rights advocates from the US to Russia (Jansz 1990; Hekman 1992; Berest 2016).[31] Its central claim was that no judgements could be passed on women's natural or biological aptitudes as compared to men's, so long as they were not free to develop them in society. Mill argued that women had not been free in known history and so a proper appraisal of their nature had never been possible. Mill's examination of marriage, furthermore, found it to be the 'only actual bondage' still in existence (2002 [1869], 206).

In the course of this argument, Mill made several references to chattel slavery, particularly in the first two chapters of the work. Discussing common opinions on 'different natures among mankind', he asked:

> Did not the slave-owners of the Southern United States maintain the same doctrine, with all the fanaticism with which men cling to the theories that justify their passions and legitimate their personal interests? Did they not call heaven and earth to witness that the dominion of the white man over the black is natural, that the black race is by nature incapable of freedom, and marked out for slavery? (Mill 2002, 134)

In addition to his use of slave-owners as the ultimate representations of self-interested reasoning, he also invoked the character Uncle Tom to explain his position on marriage:

> I am far from pretending that wives are in general no better treated than slaves; but no slave is a slave to the same lengths, and in so full a sense of the word, as a wife is.

[30] See for instance: 'Antikritick' 1870; 'Een Duitscher' 1870; 'Gelijk Recht' 1870; Vitringa 1870; 'Voor het huwelijk' 1870; 'De beweging' 1871; 'Het wezen' 1871; 'Neue Entdeckungen' 1894. This critique was also implicit in the criticisms of the idea that woman needed to be 'emancipated' at all, such as Vitringa 1869, 25; Baudrillart 1872.

[31] An interesting example of the memory work of circulating this text was Hedwig Kettler's offer in her journal *Frauenberuf* to personally send out copies to readers who were willing to read it out to 'as large a group of friends as possible' ('Vereinsnachrichten' 1890, 78). The journal considered Mill's text a 'duty' for all women's advocates to read ('Litteratur-Bericht' 1890).

> Hardly any slave, except one immediately attached to the master's person, is a slave at all hours and all minutes […]. 'Uncle Tom' under his first master had his own life in his 'cabin', almost as much as any man whose work takes him away from home, is able to have in his own family. But it cannot be so with the wife. (Mill 2002, 155)

Mill's reference to the literary detail of Tom's first master indicated how commonly recognised he considered the reference to be and it added narrative detail to the memory of antislavery on which his comparison relied.

In Mill's work, slavery was an evocative example to set the stage for his philosophical argument. In his reception, however, it seems to have been the element sceptical readers most attacked. French commentator Henri Baudrillart baulked at the comparison in the influential liberal journal *Revue des deux mondes*:

> To emancipate, in the etymological sense of the word, is to deliver a slave to the state of liberty, a thing to the state of personhood. Are we really to demonstrate that our wives, our mothers, our daughters are not things, and are we to take seriously those resounding assertions that emancipators used to let out at Parisian banquets, and which Mr. Victor Hugo used to reward with one of those program letters he never withholds from a popular cause? […] If one was to accept the terms in which this issue is posed, one would have to see in it the thought or germ of the greatest revolution the world has ever seen […] What is abolitionism in comparison, which endeavoured to make the slavery of a few million poor blacks disappear from the face of the earth like a shameful stain? ('L'agitation' 1872, 652)[32]

Baudrillart's comment subtly shifted terrain from Mill's argument, which referred to slavery to explain the class interest of men and to highlight women's lack of developmental opportunity. Baudrillart's response, by comparison, represents these women's rights arguments as suggesting that men did not recognise women's personhood. In making this case, this staunch critic recalled the struggle of abolitionists against slavery in

[32] 'Émanciper, selon le sens étymologique, c'est faire passer un esclave à l'état de liberté, une esclave à l'état de liberté, une chose à l'état de personne. Or, que nos femmes, nos mères, nos filles ne soient pas des choses, en vérité est-ce à démontrer, et faut-il prendre au sérieux ces retentissantes affirmations que naguère encore les émancipateurs faisaient entendre dans un banquet tenu à Paris, et que saluait M. Victor Hugo d'une de ces lettres-programmes qu'il ne refuse jamais aux causes populaires? Aussi ne s'agit-il pas ici d'une thèse à soutenir. Il suffit que la campagne émancipatrice existe, se propage dans plusieurs pays, pour que nous recherchions ce qui s'y cache ou s'y manifeste d'idées fausses, et, s'il y a lieu aussi, de revendications moins chimériques. Si l'on devait accepter les termes dans lesquels elle est posée, il faudrait y voir la pensée ou le germe de la plus grande révolution peut-être que le monde ait encore éprouvée […]. Que serait en comparaison l'abolitionisme qui s'est attaché à faire disparaître de la face du globe comme une tache honteuse la servitude de quelques millions de pauvres noirs?' ('L'agitation' 1872, 652).

some detail, echoing abolitionist language in his reference to a 'shameful stain'. Seen in this light, remarks like these only further cemented the history of antislavery as a natural point of comparison for demands for women's rights, even if the comparison was negative. He engaged in the terms of debate and engaged in further recall of the history of antislavery even as he rejected it.

Mill's reception in The Netherlands, particularly in the moderate journal *Ons Streven*, time and again returned to the woman–slave analogy. This was likely partly influenced by the translator's choice to render 'Subjection' as 'Slavery'. Like Baudrillart, commentators often discounted Mill as merely a *primus inter pares* of the unfortunate broader tendency to make this comparison.[33] These remarks did not just seek to influence the conceptualisation of women's rights, but in the process worked on the memory of antislavery as well. Even an advertisement in *Ons Streven* for the Dutch translation of Mill's essay, which appeared under the title *De slavernij der vrouw*, distanced itself from the analogy. The advertisement took the form of a fictional dialogue:

– Have you read MILL's work yet, on the slavery of women?
– No. But it is surely of the highest importance to hear how those unhappy slave women and quadroons suffered, when slavery still existed. I have learned much about this from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But are there still countries where this slavery exists? I thought that, after the Civil War in North America …
– Wait, dear madam! This book is not about full, half, or quarter-negresses, but about you and yours […] This work suggests that you live in a state of slavery.
– Me? […] What would he know!
– A little respect, if you please. Sir John Stuart Mill is not a man whose opinions ought to be taken lightly […]
– Well, that may be! But it is odd to speak of the slavery of women.
– Yes, it is a bit of an exaggeration […]. ('De slavernij' 1870, 13)[34]

[33] 'De slavernij' 1870; 'Een Duitscher' 1870; 'Voor het huwelijk' 1870.

[34] '– Hebt ge het werkje van MILL reeds gelezen, over de slavernij der vrouw?

– Neen. Maar het is zeker hoogst belangrijk om te hooren, hoe die ongelukkige negerslavinnen en kwadronen het gehad hebben, toen de slavernij nog bestond. Uit de Negerhut heb ik daarover veel geleerd. Maar zij er nu nog landen, waar die slavernij zoo bestaat? Ik dacht, dat na den burgeroorlog in Noord-Amerika …
– Wacht even, lieve mevrouw! Het boekje handelt niet over heel, half of kwart negerinnen, maar over u en uwsgelijken, over engelsche vrouwen en meisjes; en de vertaler, Mr. NIEUWENHUIS en Dr. VITRINGA, die er een voorrede bij schreef, meenen dat

Similar to Baudrillart's comment, this mild criticism of Mill ultimately further cemented memories of antislavery within the usable past of women's rights advocacy, treating them as a natural part of the repertoire. It drew attention to how readers' interaction with Stowe's descriptions informed their views of slavery and in doing so invited readers to reflect on parallels themselves.

Meanwhile, more radical feminists seized upon Mill's use of the analogy. Cornelia Zwaardemaker specifically praised Mill's parallels, concluding that he 'deserves the title of apostle of freedom. He pleads for freedom for all, black or white, rich or working man, man or woman' ('John Stuart' 1870, 32).[35] *Evolutie* went even further by criticising those who objected to the analogy:

> the non-analytical, unreasoning masses of 1867 [*sic*] could see only nonsense in the *Subjection of Women*. She, a slave?! She who walked around freely, unchained, not driven by the whip! How odd, that Stuart Mill! And still, still … people have ever so slowly come to realise that chain and whip are but symbols of slavery, not slavery itself. ('Literatuur' 1898, 40)[36]

The debate over Mill's invocations of the history of antislavery spurred an elaboration of the position of antislavery in the memory of women's activists, not a reduction. In the process, the historical meaning of slavery and abolition was placed under scrutiny as much, if not more, than the question of the role of woman.

The fiery responses to Mill's use of the woman–slave analogy and his invocation of memories of antislavery overdetermined the reception of his work relative to the brevity of the actual references. The obituary of Mill *Ons Streven* published in 1873 even summarised *The Subjection of*

het ook voor de nederlandsche vrouwen en meisjes geldt. Gij verkeert volgens dit werkje in slavernij.
– Ik? […] Die MILL kan zooveel zeggen!
– Een weinigje meer respect, als ik u verzoeken mag. Sir John Stuart Mill is geen man, op wiens gevoelen men weinig acht slaat […]
– Wel mogelijk! Maar't is toch vrij gek om over de slavernij der vrouw te spreken.
– Ietwat overdreven is het wel. Dat vindt de schrijver der voorrede ook. […]' ('De slavernij' 1870, 13).

[35] '[D]oet hem den titel van apostel der vrijheid verwerven. Hij bepleit die voor ieder, zwarte of blanke, rijke of arbeider, man of vrouw, vrijheid voor allen' ('John Stuart' 1870, 32).

[36] '[D]aar kon de niet-analyseerende, niet-redeneerende groote hoop in 1867 niet anders zien dan onzin in de *Subjection of Women*. Zij, zij slavin! Zij, die daar rondliep vrijelijk, ongeketend, niet voortgedreven door de zweep! Hoe gek zoo een Stuart Mill! En toch, en toch … is men langzaam, langzaam aan gekomen tot de conclusie, dat keten en zweep slechts zijn symbolen der slavernij, niet de slavernij zelf' ('Literatuur' 1898, 40).

Women in terms of its controversial comparisons, rather than its philosophical argument:

> [Mill] demanded proof for the common wisdoms professed about women: so long as these weren't provided, he adamantly maintained that men's protests against women's emancipation equalled the alarms raised by the Southern American slave traders against the abolition of slavery. ('De Vriend' 1873, 127)[37]

The propriety of explaining women's subjection through comparison with the enslaved continued to be hotly debated into the early twentieth century. Commentators kept close watch on discursive developments abroad and explicitly critiqued them for their readership. In doing so, they also promoted a shared vocabulary of concepts and schemata to discuss the Woman Question and signalled that this problem was universal. It was not in spite of, but often thanks to, the contentious nature of this comparison that the debate of women's rights kept returning to the history of antislavery. In this process, the movement against slavery also kept being reaffirmed as an essential chapter in the history of women's advocacy.

It should be noted, finally, that memories of antislavery were also used to counter attacks by opponents of the women's rights movement, such as Friedrich Nietzsche, who unfavourably employed the woman–slave analogy to undermine the cause. In her *Antifeministen* (1902), Hedwig Dohm countered misogynistic remarks by Nietzsche's by reframing them in her own terms:

> Nietzsche calls it 'de-feminizing', the 'clumsy and indignant gathering of the slavish and the serfs', which woman's position has so far entailed and still entails under the hitherto existing order of society, 'as though slavery were a counter-argument, and not much rather a condition of any higher culture'. Possibly. Certainly from the point of view of the slave owner. But the slaves? Can you blame them if they think otherwise? (1902, 24)[38]

[37] 'Hij wilde bewijzen voor de juistheid der algemeen aangenomen meeningen omtrent de vrouw; zoolang die bewijzen niet geleverd werden, bleef hij volhouden dat de protesten der mannen tegen de vrouwen-emancipatie gelijk stonden met het alarm door de Zuid-Amerikaansche slavenhandelaars gemaakt tegen de opheffing der slavernij […]' ('De Vriend' 1873, 127).

[38] '"Entweiblichung" nennt Nietzsche das "Täppische und entrüstete Zusammensuchen des Sklavenhaften und Leibeigenen", das die Stellung des Weibes in der bisherigen Ordnung der Gesellschaft an sich gehabt hat und noch hat. "Als ob Sklaven ein Gegenargument und nicht viel mehr eine Bedingung jeder höheren Kultur sei."

Möglich. Vom Standpunkt des Sklavenhalters gewiß. Aber die Sklaven? Kann man es ihnen verargen, wenn sie anders darüber denken?' (Dohm 1902, 24). The reference is to chapter 7 of Nietzsche's *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1968 [1886], 183).

Nietzsche's original reference to the master–slave relationship as a condition of 'höheren Kultur' referred to his studies of Classical Antiquity. Dohm, however, wrenched it free from this context and reframed it in the context of the nineteenth century, by replacing Nietzsche's 'Herren' with 'Sklavenhalters': a typically nineteenth-century villain deriving from antislavery literature.[39] By identifying his position with that of the unpalatable figure of the slaveholder, she sought to undermine his arguments.

WOMAN–ABOLITIONIST COMMONPLACE

The second major trend in the recall of antislavery history in the periodical press of Europe revolved around the contribution of women to abolition. In contrast to the woman–slave analogy, this commonplace invited readers to ponder the historical connections between bourgeois white reformers, women, and female abolitionists – not between women and the enslaved. Women's part in antislavery was also often recalled in works aimed at a broader audience, such as historical overviews explaining the origins of the women's rights movement, including Martina Kramer's articles in the Dutch literary periodical *De Gids* (1907; esp. the third instalment) and Avril de Sainte-Croix's *Le féminisme* (1907). These histories contextualised both abolition and women's emancipation within the nineteenth-century master narrative of liberal progress, as is discussed in depth in the next chapter. This rhetorical move was closely tied up with what has come to be commonly referred to as 'imperial feminist' discourse (Amos and Parmar 1984; Burton 1994; Midgley 1998; Valverde 2000) and was predominantly developed in moderate periodicals like *Die Frau* and in the journals of anti-prostitution movements, such as the *Orgaan* of the Dutch Women's Union for the Raising of Public Decency and *La femme* (for a socialist example, van Eeden 1897).

The connections drawn between women and abolitionists usually remained within the remit of the philosophy of difference between the sexes, emphasising women's special qualities of religious sentiment and heightened sensibility as a force for moral and social progress. The mobilisation of the principle of difference for women's rights was part

[39] Google Ngram indicates that the figure of the slaveholder only entered German discourse in the nineteenth century. It shows no usage of 'Sklavenhalter' until 1861. Similarly, for the Dutch case, the newspaper archive Delpher shows an uptick in the use of the word 'slavenhouder' in Dutch following 1852, when *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published.

of (women) philanthropists' development of a new model of 'custodial citizenship' (Waaldijk 2000, 113–114; see also Riley 1988; van Drenth and de Haan 1999; Grever and Waaldijk 2004). In this conception, compassion and moral outrage, which had once been connoted as feminine, apolitical responses, were reinterpreted as legitimate drivers of social intervention and political decision-making. While less contentious than the woman–slave analogy, remembrance in this key also raised productive controversy within women's rights circles, particularly with regards to commemoration of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was, in Europe, by far the most-cited example of feminine-connoted sentimental antislavery.

The success of the antislavery campaign was frequently ascribed to the influence of women's moral suasion, powered by the antislavery 'feminine instinct' ('Echo' 1892, 19), which mobilised a 'large slew of women, who identify with the unhappy and the despised' ('Toespraak', 1884, 4).[40] An especially evocative example occurred in *La femme*, in an article which emphasised the moral importance of women's religiosity:

> It is neither historians, nor philosophers, nor critics, who have abolished the iniquitous institution of slavery in America. It is not a Hebrew or Greek linguist who we have to thank for the foundation of hospitals. It is not the debaters of grace or the decipherers of palimpsests, who go into the deserts of Africa […] These simply listened to the Master's word and chose 'the good part'.
>
> They, too, listened and obeyed, Christians like Elizabeth Fry, Mrs. Butler, like Mrs. Booth; they did not examine whether legally or doctrinally, they were irreproachable; they did not ask questions […] Let us salute these valiant pioneers of the Lord's field; like them, like Mary of Bethany, humbly listen to the Divine Master. ('Écoutez-le!' 1891, 149)[41]

By referring to women reformers as humble servants of God, rather than tacticians or orators, the writer highlighted the importance of women's religiosity and sensibility as drivers of historical progress. The *Orgaan*

[40] '[B]ij zijn moeder echter kwam het vrouwelijk instinct boven, dat zulk meesterschap van een deel der menschheid over het andere niet goed kon keuren' ('Echo' 1892, 19).

[41] 'Ce ne sont ni des historiens, ni des philosophes, ni des critiques, qui ont aboli l'inique institution de l'esclavage en Amérique. Ce n'est pas à un linguiste hébreu ou grec que l'on doit la fondation des hôpitaux. Ce ne sont pas les disputeurs sur la grâce, ni les déchiffreurs de palimpsestes, qui vont dans les déserts de l'Afrique […]. Ceux-là ont simplement écouté la Parole du Maître; ils ont choisi "la bonne part". […] Elles aussi ont "écouté" et ont obéi, les chrétiennes comme Elisabeth Fry, comme Mme Butler, comme Mme Booth: elles n'ont pas examiné si, légalement ou doctrinalement, elles étaient irréprochables; elles n'ont point posé de questions […]. Saluons ces vaillants pionniers du champ du Seigneur; comme eux, comme Marie de Béthanie, écoutons humblement et avec soumission le divin Maître' ('Écoutez-le' 1891, 149).

similarly stressed the understanding of women's complementarity to men, citing, for instance, Dutch reformer Hendrik Pierson's suggestion that 'what a woman can do no man can, which is to place a warm, heartfelt belief in opposition to men's wisdom. For this, one has to be a Mrs. Beecher Stowe or a Mrs. Butler' ('Reglementeering' 1898, 103).[42]

This emphasis on gender difference was prominently on display in discussions of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the most prominent figure called up as part of the woman–abolitionist commonplace.[43] In their pieces, commentators often relied on George Sand's characterisation, which described Stowe as a 'saint' rather than a novelist and emphasised her feminine sympathy over her literary talent (Sand 1853, 110). Stowe was taken as an example of how a woman could exert influence using the peaceful means within existing gender norms for the cause of abolitionism, which had become, by the end of the century, uncontroversial.

The *Orgaan* presented Stowe as a key example in their deliberations over the question of whether or not women ought to speak in public, suggesting that 'Often God has chosen woman to express his will and his decrees. […] Was it not Mrs. Beecher Stowe, whom the slaves have to thank for their freedom, besides God? ('Het spreken' 1891, 90–91).[44] In *Neue Bahnen*, too, Stowe's peaceful propaganda was portrayed as having played a pivotal role in the struggle for abolition. Their account presented the transnational consumption of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as an effective means of public pressure and portrayed peaceful moral suasion as an avenue for women to become active in the political questions of the day without entering the male sphere of party politics:

[Though mostly forgotten now, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*] was read high and low, and in quite a few households people couldn't tear themselves away from its gripping

[42] '[W]at een vrouw doen kan doet geen man, nl. eene innige warme overtuiging uit het hart gesproten tegenover de wijsheid der mannen stellen. Daarvoor moet men een Mevr. Beecher Stowe of een Mevr. Butler zijn' ('Reglementeering' 1898, 103).

[43] Recently, Laurens Ham has questioned whether Stowe was truly pervasively popular across Europe (2018). His study of the Dutch context suggests she was less discussed in the general press than has been previously assumed. If the same holds for other national contexts, this makes her prominence in feminist periodicals all the more remarkable, showcasing their commitment to the memory of specific figures outside the cultural Zeitgeist.

[44] 'Ook als wij de geschiedenis nagaan, zoo zien wij hoe menigmaal God zich juist van de vrouwe bediende, om Zijnen wil en Zijne gerichten kenbaar te maken. Was het niet […] Mevrouw Beecher Stowe, aan wie de slaven in Amerika naast God hun vrijheid te danken hebben? […] moeten wij dan niet tot de erkenning komen, dat juist in deze zaak God de vrouw tot werkzaamheid heeft geroepen?' ('Het spreken' 1891, 90–91).

scenes until midnight. After the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, finally the White House, too, started to take an interest in the question of slavery […]. ('Mrs. Beecher' 1896, 120)[45]

Sometimes, as the world's most well-known female abolitionist, Stowe became a template for the representation of the nature of women's involvement in antislavery. Reversing chronology, Avril de Sainte-Croix's history of feminism, for instance, introduced Lucretia Mott, feminist-abolitionist pioneer and twenty years Stowe's senior, as having 'continued with her words' what Stowe 'did with her pen' (Sainte-Croix 1907, 97).[46] Similarly, Helene Lange's biography in *Die Frau* claimed Stowe was the perfect case to understand the historical connections between the antislavery and the women's movement ('Harriet Beecher' 1896, 735).[47] Lange stressed that this crucial interconnection could only be understood by looking at Stowe's life as a whole, as antislavery was bound up with her femininity. Lange suggests that Stowe's 'quill was moved by her mother's heart [*Mutterliebe*]' (736), and further posited that women's contributions to social life stemmed from their spiritual, if not physical, motherhood (739). Promoting Stowe as the ideal representative of the connection between antislavery and the women's movement allowed Lange to expunge frowned-upon unwomanly aspects from the legacy of American feminist abolitionism. This was all in spite of the fact Stowe was never actually involved in promoting women's rights.

Die Frau's biographies of American antislavery women, accompanied by portraits, clearly exemplify how memories of antislavery were presented to celebrate feminine values as a societal asset. They covered the 'product of her fatherland [*mütterliche Bodens*]', Elizabeth Cady Stanton ('Ein Amerikanische' 1899, 224); Harriet Beecher Stowe, with her 'warm, simple, God-loving and humanitarian heart' ('Harriet Beecher', 1896, 735); Susan B. Anthony, whose Quaker background instilled in her 'an industrious spirit, physical and moral cleanliness, conciliatory and self-sacrificing humanity' ('Susan B.' 1904, 322); and Elizabeth

[45] 'Es wurde von hoch und niedrig gelesen, und in manchen Familienkreisen konnte man sich vor Mitternacht nicht von diesen ergreisenden Schilderungen loslösen. Nach die Veröffentlichung von "Onkel Tom's Hütte" fing man an, sich auch im Weisen Hause zu Washington mit der Frage der Sklaverei zu beschäftigen […]' ('Mrs. Beecher' 1896, 120).

[46] 'Ce que Mme Beecher Stowe a fait par la plume, elle le continue par la parole' (Sainte-Croix 1907, 97)

[47] '[F]ür die Erkenntnis des bindenden Moments beider Bewegungen und seine Verwertung für die Zukunft' ('Harriet Beecher' 1896, 735).

Blackwell, who embodied 'the essence of true womanhood' in her incessant labour to help others ('Die erste' 1896, 547). *Die Frau*'s American subjects were well-known feminist-abolitionists from the educated middle classes, used here as a mirror for the feminine values *Die Frau* advocated, including piety, patience, and a good work ethic.

On the whole, *Die Frau* had in fact mostly distanced itself from American feminism. The subjects they chose for their encomiums were, the authors emphasised, pioneers of a previous generation. The main characteristic of modern American feminism which they felt would not translate to German contexts was its showiness, as authors repeatedly emphasised. In her article on Blackwell, Lange emphasised Blackwell's 'quiet, energetic […] work', contrasting it positively with other US pioneers. When it came to Stanton, the most controversial woman in their selection, Lange praised her self-possession (*Seelenruhe*), but also warned against her outspokenness, explaining that her 'absolute disinhibition [*Voraussetzungslosigkeit*]' had to be understood in its national context ('Ein amerikanische' 1899, 228). Blackwell's humility, however, served as an unreservedly positive example for German readers, as she 'had not the slightest inclination to play a role' (547). In all these accounts, particular virtues designated as specifically feminine, like moderation, empathy, and humility, were celebrated and connected to their subjects' extraordinary achievements. The articles in *Die Frau* emphasised the importance of women's organising efforts and of religiosity as a positive force and dismissed more public, theatrical, or unladylike behaviour as side issues rather than essential parts of the success of the women's movement. In doing so, they shaped the meaning of antislavery, and its role in the usable past, in particular ways, acknowledging antislavery as a part of the history of women's agitation but regulating the lessons German readers were to draw from it.

Like the woman–slave commonplace, associating women with abolitionists carried specific cues about what strategic and discursive repertoire was appropriate for the international women's movement. The connection was often marshalled to discourage rhetorical and performative excess, stressing instead the historical importance of gentler forms of persuasion that stayed within the limits of traditional femininity. This assertion was naturally paired with fond reminders of the importance of sensibility, a traditionally feminised trait, both to injustices and to such suasion. To make this case, writers emphasised the importance of civil societal debate, of writing, and even of reading, in the history of abolition.

A telling example of this occurred in a speech on the traffic in women, printed by *Orgaan*. The speech opened with an elaborate description of a slave market:

When we hear the word 'slaves' our thoughts return to those horrific stories we were told in our youth. In our imaginations we see a slave market, where coloured folk of different abilities and different ages sit, packed tightly together, anxiously waiting to see what will be their fate. […] In every face one sees suspense and fear, and along with it we see the cruel face of the buyer, and that of the driver, who treat these people as if they were a herd of cattle. In their eyes, they are not much more. Such a market is only the beginning of their misery. We don't even want to consider the scenes of dragging away to the ship, of tearing up of treasured family ties […]. Once they have reached their destination, misery truly starts.[48]

The scene was cut short by the speaker's question: 'who among us does not know at least a little of these conditions from Mrs. Beecher Stowe's famous novel?' ('In welken zin' 1902, 100). She then revealed that slavery, in fact, still existed, and still needed to be combated in the public sphere. The speaker continued:[49]

When we read of the terrible spectacle of slavery in Africa and America, tears rose to our eyes, hearing about so much cruelty. Similarly, accounts of the current slave trade not only give rise to tears, but to a feeling of rebellion in our chests, at all this deceit and all this injustice. We should like to shout it to all: do you not hear the laments, the cries, of so many unhappy, deceived souls, crying to Heaven? ('In welken zin' 1902, 100)[50]

This literary reference naturally emphasised the urgency of the cause. Perhaps more importantly, however, through the call on the audience's

[48] 'Wanneer wij het woord "slaven" hooren, dan gaan onze gedachten terug naar de vreeselijke verhalen die wij in onze jeugd daarover hoorden. Voor onze verbeelding zien wij een slavenmarkt, waar kleurlingen van beiderlei kunne en van allerlei leeftijd, dicht opeen gepakt, in angstige afwachting zijn van wat hun lot beslissen zal. […] Op aller gelaat is de spanning en angst te lezen, en daarbij zien wij het hardvochtige gezicht van den kooper en den drijver die deze menschen behandelen alsof zij slechts eene kudde vee waren. In hunlieder oog zijn zij niet veel beter geacht. Zulk een markt is slechts het begin der ellende. Wij willen niet stilstaan bij de taferelen van wegsleuren naar de boot, van het vaneen rijten van liefste familiebanden […]. Eenmaal op de plaats hunner bestemming aangekomen, begint de ellende pas recht […].'

[49] '[W]ie onzer die niet eenigzins met deze toestanden bekend is door het zoo beroemde boek van Mrs. Beecher Stowe, De Negerhut?' ('In welken zin' 1902, 100).

[50] 'Waar wij, bij het lezen van de tafereelen der slavernij in Afrika en Amerika [in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*], de tranen in de oogen kregen bij het hooren van zooveel wreedheid, zoo krijgen wij bij den hedendaagschen slavenhandel, nog bij de tranen een gevoel van opstand in ons hart, voor zooveel bedrog en zooveel onrecht. Wij zouden het wel aan ieder willen toeroepen: Hoor gij niet het gesteun, het gejammer van zooveel ongelukkigen, zooveel bedrogen, dat ten Hemel schreit?' ('In welken zin' 1902, 100).

shared readership of Stowe, the speaker modelled a strong, heartfelt response to these stories and reminded listeners of the potential for moral improvement that such emotions carried in them.

When writers emphasised the importance of sensibility, they usually recalled the struggle against slavery as a peaceful process. As a discussion of Brazilian abolition in *La Citoyenne* shows, this pattern of recall could distort the account of how abolition came to pass into an unrecognisably naïve narrative:

> Madame Beecher Stowe, through her immortal novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, emancipated the slaves of the United States in the North by way of moral suasion [*moralement*]; Princess Isabelle [of Brazil] emancipated them by way of a law. See here the response to the question: *Cherchez la femme!* ('Abolition' 1888, 3)[51]

In this account, Auclert reduced the complex world-historical process of abolition to the straightforward terms of moral suasion. Another example of this particular simplification occurs in *Orgaan*. In a speech defending the importance of public opinion, the history of abolition was coppiced to prove a central thesis:

> When the public is convinced that something is wrong, it does not survive long. We have seen this with slavery, for example. When the people learned that one man was not permitted to buy and sell another, that was the end of slavery. ('Hoe' 1889, 7)[52]

Whereas this example portrayed abolition as a rapid shift, more commonly articles relied on a conceptual model of gradual moral progress. This model is seen at play in this article in *Ons Streven*, which urged readers to keep faith in their cause by keeping antislavery in mind:

> Again the spirit of God passes over the tired, to point to the many gains for good that have already been achieved, despite all adversity, and it is these gains that

[51] 'Mme Boecher Stowe [*sic*], par son roman immortel: La Case de l'Oncle Tom, a moralement affranchi les esclaves des Etats-Unis au Nord; la princesse Isabelle les affranchit effectivement par une loi au Sud. Voilà la réponse à la question: Cherchez la femme!' ('Abolition' 1888, 3). *Cherchez la femme* is a cliché from pulp detective literature.

[52] 'Wanneer het groote publiek doordrongen is van de overtuiging dat een of andere zaak verkeerd is, dan heeft die zaak niet veel kans meer om in 't leven te blijven. Dat hebben wij, om maar iets te noemen, aan de slavernij gezien. Toen het publiek geleerd had dat het ongeoorloofd was voor den eenen mensch om den andere te koopen en te verkoopen, toen was het met de slavernij gedaan. Men kan wel zeggen: och wat! De publieke opinie, die betekent niets, die is zoo hol en onbetrouwbaar als de wind. Maar het is juist de wind die den molen laat draaien en de zeilen der schepen zwellen doet […]' ('Hoe' 1889, 7).

promise victory, no matter how far it lies ahead. The hostile, personal factions will slowly fade and be overpowered by the powerful voices of the times. The same love that once freed the slaves, will free woman […] and like a phoenix she will rise, rejuvenated and renewed to take up her powerful individual and social life. ('Iets' 1871, 72)[53]

Presenting 'love' promoted by 'powerful voices' as the driving force behind reform, the writer emphasised slave emancipation was a process of slow progress. This characterisation wholly omitted the significance of catalysts like war and insurrection.

Instantiations of the woman–slave commonplace encouraged readers to imagine women's lot as a type of slavery and drew connections between the victims of colonial slavery and of patriarchy. While encouraging women to overcome their physical and psychic bonds, the denigration enslaved persons had been subject to was constantly reasserted. The woman–abolitionist commonplace encouraged quite a different reading of this history. Readers were coaxed into action by stressing their relationship to abolitionists, rather than the enslaved, stressing the importance of their sensibility and of the societal effects it could have. Moreover, readers were encouraged to understand themselves as part of a transnational community of female, bourgeois philanthropists, rather than the subaltern community of the enslaved.

There were rare occasions where the two comparisons coincided in unusual ways, as in this example from the radical journal *Journal des Femmes*:

It is the irresistible current that shakes humanity, pulls it from its torpor, pushes it towards improvement. Here and there, a voice rises and claims justice, and numb consciences quiver, movement begins. It was a woman, Mrs. Beecher Stowe, who stigmatised slavery in America, and contributed more to abolishing the horrible right of white proprietors over black workers than any jurisconsult and politician. A certain number of women in all countries have demanded, in the name of the same justice, the liberty for those human beings who up to the present are undergoing the last laws affirming servitude. These women, entirely devoted to the cause of enfranchisement, braved the anger of their owners […] Fortunately

[53] 'Maar weder ruischt de geest Gods over de vermoeiden en hij wijst op het vele goede en groote dat, ondanks alle hinderpalen, reeds verkregen is, en juist die vorderingen beloven de overwinning, al is ze no zo verre. De vijandige, persoonlijke elementen, ze zullen langzamerhand wijken en op den achtergrond gedrongen worden door de machtige roepstemmen des tijds. Dezelfde liefde, die eenmaal de slaven bevrijdde, zal de vrouw opheffen uit de slavernij des geestes, die haar al te lang in lager sferen geboeid hield en als een phoenix zal ze verjongd en vernieuwd ontwaken tot een krachtig individueel en maatschappelijk leven' ('Iets' 1871, 72).

for humanity, messieurs, you do not have all the spirit of the owner nor the ideas of the slaver. ('Exposé' 1893, 3)[54]

The forceful tone is characteristically radical, but the conception of progress as an 'irresistible current' clearly develops the case for women's rights on the basis of the idea of custodial citizenship. This article ultimately links the two by imagining women's demands for abolition as defiance of their own 'owners'.

Stowe became the international embodiment of those feminine qualities and modes of political action in which moderate women's rights activists put their faith. J. de Marchef-Girard's *Les femmes: leur passé, leur présent, leur avenir* (1860), a historical overview which aimed to demonstrate the sexes' complementarity, discussed Stowe and her famous novel at length (456–462) and, while Marchef-Girard rejected 'bloomerism, saint-simonianism, positivism and all other systems of those Mr. Ideologues' (547), she presented Stowe's achievement as a historical event which marked the advent of women: 'we remember well that day' which saw the writing of 'the eloquent plume of a woman, a *saint* […]' (462).[55] *Onze Roeping*, discussing Stowe's views on the women's movement, termed her 'an authority that any woman is happy to defer to, […] we are happy to trust her by her word'[56] ('Hoe Mevr.' 1872, 137). Lange called on Stowe's 'mother's love [*Mutterliebe*]' to argue women's complementarity to men and assuage concerns about more radical initiatives ('Harriet Beecher' 1896, 739). Stowe became not just a key figure for arguments of the importance of women's public voice based on custodial citizenship, but a soothing answer to the incendiary messages of radical women's rights advocates.

[54] 'C'est le courant irrésistible qui secoue l'humanité, l'arrache à sa torpeur, la pousse vers l'amélioration. Par-ci, par-là, une voix s'élève et réclame la justice, et les consciences engourdies frissonnent, le mouvement commence. C'est ainsi qu'une femme, Mme Beecher Stowe, a flétri l'esclavage en Amérique, et a contribué plus puissamment à abolir l'horrible droit des propriétaires blancs sur les travailleurs noirs, que tous les jurisconsultes et les politiciens. Un certain nombre de femmes, dans tous les pays, ont réclamé au nom de la même justice la liberté pour ces êtres humains qui jusqu'à présent, subissent les dernières lois affirmant la servitude. Ces femmes, entièrement dévouées à la cause de l'affranchissement, bravant les colères de leurs propriétaires […]. C'est que, messieurs, heureusement pour l'humanité, vous n'avez pas tous l'âme du propriétaire ni les idées du négrier' ('Exposé' 1893, 3).

[55] '[I]l nous souvient encore de ce jour où la plume éloquente d'une femme, d'une sainte […]' (Marchef-Girard 1860, 462).

[56] 'Zoo iemand mag dan voorzeker de schrijfster van de negerhut, de kleine vossen, en zoovele andere werken, een autoriteit worden genoemd aan wier oordeel elke vrouw zich niet alleen gaarne onderwerpt, maar dat een iederlijk onzer alleen "op den naam af" zou durven onderschrijven' ('Hoe Mevr.' 1872, 137).

Stowe was a useful figure through which more commonly accepted views of womanhood could be connected to claims for women's rights in the public sphere, stretching the limits of the conventionally acceptable. Still, radicals objected to her moderate framing and feminisation, resulting in a tug of war over her memory. This conflict made the legacy of Stowe a vibrant site for the recall of memories of antislavery, as in the process of debating her significance advocates negotiated the ways in which antislavery might serve as a model for women's rights agitation. Whereas moderate bourgeois assessments emphasised Stowe's piety and empathy, radical commentators remembered her as a skilful activist. In *Evolutie*, Louis Frank referred to the tactical importance of her novel within the broader antislavery movement, as 'the most beautiful and *well-spoken* plea for abolition' of all ('De Vrouwenbeweging' 1893, 3, my emphasis). His article framed Stowe as proof of the genius of women's advancement in the US and as a concrete example of how women advanced world history ('De Vrouwenbeweging' 1893, 3).[57] This frame was distinctly at odds with views that reduced her success to the compassion in her 'mother's heart'.

One contributor to *La Citoyenne* expressed irritation at the dominant sentimental mode in which Stowe was remembered:

> What made [the book] such a success? Everything, one might say. Because in addition to the smartest observations there was the most acute imagination; rich sentiment responded in measure to the originality of thought. Oh yes, sentiment was there, that gift to which people wish to reduce all women's art; but not this sentimentality which creates imaginary situations to pour out sterile and disappointing sentences; instead, that large passion for humanity which suffers under all the evils it sees and which offers a remedy, that emotion finally of which is said that it makes the heart speak. ('Les femmes', 1881, 3)[58]

Rather than connecting Stowe's 'passion for humanity' to her gender or motherhood, this article presents her as a paragon of reformist zeal for both women and men. The author even asserted that most readers were

[57] 'Wel wordt zeer vaak beweerd, dat de vrouw de wereldgeschiedenis geen stap vooruit heeft gebracht, maar de geschiedenis van Amerika is rijk aan voorbeelden, die het tegendeel van deze bewering staven … Geen schooner en welsprekender pleidooi voor den afschaffing der slavernij is er geleverd dan het zoo vermaarde werk van Harriët Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*' ('De Vrouwenbeweging' 1893, 3).

[58] 'Qui avait fait le succès? Tout, pourrait-on dire. Car à côté de l'observation la plus savante se trouvait la fantaisie la plus relevée: la richesse du sentiment répondait à l'originalité de la pensée. Oh! oui, le sentiment n'y manquait pas, ce don auquel on voudrait réduire tout l'art de la femme; mais non pas ce sentimentalisme qui crée des situations imaginaire pour s'épancher en phrases stériles et décevantes, cette large passion de l'humanité au contraire qui souffre de tous les maux qu'elle voit et qui indique le remède, cette émotion enfin dont on dit: "Pectus disertos facit"!' ('Les femmes' 1881, 3).

not aware that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had been written by a woman. Stowe was not presented as a benevolent Christian philanthropist, but as a rebel against an overwhelming tide of oppression, the author using the occasion to point out the 'abundant' indignities that women and American slaves suffered in common ('Les femmes', 1881, 3). *De Vrouw* similarly emphasised Stowe's genius rather than her feminine qualities. In an article defending *Uncle Tom's Cabin* against the 'small-minded vitriol on the open-minded book [*kleinzielige vitterijen op het grootzielige boek*]', the author reprinted a less-circulated excerpt of George Sand's well-known characterisation of Stowe:

> Thrice holy is the soul that loves martyrs thus, that blesses and comforts them! Pure, deep and penetrating is the soul thus able to fathom the dark corners of the human soul! Great, noble and elevated is the heart that, with its love, compassion and reverence embraces a whole race that has been cast down in blood and dust, under the whip of the butcher and the curse of the wicked. ('Nog iets' 1896, 39–40)[59]

This recall of the violence perpetrated against the enslaved, of the 'martyrdom' of the victims, and of the crimes of slave-owners is purposefully rendered in the present tense. The socialist journal did not recall Stowe in the context of any master narrative of moral progress, but instead foregrounded the need for a continued struggle against injustice and against the class they saw as the perpetrator. Finally, *De Vrouw* also praised George Sand for her 'genius' in being able 'better than anyone else, to guess at the secret mechanism of this heart, and of this womanly intelligence' ('Nog iets' 1896, 39).[60] Yoking together Stowe and Sand, whose unfeminine and flamboyant lifestyle was notorious, drew attention to Stowe's writerly genius, rather than her supposedly exemplary femininity.

The discrepancy between Stowe's real-life reservations about women's rights campaigns and the important 'structuring power' her popularity had among feminists internationally, has led Margaret McFadden to describe her as an 'unwitting ally' to feminism (1999, 68, 67). Sensitivity

[59] 'Driemaal heilig is de ziel die aldus de martelaren liefheeft, zegent en troost! Rein, diep en doordringend is de geest die aldus de schuilhoeken van het menschelijk wezen peilt! Groot, edelmoedig en verheven is het hart dat met zijn liefde, zijn mededoogen, zijn eerbied een geheel ras omhelst dat ter neer geworpen ligt in het bloed en in het stof, onder den zweep der beulen en onder den vloek der bozen' ('Nog iets' 1896, 39–40).

[60] 'En wat zij als schrijfster was, ook dàt weet George Sand ons te zeggen met dezelfde scherpzinnigheid van haar vrouwelijk genie. Dat haar, beter dan eenig ander, de geheime springveeren van dit hart en deze intelligentie eener vrouw te raden' ('Nog iets' 1896, 39).

to the specificities of the memory work that was being done around her casts further light on McFadden's observations. Stowe's 'structuring power' did not simply emanate from her accomplishments, but was reiteratively constituted by women transnationally, who sought to transmit different interpretations of her legacy and different ways of relating to her as a role model.

CLASS STRUGGLE COMMONPLACE

Despite these differing interpretations, the memory of Harriet Beecher Stowe was not infinitely malleable. At heart, it affirmed the importance of civic debate between equals. To socialists, this was a dangerously bourgeois precept. It is little wonder, then, that in the German socialist feminist periodical *Die Gleichheit*, memory of Stowe was conspicuously absent. Though the editors regularly included biographical articles on prominent women of history, Stowe was never featured. Neither was the usual liberal pantheon of bourgeois feminist-abolitionists, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Susan B. Anthony. Openly hostile to bourgeois associations, *Die Gleichheit* instead introduced its readers to a different set of American characters: radical Knights of Labor union organiser Mary Jones, labour activist Annie Clemenc, and feminist-abolitionist founding figure Lucy Stone (Sachse 2010, 655). *Die Gleichheit*'s editor, leading socialist feminist Clara Zetkin, researched and promoted Stone, who had a lesser public profile among European audiences. *Die Gleichheit* featured Stone twice: once in 1894 and again in 1916, when it published an eight-part article in the supplement 'Für unsere Mütter und Hausfrauen' ('Lucy' 1894; 1916).

This alternative cast of characters fit a different, social-revolutionary conception of the Woman Question, which designated the question part of a global class war. The class struggle commonplace encompassed perspectives that portrayed the plight of the enslaved and that of women as outflows of the same mechanisms of a system of oppression (generally understood as having developed under capitalism). In this context, readers were regularly reminded that abolition had not been the peaceful moral victory which broader society celebrated it as. Moreover, antislavery was presented as just one example of ongoing insurrection against a violent, oppressive upper class. This mode of recall was particularly associated with the late nineteenth-century socialist periodicals *Die Gleichheit* and *De Vrouw*, but occasionally made its way onto the pages of differently positioned journals as well.

An early article in *Evolutie* defended the journal's aims by reference to antislavery, offering this conceptualisation of a shared struggle against a class-based enemy:

> It is calamitous: might is valued over right; what is low in law and custom, can supposedly not be insulted, hurt, or treated unjustly. Why should those who disagree use any other means to protest this than the customary one, the press? And why should the emancipation of women be any less worthy of a journal than, in its time, the emancipation of the Negro slave?[61] ('Gemaakte Opmerkingen' 1893, 1)

This memory of the importance of the press as a means of protest for the antislavery movement places both abolitionism and women's rights reform in a broader struggle for emancipation. The emphasis here is on the press as a means of *protest* against injustice, rather than on sentimental appeal. Abolitionism is framed as a protest movement by engaged citizens, not a philanthropic initiative.

Die Gleichheit's coverage of Lucy Stone displayed a similar anti-bourgeois characterisation of the antislavery struggle and its heroines. Far from celebrating culturally feminine traits like sympathy, religiosity, or humility, Zetkin depicted Stone as the socialist ideal of the independent, tireless, working-class woman. Zetkin's account emphasised stereotypically unfeminine behaviours, such as Stone's uncommon courage,[62] and her progressive marriage arrangements with Henry Blackwell ('Lucy' 1894, 55–56). Stone was made an exemplar of socialist-feminist call for the reorganisation of family life (Honeycutt 1976, 134). Zetkin glossed over the fact that Stone, the first woman from Massachusetts to earn a degree, had in reality been part of the network of US middle-class reformers. Instead, she emphasised Stone's lack of funds, describing how Stone had raised her own tuition fees and had chosen a life of poverty to devote herself to her calling ('Lucy', 1894, 55).

Zetkin spelled out the connections between the oppression of the enslaved, women, and the proletariat when she professed her regret that, because of her historical context, Stone never became conscious of the fundamental class war connecting these struggles (*nie zum Bewusstsein*

[61] 'Een bevestiging van het rampzalige: Macht gaat boven recht, van het: Wat laag staat in wetten en zeden, kan niet beleedigd, kan niet gegriefd, kan niet onrechtvaardig behandeld worden. Hoe nu, voor hen die het daar niet mede eens zijn, een ander middel om te protesteeren aan te grijpen, dan het gewone: de pers? En waarom ook zou de emancipatie van de vrouw minder een blad waardig zijn, dan in der tijd de emancipatie van de negerslaaf?' ('Gemaakte Opmerkingen' 1893, 1).

[62] '[Where] other orators fled, cold-blooded Lucy Stone alone stood firm' ('Lucy' 1894, 55).

gekommen) ('Lucy' 1894, 56). Zetkin was confident that had she lived in a later age

> she would have become one of the most excellent and active champions of the rights of the proletariat. Because her heart beat with hot sympathy for all the oppressed and suffering, her spirit grasped with glowing enthusiasm the idea that 'all men are born equal from the same noble stock', and she never tired in her fight for her ideals. ('Lucy' 1894, 56)[63]

As this passage indicates, much of this conceptualisation was created by pouring the history of slavery into the customary Marxist language of proletariat, struggle, classes, and masses. *De Vrouw* and *Die Gleichheit* sought to promote key socialist analyses of the Woman Question, including Friedrich Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigenthums und des Staats* (1884) and, particularly, August Bebel's *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1879). Bebel's book posited that the only solution to both the Woman Question and the class struggle was a wholesale socialist reorganisation of family and society. More controversially, and to more furore, it also promoted the thesis that prior to what it considered women's enslavement under capitalism, there had been a matriarchate. The editors of *De Vrouw* included these ideas in their statement of principles ('Beginselverklaring' 1893, 1): 'Since that great event, in prehistoric times, the replacement of matriarchy by patriarchy, woman has been the slave of man.'[64]

Conceptualising both the Woman Question and slavery in terms of class warfare changed what tactical lessons for the women's rights movement were drawn from memories of antislavery. The idea left its marks on the representation of the history of antislavery particularly in socialist and radical journals. Writers discounted the possibility of cross-class collaborations, emphasising instead the need for insurrection and for a revolutionary vanguard. One writer claimed in *La Citoyenne*, for example, that 'it wasn't the planters who abolished the slavery of the blacks, nor the sons of the boyars who abolished the agrarian serfdom in Russia. I do not know of a single example of a sovereign class who have made laws in

[63] '[S]ie wäre eine der hervorragendsten und thätigsten Vorkämpferinnen geworden für die Rechte des Proletariats. Denn ihr Herz schlug in heißem Mitgefühl für alle Unterdrückten und Leidenden, ihr Geist erfasste mit glühender Begeisterung die Idee "dass alle Menschen gleichgeboren ein adliges Geschlecht sind", und ihre Energie konnte sich nicht genug thun im Kampf für ihre Ideale' ('Lucy' 1894, 56).

[64] 'Seedert de groote gebeurtenis, die in vóórhistorische tijden plaats greep, namelijk de vervanging van het moederrecht door het vaderrecht, is de vrouw de slavin van de man' ('Beginselverklaring' 1893, 1).

the interest of the subjugated class' ('Le pouvoir' 1887, 1).[65] A contribution to *Evolutie* pondered revolutionary zeal, concluding: 'Can [women] themselves break their chains? I hope so, but I fear they cannot. It was not the slaves who liberated the slaves; *the masses don't revolutionize*, that is the work of the few' ('Rede', 1902, 46).[66] Both of these memories of anti-slavery suggested that abolition had required revolutionary action and that some form of revolution was indispensable to abolish all iniquities.

This emphasis on social revolution worked against the liberal conception of abolition as a moral victory. The class struggle commonplace emphasised the ongoing violence involved in the struggle against slavery and the black struggle for civil rights. *Evolutie* invoked the continuing oppression of African Americans as a useful parallel for women's condition: 'If in America, powerful Negroes let their brothers be burned to death, without letting their fists rain down like sledgehammers on the murderers' heads, the cause of this is the principle they have been infused with, that they are outcasts' ('De meerderheid' 1911, 78).[67] This racialised characterisation of black men posits violent insurrection as a rational response to oppression. It also drew attention to the ongoing struggle of the black population in the US, running counter to liberal celebratory memories of peaceful white abolitionists on both counts.

In a most graphic instance of this trend, *De Vrouw* presented slavery in the present tense, juxtaposing it with other examples of violence made possible by the current social order:

> Man, the terrible beast that tears open the bellies of slaves and serfs to warm its feet in their steaming intestines; that burns witches and heretics while singing the *Te Deum*; which whips and uses up its Negro slaves; which offers up white women's and children's flesh to its own lusts; which sucks proletarians dry and tortures animals … my fellow men, have we not been animal long enough? Let us, in God's name, become human! ('De vivisectie' 1897, 115)[68]

[65] '*Les convenances de l'homme cesseront-elles jamais de déterminer la condition juridique et sociale de la femme, aussi longtemps que l'homme édictera seul des lois pour la femme?* C'est une question sur laquelle je ne veux pas me prononcer ici; mais ce ne sont pas les planteurs qui ont aboli l'esclavage des noirs ni les fils des boïards la servitude agraire en Russie. Je ne connais pas d'exemple d'une classe souveraine qui ait fait des lois dans l'intérêt de la classe assujettie' ('Le pouvoir' 1887, 1, original emphasis).

[66] Compare 'Afschaffing' 1909, 98.

[67] 'Als in Amerika de stoer-krachtige negers op klaarlichten dag een hunner broeders laten verbranden, zonder dat hun knuisten, mokerhamers gelijk, nederbonzen op de moordenaarskoppen, dan moet de oorzaak daarvan gezocht worden in het hen geïnfuseerde principe: te zijn verworpelingen' ('De meerderheid' 1911, 78).

[68] 'De mensch, het ontzettende beest dat slaven en lijfeigenen den buik openrijt om zich de voeten te warmen in het lillend ingewand; dat heksen en ketters verbrandt en daarbij het

The writer connects different forms of oppression as part of the same dehumanising system, while his vivid emphasis on cruelty and violence undermined the master narrative of progress encapsulated by the woman–abolitionist commonplace. Like the article in *Evolutie*, this article presents slavery as an ongoing crime, one that will rage on until the day that the social revolution to combat the underlying evil will finally come to pass.

Tactical considerations of whether women's condition could be improved by gradual measures or whether it required some form of revolutionary action proved a bone of contention between different factions. The fact that this debate also questioned the limits of the conventional repertoire of women's political activity added another dimension to the disagreement. Looking to the past was the only way in which to settle this debate and the vehemence with which the discussion was held in women's rights journals attests to the stakes writers thought involved.

One significant site of controversy regarding the history of antislavery was whether the effusive displays of emotions associated with bourgeois antislavery were genuine or a form of self-interested deflection. There was something significant at stake in seemingly banal accusations of hypocrisy: could liberal reformers' emphasis on the political importance of sensibility to moral progress be trusted? In *La Citoyenne*, one writer wondered why 'those Frenchmen, who gladly denounce slavery, cannot allow that we want to break the chains of the white slave' ('Le pouvoir' 1887, 1), while *Evolutie* chided countries for 'their proud convictions of their commitments to freedom and their abolitionism as regards peoples, black, brown, or yellow' while under current marriage legislation 'slavery is still seated on its glorious throne, only the only merchandise allowed now is woman' ('De stroomingen' 1894, 290).[69] In his introduction to the anti-prostitution novel *Clarissa* (1892), Henne am Rhyn wondered why those same people who 'wrote sentimental novels and dramas about

Te Deum zingt; dat broeders tegen broeders leidt te slacht; dat negerslaven verkwanselt en geselt; dat blank vrouwen- en kindervleesch offert aan zijn lusten; dat proletariers uitzuigt en dieren martelt.... Medeleeken, zijn wij nog niet lang genoeg beest geweest? Laat ons, in Godsnaam, eindelijk een Mensch worden!' ('De vivisectie' 1897, 115).

[69] 'Van deze landen te constateeren dat, trots als dezelfder prat-zijn op hun vrijheid, al hun abolitionisme waar het geldt volken, zwart, bruin, of geel, de slavernij er nog zetelt in alle hoogheid en glorie, edoch onder dit beding, dat de gekochte slechts mag zijn de vrouw, de verkoop plaats moet hebben door haar-zelve [...]' ('De stroomingen' 1894, 290).

the slavery of the negroes' could not muster the same concern for young prostitutes, 'the European, white maidens who were the images of Venus' (1892, n.p., ch. 2).[70]

La Citoyenne was the most vehement in its denunciations of hypocrisy. It frequently criticised celebrations and commemorations of Republican history, which it portrayed as premature so long as woman was not emancipated.[71] Both after the 1881 banquet commemorating abolition, and the 1890 Paris antislavery congress, it printed criticisms of the events and their speeches ('La semaine' 1881; 'Contre', 1890).[72] Auclert reprinted parts of Schoelcher's speech, to which she added her own ironic commentary, pointing out what she found to be hollow phrases in his speech. She highlighted inconsistencies and interrogated 'why the Republic stop[ped] halfway, and [still] made distinctions according to dress or length of the hair, as we used to do regarding the colour of the epidermis' ('La semaine' 1881, 1).[73] In some ways, *La Citoyenne*'s critiques of the French Republican memory of antislavery resembled the work of Anne Knight and Jeanne Deroin. Where Knight and Deroin offered an alternative memory of antislavery as the basis for transnational community, *Citoyenne*'s pieces punctured the master narrative of progress altogether and supplanted a social-revolutionary view of political change.

Demonstrating the selectivity and limits of the liberal conception of social change could serve to buttress a range of demands, from protective legislation to the importance of women in representative politics. Accusations of hypocrisy undermined the idea that sensibility and empathy were effective political forces and questioned whether reading and writing in themselves could in fact transform society. An elaborate example of this subtextual redrawing of the boundaries of political

[70] 'Man hat sentimentale Romane und Dramen über die Sklaverei der Neger geschrieben; hat man kein Herz und keine Thränen für europäische, weiße Mädchen, für Abbilder der Aphrodite, die mit Vorwissen der zu ihrem Schutze aufgestellten Polizei in den Rachen der mit wohlgefüllten Beuteln versehenen Wüstlinge geworfen werden?' (Henne am Rhyn 1892, n.p., ch. 2).

[71] For instance: 'La Bastille' 1881; 'La manifestation' 1881; 'La fête' 1882; 'Les faux' 1884.

[72] *Le Droit des femmes* had also used the occasion of a commemorative banquet to remind its readers that 'the work of liberation is not yet complete'. The editors in this case referred to ongoing difficulties of African Americans and concluded that 'justice', through universal enfranchisement, could be the 'only solution' ('Causeries', 1879, 82).

[73] 'Nous demandons alors pourquoi la République s'arrête à moitié chemin, et fait des distinctions d'après l'habit ou la longueur des cheveux, comme on en faisait autrefois d'après la couleur de l'épiderme' ('La semaine' 1881, 1).

action occurs in this passage from Fanny Lewald's *Für und wider die Frauen*, in which she writes:

> It is considered horrible that a planter can say to a Negro, who has a wonderful aptitude for mechanics, or an unusually sharp eye for the recognition of diseases, or a great dexterity for commerce: You shall plant sugar, you shall farm cotton, you shall polish the silver in my house, you shall fix my clothes, you shall drive me around in my carriage! The public cried over Uncle Tom in his hut and said to their daughters, who might be a medical genius or a great commercial talent: you shall darn socks; you shall learn to run the household; you shall receive just enough education to be able to see what you could aspire to and achieve if people let you develop your skills, but you shall not be allowed to develop – for you are a woman. ('Zweiter' 1870, 13–14)[74]

Lewald intimates that men are oblivious to the fact that they are behaving just as plantation owners had, even though they 'cried' over Stowe's novel. Her analysis made the drastic suggestion that families needed to critically revaluate and redesign their own relational dynamics to achieve genuine social change. Lewald's passage also demonstrates how skewed representations of the institution of slavery could ensue from this revaluation of the history of slavery and abolition.

The memory work discussed so far produced productive tension and frictions. Rather than foreclosing recall, these disagreements acted as a catalyst for further remembrance. Disputes over the association of women with slaves made it to the pages of major journals such as the *Revue des deux mondes*; Stowe's position as a role model for action was sought on all sides; and references to the powerful emotions depictions of slavery produced could call up alternative visions of slavery itself. But not all instances were generative. Two major commonplaces that came to dominate public discussions in the later decades of the nineteenth century worked against the inclusion of memories of antislavery in the feminist usable past. These are those references to antislavery history that

[74] 'Man fand es furchtbar, dass ein Pflanzer einem Neger, der etwa mit schönen Anlagen für die Mechanik, mit einem ungewöhnlichen Scharfblick für die Erkenntnis von Krankheiten, mit einer großen Gewandtheit für kaufmännische Verhandlungen geboren war, sagen konnte: Du baust Zucker, Du baust Baumwolle, Du putzest in meinem Hause das Silberzeug, Du machst meine Kleider, Du fährst mich im Wagen! Man weinte über Onkel Tom in seiner Hütte, und sagte einer Tochter, die vielleicht ein medizinisches Genie oder ein großes kaufmännisches Talent war: Du strickst Strümpfe; Du lernst den Haushalt führen; Du bekommst Unterricht, der so weit langt, dass Du einsehen kannst, was für Dich wünschenswert und zu erreichen wäre, wenn man es Dir möglich machte, Deine Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln, aber entwickeln darfst Du sie nicht – denn Du bist ein Weib' ('Zweiter' 1870, 13–14).

emphasised a sense of racial difference and antagonism and discussions of the white slave trade. Both trends sparked arguments that undermined the affiliation of women with the history of antislavery, its heroes, and its victims. They encouraged, and at times prescribed, a collective amnesia regarding the affiliative ties to antislavery which other women's rights advocates had worked to cultivate.

RACIAL ANTAGONISM COMMONPLACE

During the late nineteenth century, the 'racial *Weltanschauung*' became a dominant cultural paradigm in all layers of society (MacMaster 2001, 7). Racial theories, including social Darwinist ideas about competition between races, fears of socially disruptive 'miscegenation', and pseudo-scientific racism became popular topics of public debate and were widely incorporated into fiction and entertainment (Nederveen Pieterse 1990; MacMaster 2001). These ideas also permeated feminist production, suffusing the discourse to the extent that even the *Almanach féministe*'s (1899, 9) praise of British philanthropist Lady Aberdeen, the long-standing president of the International Women's Council, could not but focus on how she united in her character 'the best qualities of the Celtic races'.[75] This is to say nothing of the development of elaborate theories on of racial hierarchy between women of different races, such as Käthe Schirmacher's writings exemplify in the next chapter. As Chapter 5 will discuss in more detail, heated American conflicts over black and female suffrage also contributed to the rise of a commonplace of racial antagonism.

This development was inextricably linked with the 'imperial imaginary' woven throughout late nineteenth-century Western feminist discourse (Eichner 2022, 11). Writers argued for the increase of women's civic liberties on the grounds of white women's 'civilising mission' in the colonies and included in their rhetoric designations of the non-West as primitive and developmentally backward (Mohanty 1984; Burton 1994; Holton 1998; Midgley 1998). They sometimes came to think of their own movement as an 'empire' of international woman suffrage (Bosch and Kloosterman 1990, 99). Writers often connected their imperial positioning with particular women's rights arguments, from the *Orgaan*'s intermittent reporting on the activities of the representative of the anti-prostitution movement in Curaçao (see 'Verslag' 1897) and the

[75] 'Lady Aberdeen 'unit dans sa nature les qualités des deux races celtiques, l'énergie, l'activité, la volonté la chaleur de cœur, et la bonne grâce' (*Almanach féministe* 1899, 9).

imperialist feminist ideals Hubertine Auclert espoused in *Les femmes arabes en Algérie* (1900; Eichner 2009; 2022, 6), to radical feminist Minna Cauer's assertions that women could not seek to exert their moralising influence in the colonies so long as European women were themselves condemned to live their lives as a 'lowly sexual being and slave' ('Falscher' 1899, 62).[76]

Ethnographic articles and travel reports served as the prime vehicles for this imaginary and for the racist and imperialist stereotypes connected with it.[77] In 1896, for example, *Die Frau* published one woman's account of her travels in Cuba, which criticised the supposed lethargy of colonial freed people, lamenting that there had been little progress since emancipation, as their 'indolence did not allow them to join in the struggle for existence', which meant that 'it would take centuries to bring [Cuba] to the cultural level on which it deserves to be' ('Von einer Westindienexkursion' 1896, 396).[78] *Evolutie* printed parts of a lecture on Suriname, paying particular attention to the descriptions of the local ethnic groupings ('Vergaderingen' 1894, 103). Characteristically subversive, the editors praised what they saw as progressive gender relations among different Surinamese populations. They claimed, for instance, that though the majority of the black population did not marry, couples were generally faithful and the 'morality of the despised Negro would compare favorably to that of the more elevated (?) [*sic*] population' (103).[79] The article mentioned that the lecture had been criticised as overly negative in its depiction of the colony by audience members with first-hand

[76] 'Als niedriges Geschlechtswesen und zur Sklavin durch ein hartes Zwangverhältnis im Dienst verurteilt, werden die Frauen niemals eine kulturelle Aufgabe erfüllen können' ('Falscher' 1899, 62). The literature investigating European imperial feminism is extensive, if dispersed. See, for instance, Grever and Waaldijk 1998, ch. 5; Bosch 1999; Coté 2000; Wildenthal 2001; Ernot 2011.

[77] For reflection on late nineteenth-century connections between the rise of women's travel and exploration, colonialism, and feminist claims, Bosch 1999; Godsoe 2009.

[78] 'Die Zeit der Sklaverei ist vorbei für die Schwarzen, wenige unter ihnen vermögen sich aber emporzuringen. […] Noch heute kann der westindischen Nigger dasselbe sagen in Bezug auf den Weißen – seine Indolenz lässt ihn nicht mit eintreten in den Kampf ums Dasein, in die Jagd nach Erwerb. […] und doch ist dies unerschöpflich reiche Westindien noch nicht völlig heruntergebracht. Aber Jahrhunderte werden dazu gehören, es auf die Kulturstufe zu führen, die es verdiente' ('Von einer Westindienexkursion' 1896, 396).

[79] 'Ook bij de negerbevolking heeft het huwelijk voor den ambtenaar geen groote waarde; zelfs huivert een neger terug voor een bindende gelofte; des ondanks is huwelijkstrouw buiten den ambtenaar meer regel dan zeldzaamheid en indien de statistische gegevens duidelijk konden spreken zou de zedelijkheid van den verachten neger geen slecht figuur maken tegenover de moraliteit van den hooger (?) staande bevolking' ('Vergaderingen' 1894, 103).

experience in Suriname. Nevertheless, the editors reprinted in detail the precepts of ethnic difference relayed in the talk.

The regular 'Questions et réponses' section of *La Fronde* in 1901 shows how blatant racist discussions, which would have embarrassed women's rights organisers at the height of cultural antislavery in the 1850s, became acceptable in late nineteenth-century circles.[80] Responding to well-known female author Daniel Lesueur's assertion that there was no such thing as black genius, one reader, invoking the woman–slave commonplace, asked:

> Are these not the same kind of arguments that were continually made against feminism? The absence of genius women, the long-established servitude of women, these are great motifs that are endlessly invoked to leave all privilege to men. How does feminism turn to its advantage the parallels between women's situation across the ages, their thousand-years old subjugation, and the situation of the so-called inferior races? ('Réponses' Nov. 1901, 2)[81]

La Fronde printed several responses to this letter, among which was one by Lesueur herself: 'I imagine that, intellectually, a George Sand is placed a thousand degrees above a Booker T. Washington who, until now, appears as the paragon of the Negro race' ('Réponses', Nov. 1901, 2).[82] An anonymous 'Sceptiques' rejoined that women's physical weakness explained the fact that they had in the past not been able to develop themselves intellectually and escape their subjection, while '[t]he swarthy gentlemen cannot benefit from these attenuating circumstances, since they enjoyed freedom [once] and could command physical force' (2).[83] One Haitian naval officer's article offered significant counterweight to these assessments in the same issue, by explaining in detail African American involvement in the historical development of the 'movement in favour of the Negro race' (3). This article, however, was

[80] 'Réponses', 17 Nov. 1901; 'Les races', 3 Nov. 1901; 'Le Négrophilisme', 17 Nov. 1901; 'Réponses', 1 Sep. 1901.

[81] 'Ne sont-ce pas là les mêmes raisons qu'on oppose sans cesse au féminisme? L'absence de femmes de haut génie, la servitude féminine acceptée depuis si longtemps, sont les grands motifs sans cesse invoqués pour laisser à l'homme tous les privilèges. Comment le féminisme se tire-t-il à son avantage du parallèle de la situation des femmes à travers les âges, de leur assujettissement mille fois séculaire, et de la situation des races dites inférieures?' ('Réponses', Nov. 1901, 2).

[82] 'J'imagine qu'une George Sand se place intellectuellement à mille degrés au-dessus d'un Booker Washington qui, jusqu'à présent, apparaît comme le parangon [*sic*] de la race nègre' ('Réponses', Nov. 1901, 2).

[83] 'Messieurs les moricauds ne peuvent bénéficier de ces circonstances atténuantes, puisqu'ils ont joui de la liberté et possédé de la force' ('Réponses', Nov. 1901, 2).

printed under the denigrating title 'Le Négrophilisme en Amérique' – a title and word that the author did not use himself, but was assigned by the editors, undermining any sense of the parallel between this struggle and the movement for women's rights that the original correspondent had raised.[84]

Popular pseudo-scientific publications fed racialist thinking among women's rights advocates and produced ambivalence about the place of antislavery in their usable past. Reconstruction writing, characterised by its quest to promote post-war reconciliation with its Southern gentlemen, Lost Cause mythology, minstrelsy, and romanticised patriarchal plantations, contributed to this ambivalence as well (Blight 2001; Tetrault 2014). In 1905, for instance, the *Orgaan* referred to a Southern memoir, Belle Kearny's *The Slaveholder's Daughter* (1900), which the editors recommended. The reference served the didactic point that women should not emulate emancipated slaves, who did not know what to do with their freedom when they received it, as they supposedly had not been involved in the battle for it ('Openingswoord' 1905, 5). Other new American narratives, discussed in more depth in the next chapter, were also uncritically repeated in Europe. When *Le droit des femmes* published an eyewitness report of the divisive campaign in which Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony lectured together with George Train in 1867, they reproduced Train's repeated prodding of the audience by asking whether they really wanted their 'wives, sisters, daughters' to have fewer political rights than blacks.[85]

Different memories of antislavery, then, were being marshalled to serve arguments that hinged on a hierarchical imperial imaginary, rather than on earlier visions of cosmopolitan solidarity. Ultimately, this undermined women's rights advocates' affiliation with antislavery history at the base. Discussing the appropriateness of the woman–slave analogy in

[84] It should be noted that *La Fronde* to an extent demonstrated wilful ignorance: other journals did show interest in African American mobilisation, such as the scholarly feminist *Revue de morale sociale* (1899–1903), which published Albert Schinz's article 'Le féminisme chez les nègres' in June 1900, in which he discussed the organisation, activism, and philanthropy of African American women's organisations.

[85] On this occasion, Louis Simonin noted, Train's rhetoric seemed to have little success. 'Comme il est d'usage aux Etats-Unis, M. Train a interpellé l'assemblée: "Voulez-vous que vos femmes, vos filles, vos soeurs, politiquement, aient moins de droits que les nègres?" Et un grognement significatif, indiquant que l'assemblée, d'ailleurs presque entièrement composee d'hommes, ne se souciait point d'accorder aux femmes le droit de suffrage, M. Train a recommencé deux fois l'épreuve, même insuccès.' Bath [Richer] 1869, 2–3.

Ons Streven, one contributor not only questioned the comparison, but also the extent to which chattel slavery had been an aberration of justice itself:

> We are not dealing with [...] an injustice suffered by persons whose misery is only matched by their lack of development, vitality, energy. No, people speak the slavery of woman under common law [...] Don't blame me for not believing this slavery is so grave. ('Voor het huwelijk' 1870, 104)[86]

Shifting from a generally accepted interpretation of slavery as a historical injustice to its association with weakness and inferiority caused a rift in the conventional feminist imagination of a common cause between women and the enslaved. One commentator in *Vrouwenarbeid* saw no issue with demoting antislavery from a cause kindred to women's emancipation to one on a level with campaigns for animal welfare:

> And if you should think the speaker's appeal to pity for the suffering animal mere sentimentalism, 'sentimental' was the moniker of those first few, who called for the abolition of the racks, the end of corporal punishment, the banishment of slavery from our midst. [...] [One should pity] those creatures, whose only crime is, that they are as powerless to resist us, as slaves used to be to resist their owners. ('Bespreking' 1898, 63)[87]

The memory of antislavery was invoked in the service of increasingly popular racist arguments. No longer in this more racialised Europe could it be seen as the *locus classicus* of nineteenth-century progress towards universal emancipation. In this new context, it was of little use to feminist propaganda, as it could all too easily be used to support arguments of the natural inferiority of women. This change was cemented by a generational shift. Former stalwarts such as Jeanne Deroin, who had emphasised grander emancipationist worldviews encompassing race, class, and gender, were phased out, while the commonplace of racial antagonism flourished among newer generations of women's advocates.

[86] 'Doch waarmede hebben wij hier van doen? [...] Toch niet met een onrecht geleden door personen wier ellende alleen geëvenaard wordt door hun gebrek aan ontwikkeling, aan levenskracht, aan energie. Neen, wie spreekt van de slavernij der vrouw onder den burgelijke wet [...] Men duide het mij niet ten kwade, maar bij zulke omstandigheden kan ik niet gelooven dat de slavernij zoo groot is [...]' ('Voor het huwelijk' 1870, 104).

[87] 'En moge het beroep der spreekster op medegevoel voor het lijdende dier sentimenteel schijnen, sentimenteel werden ook de eersten genoemd, die om afschaffing der pijnbank riepen, die de lijfstraffen wilden helpen afschaffen, die de slavernij uit ons midden wilden bannen. [...] wezens wier eenige kwaad is, dat zij machteloos staan tegenover ons als vroeger de slaven tegen de bezitters' ('Bespreking' 1898, 63).

WHITE SLAVE TRADE COMMONPLACE

In July 1885, pioneering investigative journalist and editor W. T. Stead published a sensational article series in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, titled the 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon'. In it, he described the world of child prostitution in London and even detailed how, with the help of Josephine Butler, he made his own 'purchase' of a young girl. The articles, thought up as an 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' for prostitution (Walkowitz 1992, 96), were an instant success and had a spectacular transnational effect, acquainting wide audiences with the spectre of the sex trade. The Dutch newspaper archive Delpher alone reveals a spike of 200 hits for 'blanke slavinnen' in 1885, which can be directly attributed to Stead's publication.

With his article series, Stead instigated the development of a new, sensationalist tabloid journalism which was simultaneously moralist and entertainment focused (Soderlund 2013). Moreover, it created a popular hunger for plots about the 'white slave trade' (Sabelus 2009; Knepper 2010; Soderlund 2013). A wave of investigative journalism, urban explorer novels, and 'exposés' on the theme followed, including Stead's *If Christ Came to Chicago* (1894), William Booth's *In Darkest England* (1890), Dr Lutaud's *La prostitution et la traite à Paris* (1886), and Otto Henne Am Rheyn's *Prostitution und Mädchenhandel: Neue Enthüllungen aus dem Sklavenleben weisser Frauen und Mädchen* (1903; see also Grittner 1990; De Vries 1997; Corbin 2011).[88] In the Dutch case alone, four translations of Stead's articles appeared in 1885, as well as an account of 'white slaves' in the Netherlands, *Blanke Slavinnen in Nederland*, which would go through fifteen editions ('Blanke' 2018). The formulaic plots and prints of 'white slavery' circulated well beyond the news-reading public and reached even wider masses in their visual dimension, in illustrated works, on the stage, and in the cinema. Esther Sabelus counts at least fifty films with the white slave trade as its theme in Europe before 1914 (Sabelus 2009, 194). The 'white slave trade' also percolated upwards, becoming an accepted euphemism in policy papers and sociological studies of prostitution (Collard 1900; Billington-Greig 1913; De Vries 2005; Attwood 2021). As Micki McElya points out, 'iconography of the white slavery panic was spectacular, pervasive, and often the key selling point' of a diversity of texts on the subject (2017, 82; Figure 4.2).

Popular depictions of white slavery had little direct connection with memories of antislavery. The discourse was rather grafted onto a

[88] As an indicator of the reach of white slavery discourse, Stauter-Halstedt 2015, esp. 124ff.

FIGURE 4.2 Poster announcing *Le Journal*'s serialisation of popular crime novelist Dubut de Laforest's *La traite des blanches* (1900). By Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, 1899. Art Institute of Chicago.

long-standing cultural fascination with sexual slavery and harems in the Islamic world (Rupp 1997, 75–76; Armstrong 2020, 217ff.). Stories borrowed from this older vogue in their motifs and patterns of racialisation. Even though victims of trafficking came from all over the world, the discourse of white slavery was highly racialised, with whiteness serving to heighten the perceived innocence of the victims and severity of the crime and procurers generally portrayed as ethnic Others. But in the cauldron of reform discourse, the two mnemonic traditions did mingle. Crusaders for the end of state-sponsored vice, most influentially Josephine Butler, who had close ties to both campaigns, had already been drawing elaborate parallels between 'their' abolition movement and the end of slavery in the 1870s (e.g., Stuart and Butler 1876, 3–4, 12, 38; Butler 1909).[89]

[89] Stauter-Halstedt traces back the coinage of the phrase *white slavery* to correspondence between Victor Hugo and Josephine Butler (2015, 119).

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The entanglement of white slavery and antislavery was also on display in the audience response to one of the most iconic depictions of sexual slavery, Hiram Powers' statue *The Greek Slave*. Copies of this best-known sculpture of the century and first popular American nude toured Great Britain and the US in the late 1840s and early 1850s and moved throngs of general viewers and reformers alike. For influential commentators, especially feminists and abolitionists, the figure inevitably evoked thoughts of plantation slavery (Stevenson 2020, 23ff.).

The effect of this international interest in the white slave trade was a close association of the image of enslaved woman with the social problem of prostitution, eclipsing other parallels that women's rights advocates had been cultivating for decades. Already in 1885, when a Dutch socialist magazine placed an article referring to the 'white slavery' of housemaids, they were criticised for 'not just word-thieving [*sic*], but for wrongfully applying another's words [...] the writer of "White Slaves" would have never applied this terminology to our servants' ('Mijnheer' 1885, 3).[90] The editors doubled down in their response, retorting that maidservants were not only exploited for their labour, but in fact also frequently forced to prostitute themselves to their employers, which meant that 'such a life is in fact rather similar to that of the slaves of earlier days' (3).[91] Echoing dozens of questionable film and book titles, the conceptual combination of women and slavery came to be sexualised, a fate that had befallen the phrases 'emancipation' and 'free women' in the decades before. An evocative example of this sexualisation is French cartoonist Carlègle's bawdy design for satirical magazine *L'assiette au beurre* (1906). In his satire of the women's movement, he commented: 'Women too have become conscious; they no longer want to be slaves and they are tired of using the coarse means they have so far employed in the battle of the sexes; no more plump buttocks, no more pointed breasts, pink thighs and other reactionary arguments' (Carlègle 1906, n.p.).[92]

[90] 'Ten eerste de aanhef: "En ook gij dienstboden, blanke slavinnen", is niet alleen letterdieverij maar ook verkeerd toepassen van een anders woorden, want ik hou mij overtuigd dat de schrijver zich wel gewacht zou hebben die benaming toe te passen op onze dienstboden' ('Mijnheer' 1885, 3).

[91] '[W]ij meenen dat een dergelijk leven vrij wel met dat der slavinnen van vroeger tijden overeenstemt' ('Mijnheer' 1885, 3).

[92] 'Mais voilà! Les femmes aussi sont devenues conscientes; elles ne veulent plus être esclaves et sont lassées d'user, dans la lutte des sexes, des moyens grossiers employés jusqu'à ce jour. Plus de fesses rondouillardes, plus de nichons pointus, de cuisses roses et autres arguments de la réaction' (Carlègle 1906).

The circulation of accounts of the white slave trade and of white slavery phraseology to refer to prostitution also became common within women's rights publications. At the same time, increasing numbers of young feminists turned away from the woman–slave analogy. Where *La Citoyenne* had discussed the woman–slave analogy time and again, the French feminist daily *La Fronde* contained less than fifteen references to it in the hundreds of issues that appeared between 1898 and 1903.[93] Similarly, the journal *Ploeger* (*Ploughman*) of a new Dutch suffrage organisation, the Union for Female Suffrage, did not once use the woman–slave analogy, which it considered a marker of the 'narrow-mindedness' of their predecessors in *Evolutie* (*bekrompen feministischen geest*) (Knuppel 1907, 48), except to refer to the 'white slaves' in the sex trade.[94]

The commonplaces of the white slave trade and of racial antagonism that found their way into women's rights discourse in the final decades of the nineteenth-century amplified each other. Stories of white slavery hinged on intense patterns of racialisation and in turn stoked fears about migration and sexual morality. Both emphasised irreducible differences between different population groups and associated the word 'slave' with inferiority and sex. The commonplaces of woman as slave, woman as abolitionist, and of class warfare each produced significant discussion, with writers revisiting the history of antislavery to draw out different elements. Though they still employed memories of antislavery, the stories that were circulated in these late nineteenth-century contexts doused further discussion of the legacy of the movement. With abolition no longer the paragon of nineteenth-century progress it had been in Europe in the 1860s, both trends contributed to the story of abolition falling out of favour as a main pillar of the feminist usable past in the early twentieth century.

[93] For its digitised collection, Gallica reveals 14 hits for key phrases 'l'esclavage des femmes', 'l'esclavage de la femme', and 'la femme esclave', compared to 153 for 'traite des blanches'. This Gallica corpus is not complete, but does contain near complete runs for five years, which give a reliable impression of the relative use of these terms.

[94] A keyword search in the Atria Institute's digital corpus of *De Ploeger* revealed just one hit for women's 'slavernij', in a cited book title. The 'white slave trade' ('blanke slavinnen') is mentioned three times. The new suffrage organisation, De Nederlandsche Bond voor Vrouwenkiesrecht, which produced the *Ploeger*, had been the result of a hostile intergenerational split within the old Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht (VVK). A faction of younger feminists found the 'ultra-feminism' of VVK too radical and one of their targets of ridicule was the woman–slave analogy (see also 'Vrouwenstrijdzang' 1912; Handleiding 1911, 23). Compare a similar generational divide in the UK in Stanley Holton 2000, 19.

NOTE ON ERASURE

Despite their contradictions, these different commonplaces of women's rights argument overlapped in important ways and the partial recall of individual articles had significant collective effects. Certain narratives were emphasised and given more cultural prominence, while others were forgotten. Instances of structural forgetting are perhaps even more important to attend to than what was relayed, in order to grasp the effects of memories of antislavery on the women's rights discourse. Memories of antislavery were not just passively imbibed by women's rights advocates but recirculated and shaped to serve different ideological arguments.

Overwhelmingly, it was white women who were remembered, which hid from view the agency of black organisers. There was little interest in exploring the specific experiences of black women.[95] Moreover, the canard that the enslaved did not actively fight their enslavement was a constant. Even *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the best-known but much maligned touchstone for depictions of plantation life, did in fact feature prominent characters who resisted their enslavement, such as George and Eliza Harris. In their ritualised repetition of certain narratives and motifs, these periodicals continued to insist on the double-edged representation of the enslaved developed throughout abolitionist discourse, which bought affective response at the expense of genuine fellow feeling or solidarity.

European memory work on antislavery relied heavily on Anglo-American antislavery materials, and particularly on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was taken as a common reference for the realities of slavery. There was hardly any reference to Dutch or French enslaving practices or their abolition, never mind German.[96] Though the cultural impact of Stowe's novel and the Civil War explain why American slavery should be at the forefront of readers' imaginations, through the repeated association of

[95] One exception to this rule was the *Frauenanwalt*, which offered several short reports of black women's educational and professional progress in the US.

[96] Exceptions are Auclert's discussion of the commemoration of French abolition ('La semaine' 1881) and a printed speech in *Orgaan*, which encouraged readers to think on abolition in the 'West Indies' as the 'most splendid pearl on the [king's] crown of philanthropy [*schoonste parel aan de kroon zijner philanthropie*]' and expressed the hope that 'we will soon be allowed to rejoice that in the free Netherlands people not only don't buy *black slaves*, but also, that they don't buy and entertain *white slaves*! [*en wij niet slechts juichen mogen: In het vrije Nederland koopt men geen* zwarte slaven, *maar ook, men koopt en onderhoudt daar geen* blanke slavinnen *meer!*]' ('Toespraak' 1889, 7).

slavery with the US, Continental feminist journals contributed to the collective forgetting of their own nations' involvement in slavery.

The debates clustered around each commonplace drew affective power from what Saidiyah Hartman has termed 'scenes of subjection' (1997). Hartman pinpointed the 'precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator' in abolitionist materials:

> Only more obscene than the brutality unleashed at the whipping post is the demand that this suffering be materialized and evidenced by the display of the tortured body or endless recitations of the ghastly and the terrible [...] It was often the case that benevolent correctives and declarations of slave humanity intensified the brutal exercise of power upon the captive body rather than ameliorating the chattel condition. (1997, 4, 5)

Stock cultural depictions of the excesses of slavery and of the experiences of the enslaved, particularly the litany of whippings, dog chases, and family separations, could be as effective at dehumanising and barring genuine feelings of solidarity as proslavery materials (see also Wood 2010).

References to whipping recur time and time again across the different pathways of recollection and other spectacular instances of cruelty were also restaged. *La Citoyenne*'s account of an antislavery congress opened with a description of the most horrific facts relayed and compared them with those 'so well described by Mrs. Beecher Stowe' ('La semaine' 1881, 1).[97] Lange's biography of Blackwell related the details of the cruelties perpetrated against the enslaved which she had witnessed during her time in the American South ('Die erste' 1896, 542). As mentioned, *Orgaan* argued for the similarities between the evils of prostitution and of slavery by asking 'who among us does not know at least a little about these affairs from Stowe's famous book, *Uncle Tom*?' ('In welken zin' 1902, 100).[98] Accounts of plantation life, without exception, centred on the

[97] The writer repeated some of the worst atrocities she had heard about at the event and referred readers to Stowe ('La semaine' 1881, 1).

[98] 'Wanneer wij het woord "slaven" hooren, dan gaan onze gedachten terug naar de vreeselijke verhalen die wij in onze jeugd daarover hoorden. Voor onze verbeelding zien wij een slavenmarkt, waar kleurlingen van beiderlei kunne en van allerlei leeftijd, dicht opeen gepakt, in angstige afwachting zijn van wat hun lot beslissen zal. [...] Op aller gelaat is spanning en angst te lezen, en daarbij zien wij het hardvochtig gezicht van den kooper en den drijver, die deze menschen behandelen alsof zij slechts eene kudde vee waren. [...] Zulk een markt is slechts het begin der ellende. Wij willen niet stilstaan bij de tafereelen van wegsleuren naar de boot, van het vaneen rijten van liefste familiebanden [...] Eenmaal op de plaats hunner bestemming aangekomen, begint de ellende pas recht, en wie onzer die niet eenigzins met deze toestanden bekend is door het zoo beroemde boek van Mrs. Beecher Stowe, De Negerhut? [...]' ('In welken zin' 1902, 100).

torture of the enslaved. One article in *Le Journal des femmes* opened with a slave escape, which it combined with a racist dismissal to explain the urgency of women's desire for civil liberties:

> Hunted down by dogs, hunted down by men more ferocious still, with bruised feet, with flesh torn by thorny bushes, without food, exhausted by fatigue, devoured by thirst, he had only one thought, only one desire: cross the border and finally touch the territory of the North, the sacred land of freedom. These are the perils that ignorant, underdeveloped, uncivilized beings daily faced in order to be free. ('Liberté' 1893, 1)[99]

These discussions of plantation life are the most vivid cultural memories of antislavery. They seek to involve the reader, to evoke an affective response of horror, indignation, or pity. In this way, they are the most concrete and intimate renderings, invoking the past not as an ideological reference point by which readers could orient themselves, but lingering for a moment, creating space for the reader to reflect on the gruesome details of slavery itself. They are also the most obvious in their artifice. The *Journal des Femmes* lingering on the fugitive does not, in the end, humanise him to imagine a common cause. Instead, the spectacle of his torture is imagined from popular literary materials and in turn rendered in vivid prose, mimicking the staccato rhythm of his flight to serve an unconnected European movement.

The memory work performed in these journals to construct a usable past for readers obscured more about the past than it revealed. Collectively, the memories of antislavery that circulated in the debates around the Woman Question forgot black agency and black humanity, as well as the involvement in slavery and the slave trade of European nations. Even if contributors were not informed of the complexities of the Civil War, the common reference, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, contained passages of slave resistance, as well as of the domestic life of the enslaved. It is important to note, then, that selective omissions and erasures of the past were not a passive or inevitable process but happened through (collective) active selection. These patterns of remembrance and forgetting in women's rights periodicals made them a vector for racial thought and division within the women's movement, as well as general society.

[99] 'Traqué par les chiens, traqué par des hommes plus féroces encore, les pieds meurtris, les chairs déchirées par les buissons épineux, sans nourriture, épuisé par la fatigue, dévoré par la soif, il n'avait qu'une pensée, un seul désir, passer la frontière et toucher enfin le territoire du Nord, la terre sacrée de la liberté. Voilà pour être libre les périls qu'affrontaient tous les jours des êtres ignorants, peu développés, peu civilisés' ('Liberté' 1893, 1).

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In the second half of the nineteenth century, the history of antislavery proved a rich resource for women's rights advocates of different ideological persuasions. Stowe versus Stone, benevolent altruists versus brothers in arms; distinct referential traditions were developed which centred on some figures rather than others and on different imagined relationships to the enslaved. Disagreement over the meaning of the past crystallised positions and introduced new elements into memory, as writers sought to bolster their case for a specific interpretation of history. The woman–abolitionist commonplace, for instance, suggested a different sense of transnational community than the woman–slave commonplace. Where the latter had fostered affiliation across gender, race, and class lines, even if severely blinkered by its selective recall, the participants in the woman–abolitionist commonplace imaginatively shaped and physically facilitated a more homogeneous community of white middle-class reformers. The preoccupation with women's achievements in philanthropy and social work emphasised the social significance of educated middle-class women, recalling antislavery in ways that fit this understanding. Moreover, in publishing about particular feminist abolitionists and not others, writers directed their readers to further readings that bolstered this sense of community. In her biographies, for example, Lange directed her readers to Charles Stowe's *Harriet Beecher Stowe: Letters and Diaries* (1890) and Stanton and Blackwell's memoirs, *Eighty Years and More* (1898) and *Pioneer Work in Opening the Medical Profession to Women* (1895), endorsing these books as part of the same shared horizon and encouraging her readers to further affiliate with this collective by continuing their reading.

Though there were local accents, the commonplaces around which memories of antislavery were mediated into the usable past of feminism transcended national boundaries, finding comparable expression in the different contexts. Political arguments were often framed in terms of the national good, but the debate was in fact thoroughly transnational, with women's rights advocates engaging with and busily translating major interpretations and argumentations, such as J. S. Mill's. These acts of information politics were facilitated by an extensive network of friendly (and rival) editors and contributors and a hunger for news from abroad. Structures of identification and affective involvement similarly patterned transnationally, turning networks into imagined communities with shared tactical considerations, framings of the Woman Question,

and outlooks on history. The memory of antislavery was a fundamental touchstone which enabled this identification, as the cultural impact of the antislavery campaign, and particularly the wide readership of Stowe and the coverage of American news, allowed a broad audience of women to orient towards the same usable past.

Strategic alliances and productive conflicts clustered around each commonplace. The woman–slave commonplace recalled a transnational history of women's shared experience of suffering and organisation and emphasised the importance of a transnational vanguard movement. The woman–abolitionist commonplace moved in concord with wider liberal patterns of recall, as it hosted discussions and debates about the unique feminine qualities which had prompted women's involvement in antislavery and the importance of sensibility to the movement for women's rights. The class struggle commonplace placed both the struggle against slavery and the movement for women's rights within a wider emancipatory frame and invoked particular, new memories of antislavery, including the political uselessness of readers' tears at depictions of plantation life.

Racism in women's rights periodicals, and the dominant narrative of the white slave trade which also found its way into the women's rights discourse, undermined the position of antislavery in the feminist usable past. What is more, erasures in the memory of antislavery were collectively fostered: across virtually all instances of recall, writers emphasised the agency of white women while showing no interest in exploring the histories of black women and they often luxuriated in the scenes of subjection that the cultural production of antislavery had brought into circulation. To an extent, women's rights periodicals followed the contours of the broader popular memory of this history. However, they were clearly also agents in this process. Writers left out well-known plots, such as that of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*'s George and Eliza, and recovered more obscure memories, such as that of Lucy Stone in *Die Gleichheit*. The unifying force of memories of antislavery, then, did not just come about because they were used to cultivate solidarity, but equally from their encouragement of hierarchical models and their fomenting of particular hostilities.

American narratives carried special weight. This was both because of the country's reputation as a 'mirage' of progress and freedom, and the most advanced in respect of the Woman Question, and because of concerted efforts of American advocates in the turn towards a self-identified 'feminist internationalism' (Durand Echeverria quoted in Offen 2017, 235; see also Rupp 1997). The American correspondent who composed

the letter in *Neue Bahnen* which opened this chapter, presented American events in emotive terms that counted on readers' investment – and, indeed, some European commentators found as much significance in the memories of antislavery that were being recalled as American women did. The next chapter examines emotive, tactical, and historical factors that played into this veneration of the American example, as it witnesses how, with a supranational campaign for suffrage ramping up, writers used the authority of history writing to distil the wealth of memories of antislavery into a singular, powerful origin myth.