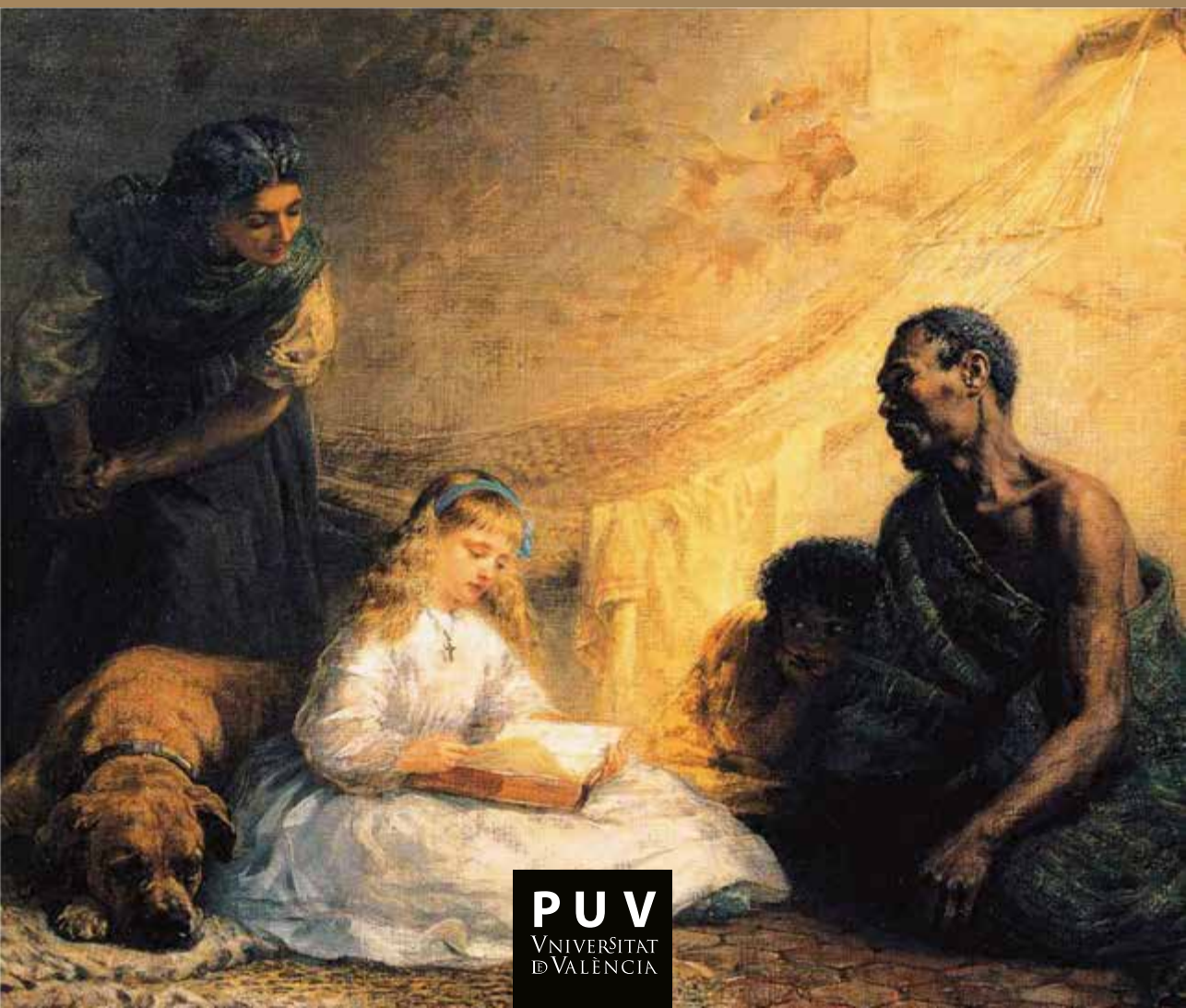
CARME MANUEL, ED.

THE SLAVE'S LITTLE FRIENDS

AMERICAN ANTISLAVERY WRITINGS FOR CHILDREN



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BIBLIOTECA JAVIER COY D'ESTUDIS NORD-AMERICANS

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The Slave's Little Friends: American Antislavery Writings for Children

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INTRODUCTION

The Children's Crusade: American Children's Literature of Atrocity

> But the day will come when the rod of the oppressor will be broken, and the slaves will go free. God has said it. Let us pray for that day, and work for it, and it will come.
>
> *The Slave's Friend*

Our contemporary world is the scenario of constant violations of human rights. Among their many manifestations, slavery remains a widespread social and political scourge, even though it is frequently transformed into barely visible, and consequently, more fluid types of human exploitation. "The current manifestations of slavery," Claude E. Welch affirms, "are far more subtle than those of captured, racially-differentiated slaves imported into a society to fill specific labor needs, the form most familiar to Westerners. Slavery in the twenty-first century is deeply rooted in many societies, promulgated by existing norms, in which selected groups in the general populace are particularly liable to slave-like practices" (72). Experts on the field—Kevin Bales, Joel Quirk, among others—agree that, in spite of the efforts of the numerous worldwide human rights organizations, there are more than twenty million enslaved individuals (men, women and children) throughout both the most and the least developed countries. In his *Unfinished Business: A Comparative Survey of Historical and Contemporary Slavery*, Quirk argues for the implementation of four overlapping strategies to fight contemporary forms of slavery and slave-like practices: "i) education, information and awareness, ii) further legal reform, iii) effective enforcement, and iv) release, rehabilitation and restitution" (114). At the core of modern antislavery activism, public education is "one of the most effective ways of improving general knowledge of slavery" (115). Yet, primary, secondary and even university educational curricula continue to ignore the study of slavery at international and national levels. Most children and young people lack a fundamental knowledge of how the economic and political system of human bondage shaped past first-world empires and colonization

ventures, and do not recognize the permanence of new forms of human exploitation in contemporary societies. If our educational institutions have not yet introduced the study of multifarious types of bondage as a mandatory requirement, how can twenty-first-century children be exposed to these economic, political and moral injustices? Do parents explain these abuses of human rights to their children? Do parents or tutors, across different ranges of political and ideological perspectives, introduce readings or encourage children to buy books showing how other children in remote parts of the world or in their own countries are exploited because of class, skin color, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability? Are twenty-first-century children aware of the existence of slavery in the modern world? Do parents and educators make any effort to alert them about the thriving trade of human beings in our globalized societies? Do they know about "disposable" people? Do children read about human trafficking, indentured servitude, and lifelong servitude in the world? Claude E. Wench reminds us that "the elimination of all forms of slavery may also require significant changes in social attitudes" (77). How can we then enhance our children's awareness, raise their political consciousness towards these forms of injustice that are perpetuated throughout time?

INDOCTRINATE THE CHILDREN,

AND WHEN THEY GROW TO BE MEN AND WOMEN THEIR PRINCIPLES WILL BE CORRECT!

WITH this great end in view, we are issuing a series of Elegant

ANTI-SLAVERY PICTURE BOOKS,

Four of which, with the following titles, are now ready:

PICTURES AND STORIES FROM UNCLE TOM'S CABIN;

THE EDINBURGH DOLL, and OTHER TALES;

GRANDMOTHER'S STORIES FOR LITTLE CHILDREN;

MINNIE MAY, AND OTHER RHYMES.

The Books are ELEGANTLY ILLUSTRATED, and are sold at retail for 12½ cents, and at ONE DOLLAR per dozen. Anti-Slavery parents will see the importance of circulating such books.

PUBLISHED BY

JOHN P. JEWETT & COMPANY,

No. 177 Washington St., Boston.

350–2m.

Taking into account contemporary parental and social attitudes, the advertisement that appeared in *Frederick Douglass' Paper* (published in Rochester, New York) on October 13, 1854, may come as a provocative surprise[1]: "INDOCTRINATE THE CHILDREN, AND WHEN THEY GROW TO BE MEN AND WOMEN THEIR PRINCIPLES WILL BE CORRECT." Thus read the notice paid by John P. Jewett, the Boston publisher who had reached success for publishing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in book form two years before, and who was then trying to expand his series catering for potential young readers with antislavery picture books in the hope that "anti-slavery parents will see the importance of circulating such books."

Jewett's potential young readers in 1854, however, were not the first to have the experience of enjoying antislavery stories bought by antislavery parents. American children had had the opportunity to consume antislavery literature specifically written for them since the early decades of the nineteenth century. The works included in this anthology are a small example of the many texts written and published for children in the antebellum period. Writing about the possibilities of children's literature in a post-holocaust world and borrowing Lawrence L. Langer's coinage in *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (1975), Elizabeth R. Baer asks if writers should create "literature of atrocity" for children (381) with themes that "illustrate the aesthetic problem of reconciling normalcy with horror" (381). American antislavery literature for children penned by male and female abolitionists and antislavery reformers attempted not to reconcile but to exhibit the flagrant contradictions between the American national republican ethos and the horror of the institution of slavery in an attempt to garner the little ones' political response. "If you make children abolitionists slavery must come to an end," announced a motto appearing in *The Slave's Friend* (3.2, 1838: 8), condensing the educational and political attitude sponsored by the authors featuring in its pages.

Margaret Bayard Smith, Isabel Drysdale, Lydia Maria Child, Hannah and Mary Townsend, Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, Jane Elizabeth Jones, Ann Preston, Jonathan Walker, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sarah C. Carter, Harriet Newell Greene Butts, Abel C. Thomas and many other female and male American antislavery writers in the antebellum era seem to have been deeply convinced of three things. First, they understood the child to be the supreme representative of the national republican ethos; second, they thoroughly believed in the evil of slavery; and third, they

[1] Frederick Douglass' *Paper*, 1854, 10-13, vol.7. iss.43. no. 335, p. 4.
http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15109coll7/id/589/rec/1

radically defended literature as the path to raise children's political awareness. As inheritors of the Enlightenment philosophical attitudes on childhood and educated in their infancy under the literary wings of well-known transatlantic luminaries of British children's writing—John Newbery, Sarah Fielding, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Thomas Day, Dorothy Kilner, Sarah Trimmer, Amelia Opie and Maria Edgeworth, among others, these American antislavery authors were conscious of the prominence of their efforts when contributing to the critique of the institution of slavery and the role that American children would consequently play in its demise. Yet, as Caroline F. Levander explains, these political texts call for a critical reading since the child constructed by their antislavery rhetoric "simultaneously works to eradicate slavery and to reinforce the enduring power of white supremacy to an audience anxious about the impact of emancipation on the nation and the racial order that has historically defined it" (2006: 50). Consequently, antislavery writings for children stand as highly controversial texts in their relation to historical truth. Even so, their praiseworthy attempts to engage their readers' ethical and political understanding must be recognized as exceptionally significant when unearthing the cultural constructions of American children as liberal citizens of a racially segregated republic.

THE ENGLISH ORIGINS OF ANTISLAVERY LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

The spectacular rise of children's literature in the eighteenth century catered for a new conception of the child. Following the Lockean dictums of instructing and entertaining at the same time, John Newbery was the first to capitalize on this transformation. At the end of the century, as J.R. Oldfield explains, "equally resourceful competitors had sprung up in the shape of John Marshall, Vernor and Hood, John Stockdale, and Darton and Harvey" (143). These publishers initiated the industry of children's literature in Great Britain and would set the pace for the transatlantic American world of juvenile works, which would readily expand throughout the nineteenth century.

English reformist movements were quick to grasp the relevance of children as a new potential audience as of the early eighteenth century. The Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was founded on May 22, 1787, by Granville Sharp, Joseph Woods, and Thomas Clarkson, among other Quakers, with the aim of

promoting campaigns against slavery. To that end they encouraged writers and artists to support the abolition of the slave trade and the condemnation of slavery in the English overseas territories.

As the movement gained momentum, explicit visual elements were produced to show support as part and parcel of the growing antislavery material culture. Two of the most celebrated images—widely reproduced in transatlantic antislavery and children's literature—were those appearing on Josiah Wedgwood's medallions (first made in 1787 for the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade) portraying kneeling male and female slaves, with their chained hands and a pleading expression—"Am I not a Man and a Brother?" / "Am I not a Woman and a Sister?"

These images appealed to the head and the heart, to the sense and the sensibility of late-eighteenth-century Britons to such an extent that they became the unquestionable emblem of the antislavery struggle. As Marcus Wood explains, antislavery writings were profligate in their employment of imagery and they showed the "irrational belief that pictures speak for themselves in a way that words do not" (2000: 6). Thus, paintings, broadside woodcuts and photographs, among many other visual materials accompanying the written texts, must also be read and studied under harsh scrutiny. The appearance of the kneeling male/female slave on a number of everyday objects (plates, shoe buckles, coins, glasses), jewelry

(medallions, hair pins, pendants), as well as in printed material (pamphlets, leaflets, books) is, consequently, not free from conflicting representational messages. Calling into doubt the exclusion from humanity and Christianity, some scholars believe that the noble slave does not pose any threat but merely interrogates the readers'/viewers' sense of sympathy and beseeches benign inclusion into the human family. Yet, at the time these artifacts were issued, the question the kneeling slave posed was only apparently rhetorical, since it clearly asks for a reinterpretation of Africans as a separate species within the Great Chain of Being, as defended by pro-slavery Britons, as well as for recognition of sameness and, consequently, humanity.

Scholars have pointed out the ways in which sympathy became politicized during the first decades of the nineteenth century and how the visual materials accompanying antislavery and proslavery writings contributed to consolidate ideological responses. Albert Boime, Margaret Abruzzo, John H. Bickford and Cynthia W. Rich, Karen Halttunen, George E. Boulukos, Penny Brown, Brycchan Carey, Marcus Wood, among others, have written about the urgency to recognize that slavery was read about but also controversially envisioned. In *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography*, Marcus Wood writes that the problem is how "to explain that the dirtiest thing the Western imagination ever did, and it does compulsively still, is to believe in the aesthetically healing powers of empathetic fiction" (36). Slavery facilitated the propagation of thousands of images that served the needs of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English and American readers for pathos but also for voyeurism. The pain of others visualized in images of defenseless sufferers promoted what Karen Halttunen calls "spectatorial sympathy," a concept that was "instrumental in shaping the eighteenth-century literature of sensibility." The immense corpus of fictional, dramatic, and poetic texts that subscribed to the ideas of sentimental art "undertook to teach virtue by softening the heart and eliciting tears of tender sympathy, an aim reinforced by eighteenth-century art criticism, which emphasized emotional response rather than rational judgment as the proper criterion for evaluation." Countless scenes of tormented human beings and animals aroused readers' and viewers' sympathy and enhanced and demonstrated their virtue (307). For Halttunen, the gaze of free citizens "liberally mingled pleasure with vicarious pain," delighting in a sort of "dear delicious pain," "a sort of pleasing Anguish" (308)—condemned by Keats as an "aching pleasure"—that bordered on the pornographic. Consequently, "reform

literature did eroticize pain, constructing it as sexual in nature. The eroticization of suffering in humanitarian reform sometimes took the form of overtly sexual references: to the 'indecent' nudity and sexual abuse of idiot or insane women, to the sexual coercion and rape of slave women […] Their treatment of scenarios of suffering, if not narrowly pornographic in nature, assumed that the spectacle of pain was a source of illicit excitement, prurience, and obscenity—the power to evoke revulsion and disgust" (324-325). For her part, Marianne Noble also asserts that the exhibition of the tortured body of the enslaved brought about a "sentimental wounding" that placed the slave as "erotic objects of sympathy rather than subjects in their own rights" (296).

In *The Illustrated Slave: Empathy, Graphic Narrative, and the Visual Culture of the Transatlantic Abolition Movement, 1800-1852*, Martha Cutter (10-11) distinguishes between "parallel empathy" and "hierarchical empathy" as the two strategies that explain how readers and viewers reacted to these literary and graphic materials, modes that can coexist within the same written or visual text. For this scholar, "the mode of empathy most common in abolitionist artwork and visual texts relies on hierarchy: the idea that the pained body and psyche of the enslaved is a low, unfinished, disabled, childlike, or in some way inferior entity that needs the help and mediation of the white viewer, who is separated within the text or artwork from the viewed. This hierarchical mode of empathy relies on a viewer's pity for the enslaved, who possesses only an unfinished and open selfhood, rather than the finished and closed selfhood of the viewer" (11). In contrast to this mode of hierarchal empathy, Cutter explains that parallel empathy "relies on similarity between the enslaved person and the viewing subject; the enslaved person is seen as a conspecific, and the connection between the self and the other is emphasized over figuration of division and difference. The viewer and the enslaved are brought into some degree of concordance by this mode of parallel empathy" (11).

In the early illustrated antislavery writings this mode prevailed, claims Cutter, because it was thought to move "the viewer beyond receptivity to another's pain (common in hierarchical empathy) toward specific, tailored helping actions (such as stopping a whipping) or larger, prosocial ones (for instance, joining an abolitionist movement or becoming part of the Underground Railroad)" (11). The viewer/reader is asked not to "feel pity" for the body in pain but to see "a self that could also potentially be whipped, tortured, or emotionally traumatized" (11). The American abolitionist writings for children included in this anthology aimed at this

mode of parallel empathy. Children are constantly stimulated to reflect on themselves and on the possibilities of their taking the place of the enslaved, and not only to enjoy the pathetic and voyeuristic spectacle of slavery and its atrocities. At the same time, they are encouraged to go beyond the written and the visual to imagine what is veiled by words and images.

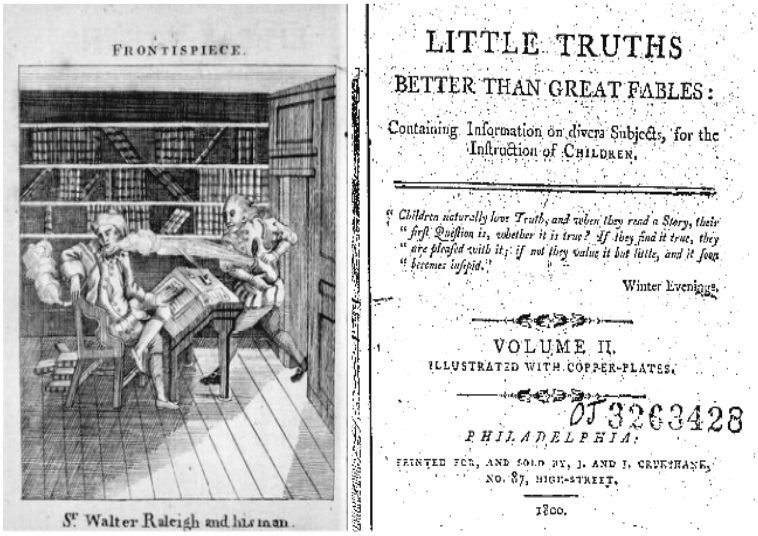
The Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade also had women amongst its participants. It was an organization made up primarily of men, but its subscribers included many Quaker women who, throughout the 1780s and 1790s, supported and campaigned for its causes. Moira Ferguson coined the term "Anglo-Africanism" to refer to writings about Africans, a term that echoes Edward Said's deployment of 'Orientalism' as a concept that includes Western views of the East, and explores the connections between feminism and abolitionism to demonstrate how in their antislavery writings British women projected their anxieties about their own oppressed status onto their literary constructions of slaves. Anglo-Africanist writings, Ferguson states, show how pro-antislavery white female authors gendered their abolitionist arguments and centered on the domestic sphere (the disruption of family bonds and sexual abuse) while they silenced the voices of slaves and described them as passive victims of physical and spiritual exploitation.

From their domestic sphere women politicized their role through calls for antislavery resistance and issues such as the boycott of sugar derived products (what was called "abstention") were seen "from the first as a particularly female concern, and it provided women with another important opportunity to actively participate in the abolition campaign," as Clare Midgley explains (35). For example, Mary Birkett, a Dublin Quaker, published "A Poem on the African Slave Trade: Addresses to her Own Sex. In Two Parts" (1792). Midgley writes that Birkett's "poetic appeal called on women not only to exert their influence on men but also to take action themselves by abstaining from slave-grown sugar" (35). Women working outside the home also joined and became relevant members of the English antislavery cause. One of these women was Martha Gurney, who, for Timothy Whelan, played the most prominent role "in raising the consciousness of the English people against the slave trade" between 1788 and 1796, in her role as an active printer and seller, as well as composer, of abolitionist pamphlets (46). Another was Anna Laetitia Barbauld, whose "Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. On the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade," published in June 1791, appeared as an indignant response to the defeat of the motion presented two

months earlier by William Wilberforce in the British Parliament to abolish the slave trade. A year later a sugar boycott was organized against the importation of sugar from the plantations of the West Indies, where women played an outstanding role. As Charlotte Sussman observes in "Women and the Politics of Sugar, 1792," new conceptions of womanhood explain the appearance in abolitionist pamphlets of images of an energetic "female virtue conjoined to a kind of national sensibility" that transforms "the compassion of British women" into a symbol of "a specific national identity, a quality that distinguishes England from the rest of the world" (60). These British "antisacharist" rejections would be imitated by American abolitionists in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and used as a non-violent method to protest against the products derived from slave labor.

At the same time, during these last decades of the eighteenth century, literature for the little ones was conceived as the ideal space to instill justice and more humane attitudes towards Africans, as well as a treasured path to recruit future members in the ongoing struggle against slavery. A new understanding of children's minds and their malleability, as well as their openness and receptivity to the fair treatment of creatures, increased the perception of printed material as the way to conversion. Thus, it did not take long for abolitionist publishers to jump on the bandwagon and devote their efforts to antislavery books for children. One of the most notorious was William Darton, a Quaker and prominent abolitionist and founder of the firm Darton and Harvey in 1787.

One of his earliest titles was *Little Truths Better than Great Fables: In Variety* [sic] *of Instruction for Children from Four to Eight Years Old*. Similarly to many other children's books of the period, this volume appears as a list of questions asked by the children to their tutor. The topics range from animals and their habitats to the existence of races in the world, as well as to the injustice of the slave trade. In 1788 Darton published a second volume, *Little Truths Better than Great Fables: Containing Information on Divers Subjects, for the Instruction of Children* (Philadelphia, 1800). In this second volume he included subversive versions of what the Middle Passage was for the enslaved Africans—human cargo (14-18):


FRONTISPIECE.

Sr. Walter Raleigh and his man.

LITTLE TRUTHS
BETTER THAN GREAT FABLES:
Containing Information on divers Subjects, for the Instruction of CHILDREN.

"Children naturally love Truth, and when they read a Story, their "first Question is, whether it is true? If they find it true, they "are pleased with it; if not they value it but little, and it soon "becomes insipid."
Winter Evenings.

VOLUME II.
ILLUSTRATED WITH COPPER-PLATES.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED FOR, AND SOLD BY, J. AND J. CRUKSHANK,
NO. 87, HIGH-STREET.
1800.

Why do they call some black peoples Negroes? From Negroland, the name of a large track of country, on the borders of the river Niger, in Africa. *But why are they called slaves?* On account of their being made so by great numbers of people who go from England, Holland, and France, to several parts on the coast of Africa, and encourage the strong and wicked people of the land to make war and heal away the inland natives, whom the Europeans purchase by hundreds, and carry to America and the West India islands, where these poor creatures must work so long as they live! and not contented with enslaving the parents, they retain their children's children in perpetual slavery. Great numbers of those poor people have no other provisions allowed them in many places but what they raise for themselves, and that on the very day of the week set apart for a Sabbath! Great are the hardships they endure on board many of the ships: I have read, that six hundred and eighty men, women, and children were stowed in one ship! which was also loaded with elephants' teeth. "It was a pitiful sight," says the writer, "to behold how those people were stowed. The men were standing in the hold, fastened one to another with stakes, for fear they should rise and kill the whites; the women were between decks, and the children were in the steerage pressed together like herrings in a barrel, which caused an intolerable heat and stench." And in this situation several of the poor creatures frequently die;

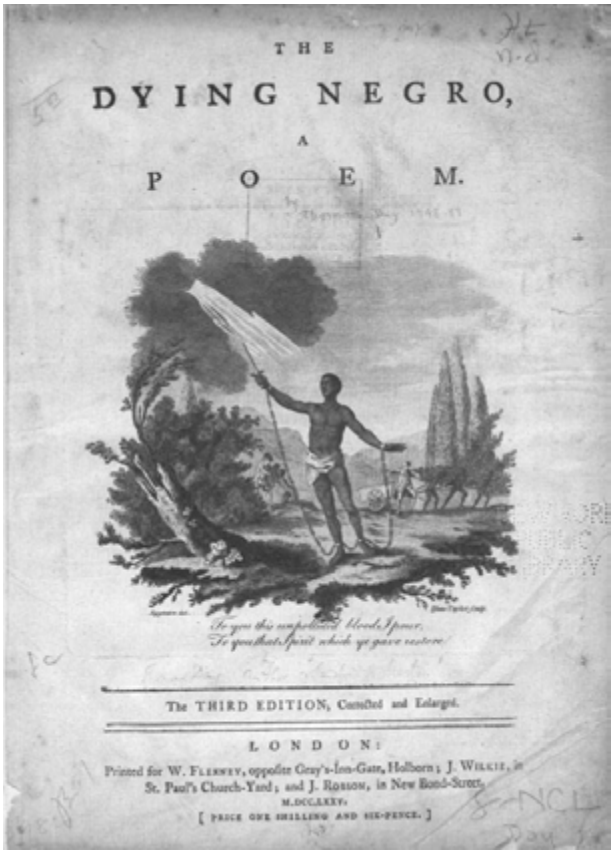
> others attempt to break their confinement, try to swim back again, and are often drowned. *I did not think there had been any people in England so wicked as to do those things*, I am sorry to say there are. *And, why do they do them?* From an evil desire of gain; that kind of love for money, "which is the root of all evil."—To hear the groans of dying men,—the cries of many widows and fatherless children,—the bitter lamentations of a husband when torn from the arms of his beloved wife,—and the mournful cries of a mother and her children, when violently separated, perhaps, never to see each other again—I say, one would think, that those things might so affect the human mind, as to cause such practices to cease.
>
> *There are many good people in England; why do they not strive to stop such cruelties?* I am glad to have it in my power to say that a great number of tender minded people, both in America and England have set their slaves at liberty. Others have been using their endeavors for years past, and not without some good success; to abolish a trade so big with numberless evils, some hundreds of slaves have been liberated in divers parts of America.

In 1800 both volumes were published under the latter title. As Linda David explains, "the antislavery passage in the second volume was expanded in 1800 to include references to the poetry of Phillis Wheatley and the letters of Ignatius Sancho—surely the very earliest mention of these black writers in a children's book" (16).[2] Darton's *Little Truths* "demonstrated the speed with which the growing literature on the slave trade, much of it collected and published by the London Committee and enthusiasts like Thomas Clarkson, reached juvenile readers" (Oldfield 144).

English publishers and writers were willing to join the antislavery movement and rapidly participated in the criticism against the slave trade and the evil institution by including black characters in their tales. One of the most celebrated examples appears in Thomas Day's *The History of Sanford and Merton* (1783-89), where a black beggar rescues Harry Sanford from a dangerous bull. The story offers a romanticized view of African tribal life, where Africans are depicted as black Rousseaunian noble savages brutally snatched away from their land and

[2] In these volumes, "the children in the dialogue notice the oddity of saying Columbus 'discovered' a country where people already lived." And "while only a third English edition was appearing by 1790, the book was so popular in the United States that in 1794 the Boston publisher Samuel Hall was enthusiastically advertising a sixth American edition 'with many alterations and additions'" (David 17).

innocent families. In 1773, Day had co-authored with John Bicknell "The Dying Negro: A Poetical Epistle," the piece considered to be the first significant antislavery poem, although for an adult audience.


THE
DYING NEGRO,
A
POEM.
The THIRD EDITION, Corrected and Enlarged.
LONDON:
Printed for W. FLEXNEY, opposite Gray's-Inn-Gate, Holborn; J. WILKIE, in St. Paul's Church-Yard; and J. ROBSON, in New Bond-Street.
M.DCC.LXXV.
[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE.]

In 1788 William Cowper published "The Negro's Complaint," an antislavery poem that became so extremely popular that it was turned into a ballad. Harvey and Darton published a children's version with another poem titled "Pity for Poor Africans" (*The Negro's Complaint: A Poem. To Which is Added, Pity for Poor Africans*), with colored woodcuts, in 1826. The book made use of the same visual layout as other contemporary antislavery volumes—Amelia A. Opie's *The Black Man's Lament, or How to Make Sugar* (1826)—with an illustration and poetry stanzas underneath them on each page. Cowper's poem appeared in the wake of the initial sugar boycotts in Britain and was widely distributed by the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Elizabeth Massa Hoiem explains that this reprint "uses popular generic conventions for teaching children about commodities," which have been called It-narratives, to give agency and voice to personified commodities. Yet, here the narrator is an enslaved African who tells his own story. Cowper's antislavery poems were widely reprinted and distributed in newspapers and magazines in the transatlantic English world and had a significant impact on the English campaigns against the slave trade as well as on American abolitionist writings.

THE
NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORCING A NEGRO FROM HIS HOME.

—

Forc'd from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.

THE ARRIVAL IN THE WEST INDIES.

—

Men from Europe bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
Minds are never to be sold.

THE TORTURE.

—

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?

THE APPEAL.

—

Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

John Aikin and his sister Anna Laetitia Barbauld also turned to black characters in some of their stories in their six-volume series *Evenings at Home; or, The Juvenile Budget Opened Consisting of a Variety of Miscellaneous Pieces for the Instruction and Amusement of Young Persons* (1792-1796), a miscellany of tales, fables, poems, and dialogues, which epitomize the tenets of the educational principles of the Enlightenment. These black characters "brought immediacy and authenticity to the antislavery struggle, and the device was widely imitated" (Oldfield 144).


CHEAP REPOSITORY.

THE

SORROWS of YAMBA;

OR, THE

Negro Woman's Lamentation.

Sold by J. MARSHALL,
(PRINTER to the CHEAP REPOSITORY for Religious and Moral Tracts, No. 17 Queen-Street, Cheapside, and No. 4, Aldermary Church-Yard, and R. WHITE, Piccadilly, LONDON.

PRINTER to the CHEAP REPOSITORY, at Bath; and by all Booksellers, Newsmen, and Hawkers, in Town and Country.—Great Allowance will be made to Shopkeepers and Hawkers.

Price an Halfpenny each, or 2s. 3d. per doz.—1s. 9d. for 50—or 3s. for 75

Entered at Stationers Hall.


CHEAP REPOSITORY.

THE

BLACK PRINCE,

A TRUE STORY;

BEING

An Account of the Life and Death

OF

NAIMBANNA, an AFRICAN KING'S SON,

Who arrived in England in the Year 1791, and set Sail on his Return in June 1793.

SOLD BY J. EVANS,

(Printer to the Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Tracts,)

No. 41 and 58, Long Lane, West Smithfield;

And J. HATCHARD, No. 173, Piccadilly, London. By S. HAZARD, Bath; and by all Booksellers, Newsmen, and Hawkers in Town and Country.

*** Great Allowance will be made to Shopkeepers and Hawkers.

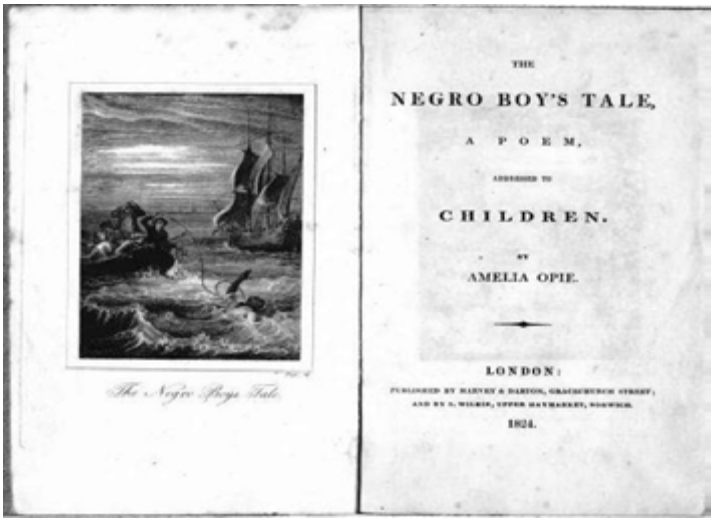
PRICE ONE PENNY,

Or 12. 6d. per Hund.—1s. 6d. for Fifty—2s. 6d. for Twenty-Five.

[*Entered at Stationers Hall.*]

In 1795 Hannah More published *The Sorrows of Yamba; or, The Negro Woman's Lamentation* in her Cheap Repository Tracts series. More was a member of the Clapham Sect, a group of leading Evangelical reformers devoted to social reform, and her Tracts were written to instill the need to abolish the slave trade and slavery among children and adults. More's sole authorship of the poem has been questioned and some historians believe that the piece was originally penned by the Scot Eaglesfield Smith. *The Sorrows of Yamba* tells the story of an African woman kidnapped and sold as a slave who suffers the death of her child on her sea voyage. Devastated by her loss, she tries to commit suicide but meets a missionary who converts her to Christianity. Her new religious beliefs help her reconcile herself

with her captors and wish for her husband's conversion to the new faith in Africa. The poem became one of the most popular and reprinted antislavery poems of its time, together with *The Black Prince* (1796), a poem she did not write but, according to Robert Hole, "was published under her editorship" (619). The story was a true account of the visit of Naimbanna, 'An African King's Son,' to England between 1771 and 1793, to engage British help to found a colony of freed slaves in Sierra Leone and "insisted on the equality and equal rights of all 'whatever be their colour' and on the dignity and nobility of the black person" (619). As Hole and other critics point out, More viewed Africans as unequal to white British citizens since her position was determined by a Christian faith that rested heavily on a providential hierarchy, product of her times and of the racial ideologies of Anglican evangelical abolitionists.


THE

NEGRO BOY'S TALE,

A POEM,

ADDRESSED TO

CHILDREN.

BY

AMELIA OPIE.

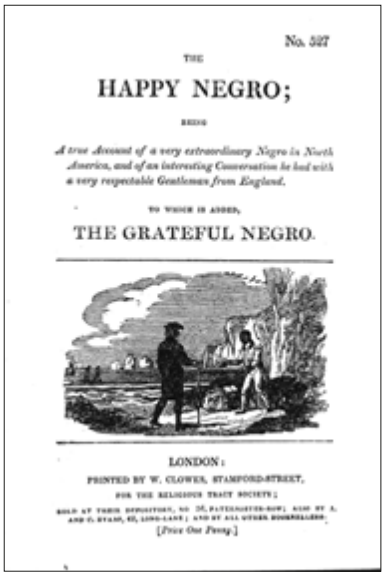
LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY HARVEY & DARTON, GRACECHURCH STREET;

AND BY J. WILKIN, UPPER HAYMARKET, NORWICH.

1824.

In 1801, the Quaker novelist and poet Amelia Opie published "The Negro Boy's Tale: A Poem Addressed to Children," included in the first edition of *The Father and Daughter*. In 1824, Harvey and Darton reissued the poem in volume form as part of the antislavery series for children. In 1804, three years before the abolition of the slave trade in Britain, Maria Edgeworth published her tale, "The Grateful Negro," which had at least five American editions (1804-1813, 1823, 1832, 1835). In the same year Priscilla Wakefield, an important and prolific author of children's geography books, published *A Family Tour through the British Empire*, where she included some thoughts on the trade when the family visits the port of Liverpool:


No. 527

THE

HAPPY NEGRO;

BEING

A true Account of a very extraordinary Negro in North America, and of an interesting Conversation he had with a very respectable Gentleman from England.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE GRATEFUL NEGRO.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. CLOWES, STAMFORD-STREET,

FOR THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;

SOLD AT THEIR DEPOSITORY, NO. 56, PATERNOSTER-ROW; ALSO BY J. AND C. EVANS, 82, LONG-LANE; AND BY ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

[*Price One Penny.*]

As they had never been on board a ship, the opportunity was too inviting to be neglected; they entreated their mother to mention their wish to Mr. Franklin, who readily accompanied them to several of different forms and dimensions. The disposal of the apartments; the contrivances for accommodation in so small a space; and the manner of stowing goods; with the sails, masts, and rigging, the uses of which were explained by their kind instructor; not only amused them, but furnished their minds with a new set of ideas. In reply to Edwin's enquiry, In what consists the chief trade of Liverpool? Mr. Franklin remarked that it is the second port in the kingdom, and is frequented by ships from most parts of the world. "Its foreign commerce," said he, "is very extensive and profitable; but it is sincerely to be lamented, that one branch of it is contrary to humanity and justice: I mean that of trafficking to Guinea for slaves, whom they carry, against their inclination, to the West Indies, and then barter them for sugar, rum, cotton, and other produce." His companions, uncorrupted by prejudice or interest, warmly declared their abhorrence of buying and selling their fellow-creatures, and were surprised that any person, who pretended to a virtuous character, would obtain a fortune by such unjust means. (55)

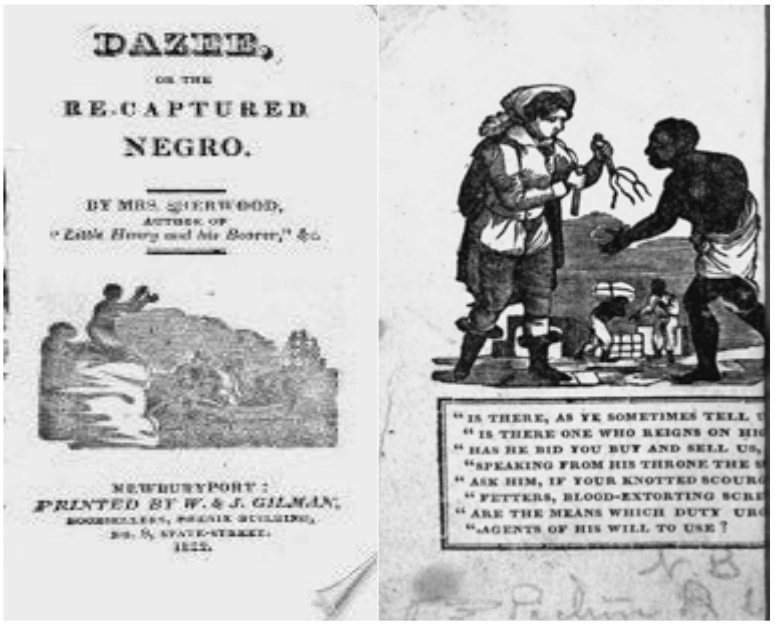
In 1806 Wakefield published *Excursions in North America: Described in Letters from a Gentleman and his Young Companion, to their Friends in England*, "one of the first children's books to deal with the issue of American slavery" (Oldfield 145). In this text she talked about the visit of two English travelers to the recently founded American republic who, after purchasing a black slave, Sancho, at an auction in Charleston, North Carolina, free him and engage him as their guide through other states. In a letter to his brother, one of the travelers, Henry Franklin, writes about the feelings that black slaves awaken in his friend Arthur, his travelling companion:

> After one of these handsome entertainments, where we had been attended by negro slaves, I observed a cloud upon the brow of my young friend, for which I could not account, till he confessed, that the sight of men, who were the property of their fellow creatures, and subject to every indignity, excited such painful reflections, that he could not banish them from his mind. I endeavoured to soothe him, by representing that their treatment here is gentle, compared with that exercised in the southern states, and in the West Indies; though the efforts that have been made for the abolition of slavery, have improved their condition every where. It is indeed to be regretted, that men, so ardent in the love of liberty for themselves as the Americans are, should continue, in any degree, to tolerate the slave trade (19).

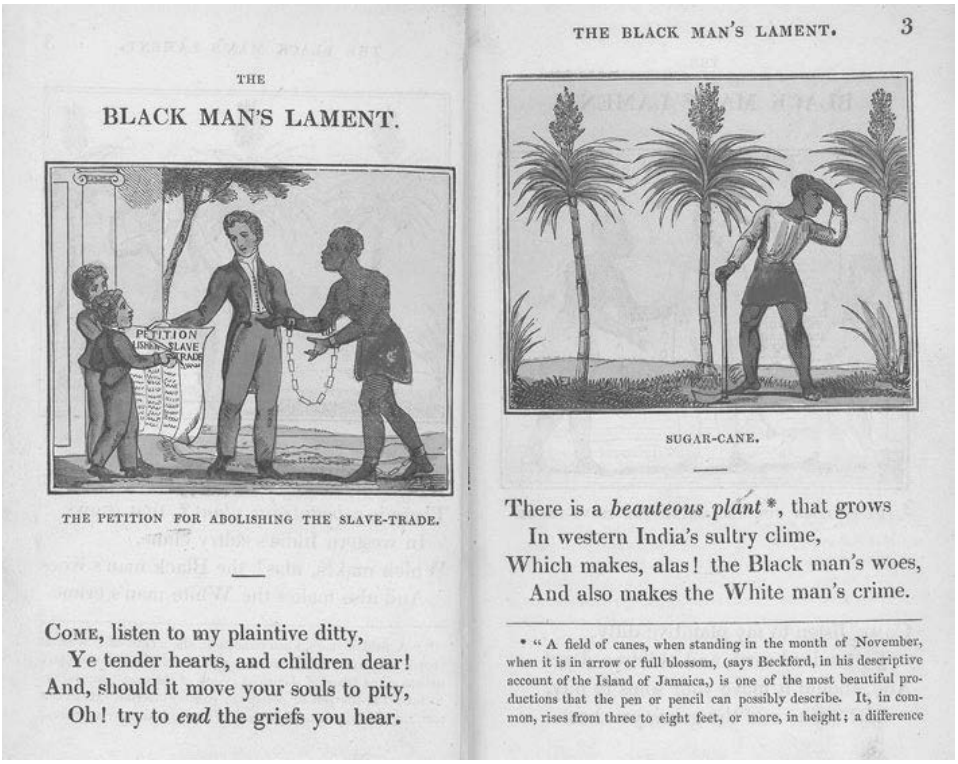
In 1807 the English Parliament prohibited British participation in the African Slave Trade and, a year later, the United States also outlawed American participation in the trade. This new scenario shifted the attention from the injustices of the slave trade towards chattel slavery as it was known in the West Indies and the South of the United States. As Philip Gould explains, "the savage slave trader continued to function iconically in the abolitionist imagination. The figure still had rhetorical and emotional effect. This marks an important site of rhetorical continuity between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century antislavery writing. […] As southern apologists criticized the severity of the northern industrial economy, northern abolitionists (many of them urban and industrial reformers as well) responded in kind by employing the well-established trope of the slave trade. It helped to secure regional claims to 'civilization'" (Gould 192).

After the abolition of the slave trade, authors concentrated on criticizing the institution. As shown by the number of women authors penning antislavery stories, British women, as would happen with their American sisters, played a fundamental role in the antislavery campaigns from the middle of the eighteenth-century throughout the nineteenth century. Even if politically disenfranchised, they involved themselves in all venues of social and political reforms, and some of them (Elizabeth Heryrick Anne Knight, Elizabeth Pease) remained active until the abolition of slavery in the West Indies in the 1830s.

In 1821, Mary Martha Sherwood published *Dazee, or the Re-Captured Negro*, which had at least three American editions (1821, 1822 and 1834). It tells the story of Dazee, an African boy, who is captured by a slave trader, released by the English government, and then sent to the colony of Sierra Leone, where he is reunited with his elderly mother. As Martha Cutter explains, the text "relies on existing iconography to make its argument. Dazee is a literal replication of the Wedgwood supplicant slave, repurposed and repackaged but with unchanged features. The enslaved African in Sherwood's text is the recipient of the gaze of both the individual in the image (on the left of the frontispiece) and of a reader. The enslaved African does not return the gaze of a reader, nor does his imprimatur contest the dominant scopic order of slavery in any way" (81-82).



By contrast, Amelia Opie's *The Black Man's Lament; or How to Make Sugar* (Harvey & Darton, 1826), according to Cutter, depicts "distinctive (rather than stereotypical) persons, unbroken corporealities that can assert a mode of ocular resistance. Again and again her illustrations depict men and (sometimes) women who appear to be staring away from the action of the scene and back at the viewer" (82).



THE

BLACK MAN'S LAMENT.

THE PETITION FOR ABOLISHING THE SLAVE-TRADE.

COME, listen to my plaintive ditty,
Ye tender hearts, and children dear!
And, should it move your souls to pity,
Oh! try to *end* the griefs you hear.

THE BLACK MAN'S LAMENT. 3

SUGAR-CANE.

There is a *beauteous plant* *, that grows
In western India's sultry clime,
Which makes, alas! the Black man's woes,
And also makes the White man's crime.

* "A field of canes, when standing in the month of November, when it is in arrow or full blossom, (says Beckford, in his descriptive account of the Island of Jamaica,) is one of the most beautiful productions that the pen or pencil can possibly describe. It, in common, rises from three to eight feet, or more, in height; a difference

The Black Man's Lament, published as part of a collection of essays for children, tells the life of a slave captured by slave traders in Africa and condemned to work on a West Indian sugar plantation. The book contained fifteen hand-colored copperplate engravings that help visualize a new conception of children as citizens with moral responsibility to act politically. The style of the images shows that Harvey and Danton most probably engaged the same artist who had illustrated Cowper's reprint of his celebrated *The Negro Complaint* for children, as mentioned above. As Cutter explains, the illustrator projects his respectful attitude towards blacks because these characters are represented as persons who "mobilize a politics of empathy and intersubjectivity that attempts to move *beyond* spectatorial sympathy by pushing a viewer to see the enslaved as connected with his or her own subjectivity, on terms of parity and equality" (xii). Thus, the first page opens with a plea for children to sign a petition to abolish the slave trade and the second attacks the cultivation of sugar cane and the transatlantic commerce of sugar as one of the roots of the evil of slavery:

Karen Sands-O'Connor (35) points out that, throughout her abolitionist poetry, Opie underlines the fact that slavery is a sin "not through ambivalent or guilt wracked white characters, but through adopting the slave's own voice, thus forcing the recognition of the humanity of the slave" (35). The speaking voice in *The Black Man's Lament* addresses children directly and emboldens them to take action against the dehumanizing system. The use of the first-person voice is, according to Sands-O'Connor, unique in children's abolitionist literature, despite the story's frame, and it is how Opie achieves what other children's authors failed to do: turning the slave from object or animal into a human (35). Martha Cutter also underlines the prominence of Opie's volume as one of the earliest and most elaborate graphic illustrated books for children exclusively devoted to an antislavery topic, since "it forwards the idea that the child's example could motivate an adult reader […] envisioning of the child as a proto-political subject who inspires adult action may also have enabled the cultural work of a text such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which takes a similar approach to the function of children like Little Eva." Thus, Opie "foreshadows how, in later years, the child became a unique catalyst and model for social change" (10-11).

Opie's text, like others previously discussed, stands out amongst a vast array of British literature for children exhibiting tales of wild heathen savages in overseas territories. Yet Sands-O'Connor (21) clarifies a distinction between those books dealing with people in the Pacific islands and those about the inhabitants of Atlantic islands. "As the people providing manual labor for the farms of their British colonizers, the non-European Caribbean subjects—predominantly kidnapped West Africans—were a curious mix of wildness and domesticity," she explains. Opie and her antislavery literary companions for children also offered this blending of peacefulness and violence, a dual description that "prepared their readers for the potential dangers, and perhaps the impossibility, of controlling the British Empire" (21). According to Cutter, "the black man's rage in Opie's text may denote that he can never fully embrace Christianity and might instead embrace bloody insurrection" (84). Hence, "her text portrays the opposite of the colonial discourse of enslaved, Christianized passivity, a 'shadowy textual presence' (Ferguson 5) that includes the potential rebellion of slaves against this colonial discourse" (85).