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# THE ABOMINABLE TRAFFIC

## The Abolition Movement and Emotions

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## **1. Introduction**

At the end of the 1780s a public discourse on the abolition of the slave trade sprang up which surprised not only the opponents of abolition but its supporters as well. As Drescher (1986; 1994) contends, this discourse proceeded from new modes of social and political mobilization. Abolition was actually one of the first manifestation of the social movement as we know it. In such movements - as the abolition case shows - the framing of the cause of a movement (or of its opposite) plays a major role in the mobilization of resources and support and in convincing the public and the authorities that the proposed changes are badly needed (Snow et al. 1986; Gamson 1988; Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Social movement actors do this in the form of an interpretive package with which they try to appeal to the cognition of people as well as to their emotions (D'Anjou 1996).

In the abolition case, it was clear that the abolitionists succeeded in changing public thinking on slavery and the slave trade and that this was largely the result of the more credible way they framed their message. Although it appears that their appeal on emotions was also more effective than that of their opponents, nothing definitive can be said about the place and role of emotionality in bringing about change in thought on slavery and the slave trade. This is largely the consequence of the way the emotional side of the abolition struggle is dealt with in historical studies. Ample attention is paid to emotional elements, but more as an illustration of what went on in the struggle than as a topic of research in its own right. This is rather strange as several of anti-slavery historians point to the fact that feeling and sensibility became important values in eighteenth-century Britain (see, e.g., Davis 1966 or Anstey 1975).

The same lack of attention is to be found in the social movement literature. According to Benford and Hunt (1992) this is an effect of the overwhelming influence of Resource Mobilization Theory with its emphasis on rationality (see on this point also Jasper 1998). In a reaction to the earlier collective behavior tradition, the resource mobilization theorists brought the fiction of the 'ultra-rationalistic' movement actor to the fore. With it, they obscured the role of passions and emotions in the explanation of social movement processes. As Benford and Hunt show, passion and emotion are factors needed to explain the mobilization of constituencies because constituents "... must be more than mobilized to act; they have to be inspired" (1992:50). The abolition case shows that emotions also deserve a place in the set of factors that explain the cultural effects of movement campaigns as they play an important role in public discourses. At this point, more work is needed and a 'dramaturgical infusion' into movement theory, as Benford and Hunt propose, could be very useful in this respect. In this paper we follow their lead. In it we explore historical studies of the first public campaign of the eighteenth-century abolition movement in Great Britain in order to shed more light on the role of emotions in movement discourses.

Outline of the paper. First, the development of some theoretical notions to analyze the case study material with. Second, the data concerning the use of emotional material in the first abolition campaign, Third, the discussion of the results and the conclusion of the paper.

## **2. Theoretical notions**

Emotions have gotten only scant attention within sociology; they "... tended to enjoy a rather 'ethereal' existence within sociology, lurking in the shadows or banished to the margins of sociological thought and practice." (Williams

and Bendelow 1998: XV). It is therefore difficult to present a ready-made set of theoretical notions with which one could map the realm of emotions in social movements and analyze their role. This task of finding a suitable theory is made even more difficult by its central subject, the emotions. Basically, emotions refer to bodily states and to the feelings that accompany them. So, emotions seem to be rather the subject of disciplines like biology and psychology than for the sociological discipline.

Emotions play, however, an important role in the interactions between people whether these interactions are direct as between man and wife, or indirect as between politicians and voters. The recent elections in the U.S. are, e.g., incomprehensible if the emotions raised by the Lewinsky-case and by the ways politicians used these are left out of consideration. The world of politics is pre-eminently one of emotions as is the world of social movements. Researchers of politics, protest, and social movements are, however, less interested in the psycho-biological states of being of the people involved but more in the role emotions play in communication processes for communication forms the heart of politics and collective action. This brings us to an additional problem; as far as sociologists deal with emotions, they direct their attention primarily to the feelings of the people involved and far less to the communicative role of emotions in human interactions (Burkitt 1997 is an exception in this respect).

In this situation, there seems to be only one sensible way out of this quagmire; to build a set of theoretical notions that are based on common sociological sense complemented by a free use of existing literature about emotions. As our 'theory' concerns emotions in movement actions, we will begin our theoretical expedition with advancing a concept of social movements. Tilly's definition of social movement gives a good start. He defines a movement as "... a sustained series of interactions between powerholders [authorities] and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation [challengers]." (1982: 26). This challenge of authorities is the core of his concept. A second - essential - element of this concept concerns the fact that challengers act on behalf of people who have not enough power to see that their needs and interests are directly taken care of; challengers represent the needs and interests of outsiders. The third element of the concept points to the fact that collective actions are sustained during a prolonged period of time. It is also important to keep in mind, as Tilly (1993-94) emphasizes, that movements themselves do not act, only people active in a movement do. They - the social movement actors or SMAs<sup>1</sup> - form the fourth element of our movement concept.

The second notion concerns the emotion concept. At this point, we meet an important problem because the realm of phenomena we commonly depict as emotions contains such a great variety that it is not really possible to capture emotions with one clear-cut concept. We therefore choose for Barbalet's broad definition. He defines emotions "... as feelings and sensations.... But, unlike mere feeling and sensation, an emotion has a direction and therefore an object. Although their emotions do not automatically set a person on a course of action, they do leave a clear stamp on an actor's disposition and intentions." (1998: 133). This means for social movements that emotions may prepare people for action, either in the form of participation or of support. It also means that emotions may bring people to considering the changes SMAs propose.

It is thus important for SMAs to appeal to the emotions of people as well as to their cognitions. This is normally done by movement actors and their interpretive packages contain - in most cases - more than rational diagnoses, action-plans, and solutions for problems. Alongside cognitive appeals, SMAs use emotionally laden symbols,

metaphors, figures of speech, pictures, songs, etc. Like with their cognitive messages, they attempt to convince people that they have to participate in movement actions or to support the cause in other ways (the mobilization of resources), as well as the authorities that social arrangements have to change to the benefit of the outsiders for which they struggle (the effect of a movement)<sup>2</sup>. Communication by SMAs implies a mix of rational and emotional depictions and descriptions directed at several, often overlapping, audiences<sup>3</sup>.

This assessment brings us to the question what makes certain depictions (etc.) emotional. Like other meanings, emotional meanings of words or signs<sup>4</sup> depend on meaning construction processes in society which result in all kinds of cultural narratives, the cultural context, which contain the common meanings and on which actors may draw in communicating with each other. Concerning emotions, this means that in every society there exist stocks of words, figures of speech, symbols, pictures, etc. that have an emotional meaning for the members of that society and that they can use to express their emotions and to communicate them to others. Hochschild describes this as follows: "Each culture has its unique emotional dictionary, which defines what is and isn't, and its emotional bible, which defines what one should and should not feel in a given context." (1998: 7).

The emotional dictionary-bible consisting of signs, such as words, symbols, pictures, metaphors, etc., that have specific emotional meanings for users and audiences alike<sup>5</sup> is the third theoretical notion we will use in this paper. Hochschild makes clear that people use the dictionary-bible to manage their emotions in order to bring them in line with the internalized cultural guidelines coming from society. In our view, this emotional repertoire may also be used to manage the emotions of others and this is what SMAs attempt to do. They use common emotion signs to evoke specific emotions in their audiences in order to bring the audiences' emotions in line with the way they see things and with what they want. And, most importantly, to motivate those people to act accordingly. At this point, it is crucial to keep in mind that emotions are linked to the moral order (Harré 1986: 8). As Jasper states, "[E]motions are also tied to moral values, often arising from perceived infractions of moral rules." (1998: 401).

Management of emotions of others by movement actors is our fourth theoretical notion and we are particularly interested in two of the functions that emotion signs play in this management. First, emotion signs may be used to express emotions. This concerns, in normal cases, the expression of indignation. As SMAs act for outsiders, the excluded, they are, quite understandably, angry about the injustice of the exclusion and they want to make other people angry about this injustice, too. Gamson calls this moral indignation a cognition laden with emotion (1992: 7) and, according to Barbalet, such feelings are the basic animus of movements (1998: 136). Second, emotions are used more in a strategical-instrumental way. Emotion signs may be used as instruments in the struggles that SMAs (or their opponents) wage; e.g., by arousing feelings of pity with the undeserved fate of the outsiders (and so enhance feelings of empathy and sympathy) or by discrediting the proponents of the cause of the outsiders (and thus make them and their proposals seem unreliable and foolish).

Summary. Social movements may reach their ends only if they are effective in communicating with powerholders and with their own supporters. These communications contain often business-like proposals and analyses but also - in most cases - a variety of emotion signs. Hereto, SMAs employ the emotional repertoires of their society in order to express their indignation and to evoke emotional feelings in the audiences they address.

### **3. The First Phase of the Struggle for Abolition<sup>6</sup>**

Although the legitimacy of slavery in the Americas was questioned almost from its introduction in the overseas colonies<sup>7</sup>, a continuing debate about this institution did not arise in the Western world for quite a long time. It was an accepted aspect of colonial life and those who argued against it during the 16th, 17th, and the first part of the 18th century were not heard. As Rice states, "... these first voices against slavery cried in the wilderness." (1975: 154). In the course of the eighteenth century, however, this situation changed. An intellectual critique of slavery arose which "... was an intellectual debate of genuinely international proportions, drawing on the arguments (and experiences) of men in Britain and France as well as the North American and Caribbean colonies" (Walvin 1986: 97). The roots of this debate are to be found in a complex of interacting developments in philosophical and religious thought<sup>8</sup> which furthered the coming into being of a loosely knitted network of critical thinkers on slavery, a veritable critical community (Rochon 1998: 22). This community initiated an international intellectual discourse about this institution in which these thinkers defined slavery and the slave trade as pressing social problems that should and could be removed. As Anstey states:

"... the content of received wisdom had so altered by the 1780s that educated men and the political nation, provided they had no direct interest in the slave system, would be likely to regard slavery and the slave trade as morally condemned, as no longer philosophically defensible." (1975: 95/6)

As Rochon also recognizes, discourses within critical communities will only have effect when social movements come into existence that are "... effective in mobilizing activists and winning social and political allies." (1998: 31). This happened in Great Britain with the coming into being of the abolition movement. This movement strove first to abolish the slave trade (effected in 1807) and then to emancipate the slaves (effected in 1832).

The history of the abolition movement is a complex whole consisting of several phases the first of which we will analyze in this paper, viz., the first (public) abolition campaign that began in 1787 and ended in the beginning of 1792. In the next section (3.1) we will provide the main contours of this campaign after which the presentation of the data will follow (section 3.2). These are qualitative data concerning the use of emotions and emotional material in that campaign.

#### **3.1 The Abolition Campaign, 1787-1792**

The year 1787 marks the beginning of the abolition movement in Great Britain, because in that year the Abolition Committee was founded. This committee acted as the central social movement organization and launched very soon after its foundation the first public nationwide campaign directed at the prohibition of the slave trade by Britons. In this campaign, the abolitionists aimed at mobilizing so much support for their cause that a parliamentary decision to outlaw the slave trade would be inevitable. Hereto, they took the grass roots organization at hand; took care of the production and distribution of written and visual material, such as pamphlets, tracts, books, and medallions; organized lectures and other antislavery gatherings all over the country; and set up two massive petition campaigns. Alongside mobilizing resources and public support, the Committee acted as a political pressure and lobby group in

Parliament. In support of these activities the abolitionists were engaged in fact-finding on a massive scale because factual evidence would, in their view, self-evidently convince every one of the need to end this horrible practice. Naturally, those involved in the slave trade and slavery did not wait to be slaughtered on the altar of public indignation. They reacted promptly and vigorously. The result was an intense discourse on slavery and the slave trade that involved the whole country.

Structurally seen, this discourse evolved into a set consisting of two interdependent networks: an abolitionist network and in reaction to the abolitionist attack an anti-abolitionist network as well. The Abolition Committee was at the core of the abolitionist network. This committee arose out of the existing, mostly informal networks of people who opposed slavery and the slave trade. They came overwhelmingly from dissident circles; Quakers, Methodists and Evangelicals within the Church of England. These activists built a stronghold in Parliament and the cabinet; prominent members being Wilberforce, Pitt, Grenville and Fox. They also built a system of local associations and committees who organized the grass roots support and the propaganda. The anti-abolitionist network proceeded from the so-called West Indian Interest; a loosely organized alliance of returned planters, merchants trading to the West-Indies, slave traders, and landed proprietors. This alliance virtually represented the West Indian colonies in Parliament and government. The actual defense against the abolitionist attack was organized by the London Society of West Indian Planters and Merchants. This organization built an impressive bloc of supporters in the Commons as well as in the House of Lords and through the support of the King also in the cabinet. Alongside these supporters, they found support among those in British society who 'lived off' the West Indian colonies. All in all, the abolitionists won the battle of numbers and they got far more supporters among the general public than the anti's. They lost, however, - for the time being - the struggle on the political level where the anti-abolitionists outnumbered them.

Culturally seen, the abolition discourse meant a clash of two diametrically opposed visions on the subject of slavery and the slave trade couched in two interpretive packages, the abolition and the anti-abolition one. The abolitionists took the initiative and chose the arguments. They designated slavery and the trade in slaves as practices that were fundamentally immoral, criminal and sinful. These practices were contrary to God's precepts, human nature and natural law. Moreover, so they stated in the political debate, the practices ran counter to a sound economic policy; a point of view derived from the upcoming economic theory of Adam Smith. The anti package was the mirror image of the abolitionist package. The anti-abolitionists contended that both slavery and the slave trade were prime examples of sound economic policy and were, first of all, in the interest of Britain as a nation. They drew their arguments mainly from the reigning mercantilist theory and thus defended these practices as indispensable contributions "... to the collective wealth and power of the empire" (Drescher 1986: 20). Sometimes they also tried to justify slavery morally by appealing to the Bible and by portraying the black African as a subhuman being somewhere between the orangutan and the white man. This defense was and remained, however, a marginal affair; as Drescher states: "Quite significantly, however, neither line of argument was sustained in either polemical or Parliamentary debate."<sup>9</sup>

The first abolition campaign came to a grinding halt at the end of 1791 and the beginning of 1792 as the political climate changed dramatically. The slave rising in the French colony of St. Domingue (now Haiti) and the Jacobin

turn in the French Revolution with their atrocities and violence led in Britain to an augmenting antipathy to radical political changes, a political shift to the right, and - eventually - a period of political repression. The opportunities for collective action diminished considerably and for years to come social protest was out of the question. These events forced the abolitionists to rely fully on putting pressure on the parliament and, as Anstey states,:

" In this situation the struggle would have to be waged exclusively in Parliament and a new phase in the abolition movement began" (1975: 278).

### **3.2 The data**

The abolitionists depicted the slave trade (and as a logical sequel slavery) as a horrible, barbarous, bloody, and evil activity that transgressed all boundaries of morality and legitimacy. It was, above all, characterized as a crime, a sin, and a sign of human depravity and wickedness. A metaphor like 'rapine theft' (Sharp) - or for that matter 'man-stealing' (Wesley) - appeals in itself already to the emotions of the audiences that are addressed. Such depictions did, however, more. They shocked society because they put accepted definitions (self-definitions included) upside down. At that time, the trade in slaves was a lawful economic activity as was slavery itself. Moreover, those involved were respectable citizens, although their social standing was declining toward the end of the eighteenth century<sup>10</sup>.

The emotionally laden accusations of the abolitionists implied a fundamental attack on the social and economic position of those who lived of slavery and the slave trade. The negative portrayal of their behavior, quite naturally, enraged them and led to furious reactions; it set the tone of the debate for years to come (Porter 1970). Porter describes, e.g., how James Ramsay, a clergyman who lived nineteen years on St. Kitts, enraged the West Indians by publishing in 1784 "... an essay which bitterly attacked the treatment of West Indian slaves and the character of their masters .... The unfortunate was simply hounded to death." (1970: 32). The anti-abolitionists also used emotions in a more instrumental way in their attempts to keep the trade (and thus slavery) intact, e.g., by disqualifying their opponents through emotional stereotypes such as 'gloomy fanatics' (Rice 1975: 219).

The abolition struggle in and out of Parliament was characterized by an intensity of feeling (Porter 1970: 52). Below we will further illustrate how emotionally intense this struggle was by presenting material about the way the abolitionists and their opponents used a variety of emotional signs to appeal to the emotions of politicians and public. We will begin with the abolitionists because they took the initiative for the struggle and the data on the anti's will follow after that.

#### **The abolitionists and emotions**

As the historical literature contains quite a lot of data concerning the use of emotions by the abolitionists, we have decided to present these data in three sections; the first on emotions in texts; the second on emotions in pictures, and the third on emotions in spoken word.

##### *Emotions in abolitionist writing*

The Abolition Committee was very active in the (re)production and distribution of written material that was used in the abolition struggle. One of the works they used was Benezet's *Some Historical Account of Guinea*. This

American tract was republished in 1788 in London and was not only important in its own right but also because it had a thorough influence on the writings of influential abolitionists like Sharp, Clarkson, and Wesley which were widely used in the abolition campaign. We have therefore taken this tract as a prime example of the way the abolitionist dealt with emotions. Alongside this tract, we have chosen Newton's report about the way the slave trade was actually executed. It occupied also an important place in the abolition campaign because it supplied first hand information about this trade. Finally, we used the historical studies as a resource for finding more material concerning the emotional side of the abolition struggle<sup>11</sup>.

With his tract (and the preceding ones) Benezet introduced a strategy that became one of the main characteristics of the abolitionist collective actions (Bruns 1977). He sets himself to present the true facts about Africa (mainly West Africa or, as he calls it, Guinea), its inhabitants, their way of life and culture, its climate and environmental situation, the origin of 'the practice of making slaves of Negroes' (p.158) and of the development of the slave trade to the Americas so that "... the iniquity of this practice may become effectually apparent, to those in whose power it may be to put a stop to any farther progress therein; ...." (p. 145)<sup>12</sup>. His goal was to enable people to form their opinion on black Africans not in their present state of being deformed by slavery and their dealings with (often) the worst of the Europeans but as they are in their (undisturbed) natural habitat. Benezet therefore compiles a host of facts and quotations taken from books, tracts, letters, etc. written by merchants, travellers, factors, and other authorities on West Africa. This way he arrives at a portrayal of this part of the world as a veritable Eden that was being despoiled by the European slave traders (Bruns 1977: 145).

In his work, Benezet uses an emotional technique<sup>13</sup> that will be used later by the abolitionists as well as their opponents; he (1) contrasts the negative characteristics of slavery and the slave trade with the positive features of the way the black Africans lived in their homeland; and (2) makes this contrast even sharper by portraying this way of living more positive than it was in reality. He states, e.g., "... that there is scarce a country in the whole world that is better calculated for affording the necessary comforts of life to its inhabitants, with less solicitude and toil, than Guinea .... [that] abounds with grain and fruits, cattle, poultry, &c." (p.146-7). He described this African Eden in detail in the following chapters after which he continues with the description of how Portugal and Spain initiated the African slave trade and the way Great Britain became involved in it. Benezet makes it then clear that the intercourse with Europeans corrupted the West Africans which eventually brought the Africans to start internal wars for the sole purpose of selling the captives as slaves. On the other side, he concedes that slavery debases the masters in the Americas as well; "... it reconciled men, of otherwise good dispositions, to most hard and cruel measures." (p. 164). Taken together, Benezet shows his readers that the European encounter with Africa and the economic development of the Americas produced much misery and how this misery came about.

Throughout his tract, Benezet presents himself not as a disinterested observer but as an engaged activist who negatively characterizes the slave trade as a wicked and horrid traffic and associates it with terms as horror and evil. He does the same with people who are involved in the practice of enslaving black Africans. The European traders are evil disposed, base, villainous, depraved and act out of selfish avarice. They have become so base because they are motivated by an inordinate desire for the greatest gain. See, e.g., the following citation.

"All other considerations [of the christian Europeans] have given way to an insatiable desire of gain, which has been the principal and



moving cause of the most *iniquitous and dreadful scene* that was, perhaps, ever acted upon the face of the earth ...." (p.170).

Moreover, he makes the description of this traffic even blacker by contrasting the behavior of Europeans ('stimulated by the unwarrantable lust of gain') with a positive image of the Africans; "... the natives were an inoffensive people (gentle and loving), who, when civilly used, traded amicably with the Europeans." (p. 161).

The slave trade is sketched in shrill colors, among other things, by citing ship journals and accounts of factors. When the slave ships arrive on the African coast, Africans undertake inland raids and set towns to fire in order to capture prospective slaves. Benezet, e.g., cites a captain:

"... seven hundred slaves on board, the men being all put in irons two by two, shackled together to prevent their mutinying or swimming ashore. That the Negroes are so loth to leave their own country, that they often leap out of the canoe, boat or ship, into the sea, and keep under water till they are drowned, to avoid being taken up, and saved by the boats which pursue them." (p. 177).

The captain further reports that he lost 320 of these slaves during his trip to Barbadoes and Benezet continues with the exclamation:

"Reader, bring the matter home to thy own heart, and consider whether any situation can be more completely miserable than that of these distressed captives. When we reflect that each individual of this number had probably some tender attachment, which was broken by this cruel separation; some parent or wife, who had not an opportunity of mingling tears in a parting embrace; perhaps some infants, or aged parents, whom his labour was to feed, and vigilance protect; themselves under the most dreadful apprehension of an unknown perpetual slavery; confined within the narrow limits of a vessel, where often several hundreds lie as close as possible. Under these aggravated distresses, they are often reduced to a state of despair, in which many have been frequently killed, and some deliberately put to death under the greatest torture, when they have attempted to rise, in order to free themselves from present misery, and the slavery designed them." (p. 177).

The enslaved Africans in their turn are invariably described as miserable and as poor wretches whose terrible fate is even less acceptable as they are our fellow creatures and brethren. Slavery itself is also described in these negative terms. It is a practice that not only brings unjustified misery to the innocent natives of Guinea but debases the masters as well by bringing them to cruel behavior. Benezet gives example after example of the brutish way in which slaves are treated, how they are unmercifully whipped for minor transgressions and how they are sometimes brutally tortured; e.g., whipped till their flesh is raw and then rubbed with pepper and salt or how they are slowly burned in case of rebellion. Benezet becomes especially emotional in his description of the arrival of a slave ship in one of the American or West Indian ports. The slaves are exposed naked to the purchasers to be examined by them like cattle and then forcefully separated. He portrays the latter in the following manner.

"Mothers are seen hanging over their daughters, bedewing their naked breasts with tears, and daughters are clinging to their parents, not knowing what new stage of distress must follow their separation, or whether they shall ever meet again. And here what sympathy, what commiseration, do they meet with? Why, indeed, if they will not separate as readily as their owners think proper, the whipper is called for, and the lash is exercised upon their naked bodies, till obliged to part. Can any human heart, which is not become callous by the practice of such cruelties, be unconcerned, even at the relation of such grievous affliction, to which this oppressed part of our species are subjected." (p. 178-9).

Benezet ends his exposé of the horrors of slavery and the slave trade with the following rhetorical question: "Can any, whose mind is not rendered quite obdurate by the love of wealth, hear these relations, without being deeply touched with sympathy and sorrow?" (p. 181).

Newton's tract *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade* ([1788] 1962)<sup>14</sup> is more a personal statement and contains a public confession of the mischief and evil he had been accessory in the past. His direct experience with Africa and the slave trade - first as an employee of an factor in Africa and later as mate and captain of a slave ship - puts him in an unique position in the abolition movement. He is, viz., one of the few persons in the movement who can give first hand accounts of Africa and the slave trade in writing and in lectures. He describes the part of Africa he knows and its inhabitants in positive terms. On this point, his description agrees well with that of Benezet but the way he

describes the slave trade practices may shock the public, if possible, even more than Benezet's tract does. All in all, he gives a very bleak description of this trade and shows how it brings misery upon the black Africans, death to many British seamen, and profoundly corrupts the people involved in it. This trade, he states, has always been unjustified, particularly the profits that are derived from the groans, agonies and the blood of the poor Africans (p. 100).

Newton describes these agonies more in detail in his tract and relates his experiences in emotional terms. An example of this is the way he describes the way slaves are 'stored' on board a ship, A slave ship takes as many slaves as possible and a vessel of a hundred tons takes between 220 and 250 slaves on board. There are only three rooms and the slaves lie in these in rows, close to each other, like books on a shelf. This means :

"... that the poor creatures, thus cramped for want of room, are likewise in irons, for the most part both hands and feet, and two together, which makes it difficult for them to turn or move, to attempt either to rise or to lie down, without hurting themselves, or each other....[the motion of the ship makes this even worse as does] [T]he heat and smell of these rooms, when the weather will not admit of the slaves being brought upon deck, and of having their rooms cleaned every day, would be almost insupportable to a person not accustomed to them." (p.110)

It is no more than logical than this situation causes many slaves to become ill and to die; "... the loss of a third part ... is not unusual." (p. 111).

Newton also describes what happens if the wretched slaves attempt to rise against their oppressors; it "... brings on instantaneous and horrid war: .... [such risings] are seldom quelled without much mischief and bloodshed on both sides." (p.103). The consequences for the slaves if they do not succeed or are found out beforehand are terrible as Newton describes.

"I have seen them sentenced to unmercifully whippings, continued till the poor creatures have not had power to groan under their misery, and hardly a sign of life has remained. I have seen them agonizing for hours, I believe for days together, under the torture of the thumbscrews; a dreadful engine, which, if the screw be turned by an unrelenting hand, can give intolerable anguish. There have been instances in which cruelty has proceeded still further; but as I hope they are few, and I can mention but one from my own knowledge ...., a captain ... [who in such a case] studied, with no small attention, how to make death as excruciating as possible. For my readers sake, I suppress the recital of particulars." (p. 104).

At several places in his tract he assesses that the slave trade and the way it is executed imbibe otherwise gentle and well disposed people with a ferociousness and savage insensibility which one would not think to be possible. In this respect, Newton relates the story of a mate who cold-bloodedly drowned a child because its crying disturbed his sleep. Another terrible example he mentions is the captain who decides to throw more than one hundred slaves overboard because he fears a shortage of fresh water. Next, Newton brings the fate of the women slaves to the attention of the reader. The treatment of women by 'an enraged and licentious army' in situations of war, quite naturally, heavily affects every feeling mind.

"But the enormities frequently committed in an African ship, though equally flagrant, are little known *here*, and are considered *there*, only as matters of course. When the women and girls are taken on board a ship, naked trembling, terrified, perhaps almost exhausted with cold fatigue, and hunger, they are often exposed to the wanton rudeness of white savages. The poor creatures cannot but understand the language they hear, but the looks and manner of the speakers are sufficiently intelligible. In imagination, the prey is divided, upon the spot, and only reserved till opportunity offers." (p. 105).

Newton proceeds no further because "... this is not a subject for declamation" (p. 105). He also denies that such a treatment is less cruel for African women who are after all savages than for European women who are more civilized. He does this by relating his experiences with living and talking with black Africans which are very positive indeed. Again, the portrayal of the treatment of slaves is made even more negative by contrasting it with the way these people behave without being corrupted by Europeans.

Finally, Newton relates the fate of the slaves who arrive safely in the colonies happy to have survived the terrible voyage. Their fate is even worse; it is "a continual progress from bad to worse." (p. 111). In his time, theirs is only "... excessive toil, hunger, and the excruciating tortures of the cart-whip inflicted at the caprice of an unfeeling overseer, proud of the power allowed him of punishing whom, and when, and how he pleases." (p. 111-2). He tells that - as a planter told him - skillful calculators in the West Indies had calculated that it was much cheaper to wear out the slaves and to replace them by new ones than to feed and treat them well. He ends by asking how people can plead "... for a commerce so iniquitous, so cruel, so oppressive, so destructive, as the African Slave Trade!" (p. 113).

Alongside these tracts of Benezet and Newton, a host of written material against slavery and the slave trade was published<sup>15</sup>. This material consisted mainly of (1) tracts and pamphlets; (2) literary works, mostly poems; and (3) pieces in newspapers and magazines. Important examples of the first category are Clarkson's prizewinning essay, the pamphlet that was based on this essay, and the publication of Clarkson's compilation of facts. Particularly, the latter hammered the horrible truth about the slave trade home to British society. Another important event was the republication of John Wesley's *Thoughts upon Slavery* which was widely influential because its author was the leader of a fast growing religious denomination, the Methodists. The following quotation gives an impression of the emotional way Wesley approached the subject.

"I would to God it [the slave trade] may never be found more: that we may never more steal and sell our brethren like beasts; never murder them by thousands. Oh, may this worse than Mohammedan, worse than pagan abomination be removed from us for ever. Never was anything such a reproach to England, since it was a nation, as the having a hand in this infernal traffic." (Wesley cited in Anstey 1975: 240).

Together, the foregoing description of the tracts and the citations taken from them illustrate fairly well how the slave trade was presented to the public in Britain.

Emotional depictions of slavery and the slave trade are also present in a large measure in literary works. These proceeded from a long tradition in Britain of anti-slavery verse, drama, and fiction that started already at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century and that often produced - as far as verse was concerned - bad poetry that directly addressed the sentiments of its public (Sypher [1942] 1969: 156-7). The Abolition Committee inspired the writing of anti-slavery poems<sup>16</sup> and took care of publishing them. Some also appeared in magazines and books. In these poems, the poets often sketched a very positive image of Africa and the black African<sup>17</sup> and - like Benezet - they contrasted this image with an emotional portrayal of the horrors of slavery and the slave trade. Other important topics in the poems were natural rights and the equality of men; the depravity of the Europeans; and the appeal to freedom as a fundamental characteristic of Britishness (Sypher [1942] 1969: 191).

A fair example of the way this poetry appealed to the sentiments of the British public is to be found in Samuel Pratt's poem *Humanity*. In this poem Pratt portrays the black African as a natural bard in the following description:

"Musicians, Poets, too, by nature taught,  
A song spontaneous bursting from a thought ,,,  
Nature to harmony attunes the ear,  
and her nice touches o'er their limbs appear,  
Each nerve extatic springs to the rebound,  
And every motion seems to paint a sound."

Further down in his poem he contrast this noble savagery with the sufferings of the slave as follows.

"Behold that axe the quivering limb assails,  
Behold that body weltering in its wails!

Ah! hear that Bludgeon fall, that lash resound,  
Ah! see those wretches writhing on the ground!  
See yonder mangles mass of Atoms lie,  
Behold that Christian's hands the flames apply,  
At the bare feet is laid the sulphurous train,  
Climbs to the heart and burns into the brain."  
(Sypher [1942] 1969: 197)

This emotional contrasting technique is to be found in other poems as well along with the already mentioned topics like equality and freedom. For instance, Edward Rushton relates in his *West Indian Eclogues* (1787) how easily slaves were punished on the plantations.

"In the first eclogue, Adoma [a slave] explains to Jumba [also a slave] why he has been so brutally whipped: yesterday, his wife Yaro was working in the fields with her infant son strapped to her back. When the child cried and Yaro stopped to nurse him, the driver 'with his cow-skin cut her tender frame.' Adoma assaulted the driver, and was bound and whipped."

When both slaves conspire to take revenge, one of them points out to the other what may happen if they fail and the poem continues with:

"Oh! think on *Pedro*, gibbeted alive!  
Think on his fate - six long days to survive!  
His frantic looks, - his agonizing pain, -  
His tongue outstretch'd to catch the dropping rain;  
His vain attempts to turn his head aside,  
And gnaw the flesh which his own limbs supplied."

This bleak description is later on contrasted with memories of the life in Africa in the following way:

"... upon our native soil we lay;  
When we repos'd beneath the friendly shade,  
And quaff'd our palmy wine, and round survey'd  
Our naked offspring sporting free as air ..."

Rushton closes this poem in a grim way by bringing "... the news of the killing of Jumba for his plots, and with the scourging of the aged Ango for breaking a water pot." (Sypher [1942] 1969: 183-4).

Taken together, eighteenth-century poetry - sentimental like the other literature of that period - is very well suited to appeal to the sentiments of people and is, thus, an important weapon in the abolition campaign. It succeeds in conveying striking images particularly with the sensitive descriptions of pastoral Africa, the noble Negro, and the cruelties inflicted by heartless Europeans.

In the theater, there were - strictly spoken - no anti-slavery plays but "... only a number of plays in which the Negro played its part." (Sypher [1942] 1969: 231). Occasionally, plays expressed anti-slavery sentiment, but the crusading spirit so typical of poetry and fiction was lacking. Still, theater played a supporting role in the abolition campaign. This becomes clear from the fact that *Oroonoko* - the first play in the noble savage tradition - was adapted because "... existing versions of the play were deemed insufficiently abolitionist..." This was done when it opened in Manchester in 1788 and "... was rewritten to conform to Manchester's new militancy .... [N]ewspapers also noted the increase in performances of *Oroonoko* elsewhere ...." (Drescher 1986: 228).

The novel gave, more than poetry or plays, ".,.,. widest play to anti-slavery feeling .... Anti-slavery was an almost 'occasional' subject for the poet; but prose fiction, an amalgam of sentiment, sensationalism, and reforming zeal found the West Indies irresistible." (Sypher [1942] 1969: 257-8). It did so from the beginning of the century and prose fiction assisted, quite naturally, in arousing anti-slavery feelings during the abolition campaign. A typical example of such anti-slavery sentimentalism is presented by Sypher who describes Susannah Rowson's novel

*Inquisitor* (1788) as follows.

"This pseudo-novel is a flow of impressions and consequent tender reveries.... [in which] she 'reflects' upon the inhumanity of the hand that scourges a slave. [she writes] 'Why did I blush, why did I tremble, as I pronounced the word slave? - It was because I was ashamed of the appellation - It is a word that should never be used between man and man - the negro on the burning sands of Africa, was born as free as him who draws his first breath in Britain - and shall a Christian ... for a little sordid pelf, sell the freedom of this poor negro, only because he differs from him in complexion?' This 'reflection' .. provokes [the author] to fancy the Negro in Africa sitting in his 'little hut' with 'his jetty companion by his side.' An infant is at her breast; two others are 'prattling at her knee' ('serenity played on every countenance'). Then come the Europeans with baubles; they ornament the wife's 'jetty locks with glittering toys.' The Negro is lured to the shore, and 'bids adieu to liberty forever.' His wife 'trims up their hut - lays her dear babes to sleep - and then prepares a supper for her love, composed of wholesome roots and fruit.' Here Mrs. Rowson's heart is 'wrung so keenly' that she cannot go on. 'Had not that poor negro a soul?'" (Sypher [1942] 1969: 281-2).

There is another line of writing that played an important role in anti-slavery: the autobiographic writings of former slaves who had had the chance to learn and write English, As Walvin states:

"Their free voice told of common experiences; of the fears and slender hopes of their mute fellow Blacks. The published works of or about the Africans are few but of crucial importance. Their value lies not simply in the stark and at times horrifying descriptions of the Africans' lives, but in the unique insight they offer into black society." (1973: 80).

Two of these former slaves played a distinctive role in the abolition campaign, viz., Equiano and Cugoano. The first published his autobiography in 1789 and it became an instant success. As he was ten years old when he was enslaved, he could present vivid memories of Africa, the act of enslavement, and the way he was transported to the Americas; his book gave a realistic and inside picture what it was like to be a slave. (Walvin 1973: 89-95). Ottobah Cugoano was also taken from Africa when he was a boy and on the basis of his experiences he composed a tract titled *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery* (1787). Both were also politically active and wrote series of petitions and letters to prominent figures in British society. (Walvin 1973: 95-7). An impression of the way they approached these figures, may be gleaned from Equiano's petition to the Queen.

*"To the QUEEN's most Excellent  
Majesty.*

MADAM,

Your Majesty's well known benevolence and humanity emboldens me to approach your royal presence, trusting that the obscurity of my situation will not prevent your Majesty from attending to the sufferings for which I plead.

Yet I do not solicit your royal pity for my own distress; my sufferings, although numerous, are in a measure forgotten. I supplicate your Majesty's compassion for millions of my African countrymen, who groan under the lash of tyranny in the West Indies."

He continues with pointing out that the 'oppression and cruelty exercised to the unhappy negroes' have reached British Parliament and requests her to use her influence 'in favour of the wretched Africans.' (Crahan et al. 1976: 258). In this way, the writings of these former slaves stirred the feelings of many in British society but, probably even more important, they demonstrated black humanity which did much "... to restore a lost humanity in the eyes of white society." (Walvin 1973: 98).

Other examples of emotional language in print are to be found in the petitions that the abolitionists used as a way to mobilize public opinion in order to put pressure on members of parliament and the cabinet. Such emotional laden language could be found in petitions as well as in the advertisements and other calls to sign the petitions. Drescher, e.g., cites such a call in the *Northampton Mercury*. It informed the inhabitants of the county that "... [T]he Northampton County petition was lodged in different towns 'for the Signatures of all those who wish to suppress this abominable traffic' .... 19 January 1788." (1986: 213). Such emotional typifications occurred in other petitions and petition calls as well in which religious depictions such as 'unchristian' often dovetailed neatly with a broader humanitarian response (Oldfield 1995: 115). The same author assesses on the basis of newspaper reports:

"All petitioners were agreed that the slave trade was 'inhuman' or 'fundamentally unjust and enormously oppressive'. Many went further, evoking images that sought to give expression to middle-class anxieties. The Devon petition of 1788, for instance, began with a

passionate denunciation of 'that iniquitous, cruel and infamous traffic carried on between Africa and America - by dragging our fellow creatures from everything dear to them into slavery.' The language used here is revealing. Slaves were frequently referred to as 'our fellow creatures'; abolitionists, in turn, liked to describe themselves as 'friends to humanity.' Similarly, it was not uncommon to draw out the cruelty of the slave trade in this way, the breaking up of families, the practice of 'purchasing harmless Men, Women and Children, to sell in British Dominions for Slaves.' The trade, in short, was offensive." (1995: 115).

The abolitionists were eager to get their views published in the press and also did their best to get tracts, poems and other work positive for their cause in newspapers and magazines. Access to the press was a must for the abolition movement because, by the 1780s, there existed a well-developed media system consisting of national and provincial newspapers, magazines and other periodicals, which was a key facility for political action. In this respect, the movement was successful and in 1787 and 1788 there was an explosion of media attention for the abolitionist cause (Drescher 1986: 207). The tone of the pro-abolitionist pieces in the newspapers and magazines was like in the other publications emotional but their potential impact was far greater because these media reached the whole nation. They could therefore appeal to the emotions of far more people than publications like books, tracts, and pamphlets, could.

All in all, the abolitionists did not shrink away from using emotional language in a way that some historians find to be overdone; Sypher speaks about sentimentalism in the anti-slavery literature ([1942] 1969: 105) and Porter compares it even with "... the pseudo-solemn manner (of writing) of the modern tabloid newspaper." (1970: 59). On the other hand, slavery in the Americas and the Atlantic slave trade were so cruel that their description hardly needed any exaggeration. Still, the abolitionists produced enough printed work, e.g., concerning the impolicy of the trade, that contained matter-of-fact argumentations against the trade without these emotional depictions.

#### *Emotions in abolitionist imagery*

The image became an influential weapon in political struggles during the second half of the eighteenth century which the abolitionists gratefully exploited. An image depicts a wrongful situation in a condensed form which clarifies the message of movement actors at a glance. This enables it to affect the viewers directly. As Craton et al. state: "The more graphic accounts of the horrors of slave-trading made perhaps the greatest impact on the public imagination ...." (1976: 231). The abolitionists employed two types of graphic material - artefacts and printed images - to stir the antislavery emotions of the British public. Through this material, they developed a visual abolitionist culture which effected the wider culture. These effects may be witnessed in paintings, engravings, and caricatures<sup>18</sup>.

The central artefact that the abolitionist movement produced was a medallion. It took its design after the seal of the Abolition Committee designed by William Hackwood, a employee of Wedgwood. The medallion was, above all, an initiative of Josuah Wedgwood, earthenware manufacturer and an early member of the Committee. The medallion depicted a kneeling slave in chains encircled by the text 'Am I not a Man and a Brother?' (Oldfield 1995: 156-7) (See figure 1).



Figure 1

It captured the enormity of slavery at one blow and brought the antislavery message directly to the heart of people. With this medallion, Wedgwood clearly touched the right chord<sup>19</sup> and it soon became a very popular image that "... became a familiar sight on cups, plates, broaches, and pendants ...." (Blackburn 1988: 139). Alongside this innovation of the abolitionists, other abolition artefacts made their appearance as well.. The same and other designs were, e.g., put on token coins, mostly pennies and halfpennies, that served as small change and as collector items (Oldfield 1995: 159-60). This way, Wedgwood made "... abolition fashionable ... helped to fix in the public mind an [emotional] image that would be forever associated with the abolition of slavery and the slave trade." (Oldfield 1995: 163).

In the same period, printed images became very popular, particularly in middle-class homes. This growing consumer market offered the abolitionists a pre-eminent opportunity to spread their message. They entered this market with an engraving showing the plan of a loaded slave ship (see figure 2).





It became the most famous pictorial representation of the abolition campaigns and "... the slave ship soon hung in homes throughout England." (Drescher 1986: 78). It was used in very different ways to appeal to the emotions of the public; as an illustration of the abominable traffic in antislavery lectures or in more private demonstrations of the enormity of the trade. Hannah More, poet, friend of Wilberforce and member of the Clapham Sect, e.g., "... carried with her, as she moved in the fashionable circles of London society, a print of Clarkson's drawing of a slave ship, complete with instruments of torture, with which to arouse her friends." (Fladeland 1972: 50).

This way, abolitionism spawned an iconography that brought the antislavery message in its emotion-laden form to each doorstep. The most important effect of the graphic way of bringing the message home to people was that the images directly affected the feelings of many Britons.

### *Emotions in spoken word*

The abolition campaign in spoken word was executed on two levels, that of (1) the lecture hall; and (2) Parliament. The first is the most important for our subject because a veritable parliamentary antislavery debate was delayed for years. First of all, by the fact that Wilberforce and Pitt choose for an enquiry by the Privy Council and, when this was ready in 1789, the anti-abolitionists scored their first victory; they succeeded in making the debate on it fundamentally a nonevent. As Anstey points out, "[T]he case quite simply was not argued substantively but shelved on the ground that the Commons must hear their own evidence on the matter ...." (Anstey 1975: 271). Thus, there was only limited attention for abolition between 1787 and 1792 and we will, therefore, leave parliamentary debates out of consideration.

The antislavery-and-slave trade lecture was a crucial factor in the abolition campaign (Walvin 1985: 36). Right from the start, the abolitionists organized a vast amount of lectures and other antislavery gatherings all over the country and created several lecture circuits with speakers renowned for their oratory qualities. These lectures and gatherings drew huge audiences and were - if the meeting place was full - often repeated. Organizers never had trouble finding suitable meeting places; as Walvin observes, "Town halls, guild halls, music halls, Leeds coloured cloth hall, chapels, churches and so on all provided anti-slavery with a venue" (1985: 36).

The lecture was a very well suited means to arouse the feelings of the - common - people all over the country about the abominable traffic in flesh. The champion of these lectures was Clarkson, who travelled thirty-five thousand miles between 1787 and 1794 on seven lecture and research tours all over Britain. Missionaries who could give eyewitness accounts of the atrocities of slavery were also very useful in these circuits. Other very welcome speakers were former slave-traders, like John Newton, who could give first-hand descriptions of Africa and the slave trade. Newton made his lectures even more emotional by illustrating them with the famous engraving of the slave ship's plan and the torture instruments that were used aboard these ships (Clarkson did the same with the torture instruments he assembled on his tours)<sup>20</sup>. Former slaves also proved to be very useful as itinary speakers on such lecture tours. Well-known lecturers were, e.g., the already mentioned Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoano who could "... relate its horrors with the authority of experience (Blackburn 1988: 140; Walvin 1973: 93-7).

Because of the limited attention of historians of slavery for the role of emotions, there is only a limited amount of data about the ways these lectures used emotions in their speeches. One of the scarce citations is found in a note in

Drescher (1986) in which he cites from a speech delivered at the Coach-Makers Hall in London in January 1792. In this speech, the consumer was depicted as 'the master spring that gives motion the whole machine of Cruelties', and abstention [of slave-grown sugar] could unbend the spring of planter action." (Drescher 1986: 215). There is, however, no reason to assume that a lecture would have been less emotional than the written pieces mentioned above. Chances are that the lectures have been more emotional which may be gleaned from the fact that they were enormously popular as Walvin's description of Clarkson first tour in 1787-8 illustrates.

"He [Clarkson] was regularly staggered by the crowds packing his lecture rooms [and the lecture was partly] responsible for the transformation of the concept of black freedom, from the preserve of a small handful of propertied, educated men of sensibility - Wilberforce and his friends - into the stuff of mass, democratic politics" (1985: 35).

The enthusiasm for abolition aroused by the emotional approach of the abolitionist may also be indicated by rapid success of the boycott of West Indian sugar. In 1791, a nationwide boycott of slave-grown sugar was begun which directly brought women and children into the orbit of the abolition campaign. This sign of the new consumer power attracted many people and estimates are that at its peak the boycott involved some 300.000 families<sup>21</sup> (Drescher 1986: 78-9; Oldfield 1995: 57-8). The economic effects of the boycott were not so much important as its 'signalling' function. In Oldfield's words: "... the boycott hinted a depth of popular feeling that, once harnessed, might yet prove decisive." (1995: 58).

### **The anti-abolitionists and emotions**

During the first abolition campaign the opposition to abolition took the form of a counter movement which undertook similar activities as the abolitionists did. The most important actor of this counter movement, the SMO, was the London Society of West Indian Planters and Merchants. This SMO took care of the production and distribution of written material such as pro slavery tracts and pamphlets. Examples are: *An Abstract of the Evidence favourable to the African Trade* and *A Defence of the Planters in the West Indies*. Other writers also wrote such tracts at their own initiative, e.g., the reply to the abolitionist tract of Ramsay of 1774. The Society also took the difficult task in hand to get notices favorable to slavery and the slave trade in the media. It provided material for publication in the newspapers, national and provincial, wrote letters to the editors, provided rebuttals to abolition pieces, and even paid editors to insert their contributions in the papers. The anti's attempted as well to employ the weapon of petitioning but were not very successful at that. In 1791, they undertook the difficult task of mobilizing the public for their cause in a desperate effort to stem the abolitionist tide. The propaganda campaign that they launched was, however, not much of a success story.

At the same time, the slavery interest acted as a pressure and lobby group in the world of politics and built a powerful alliance against abolitionism. As Anstey states: "The West Indians could claim an impressive bloc of support at this time [1788/9]." (1975: 289). This encompassed MP's in the Commons, peers in the House of Lords, and members of the cabinet<sup>22</sup>. Alongside lobbying, the defenders of slavery and the slave trade were engaged in influencing the inquiries by the Privy Council and the Commons. They provided evidence and witnesses (which they also groomed) to present an idyllic picture of the slave trade and a grim one of Africa.

The defense against the abolitionist attack rested primarily on the notion that the abolitionist attack threatened the leading position of Britain in the world and put also the existing social order in jeopardy. Slavery and the slave trade

were in the national interest; it contributed to the collective wealth and power of the empire (Drescher 1986: 20). Ending them would thus be an unwise policy and therefore harmful for all Britons. The discourse about the policy and impolicy of slavery and the slave trade progressed generally in a businesslike manner and, in most cases, neither side used emotional appeals in it.

Yet, the defenders of slavery also brought emotions into play. First of all, they used emotional language because they were really angry. Abolition threatened the economic interests of slave traders, plantation owners, and merchants in colonial ware, but, what is more, it attacked their social status in society as well. The fact that they - respected members of society - could be called thieves and murderers with impunity infuriated them. In their view, the existing social order based on legitimate hierarchy and the (sacrosanct) right of property was fundamentally in danger when the government let such things happen. Davis states this argument very clearly.

"They [the West Indians] and their proslave allies did their best to evoke fears that any humanitarian tampering with the slave system would open Pandora's box, as the Earl of Abingdon put it, and let loose democratic forces that would ultimately destroy both monarchy and rank: 'The Order, and Subordination, the Happiness of the whole habitable Globe is threatened,' Abingdon warned. 'What anarchy, confusion, and bloodshed,' Gilbert Francklyn asked, 'may follow too nice and critical an enquiry into the exact portion of each man's particular liberty, the society of which he is a member may have a right to deprive him of?' " (1975:345).

The rage of the anti-abolitionists came out into the open in various ways; the most important being (1) personal attacks; (2) denouncing Africa and its inhabitants; and (3) - hypocritically - arguing that both slavery and the slave trade were in the interests of the slaves themselves. In all three cases, the expression of rage and the strategical use of emotion signs (and, when needed, the clever omission of them) were skillfully mixed. This was successful (for the time being) in the realm of politics but did not elicit much response from the general public<sup>23</sup>.

Anti-abolitionists attacked their opponents personally on all kind of occasions. The use of stereotypes that referred negatively to the fact that many abolitionists were Evangelical was very popular. The abolitionists were, e.g., depicted as sectaries or "... gloomy fanatics and dangerous visionaries ..." (Rice 1975: 219). Fuller - a leading anti-abolitionist - referred to the abolitionists as 'enthusiasts and fanatics' and to their arguments as 'that horrid mass of calumny' (Furneaux 1974:104) and for Cobbett the abolitionists were 'the hypocritical sect of negro-loving philanthropists' (Drescher 1986: 252). Sypher mentions a letter of Horace Walpole to Hannah More (September 29, 1791) in which he wrote "... that she is of the party of 'blood' - 'curses our clergy and feels for negroes' ...." ([1942] 1969: 212). On the same page Sypher cites James Boswell who typifies the abolitionists as 'zealots'. Anstey points out that the anti's also invented new negative stereotypes like 'Jacobin'. They also attempted to denounce abolitionism more in general as "... a general 'delusion' prevailing 'amongst all distinction of people' ...." (Drescher 1986: 213). Rice neatly summarizes this type of emotional attack as follows.

"At the simplest level, it was easy to make *ad hominem* comments about the gloomy fanatics and dangerous visionaries, especially once the murk of suspicion was thickened by revolution across the Channel, controversy over radicalism and sedition at home, and the fact that Britain was fighting for her life on the international scene. Men like Ramsay, with West Indian experience, could also be discredited, possibly with justice, by claiming that they themselves had mistreated their slaves while in the colonies." (1975: 219-20).

When in 1792 the abolition debate in Parliament came off the ground, this personal attacks surfaced also there. Lord Penrhyn assured the Commons that "... the tales of the Middle Passage were begotten in fanaticism and nurtured in falsehood ...." (Howse 1952:33). The anti-abolitionists also tried to discredit the abolitionists by accusing them of foul play in raising the petitions (schoolboys and paupers signing them). They accused the abolitionists of not reserving the signatures for the 'grave, respectable, and informed part of the community' (citation

from the speech of Colonel Tarleton, MP for Liverpool in Drescher 1986: 81). "One anti-abolitionist was outraged that the City of London commercial majority in favour of the slave trade should be placed on a equal footing with the 'enlightened miners of Cornwall' ...." (Drescher 1986: 219). Another popular topic in Parliament was the slave uprising in the French colony of St. Domingue (now Haiti) in 1791. This illustrated the foolishness of abolition and the anti's fully emphasized the atrocities committed by the rebelling slaves. "The West Indians spoke of 'rapes ... massacres ... conflagrations', 'impaled infants', 'acts of parricide' ...." (Geggus 1982: 126)<sup>24</sup>. The same author mentions another trick the anti's used. "An absurd story about Wilberforce being worshipped by the slaves of the French colonies appeared in several newspapers, probably planted by the pro-slavery lobby." (1982: 124).

The appeals to emotions did not remain without consequences, however. "William Wilberforce was threatened with violence in 1788 by a hostile witness and again in 1792 by slaving captains. The latter even tried to murder Clarkson on one of his research tours. The emotional tone of the abolition debate was neatly captured by Gisborne in a letter to Wilberforce on the occasion of the passing of the Dolben Bill. This created a storm of opposition to the abolitionists; especially Wilberforce was attacked. Gisborne wrote:

"I shall expect to read in the newspapers of your being carbonadoed by West Indian planters, barbecued by African merchants, and eaten by Guinea captains; but do not be daunted, for- I will write your epitaph" (citation in Howse 1952:34).

The second emotional response to abolitionist accusations consisted of the defamation of the black Africans and the country they came from. The anti-abolitionists tried to show that the Africans were of a different and lower genus than white Europeans, especially Englishmen. This ethnocentric and racist argument proceeded from the way some pro-slavery writers reacted to the rising tide of anti-slavery writings in the 1770s. This demanded a fierce response which was not long in coming. In 1773, Samuel Estwick wrote an economic defense of the slave trade and a tract addressed to Judge Mansfield who presided over the so called Somerset case<sup>25</sup>. In the last, he argued:

"... that Negroes were indeed not human beings in the same sense as Englishmen .... [moreover] [A]fter surveying barbarity, he concluded that the present state represented the summit of their potential, 'as compleat, as that of any other race of mortals; filling up that space in life beyond the bounds of which they are not capable of passing, differing from other men, not in *kind*, but in *species*' ...." (Barker 1978: 47-8).

The work of Estwick introduced the notions of superiority and inferiority in slavery debate. This added a rather nasty emotional tone to the already angry reactions of the proponents of slavery, particularly when these notions were reworked in the direction of plain racism by Edward Long. Long was an absentee planter and Jamaican official who became a well-known historian by writing a classic - *The History of Jamaica* (1774) - based on personal experience and existing published sources. As Craton et al. make clear, "[C]entral to Long's defence of slavery and the slave trade was a bitter denunciation of the Negro and black society on both sides of the Atlantic. In Long's hand, certain widespread assumptions, culled from existing published sources, were reduced to a gross caricature designed to persuade the reader of the Negro's innate inferiority." (1976: 260)<sup>26</sup>. Because black Africans were subhuman and had an animalistic nature, the use of them as beasts of burden was legitimate and thus no wrong.

Although plain racism played a marginal role<sup>27</sup> in this discourse, all kind of racially tinged notions abounded on the pro-slavery side. This may, e.g., be seen in the work of William Beckford, Jr., a planter who returned after a residence of thirteen years in Jamaica to England. In 1788 he wrote "... his *Remarks upon the Situation of Negroes in Jamaica* (1788), a tract exhibiting the character of the slave in the harshest light. The same hard view is carried in [his] *Descriptive Account [of Jamaica of 1790]* in which the Negroes are called 'slaves by nature,' making profitable

an investment of seventy millions." (Sypher [1942] 1969: 146). This harsh tone was, however, softened by the picturesque way in which he described the life on the plantations in Jamaica. Again, we see the emotional technique of contrast now used in a slightly different way by a literary gifted writer.

The description of the black African in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1788) show all the aspects of stereotyped thinking on the pro-slavery side.

"The Negro is possessed of passions not only strong but ungovernable; a mind dauntless, warlike and unmerciful; a temper extremely irascible; a disposition indolent, selfish and deceitful; fond of joyous sociality, riotous mirth and extravagant shew. He has certain portions of kindness for his favourites, and affections for his connections; but they are sparks which emit a glimmering light through the thick gloom that surrounds them, and which, in every ebullition of anger or revenge, instantly disappear. Furious in his love as in his hate; at best, a terrible husband, a harsh father and a precarious friend. A strong and unalterable affection for his countrymen and fellow passengers in particular seems to be the most amiable passion in the Negro breast.... As to all the other fine feelings of the soul, the Negro, as far as I have been able to perceive, is nearly deprived of them." (citation in Walvin 1973: 160)

This way of depicting the black Africans as inferior beings was a combination of two apologies. First, it justified the enslaving of black Africans and gave the slavery interest a defense against the accusation that enslaving them was fundamentally wrong and unjust. Second, it was an attempt of the planters and slave traders to clear themselves from the accusation that they treated the slaves rudely and cruelly. The fact that black Africans were barbarians implied that the standards applicable to them differed from those that should be applied to Englishmen.

In the third response to the abolitionist attack the anti's contended that slavery and the slave trade were in the interests of the slaves themselves. In order to prove this rather incredible point, the anti's used the same emotional technique as Benezet, only in reversed order. According to them, Africa was hell and the West Indies (inclusive the sea voyage) were heaven for the enslaved black Africans. They contended that:

- Africa was a barbaric continent pestered by feuds, wars, and bloody massacres. The slave traders were, in fact, doing the people of Africa a favor, or as Porter phrases the plantocratic argument, "The slave trade served the cause of civilization by carrying victims of barbarism to new homes, where education, discipline, and religion were available for their benefit" (1970:55);
- In contrast to barbaric Africa the West Indies were a veritable paradise. This thesis was further strengthened by the portrayal of the planter as a benevolent, patriarchal, and kind master (Lewis 1978);
- "... the transported African prisoner found the middle passage to be little less than a Elysian retreat ...." (Lewis 1978:42) or as Lord Penrhyn put it in the debate on the Dolben regulation Bill "... the captive slave looked upon the voyage from Africa as 'the happiest period of his life' ...." (see Howse 1952:33).

Above, we mentioned the spin-off of the abolitionist iconography on the realm of the 'fine' arts, particularly on paintings and engravings. Both sides in the abolition discourse inspired also other artists with their vivid portrayals of slavery, the slave trade and of each other. The abolition discourse provided very suitable material for a genre that became very popular in the 1780s and 1790s, the personal and political satire in the form of caricatures. Such prints were "[Q]uick and easy to produce .... [and] provided a biting and seemingly uninhibited commentary on eighteenth-century politics and society." (Oldfield 1995: 173). As Porter remarks, most of these caricaturists were friendly to abolition but - due to the inherent ambiguity of satire - "... this did not preclude an occasional poke at the crusaders' self-righteous zeal." (1970: 53).

The satirical prints also "... helped to popularise an image of blacks as servants, sailors, rioters, and beggars; in short, as part of plebeian culture. Worse, they were often the butt of jokes or introduced only to make a wider political point .... [and sometimes] had sexual overtones." (Oldfield 1995: 173). The prints that had the slave trade or slavery as their subject showed, on the one hand, the abject sides of these practices but, on the other hand, the comments on the side often called the message in the print into question. See, e.g., figure 3 in which the displayed distasteful spectacle - the murder of a young black woman for refusing to dance naked for the captain of a slave ship - is partly undone by the comments of the two sailors exiting the scene<sup>28</sup>

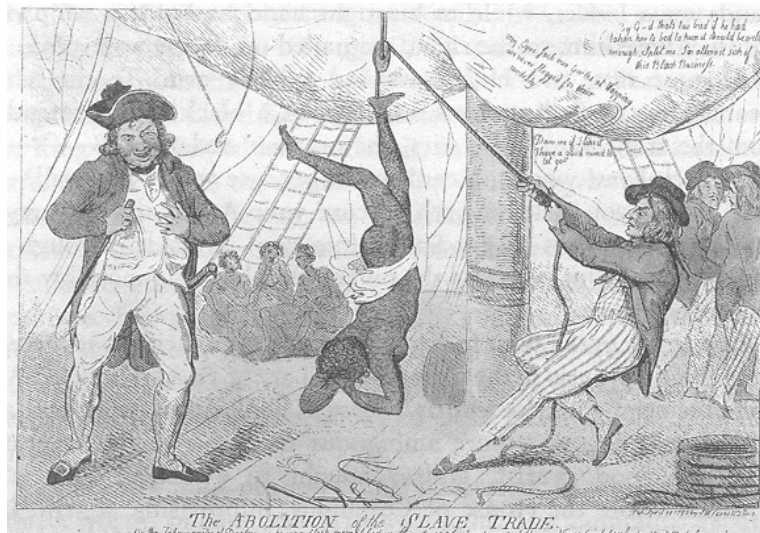


Figure 3

In spite of this ambiguity which made that such prints could easily be interpreted as anti-abolitionist ones, the overall effect was, most probably, positive for abolition. As Oldfield, rightly assesses: "[U]nintentionally, perhaps, they helped to popularize abolition and give it a political voice .... helped to familiarize the public with scenes of the most appalling cruelty ....[and] helped to make people think about the slave trade ....(1995: 179).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The foregoing survey of the first public campaign of the British abolition movement and the reaction to it shows that the feelings about the cause of the movement, abolition of the slave trade, often ran high. The formation of the Abolition Committee in 1787 and the collective actions the Committee organized led almost instantly to the coming into being of a public discourse on abolition. This discourse involved quite naturally the abolitionists and the people they attacked - the slave traders, planters, and the merchants in colonial ware. It spread, however, like wildfire all over society drawing in the political elites and the public at large - no class exempted. The tone of discourse, set by both the abolitionists and their opponents, was often very passionate and the contenders used every means available to arouse the feelings of politicians and other members of society. This conclusion leads, self-evidently, to the

question of why the abolition discourse became so emotional.

The first answer to this question is to be found in the character of slavery and the slave trade - the abolition of which was the ultimate goal of the movement. Slavery is a system of utmost inequality that can only be executed and maintained by the use of force. Generally, people do not become slaves (and remain so) voluntarily. In Africa, most slaves came from wars - in most cases initiated with the sole purpose of making slaves - and from inland slave raids. Slaves were made by force in most cases by other Africans who then sold them to the European slave traders. These traders invariably used excessive force to get the slaves on board of their ships, to keep them there, and to bring them to the Americas. Moreover, an eighteenth-century Atlantic voyage was not much of a pleasure but was made far worse for the slaves by the use of chains, etc. The situation in the colonies - being sold, separated from their families, seasoned, and often worked to death - was, however, still worse. As Newton stated, slavery implied a progression from bad to worse.

As Davis (1966) rightly concludes, the amount of force that is used in slavery is variable but the amount that was used in the Americas, particularly the British colonies, and during the Middle Passage was extreme. Questioning American slavery (the slave trade included) could therefore hardly be done in neutral terms and this is what we see; slavery and the slave trade were in most cases discussed in emotional terms. At the same time, slavery contains an inherent contradiction; the contradiction between the notion of the slave as a thing and an instrument of his master and the notion of the slave who is also a human being (Davis 1966). Contradictions always need solutions which mostly take the form of rationalizations. The same applies to inequalities. These must also be justified which boils down to being rationalized. As slavery involves both a fundamental contradiction and extreme inequality, the rationalizations of this institution have to go quite far in order to work. In this case, this means that the language through which the institution of slavery is rationalized is more than rational. It does not only address the cognitions of people but invariably their emotions as well (see on the point of rationalizing western slavery Davis 1966).

A quick look at the work of Edward Long, the ultimate compilation of plantocratic rationalizations and stereotypes, proves this point completely<sup>29</sup>. The earlier mentioned questioning of slavery and the slave trade led to reactions of people like Long. They put down in writing what slave traders and planters thought and how they spoke between themselves. Such writings became the more emotional as they involved a reaction to attacks of their interests and of their social position and status. And, there is probably nothing in the world that leads as easily to emotions as the attack of people's interests, particularly when the attack concerns the core of one's existence. This is obviously the case when social position and status are involved. The historical studies of abolition proves that this was the case with the slave traders, planters, and merchants; the protection of interests (status included) forms the core of the emotional anti-abolitionist defense.

Social movements are directed at the inclusion of outsiders whose exclusion the actors in such movements consider as an injustice. These actors attempt to redress the existing social inequalities and thus attack the status quo and the interests related to it which the attacked in their turn will consider as being unjustified. As we stated in the theoretical section, perceived injustices and infractions of existing rules raise feelings of anger and indignation. This means that in discourses initiated by SMAs emotions will always be involved. How high the emotions will run in a particular case is, however, variable. The nature of slavery and the slave trade and the large economic and social

interests connected with them make abolition an extreme case but as other movement campaigns show, e.g. the civil right campaigns or those of the women's movement, emotions are unavoidable. It seems fair to conclude that social movements and emotions go together; emotionless movement and counter movement campaigns simply do not exist. Movement actors (those of a counter movement included) use emotion signs in their collective actions which makes the discourses they participate in necessarily emotional. How emotional depends on *the nature of the cause of a movement*, particularly *the degree of inequality* related to it, and/or *the centrality of the interests* that are attacked - our first variable.

An second answer to the question mentioned above may be found in the cultural climate of the late eighteenth century. This era is often typified as the Age of Reason but the widespread interest in happiness - of oneself and of others - and the related emphasis on benevolence - good works and philanthropy - made it an Age of Compassion as well. Contemporary philosophical and religious treatises show that feeling and sensibility were important values for many Britons. The pre-eminence of feeling in eighteenth-century Britain may, above all, be seen in the literature of that period in which sympathy and genuine emotion became dominant virtues<sup>30</sup> (Davis 1966: 357). The same author assesses that the sentimental drama "... enjoyed increasing popularity by the 1720's, and was a prevailing vogue by the 1760s. Poets, novelists, and essayists paid homage to the cult of sensibility; the result of their collective efforts was a profound though immeasurable transformation in public values." (1966: 356). The mix of feeling with benevolism produced a heightened sensibility to the 'misfortunes of the innocent' (1966: 356). It is quite logical that in such a context social movement actors will easily employ emotional laden words, symbols, and metaphors; at least far more easily than movement actors do nowadays. *The cultural context* is another - the second - variable in determining the height of emotions in a particular movement discourse.

A third answer is to be found in the emotional tone of the foregoing debates that are initiated by critical thinkers - the emotional tone of critical-community-discourses. Within the critical community concerning slavery two types of anti-slavery discourses may be discerned; (1) a pre-dominantly emotional one that took place especially in religious circles; and (2) a more rational discourse among the Enlightenment philosophers and among politicians<sup>31</sup>. The first discourse is the most important in (partly) explaining the later emotional tone of the abolition discourse not only because it was the emotional one but also because a pivotal figure in it, Benezet, determined the arguments of the later abolitionists.

The religious discourse originated in the colonies that became later the United States. It arose in the Quaker community with the Germantown Protest of 1688 as Quakers living in this place sent a petition to one of the Quaker Meetings. This petition concerned the involvement of Quakers in 'the traffic of men-body'. They took the words of George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends - the Quakers, about 'the brotherhood of all men, including slaves,' quite literally and thus questioned the legitimacy of 'stealing, robbing and selling' black Africans and of 'purchasing and keeping them as slaves' (Bruns 1977: 3-4). Although these Quakers used emotional descriptions now and then, their petition was not radical and emotionally muted. This remained so during the forty years in which time and again protests erupted within the Society of Friends.

This way of protesting changed in the 1730s when two Quaker perfectionists, Ralph Sandiford and Benjamin Lay, appeared on the stage. Their antislavery writings were far more emotional than the foregoing ones and both



Quakers in particular enhanced their emotional tone by very dramatic presentations<sup>32</sup>. Their eccentricity precluded their writings from being accepted among the Friends, but this changed with the work of John Woolman and Anthony Benezet. They convinced the Quaker Meetings in 1760s and 1770s that involvement in slavery and the slave trade was sinful upon which these Meetings ordered the brethren to refrain from them. Although their language was less emotional than that of Sandiford and Lay, it was nonetheless more emotional than the earlier protests. The eccentrics clearly triggered the emotional potential within this religious sect<sup>33</sup>.

Alongside the developments among the Quakers, there were also religious changes in Britain that affected the critical-community-discourse about slavery. In the second half of the eighteenth century, Britain was struck by a "... great evangelical wave which swept through most denominations ...." (Turley 1991: 7). Many people turned evangelical either within the Church of England (see, e.g., the influential Clapham Sect) or outside this Church, particularly by becoming member of the dissident sect of the Methodists. Evangelicalism was a religion of the heart that appealed to the instincts, emotions, and sentiments of people rather than to reason (Anstey 1975: 127-8; Mellor 1951: 20). It preferred "... the wisdom of the heart over the dispassionate logic of the head. " (Matthews 1980: 208-9). The result was an emotional religion that produced an intense feeling of urgency in combatting the progress of sin among its members (Rice 1975: 184). As many of these Evangelicals participated in the early antislavery debates, Evangelicalism provided the later abolition movement with its fervour (Craon et al. 1976: 196).

The degree of emotion in critical-community-discourses is in itself variable and this may affect the use of emotion signs in later movement campaigns. The emotional tone in these discourses is, however, related to the earlier mentioned variables, i.e., the nature of the cause and the related degree of inequality and the cultural context which have an independent effect on the tone of critical-community-discourses. Still, we see that such discourses may have an effect of their own such as the eccentric performances of Sandiford and Lay had. A *critical-community-discourse* may thus intensify or lower the emotionality of later discourses of movement actors and is our third variable.

The fourth answer concerns emotionality as a conscious strategy. The abolitionists very cleverly employed a variety of emotion signs to make people think about slavery and the slave trade - practices they truly abhorred. It cannot be assessed, however, with certainty for which goals they used these signs because the historians of anti-slavery did not study abolition as a social movement in a sociological sense. The only exception being Drescher who focused mainly on the external effects of mobilization, however. More specifically, systematic attention for mobilization of resources and building of collective identities is lacking and it is thus difficult to relate the use of emotion sign as strategy to specific goals of movement actors.

Yet, it is clear that the abolitionists used emotion signs (1) to convince audiences that the slave trade was immoral, horrible, and fully unjustified; and (2) to raise sympathy for the undeserved fate of these slaves. The abolitionists tried to convince people by stating the facts about the slave trade (and slavery) as realistic as possible - the first strategy. This would in itself make the appalling character of the trade clear to every sensible person. The most important targets of this strategy were the responsible politicians in Parliament and the cabinet *and* the public opinion. They found the latter important because a favorable public opinion would put extra pressure onto the powerholders.

In the second strategy the abolitionists used the technique of contrast in order to enlarge the empathy of the audiences. This way, it could support the first strategy because it affected the opinion of the public in the direction of the abolitionist point of view. This empathy-strategy was, however, mostly not used in the political realm. Politicians were obviously considered as being too 'cold-blooded' for the abolitionists used emotion signs more restrictively in the sphere of politics than outside it. Another goal of this second strategy was to make people more willing to participate in the abolition movement or to support it in other ways. As far as may be gleaned from the historical studies, raising sympathy with the undeserved fate of the black slaves was rather successful in the mobilization of personal, financial, and other resources.

It is even more difficult to assess the strategic role of emotions in the defense of the slave trade because data concerning their activities are even more scanty than concerning the abolitionist actions. From what we know, it is clear that the anti-abolitionists used emotion signs, mainly words, to discredit the abolitionists. In their view, this would self-evidently discredit the message that the abolitionists brought; a zealot cannot talk sensibly. This way, the anti's hoped to block the reception of the abolition message among politicians and the public. Next to this strategy, they used emotion words to deny the abolitionist descriptions. The trade and slavery were not as bad as the abolitionists contended and the situation in Africa was far worse than the abolitionists said - the familiar emotion-contrast-technique. Moreover, black Africans were barbarians and thus the standards that applied to them differed from the standards applicable to white Englishmen.

We conclude that movement actors use emotion signs for internal purposes, particularly the mobilization of resources, and for reaching the external goal of the movement - changing societal arrangements or preventing that. This *strategical-instrumental use of emotion signs* contributes to the emotionality of discourses within a movement and outside it - the fourth variable. We have here, however, a variable that differs from the foregoing ones because it mainly depends on the considerations and choices of movement actors. The value it takes (and therewith its effect on the emotional tone of a movement discourse) is far less a question of determination than of agency and thus more difficult to assess (see on the role of agency in social movements D'Anjou 1996 and D'Anjou & Van Male 1998).

The main conclusion of the secondary analysis of historical studies of the abolition of the slave trade in Great Britain is that both the abolitionists and their opponents used a great variety of emotion signs as means to communicate with the world of politics and with society at large. They did so because they were truly angry about what they perceived as gross injustices. In the discourse on abolition both parties acted out their feelings of indignation and tried to manage the emotions of the members of British society in order to enhance their participation in and support of the abolition struggle and to convince them of the righteousness of the cause (abolition or the continuation of the slave trade). The use of emotion signs enhanced the emotionality of the abolition discourse that took place between 1787 and 1792.

As we have elaborated above, four variables determined the degree of emotionality in this discourse. Two of these variables we already discerned in a way in the theoretical section.

1. The nature of the cause SMAs (counter-SMAs included) struggle for. This means in the case of a social movement the degree of inequality that has be redressed or in the case of a counter movement the centrality of

the interests that are attacked. These determine the level of moral indignation which is indeed the basic animus of every social movement and which shows itself in the emotion signs used.

2. The strategic-instrumental choices of SMAs whether or not to use emotion signs in a particular discourse.

The other two variables are new, however. The first of these is a logical one because the cultural context or climate is always important when meaning is involved. The second comes from Rochon (1998) and is a very useful contribution to the theory of social movements and emotions and to theories of social movements in general as well.

The historical studies of abolition also show that the use of emotion signs proceed from a mix of rage and cool calculations. These go mostly hand in hand and can only analytically be discerned. There are, moreover, indications (but alas not more than that) in the historical studies of antislavery that point to a dynamics of action and reaction affecting the use of emotion signs. We can say not much about this point because of the paucity of data. It needs, however, further investigation as do the interactions between the four variables.

Finally, the analysis points to the importance of emotions in social movement processes. An important change in society like the abolition of the slave trade proceeded, above all, from new modes of social and political mobilization (Drescher 1986; 1994) which - as we have seen above - were heavily infused with emotions. We assume that this was not only the case with the abolition movement but that social movements and emotions are indivisible. In our opinion, emotions are even essential to get a movement started and to keep it going over time. Emotions therefore need scholarly attention in their own right and must not be taken for granted as folklore of a social movement.

## Notes

1. In this paper, we will use the term *social movement actor* (SMA) instead of the more current term *social movement organization* (SMO). The latter term suggests, in our view, far too much that social movements are ongoing concerns like business concerns whose boards (SMOs) take decisions about collective actions based on rational calculations. Particularly, the emphasis on 'rational choice' in many articles and books on social movements hinder the sight on all those aspects of movement activities that are not 'strictly rational'. This is at least the case with the abolition movement which is for a large part incomprehensible when it is exclusively seen through a 'rational choice' lens.
2. Self-evidently, those who resist the claims of the challengers - mostly because giving in to them will damage their interests - may do so as a social movement - a counter movement. In that case, all that is said about social movements applies to them as well, only in reversed order.
3. How SMAs do this has been subject of much recent literature on the culture of social movements, See, e.g., Morris and McClurg Mueller 1992, Johnston and Klandermans 1995, Gamson and Modigliani 1989, Williams 1995]
4. Harré (1986) uses the term 'emotion words', We think that the more general term 'emotion signs' is more appropriate as it encompasses verbal as well non-verbal denominators of emotions.
5. This does not mean that emotional meanings are invariable givens. They are, like other meanings, social constructions that may change, among other things, through movement actions. See on this matter D'Anjou and Van Male (1998). The emphasis on the construction aspect does, however, not imply that emotions are no more than social constructions. There is some form of an innate component involved as well

(Armon-Jones 1986; Jasper 1998).

6. The material of the case study comes from Anstey (1975), Craton (1974), Craton et al. 1976, Davis (1975), Drescher (1986), Rice (1975), Sypher ([1942] 1969), and Walvin (1973 & 1982). To enhance the readability of the text we will not refer to these authors unless specific elements or citations of an author are used.
7. Davis, e.g., mentions a sermon that was delivered as early as 1511 in Hispaniola in which Antonio de Montesinos denounced the enslaving of Indians as a wicked sin (1966: 168).
8. See for a penetrating analysis of these developments in relation to anti-slavery Davis (1966) or Anstey (1975). A summary may be found in d'Anjou (1996).
9. The fact that the racist argument did not appeal to the public underlines Curtin's assessment that racism was something of a later date and developed because of the attacks on slavery and the slave trade (1964: 36).
10. In the 1760s, "... the slave trader was not only social respectable, but his business was a recognized route to gentility, and was officially approved by the Board of Trade, the navy, and the nobility." (Davis 1966: 154). This positive image was changing, however. See, e.g., Sypher ([1942] 1969: 86-90, Drescher (1986: 18-9), or Davis (1975: 453-4).
11. Although most historians of anti-slavery state that the abolition struggle was very fierce, they are at the same time not very interested in the role emotions played in it. Therefore, their books and reports contain less material on emotions than we hoped they should do.
12. Assembling facts was one of the first undertakings of the Abolition Committee. This was particularly done by Clarkson who drove all over the country to organize local committees, to give lectures, and to unearth all there was to know about the slave trade by interviewing the people involved in it; soon "... the Abolitionists knew more of the trade than the Slavers themselves." (Furieux 1974: 75). As Lewis states, "It was a truly herculean task, at times involving the very real possibility of .... being murdered by the dock gangs in the employ of the powerful vested interests of the proslavery mercantile community." (1978: 41). Wilberforce and Pitt showed the same trust in the efficacy of factual information as they began the parliamentary campaign with an inquiry by the Privy Council because this would, as they thought, necessarily discredit the slave trade (Anstey 1975: 267).
13. The work of Benezet is, however, more than an emotionally worded tale of slavery and the slave trade but here we will focus only on the emotional side of it.
14. Reverend John Newton was Rector of St Mary Woolnoth and one of the founders of Evangelicalism (Craton et al. 1976: 254). He was also important as a 'guide' in Wilberforce's conversion to Evangelicalism (Furieux 1974: 37).
15. Sypher reports that the Abolition Committee "... was responsible for the printing of 25,526 reports and 51,432 pamphlets and books between May, 1878, and July, 1788," ([1942] 1969: 19). Drescher shows on the basis of research by Joyce Bert, Lowell Ragatz, and P.C. Lipscomb, "Just before the American of Independence about three antislavery tracts were published each year, Output rose to an annual average of under six in 1783-7, and then soared to over 46 per year in 1787-1792." (Drescher 1986: 207). In the same period, an explosion of newspaper attention could also be witnessed (Drescher 1986: 207).
16. Well-known examples are the Liverpool abolitionist William Roscoe, who wrote *The Wrongs of Africa*, the Claphamite Hannah More with

her influential *The Black Slave Trade*, and the renowned Evangelical poet William Cowper, who wrote the widely known *The Negro's Complaint*. This last poem became even more widely known as it "... was set to a popular tune and evidently designed as propaganda jingle." (Anstey 1975: 259).

17. Sypher speaks about a pseudo-Africa and a pseudo-Negro ([1942] 1969: 156-7). The poets portray Africa as a Garden of Eden and its inhabitants as noble savages uncorrupted by civilization. This mythical portrayal of so-called primitive peoples in distant parts of the world - Africa, the Americas, the South-Sea islands - proceeded from the turn to nature and the natural in seventeenth-century science and philosophy (and in Britain in religion as well).

18. As Oldfield (1995: 167-179) shows, the abolitionist iconography inspired other artists of which the painter Georg Morland was the most important. His painting *Execrable Human Traffic* (1788) was engraved by John Raphael Smith under the title *The Slave Trade* (1791). This print (and others after this and other paintings) were published and sold into the thousands.

19. This may be gleaned from the fact that over two hundred thousand copies of the medaillon were sold; it functioned as a sort of campaign button (Craon 1974:262).

20. Sypher cites Hannah More as a witness of such a presentation. She writes, "The writer of these lines [herself] has seen a complete set of chains, fitted to every separate limb of these unhappy, innocent men; together with instruments for wrenching open jaws, contrived with such ingenious cruelty as would shock the humanity of an inquisitor." ([1942] 1969: 195).

21. Such a boycott was easily accessible for many people as Drescher makes clear in his citation of the *Leicester Journal* of January 1792: "All could join [the sugar boycott]: 'Plebian, Peasant, Artist, this is a cause which you may engage secure of conquest; because far more glorious than that of sacking towns, or subduing kingdoms, is that of "bidding the oppressed go free" ... ye have only to refuse the commodity which is the price of blood, of the blood of brethren .... unite and conquer'...." (Drescher 1986: 215).

22. Important in this respect was the active support of the King and the rest of the Royal Family.

23. Because of the already mentioned (deplorable) fact that the antislavery historians are not very interested in emotions for their own sake, their studies provide even less data on the use of emotion signs by the anti-abolitionists.

24. The attitudes of most abolitionists to this insurrection were rather ambivalent. Most of them condemned it but used neutral terms like 'rebellion' or 'revolt' and judged the insurrection as understandable in the view of the way slaves were treated. Some even justified it and an individual abolitionist approved of it. Percival Stockdale, e.g., called the rising a justified revenge; '[Their] cries ... against their tyrants, is the *Voice* - their revenge, is the *Act* - of NATURE and of GOD!' (citation in Geggus 1982: 127).

25. The Somerset case concerned a court case about a runaway slave in England, James Somerset, who was defended against the claim of his master, Charles Stewart, by the well-known abolitionist, Granville Sharp. The case was used by abolitionists and slave owners alike to lay down a legal principle and became famous by the extensive coverage by the media and the enormous public interest in it.

26. Long did not only contend that black Africans were inferior, but described them in a highly negative and emotional manner as follows: "... A covering of wool, like the bestial fleece, instead of hair .... Their bestial or fetid smell .... In general, they are void of genius, and seem almost incapable of making any progress in civility of science. They have no plan or system of morality among them. Their barbarity to their children debases their nature even below that of brutes.... among so many millions of people, we have heard but of one or two

insignificant tribes, who comprehend any thing of mechanic arts, or manufacture; and even these, for the most part, are said to perform their work in a very bungling and slovenly manner, perhaps not better than an *oran-outang* might, with a little pains, be brought to do ...In many respects they are more like beasts than men; ...." (Craon et al. 1976: 260-262).

27. The same applies to another - marginal - line of defense, the justification of slavery based on the Bible. This could in itself arouse emotions in a very religious society like Great Britain in the 1770s and 1780s, but it did not (see for the reasons D'Anjou 1996: 182).

28. 'My Eyes Jack', says one, 'our Girles at Wapping are never flogged for their modesty'. 'By G---d that's too bad', replies the other. 'If he had taken her to bed it would be well enough. Split me I'm allmost [*sic*] sick of this Black Business' (Oldfield 1995: 175).

29. Walvin makes quite clear that this caricatural and selective portrayal of the black African fully demonstrates the paranoia which resulted from the way white Britons behaved in the West Indian colonies (1973: 163). This way, the plantocratic writers helped to colour the abolition discourse emotionally.

30. The effect of literature was particularly great in that period because eighteenth-century writing in Great Britain was: (1) religious in content; (2) moralistic in tone; (3) didactic in intent; and (4) realistic in presentation.

31. One of the central characteristics of the Enlightenment was the faith in reason as an instrument to understand and build society. From this follows, among other things, an inherent challenge of authority and the status quo, however moderate in most cases. Slavery did not escape the critical attention of these philosophers, see, e.g., John Locke, Montesquieu, John Hutcheson, James Beattie, Adam Smith, etc. and that of critical political thinkers like Burke (see Anstey 1975: 91-125). Although emotional language was not absent, the emphasis in their work laid on rational analysis.

32. Lay, for instance, condemned the slave trade in rhetorics like "The very worst part of the old Whores Merchandize [slaves], nasty filthy Whores of Whores, *Babilon's Bastards*" or through emotional performances such as plunging a sword into a hidden bladder filled with red juice at a Quaker meeting to show what involvement in this trade entailed (Davis 1966: 291).

33. Emotionality and the value that Quakers put on a humble life do not go well together, but this situation changed when a religious revival occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century.

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