



Black Atlantic Resistance of Enslaved Women in Robert Wedderburn's *The Horrors of Slavery* (1824) and Mary Prince's *The History of Mary Prince* (1831)

Raphael Hoermann

To cite this article: Raphael Hoermann (2026) Black Atlantic Resistance of Enslaved Women in Robert Wedderburn's *The Horrors of Slavery* (1824) and Mary Prince's *The History of Mary Prince* (1831), *Women's Writing*, 33:3, 330-350, DOI: [10.1080/09699082.2026.2696201](https://doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2026.2696201)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2026.2696201>



© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 31 Aug 2026.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



BLACK ATLANTIC RESISTANCE OF ENSLAVED WOMEN IN ROBERT WEDDERBURN'S *THE HORRORS OF SLAVERY* (1824) AND MARY PRINCE'S *THE HISTORY OF MARY PRINCE* (1831)

Raphael Hoermann 

Institute for Black Atlantic Research (IBAR), Research Centre for Migration, Diaspora & Exile (MIDEX), University of Lancashire, Preston, UK

ABSTRACT

This article contends that Prince's *History* and Wedderburn's *Horrors* stage female enslaved resistance against commodification and dehumanisation. There are significant differences between texts; for instance, Wedderburn's radical pamphlet was written by a free Black Atlantic man, and Prince's *History* is the narrative of an enslaved Caribbean woman, told to and edited by white evangelicals. However, both display a dialectic of commodification and liberation. Prince's standing up to her sexual abuser, her strategic moves towards emancipation, and her eventual escape from her abusive enslavers in England demonstrate her constant resistance. This practical resistance corresponds to narrative resistance as she indicts the atrocities of her enslavers, whose identity is thinly disguised. By contrast, the free Black man Wedderburn invokes places himself within matrilineal female Black Atlantic resistance traditions. These range from his enslaved rebellious mother, Rosanna, to his enslaved maternal grandmother, "Talkee Amy". Wedderburn juxtaposes matriarchal cultures of African diasporic resistance with capitalist patriarchal oppression epitomised by his white paternal family line of enslavers and sexual abusers.

KEYWORDS Enslaved African women; Black Atlantic; commodification; resistance; Robert Wedderburn; Mary Prince

This article will focus on two British Black Atlantic abolitionist texts that appeared a mere seven years apart during the phase of the terminal decline of the British transatlantic enslavement regime. Robert Wedderburn's autobiographical radical abolitionist pamphlet *The Horrors of Slavery* (1824) and Mary Prince's *History* (1831) stand out among the contemporary abolitionist

CONTACT Raphael Hoermann  rhoermann@lancashire.ac.uk

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

propaganda. These are among the few texts by Black Atlantic Writers published in Britain between the abolition of the transatlantic enslavement trade (1807) and the 1838 abolition of enslavement. Moreover, in both texts, enslaved African women feature more centrally than in most contemporary British abolitionist discourse. They figure not only as victims of the torture regime or “as commodities, but also engaged in various struggles towards emancipation, autonomy, and citizenship”, as Paul Gilroy sums up the Black Atlantic dialectics of oppression and liberation.¹ Drawing on radical Black geographer Kathrine McKittrick, Katey Castellano contends that Wedderburn’s mother, grandmother, and Mary Prince bring “stories of Black women’s place-based freedom practices to a white audience”.² Moreover, countering the white Western fetishisation of the individual, both writers feature several other enslaved women. Mary Prince narrates not just her own life as an enslaved African woman but also tells of the fate of others. Wedderburn interweaves his biography with biographical sketches of his enslaved African mother and grandmother. Furthermore, both indict their relentless commodification, and the sexual abuse enslaved women suffered. Contrary to most white abolitionist texts, which largely elicit sympathy from the white reader with the plight of enslaved women, they also stage and foreground the resistance of enslaved African women as a means of liberation.

Female Resistance and the Limits of Sentimental Abolitionism

However, there are pronounced differences. As I have shown elsewhere, Wedderburn agitates for a transatlantic revolution that would overthrow enslavement and racial capitalism in the Caribbean and Britain.³ He concludes his pamphlet, *The Horrors of Slavery* (1824), with the promise to outline, in a sequel, “the prospect of a general rebellion and massacre” in the Caribbean.⁴ While this never appeared, in his earlier periodical, *The Axe Laid to the Root* (1817), he harnesses the spectre of the Haitian Revolution in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, the only revolution of enslaved Africans. He threatens the Jamaica enslavers with complete annihilation at the hands of the self-liberating enslaved Africans:

Prepare for flight, ye planters, for the fate of St. Domingo awaits you. ... they will slay man, woman, and child, and not spare the virgin, whose interest is connected with slavery, whether black, white, or tawny. O ye planters, you know this has been done; the cause which produced former bloodshed still remains,—of necessity similar effects must take place.⁵

For Wedderburn, the physical fight against enslavement and colonialism seems to include women. As he advises, in the black post-enslavement state he envisages: “let every individual learn the art of war, yea, even the females, for they are capable of displaying courage”.⁶

By contrast, Prince's text does not endorse revolts, let alone a second Haitian Revolution. However, to my knowledge, neither did any other text within the contemporary British abolitionist discourse. Even Elizabeth Heyrick's radical pamphlet *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, published in the same year, 1824, as Wedderburn's pamphlet, conjures up the spectre of a second Haitian Revolution in the British Caribbean to urge immediate abolition. Otherwise, Heyrick warns, as in the Haitian Revolution,

... the emancipation of *eight hundred thousand British slaves!* may be effected through other means and other agency, which, when once roused into action, may realize all those terrific scenes of insurrection and carnage, which the imagination of the planter has so often contemplated.⁷

By contrast, Prince's *History* neither focuses on the spectre of mass insurrections of the enslaved nor collective resistance. Moira Ferguson speculates that during the crippling work in the salt ponds of Turks Island, Prince was exposed to abundant "talk of freedom" furthered by the geographical proximity to the newly independent Black state of Haiti.⁸ Although she seems to have stepped up her resistance against her sexually abusive enslaver as she returned to Bermuda, there is no textual evidence to suggest that she was inspired by the Haitian Revolution. Instead of revolutionary self-liberation, she seems to elicit the sympathy of the white British reader to abolish enslavement from above, an ideological-rhetorical strategy aligned with mainstream abolitionism. However, in contrast to white abolitionists, she foregrounds her firsthand experience as an enslaved woman, her feelings and her empathy for her fellow enslaved Africans. It is her revealing the terror of the enslavement regime and transmitting her knowledge to the British public rather than manipulating their feelings that will bring about abolition.

Oh the horrors of slavery! - How the thought of it pains my heart! But the truth ought to be told of it; and what my eyes have seen I think it is my duty to relate; for few people in England know what slavery is. I have been a slave - I have felt what a slave feels, and I know what a slave knows; and I would have all the good people in England to know it too, that they may break our chains and set us free.⁹

At first glance, this passage seems to evoke the white abolitionist stock trope of the supplicating shackled slave pleading with the white audience for sympathy to liberate him or her from their chains. However, de-centring her white audience, Prince subtly subverts this trope by insisting instead on *her* feelings, *her* knowledge, and *her* lived experience of enslavement as a Black Caribbean woman. She further subverts the abolitionist rhetoric of sympathy, as she casts doubt on the white people's capacity for sympathy and empathy with enslaved Africans. As she exclaims, white sympathy is narcissistic and limited only to fellow white people: "Oh those white people have

small hearts who can only feel for themselves".¹⁰ Her pronouncement anticipates Marcus Wood's exposure, in his 2002 study *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography*, of the "solipsistic constructions of abolition rhetoric".¹¹

Comparably, in his *Horrors of Slavery*, Wedderburn also subverts this white abolitionist rhetoric of sympathy with the enslaved by foregrounding their feelings rather than those of the white observer. Riffing on the famous soliloquy of the Jewish money lender Shylock in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (I, 2), Wedderburn adapts Shylock's rebuttal to antisemitic demonisation and dehumanisation. In addition to race, he also enacts a gender bender. Instead of Shylock, he places his enslaved African mother, Rosanna, at the centre of a matrilineal rhetoric of resistance. Defending her against the slanders of his white enslaver half-brother Andrew Colville-Wedderburn, he transforms the "unwomanlike" vices of violence and rebellion (from the perspective of the patriarchal enslaver) into virtues essential for self-liberation:

My brother COLVILLE asserts that my mother was of a violent and rebellious temper. I will leave the reader now to judge for himself, whether she had not some reason for her conduct. Hath not a slave feelings? If you starve them, will they not die? If you wrong them, will they not revenge? Insulted on one hand, and degraded on the other, was it likely that my poor mother could practise the Christian virtue of humility, when her Christian master provoked her to wrath?¹²

As Prince, Wedderburn validates the feelings and the experiences of enslaved women. Rosanna's "violent and rebellious temper" is a justified reaction to violence, physical and psychological, enacted on her by her enslaver, Wedderburn's father. However, channelling Shylock's insistence on legitimate, justified "revenge" (I, 2, ll. 1288) on the racist white Christians, Wedderburn goes further. He suggests that "revenge" is a justified means of resistance for enslaved women. Moreover, he claims to have "inherited" his enslaved African mother's rebelliousness and violence, drawing on her resistance to call for a revolutionary overthrow of transatlantic slavery. He shares "the same desire to see justice overtake the oppressors of my countrymen and the same determination to lose no stone unturned, to accomplish so desirable an object".¹³

Designed to quash this spirit of resistance, Christian "humility" propagated by the "Christian master", for Wedderburn, figures as a central means of oppression within racial capitalism. For instance, in an 1819 debate, he vehemently opposed the Methodist missionaries' preachings in the Caribbean. According to a Home Office spy report, he exposed them as thieving "villains, ... pretending to preach the Gospel to poor devils and passive obedience to the planters there [*sic*] masters".¹⁴ Another report claims he cast them metaphorically as vampiric snakes torturing enslaved

Africans, castigating “the villainy of our church and state for sending out these vipers of Church Missionaries to Suck the Blood of the poor innocent Blacks in the West Indies”.¹⁵

Such a trenchant critique of Christian missionaries in the Caribbean is absent from Prince’s text. Converted by Moravian missionaries on Antigua and with her narrative controlled by evangelical abolitionists, who served as amanuensis and editor, Prince does not share Wedderburn’s vociferous antipathy to the oppressive powers of organised religion, which had earned him in 1820 a two-year prison sentence for blasphemous libel.¹⁶ During this time in Dorchester jail, he was visited by the evangelical abolitionist William Wilberforce, plying Wedderburn with expensive religious tracts “beautifully bound in calf”. Despite this bribe, Wilberforce could not convert him to evangelical Christianity. This is attested by Wedderburn, with subtle irony, thanking Wilberforce for “your advice, for which I am still your debtor”. Nevertheless, Wilberforce’s intervention was not entirely fruitless, as it pushed Wedderburn to contribute to abolitionist propaganda with his pamphlet *The Horror of Slavery*. However, instead of an evangelical, it pursued the same radical, outspoken agenda that landed him in prison “for daring to express my sentiments as a free man ... and imprisonment has but confirmed me that I was right”.¹⁷

As a Black woman caught in the legal grey zone between enslavement and freedom and sheltered by evangelicals from the Anti-Slavery Society, Prince cannot afford Wedderburn’s precarious outspokenness. Nevertheless, Prince’s *History* suggests that Christianity perpetuates transatlantic enslavement, as it substitutes spiritual for legal freedom. When admonished by the Christian minister Mr Mortimer that she “must pray to God to change [her] heart, and make [her] to know the truth, and the truth will make [her] free”, she juxtaposes such a quest for a spiritual truth with her pursuit to obtain freedom from enslavement.¹⁸ As she suggests, such spiritual freedom will never change her legal status as an enslaved woman in the Caribbean, which prevents her from joining her free husband in Antigua: “I still live in the hope that God will find a way to give me my liberty, and give me back to my husband”.¹⁹ Kerry Sinnan argues for viewing “Prince’s refusal of God and her return to the law of the Mother, as the resistance of shadow humanism to white power”.²⁰ Affirming Sinan’s argument, Prince, to a certain degree, rejects a patriarchal white God as a means of her salvation. She did not merely put her trust in God but also, unsuccessfully, petitioned Parliament to free her so she could return to her husband in Antigua without risking re-enslavement. Defying her enslaver, John Adam Wood’s outrageous offer to send her there re-enslaved, she also defies the Christian minister who advised her to seek her spiritual freedom and salvation instead of pursuing full legal freedom.

... the Petitioner's master has offered to send her back in his brig to the West Indies, to work in the yard; that the Petitioner expressed her desire to return to the West Indies, but not as a slave, and has entreated her master to sell her, her freedom on account of her services as a nurse to his child, but he has refused, and still does refuse ...²¹

The text of this petition suggests that it would be foolish to put trust in God alone, as only legal emancipation would guarantee her continued freedom in the Caribbean.

Despite the differing stance towards Christianity, I will argue that comparing these two texts is fruitful. Prince's emphasis on the lived experience and continual resistance of enslaved women will throw the acts of resistance of Wedderburn's mother and grandmother into sharp relief. Conversely, Wedderburn's open radicalism and his insistence on the right of the enslaved to take revenge will cut through the layers of evangelical insulation wrapped around the radical core of Prince's narrative: I will consider her narrative as a resistance narrative that unremittingly exposes the physical, psychological, and sexual abuse that her enslavers inflicted on her. With their identity feebly disguised by initials, she pays them back, blow by blow, cutting through the white Christian silencing, thus extolling her narrative power as an enslaved Caribbean woman. Her narrative struggle is double to expose the atrocities of her enslavers and to fight the white abolitionists who attempt to obscure her voice.

Prince's History Between Silencing and Narrative Resistance

Although both autobiographical texts engage with the lived experience of the enslavement regime, the gender and status of the narrator differ. Wedderburn's pamphlet was written by a "free" mixed-race man from Jamaica, while Prince's is the narrative of an Afro-Caribbean woman who was enslaved for most of her life. Yet, both tap into the genre of the autobiographical "slave narrative" as the titles suggest (reproducing their typographical idiosyncrasies): *The Horrors of Slavery*; EXEMPLIFIED IN The Life and History of the **Rev. Robert Wedderburn, V.D.M.** (Late a Prisoner in His Majesty's Gaol at Dorchester, for Conscience-Sake,) *Son of the late JAMES WEDDERBURN, Esq. of Inveresk, Slave-Dealer, by one of his Slaves in the Island of Jamaica* and *THE HISTORY OF MARY PRINCE, A WEST INDIAN SLAVE. RELATED BY HERSELF. WITH A SUPPLEMENT BY THE EDITOR.* As Helen Thomas has argued, "Wedderburn's tract draws loosely upon the genre of abolitionist redemption autobiography ... yet its author could not claim to have suffered directly the 'horrors' implied by the title of his pamphlet".²² As I have suggested elsewhere, Wedderburn is conscious that his autobiographical text is *not* a slave narrative.²³ Riffing on the title of Equiano's *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah*

Equiano (1789), Wedderburn professes, “The events of my life have been few and uninteresting”.²⁴

By contrast, Henry Louis Gates Jr. argued that Prince’s *History* marked a milestone in the evolution of the genre. It “altered fundamentally the very genre of the slave narratives” because it made “her readers acutely aware” both of the “sexual brutalisation of the black woman slave” and the enslaved women’s “self-transformation into subjects, subjects as defined by those who have gained a voice”.²⁵ While not obvious from Wedderburn’s title, which only refers to his mother as “one of his [father’s] slaves”, both texts feature enslaved women prominently in their narratives. Prince focuses on herself, her mother and other enslaved African women, while Wedderburn pays tribute to the resilience of his mother and grandmother.

One of the most significant differences is their narrative and writing situation. Prince’s narrative is “related by herself” as it was written down and edited by two white British evangelical abolitionists, the amanuensis Susanna Strickland and the editor Thomas Pringle. Pringle claims that the “narrative was taken down from Mary’s own lips”, and his edits did not go beyond the strictly essential ones “to exclude redundances and gross grammatical errors”, yet, at the same time, admits having “pruned into its present shape”. With two white evangelical abolitionists in control of the narrative, we must take Pringle’s assertion that Prince’s narrative “is essentially her own, without any material alteration” with more than a grain of salt.²⁶ As Jessica L. Allen contends, Pringle’s “removal of Prince’s repetition then becomes more of an issue of anxiety and control over representation: who has the power to repeat, to emphasize, and to speak freely?”²⁷ By contrast, Barbara Baumgartner suggests that since “Prince’s narrative is markedly devoid of the types of ‘stylistic extravagances’ that white amanuenses and/or editors inserted in dictated narratives”, it follows that the text of her *History* is all her words.²⁸

Nevertheless, Pringle protests too much when he emphasises that he did not significantly alter Prince’s narrative. The editorial manipulations cast doubt on Kerry Sinanan’s empathic appraisal of Prince’s *History* as “the only text that recounts, in a first-person narrative, the experiences of an enslaved woman female slave in the British Caribbean”.²⁹ There are unmarked and unacknowledged white abolitionist voices in Prince’s first-person voice. However, they do not fully silence her voice but, at the very least, tune down her volume. Faced with the impossibility of fully recovering Prince’s original narrative underneath the layer of white abolitionist alterations, Samantha Pinto suggests looking instead at a “surface” by “reading Prince’s narrative as a history of Black skin without a hermeneutics of suspicion around its display”.³⁰ As Pinto demonstrates, the hermeneutics of her Black body that she deploys constitute a powerful attack on the enslavement regime.

Nevertheless, her body is also used by the evangelical abolitionists to further their aims of erasing her and her voice. This even goes as far as protecting the enslavers' identity while displaying her tortured body as a voyeuristic piece of abolitionist propaganda. When Pringle justifies the withholding of names as "it might deeply lacerate the feelings [of the enslavers'] living and perhaps innocent relatives" his white Christian cowardice is thrown into sharp relief by Pringle's depiction of Prince's scarified back in the appendix to the third edition: "lacerated with *gashes*, by some instrument wielded by most unmerciful hands."³¹ Pringle's cowardice backfired as Prince's last enslaver (in a long line) successfully sued Pringle for libel. Moreover, his controlling the narrative by exposing her naked, scarred back to the reader also did not work. Eschewing Pringle's voyeurism, Prince's narrative reveals the colonial attacks on her body that left her disabled, taking revenge on the perpetrators rather than exposing her mutilated body without her consent. Thus, Kerry Sinanan contends, it "exposes the myth of English colonial power as civilization", anticipating Césaire's assertion "that between *colonization* and *civilization* there is an infinite distance".³²

By contrast, in *The Horrors of Slavery*, Wedderburn deliberately reveals the enslavers' identity by providing full names. This caused his half-brother Andrew Colville to threaten to sue for "slander upon the character of my father".³³ Moreover, we can safely assume that Wedderburn's self-published pamphlet, *The Horrors of Slavery*, is entirely his voice and largely written by himself. Another radical may have proofread it as it contains fewer spelling mistakes than his handbills for the 1819 political debates he conducted in a London hayloft. However, he may have also spent his two-year prison sentence improving his literacy. Ryan Hanley contends that "Wedderburn's competency in written English was moderate, and never reached the standard expected of a professional polemicist" and further finds "marked deficiency in conventional early nineteenth-century English grammar and spelling".³⁴ However, this may be a white Eurocentric judgment that misses Wedderburn's linguistic anti-colonialism. As Alan Rice has argued, Wedderburn, in a Caribbean move, deliberately creolises the coloniser's language to create a "black Atlantic discourse of radicalism", which "manipulates the King's English to tell a new story from the colonies".³⁵

Prince has significantly less leeway for such linguistic anti-colonialism, as Pringle uses her "marked deficiency" (to re-quote Hanley) in literacy to silence her voice as an enslaved Caribbean Black woman. While Pringle conveys the impression that she cannot read or write, this is a blatant lie contradicted by the text he edited. In her narrative, it emerges she was literate. As she asserts, she had rapidly acquired, at the very least, basic reading and writing skills taught by Moravian missionaries in Antigua: "The Moravian ladies (Mrs. Richter, Mrs. Olufsen, and Mrs. Sauter) taught me to read in

the class; and I got on very fast”.³⁶ Of course, we do not know her level of literacy. However, even if her writing skills were deemed insufficient to write her narrative independently, Pringle could have offered Prince to collaborate with a more skilled writer. Instead, he deployed a white female amanuensis, Susanna Strickland. Despite his assurance to have faithfully rendered Prince’s voice, there is white abolitionist control and censorship. As I will suggest in the following, comparing the resistance of enslaved women in Wedderburn’s and Prince’s texts will go some way towards recovering the radical edge to Prince’s voice.

“My Grandmother Called him a Mean Scotch Rascal”: Enslaved African Women and the Dialectics of Commodification and Resistance.

Despite the evangelical abolitionists’ attempts to sanitise it, Prince’s text retains some linguistic anti-colonial resistance in its “Caribbeanisms”. Deploying these and a rhetoric of resistance, she partly subverts the silencing of her voice. As I would suggest, is particularly through her Caribbeanisms that she partly subverts the erasure of her voice. For instance, she indicts the dehumanisation by white “Buckra people” who deny enslaved Africans the capacity for human feeling, considering them “cattle, without any affection”.³⁷ For instance, in a harrowing passage, she recounts the torture of two enslaved boys, and subsequently, uses the Caribbean word for “to whip”, “to lick”, with great effect to expose the terror regime of plantation slavery:

I have seen their flesh ragged and raw with licks. — Lick — lick — they were never secure one moment from a blow, and their lives were passed in continual fear. My mistress was not contented with using the whip, but often pinched their cheeks and arms in the most cruel manner. My pity for these poor boys was soon transferred to myself; for I was licked, and flogged, and pinched by her pitiless fingers in the neck and arms, exactly as they were. To strip me naked - to hang me up by the wrists and lay my flesh open with the cow-skin, was an ordinary punishment for even a slight offence. My mistress often robbed me too of the hours that belong to sleep. (66)

This passage casts strong doubts on the white abolitionist rhetoric of sympathy. Prince’s “pity” with the tortured enslaved boys only achieves their torturers turning on her. Despite her helplessness to stop either the abuse of the children or herself, she uses language as a tool of resistance. The almost onomatopoeic quality of “— Lick — lick”, heightened by explosive plosives, imitates the sound of the whip. While exposing the terror regime of enslavement (that further deploys sleep deprivation), Prince also strikes back against them. This includes her “maltreatment by female owners”, which, as Moira Ferguson surmises, is “partly directed at Mary Prince’s

implied efforts at a distinctive self-definition", a point silenced in the narrative by the evangelicals.³⁸ The licks returned upon the enslavers further anticipate her eventual speaking up to them, which does not happen until they have committed many further atrocities, including murder: Her enslavers torture an enslaved woman, Hetty, whom Captain I[ngham] had impregnated, to death and who was "repeatedly flogged by both master and mistress".³⁹ Afterwards, he commits another near-murder, which disabled Prince through further callous brutality: "taking off his heavy boot, he struck me such a severe blow in the small of my back, that I shrieked with agony, and thought I was killed; and I feel a weakness in that part to this day".⁴⁰ Returned to them by her father after running away to her mother, Prince openly resists and defies them, even though, with her murderous enslavers, this means risking her life:

I then took courage and said that I could stand the floggings no longer; that I was weary of my life, and therefore I had run away to my mother; but mothers could only weep and mourn over their children, they could not save them from cruel masters — from the whip, the rope, and the cow-skin. He told me to hold my tongue and go about my work, or he would find a way to settle me. He did not, however, flog me that day.⁴¹

This passage is characterised by a mixture of courageous resistance and consciousness of her impotence and vulnerability. As an enslaved African woman, legally, she was chattel, removable property to be used and "destroyed" at the whims of her proprietor. Again, Prince's voice seems to emerge as she bitterly remarks that "mothers could only weep and mourn over their children". Commenting on Prince's pronouncement, Saidiya Hartman raises a larger point about how the laws of chattel slavery enshrined the commodification of enslaved women, their wombs and unborn children (as Wedderburn exposes) *and* even future generations of enslaved Africans:

PARTUS SEQUITUR VENTREM – the child follows in the condition of the mother. The bill of sale includes "future increase," so that even the unborn were fettered. "Mothers could only weep over their children," according to the ex-slave Mary Prince, "they could not save them." The stamp of the commodity haunts the maternal line and is transferred from one generation to the next.⁴²

Yet even within the bleak pronouncement on the impotence of her mother to protect her child, a further subversion of white abolitionist rhetoric of sentiment can be discerned. Weeping and mourning about the fate of enslaved mothers do little to end their enslavement, Prince seems to suggest. Prince, however, offers an alternative to the ineffectual abolitionist sentimental rhetoric. Although Captain I– threatens her with more torture if she does "not hold [her] tongue", she is neither silenced by enslavers nor pious abolitionists. Moreover, Prince's speaking out and her resistance are also on

Hetty's behalf, now silenced by death. While she did not speak out then, she is avenging her excruciating suffering and death, whose "horror" was "always present to [her] mind for many a day".⁴³

Standing up to her enslavers does not free her either from the abuse by her enslavers, but at least wins a battle, if not the war. She is not tortured "this day". However, she is forced to stay "five years" longer with her torturers, from whom she "almost daily received the same harsh treatment", before she manages to swap this hell with the infernal, crippling conditions in the salt pond on Turks Island, and one abuser with another;⁴⁴ or, as she sarcastically phrases it, "going from one butcher to another".⁴⁵

Repeating the same pattern of enduring abuse until a breaking point, after years of abuse, she also confronts her new enslaver, Mr D-. Now working as an enslaved domestic for him in Bermuda, Prince is constantly exposed to his sexual abuse:

He had an ugly fashion of stripping himself quite naked and ordering me then to wash him in a tub of water. This was worse to me than all the licks. Sometimes when he called me to wash him I would not come, my eyes were so full of shame. He would then come to beat me. One time I had plates and knives in my hand, and I dropped both plates and knives, and some of the plates were broken. He struck me so severely for this, that at last I defended myself, for I thought it was high time to do so. I then told him I would not live longer with him, for he was a very indecent man - very spiteful, and too indecent; with no shame for his servants, no shame for his own flesh. So I went away to a neighbouring house and sat down and cried till the next morning, when I went home again, not knowing what else to do.⁴⁶

This is a remarkable passage. While the sexual abuse is not depicted in detail, Prince's assertions that "washing" Mr D., who used to strip "himself quite naked", were worse than all lashings, leave little doubt that we are witnessing a repeated scene of sexual abuse. This is reinforced by the strong words Prince deploys as she decides to resist any further abuse, brandishing Mr D repeatedly as "indecent" and lacking any shame, neither for the enslaved nor "for his own flesh". This act of resistance, of "defending" herself, is highly courageous since it puts her life on the line again. Surprisingly, her resistance seems to have gone unpunished. When she returns, she is "hired out", most likely setting aside part of her earnings for the fund to buy her freedom and eventually manages to persuade Mr D to "sell" her to her final enslaver, John Adams Wood, a large-scale enslaver and owner of the Colebrooke's Estate in Antigua, who (and his heirs) received thousands of pounds "compensation" for the "loss" of hundreds of enslaved Africans after abolition.⁴⁷ As she suggests, she is done with any more sexual abuse by any of her enslavers: "The truth is, I did not wish to be any longer the slave of my indecent master".⁴⁸ This is the only passage in her *History* where sexual abuse is tangibly mentioned. However, one wonders whether her repeated insistence on

Mr D—'s indecency and shamelessness was part of an evangelical sanitising of her angry speech: "a very *indecent* man - very spiteful, and too *indecent*; with *no shame* for his servants, *no shame* for his own flesh".

Unfettered by Christian censorship and as a man, Wedderburn can be more explicit when he talks about the sexual abuse of his mother at the hands of his father. Moreover, since he is not a direct victim of sexual abuse, he can cast it in a satiric vein. In drawing a bathetic parallel between the biblical King Solomon and his harem, he casts his father as a diminutive cock (with a pun on the male sexual organ), abusing enslaved African women: "My father's house was full of female slaves, all objects of his lust; amongst whom he strutted like Solomon in his grand seraglio, or like a bantam cock upon his own dunghill."⁴⁹ Nevertheless, his indictment of his father moves beyond satire. In an act of narrative retributive justice "to the memory of" his enslaved mother, Rosanna, he exposes how his "mother was made the object of his [father's] brutal lust, then insulted, abused, and abandoned".⁵⁰

Like Prince, Wedderburn's mother, Rosanna, stands up to her abuser with her "rebellious and violent temper", even managing to secure freedom for her unborn child: "one of the stipulations of the bargain was, that the child which she then bore should be FREE from the moment of its birth. I was that child".⁵¹ Wedderburn's account is contested by historians who point to Jamaican archival records that prove his father, the Scottish-Jamaican enslaver James Wedderburn, manumitted Robert at three.⁵² Yet such punctilious insistence that the veracity of the colonial archives trumps Wedderburn's narrative misses a key point. In Wedderburn's version, it is not his white enslaver father who secures his freedom but his enslaved African mother. As he suggests, freedom comes from a matrilineal Black Atlantic tradition of resistance, which combatted patriarchal white enslavement, oppression and exploitation for centuries.

This link becomes even more evident in the corresponding claim in his radical journal *The Axe Laid to the Root* (1817). It is Rosannah [*sic*] and her fight for her unborn child's freedom that inspires Wedderburn to embark on his global crusade against enslavers and other oppressors of humanity:

Be it known to the world, that, I Robert Wedderburn, son of James Wedderburn, esq. of Inveresk, near Musselborough, by Rosannah his slave, whom he sold to James Charles Shalto Douglas, esq. in the parish of St. Mary, in the island of Jamaica, while pregnant with the said Wedderburn, who was not held as a slave, (a provision made in the agreement, that the child when born should be free.) This Wedderburn, doth charge all potentates, governors, and governments of every description with felony, who does wickedly violate the sacred rights of man—by force of arms, or otherwise, seizing the persons of men and dragging them from their native country, and selling their stolen

persons and generations.—Wedderburn demands, in the name of God, in the name of natural justice, and in the name of humanity, that all slaves be set free.⁵³

An enslaved African woman is at the heart of his Black Atlantic poetics of revolutionary liberation. His notions of the “sacred rights of man” and “natural justice”, which transcend race, class and possibly gender, are not rooted in European Enlightenment thought but in Black Atlantic matrilineal cultures of resistance. It was his mother and her enslaved African ancestors who fought for emancipatory human rights, unlike the European Enlightenment philosophers. As Louis Sala-Molins asserts, it was not the Enlightenment but the enslaved African who “did indeed invent his liberty”, while Aimé Césaire contends that even in the twentieth century, the colonial racially limited notion of human rights as *de facto* meaning merely “the European Rights of Man” [*les droits de l’homme européen*] prevails.⁵⁴

Wedderburn’s creed of resistance is also linked to the most forceful verbal act of resistance in Wedderburn’s *Horrors*. It comes from another enslaved African woman, his grandmother Talkee Amy, a market trader, smuggler and *obeah* woman. Katey Castellano explains that her moniker derives from “the pass given to enslaved people to leave a plantation was called a “talkee talkee””, thus gesturing “towards the anticipatory abolitionist geographies outside of plantations”.⁵⁵ Forcefully separated from his mother, Rosanna, Robert was raised by Talkee Amy who took his father to account for abandoning his son. Addressing him for financial assistance, Amy firmly rebuts his rude refusal, showing a similar rebellious spirit as her daughter:

Giving her some abusive language, my grandmother called him a mean Scotch rascal, thus to desert his own flesh and blood; and declared, that as she had kept me hitherto, so she would yet, without his paltry assistance. This was the parental treatment I experienced from a Scotch West-India planter and slave-dealer.⁵⁶

His enslaved grandmother, Talkee Amy, forcefully pleads his case with his enslaver father, as she courageously takes him to task and counters his invectives. As pointed out, Wedderburn invokes this spirit of enslaved female resistance throughout his pamphlet. Violent resistance also characterises his revolutionary abolitionism and places him in sharp opposition to evangelical white abolitionists, for whom a revolution of the enslaved was anathema. The fault lines of race, gender and enslavement run right through the family. This is more than a question of kinship fostering or adoption: either you are with the line of male enslaver “JAMES WEDDERBURN, Esq. of Inveresk, Slave Dealer”, and his enslaver brother John, or you are with his mother, Talkee Amy and his mother, “a woman of colour, by name of ROSANNA”.⁵⁷ There can be no middle ground.

Wedderburn is crystal clear on which side he is on. While he does not print his father's "abusive language", he gives Talkee Amy's insult of his father as a "mean Scotch rascal". Riffing on the stereotype of the Scottish miser, "the stingy Scot", Wedderburn finds his meanness confirmed when he later, utterly destitute, with his wife giving birth, appeals to his father for financial assistance by travelling from London to Scotland.⁵⁸ In re-enacting the earlier confrontation between Talkee Amy, with Wedderburn taking the role of his grandmother in this scene, Wedderburn asks him "for some pecuniary assistance". However, like his grandmother before, he receives only abuse from his father and more than "paltry assistance".⁵⁹ With sarcasm, highlighted by italicisation, he recalls how his father reacted:

... called me a *lazy fellow*, and said he would do nothing for me. From his cook I had one draught of small beer, and his footman gave me a cracked sixpence —and these are all the obligations I am under to my *worthy* father and my *dear* brother, A. COLVILLE.⁶⁰

In echoing Talkee Amy's exposure of his dereliction of his father's paternal duties, Wedderburn casts himself with matrilineal Black Atlantic cultures of resistance. Embracing them, he, at the same time, renounces his patrilineal white enslaver heritage.

Yet, these links seem to stretch beyond Wedderburn's pamphlet. If we look closer at the language of Talkee Amy's insults of the enslaver and abuser, James Wedderburn, some parallels emerge to Prince's invective against her abuser, Robert Darrell. Talkee Amy "called him a mean Scotch rascal, thus to desert his *own flesh and blood*". Prince accuses Mr D— of having "no shame for his *own flesh*". Although one marks a scene of sexual abuse and the other marks one of reckoning with an enslaver, both expose the unnaturalness and monstrosity of sexual relations under the enslavement regime. The monstrous sexual abuse of Prince is mirrored in Wedderburn's mother's sexual abuse as a "victim of his Father's lust and subsequent barbarity".⁶¹ As a child of this forced relationship, Wedderburn is disacknowledged, and his kinship is denied not only by his father but also by his white half-brother. Andrew Colville comes up with a ludicrous story about why Robert bears the Wedderburn surname, which further tarnishes his mother as a sexually promiscuous "loose woman": "as *she could not tell who was the father*, her master, in a foolish joke, named the child Wedderburn".⁶² Such slander of Wedderburn's mother was foolish, as it allowed Wedderburn to strike back. Taking up the mantle of both Rosanna and Talkee Amy and defending their honour, he instead exposes the enslavers' unnatural profiteering by selling their offspring:

As to the 'foolish joke' of calling a child after its father, we are ready to admit that many a Slave-Dealer would feel himself offended at such a liberty taken with his name; and the more especially where *he intended to turn him into*

ready money by disposing of him—a practice with Slave-Dealers, of which our present Correspondent, we presume, is not entirely ignorant.⁶³

The “liberty taken” from people of African descent is no “joke”. Family bonds do not count, as pregnancy and childbirth are considered mere investments and profit opportunities for his enslaver relatives (such as father and half-brother) in the dehumanising logic of racial capitalism. He sarcastically skewers the dehumanising economic rationale informing the biopolitics and sexual economics of racial capitalism when he exposes his enslaver father’s abuse of enslaved African women and its potential economic benefits for him:

My father ranged through the whole of his household for his own lewd purposes; for they being his personal property, cost nothing extra; and if any one proved with child—why, it was an acquisition which might one day fetch something in the market, like a horse or pig in Smithfield. In short, amongst his own slaves my father was a perfect parish bull; and his pleasure was the greater, because he at the same time increased his profits.⁶⁴

Characteristic of the double meanings and semantic slippages that mark his wider discourse, Wedderburn’s sarcastic revelation of the dehumanising economics of the sexual abuse of enslaved African women is both trenchant and chilling. Enslaved Africans are the enslaver’s “personal property”, which allows him not just to treat them like animals but to sexually abuse them without any limits. Under chattel slavery, enslaved African women are commodified and dehumanised as cattle whose offspring are a gratis investment to increase the enslaver’s profits. In his pronounced anti-clericalism, Wedderburn metaphorically further likens his father to a “parish bull” and a “parson”, a member of the clergy among his flock whom he sexually abuses.⁶⁵ Animalising his father as a bull intent on impregnating enslaved women also partially redresses the dehumanisation of female enslaved Africans, reducing them to breeding cattle. Not enslaved women are animals (as the enslavers cast them), but the male enslavers who dehumanise and abuse them, Wedderburn suggests in this passage. As Toni Morrison succinctly sums up the sociopathic economic rationale of the slave economy: “You can call it an ideology and an economy, what it is a pathology”.⁶⁶

Unlike Wedderburn, Prince draws on her lived experience to expose the animalisation of the enslaved, the commodification of children in the slave economy and the impotence of their enslaved mothers to protect them. When one of her enslavers, Mrs Williams, dies, as customary, her enslaved “property” is divided up and “auctioned off”, including twelve-year-old Mary Prince:

At length the vendue master, who was to offer us for sale like sheep or cattle ... I was soon surrounded by strange men, who examined and handled me in the same manner that a butcher would a calf or a lamb he was about to purchase,

and who talked about my shape and size in like words —as if I could no more understand their meaning than the dumb beasts. I was then put up for sale. The bidding commenced at a few pounds, and gradually rose to fifty-seven, when I was knocked down to the highest bidder; and the people who stood by said that I had fetched a great sum for so young a slave. ... It was a sad parting; one [child] went one way, one another, and our poor mammy went home with nothing.⁶⁷

Like Wedderburn, Prince exposes the commodification of enslaved children as saleable cattle. However, this passage further shows how racial capitalism utterly commodifies the bodies of enslaved women, including their wombs. Sexual economics and the commodification of African lives are here valued at “fifty-seven” Bermudian pounds. By contrast, her enslaved mother is left with “nothing”, having lost her children, without gaining any profit (unlike her enslaver). Emphasising her mother’s powerlessness to keep her children reveals, as Angela Davis underlines, how the trope of the strong Black matriarch obscures those “profound traumas the black woman must have experienced when she had to surrender her childbearing to alien and predatory economic interest”.⁶⁸

Perhaps warned by the fate of her mother, Prince, by refusing “to live longer with” Mr-D and to endure his sexual abuse, also refuses to enter into the sexual politics of dehumanisation and profiteering of potential children. Whether this is the truth or not, it is highly conspicuous that her narrative does not mention she had any children of her own but instead finds her constantly tasked with looking after her enslavers’ children. While her agency is severely limited, and every act of resistance could mean further torture, mutilation, or even death, Prince refuses to accept quietly the proto-fascist system of plantation enslavement.

Despite all the evangelical censorship, her voice emerges rebelliously to indict the extent of dehumanisation that afflicts the enslaver. Resorting to the rhetorical device of *zeugma*, she compares the stones of the house of her new “owner” Captain I- to the hardened hearts of its enslaver inhabitants. “The stones and the timber were the best things in it; they were not so hard as the hearts of the owners”.⁶⁹ Playing with the metaphor “heart of stone”, Prince suggests that the stones of the building, which was built with enslaved African labour, are soft compared to the hardened steel hearts of the enslavers. As Prince’s scathing sarcasm exposes the moral degeneration of white people, this is immediately reined in by the evangelist white editor Thomas Pringle, who adds the following footnote: “These strong expressions, and all of a similar character in this little narrative, are given verbatim as uttered by Mary Prince. - Ed”.⁷⁰ While Moira Ferguson claims that Prince “exposed the process by which the black experience of slavery had been translated into a version acceptable to whites”, such subversive tactics can only be partially successful with the white editor serving as the ultimate

arbiter of what to include and exclude from Prince's narrative.⁷¹ For instance, we are unlikely to know what other stark challenges to white superiority and supremacy Prince uttered have been censored by Pringle.

Nevertheless, both Prince and Wedderburn, by invoking and channelling their Black female ancestors, expose the degree of dehumanisation the enslavers subject the enslaved to. Moreover, they also demonstrate how enslavement has dehumanised the enslavers. Both Wedderburn, through his African female ancestors, and Prince ultimately demonstrate Aimé Césaire's foundational contention of colonialism as a decivilising machine that turns white European "civilization" into savagery:

First we must study how colonization works to decivilize the colonizer, to brutalize him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism; and we must show that each time a head is cut off or an eye put out in Vietnam and in France they accept the fact ... civilization acquires another dead weight, a universal regression takes place, a gangrene sets in, a center of infection begins to spread; ... civilization acquires another dead weight, a universal regression takes place, a gangrene sets in, a center of infection begins to spread; a poison has been distilled into the veins of Europe and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds toward *savagery* [*ensauvagement*].

Prince presents us with a veritable catalogue of atrocities, such as the numerous whippings she suffered, the near murder of her that left her disabled and the brutal murder of pregnant Hetty. Wedderburn emphasises how both his mother and grandmother were nearly tortured to death and recalls the atrocity of "Captain Paar, who *chained a female Slave to a stake and starved her to death*."⁷² Wedderburn and Prince ultimately avoid the Gothic abolitionist trope of the depraved planter. Like a biological sample, nearly all his male white relatives are not exceptional villains but merely a "tolerable specimen of" the plantocracy, "of the inhumanity, cruelty, avarice, and diabolical lust of the West-India Slave-Holders".⁷³ Similarly, the son of Mr D— is portrayed as a product of his environment, an enslaver's son who, in a dehumanising colonial system, has lost his "heart", his last vestige of humanity: "I must say something more about this cruel son of a cruel father. — He had no heart— no fear of God; he had been brought up by a bad father in a bad path, and he delighted to follow in the same steps".⁷⁴ The dehumanising infection spreads patrilineally through the system from father to son, affecting every white person within racial capitalism. As Prince remarks about the snide comments of "bystanders" at the auction where she was sold as a twelve-year-old girl: "No, no! They were not all bad, I daresay, but slavery hardens white people's hearts towards the blacks".⁷⁵ Both narratives present the "horrors of slavery" not as a system of irrational brutality but rather as a methodical, calculated racial-capitalist, murderous system that maximises profit at the cost of installing Césaire's poison of savagery. By foregrounding

the resistance of enslaved African women to this system, both texts further expose how patriarchy and plantocracy intermix, while Prince further shows how white women, such as her jealous enslavers who torture, are complicit in it. Perhaps one of the strengths of both texts is that they show how the system works to degenerate and dehumanise across gender and racial divides. As Wedderburn contests in his *Axe*, for the revolutionary overthrow of enslavement to succeed, it may be necessary to “slay man, woman, and child, and not spare the virgin, whose interest is connected with slavery, whether black, white, or tawny”.⁷⁶

I want to conclude with an anecdote from *The Horrors of Slavery* that entangles justified revenge, African female resistance and complicity with African diasporic spiritual powers. His seventy-year-old grandmother Talkee Amy is accused “by a malicious woman-slave” of causing her enslaver’s shipwreck “was owing to my grandmother’s having bewitched the vessel”. She survives the ensuing flogging only due to “the interference of a neighbour”. When soon later, the only child of her accusers dies, Wedderburn claims it was “plainly a judgment of God”, yet leaves open that his *obeah* grandmother could have caused this death as justified revenge. Nevertheless, she agrees to undertake the funeral rites, telling her accuser: “I can forgive you, but I can never forget the flogging”.⁷⁷ Irrespective of what caused the child’s death and the torture that nearly killed her, Talkee Amy ultimately blames the dehumanising enslavement torture regime that coopted her fellow enslaved woman to accuse her. Despite the relentless savagery of racial capitalism and enslavement, the enslaved African women Talkee Amy and Prince, unlike the colonisers, do not succumb to savagery but resist it and assert their humanity. As C. L. R. James insists, despite the constant exposure to dehumanisation and “the regime of calculated brutality and terrorism”, “they remained invincibly human beings; with the intelligence and resentments of human beings”.⁷⁸ Considering their particularly vulnerable position as enslaved Africans and women, these texts pay tribute to their highly courageous resistance against a dehumanising and terrorist system.

Notes

1. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 16.
2. Katey Castellano, “‘She Trafficked on Her Own Account’: Black Women’s Abolitionist Geographies in Robert Wedderburn’s *Horrors of Slavery* (1824) and *History of Mary Prince* (1831)”, *European Romantic Review*, 35.2 (2024): 334.
3. Raphael Hoermann, “‘Fermentation Will be Universal’: Intersections of Race and Class in Robert Wedderburn’s Black Atlantic Discourse of Transatlantic Revolution”, in *Britain’s Black Past*, ed. Gretchen Gerzina (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2020), pp. 295–314.

4. Robert Wedderburn, *The Horrors of Slavery and Other Writings*, ed. Iain McCalman (Princeton/ Kingston, Jamaica: Marcus Wiener/ Ian Randle, 1991), p. 61.
5. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 86.
6. Ibid., p. 90.
7. [Elizabeth, Heyrick], *Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, or, An Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest and most Effectual Means of Getting rid of West-Indian Slavery*, 3rd ed. (London: Hatchard & Son, 1824), p. 21.
8. Moira Ferguson, "Introduction to the Revised Edition," *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*, ed. Moira Ferguson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 10.
9. Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*, ed. Moira Ferguson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 74.
10. Prince, *History*, p. 62.
11. Marcus Wood, *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 2.
12. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, pp. 47–8.
13. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 48.
14. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 126.
15. Quoted in David Worrall, *Radical Culture: Discourse, Resistance and Surveillance, 1790–1820*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), p. 134.
16. Malcolm Chase, "Wedderburn, Robert", In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/47120> [accessed 29 May 2022].
17. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, pp. 44–5.
18. Prince, *History*, p. 93.
19. Ibid., 93.
20. Kerry Sinanan, "Mary Prince's Back and Her Critique of Anti-Slavery Sympathy", *Studies in Romanticism*, 61.1 (2022): 76.
21. Prince, *History*, pp. 127–8.
22. Helen Thomas, *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 296.
23. Hoermann, "Fermentation", pp. 298–9.
24. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 44.
25. Gates,
 "Introduction", xv.
26. Prince, *History*, p. 55.
27. Jessica L. Allen, "Pringle's Pruning of Prince: The History of Mary Prince and the Question of Repetition", *Callaloo*, 35.2 (2012): 510.
28. Barbara Baumgartner, "The Body as Evidence: Resistance, Collaboration, and Appropriation in *The History of Mary Prince*", *Callaloo*, 24.1 (2001): 267.
29. Kerry Sinanan, "The 'Slave' as Cultural Artifact: The Case of Mary Prince," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 49 (2020): 69.
30. Samantha Pinto, "On the Skin: Mary Prince and the Narration of Black Feeling in the Early Nineteenth Century", *Early American Literature*, 56.2 (2021): 500.
31. Prince, *History*, pp. 56, 130.
32. Sinanan, "Mary Prince's Back", p. 71.
33. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 53.

34. Ryan Hanley, *Beyond Slavery and Abolition: Black British Writing, c.1770–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 207–8.
35. Alan J. Rice, *Radical Narratives of the Black Atlantic* (London; New York: Continuum, 2003), pp. 11–2.
36. Prince, *History*, p. 82.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
38. Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670–1834* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 288.
39. Prince, *History*, p. 67.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
42. Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2021), p. 80; Prince, *History*, p. 70.
43. Prince, *History*, p. 67.
44. *Ibid.*, 70.
45. *Ibid.*, 72.
46. *Ibid.*, 77–8.
47. “John Adams Wood, Profile & Legacies Summary,” Centre for the Legacies of British Slavery, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/431> [accessed 12 August 2024].
48. Prince, *History*, p. 78.
49. Wedderburn, *Horrors of Slavery*, p. 47.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 45.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
52. Nadine Hunt, “Remembering Africans in Diaspora: Robert Wedderburn’s ‘Freedom Narrative,’” in *Slavery in Africa and the Caribbean: A History of Enslavement and Identity since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Ojo Olatunji and Nadine Hunt (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), pp. 178–9; Ryan Hanley, “A Radical Change of Heart: Robert Wedderburn’s Last Word on Slavery,” *Slavery & Abolition*, 37.2 (2016): 424; *Beyond Slavery and Abolition: Black British Writing, C.1770–1830* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 204.
53. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 81.
54. Louis Sala-Molins, *Dark Side of the Light: Slavery and the French Enlightenment*. Tr. John Conteh-Morgan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. 124; Aimé Césaire, *Toussaint Louverture: La Révolution française et le problème colonial* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1962), p. 309.
55. Castellano, “She Trafficked”, 326.
56. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, pp. 48–9.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 45.
58. Michael Morris, *Scotland and the Caribbean, c.1740–1833: Atlantic Archipelagos* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 180.
59. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 59.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
65. “Parish Bull”, 1811 *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue: A Dictionary of Buckish Slang, University Wit, and Pickpocket Eloquence*. Ed. Captain Gorse, Project

- Gutenberg, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5402/pg5402-images.html> [accessed 6 August 2024].
66. Paul Gilroy, "Living Memory: An Encounter with Toni Morrison", *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993), p. 178.
 67. Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*, ed. Moira Ferguson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 62–3.
 68. Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves", *The Black Scholar*, 3.4 (1971): 5.
 69. Prince, *History*, p. 64.
 70. Prince, *History*, p. 64 (note).
 71. Ferguson, *Subject to Others*, p. 6.
 72. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 51.
 73. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
 74. Prince, *History*, p. 75.
 75. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
 76. Wedderburn, *Horrors*, p. 86.
 77. *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.
 78. C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. (1938; London etc.: Penguin), p. 9.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on Contributor

Dr Raphael Hoermann holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Glasgow. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Black Research (IBAR) and Co-Director of the Research Centre for Migration, Diaspora and Exile (MIDEX) at the University of Lancashire. He is the author of the study *Writing the Revolution: German and English Radical Literature, 1819–1849/9* (Zurich: Lit, 2011). He is an expert on the Haitian Revolution, Black Atlantic and the Cultures of Transatlantic Enslavement and Resistance. He has published several articles in leading journals, such as *Slavery & Abolition* and *Atlantic Studies* and book chapters, including on the Haitian Gothic, the zombie and the Haitian Revolution, *Frankenstein* and Spectres of revolts of the enslaved and on the Black Atlantic nineteenth-century radical Robert Wedderburn. His second book, *The Politics of Terror and the Haitian Revolution: Narratives of Demonisation and Liberation*, is forthcoming with the University of Georgia Press.

ORCID

Raphael Hoermann  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6156-8431>