

The African-Americans and American Women's Human Rights: Thoughts of the Quaker Figures in their Works

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Quaker figures' thoughts as conveyed in their works, such as letters, essays, and pamphlets. The Quakers mentioned are John Woolman, John Whittier, Sarah Grimke, Angelina Grimke, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Chandler. The theoretical underpinnings for this article are the qualitative method, an interdisciplinary notion, and grounded theory. Slavery of African-Americans and female subordination in America were found to be practices that violated human rights and did not align with Christianity's essential teachings, which advocated love for all human beings regardless of natural differences such as race, skin color, ethnicity, nationality, and gender. Quaker personalities' perspectives on these two topics are fundamentally an extension of their conviction in Quakerism, which teaches the presence of God in every human conscience, known as the Inner Light, Inward Light, or Christ Within. Quakers believed that everyone had the same and equal potential in their connection with God. Therefore through this article we can find the deep thoughts of the American Quaker figures to be frontiers of human rights enforcement in United States as a milestone for global peace.

Keywords: Works of Quaker Figures, Human Rights, African-Americans, American Women

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the concept of human rights that developed is one that was advanced by liberal philosophers emerging in Europe. This is evidenced by the founding fathers of the United States, such as Thomas Jefferson, George Mason, John Adams, and James Madison, who had significant roles in the independence and formulation of American philosophy during the Revolutionary era. Thomas Jefferson, for instance, recognized that human rights are inherent in every individual and are endowed by God from birth. This concept is clearly articulated in his writing, The Declaration of Independence (1776), which states in the following excerpt:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government... (Hollinger dan Capper, 2001a: 134).

In the excerpt paragraph, Jefferson identifies three interconnected facets of the concept of human rights. First, Jefferson recognizes that human equality is a gift from God and a "self-evident" fact. This equality is a fundamental premise of human rights, implying the creation of other essential human rights principles such as justice and tolerance. Second, Jefferson identifies three rights that are part of these unalienable rights: life, liberty, and the

pursuit of happiness. Jefferson describes them as unalienable since they arise automatically and cannot be destroyed or denied by anyone. Third, Jefferson believes that state institutions regulate how human rights are implemented in America. The concept of human rights developed by Jefferson not only became the philosophical foundation of the United States, as stated in the Declaration of Independence (1776), but also served as the basis for the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was declared by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. This human rights charter has subsequently been the moral and legal foundation for all national constitutions worldwide, with the goal of protecting all citizens (Cassese, 2005: 42; Muladi, 2005: 99).

Interestingly, the concept of human rights was not only conceived and developed by the founding fathers of America but also by intellectual figures associated with Protestant Christian sects, including prominent figures of Quakerism, officially known as The Religious Society of Friends or simply The Friends (Bacon, 1969; Hamm, 2003). Notable figures include John Woolman, John Whittier, Sarah Grimke, Angelina Grimke, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Chandler, and others. Adhering to their fundamental belief that God or Jesus Christ never dies and is always present in every human heart, referred to as The Christ Within or The Inner Light (Hamm, 2003; Jones, 2010), American Quaker figures actively participated in advocating for the rights of minorities of their time to be recognized and treated fairly and humanely. They advocated for the practice of slavery against African Americans, as well as the marginalization of women in public and political realms. In this environment, their principal antagonists were white men who saw themselves as the most powerful and honorable race, with the right to control all aspects of life.

In this systemic and problematic social situation, Quaker figures believed that the issues arose from the worldview or understanding of white American men, who had interpreted religious teachings in a highly masculinistic and Machiavellian manner. This viewpoint subsequently grew into a long-standing social and cultural system passed down through generations, resulting in a single truth. As a result, racial slavery and female subjugation became accepted as normal. Enlightened Quakers, on the other hand, saw these practices as breaches of human rights and incompatible with God's divine love for all mankind, regardless of race, gender, or nationality.

In this regard, this paper aims to uncover the thoughts of Quaker in their works as part of their efforts to advocate for the human rights of African-Americans and women, who were subjected to social injustice in American society. In other words, this paper will address the question of why the enslavement of African Americans and the subordination of women are considered human rights violations. The answer will be given based on Quakers' thoughts in their writings, such as essays, poetry, and letters. Therefore, through this article, readers can learn how the Quaker figures have significantly sounded the issue of human rights enforcement as a milestone of thoughts in creating the global peace and spirit of humanity all over the world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

About the Quakers

Several research results have discussed the existence of the Quakers. One of the research is a dissertation by Roslewicz (1999) titled "Educating Adults through Distinctive Public Speaking: Lucretia Mott, Quaker Minister." Roslewicz focuses on a biographical study of the figure, revealing Lucretia Mott's role as a Quaker minister in the 19th century, providing public education to the general public through her speeches. The public education referred to here involves Mott's speeches calling on the public to pay attention to issues of her time, such as the practice of slavery, women's rights, peace, and social injustice. It must be acknowledged that Roslewicz's dissertation shares similarities with this research in that both discuss Quaker figures. However, this study will not only examine Lucretia Mott but also other Quaker figures, exploring their thoughts on human rights emerging in America. Thus, this research has a broader scope than Roslewicz's study.

Hewitt (1986) studied the existence of Quakers in America with the title "Feminist Friends: Agrarian Quakers and the Emergence of Women's Rights in America." In this study, Hewitt examines the extent to which the emergence of Quaker feminist ideas related to women's rights issues in the 19th century. He states that these Quaker feminists had diverse perspectives on women's rights, with one side tending to emphasize the significance of women's roles in the domestic sphere as housewives, while the other side stressed the importance of women's roles in the public and political spheres. Concerning this study, Nuriadi (2014, a) assesses that indeed, the theme raised by Hewitt is one of the focus areas of this research because it is also considered part of the human rights thoughts or ideas of Quaker figures, although it certainly does not stop there. This study aims to comprehensively and holistically examine the role of Quakers in the pre-Civil War era, particularly concerning the mentioned human rights issues in America.

Ann Maree Jones (2010) conducted research titled "Quakers and Social Reform in England 1780-1870." This research reveals from a historical perspective how the Quakers attempted to carry out social reforms in English society between 1780 and 1870. This study is quite interesting because Jones sees that the reform efforts carried

out by the Quakers in England were driven by a vision of humanitarianism rooted in Quaker teachings. Related to this study, it must be acknowledged that this research shares similarities in terms of the main issues raised. However, this study is not the same as Jones' research because, firstly, this study focuses on Quaker figures in America, not in England, related to the principles of human rights; secondly, this study has a broader period than Jones' study, covering from the late 17th century to the 19th century; and thirdly, this study uses an interdisciplinary perspective, unlike Jones' study, which only uses a historical perspective.

In addition, several other studies discuss the existence of Quakers, which are directly or indirectly related to the topic of this dissertation research, namely: Harkness's (1933) study that examined the existence of Quakers in the central city area of Philadelphia. In his writing, Harkness observes how the Quakers intersected with the Baptists in that area during the colonial period. However, Harkness's most interesting idea here is that Philadelphia is a historic area not only because it was the place where the Declaration of Independence (1776) was read, but also because the concept of freedom had been proclaimed by William Penn long before that. On the other hand, Park (1954) stated the topic of the relationship between Quakers and Puritans in America. While the relationship between Quakers and Baptists tended to be more tolerant of each other, as Harkness stated, the relationship between Quakers and Puritans was not so. The Puritans, as the first religious group to come and settle in America, were intolerant of the presence of Antinomians, as experienced by the Quakers.

About the Human Rights

Regarding the concept of human rights, there are several studies or literature that address human rights, namely Montgomery (2007), Baskerville (2012), Bryson et al. (1956), Corbett (1999), Nuriadi (2021), Epstein and Walker (2004), Renteln (1988), Moyn (2010), and Twiss (2004). However, none of these studies or literature specifically discuss the human rights ideas formulated by Quaker figures, which is the subject of this dissertation. They address human rights in a global context with a framework that tends to be theoretical and normative. Nonetheless, their thoughts are considered necessary in examining the works of Quaker figures related to human rights and the Quaker's contribution to the development of human rights ideas, particularly in the United States before the 20th century, when practices of human degradation still occurred as a social and political system.

Nuriadi (2014, a) and Montgomery (2007) discuss related to slavery, human dignity, and human rights. They argue that slavery and the slave trade are indeed contrary to human rights as stipulated in Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). However, this fact remains theoretical today and tends to be paradoxical with the reality in some parts of the world. Montgomery states this because, in fact, practices similar to slavery, such as child labor in India and sex workers in Southeast Asia, support Montgomery's view that slavery persists to this day. It means that, in this context, human rights, as Jefferson described as a built-in ethic, have so far become part of global societal awareness.

Meanwhile, Baskerville (2012) and Nuriadi & Zubair (2021, b) acknowledge that the concept of human rights today is quite closely related to political discourse. He also states that the discourse on human rights has indeed developed rapidly, although they substantively criticize the fact that innovation in the concept of human rights has been relatively slow, particularly in accommodating women's rights. His perspective is that human rights are not static and certain but should be determined based on moments and struggles in history. Within this framework, they assert that gender inequality persists.

Equality is a fundamental principle of human rights. This concept was stated by Bryson et al. (1956). In this regard, equality then became the basis for the formulation of the American Constitution. According to Bryson et al., equality is an ethical imperative and/or moral-ethical foundation believed to be sourced from the teachings of all religions. Equality, according to Johnson, one of the experts mentioned in this book, is something that is given and should be understood as the basis for ethical norms as long as human relationships continue. Although Bryson et al. do not specifically examine the human rights ideas proposed and advocated by the Quakers, the concepts or ideas offered by Bryson et al. are considered necessary and very important in this dissertation research, particularly as a basic concept in further examining how the ideas of Quaker figures emerged through their works.

Additionally, Corbett (1999) discusses the issue of human rights as part of political policy in America, which is driven by religious teachings. For Corbett, politics and religion often intersect in the life of the state. Corbett also states that the civil rights movements in America during the 1960s were driven by the awareness of some parties about the American Constitution, in addition to their understanding of religion. On the other hand, the fact that human rights are the basis for the formation of the Constitution as the main source of law in America is clearly explained by Epstein and Walker (2004). Here, Epstein and Walker reveal that human rights become the individual rights of every member of American society, as regulated in the American Constitution, which has undergone numerous amendments. These individual rights include the right to religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, assembly, the right to bear arms, and so on. In this context, similar to the explanation by Bryson et al. mentioned above, the ideas presented by both Corbett (1999) and Epstein and Walker (2004) can also serve as

initial information in examining the extent to which the human rights ideas that emerged from Quaker figures are synchronized with those explicitly stated in the foundation of the American state.

In a broader perspective, Moyn (2010) states that the concept of human rights is merely a utopia based on the idealism of morality. As the world progresses, human rights position themselves as a shared agenda of every entity in the world to be continuously magnified to improve the world so that every person in the world can enjoy a sense of security that is felt internationally. Additionally, with human rights, every country is encouraged to have dreams and to cooperate to create global security and peace with a unified concept of humanitarian law.

Analytically, Twiss (2004) explains that the concept of human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) is divided into two categories: civil-political rights and socio-economic rights. The first category of rights is further divided into two types. The first type includes norms related to civil and physical security, such as the right to be free from slavery or violence. The second type includes norms related to civil and political empowerment, such as the right to freedom of speech or assembly. Similarly, the second category of human rights is also divided into two types. The first type includes norms related to the fulfillment of basic personal and social needs, such as the right to education and health. The second type includes norms related to the provision of economic needs, such as the availability of employment or a guarantee of a decent living.

METHOD

This paper is written as the result of research on the social and cultural phenomena of America, particularly related to the thoughts of Quaker figures on human rights issues in America. According to Holliday (2002: 10) and Maryaeni (2008: 5), research that examines culture and society is more appropriately directed toward qualitative research; thus, this study is qualitative research. Creswell (1998: 15) explains that qualitative research is an inquiry process aimed at achieving an understanding based on methodological traditions by examining social and human issues. In this context, a researcher constructs a complex and holistic picture, analyzes the words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts research in a natural setting. Here, the researcher collects data naturally (Arikunto, 2006: 12). In other words, according to Strauss and Corbin (2003: 4-5), qualitative research data are not obtained through statistical procedures, notation, and percentages.

Since this paper uses the library study method, the data collection method applied is the Grounded Theory model as explained by Glaser and Strauss (1985: 64-68). In practice, this data collection model requires the writer to use note-taking techniques, which involve the researcher making notes related to the research topic. In this context, Gibaldi (2003: 46) and Turabian (1969: 55) formulate note-taking into several types, namely: summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotations, along with the marking of the data found. Meanwhile, in the analysis process, the method used is the interdisciplinary American Studies method proposed by Henry Nash Smith (1957), which is then combined with the dialectical concept of Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism theory (Endraswara, 2003: 61). This combination is deemed necessary because, as previously stated, these works are always closely related to the writer's ideology, as well as the social, cultural, and historical aspects of the writing (Teeuw, 2003: 127).

DISCUSSION

Slavery Contradicts Human Rights Because It Does Not Align with Religious Beliefs

Driven by his understanding of Quaker teachings, John Woolman stated that the practice of slavery was an act that was not right, which in this case was based on his religious doctrine. This is evident in his statement in *The Journal of John Woolman*: "I still believed the practice [slavery] was not right and desired to be excused from the writing I spoke to him in goodwill..." (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu>). Additionally, based on his religious belief that all humans are equal and brethren, John Woolman advocated that all people should be treated equally despite natural differences. From this perspective, he asserted that one should not view others or other groups as inferior to themselves. John Woolman's thoughts are reflected in his pamphlet titled 'The Essay on Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes'. John Woolman's statement is quoted as follows:

We shall then consider mankind as brethren. Though different degrees and a variety of qualifications and abilities, one dependent on another... One man ought not to look upon another man or society of men as so far beneath him (Moulton, 1971: 203).

John Woolman disagreed with the prevailing view among most white people of his era that slavery and the slave trade of African Americans were sanctioned by Christian beliefs. According to him, such a view was mistaken. Therefore, John Woolman expressed his stance and thoughts to them, stating that slavery was a great evil and must be opposed. His reaction upon seeing and hearing about the practice of slavery was that he would spontaneously

tremble with emotion because he could not understand the logic used by white people to justify slavery. John Woolman's thoughts and stance can be seen in *The Journal of John Woolman*, which is quoted as follows:

When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered, I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble". I had many cogitations and was sorely distressed. I was desirous that Friends might petition the Legislature to use their endeavors to discourage the future importation of slaves, for I saw that this trade was a great evil and tended to multiply troubles and to bring distresses on the people for whose welfare my heart was deeply concerned (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu>).

The quote also reveals that John Woolman's reaction was not just emotional; he also sought to protest in the form of a petition to the Legislature regarding the rampant practice of slavery, particularly in the importation and trade of slaves, as a social system in American society. In this regard, John Woolman saw the need for concrete action to demonstrate slavery as an evil from a moral perspective. Therefore, he encouraged the community to jointly submit the petition, using it as material for his sermons at prayer meetings, as shown in the following quote:

I have been under concern for some time on account of the great number of slaves which are imported into this colony. I am aware that it is a tender point to speak to but apprehend I am not clear in the sight of Heaven without doing so. I have prepared an essay of a petition to be presented to the legislature (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu>).

Not only John Woolman but perspectives and attitudes like his were also expressed by John Whittier in his writings during the 19th century. This Quaker figure explicitly stated that slavery was a sinful act. The great evil described by John Woolman can be interpreted as a sinful act in John Whittier's view. Here is John Whittier's statement from his pamphlet *The Conflict with Slavery: Justice and Expediency* where he declares slavery as a sinful act:

Members of one confederacy, children of one family, the curse and the shame, the sin against our brother, and the sin against our God, all the iniquity of slavery which is revealed to man, and all which crieth in the ear, or is manifested to the eye of Jehovah, will assuredly be visited upon all our people... So long as we take counsel of the world's policy instead of the justice of heaven, so long as we follow mistaken political expediency in opposition to the express commands of God (Whittier, 1969: 13).

In other words, John Whittier meant that slavery was an unjustifiable act from the standpoint of Christian moral values—the religion that was believed by the majority of American society. He expressed more clearly as follows: "[I]t has been in a moral point of view worthless, a thing without vitality, sightless, soulless, dead" (Whittier, 1969: 9-10). Therefore, John Whittier advocated philanthropic actions aimed at liberating African Americans from the practice of slavery. According to him, John Whittier would always support various efforts leading to the emancipation of slaves. What mattered most to him was concrete action on this issue. Based on these thoughts, John Whittier demonstrated his support in various poetic works, including the poem titled *Massachusetts to Virginia*. This poem primarily defends African Americans, especially those who were fugitive slaves.

His poem titled "Massachusetts to Virginia" specifically reflects John Whittier's response as a moralist and abolitionist to the news of George Latimer, a fugitive slave who escaped from Virginia and sought refuge in Massachusetts. In this poem, John Whittier aims to reaffirm his acknowledgment and pride in Massachusetts for its willingness to accept and protect fugitive slaves, preventing slave catchers from reclaiming them as slaves. His expression of acknowledgment towards the state's stance signifies how John Whittier, as a Quaker figure, supports the phenomenon of fugitive slaves. Additionally, his support extends to the firmness of the Massachusetts government in not recognizing slavery, as seen in the poem's final two lines: "No slave hunt in our borders – no pirate on our strand! / No fetters in the Bay State – no slave upon our land!" Here is John Whittier's expression of pride and support for Massachusetts as a destination for fugitive slaves:

.....
*And when the prowling man-thief came hunting for his prey
Beneath the very shadow of Bunker's shaft of gray,
How, through the free lips of the son, the father's warning spoke;
How, from its bonds of trade and sect, the Pilgrim city broke!*

*Hundred thousand right arms were lifted up on high, --
A hundred thousand voices sent back their loud reply;
Through the thronged towns of Essex: the startling summons rang,
And up from bench and loom and wheel her young mechanics sprang!*

.....
*But for us and for our children, the vow which we have given
For freedom and humanity, is registered in heaven;
No slave hunt in our borders – no pirate on our strand!
No fetters in the Bay State – no slave upon our land!*
(Meserole, et al., 1969: 1724).

Concerning John Whittier's poem, he viewed the state of Virginia as an antagonist in the context of efforts to abolish slavery and free slaves at that time. This was due to Virginia's position as one of the states that supported and maintained the slavery system. Based on this reality, John Whittier, as an abolitionist figure, expressed antipathy, opposition, and even resistance towards those who upheld slavery, particularly the authorities of the state of Virginia, as shown through the following lines of his poem:

*We hunt your bondmen, flying from Slavery's hateful bell;
Our voices, at your bidding, take up the bloodhound's yell;
We gather, at your summons, above our fathers' graves,
From Freedom's holy altar-horns to tear your wretched slaves!*
(Meserole, et al., 1969: 1723).

Not only John Whittier, Elizabeth Chandler, in her work titled *The Slave Ship*, expressed how the act of slavery exceeded moral reason. This Quaker figure depicted a ship transporting African peoples or black people sailing from their homeland to places or islands that practiced slavery, in this case, America. Using personification, she portrayed the ship as if it were a human being, hence using the pronoun "she". The ship could only carry out its duty, yet it herself felt deeply guilty and fearful of the curse resulting from her actions, which involved carrying slaves who were constantly grieving and expressing their despair, as well as separating African Americans from their homeland, family, and friends.

*And onward she rode, though by curses attended,
Though heavy with guilt was the freight that she bore,
Though with shrieks of despair was the midnight air rended,
And ceaseless the groans of the wretches ascended,
That from friends and from country forever she tore*
(Lundy, 1836: 136).

From the excerpt of the poem above, it is shown clearly how the emotional state of the black individuals inside the ship's hold is depicted. The condition of the black individuals is evident, they are despairing and wailing in sorrow due to their fate of being captured and enslaved. In the following stanza, the plight of these black individuals is further vividly depicted, contrasting their condition before and after capture. For instance, one who was previously a tribal chief and brave warrior is now on the ship's deck, helpless and despondent, with chains around his wrists :

*On the deck, with his head on his fettered hand rested
He who once was a chief and a warrior stood;
One moment he gained, by his foes unmolested,
To think o'er his woes, and his fate he detested,
Till madness was firing his brain and his blood*
(Lundy, 1836: 136).

Under such inhumane conditions, the black individuals only wished to end their lives quickly. They desired death because they believed it would liberate them from a life that had lost all meaning, that of being slaves. In other words, they believed that death was the only solution for them to attain freedom. In the afterlife, they believed they would find happiness again, reunited with their ancestors who had passed away earlier. Here is the translation of the final stanza of the poem:

*But ye shall—yes, again ye shall fondly embrace me!
We will meet my young bride in the land of the blest:
Death, death once again in my country shall place me,
One bound hall forever from fetters release me!"*
He burst them, and sunk in the ocean's dar breast.
(Lundy, 1836: 136).

John Woolman's, John Whittier's, and Elizabeth Chandler's thoughts underlying their opposition to slavery from a religious perspective are further bolstered by another Quaker figure, Angelina Grimke. In this context, Angelina Grimke stated that the white community's religious understanding justifying slavery as sanctioned by the Bible is fundamentally mistaken. According to Grimke, this view is flawed because their deductive reasoning is not based on a deep and holistic understanding of the narratives or allegories conveyed in the Gospel Scriptures. In other words, their interpretative stance on the teachings of the Gospel has led to the justification of slavery. Grimke expressed these thoughts in her essay or pamphlet titled "Appeal to Christian Women of the South" (1836). Concerning this, she further stated that the Bible, as the primary reference, prohibits slavery, as seen in her statement: "But after all, it may be said, our fathers were certainly for the Bible sanctions Slavery, and that is the highest authority. Now, the Bible is my ultimate appeal in all matters of faith and practice." (<http://iath.virginia.edu>).

Angelina Grimke's interpretation of the Gospel beliefs, showing her rejection of the slavery system, begins with the story in the Gospel regarding the life of Adam, the first human created by God. According to Angelina

Grimke, Adam received a special privilege she termed "the Charter of Privileges," which specifically granted him rights and privileges bestowed by God. These privileges were related to his status as a human being. One of the clauses in this Charter reads: "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth...Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, ye, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea..." (<http://iath.virginia.edu>).

With this Biblical story, Angelina Grimke viewed that Adam had been granted freedom or privilege by God in the form of the Charter of Privileges to utilize all the earth's contents. However, according to Angelina Grimke, this did not direct Adam to exercise dominion over all humans in the sense of placing all things under his feet. Therefore, Angelina Grimke regarded this Charter as the "Charter of Human Rights" first upon the face of the earth. In connection with this, Angelina Grimke then stated the following:

Man then, I assert never was put under the feet of man, by that first charter of human rights which was given by God, to the Fathers of the Antediluvian and Postdiluvian worlds, therefore this doctrine of equality is based on the Bible... (<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu>).

The next Biblical story that Angelina Grimke used as a basis to reject slavery involves another historical fact recounted in the Scriptures, namely the story of Abraham and Sarah. Abraham and Sarah are known as the patriarchs, who are understood to have had enslaved servants. This fact also served as a doctrinal basis for Christian communities, particularly in America, to legalize and implement the slavery system. According to Angelina Grimke, this fact must be questioned and reconsidered whether it is true and whether the slavery practiced by Abraham was similar to that practiced in America during Angelina Grimke's 19th-century era: "Do you really believe that patriarchal servitude was like American slavery? Can you believe it? If so, read the history of these primitive fathers..." (<http://iath.virginia.edu>).

For Angelina Grimke, the common belief regarding Abraham's practice of slavery was incorrect. Her rejection of this belief is evident in her logical exposition based on historical facts about Abraham and Sarah. She stated that Abraham, despite being a great figure, was willing to personally go out to herd his livestock and serve the guests who came to his house. If he had slaves as practiced in Southern American society before the Civil War era, Abraham would not have engaged in such activities. Similarly, Sarah, if she had slaves as believed by society, would not have painstakingly baked bread herself.

In addition, Abraham once stated that if he indeed did not have a biological heir, his servants, and their descendants would become part of Abraham's family or descendants: "Behold thou hast given me no see, &c, one born in my house is mine heir" (<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu>). Based on this fact, it is clear that Abraham did not at all implement the slavery system as understood and practiced by American society. Angelina Grimke further reinforced this fact by saying:

From this it appears that one of his servants was to inherit his immense estate. Is this like Southern slavery? I leave it to your own good sense and candor to decide. Besides, such was the footing upon which Abraham was with his servants, that he trusted them with arms. Are slaveholders willing to put swords and pistols into the hands of their slaves? He was a father among his servants (<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu>).

Angelina Grimke also sought to challenge the societal understanding that slavery in America was a continuation of an ancient tradition practiced by the Jews: "God sanctioned Slavery, yea commanded slavery under the Jewish Dispensation" (<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu>). In this regard, Angelina Grimke invited those who held such views to reconsider. According to her, what was practiced by the Jewish community was fundamentally different from what occurred in American society. The Jewish community had servants, not slaves, who operated under clear rules or codes, as expressed by Angelina Grimke, including: "If reduced to extreme poverty, a Hebrew might sell himself, i.e. his services, for six years, in which case he received the purchase money himself" (<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu>).

Women Need Recognition of Human Rights Because They Are Moral Beings

The Quaker perspective on women's emancipation aligns closely with what is articulated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Thomas Jefferson's statement in the American Declaration of Independence (1776). This is because both of these seminal texts advocate for equality, justice, freedom, and non-discrimination (Nickel, 1987: 181). These principles echo sentiments expressed by Quaker leaders long before the creation of these documents. In other words, while the formulation of human rights had not been precisely defined as evidenced in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, Quaker leaders had long recognized and understood these principles. This recognition stems from the religious theology they adhere to. Quaker leaders, in this context, view every human being in the world, regardless of their identity, as equal before God and each other. This belief arises from their understanding that every human possesses the same potential to become "the Publisher of Truth," which they derive from their contact with Jesus Christ in the form of the Inner Light within their hearts and souls. Therefore, Quakers developed the principle of universal grace as a manifestation of this theological

teaching, which served as their reference point in interpreting social phenomena, particularly the experiences of women during that era. They observed that discrimination and subordination had become deeply entrenched traditions that women faced. In other words, these actions marked that women were positioned unequally and were often treated merely as objects subordinate to men.

Angelina Grimke emphatically expressed her support for the struggle for women's emancipation in the pursuit of full human rights for women. This support is articulated in her letter titled "Human Rights Not Founded in Sex." This letter, the seventh in a series (Letter VII) written in 1837, was addressed to Catherine Beecher. In her letter, Angelina Grimke, in Letter XII, acknowledged that she became aware or inspired to consider the status of women after actively engaging in anti-slavery efforts. For her, human rights became a matter that needed attention, examination, understanding, and even teaching to society. When examined from a human rights perspective, one can understand that all humans, regardless of race and gender differences, possess rights known as human rights because they are moral beings with a moral nature. These human rights can be infringed upon by slavery but cannot be eradicated. Here is Angelina Grimke's statement regarding this matter.

Human beings have rights, because they are moral beings; the rights of all men grow out of their moral nature; and as all men have the same moral nature, they have essentially the same rights. These rights may be wrested from the slave, but they cannot be alienated... (Langley dan Fox, 1994: 64).

Based on the quote above, Angelina Grimke viewed that women, as creations of God, are inherently equal because they are moral beings or possess a moral nature. Moral beings refer to women's existence as creatures created by God on par with men. Angelina Grimke stated this in Letter XII above and also indicated it in her Letter XI. Therefore, the equality of women is inherent as shown in Christian theology.

However, the concept of their existence as moral beings is not properly understood in patriarchal societies. They are merely seen as complementary creatures to men. In connection with this, in her speech "Discourse on Woman," Lucretia Mott stated that the fundamental issue to be fought for by women is to ensure that the concept of their moral being is truly applied de facto in society, enabling them to stand on equal footing with men. She said: "There is nothing of greater importance to the well-being of society at large – of man as well as woman – than the true and proper position of woman" (Hallowell, 1893: 487). Not only in the first paragraph, but she also reiterated the same idea in the second paragraph, specifically in the first sentence by stating: "I have long wished to see a woman occupying a more elevated position than that which custom for ages has allotted to her" (Hallowell, 1893: 487).

Lucretia Mott saw the unequal position of women as a moral injustice experienced by women. Like Angelina Grimke, Lucretia Mott believed that women are naturally equal and have the same rights as men. Her argumentation began with her exposition of a theological fact found in one of the verses in the Gospel. This fact is expressed by Lucretia Mott in her speech in paragraph six, stating: "'Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam'. He gave dominion to both over the lower animals, but not to one over the other" (Hallowell, 1893: 488). Thus, Lucretia Mott anchored her argument in religious theology or the interpretation of religious teachings as a source of women's inequality. This pertains to the theology or interpretation of the verses of the Gospel Scriptures directly related to the event of Adam and Eve's Fall from paradise. Consequently, the common view that developed is that Eve, representing women, became the primary cause for Adam and Eve being expelled from paradise by God.

Lucretia Mott's thoughts regarding the primary causes of injustice and her affirmation of women as moral beings are affirmed by another Quaker figure, Sarah Grimke. She stated that the emergence of the tradition of diminishing women's status originated from misconceptions, misunderstandings, and incorrect interpretations of Christian teachings, particularly concerning verses in the Scriptures. In Letter I, which she sent in 1837 to Mary S. Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, Sarah Grimke expressed her opinion as follows:

I believe almost everything that has been written on this subject, has been the result of a misconception of the simple truths revealed in the Scriptures, in consequence of the false translation of many passages of Holy Writ. My mind is entirely delivered from the superstitious reverence which is attached to the English version of the Bible. King James' translators certainly were not inspired... (Hollinger dan Chapper, 2001b: 269).

The misunderstanding and misinterpretation of scriptures are the causes that lead to the issue of inequality between men and women. The misinterpretation resulted in disparities in rights and treatment between the two parties. However, women and men are inherently equal or on par with each other. Therefore, for Angelina Grimke, such a misleading interpretation is not at all inspirational. Concerning this, Sarah Grimke stated that it should be the duty of every individual, not specific people, to examine the Scriptures so that they are not influenced or guided by deductive understanding or the preferences of certain individuals when interpreting the verses of the Scriptures (Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 269).

According to Sarah Grimke, at the time of human creation, God spoke as follows: "And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and the cattle, and all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God

created man in his image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them" (Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 270). In this verse, and as Grimke understands it, God created women (female) and men (male) within the unity of one human form (he): "...male and female created he them." Therefore, Sarah Grimke believed that with the union of male and female in the form of one human being, both are equally or parallelly positioned, with no one dominating or ruling over the other, but rather needing and complementing each other. The relationship of equality between women and men occurs within the framework of harmony, love, and mutual symbiosis.

However, what Sarah Grimke disliked was the continued acceptance of these incorrect and deductive interpretations by society at that time. Misinterpretations also occurred with the word of God quoted by Sarah Grimke, such as "...And the Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him" (Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 270). For Sarah Grimke, the interpretation of the above verse should be placed in its proper context and meaning. It is clear that the human figure considered a male by God would not be left alone or that God would make another person "an help meet for him." In this context, this person is a 'companion' for the first human, and this person is female. Therefore, as Sarah Grimke understands it, the existence of this companion is equal in all aspects, and like the first human, this second human also becomes a free agent with the potential for intellectuality and immortality, thus becoming a moral being responsible. Here is Sarah Grimke's statement in Letter I:

It was to give him a companion, in all respects his equal; one who was like himself a free agent gifted with intellect and endowed with immortality; not a partaker merely of his animal gratification, but able to enter into all his feelings as a moral and responsible being. It this had not been the case, how could she have been an help meet for him?... (Hollinger dan Capper, 2001b: 274).

Furthermore, regarding the story of the Fall of these two humans from Eden, Sarah Grimke understood that this event was not solely caused by the woman named Eve (Hawa), but also by the actions of the man named Adam. This creates the question of why. First and foremost, it must be understood that both of these creatures of God were free agents, each with their rights and autonomy. When Eve was influenced by a serpent to eat fruit from a tree in the middle of the garden, it was because she was tempted. In this regard, Eve as a woman had her weakness as a free agent. However, what is even more interesting, according to Grimke, is that Adam also chose to do the same thing, that is, to eat the forbidden fruit when invited by Eve, his wife. As a free agent, Adam should not have eaten the fruit if indeed he was superior to Eve.

However, the reality is quite different. Adam did indeed end up eating the forbidden fruit as well. Yet, if Adam were truly superior, he should not have eaten it, because superiority implies physical and mental strength and endurance. In this context, Sarah Grimke interprets that both Eve and Adam possessed personal freedom (human rights) as free and independent agents, thus each had equal strengths and weaknesses. It wasn't just Adam who was strong and Eve who was weak. In other words, neither was superior but instead stood equally vulnerable in their respective weaknesses. Therefore, both of them became the cause of the fall from paradise to the world, not just one of them. Here is the quote from Sarah Grimke's perspective:

Had Adam tenderly reproved his wife, and endeavored to lead her to repentance instead of sharing in her guilt, I should be much more ready to accord to man that superiority which he claims, but as the facts stand disclosed by the sacred historian, it appears to me that to say the least, there was as much weakness exhibited by Adam as by Eve. They both fell from innocence, and consequently from happiness, but not from equality (Hollinger dan Capper, 2001b: 270).

Sarah Grimke stated in her Letter II, titled "Woman Subject Only to God," sent on the 17th day of the 7th month (July) 1837, that both men and women are equal in that neither is inherently superior to the other. The only superiority lies with God. However, the prevailing male-created mindset is quite the opposite. According to her, women are viewed as more sinful. This perspective has been intentionally cultivated for nearly six thousand years, solidifying it as a truth that places women in a sacrificial position. The following is an excerpt from Sarah Grimke's statement regarding this matter:

They had incurred the penalty of sin they were shorn of their innocence, but they stood on the same platform side by side, acknowledging no superior but their God....Even admitting that Eve was the greater sinner, it seems to me man might be satisfied with the dominion he has claimed and exercised for nearly six thousand years, and that more true nobility would be manifested by endeavoring to raise the fallen and invigorate the weak, than by keeping woman in subjection. But I ask no favors for my sex. I surrender not our claim to equality (Hollinger dan Capper, 2001b: 271).

However, the ideas expressed above are not unique to Sarah Grimke alone; Angelina Grimke also shares a similar interpretative model. This similarity is unsurprising given that they are siblings raised in the same background. Angelina Grimke argued that human rights must be built on the concept of humans as moral beings created by God, thereby rejecting the common belief that human rights exist and are influenced by gender. It is untrue to assert that men possess human rights or a higher status than women. If one believes in humans as moral beings, gender considerations become unnecessary. This Quaker figure stated this because she had a reason, namely: "whatever it is morally right for man to do, it is morally right for woman to do" (Langley and Fox, 1994:

64). Angelina Grimke also added that humans duties and responsibilities are not determined by gender differences but depend on fate, talent, ability, and the difference in an era when someone is born.

Similar to Sarah Grimke, Angelina Grimke also views that the differences in rights, roles, and responsibilities between men and women are caused by a flawed doctrine. She referred to this erroneous doctrine as "the anti-Christian doctrine of masculine and feminine virtues" (Langley and Fox, 1994: 64). All these formations are not based on the basic principles mentioned earlier, namely that all humans are moral beings. Such interpretations are corruptive. Therefore, this mistake has also brought about misconceptions in interpreting the concepts of masculinity and femininity. This is how Angelina Grimke articulated her views on the matter:

By this doctrine, man has been converted into warrior, and clothed with sternness and those other kindred qualities which belong to his character as a man, whilst woman has been taught to lean up an arm of flesh, to sit as a doll arrayed in 'gold, and pearls and costly array to be admired for her personal charms...' (Langley dan Fox, 1994: 64).

The consequence of this fatal error is to position men, within the context of patriarchy, as 'lords' and masters over women. Thus, women's primary duty in life is seen as striving to fulfill the pleasures of their lords, namely men. As a result, from childhood onward, women are conditioned in their education towards how best to captivate men's interest and become devoted servants to their needs. In this context, women have undoubtedly been placed in an inferior position compared to men. Therefore, Angelina Grimke emphatically declares that women are created by God just as men are.

I affirm that she was created like him in the image of God, and crowned with glory and honor; created only a little lower than the angels, Got, as is almost universally assumed, a little lower than man; on her brow, as well as on his, was placed 'diadem of beauty' and in her hand the scepter of universal dominion (Langley dan Fox, 1994: 65).

The unpleasant fact is the existence of efforts by people to define and separate the rights and responsibilities of men and women solely based on their gender differences. However, it is known that both genders are moral beings. Nevertheless, Angelina Grimke stated that such efforts are futile, and to this day, none have provided a definitive explanation of the dividing line between these differences. Even if there were, these lines of differentiation are highly confusing and inconsistent (Langley and Fox, 1994: 64). Therefore, Angelina Grimke suggests that the measurement of their rights and duties should be based on the standard of both genders as moral beings; "measure her rights and duties by the unerring standard of moral beings, not by the false weights and measures of a mere circumstance of her human existence" (Langley and Fox, 1994: 65).

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the enslavement of African Americans and the subordination of women in America are practices and views that contradict human rights and do not align with true Christian teachings, which emphasize love for all humanity. This Quaker perspective is evident in their works as discussed earlier. In this regard, they hold the view that all humans are equal creatures of God, regardless of natural differences such as race, skin color, ethnicity, nationality, and gender. This Quaker belief aligns with the thoughts of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, who state that human equality is a self-evident gift from God. The Quaker perspectives on these issues are essentially implementations of their belief system called Quakerism, which teaches that there is God in every human conscience, referred to as the Inner Light, the Inward Light, or the Christ Within. With this belief, Quaker figures further believe that every human has equal potential and equality in their relationship with their Creator. As a consequence, Quaker figures judge injustices committed by white people against minorities as inhumane, criminal, and sinful actions. It is clear then that beliefs can shape the thoughts and behaviors of individuals in their lives. In doing so, the American Quaker figures have truly become frontiers to enhance the spirit of humanity which can be learnt by people all over the world nowadays.

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