T.C.
DOKUZ EYLÜL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI
AMERİKAN KÜLTÜRÜ VE EDEBİYATI PROGRAMI
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

ENSLAVEMENT IN THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF HARRIET JACOBS: *INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL*

Yeliz İKİS

Danışman

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Füsun ÇOBAN DÖŞKAYA

2008

Yemin Metni

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum **“Enslavement in the Personal Narrative of Harriet Jacobs: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*”** adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

Tarih

.../..../.....

Yeliz İKİS

İmza

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ SINAV TUTANAĞI

Öğrencinin

Adı ve Soyadı : **Yeliz İKİS**
Anabilim Dalı : **Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları**
Programı : **Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı**
Tez Konusu : **Enslavement in the Personal Narrative of Harriet Jacobs: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl***
Sınav Tarihi ve Saati :

Yukarıda kimlik bilgileri belirtilen öğrenci Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü'nün …….. tarih ve ……. sayılı toplantısında oluşturulan jürimiz tarafından Lisansüstü Yönetmeliği'nin 18. maddesi gereğince yüksek lisans tez sınavına alınmıştır.

Adayın kişisel çalışmaya dayanan tezini ……. dakikalık süre içinde savunmasından sonra jüri üyelerince gerek tez konusu gerekse tezin dayanağı olan Anabilim dallarından sorulan sorulara verdiği cevaplar değerlendirilerek tezin,

BAŞARILI OLDUĞUNA	O	OY BİRLİĞİ	O
DÜZELTİLMESİNE	O*	OY ÇOKLUĞU	O
REDDİNE	O**		

ile karar verilmiştir.

Jüri teşkil edilmediği için sınav yapılamamıştır. O***
Öğrenci sınava gelmemiştir. O**

* Bu halde adaya 3 ay süre verilir.
** Bu halde adayın kaydı silinir.
*** Bu halde sınav için yeni bir tarih belirlenir.

	Evet
Tez burs, ödül veya teşvik programlarına (Tüba, Fulbright vb.) aday olabilir.	O
Tez mevcut hali ile basılabilir.	O
Tez gözden geçirildikten sonra basılabilir.	O
Tezin basımı gerekliliği yoktur.	O

JÜRİ ÜYELERİ İMZA

…… □ Başarılı □ Düzeltme □ Red ……...

……□ Başarılı □ Düzeltme □Red …….....

……...…□ Başarılı □ Düzeltme □ Red …….……

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Harriet Jacobs'un *Bir Köle Kızın Yaşamındaki Olaylar*
Adlı Kişisel Anlatımında Kölelik Kavramı

Yeliz İKİS

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Ana Bilim Dalı
Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Programı

Otobiyografi yirminci yüzyıldan itibaren edebi bir tür olarak bütün dünya edebiyatında ve Amerikan edebiyatında dikkat çekici hale gelmiştir. Ancak Amerikan tarihindeki kölelik dönemine ait, bir zamanlar köle olarak hizmet etmiş zenciler tarafından yazılan köle hikâyeleri ayrı bir önem arz etmiştir. Özellikle kadın ve erkek otobiyografileri kadar kadın ve erkek köle hikâyeleri arasındaki farklar on dokuzuncu yüzyıldan itibaren bir çalışma alanı oluşturmuştur.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Jacobs'un özgürlük mücadelesini anlattığı *Bir Köle Kızın Yaşamındaki Olaylar*'ı, onsekiz ve ondokuzuncu yüzyıl Amerikan yazını içerisinde otobiyografik bir tür olan köle hikâyeleri açısından ele almaktır. Bu esnada, otobiyografi ve köle hikâyelerinin karakteristik özellikleri ve tarihi gelişimi gözlemlenecek ve Jacobs'un tarihi gerçeklerle zenginleştirilmiş kişisel anlatımının edebi ve kültürel sonuçları ele alınacaktır.

Jacobs erkek egemen sitem içerisinde okuryazarlığını kullanarak kaderinden kaçış yollarını aramış ve bulmuştur. Aynı zamanda ardında tarihi bir doküman bırakmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı otobiyografinin ve köle hikâyelerinin nasıl tarihe ışık tutan bir araç olduğu ve kadın açısından köleliliğin anlamının sunulmasıdır. *Bir Köle Kızın Yaşamındaki Olaylar*'da tarihsel uygunluğa dayanarak, belirli bir periyoda dair, birinci elden anlatımlara ulaşılabilir.

Jacobs'un anlatımı, kölelerin tecrübe ettikleri, aynı zamanda, Amerikan tarihinde de büyük önem taşıyan bazı önemli olaylara örnek teşkil eder. Böylece bu yazım sayesinde hem bir tarihe tanıklık etmiş, hem de bir hayatı incelemiş oluruz. *Bir Köle Kızın Yaşamındaki Olaylar*, bir kadın duygusallığıyla hayatın acımasız gerçeklerini sunar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Köle hikayeleri, Harriet Jacobs, tutsaklık, kadın köle hikayeleri, kölelik

ABSTRACT

Master Thesis

Enslavement in the Personal Narrative of

Harriet Jacobs: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Yeliz İKİS

Dokuz Eylül University
Institute of Social Sciences
Department of Western Languages and Literatures
American Culture and Literature Program

Autobiography has been a remarkable literary term in world and American literature especially starting in the twentieth century. Hence, slave narratives written by ex-slaves who gave service during the slavery times in America carried a special importance. Especially differences between the male and female slave narratives as much as the differences between male and female autobiographies became a unique study field.

The aim of this study is to consider *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* in terms of slave narratives which are autobiographical writings in the eighteenth and nineteenth American literature. While doing this, characteristics and historical developments of autobiography and slave narratives are going to be observed and the cultural and literary results of personal narrative of Jacobs enriched with historical truths are going to be evaluated.

In a male dominant system, Jacobs tried to find ways to escape from her destiny and she did. Additionally, she left a historically valuable piece of writing. The aim of this study is to show autobiography and slave narratives can be tools enlightening the history and the meaning of slavery in the eyes of a woman. In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* we can get first hand information told accordingly to historical truths of a certain period.

The narration of Jacobs is a sample for events that carries vital importance in American history experienced by the slaves. So through this writing we can witness a history and observe a life. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* represents the harsh realities of life by a sensitivity of a woman.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Köle hikayeleri**,** Harriet Jacobs, tutsaklık, kadın köle hikayeleri, kölelik

ENSLAVEMENT IN THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF HARRIET JACOBS: *INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL*

INTRODUCTION

Autobiography is commonly defined as “the biography of a person narrated by that person”, or “the story of a person’s life as told by him or herself”. Within this definition it is possible to trace the origin of the genre to post-Homeric Greece and works by Hesiod, Empedocles, Plato and Isocrates; and then see it being developed in the Roman world in Ovid’s autobiographical poems, Cicero’s *Brutus* and St Augustine’s *Confessions*. The English word “autobiography”, however, is first coined in the late eighteenth century when the genre begins to flourish in Europe and North America, notably in Rousseau´s *Confessions* (1782), Benjamin Franklin’s *Autiobiography* (1784), Casanova’s *Histoire de ma fuite des prisons de Venise* (1788) and Gibbon’s *Memoirs* (1796). Its flourishing at this time is generally seen as consistent with the birth of the Romantic fascination with the complex individual soul and the interaction of nature with social experiences. In the twentieth century, the possibilities of the genre have been greatly enlarged, Gertrude Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) being structured as the life story of her friend and personal secretary Alice B. Toklas, and Sartre’s *Les mots*, written when he was already sixty years old, relating only the first twelve years of the author’s life (Linda, 2001: 25).

Such generic expansion leads us to question if it is valuable, what “autobiography” is, what it is for, and what its methods should be – anything beyond describing it a “self-life-writing”. Autobiographers can discuss whatever they wish, and include anything from human geography to reproach; they can give direction to their books as a litany, a confession**,** an apology, a cathartic act, a collection of anecdotes or gossip, or even into a space to wash dirty laundry. Similarly they can decide where to begin or end and the subject’s name may not necessarily correspond to the author’s.

This study concentrates on autobiography as a theory, slave narratives and female slave narratives and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. (hereafter *Incidents*) My interest in personal narrative of Harriet Ann Jacobs is because of the sufferings she endured during her life time as a slave woman and a mother. Even she was born

to be slave her great will of survival and escape makes the reader excited about her story. Even she has lack of scholarship and uses poor literature to narrate her interesting autobiography, it is worth reading to get the noting of slavery in the eyes of a woman. She was not realized for a long time and only found to be valuable piece of writing in 1980, many years later her death. Most of the time she was criticized for not being the true author of the story but with the discovery of her letters and documents, she was proven to be the actual writer. The aim of this thesis is to realize how a woman slave can be so strong to open a new phase in slave narrative tradition by using a pure style and basic language and create a consciousness of gender while reading a slave narrative, i.e. *Incidents*.

In 1853, the fugitive slave Harriet Ann Jacobs shared her ideas about narrating her life story with the poet and abolitionist Amy Post with these words: “Don’t expect too much for me, dear Amy” and she reacted “You shall have the truth but not talent” (Yellin, 2004: 6). Here, Jacobs in fact points at the very essence of the slave narratives which are autobiographical accounts of former slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in America. In the slave narratives, all the bitter truths and miserable experiences of slavery are told without artistic concerns we are used to reading in literary works. This is partly due to the abundance of historical information besides personal information in these narratives. The first hand experiences of major historical events that these narratives reveal are important facts about a period in the nation’s history. Therefore, by foregrounding both the autobiographical elements and the historical elements, Jacobs writes a historically rich autobiographical writing, namely, the slave narrative.

The equal emphasis on the personal and the historical forms a delicate combination in Jacob’s modest life story, *Incidents* which was published in 1861 under the pseudonym Linda Brent. This piece of writing is significant for being a historical document besides being one of the very precious and rare antebellum slave narratives written by a female ex slave. The contention of this thesis is that Jacobs’s slave narrative is masterful in the sense that she transforms her sorrowful experiences into an artistic expression of despair and salvation without any reservations for unrestrained articulation of nothing but truth. In order to support this suggestion, this thesis will look at Jacobs’s distinction from her female counterparts who write slave

narratives as well as her sentimentally charged superiority over some overly masculine and aggressive male slave narratives.

Incidents is not considered to be very artistic with regard to literary terms but the historical and purely autobiographical narrative style adds value to it. First of all, Jacobs is very successful to integrate "women's literature" into women's politics because one of her motives for writing her life story has been to share with the Northern white women the suffering of Southern slave women. However, the sympathy she expected in writing her story has reached well beyond the compassion of Northern women: Jacobs initiated a political debate over the hazardous effects of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, thereby drawing enough attention to historical facts to cause controversies over the system of slavocracy throughout America. It is also significant that being a slave and being a woman are treated as equally determining factors in life: being a slave woman is presented as the worst combination for a human being since both are pre-determined and this makes one's life pre-destined to many wretched experiences. We can say that the tale of Jacob's sex-determined destiny has been her tool to defend the unalienable humanistic rights in the face of slavery.

In this sense, the aim of this study is to analyze *Incidents* as a critically important piece of writing to introduce the injustices of slavery of humanity especially on a woman. It is absolute that Jacobs has no intention of creating a valuable piece of literary writing but to release the truth. She wanted to create sympathy on readers and attract attention of white ruling class especially northern women on the condition of their counterparts. Her autobiography is important not only for being a narration of a kind of literature but also a piece of historical document to release the truths of the time.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the historical background of slave experiences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will be introduced. This is of special importance to an understanding of the emergence and the characteristics of genre called as slave narratives as they are the historical pieces f writings to give light to period in a nations history called as "slavery". This chapter will introduce how the slavery started historically in the USA and how it has developed in time. To

be able to look at closely to the issue, the laws and regulations, important events, social and communal life in the country will be introduced.

In the second chapter, to be able to understand the source of slave narrations as a literary genre, the description and a brief history of autobiography will be given. While treating the slave narrative as a distinct genre in American literature, special emphasis will be on what we here shortly refer to as 'accurate historical accounts': the first hand documents of blacks' lives unknown to the rest of the world including North American people from Christian white supremacist class, and the struggles of blacks in the face of some pro-slavery laws like The Fugitive Slave Law. Therefore, the aim of this discussion will be to highlight the literary value of slave narratives through a discussion of these narratives as accurate historical accounts that reveal not only facts but also create a distinct literary genre with its own codes and rules. In this way, autobiographical elements of slave narratives will be treated as factors that culminate in a very historical method of writing life stories. Here, it is important to note that rather than being chronologically narrated accounts of lives, the slave narratives reveal historically accurate and immensely significant events not only in the lives of former slaves but also unpleasant facts and bitter ironies in the history of America. These narratives reflect the sorrows, hard days and sufferings of the people enslaved by the system.

The third chapter will focus on the workings of gender in Jacobs's narrative. The plot and the importance of the narrational elements like characterization, time, setting etc. of *Incidents* as a slave narration will be considered. With regard to the conventional slave narratives, her pseudonymous and highly sentimental narrative makes not only her story impressive and convincing but also due to her talent, she raises the stakes in the slave narrative tradition. Jacobs presents the reader some historical documents that verify the accuracy of her story against charges of embellishment and hoax. Her ability to read and write is perhaps the single most important thing for a woman of her position as literacy was unusual among the slaves of her period due to laws and regulations against the education of slaves.

In the fourth chapter, there is going to be more concentration on the gender roles. She not only appears very determined to share her experiences but she also

seeks cures for her ‘maladies’ of slavery-related sexual abuse and economic disability. In this way, she resists the determining aspects of her sex, of her femininity, in her life. Thus, she emerges as a strong woman in the literary history of America. Thomas Doherty evaluates Jacobs as a slave narrator as below:

> Throughout, as per generic convention, Jacobs interweaves her story with long stretches of anti-slavery rhetoric, much valuable ethnography, and some solid history (especially the chapter “Fear of Insurrection” (64-69), which is vivid testimony to the panic among Southern whites wrought by Nat Turner’s uprising in 1831. But what lends this narrative unique and immediate appeal is, of course, sex – the sex of the narrator, of the audience and the story. (1986: 80-81)

The female, as a mother and a wife, had a unifying function to keep the family together, to nurture them, and to supply protection. But the meaning of being a female was more than this: they were subject to endless kinds of physical abuse such as beating, flogging, sexual assault. In other words, their bodies were exploited, or their bodily integrity was violated twice: they were, in a way, ‘punished’, both for their femininity and humanity. Here, a study of the workings of gender in *Incidents* emphasizes the variety of burdens of the slave women: their multiple functions as fieldhands, care-givers, passive and abusable sexual beings. Besides, slave women carried speical importance for their masters as the laws were against any kind of human right for the slaves. A child had to follow the state of the mother and upon that legal right, a reproductive slave women meant more slaves for a master.

As these brief chapter objectives illustrate, this thesis will try to discuss, in most general terms, how, in the face of such challenges, the heroine of Jacobs’s narrative dared to die to get her ultimate independence. Her motto was “give me freedom or give me death,” and her story can be seen as the story of blacks: the people fought for their lives, for a way out of the system of slavocracy. Many died for that aim and the ones who could go to North did not usually get what they expected. To re-claim their unalienable rights, they went through many trials and wars that cost them many lives. The losses were not only for blacks because white upper class Christians had suffered from economical loss besides a large number of

deaths. Civil War which was mainly a result of the controversy about the emancipation of the blacks is the clearest example of that. The years between 1861 – 65 became the most horrible period that a nation would live in its own people. The Reconstruction period following the Civil War era shows the financial loss of America as a result of that system.

The most important historical documents of these years, the slave narratives, gave us the chance to read the truths from the first hand. Lindon Barret in her book *African American Slave Narratives: Literacy, the Body, Authority* adds points of the slave narratives in the American literature:

> To speak of the issue of literacy within context of the US slave regime and the autobiographical narratives of its legacies promote a conflation of the distinctions between literacy and illiteracy, on the one hand, and black and white, on the other. These four terms, in effect, form a spurious homology, with the result that, as much as literacy represents a privileged state of mind, it also connotes the material body and, ultimately, alleged overwhelming corporeality of blackness. This peculiar set of relations, it seems to me, deeply informs the complex relationship between ex-slave narrators and their texts and, African-American corporeality . . . an extension of the theorizing focused on issues of literacy as it informs the relationship between ex-slave narrators and their texts. (1995: 415)

Jacobs as a literate ex-slave reveals the relation between her two identities; a woman and a slave. Her pen becomes her gun many times before and after the life on plantation. She tries to attract the direct attention of her white readers—especially the women—to gain sympathy not for herself but the people who still suffered in the system pre-destined for them.

This thesis privileges Jacobs's narrative because she is a successful narrator and through her narrative, the notion of enslavement of a black woman gains a different, and much deeper meaning in contrast to conventional slave narratives. Her struggle as a slave, a mother, and a woman was three times more than an ordinary

life of a slave and the autobiographical account of Jacobs exposes how it feels to be bounded by the ropes of law and insecurity within a system that she resists.

I. SUBJECT OF RACE: RACISM AND SLAVERY IN THE USA

The meaning of racism by its simplest definition is the superiority of a particular race over another. This situation may create hatred or conflict between racial groups. If the racism gets institutionalized, one of the races may be denied from the right or the benefits due to general treatment. Racial discrimination and ethnic discrimination are accepted as equal terms in meaning. One of the greatest ironies in the history of USA is how this concept of racism developed for blacks; how the shift for the terms freedom and liberty developed. There are many evidences showing the double face of racism in American history just like the Capitol building in Washington DC. This was built by the enslaved African Americans to house the deliberations of a white dominated US. The ones who were the actual builders of this great symbol for democracy were not paid even treated like a human. The history goes further that the ones who put the statue of freedom on the top of Capital dome in 1860s was again the enslaved African Americans. (Feagin, 2000: ix)

Contrary to the life in America, many black writers and ex-slaves have illustrated the life in Africa as a place where childhood was simple and plain; families lived in a country where nature is prodigal for their favor and where they could supply their needs easily**.** Agriculture was the main source of life. Everybody was habituated to labor so everybody consequently contributed to common stock and a whole, and the community was unacquainted with idleness. Plus “deformity was unknown among them” and the people were beautiful. There was one creator of all things “and a strong analogy between the manners and customs of his countrymen” (Equiano, 2004: 12)

The black journey of Africans in fact starts in the decks of the ships when the masses of people were transported across the ocean, beaten savagely, chained most of the time during the shipment to be forced to work as slaves in America. A new life had started for those already on their way to there; breaking up of the families, imposition of their new names, strangeness, brutality on the blacks and fear against them. What they had lived on the ship was the mirror of their days under brutality in the very near future. Olaudah Equiano, the first male slave narrator taken from Africa to be a slave in America, tells in his *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah*

Equiano Gustavus Vassa, the African "I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits and that they were going to kill me" (34).

Major historiographical issues related to the transatlantic slave trade include estimating the number of Africans taken to the Western Hemisphere, the nuances of the Middle Passage and the subsequent dispersal of Africans in Europe's "New World," and the linkage of the transatlantic slave trade with the development of capitalism. Phillip D. Curtin's *Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (1969), which critics maintain is an undercount, remains, perhaps, the most discussed book associated with estimating the number of Africans taken to the Western Hemisphere. There exist a number of important studies related to the actual dynamics of the transatlantic slave trade and its aftermath, including W.E.B. Du Bois's *Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States, 1638– 1870* (1896); *Daniel R. Mannix's Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518– 1865* (1962); and *Herbert S. Klein's Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (1978). Finally, Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) remains the starting point for any inquiry into the broader economic ramifications of the transatlantic slave trade. An overview of the historiography of slavery during the colonial and antebellum periods provides insight into the involuntary movement of transplanted African slaves at the whim of their white owners. Important sources include Lorenzo J. Greene's classic, *The Negro in Colonial New England* (1942); Edgar J. McManus's *History of Negro Slavery in Colonial New York* (1966); Peter Wood's *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (1974); Betty Wood's *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730– 1775* (1984); *Frederick Bancroft's Slave Trading in the Old South* (1931); Kenneth M. Stampp's *Peculiar Institution* (1956); John W. Blassingame's *Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (1972); Leslie Howard Owens's *This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South* (1976); *and Peter Kolchin's American Slavery*, 1619– 1877 (1993).

1.1. LEADING A "BLACK LIFE" IN THE USA

The life in the USA for blacks has never been easy. Because contempt and loathing for them was seen in the mobs on the streets and the physical violence as well as psychological attempts to keep them under control was increasing. In fact while the life they were in trying to bound them as much as possible, what they were asking for was not wrong. They have asked for the recognition of their human dignity, individual rights, equality, opportunity for education and social life, and justice. These things both ideal and practical were a way to freedom in America. What they were hearing all the time was freedom for Americans and America was the country of freedom and opportunity. White people asked constantly: "What do Negroes want?" and the Black people kept answering: "Freedom!" But it was clear that for a very long time, freedom was not easy to reach.

W. D. Wright tells about his experiences with the sentences below regarding the racism he lived personally:

> I recalled the Senate hearings on alleged communists in the American army in the 1950s, many of which I saw on television, seeing Senators Joseph McCarthy and John McClelland going after the defense counsel Joseph Welch and the defense witnesses opposite them. This whole thing was a spectacle, but a double spectacle for Black people. The Soviet and Eastern European communists and the communists in China were enemies of the United States to be sure. But we Black people knew that white racists were, too, and an even greater internal threat to America than the communists were or ever could be; we also knew how southern Whites, especially, were using the communist threat to cloak their own racist power and racist threat to the country. (1998: 18)

Just like the story of construction of the Capitol and the statue of freedom, the stories of the African Americans in the US history may be forgotten. Even the long-term racial oppressions of the blacks by the white superiorities can be denied today. Hence, the basic institutions, daily life and social organization still carry the elements of the systematic racist attitudes of past and roots of slavery.

In the pre-Civil War years the mobility of African Americans' was linked the issues like transatlantic slave trade, the subsequent forced movement of slaves based upon the whims of their white masters, runaway slaves and such support groups as the "Underground Railroad," and organized movements that promoted blacks

returning to Africa. The urbanization of African Americans is generally considered as a twentieth-century phenomenon in fact African Americans were present in a variety of capacities like the cities as early as colonial period. Before Civil War most African American city dwellers were free persons, yet there were a considerable number of urban slaves. Between the years 1865 and 1900, former slaves were intensified by African American migration and urbanization and they demonstrated their freedom to nearby cities. Moreover, as the promise of Reconstruction turned into the nightmare of Jim Crow, a large number of late nineteenth century African Americans resurrected their emigrationist sentiment for their forebears.

It was physically impossible to return Africa, so it remained as the "impossible dream" for many southern blacks (Strickland, 2000). In fact this late-nineteenth-century westward movement of southern blacks resulted in the establishment of African American towns. Plus, other southern blacks began during this period what would subsequently become a massive movement to north urban areas. In 1860, 94.9 percent of the black population lived in the South, and only 5.1 percent lived in the North and West. By 1910, the percentage living in the North and West had risen to 10.4 percent; in 1940 this proportion stood at 23.8 percent, and in 1970 it had risen to 46.8 percent. In other words, the percentage of the black population in the North and West doubled each generation from 1860 to 1970. After 1970, however, these proportions stabilized at about 47 percent in the North and West. There exist a number of important works that chronicle pre-twentieth-century African American migration and urbanization from the transatlantic slave trade to the late-nineteenth-century dispersal of southern blacks. In fact, the historiography of this expansive chronological period has grown dramatically in recent years (Strickland, 2000).

1.1.1. WARS, STRUGGLES, HISTORICAL TRUTHS IN PATH OF SURVIVAL

Slavery became the cause of the bloodiest war in the America's history. In fact the conflict began in 1861 but both north and south failed to mention the 'peculiar institution' as slavery was called in statements of their war aims. The

reason for north to enter the war was explained to maintain the Union which was threatened by the rebellion of the eleven seceding states. The south wanted to protect their freedom against the threat posed by the central government it considered tyrannous. The role of slavery was just gradually acknowledged.

When Lincoln issued Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 with the aim of freeing slaves in the Confederacy, the abolition became central the war aim for North. On one hand, Confederacy needed slaves to keep their armies on field; to free them would be to undermine their effectives. So abolition would be seen as a means to an end. But there was another aspect to be considered: slavery was central to a social system, southern way of life that embodied an interpretation of the legacy of the Founding Fathers, an interpretation not shared by the North. In making abolition an aim, Lincoln acknowledged the true nature of the conflict: it was a war to decide the ascendancy of rival versions of the Republic, of the kind of freedom Republican social and political institutions should promote.

For the South, the freedom at issue was chiefly negative. Republican institutions should guarantee the individual freedom from unwarranted interference by religious or secular authorities. How a man lived, what he thought and read, how he disposed of his property – such things should be the concern of the man whose life, thoughts and property they were, and of no one else. This view presumed that the individual was already equipped with the means of leading a fulfilling life: education, property and profession. It was an eighteenth century view of freedom and of the place of government in promoting it. Government was apt to overstep its bounds, and the hallmark of a wise constitution was that it inhibited that tendency as much as possible. For the archetypal Southerner, the big plantation owner, whose lifestyle and aspirations set the pattern even for those Southerners, who resented the dominance of the slave-owning aristocracy, the negative freedom that most concerned him was the freedom to dispose of his property as he wished, specifically, the property consisting in other human beings (Davies, 2001: 7-8).

The North nurtured a richer idea of freedom and the role of government. Freedom in general can be defined as being permitted to get on with making the most of one's life, undisturbed by the outside interference (Davies, 10). But the idea of

freedom for North for the goals of happiness and self-fulfillment would be through a strong central government. The rapid growth of industries and towns fuelled by immigration led the people question the if the real freedom could be achieved under the current conditions. The need of education, health care and housing was not easy to supply. Phil Davies describes those times as:

> The traditional and rudimentary institutions that supplied the South's needs were inadequate to those of the fast-growing and sophisticated North. Charitable bodies, religious foundations, local and central government were all involved in helping to provide the necessary conditions for the pursuit of individual fulfilment. The idea that the fruit of freedom – happiness – would fall into one's lap if only one was left alone, gave place to serious reflection on the variety of social and political forces involved in its growth. The North and South also differed over the place of the Union in securing the freedoms enshrined in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. The Southern view was that the original states, the colonies, had formed an alliance, the Union, to make possible a form of social life that gave those freedoms unfettered expression. It had an instrumental value; the Union had no intrinsic worth aside from the freedoms it helped promote. (8)

In the year 1865, on 9 April, General Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant met at Appomattox Court House, a country crossroads in the forest, and handed over his sword. This is one of the great symbolic moments of American history. Everyone else had surrendered within a few weeks, and by the July of the same year the Civil War was over. It was and still it is the bloodiest war in the American history, both in the absolute numbers and in the casualties to the population. Nearly 360,000 union soldiers and 260,000 confederates died on the battle field or in the military hospitals. As a result of that bloody battle, slavery was abolished, a Freedman's Bureau had been organized to give assistance to former slaves, and the Union was restored. But, the war left an irremovable stain on the consciousness and the souls of the American people.

Even European countries had no war to compare to this at this time. In 1812, Napoleon invaded Russia with an army of 600,000, cobbled together from the allies of France. This army was the largest assembled in the West up to that time, but that would be sufficient for the Civil War. The number of the people enlisted in the North

was 2,778,304, of whom 2,489,836 were whites, 178,975 were African Americans, and 3,530 were Native Americans. This number of people may be slightly misleading as men sometimes enlisted several times. But the general idea we can get is that no fewer than two million people served on the Union side. Confederate enlistments have been calculated at between 750,000 and 1,223,890. During this war, the number of the American soldiers lost was more than the number killed, and this was the closest war to two world wars, Korea and Vietnam. One traveler in 1875 described it as "a dead civilization and a broken-down system" and another one, ten years earlier said it was "enough woe and want and ruin and savage to satisfy the most insatiate heart, enough of sure humiliation and bitter overthrow to appease the desire of the most vengeful spirit" (Bland, 2001: 17). In the south it was what was left after. In the north, it left a sense of triumph at the restoration of the nation and the abolition of the slavery. But there was also a sense of tragedy because of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination by a man crying out "Sic simper tyrannis!" "Thus always to tyrants" which was the motto of the state of Virginia even a week after Appomattox.

The result of the war was, with an unparalleled speed, a great urban and industrial society dedicated to production, progress and profit. In the 1860s, the United States as a productive economy extended only as far as the Missouri River. There was no manufacture of steel; and the country had an industrial investment of only a billion dollars. In twenty years after Civil War, United States became one of the giants of international steel industry, the numbers of the factories in its borders were more than doubled and the industrial investment were increased up to four million dollars. The developments were not only that; they developed the most extensive railway system in the world binding East and West in one vast economic unit. Almost world's half of the total railway mileage was estimated to be in the United States and the mileage constituted the one-sixth of the nation's estimated wealth.

America was being changed into a country of towns and cities from the farms and villages especially on its eastern seaboard. For instance, by 1880, more than half of the total population living in the United States lived in towns consisting of more than 4,000 people. The transformation of cities were inevitable as well, just like

Chicago which grew from a fur-trapping village of about 350 people in 1830 to a city of half a million people in 1880, then one million by the time of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. New York City, the largest city in the nation, had a similar development and reached a population of three and a half million by 1900. Other western cities like Detroit, Milwaukee and Minneapolis, witnessed their population getting doubled even tripled decades after the war. West Los Angeles grew from a population of 11,000 in 1880 to five times in just twenty years. By the end of the nineteenth century, forty percent of the population was still in rural areas. Hence, the trend for the urbanization was irreversible. And a further symbolic moment for American consciousness was in 1890s when it was revealed that every part of the continental United States was now organized. This meant that as the historian Frederick Jackson Turner declared, that the frontier was now closed and a new era for America was at hand three years later at the Chicago World's Fair. (Woodson, 1937: 138)

In the 1890 census it was revealed that the total population of the USA was sixty three million. And nine million of that number of people was foreign-born. This situation, actually, did not present much of increase on pre-Civil War figures. Because the new immigrants had a tendency to cluster in the cities as cheap labor force for the factories and sweatshops and they were of different ethnic group compositions from earlier immigrant generations, the situation was enough to generate a moral panic. It eventually led to the release of anti-immigration legislation. Before 1860, most of the immigrants were from Great Britain, Ireland, Germany and Scandinavia. Around five million new comers arrived in the country four decades prior to the Civil War. From then until the end of the century, there were fewer than fourteen million arrivals especially from Poland, Italy, Russia, Austria, Turkey, Greece, and Syria. Each group from different ethnic and religious origins and many of them non-English speakers brought their different manners, customs, languages and beliefs. This inspired the ideas and the feelings of resentment and distrust. The suspicion that Anglo-Saxon hegemony was being threatened arose. The United Sates were being more mixed ethnically and plural culturally and such feelings were a kind of response to that tangible reality. Along with these immigrants arriving mostly Eastern seaboard, there were others arriving mostly on the western: that portion included some 264,000 Chinese and much smaller number of Japanese

between the years 1860-1900. The numbers of these new comers were not large or out of proportion regarding the earlier waves of immigration. Particularly the Chinese immigrants confronted with fear, resentment and racial antagonism with violence against them in the Western states, rising in the 1870s and 1880s. This resulted with Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which outlawed the immigration of all Chinese people, but only a few professionals, students and tourists.

The history of the African Americans in the USA is in fact a story of a survival of people in political, economic, cultural, educational, social and many other ways of life and shaping their fate and future. This struggle includes their advancement and determination. Starting with the Dred Scott case in 1857, they had to stand against the reactions of white Americans in terms of their development as well. In 1856, on May 29, Abraham Lincoln advocated the end of slavery during a speech to the first Republican state convention observing that: “We allow slavery to exist in the slave states, not because slavery is right or good, but from the necessities of our union.” But his effort cost a lot for the future of a nation as it was the reason of a bitterness that lasted for the next century. This was the start of a political chaos with a new level of racial hostility. It was followed by Civil War which resulted with the death of the president himself. “None of the Confederate States accepted the implied offer of immunity from prosecution if they were to lay down their arms” at the outbreak of the Civil War on April 12,1861.

For a group of people looking for development, education is highly important as that would be the most valuable tool to reach success and potential help in an individual’s future. In the post slavery era, whites did not like the idea of educating Africans as they were giving them the permission to bear arms in times of war. They had the fear of revolt which would mean their demand to equalize their status. When, in 1800s, blacks got access to education, the law enforcing the segregation of schools was passed allowing a withdrawal of federal funding.

During the period following 1872, the groups like Ku Klux Klan and The Knights of the White Camellia arose. These groups thought beatings and physical attacks on African Americans were necessary to prevent black supremacy over white people. The other reason for these groups for not accepting emancipation of blacks

was to reaffirm white supremacy. With the betrayal of Reconstruction and disfranchisement of blacks, the postwar economic structure started to take shape. This new economic system meant the "superexploitation" of black labor. Together with this re-structuring in the society and economy of the nation, the lynching gained rise. So the ideology of the black people changed accordingly with the political motives to meet the new historical conditions.

If black people accepted a status of political and economical inferiority, probably the mob murders and lynchings would not be so high. On contrary, many of the ex-slaves did not give up from their dream of progress; more than ten thousand anti-black activities were done during the three decades following the war. The one who challenged the racial hierarchy was the potential victim. The people included in this lawless series of crimes were from every sect of life; owners of successful black business, workers who asked for higher wages and refused to be called a "boy", women who refused the sexual attacks on their bodies. (Gates: 1989: iv)

Physical attacks did occur particularly before Civil War but they targeted white-abolitionists during these years. According to the observation of Lloyd Garrison as told in *Liberator*, more than three hundred white people were reached over the two decades following 1836. So aggression in fact helped anti-slavery campaign climb and gain power and influence as they essentially aimed to silence the ones who supported the abolition of slavery. This new organization made a great change in the society as well. White support for the black equality and the oppositions to the individual lynchings began to wade.

1.1.2. PRE-CIVIL WAR PERIOD AND SLAVE HOLDERS

African American enslavement started in 17th century and since then with the acts like American Revolution and the adaptation of Constitution in 1787, it was a dying institution. With the parts of the compromises in the constitution by 1808 the founders decided to end the importation of slaves in the USA. However, in the beginning of 1800s, African slave trade became a live institution once more especially in the Southern States of which economy depended on agriculture. The

adoption and reinvigoration of cotton gin led the slavery widespread because wide variety of cotton was grown as it was suitable for the climate of Deep South. This labor to remove seeds from the cotton fibers needed labor force. The fact that cotton production was a profitable and an attractive business created the need for labor supply to tend the fields. And African Americans could supply this labor force.

It must be remembered that the slaves did not only work on the cotton plantations but they did many other kinds of agriculture including tobacco, hem, corn, and livestock. Besides they were working as skilled traders. Even, some worked in the cities and earned enough money to buy their freedom. Southern and northern states had large free black populations as well.

A typical day of a slave consisted of long hours of work. A field hand had to start working before dawn till after sunset with a two-hour break for a noon meal. The masters generally put long working hours and the slaves had no control to arrange their working hours. They were under threat of physical punishment by their overseers. The system and the slave owners made them as powerless victims. Even the family life, which was an important institution in slave life, was under control of masters. The plantation life gave them small cabins to shelter and there was almost no private or social life beyond the reach of the masters (Walvin, 1996: 72)

The system of slavery in the Americas was based on the people of Africans. Basically, slavery was an organization that brought large black populations into groups to serve economic interests of small local white elites. The formula was simple and easily explained. The richer white land owners employed the Africans and their local-born descendants to achieve the development of the America. The justification and the explanation of the use of slave owners were clear depending on the terms of race, asserting that the people of African descent were suitable to work in tropical and semitropical regions.

The slave economy matured when sugar cultivation became common in Caribbean, tobacco in Northern colonies and cotton in the US south. So the slaves were used for the local field work. As most the slaves were black, the idea of

blackness donated the slavery and they became almost equal terms: to be a black was to be a slave.

1.2. SLAVERY AND THE US CONSTITUTION

The life of the African Americans was difficult in social, economic, political and educational fields. The barriers experienced by them in their quest for equality was tiring and hard. The path in their struggle was full of debates for opposing beliefs, which mainly derived from their identity put upon African Americans as slaves and their manner to find a new identity as a free people.

Thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the US Constitution regarded them as free humans, liberating them from human bondage and defended their access to life and liberty without fear of deprivation, and these amendments gave them right to vote. In no other country of the world, the institution of slavery has been considered such frankly. In fact the original reason to these amendments was to serve for the interests of the African American but they served for the interest of whole nation. While giving the basic rights for freedom and equal status to the blacks, who were denied before, the US Constitution was reframed.

If for the wishes of people in the south especially who wanted to keep slavery as their profitable economic lifestyle, that would not be necessary to give these rights to them. As federal courts enjoyed unrestricted freedom of thought and action, what they regarded as rule was the law of the land. Due to the progress in the court system, this change showed its reflection on the society as well. For instance, the decision about Dred Scott Case given by Supreme Court in 1857 did not change until 1938 and this period can be considered too long for the people to wait for their struggle. As African people were determined to define their position in that newly emerging American society, it was inevitable to have battles between the conflicting sides. Laws, which did not exist before, were passed under Jim Crow sanctions to reinstitutionalize slavery in a new form. As soon as the framework of these laws was completed, the system brought African Americans into a brand new life of slavery to meet the increasing demand for the physical needs of the society. With the re-shaped organization of the society and rise for the need, new laws or code of laws were

enacted as a further attempt to control the servitude of African Americans. These attempts of violation and its severe and swift consequences continued until 1920s.

With the passing of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1865 four million African Americans were freed which was a mixed experience for another ethnic group already in the United States before Civil War. It was precise and left no room for its intent. In the 13th Amendment it was stated that: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.” With a final point to the fate of a race with this amendment, an end became a start that an ancient institution of a society had no place in the future of a country. By the abolition of slavery from the USA, the whole world was aware that it had to go. It was realized by many leaders in the USA that the slavery had to end in the country. When at last they decided to take action against this institution, they had already been 56 years behind Britain who ended with it in 1807.

On June 13, 1866 The Fourteenth amendment was adopted to prevent states from depriving persons of “life, liberty, or property without due process of law.” The congressional resolution proposed by the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified by 30 states on July 28, 1868. With this amendment the former slaves could extend the right of citizenship. On February 26, 1869 Fifteenth Amendment, which was ratified by 29 states on March 30, 1870, was passed by the congress. With the fifteenth amendment it was stated that: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

These three amendments led to the launch of Reconstruction which was an important political, educational, social and economic undertaking. It was designed to promote the development of the African Americans and create a change in the attitude among the southern states by bringing them back to the national unification. But before slavery was ended, and Reconstruction was initiated, some alternative solutions were discussed to deal with the issue of slavery. One of the possible solutions considered seriously was repatriating African Americans back to Africa. It

was first suggested in 1823 by famous Monroe Doctrine of President James Monroe who was the president of the USA between 1817 and 1825. The main aim of the doctrine was to prohibit the European nations from coming to found their own colonies in Western Hemisphere. Though there was an additional clause for the African Americans who had bought their freedom to be able to go back to Africa if they wanted. Although by 1847 some Africans moved back to Africa; settled in Liberia and founded Monrovia as their capital city in honor of James Monroe, the idea of sending Africans back to Africa did not materialize. It was not so realistic to expect those Africans to consider Africa as their homeland any more than white Americans would consider Europe theirs.

On September 22, 1862, by considering all the factors in the system of slavocracy President Lincoln was sure that the slavery should come to an end immediately and he issued a proclamation stating that "as of January 1,1963, all persons held as slaves within any state or designated party of a state, shall then, thenceforward and forever, be free." Upon that decision brutal Civil War started. This war lasted for four years and it almost destroyed the whole United States. During these years, killing, rancor, venom became the horrible experience of a nation who was looking for its soul and struggling for survival. When it was over after four years both North and South had to pay a very heavy price. The damage of the country and the people was immeasurable. Thousands of young men, women and children were killed, their property was destroyed. Even president Lincoln himself lost his life on April 14, 1865 to an assassin's bullet.

1.2.1. LIFE AS A FREE BLACK vs. SLAVE LIFE; HOW IT FEELS TO BE FREE BUT "COLORED"

'All men are created equal' the Declaration of Independence announced. That explicitly excluded women. Implicitly, it also excluded 'Indians' and 'Negroes', since what it meant, of course was all *white* men. Lincoln tried to capture the significance of the end of slavery on November 19, 1863 when he delivered his famous Gettysburg address. He told during his speech;

> Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and dedicated will long endure. It is for us the living, rather for us to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion that we here highly resolved that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. (Mungazi, 2000: 4)

Gettysburg address is unquestionably a monument for the national spirit that Lincoln was trying to recapture and sustain not only for his time but for the future as well. It absolutely created a high moral ground. It helped the nation see the issue of slavery from a proper perspective and the importance of president's decision to end it. Despite the heavy losses of the nation resulting from Civil War, African Americans did not regard going back to Africa as a viable option. They preferred to solve the problems of race in their permanent homeland USA. Even Lincoln himself abandoned the idea of repatriation to Africa. Reconstruction was initiated on that basis after that.

With a decade of reform and reconstruction, a quarter of a million gained the chance to take an education, achieve political office and exercise the right to vote. But in 1877, when federal troops withdrew from the South, African Americans lost the franchise swiftly. All the former Confederate States had radically restricted black voting rights by 1910 even before that a whole raft of laws established segregation in everything; from schools to public transport. If the legal means of repression did not work against blacks, the violence was used. Ku Klux Klan, established in 1866 and other white vigilante groups were doing cruelties against the blacks. The basic economic situation for blacks did not change. Sixty percent of the total land in the southern part was owned by the ten percent of the white population. Freed African Americans had to work in sharecropping or tenant farming and as a result more than 75 percent of the black farmers were tenant farmers by 1900. In other words, they were moved from slavery to 'serfdom'.

By 1890s, one percent of the entire American population owned more than 25 percent of the nation's whole wealth. In 1893, when $700 was a reasonable annual income, a survey revealed that there were over four thousand millionaires in the United States. Industrial working class far outnumbered the middle class, and was at the end of the new economic and social scale. By 1915, the poor class would constitute the 65 percent of the population. The other end of the scale showed the industrialists and financiers who vas fortunes and power like John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie and J. Pierpoint Morgan. They subscribed to an emerging ideology seeing their wealth as justified, the reward of pluck and luck. This ideology drew on the Protestant ethic; the belief that wealth was a sign of heavenly favor or as a more popularized version of Darwinian theories of evolution which was termed as "the survival of the fittest". The ideology defended success as the inevitable outcome of hard work and sturdy of self-reliance.

In the book by Beth Bailey and David Farber "The 'Double V' Campaign in World War II Hawaii: African Americans, Racial Ideology, and Federal Power" we can recognize the awakening of a nation against the threats inside to keep themselves strong against the threats outside: "We call upon the President and Congress to declare war on Japan and against racial prejudice in our country. Certainly we should be strong enough to whip both of them." (817)

But the decision by President Roosevelt and his advisors was to declare a war only for one of the issues otherwise it would be only troubling domestic social issues. So they would fight against their enemies in and out with segregated arm forces. During the years of World War II, the federal government used its full power to have control over all matter threatening the peace of the people of the country. Race was one the subjects but maybe the most "inflammatory, politically dangerous and divisive of the American will". So the government took a different position in making laws for the subject sometimes believing in the importance of local or regional custom and tradition.

The social structure that opposed their relief and freedom inevitably led them to commit crimes. Considerably, it would be accepted that the crime rates must have

been higher than the actual numbers officially published. In a study made in 1931 by the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching, the black people were accused of different crimes between 1889 and 1929: 37.7 percent were charged with murder, 5.8 percent with felonious assault, 7.1 percent of theft, 1.8 percent of insulting a white person and 24.2 percent were accused of miscellaneous charges, 16.7 percent were accused of rape, 6.7 percent of attempted rape and majority of them were trivial.

When Frederick Douglass tells his life, we encounter the harsh realities once more: “At an auction or valuation, a single word from the white man was enough – against all wishes, prayers, and entreaties – to sunder forever the dearest friends, dearest kindred, and strongest ties known to human beings” (2000: 53).

If a country is under such a great change, this is inevitable to have conflicting ideas just like on issue of slavery. Besides the voices against system designed by rules of slavocracy, there were some pro-slavery actions in the USA. Another group in the south argued for a quite contrary subject to the one abolitionist ideas; slavery was not just and economic necessity but it was positive and good as well. Amongst the defenders of slavery we can count writer and social philosopher George Fitzhugh (1806-81), the novelist William Gilmore Simms (1806-70), the poet William J. Grayson (1788-1863), the lawyer and writer Henry Hughes (1829-62), the scientific agriculturist and fanatical secessionist Edmund Ruffin (1794-1865), a professor of political philosophy Thomas Dew (1802-46), and the politician James Henry Hammond (1807-64). Some of these supporters of slavery used even Bible as a reference to find a theological basis for their argument. Some other tried to explain it scientifically, concerning the separate, inferior origins of ‘Negro race’. What was central to their defense was the feudal society of the south. They considered the life there as an extended family and the master acted as patriarchal head. Every member of the family played their own role; both black and white. Slave had the role of a child, dependant on the master. As they were incapable of looking after themselves, they needed the support and the guidance of the mistress as the matriarch and the master as the patriarch. So the system of slavery was a fundamentally benevolent institution.

George Fitzhugh wrote several polemical works including *Sociology for the South; or, The Failure of Free Society*; and *Cannibals All!; Slaves without Masters*. In these works he argued in general that the South was the most prosperous and happy country in the world because it embraced a protective philosophy, which takes care of the weak while it governs them. (82)

While Fitzhugh told about the benefits of slavery in fiction, there were some defenders for slavery who chose to tell it in poetry. William J. Grayson was the one who did it in this way. In 1856 he published a long a poem *The Hireling and the Slave* with a theme that the African slaves on the farms led a better life and lived more happily than the free worker. He draws an ideal portrait of 'Congo's simple child' learning 'each civilizing art' 'under the tutelage of his master'; 'schooled, fed, clothed, protected by slavery many a patient year.' Just like in the poems of Grayson and in the narrations of Fitzhugh, American slave society of the south was rehabilitated, transformed into the garden of paradise in other literary pieces.

In a speech delivered in 1858 in the senate, James Henry Hammond described blacks as 'mudsills' of the society, the material foundation on which 'the civilization, the refinement of white Southern culture was built' (Hammond, 1853: 108). To support their cause Hammond, Thomas Dew, William Gilmore Simms, and many others came together in a seminal document, a collection of essays published in 1853 *The Pro-Slavery Argument: As Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States*. According to this frame work, society was derived from the British political philosopher Edmund Burke and from Aristotle as a natural extension of the human personality, and with the people living in it, society was a kind of biological unit.

George Fitzhugh sees it as growing work of nature. Just like any other organism, society is complex and inegalitarian, so it is a kind web of different interests and castes consisting of different classes and races. Simms tells the situation as: "All harmonies, whether in the moral or physical world arise wholly from the inequality of the tones and aspects; and all things, whether in art or nature, social and political systems, but for this inequality, would give forth monotony and discord" in his essay "The Proslavery Argument" (257). So the pro-slavery defenders conclude

that inequality is deeply founded in nature and they attacked on the entire liberal tradition. To quote "The Pro-Slavery Argument" again, they believed that man was not born free but "in a state of the most helpless dependence on the others… to subjection… to sin… and ignorance". (6)

Actually pro-slavery polemicists were attacking the founding principles drawn from Enlightenment and a progressive idea of history on which American Republic had been built. While doing this they started with an organicist notion of society. Fitzhugh argues: "Fathers do not derive their authority as heads of families, from the consent of wife and children; and since the family was simply the first and most natural development of man's nature, it followed that the leaders of society did not derive their authority from the consent of those they led." Fitzhugh sees liberty and equality as the source of slavery and explains it as:

> Liberty and equality are new things under the sun. Free competition like others is another name for liberty and equality; that threw the whole weight of society on its members; so liberty and equality are essentially destructive instruments, since they served to combine all men in oppressing that part of mankind who most need sympathy and protection. Individualism, self-reliance, self improvement; all that means each man's eagerly pursuing his own selfish welfare unfettered and unrestricted by legal regulation. (1998: 47)

1.2.2. WOMEN OF THE NORTH

If you look at any work from the years of slavery, the index will very probably include a title including the word rape. The scholars of today since the years of Civil War have been discussing for the rape of black men on English, European or American women. James Hugo Johnston wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1937, he found: "It is a common belief that the crime of rape committed by Negro men against white women was nonexistent…" There were many other historians who believed that black rape on white women was only a myth (Jordan, 2003: 27).

As the rape on black women by white men was correct, so was the rape on white women by black men. The sexual abuse of women for the enslaved and free was the primary source of male dominancy to achieve their goal and take revenge.

In the nineteenth century, abolitionism and feminism were not always seamless. World Anti-Slavery Convention, in 1840, was held in England, and on the first day, it was decided not to seat women delegates. In the same year, American Anti-Slavery society split mainly because followers of Garrison declared that women could not be excluded from full participation in the work of abolition. With Garrison, Elizabeth Cady Garrison (1815-1902) was amongst those sitting in gallery at the World Anti-Slavery Conventions. She got so angry with the treatment of female delegates that she decided to organize a convention devoted to the rights of women.

This was Seneca Falls Convention which indeed took place eight years later. Among its three hundred attendees, one third of them signed a 'Declaration of Sentiments' about the conditions of women. It was modeled by Declaration of Independence, beginning that all men and women were created equal and going on: "The history of mankind is of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man towards woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her." Declaration insisted that 'women should have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States'.

Racism has always given way to sexual coercion. While black women and the women of color have been the main target of it, white women suffered it as well. Even, white men were once in the idea that they could commit sexual assault against Black women with impunity. Racism has always been a provocation to rape and white women have inevitably suffered the ricochet fire of these assaults. In this way it would be correct to say that racism included sexism or at least it nourishes. So indirectly it affects the white women by the deliberate oppression on their sisters of color.

Racism was felt in every aspect of life. In 1918 Winfield Collins published a book entitled *The Truth about Lynching and the Negro in the South* in which he defends that two of the Negro's most prominent characteristics are the utter lack of

chastity and complete ignorance of veracity. The Negro's sexual laxity, considered as immoral or even criminal in the white man's civilization, may have been all but a virtue in the habitat of his origin. There nature developed in him intense sexual passions to offset his high death rate. Here Collins makes use of pseudo-biological elements to assert that black men are motivated to commit sexual violence against women.

Sociological studies even go further in their analysis of racism. Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectic of Sex: the Case for Feminist Revolution* invokes a Biblical notion that "races are no more than the various parents and siblings of the family of Man" (97). According to that explanation, she defines white man as father, white woman as mother and the Black people as children. She transposes Freud's theory of Oedipus complex to explain black man's uncontrollable desire for white women. They want to kill the father and sleep with the white mother according to that approach and she defends that in order to be a man, the black man must untie himself from his bonds with the white female, relating to her if at all only in a degrading way. In addition, due to his virulent hatred and jealousy of her Possessor, the white man, he may lust after her as a thing to be conquered in order to revenge himself on the white man. (100)

These discussions were even further on women. During 1920s a well known Southern politician declared that "there was no such a thing as a virtuous colored girl over the age of fourteen". Calvin Hernton, a contemporary black writer makes a similar comment about black women in his *Sex and Racism* by insisting that the Negro women during slavery began to develop a depreciatory concept of herself, not only as female but as a human being as well. Hernton's analysis shows that after experiencing the ceaseless sexual immorality of the white South, the Negro woman became 'promiscuous and loose' and could be 'had for the taking'. Indeed, she came to look upon herself as the South viewed and treated her, for she had no other morality by which to shape her womanhood.

The aggression against black people as a whole perceived the rape charge as an attack against the black community. So the black women became the most important figures in the leadership of anti-lynching movements. Amongst them Ida

B. Wells-Bernett was a moving force. In 1892 three acquaintances of this black newspaperwoman were lynched in Memphis, Tennessee. They had a store in a black neighborhood which was successful in competing with white owned one and because of that reason they were murdered. Ida B. Wells spoke out against this event in her newspaper *The Free Speech* and during her trip to New York the offices of her newspaper were burnt to the ground. She was threatened to be lynched as well, so she decided to stay in the East to "tell the world for the first time the true story of Negro Lynchings, which were becoming more numerous and horrible."

Her articles in *New York Age* became a tool of motivation for black women for support campaigns and eventually to establish the Black Women's Club. So the black women were actively involved in the opposition for the anti-black movements in the country. Ida B. Wells traveled from city to city to speak against black oppression including the lynch law. During her trips to abroad she took great support from the countries like Great Britain which made an important impact on US public opinion. Mary Church Terrell, the first president of the National Association of Colored Women was another black woman leader who devoted herself for the fight of her people especially for lynching. Thirty years later their start for the anti-lynching campaigns, an organization called Anti-Lynching Crusaders was organized. It was established in 1922 with the aim to create an integrated women's movement against lynching. They introduced themselves as below:

> What will Mary B. Talbert do next? What next will the colored American women do under her leadership? An organization has been effected by colored WOMEN of all kinds and colors united by December, 1922 against lynching.
> Look out Mr. Lyncher!
> This class of women generally get what they go after.

1.2.3 SLAVERY ON WOMEN

If we take the situation specified on a gender, the situation of women and men in the difficulties they endured during their lives in and out of the slavery was almost equal and even sometimes tighter for women. Throughout the history of the USA, black women have always declared a 'collective consciousness' of their sexual

victimization. During slavery, physical harming of black people was not common as the slave owners were reluctant to harm their 'property'. Because, each black was a force of labor to make money for them with his effort on the field and at home. As Jacobs gives definition of a slave, they were in the eyes of their white owners "a piece of merchandise, trusted to them for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment" (12). The sufferings of both sexes were not equal and it would not be wrong to say it was heavier for females. Rape as a tool of white supremacist terror for black women comes even before the act of beating due to these reasons. Even flogging and rape were methods of keeping black people, both men and women in control; women had to endure twice more trials. Sexual abuse was inevitable for almost all females under the rules of slavocracy. The sorrows lived under the brutal conditions of slavery were uncountable as Harriet Ann Jacobs in her personal narrative *Incidents* tells;

> But to the slave mother New Year's day comes laden with peculiar sorrows. She sits on her cold cabin floor, watching the children who may all be torn from her next morning; and often does she wish that she and they might die before the day dawns. She may be an ignorant creature, degraded by the system that had brutalized her from childhood; but she has a mother's instincts and is capable of feeling a mother's agonies. (26).

The rape of the black women complemented with the lynchings became the main tool of postwar strategy for the racist terror. So it was easier to guarantee the exploitation of black labor force of the ex-slaves and the political domination on black people after the betrayal of Reconstruction era. Frederick Douglass observes that the murders of black people were a kind of preventive measure to deter the black masses from rising up in revolt. So the black people could not achieve their goals for citizenship and equality (2008: 35).

In fact sexual abuse and rape was an inevitable reality of the black community in the USA. Especially the 'institutionalized' sexual abuse of black women was so powerful that it lasted longer than slavery. Group rape by the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist organization organized in the post-Civil War period became a kind of political weapon to stand against the black equality. For instance, during the Memphis Riot of 1866 mob murders and sexual attacks on black women

complemented each other. After the riot, many black women testified the savage mop raped the lived before a Congressional committee. This testimony named Ellen Parton, telling about the similar events lived during the Meridian, Mississippi, Riot of 1871:

> I reside in Meridian; have resided here nine years; occupation, washing and ironing and scouring; Wednesday night was the last night they came to my house; by "they" I mean bodies or companies of men; they came on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday; on Monday night they said they came to do us no harm; on Tuesday night they said they came for the arms; I told them there was none, and they said they would take my word for it; on Wednesday night they came and broke the open wardrobe and trunks, and committed rape upon me; there were eight of them in the house; I do not know how many there were outside… (Firestone, 2003: 89)

Similarly Jacobs tells about her own experience of a mother when she sees her children on auction block to be sold away from her;

> On one of these sale days, I saw a mother lead seven children to the auction block. She knew that some of them would be taken from her; but they took all. The children were sold to a slave-trader, and their mother was bought by a man in her own town. Before night her children were all far away. She begged the trader to tell her where he intended to take them; this he refused to do. How could he, when he knew he would sell them, one by one, wherever he could command the highest price? I met that mother at the street, and her wild, haggard face lives to-day in my mind. She wrung her hands in anguish, and exclaimed, "Gone! All gone! Why don't God kill me?" I had no words wherewith to comfort her. Instances of this kind are of daily, yea, of hourly occurrence (26-27).

Rape was the fate of many black women in the society sometimes a terrible end for them. In an article published in Chicago Defender on December 18 under the heading "Rape, Lynch Negro Mother" a tragic end of a colored woman is told with the following words:

> Columbus, Miss., Dec.17- Thursday a week ago Cordella Stevenson was found early in the morning hanging to the limb of a tree, without any clothing, dead. . . She was hung there from the night before by a bloodthirsty mob who had gone to her home, snatched her from

slumber, and dragged her through the streets without any resistance. They carried her to a far-off spot, did their dirt and then stung her up.

II. AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING

Writing about what you know best is the simplest way to make the people realize a truth or an idea and what we know best is our own life. Through this process, the act of writing is easy; the writer becomes the observing subject and the object of investigation, remembrance, and contemplation. It is the practice of self-referential writing. The root of the word is from Greek in which autos signifies “self”, bios “life”, and graph “writing”. If we put them in order they denote “self life writing” which is a brief definition for the genre “autobiography”. In Oxford English Dictionary the meaning for the word autobiography is defined as “The writing of one's own history; the story of one's life written by himself” or “the story of one’s life written by himself”. Or Sidonie Smith defines the term as:

> “Autobiography,” now the most commonly used term for such life writing, thus described writing being produced at a particular historical juncture, the early modern period in the West with its concept of the self-interested individual intent on assessing the status of the soul or the meaning of public achievement. By the eighteenth century notions of self-interest, self-consciousness, and self-knowledge informed the figure of the “Enlightened individual” described by philosophers and social and political theorists. And “autobiographies” as studies in self-interest were sought by a growing reading public with access to affordable printed books (2001: 2).

More recently, French theorist Philippe Lejeune has expanded that definition: “We call autobiography the retrospective narrative in prose that someone makes of his own existence when he puts the principal accent upon his life, especially upon the story of his own personality” (qtd in Smith). When “life” is expanded to include how one has become who he or she is at a given moment in an ongoing process of reflection, clearly the autobiographical story requires more explaining. Let us first situate the term historically. The term autobiography was first coined in the preface to a collection of poems by the eighteenth-century English working-class writer Ann Yearsley, although most critics still cite Robert Southey’s anglicizing of the three Greek words in 1809 as the first use of the term in English. In his extensive history of the term autobiography, Robert Folkenflik specifies the exact dates of the word’s

emergence in the West: “The term autobiography and its synonym self-biography,” Folkenflik notes, “having never been used in earlier periods, appeared in the late eighteenth century in several forms, in isolated instances in the seventies, eighties, and nineties in both England and Germany with no sign that one use influenced another”. Folkenflik also notes that until the twentieth century the word memoirs (the French les mémoirs) was commonly used to designate “self life writing” (1993: 2).

Autobiography is now the most commonly used term for a life writing which is produced at a particular historical juncture. It is an early modern period style in the West carrying the concept of a self-interested individual intent on assessing the status of the soul or the meaning of public achievement. By the eighteenth century notions of self-interest, self-consciousness, and self-knowledge informed the figure of “enlightened individual”. In fact autobiographical writing as the self-referential act of writing was not a practice began at the end of eighteenth century. In earlier centuries, terms such as “memoir” (Madame de Staël, Glückel of Hameln) or “the life” (Teresa of Avila) or “the book of my life” (Cardano) or “confessions” (Augustine, Rousseau) or “essays of myself” (Montaigne) were used to mark the writer’s refraction of self-reference through speculations about history, politics, religion, science, and culture. Moreover, since the end of the eighteenth century many other terms, among them testimonio, autoethnography, psychobiography, have been coined to designate new kinds and contexts of self-referential writing. Because of this rich and diverse history of selfreferential modes, we need to make some crucial distinctions among a set of terms— life writing, life narrative, autobiography— that may seem to imply the same thing.

2.1. AFRICAN AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The earliest cultural conflict between blacks and whites in the United States can be framed partly as a conflict between orality and literacy. As a preindustrial people systematically denied access even to the rudimentary tools of literacy in the New World, the imaginative texts created by African Americans during the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries remained exclusively in oral form.

Blending their West African cultural memories and their harsh American experiences, the early preliterate African American artists pioneered a unique Afro–New World idiom that found expression in their work songs, folktales, spirituals, sermons, and other verbal structures that were orally transmitted across generations. In political terms, however, those cultural productions were no match for the power of the written texts produced by the literate segments of white America. Books, after all, are not innocent entities; they are repositories of ideology. Inscribed in an overwhelming majority of early American political, legal, religious, medical, and literary texts were racist, sexist, and elitist ideologies that empowered the white male ruling class.

Emmanuel S Nelson tells about the African American autobiography with the words:

> Even when African Americans were the subject of white discourse, they were powerless— because of their preliterate status— to intervene and resist. The very absence of textual challenge from African Americans ensured the pseudolegitimization and perpetuation of white assumptions and representations. The written texts, which constitute a most potent manifestation of literacy, thus crucially helped establish and maintain white hegemony and functioned as powerful instruments of domination. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, however, the terms of the racial encounter were gradually rearranged. African Americans began to write. Soon autobiographical narration emerged as a preferred mode of creative self-expression. To a large extent, this privileging of self-representational writing over other textual forms was a result of encouragement by Northern white abolitionists. The antislavery activists sponsored the production and circulation of autobiographical narratives by fugitive slaves because they realized that those poignant ?rst-person accounts of life in inhuman bondage in the South could be used effectively to advance the abolitionist cause. For the fugitive slave, too, the act of self-creation implied in the autobiographical role had enormous personal and political significance. Autobiographies indeed are narratives of selfhood; the narrator lays claim to the power and authority of self-definition. For an African American autobiographer, in the antebellum era, to claim her subjectivity was inherently a revolutionary act. It was a profoundly political gesture because she dared, in effect, to insist on her selfhood and agency in a society that refused to recognize her humanity and viewed her instead as commodity. Moreover, the autobiographical form offered her an exemplary opportunity to fuse the power of personal testimony with trenchant social observation. It granted her a communal voice that allowed her not only to tell her life story but also to expose the various forms and structures of oppression

> that maimed her life and the lives of others in her community. The early African American autobiographies, therefore, were more than life stories; they were carefully crafted instruments of resistance. This melding of personal, communal, and sociopolitical concerns continues to be a salient feature of African American lifewriting. (2002: xiv)

The tradition of autobiographical writing originated in the antebellum slave narratives. It still occupies primary position in African American expressive culture. The racist logic of the dominant culture still remains the heart of African American autobiographical enterprise. African American autobiographical writing starts with the early captivity narratives, antebellum fugitive slave narratives, spiritual autobiographies, and travelogues to the sleek, self reflexive autobiographies of the late twentieth century that reveal their authors' postmodern awareness of the fictionality of all constructed selves. The works of major authors, such as Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Maya Angelou, and Malcolm X, receive careful and extensive attention amongst the autobiographies ever written by an African American.

2.1.1. SLAVE NARRATIVES AS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL GENRE

In order to be able to understand the African American writing developed in the twentieth century, we need to look the cultural currents upon which it flowed out in the nineteenth century. The new ideas like the emergence of the "racial uplift" in the post slavery America became the ideological foundations for the black masters like the educators, leaders, intellectuals, public servants, successful book writers. As the black people wanted to lift themselves up from the horrors of past slavery years and Jim Crow era, their commitment to self-education, solidarity and self-help became their tool.

The history of slavery is so deep and terrifying that it was inevitable for the ex-slaves or the ones who lived slavery directly to share their experiences during those years. Many of the slave narratives were the slaves who escaped from Southern slavocracy. There were some exceptions like Nat Turner who organized a slave rebellion in Southampton and was hanged for that, and the other example is James

Mars who was born and lived his entire life in Connecticut in North. Slave narratives were generally writing under the abolitionist sponsorship or their encouragement. These narrations are firsthand accounts of their real lives, personal developments, desire for freedom, and their reach to freedom as slaves. They represent different tensions, desperate thoughts and experiences in a literary form. (Crane, 2002: 300)

Slave narratives as a genre were very popular especially in the nineteenth century. That was due to the increasing influence of abolitionist movement and political debate about slavery; as a result of these social events the increasing public's desire to read the experiences of slaves and first person accounts of the effects of slavery on individuals.

In fact the history of black existence on American continent is somehow different than what is told in the stories of those slave narratives. The earliest African Americans were not slaves but explorers. Estevanico (1500?? - 1539) who was an African was on board with Spanish explorers Panfilo de Narvaez and Alvar Nunez Caabeza de Vaca when they traveled to American southwest. In 1619, twenty Africans landed in Jamestown but they were considered as indentured servants rather than slaves. Indentureship was different than slavery as they were free after fulfilling their contract which was generally for seven years and they would purchase land and live as free citizens.

The situation turned out to be just the opposite in the next half century. This system was eliminated and instead all Africans who were currently in the colonies and those who would arrive in the near future would live as slaves for whole their lives rather than duration declared on a contract. This was by the mid-seventeenth century. Any reasons can be counted for the change of the system like the rise of tobacco, rice, cotton, indigo economy in southern colonies with the rise of the planter class; the laws that would allow to consider the Africans as the property; scientific studies and intellectual debates endorsing the inferiority of the African race; the complicity in the Atlantic slave trade involving British colonies, Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, and the Dutch. Even in New England, because of its involvement in shipping industry, they made use of slave labor and economically benefitted from slave trade.

In *African American Slave Narratives: Anthology, Volume I,* edited by Sterling Lecater Bland, the history is told as:

> The amount of human loss resulting from the Atlantic slave trade is astounding. When the earliest Europeans ventured into the areas on the western coast of Africa that are now known as Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Nigeria, they encountered what they saw as a thriving slave trade between numerous African nations and Arab traders to the north. That practice was substantially expanded when slaves were provided to the British colonies. The most conservative estimates suggest that between the sixteenth century and the nineteenth century, anywhere from ten to twenty million Africans survived middle passage and arrived in the Americas. This is only a small portion of the total number of Africans who were shipped from Africa. It is estimated that fifty percent of all Africans who were sent from Africa perished in transit and never arrived in the Americas. As the colonies expanded, they found themselves involved in a number of military conflicts with the French and with Native Americans, and eventually in the Revolutionary War with the British. African Americans participated in all military conflicts. There was continuous concern, however, especially in the South, about blacks, slaves and freemen alike carrying weapons. During the Revolutionary War, for instance, Georgia and South Carolina even went so far as to refuse to allow slaves to bear arms at all. As the war continued, northern colonies desperate for support often enlisted southern slaves in what were initially non-combat assignments that frequently became combat assignments. After the war, about 5,000 of the slaves who participated were granted their emancipation. (3)

By the year 1790, there were 757,208 African Americans, which was the nineteen percent of the population, in the United States. However, they were mostly in the south; 697,681 of them were slaves and only 59,527 were free. To give the slave holding states a disproportionate amount of power in the House of Representatives, the Constitution was settled on the well known compromise to minimize the presence of African Americans in Article I, section 2: “Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons” (Nabers, 2006: 154).

The Constitution sanctioned the Atlantic slave trade until 1808 when it was declared that: “The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person” (Article I, section 9). The Constitution was ratified in 1788 and from the ratification of the Constitution till the abolition of slavery in 1808 the country expanded rapidly. Eli Whitney’s invention of cotton gin in 1973 has been the turning point in the establishment of cotton as the primary cash crop of South. The expansion of cotton production in the South directly led to an increase in the slave population. In 1800, 100,000 bales of cotton were produced by the slave population of 850,000. By 1860, with an increase of slave population up to 4,000,000, the cotton production was 3,750,000 bales. Profit per acre soared and this made a slave more valuable. Between the years 1802 and 1860, the average price of a field hand increased more than $1,800 from $600.

This relation shows the big profit from cotton. This profitability on one hand bolstered the economic presence of America in the world; on the other hand it meant the revival of the slavery issue. In the period between the Revolutionary War and the early part of the nineteenth century, the solution to the Negro problem was considered as the possibility of colonization. The supporters of colonization suggested that the Africans could either be removed to the western parts of the North American continent or returned to Africa. But for the majority of the Americans, colonization was to be deported to lives of even greater uncertainty. The lives of the southern blacks were defined by the cruel conditions of the slavery, as the lives of the blacks in the north was drawn by economical hardship, legal constraints, inability to vote, and many other forms of racial discrimination.

Between the years of ratification of the constitution and 1820, US country grew tremendously. The population of four million rose to 9.6 million. Economy continued expanding, Manifest Destiny led the borders further west and the issues of tariff laws and the establishment of a national banking system were important debates of these years. Though, no issue had been as divisive as the issue of slavery. Not the moral aspects but the economic concerns of slavery were discussed. So

generally sectionalized, partisan political solutions were offered and one of those was the Missouri Compromise of 1820. This compromise called for Maine to be granted statehood on March 15, 1820. The balance of the Free States and the slave states of the twenty four states in the Union stayed equal. Additionally, all the western areas of north Missouri's southern boundary would be free territory. In fact Missouri Compromise was unsatisfactory for many but it at least could temporarily avert the attention from resolving what to do about slavery in territories that would ask for statehood in the future.

The situation changed when California asked to enter the Union as a free state. In fact it was not a humanitarian decision but an economic one as a result of 1849 Gold Rush. At last Henry Clay, a senator from Kentucky understood that California should be admitted as a free state and south should be repaired. As a result California was allowed to enter the Union as a Free State, the District of Colombia would eliminate the slave trade but not the actual institution of slavery and the government would revise and strengthen enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. Fugitive slaves who were captured would not be allowed to testify on their own behalf and would be returned to south without due process of a trial. Citizens were required to report the fugitives and they would be punished for an aid for their escape.

2.2. SLAVE NARRATIVE TRADITION IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

In a country that was under such political adjustments on an issue of slavery, ex-slaves wanted to tell their own experiences. Their life-story, generally autobiographies were called as slave narratives. With the publication of popular narratives slave narrative became a well established genre because these stories had multiple printings as well as they were translated into many languages. Now it was the narrative writing gaining the large number of audiences.

Narratives written in the eighteenth century were generally framed by the terms of spiritual and adventurous elements. Most of the writers of that period were Afro-British. The most well-known examples of their writing include *A Narrative of*

the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man (1760), *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince* (1770), *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black* (1785), *Ottobah Cugoano's Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1787), and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African* (1791). In these stories the fundamental issues were bondage and freedom. The injustice of slavery was attached to moral, religious, and social grounds and they wanted to attract attention especially on the unjustness of slave trade.

Both blacks and whites had one idea in mind that the abolition of slave trade would end the slavery itself. With the law of African slave Trade Act of 1808 signed by President Thomas Jefferson, the objective of bringing an end to the slave trade in the United States through legislation was accomplished. It was the end of importing slaves from Africa; not the sales of the slaves already in the USA. It was ended with Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. Slave narratives continued to be written and published after African Slave Trade Act. *The Blind American Slave or Memoirs of Boyrereau Brincho* (1810); *Account of Life, Experience, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George White, an African, Written by Himself and Revised by a Friend* (1810); *The Life, History, and Unparalleled Sufferings of John Jea, The African Preacher* (1815); *The Negro Servant: An Authentic Narrative of a Young Negro, Showing How He Was Made a Slave in Africa, and Carried to Jamaica, Where He Was Sold to a Captain in His Majesty's Navy, and Taken to America, Where He Became a Christian, and Afterwards Brought to England and Baptised* (1815); *Incidents in the Life of Solomon Bayley* (published in North America in 1820 and in London in 1825); *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave* (1824); and *Life and Adventures of Robert Voorhis, the Hermit of Massachusetts, Who Has Lived Fourteen Years in a Case, Secluded from Human Society. Comprising an Account of His Birth, Parentage, Sufferings, and Providential Escape from Unjust and Cruel Bondage in Early Life-and His Reasons for Becoming a Recluse. Taken From His own Mouth by Henry Trumbull, and Published for His Benefit* (1829) are the most important samples of that period for slave narratives.

During the late 1820's and 1830's, with the renewed interest in the abolitionist cause, the first person accounts of slavery and its effects took importance because the abolitionist idea considered slave narratives as an instrument to sway public opinion in their favor. Those abolitionists approached and encouraged the slaves to write their narratives. This close relation with two sides integrated antebellum black writing with the socio-political conditions. In the style of the black writers there were some changes; one of the most clear was direct connection to Africa began to disappear. Eighteenth century writers like James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw and Olaudah Equiano wrote mostly about their African experiences and called for a return to home. It was a recollection of their lives in Africa. Instead of the African-born free men, now there was a generation of fugitive slaves who on contrary had no control over his financial, spiritual and social affairs. These new slaves were subject to physical and psychological violence. They were no more interested in philosophical side of slavery; they were trying to express the sensational and lurid accounts of their lives. The total abolition of slavery not only the slave trade became their main target.

Frances E. W. Harper (1852-1911) was one of the most prolific African American writers of the 19th century. During her lifetime she wrote four novels, several collections of poetry, numerous stories, essays and letters; she gave lectures about reform issues, especially on the subjects of temperance, slavery, racism and the rights of women. Harper was born in a slave holding sate, Maryland, to free parents. When she was three she was already an orphan; by the age sixteen, she published her first, small volume of poetry which is *Forest Leav*es. No copy of this book known to have survived at the moment. When she was twenty four, she had left the South to live in a free state, first in Ohio and then Pennsylvania.

She gained a great attention from public with her poem "Eliza Harris" in 1853. It was a response amongst many other responses to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. It is the story of a woman escaping across a river covered with ice. She carries 'the child of her love' to 'Liberty's plains'. This shows her growing involvement with the anti-slavery movement. When she gave her speech "The Education and Elevation of the Colored Race" her involvement was even more career. Her "Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects" (1854) started African American

protest poetry to which “The Slave Mother” can be shown as a good example. A conventional metrical form, emphatic rhymes and rhythms, elaborate images, a melodic, repetitive rhetoric which are the characteristics of that protest poetry, are used for the service of the story of a slave mother and her son. ‘He is not hers, although she bore / For him a mother’s pains’ she observes and goes on as ‘for cruel hands / May rudely tear apart / The only wreath of household love / That binds her breaking heart.’

In 1859, Harper published the short stories “The Two Offers” and “Our Greatest Want”. “The Two Offers” is the first short story published by a black person in the United States and it is concerned with the condition of women. It tells about the story of two cousins, one of whom is married unhappily and the other remains married taking lesson from her fate. So she turns to universal love and truth as another alternative – and this is abolitionism and other reform movements. She concludes in her story: “‘The Two Offers’ consists not so much in the fruition of our wishes as in the regulation of desires and the full development and right culture of our whole natures” (17). She had a commitment to racial and sexual equality that she reflected in those stories as well as her first serialized novel *Minnie’s Sacrifice* (1869). She expressed her belief in the redemptive power of women and particularly black women in this book. Harper participated with many others in the nineteenth century in the cult of true womanhood, a set of convictions that celebrated the superior piety, domesticity and rectitude of the Christian women. But she concluded: “It was up to black people generally, but black women especially, to ‘consecrate their lives to the work of upholding the race” (103).

Harper continued to link the cause of African Americans and the cause of women until the end of her life. She proclaimed in “Women’s Political Future” (1894) that: “Today we stand on the threshold of woman’s era. O women of America! . . . It is in your hands . . . to demand justice, as the right of every race; to brand with everlasting infamy the lawless and brutal cowardice that lynches, burns and tortures your own countrymen.” She believed that ‘the combined power of an upright mood and an enlightened womanhood’ would change the character of America.

In March 1853, Frederick Douglass published his novella, *The Heroic Slave*, in his paper "North Star". The same year, William Wells Brown (1814?-84) published a full length novel, *Clotel; or the President's Daughter*. Douglass wrote on mutiny, on the slave ship Creole, in 1841. "Curiously, earnestly, anxiously, we peer into the dark and wish even for blinding flash or the light of northern skies to reveal him. Bu alas! He is still enveloped in darkness" (7) he wrote in his introduction with his little knowledge of mutiny. It was his imagination that helped him to create an embodiment of heroic rebellion. He uses white mediation to tell a black history like in the slave narratives.

The protagonist of the story is Madison Washington in fact but the narrator is a white northerner named Listwell. Washington whispers: "What, then, is life to me? I am a slave… How men a thing am I. that accursed and crawling snake… that just glided into its slimy home, is freer and better off than I. but here am I a man, - yes a man! With thoughts and wishes, with powers and faculties as far as angel's flight above that hated reptile" and concludes "My resolution is fixed, I shall be free." (Douglass, 2008: 8) The rest of the story goes on with the adventures of the heroic slave: his flight to Canada, his return to rescue his wife, enslavement again, and the leadership of the munity.

Like Douglass, William Wells Brown was born as a slave in Kentucky. He had a slave mother but his father was white. As a resistance to his fate, he escaped from slavery in 1834 and took this name from a Quaker couple who assisted him in his flight. He moved to Boston and there he wrote his autobiography *Narrative of William W. Brown, an American Slave* which was published in 1847. This book established his reputation with its popularity. Hence, it is different than *Narrative* or *Incidents*. Richard Gray explains the difference as: "For that matter it offers an intriguing variation on the themes played out in such other notable – and, in their own ways, highly individual – slave narratives as *The Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man* (1760), by Briton Hammon (?-?), *Life of William Grimes, The Runaway Slave* (1825) by William Grimes (1784-?), *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper* (1838) by Moses Roper (1816-?), *Narratives of the Sufferings of Lewis and Milton Clarke* (1846) by Lewis Clarke (1815-97) and Milton Clarke (1817?-?), *Narrative of*

the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave (1849) by Henry Bibb (1815-54)…" (2004: 185).

Brown deploys an understated plain style, with just little personal reflection or literary calculation. His depictions of himself are ordinary and anti-heroic. He does not look for an excuse even for the tricks he played on another man whom he sent to jail to be whipped instead of him. His story is a kind of tool used to shoe the contradiction between the survival ethic of the slave and the dominant morality of the day. As he points out: "Slavery makes its victims lying and mean for which vices it afterwards reproaches them, and uses them as arguments to prove that they deserve no better fate." (2003: 57).

Brown travelled to Europe and stayed there till 1854, and in 1852 he published his book *Three Years in Europe* which is the first African American travel book. This book mainly consists of letters to his friends and newspapers in America. Then in 1853, published his book *Clotel*. Later, he revised the novel and published it in a serial form as Miranda*; or the Beautiful Quadroon: A Romance of Slavery Founded on Fact* (1860-61), and twice in novel form as *Clotelle: A Tale of the Southern States* (1864). *The Antislavery Harp* (1848) is a piece of compilation which tells about a well-known rumor that Thomas Jefferson had a mulatto daughter from his housekeeper who was sold at New Orleans slave auction. This story is probably an inspiration for *Clotel* even in none of the versions he mentions it by name.

The most notable thing about book is its open discussion of themes about black concubinage, miscegenation and the link between sexual and racial oppression. The story begins with the sentence: "With the growing population in the Southern States, the increase of mulattoes has been very great" (2003: 55) and goes on as following: "Society does not frown upon the man who sits with his half-white child upon his knee whilst the mother stands, a slave, behind his chair" (2003: 55). Through several generations, black women were at the mercy of white men for arbitrary power and the sexual whims, besides the jealousy of white women. He tells the reader: "Every married woman at the South looks upon her husband as unfaithful, and regards every Negro woman as a rival." (144). Daughters to white men are sold at auctions, a black concubine is sent to slave trader due to the insistence of a jealous

white wife; blacks kill themselves instead of going on a life in slavery, a mother is sold in an auction with her daughter…

Clotel, even being a romantic novel, it is a powerful assault on slavery and the system. It was however Brown's only long work of fiction. However he continued to write and try other forms. In 1862, he wrote a historical study, *The Black Man, His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*; another one which is the first of its kind in 1867, *The Negro in the American Rebellion,* and the third *The Rising Son; or, The Antecedents and the Advancement of the Colored Race in 1873*. *My Southern Home*, which is his final work and an account of a trip to the South was published in 1880. Brown was a believer in assimilation and he defended that his race was becoming a part of promise and project of America. In his fiction he tried to show the sentimentalism and moralism of the day. Mapped out much of later African American narratives – the flight to freedom, the bitter fate of denied and mixed identities – and in portray of Clotel, he created a heroine who is both a victimized tragic mulatta and a combative spokesperson for her race.

Even they had many trials and tribulations in their careers, writers like Wells and Harper saw their work printed. There were many others who were not so fortunate. One of them who was a female writer of the time was Hannah Crafts whose work was neither published nor read. A manuscript *The Bondswoman's Narrative by Hannah Crafts a Fugitive Slave Recently Escaped from North Carolina* written in somewhere between 1855 and 1860, stayed unpublished for a hundred and fifty years; it eventually appeared in print in 2002. The real name of the author is yet firmly known; Hannah is the name of the protagonist of the novel and the name she chose to use for herself. Crafts may be a tribute to Ellen and William Craft who dared to escape from slavery in 1848. During their escape Ellen was disguised as an invalid white man and William posed as his servant. Though, Hannah Crafts or whoever she was one of the African Americans whose voice stayed unheard during her lifetime.

Many of these narrations remained unheard except through the collective medium of folk story, song and spiritual. The most notable thing among these is the conditions of degradation, neglect and ill treatment. It is a voiceless, outside history,

‘possessed of lives but no biography’. They are not given a significant part to play but still tell a story. As the story proceeds we learn that Hannah Crafts is a house slave, who is deeply color-conscious shaped by a superior education. She tells openly about her feeling of dejection, even horror when she faces with the ‘miserable huts of the field hands, the crowds of foul existence that crawled in out of gaps in walls and boards’ and ‘the vile, foul, filthy lives lived there’(2002: iii). She mixes slave narrative, the Gothic and the sentimental conventions in her highly self-conscious narrative.

This is a story of enslavement and eventual liberation a slave women who at least given chance to translate her world into written words. In this sense, her story is a representative of many other documents by and about an individual, literate African Americans of its time – stories, memoirs, and autobiographies, fictional or semi-fictional recollections – that probably survive but wait to be published. And if it is as it seems, the author here has a great resemblance to the protagonist with her race and conditions. For that reason, it is probably the first novel written by an escaped female slave and the first one written by a black woman.

In the beginning of her *The Bondswoman’s Narrative* she tells: “I am aware of my deficiencies” and goes on: “I am neither clever, nor learned, nor talented” (2002: 5). Her making such a statement about herself shows how modest she is. We learn that she knew nothing about her mother and father but she enjoyed the tutelage of a kindly old white woman named Aunt Hetty. She taught her to read and write. She uses literary allusions, quotations from Bible prefacing each chapter and unacknowledged borrowings like the description of foggy Washington leaning heavily on the portrait of London Charles Dickens painted in *Bleak House* in 1852-3.

Hannah uses the strategy of drawing a sentimental novel heroine portrait. She was an orphan, Hannah says, with a silent unobtrusive way of observing things and events with a desire to understand them better than she could. This is what makes her an ideal storyteller. Even in her childhood, she was aware that she had an African blood in her veins which condemned her to a life of unremitted unpaid toil. This condition, intolerable in any circumstances was additionally unbearable for her because she tells the reader: “my complexion was almost white”(2002: 6). So she is

another blueprint in fiction by and about African Americans, the tragic mulatta. Her fate as a slave is unavoidable despite her fair complexion. She is a house slave at Lindendale, a place of 'stately majesty' that seems to be haunted by a curse. She confesses that she is superstitious. The walls there are lined with ancestral portraits 'whose steady eyes motionless and void of expression' (2002: 16).

Like the nervous, trembling, acutely sensitive female observer of classic Gothic fiction, she suffers 'foreboding of some great calamity; a curse of destiny that in circumstances could avert or soften'. As she calls the "legend of Lindeldale", the terrible story of an old woman who was gibbeted alive on a linden tree with her dog just outside her house and left to die for several days shows how these prophetic feelings grow rawer and more painful. Before the old woman died, she cursed the house saying: "I will come here after I am dead to prove its bane" (2002: 25). That curse seemed to be true every time the branches of the linden tree creaked in the wind. And when the master of the house brings a new bride to home, Hannah was surrendered with the thoughts that her new mistress was haunted by a shadow or phantom.

The mistress also has a phantom shadowing her: an old gentleman in black called Mr. Trappe. He brings her the secret that destroys the new mistress. She learns that her mother was a slave to her father and was exchanged to the dead body of her father's lawful daughter. When she learns the reality about her life, she tells: "Call me mistress no longer, thenceforth you shall be to me as a very dear sister. Oh: to be free, to be free." (2002: 48). Eventually, they seek freedom in flight and go into the woods. There, they live in a long cabin which looks like haunted Lindendale, with the signs of some fearful crime – bloodstains, a skeleton, a hatchet with hair yet sticking to the heft. They were fed with wild fruits and berries. However, their refuge did not last long. They were found by "a party of hunters" and imprisoned in the Egyptian darkness of a dungeon where Hannah finds solace only in a 'blessed dream of her angel mother'. The mistress does not live long under these conditions and dies soon, and soon she learns that she is sold by Mr. Trappe to a gentleman. Then, we learn that the husband, the master of Lindendale, commits suicide upon learning that he was the parent of his wife from Mr. Trappe. So the curse runs its fearful course.

This opening to *The Bondwoman's Narrative* includes the characteristics of many genres like the wilderness of Gothic; the log cabin inspiring a superstitious horror in the minds of Hannah and her companion especially when it turns out to be a place where it is said a beautiful girl was once murdered. Sentimental conversations between "sisters" in suffering are the tactics and conventions from the slave narrative. In her Preface to the book, Hannah explains that she hopes to show how slavery "blights the happiness of the white as well as the black race". She tries to do that by exposing the hypocrisies, cruelties and silences to which slavery condemns the oppressors. This story is in fact very frank about the sexual abuse of black women which she shows as the South's "domestic institution" by breeding more slaves. This even more clear when Mr. Trappe tries to sell her off after the death of her mistress by telling the buyer that: "You won't find a nicer bit of woman's flesh to be bought for that money in old Virginia" (2002: 103).

That book is also frank about the intimacies between the white mistress and the black maid. She comments: "Between the mistress and a slave freedom exists probably not to be found elsewhere" (2002: 150). Her comment about similarity does not mean sameness, it does not guarantee fellow feeling since the weak can be cruel to hose even weaker than themselves. So we read the brutality and the jealousy of some mistresses like the one who works three of her female slaves to death. Hannah asks at one point of her story: "What do you think of it? Doctors of Divinity, isn't it strange to be like them to shuffle up and down . . . in utter darkness as to the meaning of Nature's hieroglyphic symbols'; to hear such names as freedom, heaven, hope and happiness and not to have the least idea . . . what experience of those blessed names might be." (2002: 201). She explains: "the greatest curse of slavery is its hereditary character as an inheritance of toil and misery passed from one generation to another." (2002: 200)

The critical moment of choice comes for the bondswoman after she is moved removed to another plantation in North Carolina, she is told by her new mistress, Mrs. Wheeler, that she goes and works in the fields, marries a field hand, and lives in his cabin. "With all your pretty airs and white face, you are nothing but a slave after all and no better than the blackest wench" (2002: 205) she tells to Hannah. Hannah was conscious of the differences of color and caste and house slaves and field hands

in the slave community, so this change of circumstance turns out to be a shock to her senses as well as her principles. She protests to be married to someone "whose person, and speech and manner could not fail to be ever regarded by me with loathing and disgust" (2002: 207). She will not "be driven in to the fields beneath the eye and lash of the brutal overseer or to be forced to make her home in those miserable huts, with their promiscuous crowds of dirty, obscene and degraded objects" (2002: 207). "I could not, I would not bear it" she concludes, "in such a plight rebellion would be a virtue" (2002: 207). Thus, she decides to flee.

The story of her flight is less melodramatic compared to her sojourn in North Carolina – a fine plantation probably an actual estate where author lived and worked as a slave – and less infected with Gothic and sentimental conventions. There are some more Gothic and melodramatic touches in her run away disguised as a boy. She can even conceal her true gender from her male companion who learned to love her as a younger brother. Her luck helps her once more when she happens upon beloved Aunt Hetty, the woman who taught her to read and write. Towards the end of the novel coincidences like that happen to reveal some more information like during her journey for freedom in the north, she hears a conversation between two men and learns that Mr. Trappe finally was punished with a violent death. Eventually she becomes a free woman in New Jersey and sets up a school for colored children. There, she is reunited with the guardian angel of her dreams, the mother whom she never really knows until that moment. "We met accidentally, where and how it matters not" (2002: 238) she declares. No longer an orphan, she is no longer single, either. She lives with her mother and she has "another companion quite as dear – a fond and affectionate husband". So the novel ends as the story of a princess who is no longer lost, having found her kingdom. She lives happily ever after in a neat little Cottage surrounded by friends.

The Bondwoman's Narrative is an artifice that exposes the real nature of life under slavery. She openly reveals the mental and material shackles forced upon slaves, brutalities and blindness engendered in oppressors. This novel is a major document, not just because it has floated to the surface and into publication many decades after it was written but it is a sign or a trace of whole sea of texts as yet unpublished and so largely unread. It gives access to the real life, dreams and

nightmares of one of the member of the dispossessed. It is “a record of plain unvarnished facts” as the narrator describes in her preface even more than that. It is a revelation of the truth, emotional and imaginative in the word of a woman and Hannah puts it, it is bearing witness to what it might mean to be both female and slave.

There were two other novels written by African American writers before Civil War. One of them was *Blake*; *or, The Huts of America* which was partly serialized in 1859 and then fully serialized in 1861-62 and issued as a book in 1870. The other one was *Our Nig*; or *Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two-Story White House, North. Showing that Slavery’s Shadows Fall Even There* (1859).

Blake was written by Martin Delany who lived between 1812-85 and was a free black born in today’s West Virginia. Delany published *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* in 1852. In his book he argued for the emigration of blacks to state their own creation. Hero in the book has many of the qualities Delany liked to identify with himself. Henry Blake is a pure Negro, handsome, manly, intelligent and ‘a man of good literary attainments’. Blake was born in Cuba but decoyed into slavery in Mississippi. There, he marries to another slave. As the story progresses we learn about the sale of his wife and being sent away from him. He runs away and starts to organize slave insurrections, first in the South then in Cuba. He meets an Indian whom he meets in the course of his wanderings tells him: “If you want white man to love you, you must fight him!” (1970: 87). His aim is somehow different; he does not want the white man to love him; but he still wants to fight him. “From plantation to plantation did he go, sowing the seeds of future devastation and ruin to the master and redemption to the slave” (1970: 83) is sentence of his story.

Africa was the site of ambition and future redemption for him. He hoped to ‘regenerate black civilization’ on the basis of economic success and entrepreneurial activity there. Blake has got a very revolutionary and conventional message in the American grain. “I am for war – war upon whites” (1970: 290) the hero of the book tells his allies. He insists that they should resist amalgamation, reject life in the USA and return to their homeland, Africa. He advises as well: “With money you may

effect your escape at almost any time . . . Money alone will carry you . . . to liberty; and money is the reward of enterprise" (1970: 84). Delany was the father of Black Nationalism who did not reject the American way, but hoped to see it pursued by African American in Africa.

Our Nig, which is the first published novel by an African American woman, is different than *Blake*. It is also the first in black American literature to examine the life of an ordinary black person in detail. Originally, it was thought to be the work of a white even a male writer. It was only recently established that the author of the book is Harriet E. Wilson (1808?-70) and the book was probably based on her personal experience.

The central character, a daughter of a white mother and a black father, was called Frado (short for Alfrado and called Our Nig as well). She is deserted by her mother upon the death of the father. She is left alone in the house of the Bellmonts where she works as an indentured servant. Her life there is very hard and she is treated very cruelly by her white mistress Mrs. Bellmont and her daughter Mary Bellmont. Her mistress severely beats her; even the white male members of the house try to protect her they stay ineffectual. So she had to learn to protect herself. Approaching her eighteen, she marries an African American who claims to be a runaway slave and leaves the Bellmots. She bears a child from him but later she is deserted. She discovers that his claim was a lie, experiences poverty and bad health as he result of the bad years of abuse and most dramatically she is separated from her child by force. As the story of Frado unfolds, we learn more about the life of Bellmont family like the adventures of the Bellmont children as they grow up and marry. Even in the closing paragraph she makes the summary of the Bellmonts. The centre of the book is the poor black girl whose nickname given by the whites provides the book with its main title. "Reposing on God, she has thus far journeyed securely. Still an invalid, she asks you sympathy, gentle reader." (1970: 211). The narrator emphasizes the pathos of her plight with these sentences at the end of the book.

Our Nig is a fascinating hybrid for it is an autobiography, a deeply personal confession and a cry for help. Based partly on the author's own experiences, it begins

by saying she is forced to some experiment to maintain her child and herself and in the end she asks for a direct support of the reader. Then, three testimonials follow the narrative proper, affirming its literal truth and reinforcing the request or aid. These testimonials are apparently written by whites to mediate white readers to the story. They are patronizing in tone and they are probably fictional. *Our Nig* follows the classic pattern of the lave narrative, with the aim to show that the shadows of slavery even fall in the North among indentured servants and other victims of racism.

Besides, *Our Nig* is a sentimental fiction of sorts. There are many moments of pathos involving Frado, courtship, and deathbed scenes for the Bellmonts and a series of appeal to the gentle reader. It is obvious that some of this sentimentalism is designed to make the reader sympathize with the plight of the heroine. But in a conventional sentimental novel, the dynamic of plot would be central whereas here the plot relegates those incidents. The events in the book become like the evidence of the white supremacy to exclude and ignore blacks.

Our Nig is a realist novel as well. It does not only concentrate on white brutality but also bitter daily burden of black toil and white indifference and spite. Wilson's book is a combination of all these generic forms, not just a sum of them but more. It shows the journey of a heroine towards survival rather than satisfaction, let alone success. It also illustrates the problem of many African American writers to find the true genre to express and explore themselves and their experiences; a form that would give them a chance to narrate their identity in the most proper way. The author's identification of herself as simply *Our Nig* is ironic. It underlines the difficulty to find a name for herself in a culture that tried to do that for her. It can be translated as she was to remain unnamed, for over a hundred year. Invisibility, namelessness is maybe the central theme in African American writing.

When it was published *Our Nig* had almost no impact. But we cannot say the same for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or *Life among the Lowly*. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1811-96) was born in Connecticut. Her father was an influential Calvinist preacher, named Lyman Beecher (1755-1863). His sermons and magazine articles were published in a collected edition in the same year as Harriet's novel. Then, Stowe rejected his insistence on constant self-searching and a sense of

damnation in favor of a gentler gospel. It was based on a belief in the Christ of the New Testament and on the virtues enshrined in feminine piety and motherhood. Stowe herself remained a fundamentally religious writer and her art and politics were shaped by her concern for spiritual and moral purity. Besides, all her brother became ministers and the most well-known of them were Henry Ward Beecher (1813-87). Her sister, Catharine Beecher (1800-78) lived in Hartford where Stowe went in 1824 and she was a distinguished spokesperson and supporter of female education, the importance of domestic virtues and a separate sphere for women. There she founded a female seminary as well. She attended seminary first as a pupil, and then as a teacher until 1832.

In 1834 she collaborated with Catharine on a geography book for children and she married Calvin Stowe two years later. Her husband was a professor in her father's theological seminary. Her first book published in 1843 was *The Mayflower: Sketches on Scenes and Characters among the Descendants of the Puritans* in which she collected sketches and short fictions mostly she has written for evangelical periodicals. The pieces included in that book show her interest in local color literature and they have a didactic purpose that would stay with her throughout her career. But they lack passion and intensity. That is the start of her commitment to the abolitionist cause. Stowe's father was a gradualist believing that the slave system could be dismantled in stages, while being opposed to the slavery. Stowe, however, argued for the urgency of the situation and defended her belief about it in her first essay on the subject, titled "Immediate Emancipation" which was published in 1845.

After passing Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, which required help from Northerners to help slave holders recover escaped slaves, Stowe's sister-in-law wrote her a letter saying that if she had Stowe's talent, she would write something that would make this whole nation feel what accursed thing slavery was. Her response was simple and immediate: "I will write something, I will if I live." Fired into life by this, and by a vision she had during communion of a slave being beaten to death, she composed the scene in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* when Uncle Tom, the hero of the book is killed by Simon Legree.

Uncle Tom's Cabin started out as a series of sketches in the *National Era* which was an anti-slavery magazine in 1851 according to Stowe's intention. As she told to the editor of the magazine her aim was to hold up in the most lifelike graphic manner possible Slavery. She explained: "There is no arguing with pictures and everybody is impressed by them, whether they mean to be or not." The response was very quick and even the series intended to last for fourteen weeks, due to its success, they were stretched out to ten months. Then, when the book was published in 1852, it published 10,000 copies in a few days, 300,000 copies in the first year and this success made it an international best seller. No other book had ever sold that well except from Bible. At least twelve unauthorized stage versions were produced for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. During Stowe's visit to Britain, people gathered at railway stations from London to Scotland just to see her train pass by in the night. The book was so successful and influential that, in the middle of the civil conflict between the Union and the Confederacy, President Abraham Lincoln remarked that Stowe was the little lady who wrote the book that made this Great War.

The main story of the book is actually very simple. The hero of the book, Uncle Tom is a faithful and saintly slave. He is sold by his owners, the Shelby family due to the financial difficulties they suffered. This sale separated him from his wife and children, he is taken to South by a slave trader; aboard ship on the Mississippi, he saves the life of Eva St Clare known as little Eva in the book. Upon this rescue scene, he is bought by his father, Angel St Clare out of gratitude. Tom has happy days at the St Clare plantation, growing near to Eva and her black playmate Topsy. But two years later Eva, following her St Clare dies. Upon their death Tom is sold to Simon Legree, a cruel and debauched Yankee. His patience and courage he showed all he brutal treatment on him, bewildered Legree.

Two female slaves pretend to escape taking advantage of Legree's state of mind. Tom refuses to tell their whereabouts, and furious Legree has him flogged to death. When Tom dies, the son of his original master 'Mas'r George' Shelby arrives to fulfill his pledge at the beginning of the novel that he would one day redeem the old slave. Though, it was too late for Tom. Later, Shelby vows to fight for abolition and as a first step he frees the slaves on his own plantation telling them that they can continue to work for him as free men and free women. The whole book is woven

around this main plot by some additional subsidiary episodes, involving some host characters.

The most important of these episodes is about Eliza Harris, a beautiful mixed race woman, her husband George, and their son Harry. George is a son of a slave mother and a white father of a one of the proudest families in Kentucky. He is told to have "a set of European features, and a high indomitable spirit" (1995: 102) from his father. He was "only a slight mulatto tinge" – and he preaches resistance, defiance (1995: 102). At a point, he even makes his own declaration of independence: he insists that a free man by natural right so he has the right to defend his freedom and even if necessary he would use violence. As the story progresses, the couple escapes. They stay at a Quaker settlement for a while with their son Harry. Eventually the set sail from America on board ship where they are reunited with their long-lost mother miraculously. They settle in France first, and there George attends university for four year. Then, they move to Africa. George declares: "the desire and yearning of my soul is for an African nationality. I want a people shall have a tangible, separate existence of its own" (1995: 400). The final decision George to free his slaves is in effect counterpointed by the final gesture of another George, Harris, in seeking to establish what he calls "a republic formed of picked men, who by energy and self educating force, have . . . individually raised themselves above a condition of slavery" (1995: 400). Both of Georges appear to the founders of the new order in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Stowe once announced that: "God wrote the book, I took His dictation." She was also helped by her reading as well as divine intervention as she claims. There are many forms of discourse in the novel that clearly reflect the author's active and informed engagement in her debate over slavery. Stowe was very aware of the arguments for and against slavery. For example at one point in the St. Clare episode, she rebuts every facet of the pro-slavery argument. In another scene, she has a family discuss the Fugitive Slave Law. When she tells the escape of George and Eliza, she makes a clear reference to slave narratives.

If we consider the novel as a whole, it opens with a central situation in plantation fiction, the threatened loss of the old plantation due to debt; and true to the

conventions of sentimental fiction – there are miraculous coincidences, interminable deathbed scenes (like the death of little Eva), and the customary address to the gentle reader. There some characters borrowed from tall tales and frontier humor as well, like a comic black duo Sam and Andy; two rough slave owners Tom Luker and Marks recall the rogues of southwestern humor. She makes use of local color tradition – like the time when we are first invited to enter Uncle Tom's Cabin. Scenes from provincial life take us to pastoral and anti-pastoral – respectively, the idyllic portrait of the St. Clare plantation and the detailed description of the dilapidated estate that Simon Legree owns. What Stowe does here is not a simple imitation but innovation as well. Her plantation novel does not center around the wealthy plantation owners but on the 'life among lowly'. Its hero is a slave who gradually assumes the stature of a Christ figure. Stowe declares the object of this sentimental novel in her "Preface" as specifically moral and political: "to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race, as they exist among us."

Stowe wanted to awaken the sympathy in especially women. She constantly appeals to the possible experiences of a mother and a wife. Partly, this is because she wants to use the power of sympathy as a useful political instrument and agent of conversion. Several characters throughout the novel are converted to the anti-slavery cause as they are forced to witness the suffering. This is also used for another aim as well: to show slavery as violation of the American principle of freedom and the higher law of conscience. Slavery is identified as the cause of many individual acts of dispossession, division, sexual deviance, and mental and material oppression.

Hence, she especially concentrates on two related issues: first is the slavery as a system denying and destroying the family; slavery as an institution that seems to reduce human being to a thing. She makes use of incidents like parent – as Uncle Tom – separated from their children, wives like Eliza Harris separated from husbands, and slave women betrayed by white men who profess to love them. By giving such examples from family life she subverts the familial language of the proslavery argument. She directly appeals to the reader's own family life and experience of familial love to represent the difference between a true family and what is in offer in the South. Her emphasis on domestic pieties understood by Christian women; but she aims to show slavery as a sin, too. She explains the wrong

doing in slavery as that the souls of the slaves are placed at the disposal of whoever is able to purchase their bodies. So the soul of the slave is endangered while the soul of the master is consigned to damnation. It is noticeable that Stowe intends to concentrate on her 'white female' readers to appeal their knowledge and agency.

Up to an extent, actually, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a document testifying to female power as well as black possibility – condition of women and slaves. We encounter women as better managers than men throughout the novel; like Mrs. Shelby who is said to have 'a clear, energetic, practical mind and a force of character everyway superior to that of her husband" (1995: 235). That is her husband's debts that lead him in to the initial, tragic error of selling Tom. In the narration the female characters offer the most realized vision of a redemptive society. For instance, in the Quaker settlement where George and Eliza Harris shelter, everything goes on 'so sociably, so quietly, so harmoniously' thanks to the women as they run it successfully on matriarchal and communal lines.

The principles identified with the feminine in the novel are admired: the ones like organic, creative, supportive, sympathetic associated with Eva St. Clare and her "misty, dreamy" father Angel (he said to be more like his mother than his father). The principles associated with masculinity are more mechanized, destructive, oppressive: like the ones associated with Angel's twin brother Alfred St Clare (who like his father believe in the right of the strongest) and like more brutal Simon Legree. The contrast between Uncle Tom and George Harris is relevant at that point. George is admired to resist the invoking of Declaration of Independence; though he is not the emotional center of novel.

Whereas, Uncle Tom is gentle, unresistant and feminized, invoking Bible and only resists in doing wrong as the hero of the story. He constantly refuses wrongs; whipping a fellow slave, betraying the whereabouts of two other slaves, even refusing the chance offered him to kill Simon Legree. George is the illustration of Stowe's interest in the idea of the removal of emancipated slaves to Africa, a political exemplar of a kind. She puts the idea in the "Preface" as: "an enlightened and Christianized community could be drawn from among us." But Tom is a saint, eventually compared to Christ who is ready to be killed but not to kill. The principle

subject of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is conversion but not revolution. And Stowe associates that project specifically and consistently with feminine.

The subject of patience told through its hero in the novel in fact was seen as a shame in many quarters. Throughout her narration, Uncle Tom has become a term of abuse, a 'dismissive label stuck on any African American seen to too servile, too compliant, too foot-scrapingly eager to please the white community' (Gray, 2004: 198). At one point the narrator tells: "There stood the two children, representatives of the two extremes of society" (1995: 228); a sentence which shows the resorting of racial stereotypes. This is when Eva St Clare is compared to her companion Topsy: "The fair, high-bred child, with her golden head, her deep eyes, her spiritual, noble, brow, and prince-like movements; and her black, keen, subtle, cringing yet acute neighbor." (1995: 228) And she goes on: "They stood their representatives of their races, the Saxon born of ages of cultivation, command, education, physical and moral eminence; the Afric, born of ages of oppression, submission, ignorance, toil, and vice!" (1995: 228) In these sentences, she reflects many of the prejudices of her time and she tends to present her black characters as emotional, spiritually alert, loyal and essentially childlike.

Only the characters that have a significant white ancestry deviate from this pattern; like George Harris. She also includes some familiar types and tropes of plantation fiction. There comic minstrels, comic cooks and tumbling piccaninnies. There are romantic mulattoes, who are the combination of the sensitivity of their mothers with the strength of their fathers. There are spoilt servant snobbishly identifying themselves with the families who own them; brutes like two black assistants of Legree, Sambo and Quimbo who offer what is termed as 'an apt illustration of the fact that brutish men are lower even than animals' (1995: 321). Stowe reduces this by emphasizing the destructive influence of training in making her black characters what they often are. She is inclined to slip too quickly and easily from comments on education to comments on racial character. She suspiciously wishes to patronize her black characters instead of extenuation or explanation.

She keeps the force on attacks on slavery till the end. If we look at the form and approach, imaginative idioms and dramatic argument, we can easily understand

the reason of its enormous impact and the contemporary readers. She made use of aesthetic weaponry of several popular genres like the plantation romance, sentimental fiction and the slave narrative. She then used them to illustrate how the slave system violated the most sacred beliefs in her culture like the sanctity of the family and the individual soul. It is hard to say she did this deliberately; actually it does not matter, either. Hence, it is clear that she felt inspired as a writer and she saw herself as the first reader of her book. As she tells she wrote the killing of Uncle Tom tears streaming down her face. Stowe made use of the feeling in herself towards home and family, Christian womanhood and the Christian soul; then she appealed to that same wealth of feeling in her readers. The result is clearly one of the most important American books. Even after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* she continued to write about slavery. For instance, in 1853 she wrote *A Key To Uncle Tom's Cabin* to defend the accuracy of her novel in 1852.

Later, in 1856, she published *Dred: A Tale of the Dismal Swamp*. It was her second tale of slave society and takes a different approach from the first. It concentrates on the demoralizing effects of slavery on whites. This time, the character of the novel who gives his name to the novel is fugitive and revolutionary. Stowe modeled him on Nat Turner. Dred is said to be the son of another black insurrectionary, Denmark Vesey. He invokes both Declaration of Independence and the Bible. He says: "I am a free man, free by this!" holding his rifle, preaching defiance and violence. Stowe here emphasizes the destructive force of slavery on slaves as well. She does not allow Dred the last word. He preaches vengeance against white oppressor. But another character based on Sojourner Truth, called Milly is drawn as better in argument, who preaches for patience: "O brethren, dere's a better way. Leave the vengeance to him. Vengeance is mine – I will repay, saith de Lord" (2008: 234).

After *Dred*, Stowe kept herself far away from the subject of slavery. She wrote another novel, *The Minister's Wooing* (1859) set in New England, with a romantic plot to explore the limitation of the gloomy doctrine of Calvinism and promote belief in a redemptive Christ and a God of love and mercy. She gave way to the similar themes with emphasis on the power of female purity at works like *Agnes of Sorrento* (1862), set in Catholic Italy of Savonarola, The Pearl of Orr's Island

(1862), set in New England again. In that book Sarah Orne Jewett credited with inspiring her own career. *Oldtown Folks* (1869) in which the local color elements felt stronger, is set in New England in the post-Revolutionary period and has a narrator modeled on Stowe's own husband. In *Oldtown Fireside Stories* (1871) she tells her husband's childhood memories and in *Poganuc People* (1878), which is her last novel also, tells her own.

Stowe remained as a very prolific and productive writer in her life. She wrote many kinds of books like children books, travelogues, temperance tracts, practical articles about housekeeping, theological works such as *Bible Heroines* (1878), journalistic sketches n a variety of subjects, poems and hymns. And she always remained as a writer with a stern moral purpose. Some of her novels like *Pink and White Tyranny* (1871) resemble novels of manner. She declares: "This story is not to be a novel as the world is . . . a story with a moral; and for fear that you shouldn't find out exactly what the moral is . . . we shall tell you in the proper time . . . and send you off edified as if you had been hearing a sermon." This statement clearly shows that she is a didactic writer, but she can combine adroit use of popular literary models with raw emotional power. Consistently, Stowe is one of the most important figures to defend black rights under her white skin and surely she is a great one especially with her most well known novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

The roots of slave narration derives from 1700's when Olaudah Equiano (174-97) first narrated his own story in the book *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Valla, the African, Written by Himself*. "Slave narratives commonly prefaced by a note or essay from a white notable, mediating the narrative for what was after all, an almost entirely white audience – and giving it a white seal of approval" (Gray, 2004: 86). His book was published in 1787 and gave way to many leading abolitionists. It established the form of slave narrative which directly or indirectly means an influence in American writing and in African American writing. As Equiano himself announces; "I offer here the history of neither a saint, a hero, nor a tyrant, but I compare my lot with that of most of my countrymen, I regard myself as a particular favorite of heaven, and acknowledge the mercies of Providence in every occurrence of my life." From his saying we can understand that Equiano follows the tradition of spiritual autobiography which is

commonly used American Puritans and Quakers, derived from St. Augustine and John Bunyan. What Equiano does here is to add some "dimension of social protest".

Carol Boyce Davies discusses in her book *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* that:

> The question of journeying in Black Women's writing in the United States offers a variety of possible understandings of internal migrations, historical displacement, captivity and agency. The specific conditions of US slavery and the (im)possibility of escape, including the mythical meanings of the North and freedom, embedded movement in the consciousness of a variety of narratives and cultural products, from sorrow songs to jazz. The debate round slave narratives by men and by women, suggests that by adopting the paradigm of the male slave narrative, with physical flight and physical resistance often embedded textually, the specifics of women's resistance to slavery are often not addressed. (1991: 130)

Robert Stepto describes African-American narrative as "deploying discourse of distrust." So in these writings the reliability of the text is not located with the narrator or the writer but with the reader. Robert Stepto describes the situation of reader's being "told off" as:

> … acts of creative communication are fully initiated not when the text is assaulted but when the reader gets told –or "told off"—in such a way that he or she finally begins to hear. It is usually in this way that most written tales express their distrust not just of readers but of official literate culture in general. (203)

Or Elizabeth Fox-Genovese tells that;

> Imagined readers shape the ways in which an autobiographer constructs he narrative of her life… [and] there is little evidence that black women autobiographers assumed that any significant number of other black women would read their work… black female autobiographers wrote to be read by those who might influence the course of public events, might pay money for their book, or might authenticate them as authors… the tension at the heart of black women's autobiography derives in large part from the chasm between the autobiographer's intuitive sense of herself and her attitude toward her probable readers. (2006: 36)

According to Valerie Smith, slave narratives "not only grant themselves significance and figurative power over their superordinates, but in their manipulation of received literary conventions they also engage with and challenge dominant ideology… Jacobs inscribes a subversive plot of empowerment beneath the more orthodox, public plot of weakness and vulnerability" (1991: 28).

While some were discussing against slavery, there were some who discussed for just the opposite of what is told in slave narrations. Two women writers, Caroline Lee Hentz (1800-56) and Mary Boykin Chesnut (1823-86) offered the contradictions of what was told in tales of the slaves up to now. Hentz was born in the North; but later she moved to South, to North Carolina, then to Kentucky, Alabama and Florida. Her novel for which she is best known is the *The Planter's Northern Bride*. In her novel she portrays an idyllic portrait of life on the old plantation. As a response to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she once said: "Slavery, as she describes it, is an entirely new institution to us" (2007: 49). She believed she knew the south better then Stowe having lived in the south. Her story contains the general life of the characters attending the plantation romance: young men full of "magnanimity and chivalry", "pure and high toned" young women, and abolitionist who wanted to free the slaves even these slaves did not want. The hero of the book, Mr. Moreland and his faithful personal "servant", a young mulatto Albert is the argumentative core of the book. Moreland is described as "intelligent and liberal"; while Albert is described as "a handsome, golden skinned youth, accustomed to wait on his master and listen to the conversation of refined gentleman". Albert "had very little of the dialect of the negro, and those familiar with the almost unintelligible jargon which delineations of the sable character put into their lips, could not but be astonished at the propriety of his language and pronunciation" (14) as a result of his life on the plantation. Here, she uses the advantage of the slavery.

The slavery system, according to this idea, did not only support and protect the slaves, but educated and refined them as well; as we can understand it from Albert's distinctive manner of speech. So Hentz used her business of writing as a fictional defense of South in general and of slavery in particular. In the opening chapters of the book Moreland takes Albert to a trip though New England, happy that Albert was in his service and will not try to escape. They go to a village that is

described as “the very hot-bed of fanaticism”. Here, Moreland explains a Northerner that they looked after their slaves as friends. There is drawn the deep contrast between the “secure position of the slaves” and the sick, thrown out of work people of the North. Actually, it is the difference “between the Northern and Southern laborer, when reduced to a state of sickness and dependence” (2007: 27). He gets to the point that: “the sick and dying negro, retained under his master’s roof, kindly nursed and ministered unto, with no sad, anxious looking forward into the morrow for the supply of nature’s wants, no fears of being cast into pauper’s home… had… a far happier lot”(2007: 27).

The ideas for the defense of slavery follows with Gray and Moreland as: “The one might have the nominal bandage of the slave certainly; but the other had the bondage of poverty, whose iron chains we heard clanking in every region of God’s earth” (Gray, 2004: 172). Moreland concludes that: “The enslaved children of Africa are the happiest subservient race to be found on the face of globe”. Throughout the book, she instructs that the mistreatment of the slaves in South “such as being chained, handcuffed, scourged, flayed, and burned alive” (qtd in Gray 2004: 203) are the lies of the abolitionists; and she wants to convince the reader that the slavery institution in south is a humane one as well.

The vision of Mary Boykin Chesnut for slavery was a little different. She was born in South Carolina, and married into a wealthy family called Chesnut. Her husband was an influential politician and had close relations with Jefferson Davis, who was the president of confederacy during the Civil War. Chesnut kept a dairy in which she recorded meetings with national figure, news of the progress of the war, her everyday experiences and opinions. She turned her dairy into book but her life was too short to see its publication. In an entry on 8 March 1861, she has noted: “I wonder if it be a sin to think slavery a curse to my land. Men and women are punished when their masters and mistresses are brutes and not when they do wrong – and then we are surrounded by prostitutes”. This remark is the theme of the dairy. She knew that the white patriarch of South was brutal, they wanted separation from their black slaves; but they freely had sexual contact with them. She exemplifies the use of their property sexually as the violation of humanity in the slavery system.

On her entry on 26 August 1861, she said:

> What do you say this? A magnate who runs a hideous black harem and its consequences under the same roof with his lovely white wife and his beautiful accomplished daughters? He holds his head as high and poses as the model of all human virtues to the poor women whom God and the laws have given him. From the height of his awful majesty he scolds and thunders at them, as if he never did wrong in his life. I hate slavery… our men live all in one house with their wives and concubines, and he mulattoes one sees in every family exactly resemble the white children.

That was what she really discussed about slavery. But the situation did not create a feeling of sympathy for black women who were the real victims of slavery; "My countrywomen are as pure as angels, tho' surrounded by another race who are the social evil!" (104). So she blamed the slave system but the black woman equally. When she sees the white women as models of 'purity and innocence', she turns the black women for sexual gratification. Even she is more on the side of white females, she is still aware that the black females are the ones abused and injured more. Even, as a white who attended the black religious service, she confesses that she was deeply moved by the devotional passion of voice and manner and by the hymns – the saddest of all earthly music, weird and depressing beyond her powers to describe even it was a little too exciting for her. It was like their human pain; beyond her either fully to understand or to share.

Lydia Maria Child (1802-80) was a writer who was interested in the conditions of slaves and the conditions of women. She became an abolitionist and wrote historical novels about her point. Her first book about the historical remarks was *Hobomok* (1824) about a relationship with a Puritan woman and a Native American man. She gives a vision of interracial union. She later edited the first magazine for children in the USA called Juvenile Miscellany. In 1825 she published her second novel *The Rebels; or, Boston before the Revolution* which is an agitation over the stamp tax. She married to David Lee Child in 1828. Her husband was a prominent abolitionist. Because of financial reasons she started writing practical advice books for women such as *The Mother's Book* (1831) and *The American Frugal Housewife* (1831). She included general maxims on health and housekeeping and strongly emphasized thrift and economy as Benjamin Franklin uttering. She

comments; “The greatest and most universal error is, teaching girls to exaggerate the importance of getting married.”

In 1833, Child became actively involved in the abolitionist movement when she wrote and published her book *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*. Six years later in 1839, she published *Anti-Slavery Catechism* which is a pamphlet written in the form of questions and answers. These documents were the evidences that she was a moderate abolitionist and a feminist. Her aim was to create an awakening in the south, to persuade “our brethren of the south” as she calls it to reform themselves, and reconstruct the slave system from within. She thought north did not hold a monopoly on virtue. “Our prejudice against colored people is even more inveterate than it is in the South” she has admitted. “If slaves are so well satisfied with their condition” she once asked “why do they make such severe laws against running away?” as a response to a common pro-slavery argument. She presented herself as a sensible, humane reformer.

To support her ideas she started to work to the abolitionist paper the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, published in New York. In the *Standard*, she released various form of injustice: slavery, poverty which she saw as the source of urban crime, an oppressive prison system and the denial of basic rights to women. The tone of the “Letters” was curious and political with a mixture of literature. Her last novel was *A Romance of the Republic* (1867) is about interracial marriage again. Her *Letters from New York* was published in two series, in 1843 and 1845. Her commitment to slavery continued even after the abolishment of the system with *The Freedman’s Book* (1865) which is a collection of pieces by and about the lack people. The book printed and distributed at her expense. She saw a great connection between her activism as an abolitionist and her interest in the condition of women.

There were many reformers who shared the same ideas like Angelina Grimké Weld (1805-79) and Sarah Moore Grimké (1792-1873). Grimké sisters were born into a slaveholder family in South Carolina, but they shared the ideas of the abolitionist movement. Angelina wrote *An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* in 1836 and told in her book: “I am going to tell you unwelcome truths, but I mean to speak those truths in love” (6). She went on: “If a law commands me to sin I

will break it, the doctrine of blind obedience . . . to any human power . . . is the doctrine of despotism, and ought to have no place among Republicans and Christians" (7). With her radical utters about slavery she wanted to create an awakening on Southern women to speak out and act against slavery, even by freeing their slaves, try to eradicate it. In her *Appeal* she linked the cause of abolition and the cause of feminism, because she invited white Southern women to affirm their womanhood and capacity for significant political action to end the slavery.

Only after a year Angelina wrote directly about the feminist cause in her *Letters to Catharine Beecher*. This is a response to Beecher who argues that the women should restrict themselves to domestic sphere. On the contrary, Angelina argued that there were no rights as masculine or feminine specifically divided, or "men's rights" or "women's rights" but only "human rights". She defended that a woman should be regarded "as a companion, a co-worker, an equal of man, not a mere appendage of his being, an instrument of his convenience and pleasure" (29). Sara Moore Grimké was acting against slavery and she wrote *Letters on the Equality of Sexes, and the Condition of Women* (1837-8) in which she discussed against the idea that the place of woman must be home. She wrote: "We have rested satisfied with the sphere marked out for us by men, never detecting the fallacy of that reasoning which forbids woman to exercise some her noblest faculties. She discussed that women are customarily trained to attract the notice and win the attentions of men, brought up with the dangerous and absurd idea that marriage is a kind of preferment, and that to be able to keep their husband's house, and render his situation comfortable, is the end of her being." (118). Instead of such treatment to woman, she offered equal conditions both in education and vocation. All women should achieve self respect that would lead to their equality. They should not consider themselves as inferior creature as it has been taught for so long. To stand against that powerless standing of women, she offers education. She saw impotence especially in the female slaves of the south: "Women are bought and sold in our slave markets, to gratify the brutal lust of those who bear the name of Christians. They are completely at the mercy of the power which is necessarily vested in the master over his property." (51). Grimké sisters found a great connection between the emancipation of women and the abolition of slavery. Especially Sarah saw the condition of the female slave

as a paradigm, an extreme instance of the condition of all woman, the subjection they all shared as the ‘property’ of white men.

Slave narratives written in the eighteenth century were considered as indirect products of enlightened thinking as they made emphasis on fundamental, individual freedoms. In the institution of slavery in 1830s, these influences became more focused and concentrated. With that shift from African origins to farm or plantation origins brought difference to the styles of the narratives as well. The common point for both was that they began with the details about the birth of the narrator. But nineteenth century narration gave specific description slavery. Eighteenth century narrators like Equiano, Gronniosaw, and Cugoano told about their African experiences by idealizing it. Then they gave the reader the chance to contrast the order and humanity in their earlier life and the brutality, inhumanity in the European culture. The reader would learn about their sea trip in danger, excitement and a certain amount of autonomy. In the nineteenth century these elements were replaced by farms and plantation. There were master or slave holders with their individual personalities and names. Slavery was no more a large, impersonal issue; but it was a deliberate organization in which one group of people enslaved another group of individuals.

The change in the perspective of slave narratives did not make any change in the popularity of their stories to reach a wide range of audience. The sympathetic characters in the narratives were subject to cruel, heartless attitudes of their male and female owners. Readers found their lives exotic and wondrously strange. Generally plots were moved forward a plan of escape and their eventual escape to the Free States. Most of the slave narratives had an episodic structure that was common in the historical novels of James Fennimore Cooper and William Gilmore Simms and in sentimental writings that appeared in magazines like “North American Review”, “Graham’s” and “The Southern Literary Messenger”.

Both abolitionist support and the cultural changes within the United States, like national literacy, expanding reading public, and improvement in the printing press increased the popularity of slave narratives. Even the number of the magazines in the United States rapidly grew; one clear instance is that the number of the

magazines published in 1794 but by 1825 the number increased up to hundred and by 1865 it was five hundred. Developments in the postal system gave way for the periodic dispersal of the reading materials to ever increasing areas as well. There occurred a great expansion of penny press and by means of newspapers like *New York Herald* and the *New York Sun*.

Nineteenth century slave experiences differed from the earlier ones with the lives on the farms and the plantations and a constant interaction with the slave masters and overseers. The system that the slaves participated was desperate of cheap labor; additionally seriously threatened by the abolitionist movement and its pressures outside and slave revolts inside. By the 1820s, abolitionist movement started to gain momentum. John Quincy Adams in 1820 wrote in his diary about his belief for slavery that it was “the great and foul stain upon the North American Union, and that slavery would undoubtedly be the question upon which the future existence of the Union would be decided”.

Not everybody chose to write his ideas about slaver privately but some like Benjamin Adams, the editor of *Baltimore Newspaper* called The Genius of Universal Emancipation publicly called for the involvement of the federal government to influence the South in the abolishment of slavery. William Garrison rejected the use of political methods and was more confrontational in his stance against slavery to achieve his ends. He frequently burned the Constitution at his public lectures. His speeches were not always well received but the people who felt threatened by their implied violence. Even he had a small number of followers, they has great effect on the abolitionist debate. He differed from the classical abolitionist idea by demanding full equality for blacks rather than just freeing them.

While north was in preparation of abolishment of slavery, south was preparing itself against the northern abjection to their system. It was becoming more sensitive towards a slave revolt the threats of a slave insurrection. There were quick and violent reactions towards any hint of such a revolt. This was what happened when an insurrection was planned by Denmark Vesey in 1822. The southerners killed thirty seven slaves and deported another thirty. There was not any actual

uprising but only a rumor and this was enough for such a reaction of southerners. But the result of the actual revolts did not differ in their severity.

In Louisiana, after a slave revolt, they captured and killed sixteen blacks. They placed their heads on the poles along the Mississippi River to intimidate the ones to thought of acting the same plan. Nat Turner rebellion in Southampton, Virginia is one of the most dramatic examples of the slave revolts. In 1831, at least fifty five white people were killed before the control was regained. The effects of the revolt surrounded the entire South; runaway slaves were tracked and southern states made it more difficult for the slave owners to free their slaves.

All these patterns led to an organized abolitionist movement. The institution of slavery itself included the basis of slave unrest and the potential slave revolt. Slaves become more volunteer to fight and die for freedom. White and black abolitionist ideas shared the same grounds for a revolution against the southern denial of human rights. Abolitionists were considered as the outside trouble makers and could not fully understand the facts of the slavery. In most of the literature of white abolitionist movement the assertion that the abolitionism was very much of a function of slave discontent did not appear. But the revolt of the slaves is a clear indication of the fact that they did not accept their position as subordinate slaves.

The result of the abolitionist movement and the possible of slave revolts were scrutiny and cruel restrictions over slaves and slaves thought escape as the only hope of survival. The internalization of the escape motif became the most important structuring device of the slave narratives. In *African American Slave Narratives: Anthology Volume I* the characteristics of the nineteenth century slave narratives are explained as:

> Nineteenth-century slave narratives were placed in a position in which they had to present as a sympathetic character a slave who may have been forced to lie, steal, and use other deceptions in order to gain his or her freedom. This is a rhetorical continuation of the Du Boisian notion of African American double-consciousness that eighteenth-century narrators earlier encountered. W. E. B. Du Bois noted in a paper delivered to the American Negro Academy in March of 1897 that: “No Negro who has given earnest thought to the situation of his

> people in America has failed, at some time in his life, to find himself at these crossroads, has failed to ask himself at some time: what, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American? Though Du Bois is speaking particularly about the difficulty of reconciling a nationalistic American identity with a collective black identity, this impediment also sits at the root of African American slave narrative writing. Slave narrative writers were deeply aware of their positions as Americans who contributed, under the harshest conditions, to the development of the country. But because of the conditions in which they lived, blacks were also acutely conscious of their alienation from a complete involvement with the country they were helping to create. Virtually all slave narratives seek, at some level, to explore the disparity between blackness and cultural, political, social, spiritual, and economic assimilation. (11)

Stepto explains the formula of the texts as below;

> [The] narrative depicts a black storyteller's white listener socially and morally maturing into a competency [as a reader]. In thus presenting a very particular reader in the text, the basic written story squarely addresses the issue of its probable audience while raising an issue for some or most of its readers regarding the extent to which they can or will identify with the text's "reader" while pursuing (if not always completing) their own act of reading. (1991: 38)

The production and the distribution of the slave narratives gained more potential with the expansion of the abolitionist idea because slave narratives seemed to have large impact on swaying public opinion. With the increase of the number of abolitionist societies in New England, the number of the publications they produced increased as well. These publications can be counted as: *The Abolitionist; or record of the New England Anti-slavery Society*; *The African Observer; American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society*; *The American Anti-slavery Almanac; American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and Improving the Condition of the African Race*; *Anti-slavery Examiner*; *Anti-slavery Record*; *Anti-slavery Reporter*; *Anti-slavery Tracts*; *The Argus*; *Christian Examiner*; *The Emancipator*; *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*; *Herald of Freedom*; *Journal of Negro History*; *The Liberator*; *The Liberty Bell*; *Quarterly Anti-slavery Magazine*; *Putnams's Magazine Slave's Friend*; *National Enquirer*; *Observer*. Ex slaves were encouraged to tell about their experiences in written narratives and public orations. Oral or performative component of the narratives carried a special importance.

Probably it was because the slave narrators would revise the effectiveness of various combinations of experience during an oral presentation before it was turned into a written form.

2.2.1. FEMALE SLAVE NARRATIVES VS. MALE SLAVE NARRATIVES

Slave narratives have been a way to express themselves in their writings for black women as well as for black men. The anti-slavery requirement in the lives of the women was as harsh as that of men. Cruelty, moral and physical abuse surrounded the world of female. In their form and function slave narratives shared some common features. The clearest one was that most of them started with “I was born…” This is an indication that the narration will talk about the writer’s life story from the beginning. Later on as they grow up as a slave and their natural environment is a plantation or a farm, we find the detailed descriptions about these locations. This is the microcosm of their experience. To describe their own identity, they give the definition of key factors and people binding or surrounding them. Family/master is amongst these and the role of the masters especially important in the family deprivations through sales, death or any other form of separation.

Slave life is based on suffering and mistreatment of the slaveholders. Most of the slaves had to endure unfair treatment, harsh and arbitrary beating, and whipping. They would witness the lives of the other slaves and even how they are punished or murdered. All these points would come to one absolute end that is the freedom. The ways and the tools to get the consciousness of free world are described as well. Learning to read and education of the self is almost present in all the slave narrations to show how a slave realizes her-his condition. Through learning comes to a decision to be free and he lives a kind of enlightenment. After that scene, the plot for freedom is set and as a most usual way of freeing oneself, escape follows. This journey is usually to the north as a means of attaining freedom. They generally keep the names of the people who participate in their survival secret to avoid distributing the paths and the techniques of an escape. This is generally the final act of the slave narrative.

These incidents may not occur in the same order but these are basis of the slave narratives (Escott: 1979: 3).

Depending on these norms, there can be seen crucial differences between slave narratives written by a male or a female. These differences may vary according to the roles of men and women in the slave society. For male slave narrative, the idea of manhood is based on the American presumptions of the definition for the term and the slave hero should use his wits, courage and force for freedom. He has a fight against the individuals as well as the system or the institution of slavery. The escape story is surrounded by danger, violence, physical strength and internal resolve. In a way the slave comes to a "heroic stage". During his adventure the essential piece is to protect the manhood and as a result the hero turns to "man" from a "brute". Masculine courage, force and wit play the crucial role to define the final achievement of freedom.

In female slave narratives the shaping act of the event is sexual oppression more than merely physical oppression or abuse. Unlike male slaves, it was most of the time not possible to stand against it via physical dominance, which is a staple of male slave narrative. As the women would be less strong than their male counterparts, they would use words and with rather than strength for their struggle. This is what Jacobs does most of the time through her life. Her literacy, which is a great exception for a slave becomes her weapon to fight against Dr. Flint and the system she hates. By writing letters from her grandmother's attic and reading a newspaper she saves her life. Her words and wit becomes her strength.

Male overpowering of master is the turning point for their journey to freedom. Sensitivity or emotions are put aside and their world is surrounded by achieving a goal of independence. Whereas, most of the female slaves are mothers, and the relation between a mother and a child makes it more sentimental and sympathetic. These narrations does not end with an absolute freedom or reaching north, instead their main aim is to show how far the arms of the slavery goes especially after the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. The most important concern of the female writers is to create a seduction and domestic story of a sentimental novel.

Hero is a female slave seeking to retain her virtue who is introduced by the twist of a sexual harassment.

What differs a female slave narration from a sentimental or domestic novel is the concept of marriage. A story of a slave female does not end with marriage in any case. Sexuality is used as a tool of questioning the truth described by the outside world by re-considering morals, superior power of men over women, position of each sex and their means. Slave women are generally the victims of illicit sex and it versus well being in their stories. Jacobs' act of not accepting a sexual relation out of her will is a good example of her well being even she has a relation as resistance with another man out of marriage. A disparity between the writer and the reader is felt more in female narrations with direct utters to the reader as a female author would like to gain sympathy more than a male.

Under both sexual and physical abuse, the slave woman generally finds love and takes her own lover. This becomes either a reaction against the immoral restoration of the system or a shelter to keep her humanity and ability to feel even in such a situation of suffering. This undermines the female purity. The survival of a woman in the slave narrative falls along the Victorian conventions of motherhood. Narrator carries the specifics of piety, virtue, purity, domesticity and she pays great attention for the protection of the family. The escape of a female is with the family or not at all when the escape of a male is solo making him a fugitive her of an idealized individual quest. This is the essential figure of Harriet Jacobs' narrative as well. She does not want to get rid of the bonds of slavery just for own sake but her main aim is the survival of her family especially her children. In contrast to the Victorian feminine ideal of womanhood which desires pregnancy, childbirth, promiscuity, sexual enjoyment and even love as the "Four Cardinal Virtues", the black woman considers sexual attraction and love as the violation of her purity. Most of females face to the uninvited, violent sexual advances of white plantation owner who sees the black slave as an exotic alternative to his relation with his doll wife.

The power of the slave narratives lies in the individual's struggle to find identity through salvation and standing against the social attempts to deny the individual identity. Instead, both men and women try to impose an order and

conformity of the severest kind. So a slave narrative is only a truth-telling story of exploration of self and condemnation of American slavery institution. This genre is also representative and seminal in American Literature's most significant focus and discovery. This is an individual's isolation, no matter a male or a female, in the midst of a threatening and bonding American society.

III. FACTS IN *INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL*

In the nineteenth century slave narratives was the most popular genre produced by the Negroes living in the USA. They were drawing their self portraits through their narrations and revealing the truth about the slavery. The narratives would reveal all the feelings, frustrations, fears and the attitudes of the others and especially mistreatment of the masters. In other words they would reveal the black experience of the American life. But as they appeared in a sentimental period and published as if under control of abolitionist movement, these narrations were treated and disregarded unjustly for a period. This period started with *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man* in 1760 and continued till Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* in 1861. Between these dates there has been a rise in the letters of American romanticism. And maybe romantics made their most important impact on American antislavery movement. The slave narrative was considered as a part of sentimental kind of literature with its being edited by abolitionist movement and expression of deep feelings and prevailing ideas even it included great realism in it. The narrator appeals to the feelings of the reader and the essence of romantic tradition in actually an individual's concern for freedom.

These accounts of slaves' lives started to be written in the eighteenth century including significantly important figures like Briton Hammon, John Marrant, Gustavus Vassa they gained their popularity with the rise of militant abolitionism from 1830 to 1861. Some were published as biographies. Amongst the stories of slaves like *Narrative of Dimmock Charlton*, *The Memoirs of Elleanor Eldridge*, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, the story of Harriet Jacobs or Linda Brent as she calls herself in her book took attention in the nineteenth century. *Incidents* was edited and arranged by Lydia Maria Child. Though many of these narratives were significant in the literary sense, their historical importance cannot be denied. These authentic narrations are considered as the sources of unquestioned reality because the narrators were eyewitness to the slavery and the system.

Common point for all those stories was the focus on slave trade, long hours of reluctant labor, constant physical punishment and the denial of any opportunities that

would lead to the improvement of Negros. They all talk about the poor conditions of the slave life and scant provisions for food, housing, clothing and medical care. Especially in the female slave narratives, miscegenation among the people of the South is seen in many examples. The rape that the masters force on the female slaves is the most important factor for that. As drunkenness, violence and carousing were very common in the white society, masters were in debt constantly and they would sell their slaves to pay it. This led to separation of families and left sorrow behind.

Slave markets were profitable and there was a constant activity of slaves' changing hands. The most important figure to show their confinement was iron chains round their necks, restraining the slaves. Use of irons, collars, chains to prevent them running away was in fact fastened around their life. Majority of the slave narrators were field hands on cotton fields and some were trained to be skilled workers like carpenters, coopers, black smiths or house servants. All worked hard but the skilled workers were more valuable because of their services and even they would buy their own freedom. They were luckier compared to their counterparts because they were treated better than the others most of the time. But the field hands were treated badly and they were roused by the overseer or the master very early in the morning and made work until very late under scant conditions. Other chores were waiting for them after those tiring and long hours so the slave owner would benefit from them as much as he could. In some slave narratives the terrible conditions on the fields are told that they were forced to work till twelve at noon and after that they had to cook their own meal of "hoe cakes". And they tell that they had to feed the farm animals and chop wood after they completed their work on the field.

Male and female laborers were given definite tasks to perform. The masters expected them to stipulate pounds of cotton and if they failed to bring a bag of sufficient weight they would be whipped. There was not a certain amount of weight and it differed from plantation to plantation and according to the ability of a slave. The usual working system was to put the fastest laborer in the beginning of the row and the others were urged to follow. But labor for women was harder as it would cause the neglect of their children.

All the system working around was designed to control the slaves more. Holidays, religious training, hope of freedom, opportunities for work were all served for the benefit of the slave owners. But the most important tool of controlling depended on the physical controls like whipping. Nearly all the narrators talk about their being whipped once no matter if it was a man or a woman. On the plantations the overseer acted as the judge, jury, executioner and he would use the opportunity of his power till the end. But law was not acting on the slave's side because a slave could not testify his being whipped before court unless being witnessed by a white person. So these punishments like beating, whipping, shooting were legal and the laws were designed to protect the property of owners. On the other hand, there was a fear of servile rebellions and this prompted the slave states to have more stringent laws. The activities of the slaves were prescribed sharply.

The reaction of the slaves towards the situation was not espousal. Most of the slave narratives cannot be considered as loyal slaves except for the ones like Noah Davis, William Boen, Lunsfors Lane, William Hayden, Jasiah Henson, Elizabeth Keckle and Peter Still. But these people generally had a happy childhood with their families and held comparably better conditions like house servants, drivers and artisans. So their loyalty was a kind of return for the kind attitude of their masters. Charles H. Nichols explains the situation of the slaves in these words in his book "Slave Narratives":

> The cast etiquette and fear of physical punishment encouraged the slave to develop "stage presence" – that is, the capacity to play his role convincingly before the master, even while he sabotaged the effort in actuality. By far the greater number of the slaves seem to have shown indirect or covert aggression. Neglected in early childhood and cruelly treated, they were resentful and uncooperative. For the field hands were largely excluded from the privileges enjoyed by the house servant and had less incentive to please their owners. Their protest took on many forms, from laziness, inefficiency, feigned illness and mongering, to stealing, striking (refusing to work) and sabotage. Solomon Bayley and Moses Grandy even dared to sue in the courts for their freedom. Frequently slaves ran off to the woods or swamps "on strike" until their demands were met. The slaves' protest also expressed itself in their religion and in the songs and spirituals they created. (Many narratives contain such songs). It was easy for the slaves to associate themselves with the children of Israel - God's people enslaved by the wicked Egyptians. The high and mighty white

> race was, to the Negroes, like those men of Sodom and Gomorrah, merely awaiting the sure judgment of God. (1952: 110)

The narratives written between 1836 and 1865 are mostly by fugitive slaves. Many of them stood against the system and refused to be whipped and did not want to go back to their oppressors. Like a very important historical example of Nat Turner, they even dared bloody uprisings. Such Negroes succeeded to escape from slavery by running away, rebellion or even death. In none of slave narratives, it is clear that slave holders could not succeed to organize a community of slaves who would accept their situation without resistance. But the slave narrations were full of aggression, fear, hate.

3.1. OVERVIEW

'I was born a slave' is the opening sentence for Harriet Jacobs' book *Incidents* in which she writes the 'confluence of two different cultures'. This is a very classic opening for a slave narrative; however she continues in a different way: "But I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away" (11). *Incidents* is the story of betrayal of any kind. Her work was not taken into consideration or took little attention before 1981 due to arguments about the authorship. Later, the truth about the narrator of story was proved by a study of her letters and the authenticity of her writing and event was established in 1897.

There is great deal of emphasis on family ties, blood relations within the black community in her story. This means that there is sentiment and sympathy in it. The story is around the heroic women in both races; herself, grandmother, mother and Mrs. Bruce. There are some antagonists amongst the women as well, like the ones who borrow the money and does not return back, betray promises, deny the truth of Bible. The male characters are 'shadowy presence' just talked in symbolic passages. There is not any detailed information about the father, she just tells him in passing passages to give some background about her life, or uses Dr. Flint to symbolize the cruelty of slavery system. That would be true to say that it is a "tale" telling about the female experience of slavery and while doing so, uses the

techniques of sentimental novel and slave narrative. Richard Gray in his book *A History of American Literature* explains the sentimental points in *Incidents* as: "…And at the centre of it is that familiar protagonist of sentimental fiction: the young affronting her destiny – and, in due time, faced with a dangerous seducer – the female orphan making her way in the world." (2004: 149-150)

The narrator of the book however is not called as Harriet Jacobs but Linda Brent. During her days spent on Dr. Flint's house as a slave, she has been abused sexually and that made her an object of sexual pursuit by her white master. To escape from a relentless sexual interaction, she became the lover of another white man and gave birth to two children from that man. As a slave woman, she was exploited sexually while revealing her story as a female, she needed to tell and write the truest about her sexual history. But it was a fact that she was an unmarried mother that would be an unacceptable truth of the time even she was a victim in the story. She felt a discomfort on her as her experiences were behind the limits of the nineteenth century. So she found a solution to create Linda Brent as an alter ego and remain safely anonymous. Richard Gray explains the situation: "Here especially, *Incidents* becomes a captivating generic mix: a slave narrative still, a sentimental story of female endeavor, a tale of sexual pursuit, attempted seduction and betrayal, and the first-person confession of a fallen woman" (2004: 150).

Jacobs makes direct utters to the reader which is to make the reader more involved in her story and participate in the events: "Reader, it is not to awaken sympathy for myself that I am telling you truthfully what I suffered in slavery. I do it to kindle a flame of compassion in your hears for my sisters who are still in bondage, suffering as I once suffered" (47). This is a very common use in sentimental novel to make the reader suffer the same difficulties with the protagonist. Even more, Jacobs continues to emphasize what she is telling is the absolute truth, that is not just for the sake of herself but for 'her sisters' as well. In that sense Jacobs presents a general application of her story and wants to create an awareness on the women of the North to realize that there are young slave women everywhere in the South sharing the same fate 'with no shadow of law to protect them from insult, from violence, or even from death.' There are white mistresses like Mrs. Flint who 'ought to protect the

helpless victim' but instead 'have no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage' and masters like Dr. Flint 'fiends who bear the shape of men'.

About her use of dialect Smith makes a comment as "dialogic relationship with standardized usage that has become morally bankrupt or emotionally bogus". She goes on as "she may talk her way out of the most abject forms of humiliation. With his statement he does not consider her reuse of bankrupted terms" (1986: 278) and how she turns them into a "means of exchange valuable for her and her family". Smith advocates such translations retool the process of narratively structuring character per se in cultural productions. Andrews's analysis focus on such terms as grandmother's home as "feral white trash" (1986: 279) or her use of word "love" as a turn of domestic exchanges clearly said having interest within the antebellum sphere of woman. Smith claims that Andrews's analysis misses a point that: "the way these revisions of the so-called private (fantasized as feminine) connect sharply to a revision of how an antebellum public (masculine) could be legitimately construed. She follows:

> In other words, if familial dependency, culturally scripted as "private", must be abjured so that "self" can rise to an individual liberty, isn't the resulting liberated self simply another form of the disfiguring disempowerment that slavery's logic has already enforced? Doesn't such a logic of masculinized solipsism threaten to undermine the ground of all personhood? If what antebellum mores claimed as most "human" was represented by a kinship tie – the tie between mother and the child – what would happen if such bonds were as little regarded in the North as in the slavocracy? What conceptual stay remained to keep "person" from being translated into "property" – or, to use Jacobs's terms, to keep citizens from becoming more than "God-breathing machines". (1994: 141)

Eventually, what Jacobs tries to create is a framework of individuality by giving support to the value of "liberty" in the nineteenth century American culture. In fact, she defends the freedom of any American by referring to the liberty of herself. Linda Brent's character is formulated as a "result of strong interdependencies" (Smith, 1994: 141) and her name is actually a trope for liberty. Her independency can be translated, read, or valued as the independency of any other American individual. If we organize such an evaluation towards her justification of enslavement, discrimination against blacks and gendered degradation, we can

develop a more sophistic debate for her life. Smith defends that in such a reading the words “become ludicrously hypocritical and, above all for that time and moment, dangerously unpatriotic, threatening to debase the valuable tender underwriting Patrick Henry's cultural memory” (1994: 142).

In an environment where reading and writing were forbidden for security reasons of white slave holders, Harriet Jacobs has succeeded a great thing as a slave woman. She could read and write, that would bring her the survival and freedom by the letters she wrote at the attic to deceive Dr. Flint. As a slave narrator Jacobs gains a special importance to achieve more than what is actually released her. Kaplan summarizes Jacobs’ position as slave narrator in these words:

> The celebration of Jacobs‘agency has often rested on valorizing the act of writing itself as a signal achievement of personal power. The conditions slave narrators faced make any published and self-authored account a remarkable achievement. Historically, (il)literacy was used as a measure of a slave’s (in)humanity. More specifically, the attestory, juridical position of slave narrators, denied traditional modes of literary—and social—authority, generated the use of certain literary form which strategically authenticated and legitimated their discourse. (1993: 98)

3.2. *INCIDENTS* AS A SLAVE NARRATION

Harriet Jacobs represents a close and sincere narration throughout the novel. She presents letters, additional notes, bill of sales, newspaper clippings, marriage certificates… to prove her reliability and credibility. Besides, the book includes an introduction from the editor and Child tells about the truthiness of the story told as well. Jacobs was taught to read and write by her first mistress a lot more luckily than the other slaves. Writing her own story gives her chance to share the wounds of slavery on her body and soul and share her sorrows both as a slave and a mother. That is a painful experience she lived through and her literacy gives her chance to utter her reaction towards the injustice and the forms of assault she has encountered. In a way her words are a response and reaction to system she is obliged to obey. She resists many historical events like Fugitive Slave Act in 1950 as herself declares. She wants to create a feminist consciousness as well through a “desire to arouse the

women of the North to a realizing sense of conditions of two millions of women at South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse" (6). She emphasizes the aim and the consciousness she want t evoke: "I have not written my experiences in order to attract attention to myself; on the contrary, it would have been more pleasant to me to have been silent about my history. Neither do I care to excite sympathy for my own sufferings…" (6) Richard Gray summarizes in his book;

> For Jacobs, liberation comes not in heroic battle, the recovery of manhood and solitary fight but in being still with her family, even if apart from them: enjoying a strange kind of solitude, free from the impositions of her white masters, that nevertheless allows her to see, and sometimes talk with, those whom she loves… 'Reader, my story ends with freedom; not, in the usual way, with marriage.' That conclusion to *Incidents*, playing on a conventional ending to sentimental fiction, modestly summarizes the drama of the self that inspired and intrigued so many American writers at this time: that urge towards self emancipation that the writings of the Transcendentalists and slave narratives certainly shared. (2004: 151)

Valerie Smith discusses that Jacobs found no available literary form for the story she needed to tell: as a woman she broke with many of the conventions of the traditional slave narrative; as a black slave she broke the taboos of the nineteenth century sentimental women's writing. Consequently, Smith argues: "She uses silence as a protest and indictment, by consigning to the narrative silences those aspects of her own sexuality for which the genre does not allow, Jacobs points to an inadequacy in the form" (1986: 178)

Jacobs considers her reader from a class, i.e. white, northern, free woman. She implies that with sentences like; "O, you happy free women, contrast *your* New Year's day with that of the poor bond-woman!" (26). Or she chooses to address the reader directly in the sentences;

> The degradation, the wrongs, the vices, which grow out of slavery, are more than I can describe. They are greater than you would willingly believe. Surely, if you credited one half the truths that are told you concerning the helpless millions suffering in this cruel bondage, you at the north would not help to tighten the yoke. You surely would refuse to do for the master, on your own soil, the mean and cruel work which trained bloodhounds and the lowest class of whites do for him at the south. (45)

She uses this tactic to create sympathy in the reader towards the situation of the black woman in the south. White northern woman is probably not aware of a reality like that. As a woman she uses the feeling of motherhood to be better understood; “His sale was a terrible blow to my grandmother; but she was naturally hopeful…” (13) Her narration tells about the value of a slave in the eyes of a slave owner as she tells: “We all know that the memory o a faithful slave does not avail much to save her children from the auction block” (15). She shows that slave loyalty meant nothing but an expectation.

Deborah McDowell in her essay “New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism” asserts that:

> For the Black female writer, journey on the other hand, though at times touching the political and social, is basically a personal and psychological journey. The female character in the works of Black women is in a state of becoming ‘part of an evolutionary spiral, moving from victimization to consciousness.’ (qtd in Davies, 1999: 131)

3.2.1. LIFE ON THE FARM

Jacobs’ *Incidents* is structured around a series of expectations and escapes for the ultimate freedom. In the introduction part the reader is convinced about the truthiness of the events told throughout the book. In the opening chapter we are introduced a happy childhood of a slave girl that she even was not aware of the harsh reality; as she calls it “unusually fortunate circumstances” (15). She had almost a very common life even for the whites; loving parents, a home, relatives… Even her father could make his own life by using his skill as a carpenter. But the pink childhood does not last long and all these come to an end when Brent is twelve and her kind mistress dies of an illness. Even she was promised to be free by her mistress she was “bequeathed” to the mistress’s niece who was “a child of five years old. At this moment she becomes the subject of the child’s father, Dr. Flint, he makes her realize that “she was made for his use, made to obey his command in everything; that she was nothing but a slave…” (29)

The rest of the days in Dr. Flint's house is the details for the sexual harassment and her suffering from the tempting behaviors of him at a very early age;

> …Now I entered on my fifteenth year—a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My maser began to whisper foul words in my ear. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import… He tried his to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a while monster could think of… But he was my master… He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the men tyranny. But where could I turn for protection? No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence or even from death; all these are inflicted by friends who bear the shape of men. (44 - 45)

The realities represented by Harriet Jacobs are so much effective and striking that it even created discussions about the credibility of her narrative as Kaplan tell in a part of her article;

> A critical recuperation of Jacob's text has been necessary to restore its authenticity and recognize the complex socio-political conditions of its production. In spite of authorial insistences such as "Reader, be assured this narrative is no fiction", earlier critics, such as John Blassingame, insisted that "the work is not credible." More like a sentimental seduction novel than a documentary account, too well written to have been authored by a slave, too sensational (particularly in its treatment of the sexual exploitation of slave women) for historical accuracy, the book was often assumed to be a novel, modeled on Richardson's *Pamela* and written by Jacobs' editor, white abolitionist Lydia Maria Child… (1993: 97)

Although there were some doubts about the reality of Jacobs' being the author itself, the discovery of letter cleared them. During the narrative of slavery and post-slavery years, Jacobs follows a smooth, clean and coherent language. She makes critics of the system, depicts the life of a black person especially a female, resists the domination of white supremacy and describes the existing political and social ideologies of time in fair and consistency. Her use of literary conventions as well shows human brain and soul can still be affirmed under even the most seemingly relentless and repressive conditions. As Yellin writes, "Jacobs' narrator does not

characterize herself conventionally as a passive female victim, but . . . was an effective moral agent." (2005: Introduction, xxx)

3.2.2. MASTER-SLAVE RELATIONS; SLAVE COMMUNAL LIFE

"Surely there must be some justice in the man" (216). When Harriet Jacobs declares that the "war of [her life had begun]" (31) in the voice of Linda Brent, she aims to describe this war as a consequence of her ripening ability to read the characters and to question the motives of the people around her, particularly the ones who calls themselves as 'owners'. Her first mistress whom she describes as her mother's whiter foster sister taught her how to read and spell. Such abilities were rare skills for a slave which are described as extremely high values in other slave narrations like *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Even she was donated with such a boon, her literacy and her-self taught ability to write did not grant her the access to freedom in North Carolina. Nor, it did not motivate her to wish for freedom as her life under slavery. She explains how she comes to her war against slavery: "I had not lived fourteen years in slavery for nothing. . . The war of my life had begun; and though one of God's most powerless creatures, I resolved never to be conquered. Alas, for me!" (31) in fact she achieves it by combining the powers of her literacy, her lived knowledge and her retention of what she describes as the unruly "sparks of her brother's God-given nature". She formulates her definition for heroism when she says she never resolved to be conquered.

But still when she says "Alas, for me!" we feel the immediate sentimental lament in her vocalization. This is the foreshadowing of her manifold and inevitable loses that she will encounter. Yet, she does not continue to live in sorrow. She starts with a scene of noble conflict in which she highlights the clash of willpower between Uncle Benjamin (in real name Uncle Joseph) and his master. This is a story that prefigures her own struggles with Dr. Flint or Dr. James Norcom with his actual name. Later she will say: "My master had power and law on his side; I had a determined will. There is might in each" (130).

Brent's story keeps itself as a tale of thrilling moral uplift, similar to many mid nineteenth-century American abolitionist narratives through her language and in the narration of key "incidents". These works of slave narrations, no matter if fictional like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or authentic like Stowe's later book *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, they all functioned as books of revelation. As Jacobs accepts, the adventures she tells throughout the book from the life of Linda Brent might sound too thrilling to be true, but they were true. And the real aim inside the text is to arise the moral indignation of "the women of the north to a realizing sense of the condition two millions of women at the South" (1).

Linda Brent's early declaration of a girl's war against slavery is made in a chapter called "The Slave Who Dared to Feel like a Man". This chapter does not release pieces from her own battle but she offers an account of her Uncle Benjamin's escape to the Free States. This is a story following what is often called the classic slave-narrative quest pattern fight-and-flight. This may be best enacted In Douglass's *Narrative*. Linda parallels her own experiences with her uncle's as if they were twins. She explains their relation as of sister and brother more than uncle and niece.

According to her description he was a bright, handsome lad, nearly white; for he inherited the complexion her grandmother derived from Anglo-Saxon ancestors (13). He would give any price if the handsome lad was a girl. But Benjamin's reputation as a rebellious black made him an unsuitable masculine investment. Brent reports that the family thanked God he was not a girl as he kept the image of the manly heroic slave. Such thanks throughout the text remind the reader about the unfortunate fate of Linda to be a slave girl.

By sampling the war for freedom with her uncle's and some others' cases in the book, Jacobs gives the impulse for liberty as parallel to the masculinized martial exercise. Stephanie A. Smith comments about Jacobs' narrative as:

> At the same time, she genders the narrative so clearly as to question the applicability of such a masculinized exercise to a slave woman's experience. Brent cannot physically 'tackle' Dr. Flint, the way her uncle does his opponent; as she soon reveals, physical 'contact' between a slave and a master has different (often reproductive)

> consequences when the slave is a ‘girl’ and not a ‘man’. Yet, liberty appears to require both men and women to foster those rebellious sparks Brent describes as God-given only to men, an emotional state of ‘dar[ing] to feel like a man. (1994: 136)

She chooses to quote Patrick Henry when she starts her emotional daring by saying give me liberty or give me death was her motto. So he does not feel like any men. When Jacobs gave voice to Linda Brent in 1861, she reminded Henry’s speech at Virginia Convention in 1775. Brent appropriately makes use of and already mythologized, white, male American rebellion figure on the verge of a second American Revolution or the Southern War for Independence as named by nascent Confederacy. It was a sentiment that slavocracy was attempting to manipulate for its own purposes.

When she combines Brent’s desire for liberty through a masculinized pattern of fight-and-flight, Jacobs also mobilizes a critique of how this will to liberty has been logically structured. Even, Patrick Henry’s rhetoric includes a suicidal tone, historically it is a fact that Patrick Henry did not die in the Revolution. But this choice of liberty or death which is an Enlightenment scenario, that fueled Transcendentalist romanticism as well, agrees with the slavocracy’s claim that African Americans were made to be slaves merely because they endured it. Whereas, the romance of white supremacism argued that the will of a true man would not let him put up with enslavement. A real man would rather die than being enslaved. When Jacobs in Brent’s voice and her family say each other: “He that is willing to be a slave let him be a slave.” (43), she has that romantic logic.

The use of the word “willing” refers to a story of survival within story in the way Brent’s family gives meaning. She redefines such terms as “willing” and “liberty” according to the antebellum notions of identity ride. Throughout the book, Jacobs represents various patterns of living survival, and strength. In that way, she gives a chance to re-check the “two-dimensional, simplified, one-way, masculinized liberty-or-death logic that antebellum cultural mores associated with nobility, willpower and selfhood” as Smith claims (1991: 13). When she creates a world of slavery, she constantly gives samples from liberty. She makes a fragment of the life of Linda Brent to show the value of individual liberty as necessary. In fact Stephanie

A. Smith defends that the validity of the American democratic experiment depends on such a restructuring; otherwise, northern "freedom" will be no better than southern "slavery".

This approach of Jacobs is clearly a main subject of abolitionist texts. Anti-slavery politicians frequently argued that 'the slavocracy's unbridled authorities produced aristocratic, undemocratic tyranny'. Jacobs' approach to the subjects is an example of a community that simply imagined itself as wholly white, and it makes effect on the future generations of African Americans as well. Because of that Jacobs shows the Linda Brent's view of liberty more accurate than the inheritors of Patrick Henry's legacy. Yellin analyses Jacobs as "a new kind of female hero… yoking her success story as a heroic slave mother to her confessions as woman who mourns that she is not a story book heroine" (2004: 43). Both Yellin and Beth Maclay Doriani have claimed that the early African American writers like Harriet Jacobs and Harriet Wilson who is the author of *Our Nig* could not adopt the conventions of personhood as they were reproduced in the male slave narrative nor wholeheartedly embrace the definitions of womanhood that the popular genres of women carried to the American reading public in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. Their writings required narrative strategies of adaptation. Doriani sees the image of antebellum slave women that Linda draws as taking responsibility for the welfare of their children with the white, male Emorsonian hero – shapers of their destinies and responsible for their own survival. Actually, Jacobs makes use of antebellum concepts of "masculinized self-reliance".

We can question here the reason for Yellin's use of the term "female hero" and the frame that Doriani creates for the "personhood of male slave narratives" and the "womanhood" of Jacobs's text. Why does he compare Jacobs's story to a narrative of Emersonian self-reliance? By using the words like "virtuous slave girl" and "slave mother", she displays the hypocritical violence of mid-nineteenth century heterosexual ideology. Similarly, "female hero" represents a twentieth century paradox that shapes the reading of Jacobs's narrative and the questions that may occur in the minds of the readers.

Though, the critical analysis of Jacobs's new, racially specific definition of "true womanhood" is vital. Jacobs telling the life of Linda Brent, both creates a new form of female hero and a black heroine, plus she offers ideas about gender and race designations. If we try to compare *Incidents* with classic African American male slave narratives or classic Anglo-American female domestic or seduction fiction, we will see that it differs from each without significantly questioning the gendered and racial concepts of these narrative patterns.

Early comments about this text by Harriet Jacobs declared it to be too melodramatic to be a real slave narrative and this invalidates its authenticity. Similarly, if we see Brent a female hero that would lead us to see her as follower of Patrick Henry's conventional breeches and we would miss the point about her re-definition the garment. Jacobs, in her text, stresses the lived social relations of racial identity and questions race as a category. She does not define "slave" depending on the appearance, character or familial role but she imposes the idea that race is a "legal fiction" shaped by economic conditions and commodity relations. In her book, Jacobs strongly emphasizes that both Anglo and African have meaning at special times but generally speaking her narration makes a complicated definition of each term.

Jacobs tries to tell that the basis on which the narrative identity or any constructed character accrues cultural value must change. To be able to succeed that she restructures the mid nineteenth century racialized gendered logic. William Andrews claims that her process of linguistic retribution strives to appropriate language for purposes of signification outside that which was privileged by the dominant culture. So if the terms like mother, sister, father or son are redefined by the violence of slavery, we can redefine the words like hero, liberty or patriot. All those gender or racial definitions have impact on Jacobs's construction of Linda Brent. Jacobs wanted to make gendered and racial identities the special subjects of her narrative just like much of the twentieth century subjects. What Jacobs makes differently is to define these words as simple synonyms for "woman" and black". As told in Andrews' narrative: "To facilitate the enslavement of people, the ideology of slavery must first master the potential meanings of key words in the language of the oppressing culture. Slavery must construct the free play of meaning that normally

informs words like mother, home, lady or freedom so as to reduce the multivalent to the univocal" (1986: 274). At this point Smith questions: "Doesn't using "gender" as a signifier for "woman" or "race" as a signifier for "black", also perform a reduction of the (Bakhtinian) multivalent to the univocal?"

Jacobs made use of editorial assistance of Lydia Maria Child and they made an interactive piece of literature. Child committed herself to show the abuse of slavery especially on women and she insisted upon the sentimental conventions as a means to veil the horrors of slavery. Especially as in *Incidents* they wanted to reveal the African American women's sexual exploitation in racial slavery. By doing this, they wanted to attract the attention of genteel, middle class, white, female Northern audience. This collaboration between Child and Jacobs is seen as an illustration of the racial "limits of sisterhood". Because the publisher of the book, Thayer and Eldridge accepted to publish Jacob's manuscript only on the condition that Child provided an introduction. The book, as a combination of all these elements, resulted as a sentimental inscription of race, class, sex and gender norms that are constructed by the cult of true womanhood. If we look at the argument of Karen Sanchez-Eppler, in "Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body" she believes that the sentimental strategies that abolitionists used to arose white, middle class sympathy obliterated "blackness" because white was consistently washed over black, and so, "by identifying with her enslaved sister, the free woman [came] to betray her. But it cannot be denied that Lydia Maria Child gained her reputation as a free, white, middle class, well-connected abolitionist editor in 1860 when her corresponding with Harriet Ann Jacobs started" (1993: 129).

"In order to protect my children, it was necessary that I should own myself. I called myself free, and sometimes felt so; but I knew I was insecure . . . , till, by dint of labor and economy, I could make a home for my children." (253) Through the narration of Jacobs, labor and economy becomes the synonym of freedom. Her need to own herself is in fact the need to feel like a real human being. These are the statements generally true for all the African Americans. It in fact did not matter if the African people were in the south or in the north, a free person or still a slave during the antebellum period. During the decades ending with Civil War, many black

questioned how to become a free person, how to own his own being, to possess property which is first of all self-possession.

Actually from the first years of the independence of America, its economic development was predicted on the systematic underdevelopment and exploitation of the black Americans. During the antebellum years the market revolution relied on these truths. Especially the south as Jacobs describes depended on the heavy work of slaves under bad and tiring conditions. Even on the cover of the book, Jacobs quotes these words from a woman of North Carolina:

> Northerners know nothing at all about slavery. They think it is perpetual bondage only. They have no conception of the depth of degradation involved in that word, SLAVERY; if they had, they would never cease their efforts until so horrible a system was overthrown" (front matter).

A slave meant capital more than a human being for a slave owner and they would function only as a means of money with their production. They were valuable both for the product they produced like cotton or as a force of power for future investment. Jacobs tells in her own story and in many other stories of other slaves that there was hope for north in the life of every slave to go and become free here. In fact the free but industrialized North as they regarded excluded black from work and related to this capital share. The reason for that exclusion was shown as the moral underdevelopment of blacks and their still being in a childlike state. This trait deprived them of the competitive drive to enter the capitalist complexity and to overcome the economic struggle.

Jacobs is one of those who decided to write her autobiography to resist the underdevelopment of the blacks and the exploitation of slave labor. This book is both an autobiographical and historical discourse as means of defining the codes of colored people of the USA. Even we can see the reflections of the dominant culture in language and the aim of publication for the readership of both races, it is clear that Jacobs tries to offer solution for the underdevelopment of black race. She does this by envisioning the blacks' being subject to isolation and lost in African American experience. She gives samples from the important events of black history like Fugitive Slave Act, shows the black community and preservation of past traditions

and reflects the passage in slavery and plantation life with all the severe truths and cruelty.

Her life story which takes place during the most active years in terms of African American experience with the events like Fugitive Slave Law, the Kansas-Nebraska Act and Dred Scott Case and Decision, she was effective to give particular expression about these social happenings. Amongst the most important texts written between 1853 and 1862 Harriet Jacobs with *Incidents* gives a start to the African American novel writing. Carla L. Peterson tells about the importance of Jacobs and other four writers Harriet E. Wilson, William Wells Brown, Frank J. Webb and Martin R. Delany in her essay "Capitalism, Black (Under)development, and the Production of the African-American Novel in 1850s" as following: "these narratives suggest their authors' attempts to constitute themselves as autonomous speaking subjects working to reconfigure both individual and collective African-American identity within a context of economic underdevelopment."

In the story of Jacobs as in any other autobiographical work of slave narrators, the protagonist of the story is both the narrator and the narrated. The classical theory of autobiography tells about these two "I"s in the autobiographical narrative as well. And the same theory insists to view them as separate entities and use the same graphic sign as an act of confusion and creating a false unity. This subject "I" is coherent and fixed in the autobiographies. The slave narratives, written with the abolitionist support underwrite the same project. They are more teleological in their structure and there is a progress of "I" from the state of slavery to a state of free person. The slave autobiographies are generally signed by the author by the stamp "written by herself/himself". Jacobs as a slave narrator whose narration was forgotten for many years to be remembered in 1990s again, used the same technique to prove her own being could not become so successful for a while. But her proofs were strong with the sales bills, newspaper articles, letter she wrote personally. While writing her life, Jacobs creates her alienated self that was a marginal female slave trying to seek for freedom for herself and her children.

Through Jacobs' story we can trace the lives of many slaves that start on the hard plantation life style. This following up the journey from slavery to freedom

helps the reader recognize many realities in their lives as well. It is to create sympathy and pity to describe the situations by letting the reader imagine the situation as if lived by himself:

> Could you have seen that mother clinging to child, when they fastened the irons upon her wrists; could you have heard her heart-rending groans, and seen her bloodshot eyes wander wildly from face to face, vainly pleading for mercy; could you have witnessed that scene as I saw it, you would exclaim, slavery is damnable! (38)

She presents the violence of the race prejudice and slavocracy in the south. While doing this she uses her consequent feelings of fierce, sorrow, sadness and ambition. Even by using the pseudonym of Linda Brent she problematizes the identity, such a double identity creates the question of personhood. This may be considered as a helpful tool for a writer who questions her own entity in the society she exists and may be this questioning helps her find the real selfhood. Or this is a kind of escape from their painful past by keeping a distance from the real self and the "I" in the narration.

There are some times that slaves gain powers over their masters as Jacobs succeeds it through her letters she writes from her "loophole". Her self-improvement lets her control over her life as well as gaining a kind of power by deceiving Dr. Flint with the letters she writes. Even she wrote them from her own town, from grandmother's house, they acted as the ropes of a puppet as she could have control over her "ex-master" even by laughing. Jean Yellin sees in Brent's letters "a sophisticated version of a power reversal in which the slave controls the master" (2004: xxvi). Andrews tells the situation in her own words as "experiments in writing let her play the role of a slave trickster lodged in the interstices of a social structure that she pries apart with her spying eyes and ventriloquist voice" (1986: 44).

The most tragic side of slavery in terms of a woman is the cultural anxieties that attack on her sexual attraction. Women's sexuality does not disappear throughout the narration. She becomes a heroic sexual presentation as she tries to get rid of oppression of Dr. Flint to keep her chastity. These attempts of rape and abuse of black female body or even identified with her actually represents the physical blackness of slave women. These are the constitutions revealed by the culture to

define black womanhood. But Jacobs succeeds to dramatize her own being a woman and a slave literally by showing herself as the object of white master's gaze and desire; even her female sexuality was available she avoids the act of rape. The economy or the logic behind supported the act of rape by the white master in fact because the mulatta was a part of that economic system to make profit by being sold as a fancy girl for a high price or being exploited to bear more slaves. So she was totally exposed to the consumption of the slave holder. Jacobs and all the other slaves turn out to be material objects through the system of slavocracy. The slave is then an object to be enjoyed and a capital or investment to accumulate more capital in return.

3.2.3. AN ESCAPE STORY

In fact in the story of Jacobs, she draws attention how the dominant culture creates Linda a mulatta. Dr. Flint's sexual force on Linda does not act as a basis for a romantic autobiographical work but they just stay at the level of attempts to rape. As an escape from him, she chooses to reveal her sexuality publicly because she realizes the privatization it only serves for the benefit of master. It is clear that Dr. Flints attempts to keep Brent as secret or privatize by building a small house for her in a faraway place. This action is the point that turns to take an action about having a lover and getting pregnant.

Her escape starts with a confinement in loophole; in the attic of her grandmother's house. This confinement is what the dominant culture is trying to do on the lives of the blacks in general and on the body of black female in particular. The white supremacy wants to privatize the female, shut up the black commodity and keep them under control both physically and psychologically. Peterson differentiates this to a Freudian theory and explains it as:

> … And indeed, Brent's bodily history ironically prefigures that of later nineteenth-century hysterical women who were to play such an important part in the psychoanalytic discourse of the dominant culture: attempt seduction by a father figure, seclusion, numbness, paralysis, loss of speech (aphonia), persistent coughing (tussa nervosa), unsociability, subjection to obsessive concern by the medical profession (Flint), and finally, the disruption of the social structure of the patriarchal family. Unlike Freud's later hysterics,

> however, Jacobs enters the symbolic order to write an autobiography that is not based in hysterical discourse but in a careful manipulation of fictional conventions that make self-representation possible. (1992: 571)

We meet Linda as a strong figure of a female slave who stands against the norms of the system and does not accept her fate. She does not become a piece of reinvestment, hysteria as Peterson describes, privatization, abuse, consumption and any other meaning attached to slavery. On the contrary, the incidents in her life are the ultimate end of economical survival and freedom and her femininity becomes her resistance to the patriarchal system of slavery. She is aware of her sexuality as a woman because she gives herself to Mr. Sands and gives birth to two children. But she has the self-control of her body to disrupt her master's lust. She accepts herself as reproductive with all the functionalities of her body; first giving life two her children her womb is a reproductive part of body and her physical strength gives her chance to gain her life and later her children', lastly her mothering and nurturing capacity let them all survive and get free.

She additionally gives power to black communal life by giving samples from the church, burying ground, celebrations, and rituals. Her grandmother's home is even reproductivity of domesticity by sheltering her and her children, producing goods, collecting the black under a roof. Even it turns the prison-like attic into a place of reproduction when she reads and sews there.

In fact her life after escape is unusually long compared to the other slaves. The contrast between the two chapters "Fugitive Slave Law" and "Free at Last" lets the reader get the true meaning of freedom when the slaves were so volunteer to escape north. She is domestic worker whose biggest dream can be hearthstone of her own for her children. This sampling is great example to show the hardness of home and community in the Free states for an ex-slave. She nostalgically remembers her grandmother towards the end and it indicates she values about her background and past even it meant the bonds to her slavery years. Still, she is an admirable female figure resisting the economical underdevelopment and restriction of slavery.

Incidents gives a revision of master slave relations differently from the classic slave narratives. Linda Brent denies the forces to give up her maternity, kinships, and sexuality. She succeeds to create her own potency that is generally attributed to masculinity. She turns the codes of male power to signify a woman. She contributes to change the narration of masculinity on the other way. As a sort of private memory, she aims to make it valued publicly. Her narration includes shames and cultural disapprovals. “I have shed many and bitter tears to think that when I am gone from my children they cannot remember me with such entire satisfaction as I remembered my mother” (138) she says when she describes her loss of cultural virtue as a passive virginity. But she turns this shame into satisfaction when she is reunited with her children and this remains as a memory written under purity and she traces the devaluation of the pure back to its source, the patriarchal fictions of mastery.

She presents several documents to prevent any negative loop. One of them is the bill of sale for Linda Brent, another one is a letter about Aunt Martha’s death. There are more others; a black bordered letter accompanied by her Uncle Philip’s newspaper obituary. These documents are repetitions of the narrative and represent the connection between public and private histories. We can consider the bill of sale as an evidence to show that “women were once article of traffic” (300), the private letters proves the familial losses Brent has suffered as a result of slavery; the obituary is a deliberate occasion to contemplate about citizenship. These documents connect legal, social and cultural codes and present the common logic of the North and the South, compared cultural logic.

The life on the plantation and pure conditions of slave lives were not endurable for most of the time and many of the slaves found solution in escaping with the motto of death or liberty. The idea of ‘refuge’ is very common in black society. For a group of people that is open to every kind of tyranny from white oppressors, physically, sexually and psychologically, that would mean protection, security and shelter. Grandmother’s “snug little home” was a sample for the real refuge. Under its roof they were preserved and could escape the troubles of outside world. Jacobs tells about the general idea of her grandmother’s house as “We longed for a home like hers. There we always found sweet balsam for our troubles” (28). This home becomes the symbol of hope for future and the survival of Harriet Jacobs

when it keeps her under its roof for seven year. So it becomes the shelter which protects her from the sexual abuse of Dr. Flint and everyday harassment and oppression.

Throughout the narration Brent tries to keep herself as material reality of familial ties, even during her journey to seek and attain freedom from enslavement. Her 1861 written book includes many forms of nineteenth-century discourse as many critics demonstrated. Many of the evaluations of this text concentrates on how she make use of elements that are mostly considered as primarily masculine "fight-and-flight slave narrative" in the feminine rhetoric of domesticity. Her aim is to give a voice out of the "spoken and silenced" pieces of both a slave's narrative and a girl's story. Yellin explains it as: "The resulting text is densely patterned. Although slave narrative has been likened to the 'rootless alienated' picaro, Jacobs's Linda Brent locates herself firmly within a social matrix" (2004: xxvii).

As Davies writes in her article: "Escape for Black women/men necessarily involved the seeking out of protective spaces, or concealment at some points, as the logic of "underground railroad" implies and particularly the darkness of night during which time freedom/flight was often undertaken." And Davies goes on as below:

> Slave women who could not abandon their children had to forego escaping to freedom and the cities of the north. This point is often made with reference to Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, in which the protagonist, Harriet Jacobs, escapes but remains in confinement in the attic of her grandmother's house so that she can watch, voyeur-like, her children and the community pass by. Valerie Smith shows how Jacobs "repeatedly . . . escapes overwhelming persecutions only by choosing her own space of confinement . . ." As well, the confined space of the garret "renders the narrator spiritually independent of her master and makes possible her ultimate escape to freedom." (1999: 134)

IV. BEING A WOMAN BESIDES BEING A SLAVE

In 1918, influential scholar Ulrich B. Phillips declared that slavery in the south had impressed upon African savages and their native born descendants the glorious stamp of civilization and that started a long and passionate debate. As the years passed, the debate went on increasingly and many historians entered the debate to solve the meaning of the "peculiar institution". But all this scholar activity made no effect to the special situation of the female slave. Angela Y. Davis summarizes the period as the ceaseless arguments about her 'sexual promiscuity' or her 'matriarchal' proclivities obscured, much more than they illuminated, the condition of Black women during slavery.

During 1970s the debates about slavery reoccurred with live arguments. Many books were published attributing the issue like Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, John Blassingame's *The Slave Community*, Fogel and Engerman's *Time on the Cross* and Herbert Gutman's *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*. As a response to this debate atmosphere Stanley Elkins decided to publish an expanded edition of his 1959 study *Slavery*. But there did not exist a book precisely devoted to slave women. It made the people who awaited a serious study about the condition of the black women disappointed. Additionally, in the promiscuity atmosphere that threatened marriage and forced and voluntary sex with white men, the words said regarding the condition of the slave women were insufficient.

We can accept Herbert Gutman's investigation of the black family amongst the most enlightening of all. He made it clear that the family's vitality is stronger than the dehumanizing factors and hardships of slavery. With his documentary he dethroned the thesis popularized by Daniel Moynihan in 1965. Though, his observations generally regarded the role of slave women as a wife and he implied that they were different from their white counterparts to limits of the slavery in their domestic aspirations. He released that institutionalized slave norms gave freedom to slave women for premarital sexual freedom. But, the marriages were generally permanent marriages and the family regarded the attribution of women as much as men. He makes valuable argument against the matriarchy thesis that is well

documented. It was probable that he could be more successful if he showed the multidimensional role of slave women within family and slave community as whole.

That has carried a great importance that a historian creates a record about the experiences of the enslaved black women as that would be an important contribution to the historical accuracy to study the slavery era. These studies would shed light upon the enduring and struggle of black women on the road to emancipation.

4.1. ABUSE OF SLAVERY FOR FEMALE PERSONAL IDENTITY AS A COLORED WOMAN

The black women have always worked out their homes and compulsory labor overshadowed every aspect of their existence. So that would be easier to analyze their lives under the shadow of slavery by first checking their role as workers. The system of slavery defined the black people as “chattels”. Women were considered equally profitable labor units as men so the role in work may be considered as genderless. As the scholars explain it the slave woman was first a full-time worker for her owner, and incidentally a wife, mother and homemaker. In fact nineteenth century ideology of femininity described the role of women as “nurturing mothers and gentle companions and housekeepers for their husbands” (Davis, 1981: 5) so the standing of black women was practically not normal.

In slavery system, black women used the benefit of her sex as most of the female servants were doing households working as a house servant like a cook, maid or mammy for the children of the house. The mammy figure is commonly used in slave narratives as well to show the situation of the black women like in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Incidents*. On the surface the situation seemed like that but in practice women were no different than men as they did all the jobs and worked as field hands. While most of the women slaves in the Border States worked as house servants, the slaves in the Deep South that is the real home of slavocracy were dominantly agricultural workers. By the mid of the nineteenth century, every seven out of eight slaves, both men and women, were field hands.

When they were old enough the boys were sent to field to do heavy work and so were the girls to work soil, cut the cane, harvest tobacco, and pick the cotton. An old woman tells about her memory of childhood when she worked on field in 1930s as:

> We had old ragged huts made out of poles and some of the cracks chinked up with mud and moss and some of them wasn't. We didn't have no good beds, just scaffolds nailed up to the wall out of poles and the old ragged bedding throwed on them. That sure was hard sleeping, but even that felt good to our weary bones after them long hard days' work in the field. I 'tended to the children when I was a little gal and tried to clean house just like Old Miss tells me to. Then as soon as I was ten years old, Old Master, he say, "Git this here nigger to that cotton patch. (Meltzer, 1619: 174)

It was a very typical and common experience that Jenny Proctor lived. For most women and men, girls and boys it was hard job to work on the field from sun up to sun down. Under the condition of field hand slavery on the plantations, the efficiency and the productivity of the worker were more important than sex because of the threat of whip. So the oppression for men and women was the same without regard of sex.

4.1.1. SEXUAL ABUSES OF SLAVERY

The condition of women differed from that of men as they were victims of sexual abuse and other mistreatment that could be inflicted only on women. Expediency determined the fate of female slaves according to the slave holder's situation, if it was profitable to exploit them as they were men, sex did not matter but if it was better suited their profit to abuse them as women, and they were regarded with their female roles.

After a while the international slave trade started to threaten the expansion of the young cotton growing industry, slave holders decided to increase the number of the slaves they have on natural reproduction. So the reproductivity of the slave women became more important as they lacked it. A female slave being the mother of ten, twelve even more children was considered a treasure. But on the side of the

black mother, this did not bring the same satisfaction as they were no happier if they were respected as good workers. The exaltation of being a mother was not the same for the blacks. Because in the eyes of the masters they were not mothers at all but the machines to guarantee the growth of their labor force. They were thought as "breeders" who were valuable as long as they were good at increasing their population.

The slave women were considered as breeders rather than mothers, so it was not interesting to sell their infants. The most terrifying decision taken one year after the ban on the import of the African slaves can be considered as the one that claimed a slave mother had no legal right on her children. This rule made it legal to sell the children way from their mother at any age as "the young of slaves . . . stand on the same footing as other animals".

Slave women were open to any kind of sexual coercion as females and they were subject to all kind of improper treatment including mutilations, floggings and rape. Rape was in way the expression of master's economic superiority and the control over black women as workers.

The women were exploited economically for their force of labor as well. In that situation the slave owners did not consider their orthodox sexist attitudes for the purpose of oppression. The slave system hardly accepted black women as female and male supremacy for black men was discouraged as much equally. Because all the family members; including wives, husbands, son and daughter were subject to the authority of their master. Slavocracy did not allow women to have a feminine role in the society as she was not considered from a "weaker sex" or "housewife" so the black men could not act as the head of the family or family provider. Even all the black members were providers for slaveholding class.

In the fields of cotton, tobacco, corn and sugar cane all the slave workers both male and female worked under same conditions as told in the words of an ex-slave; "The bell rings at four o'clock in the morning and they have half an hour to get ready. Men and women start together, and the women must work as steadily as men and perform the same tasks as the men."

The slaves' yields were calculated according to the average rates of productivity demanded from them. For example children were regarded as quarter hands, women full hands unless they were not "sucklers" or "breeders" in which case they were mostly considered less than full hands.

Slave owners demanded from their breeders to bear as many children as biologically possible. But they did not exempt pregnant women or the mother with new born babies from the fields. Under these conditions some mothers put their babies aside the field they worked while some did not want to leave them and went on working on the field with their babies on their backs. The situation was told by a mother slave like this:

> One young woman did not, like the others, leave her child at the end of the row but had contrived a sort of rude knapsack, made of a piece of coarse linen cloth, in which she fastened her child, which was very young, upon her back; and in this way carried it all day, and performed her task at the hoe with the other people (Meltzer, 1987: 208).

The plantations and farms that pregnant women were respected more were very seldom on humanitarian grounds. The new born slave child was as much appreciated as much that of a calf. When there were newly starting attempts in industrialization, slave labor and free labor were hand in hand, complementing each other. There was no difference in use of men, women and even children so women and children were demanded as much as men.

4.1.2. PHYSICAL ABUSES OF SLAVERY

The attribution of slave women in the constructions of Santee Canal in North Carolina, Louisiana levees and Southern railroads still in use today is huge. In many of these, the female labor force was a full fifty percent. Women were not considered too "feminine" to be lumberjacks or ditch diggers in coal mines and iron foundries. They were used as substitutes for beasts to pull trams in the Southern mines. This reminds the utilization of white female labor in England as Karl Marx described in

Capital: “In England women are still occasionally used instead of horses for hauling canal boats, because the labor required to produce horses and machines in an accurately known quantity, while that required to maintain the women of the surplus population is below all calculation.”(1998: 565) Like the British employers, the southern industrialists were motivated to use women in their enterprises. As they “cost less to capitalize and maintain than prime males”, they were even more profitable and free workers and males.

As they were demanded to be as masculine as their male counterparts in their performance of their work, they slave women were inevitably effected by their experiences in slavery. Some were broken and destroyed. The ones who survived gained qualities that were considered as taboo for the nineteenth century women. A traveler who encountered a slave group in Mississippi returning from the fields to home described the group as: “… forty of the largest strongest women I ever saw together; they were all in a simple uniforms dress of a bluish check stuff; their legs and feet were bare; they carried themselves loftily, each having a hoe over the shoulder, and walking with a free, powerful swing like chasseurs in the march” (Meltzer, 1987: 100).

It can be hardly said these women were prideful for the work they perform under the fear of being whipped, but they were still aware of their power and ability to produce and create. It can be translated in Marx’s words as: “Labor is the living, shaping fire; it represents the impermanence of thing, their temporality” (1998: 570). These women have learnt from their experiences that they need to resist the dehumanization of slavery and this made them be aware of their capacity for hard work to struggle for themselves, their family and people.

When the system of pre Civil War started to turn into factor work and embrace of industrialism in the USA, many women were out of productive labor. There was no need or their candle making paraphernalia anymore which once used to assist them for the survival of their families. As a by-product of industrialization the new ideology of femininity were described in ladies’ magazines and romantic novels. So white women were completely out of the realm of work. As the cleavage between home and economy increased as a result of industrial capitalism, this gave way to the

female inferiority more than before. Woman became a synonym for “mother” and “housewife” and these terms became the mark of inferiority. The situation for female slaves however was not the same and the vocabulary used to describe white females did not mean the same for blacks. The economic arrangements of the slave system contradicted hierarchal sexual roles. Male-female relations within the slavocracy did not obey the dominant ideological pattern.

Slaveholders’ definition of black family was based on the matrilocal biological structure. Birth records did not mention the name of the father but listed only the name of the mothers. Throughout the South, state legislatures adapted the principle of partus sequitur ventrem – which means the children follow the condition of the mother. These were for the benefit of the masters who owned children female slaves as well. These rules effected the organization of the black community in itself. Many historical and sociological examinations assumed that the masters’ refusal of fatherhood was directly translated into a matriarchal family arrangement in blacks.

1965 Moynihan Report on Negro Family made a direct link between the contemporary social and economic problems of the black community to a putatively matriarchal family structure and explains the situation as: “In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male and, in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well.”

The thesis of the report basically tells that, the source of oppression was deeper than the racial discrimination that produced unemployment, shoddy housing, inadequate education, and substandard medical care. The root of oppression was described as “tangle of pathology” which was created by the absence of male authority among black people. The result presented as a solution was to bring male authority or in other words male supremacy into the black family and community.

In 1930s, the renowned Black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier invented the theory of “black family’s internal deterioration under slavery. His book, *The Negro Family* published in 1939 described the terrible impact of slavery on Black people

dramatically. What he could not reflect fully was their ability to resist its insinuations into their social life. Angela Y. Davis assumes that: “He also misinterpreted the spirit of independence and self-reliance Black women necessarily developed, and thus deplore the fact that ‘neither economic necessity nor tradition had instilled (in the Black woman) the spirit of subordination to masculine authority” (1981: 14).

Herbert Gutman, about ten year later published his book *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* in 1976 with a motivation caused by the appearance of Moynihan Report and his doubts about the validity of Frazier’s theory. His investigation showed thriving and developing family during slavery supposed in contrast to Frazier. What he described was the infamous black family but the one involving husband, wife, children and adoptive kin, and other relatives. Differently from Fogel and Engerman, who claimed that slavery left most families intact, Gutman suggested that many black families were disrupted by force. The sales of husbands, wives and children were a terrifying reality of American slavery. But he concludes that the binding of family through love and affection, cultural norms governing the family relations let the black family survive from the devastating forces of slavery.

Gutman demonstrates through the letters and documents such as birth records including the mother and the father that black community strictly obeyed the norms that they created to regulate their family arrangements. These norms differed from those governed the white family though. Marriage taboos, naming practices and sexual mores kept them different from their masters. Sexual intercourse was generally premarital. Even their environment was designed to turn them into subhuman labor units, black society members were successful to humanize the environment they lived in by keeping their family alive and enjoying as much autonomy as they could.

Gutman did not attempt to determine the real position of a slave woman in the black society and family. He went on his argument by encompassing the husband and wife alike but he missed the point about the main argument for the matriarchy. But he did not challenge the claim that there were two-parent families and the female dominated the male. In fact as he based his argument on the extension of the black

family in social life, he needed to explain the role of women definitely, at least their social status within the slave community.

Stanley Elkins defines the role of the mother as to loom far larger for slave child than did that of the father. She controlled those few activities – household care, preparation of food and rearing of children – that were left to the slave family. There were some scholar studies that supported his idea that slave family life elevated women and debased men. He comments that he naming of the black men as “boys” by their master due to their inability to execute their fatherly responsibilities.

It would not be incorrect to say that domestic life really had great importance in the social lives of slaves. That may be because it was the only space where they could truly experience being a human. So, black women could not be described in the same way for their domestic functions as white women because they were workers as their men. They could not be described as merely “housewives” as their white counterparts. But to say they dominated their men would be distortion slave life.

Angela Y. Davis in 1971, in her jail cell by using just a few sources she was allowed, she told the domestic functions of slave women. She has realized the importance of domestic labor during slavery and she commented that its centrality did not involve exclusively women but women and men in bondage. She underlines that men took the responsibility to execute important domestic responsibilities like gardening and hunting while women were doing sewing and cooking. This sexual division of domestic work has no hierarchy; men had no superior or inferior duty compared to women. The duties they performed were equally necessary. Even these were not strictly divided as men could stay inside and perform housework as women could go out to hunt.

The theme of the sexual equality was the most salient element of the slave life. The labor they performed for their own sake not for their master based on equality. Through the system they organized for themselves in their family and community life, they accomplished a magnificent feat. What was a negative equality

in terms of the jobs they performed for their masters turned out to be a positive quality; egalitarianism became the character of their social relations.

Whereas she gives a touch of male supremacy implying that masculinity and femininity are immutable concepts, she tells on the other side that: “What was usually been viewed as debilitating female supremacy was in fact a closer approximation to a healthy sexual equality than was possible for whites and perhaps even for postbellum blacks” (1981: 19).

Black women were as challenging as black men against the inhuman institution of slavery because it was their right if they were equally involved in domestic environment and oppression. They resisted to be sexually abused by white men, defended their family and were actively involved in work stoppages and revolts. Herbert Aptheker points out some of the samples from black resistance towards white supremacy in his work American *Negro Slave Revolts*. They poisoned their masters, tried other ways of sabotage, and joined maroon communities to flee northward for freedom (1969: 359). To accept her lot as a slave was an exception rather than a rule considering the violent repression overseers inflicted on women.

When Frederick Douglass reflected the merciless violence of slavery he encountered in his childhood, he recalled the memories of torture of many rebellious women figures. The closest example is his cousin who was beaten horribly as she unsuccessfully resisted an overseer’s sexual attack. Similarly Aunt Esther was terribly flogged because she defied her master to break off her relation with the man she loved. One of the most vivid images Frederick Douglass tells about a ruthless punishment involves a woman called Nellie who was whipped for the offense of “impudence”:

> There were times when she seemed likely to get the better of the brute, but finally overpowered her and succeeded in getting her arms tied to the tree towards which he had been dragging her. The victim was now at the mercy of his merciless lash. . . The cries of the now helpless woman, while undergoing the terrible infliction, were mingled with the hoarse curses of the overseer and the wild cries of her distracted children. When the poor woman was untied, her back was covered with blood. She was whipped, terribly whipped, but she was not

> subdued and continued to denounce the overseer and to pour upon him every vile epithet of which she could think. (2000: 59)

Numerous women like Harriet Tubman fled from slavery to the North. Many were successful even there were many more captured. These stories involved man dramatic lives involving the one of a young woman named Ann Wood who directed a wagonload of armed boys and girls who ran for freedom. After setting out on Christmas Eve in 1855, they engaged in a shoot-out with slave catchers. Amongst them, two were killed but all the indication about the result showed that the rest made their way to the north. Sarah Grimke, an abolitionist tells about a case of a woman who was not successful in her resistance as Ann Wood. Her repeated attempts to escape from her master's domination returned her as many floggings that "a finger could not be laid between the cuts". She seized every opportunity to break free from the plantation and as a result she was put in prison of a heavy iron collar. In case she managed to break the collar, her front tooth was pulled as an identification mark. Grimke tells her owners were known as a charitable and Christian family "this suffering slave, who was the seamstress of the family was continually in (their) presence, sitting in (the) chamber to sew, or engaging in . . . other household work with her lacerated and bleeding back, her mutilated mouth and heavy iron collar without, so far as appeared, exciting any feelings of compassion" (1998: 25)

Maroon communities are composed of fugitive slaves and their descendants. They can be found throughout the South as early as 1642 and as late as 1864. These communities were generally described as "havens for fugitives, served as bases for marauding expeditions against nearby plantations and at times supplied leadership to planned uprisings." In 1816, in Florida, a large community consisting of men, women and children of three hundred escaped slaves were discovered. Army launched a battle for ten days and claimed the lives of more than two hundred fifty of the inhabitants when they refused to surrender themselves. The women during the battle took an equal role with the men. In 1827, in Alabama during another confrontation, women again fought with men "like Spartans" according to the local newspapers.

Resistance were often more subtle than revolts, escapes and sabotage because it involved the necessity to read and write, plus carry this knowledge to the others. There some samples of volunteer figures among slaves like a slave woman in Natchez, Louisiana who ran a midnight school to teach reading and writing to her people between eleven and two, and eventually she graduated many hundreds. Undoubtedly a lot of them wrote their own passes and headed towards freedom. In Alex Haley's *Roots*, which is a fictionalized narrative of his ancestors' lives, Belle, Kunta Kinte's wife taught herself to read and write painfully. She read the newspapers of her master secretly and stayed informed about the political and social events; and she passed the information to the other slaves.

No discussion would be complete without giving the deserved importance to Harriet Tubman who performed as a conductor to help more than three hundred people on the Underground Railroad. Her earlier life was typically similar to that of most of the slave women. While working as field hand in Maryland, she discovered that her potential was the same as a man's. While working side by side, her father taught her to chop wood and split rails. He gave her lessons which she made use of during her nineteen trips she took back and forth to the South. She learnt how to walk silently through the woods, how to find food and medicine among the plants, roots and herbs from her father. The truth that she had never once suffered defeat is attributable to her father's instructions. Throughout the Civil War, she continued her opposition to slavery and in our time even she is the only woman in America ever to have led troops into battle.

Harriet Tubman judged in any standard, black or white, male or female, was surely an exceptional figure. She simply expressed her spirit of strength and perseverance in her own way. This is repeating the earlier comment about the black female status as equal as their male counterparts; they were equal in the oppression the suffered, they were socially equal in the slave community and they resisted slavery in equal terms and passion with their men.

This situation is one of the greatest ironies of the slave system; because women were subject to the most ruthless exploitation without any sex distinction, this created the ground work for them to assert their equality in social relations as

well as expressing it through their acts of resistance. This must be a terrible result for the slave owners as they wanted to break down this system by brutal repression the reserved for women. Also we need to remember that the punishment for women exceeded the limits of the men as besides being whipped and mutilated, they were also raped.

That institutionalized pattern of rape during slavery was not a simple expression of a white man's sexual urges. That would be a very slight explanation. Rape symbolizes a weapon of full domination, repression. The main goal is to extinguish slave women's will to resist, and secondly to demoralize their men. There has been an observation about rape during Vietnam War that can be applied to slavery as well: "In Vietnam, the U.S. Military Command made rape socially acceptable, in fact it was unwritten but a clear, policy. When GIs were encouraged to rape Vietnamese women and girls (and they were sometimes advised to search women with their penises) a weapon of mass political terrorism was forged". The reasoning behind was t the heroic contributions of Vietnamese women for their people's liberation and military retaliation specifically suited them rape. While the women could hardly endure the violence inflicted on men, they were the victims of sexist military force governed by the principle that war was exclusively men's affair. A GI tells about a memory of those times: "I saw one case where a woman was shot by a sniper, one of our snipers. When we got up to her she was asking for water. And the lieutenant said to kill her. So he ripped off her clothes, they stabbed her in both breasts; they spread her eagle and shoved an E tool (entrenching) up her vagina. And then they took that out a tree limb and then she was shot."

Just like the way that rape was used as an institutionalized agent of aggression carried out against the Vietnamese people, slave owners put rape into their relation with their black female slaves as a terroristic attack. During the male supremacist period, femininity meant passivity, acquiescence and weakness, so black women had little chance to resist or use their own strength. Almost all the slave narratives of the nineteenth century include slave women's sexual assault by their master and overseers.

Inspite of the reality that slave women were exposed to sexual coercion and rape, the issue has been glossed over in the traditional literature about slavery. Even, in some documents it is shown as if slave women enjoyed the feeling of being found sexually attractive for the white men. So the intercourse between them was not an exploitation but "miscegenation". Genovese in his book *Roll, Jordan, Roll* says that "Many white men who began by taking a slave girl in an act of sexual exploitation ended by loving her and the children she bore. The tragedy of miscegenation lay not in its collapse into lust and sexual exploitation, but in the terrible pressure to deny the delight, affection and love that often grew from tawdry beginnings" (2006: 418). In other words he supports the idea that the problem of rape pales in relation to the taboos around the miscegenation.

His overall idea depends on the concept of paternalism. He argues that slaves accept the paternalistic posture of their masters in the system they belong to and masters are forced to acknowledge slaves' claims to humanity. But in the eyes of masters slaves are childlike. In that sense, Genovese believes he finds the source of humanity in miscegenation. But he misses a point on the side of the slave women; there could not be delight, love and affection for them because white men due to their economical and social superiority had unlimited access on Black female body. They were oppressors or agents of domination in their approach to women body. Gayl Jones writes about the attempts of women for many generations to preserve the evidence sexual crimes committed during slavery on female slaves in her novel *Corregidora*.

White women who were included in the abolitionist movement were especially urged to stand against the sexual assaults on Black women. Activists in the female anti-slavery societies associated the brutal rape stories of black women on themselves to attract the attention of white women to defend their sisters and the inhuman treatment of white males. Even they made undeniable contributions to anti-slavery campaign; from time to time they could not understand the complexity of slave women's condition. Even they were females as well, their experience during slavery, hard work equal to their men, equal roles in family, resistance, flogging, rape, had them develop certain characteristics that separated them from most white women.

Supporting all those ideas, Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin including a vast number people, and more women than any other works written before, is a good example for the anti-slavery cause. Stowe was even described as the woman who started Civil War by Abraham Lincoln once. Even it had an enormous influence; some writers believe it uttered distortion of slave life. Its central female figure being a travesty of the Black women, a naïve transposition of the mother figure was valued by the cultural propaganda of the period. Eliza is incarnated as a white mother figure in black face or as she was a "quadroon", in "just-a-little-less-than-white-face".

Maybe what she aimed here is to let her white readers to see themselves in Eliza. She would be appreciated for her Christian morality, unfaltering maternal instincts, her gentleness and fragility as they were the qualities that white women were taught to grow in themselves. Her whiteness allows her to the epitome of motherhood and similarly her husband who has a dominant white ancestry comes closer to become a man according to the orthodox male supremacist sense. George is ambitious, intelligent, literate and most importantly he hates slavery with a great passion unlike domestic, acquiescent, childlike Uncle Tom. When George decides to flee to Canada, his wife Eliza is frightened by his great hatred towards slavery. Eliza is generally oblivious to the injustices of the system they live in. her feminine submissiveness made her accept the fate of being a slave and live under the command of her kind master and mistress. When her maternal status is in danger she stands up to fight. She gains a surge of maternal power when she learns that her son is going to be sold away and discovers her strength just like the mother who learns she can lift a car if her child is trapped underneath. The financial troubles her kind master lives forces him for sale of Uncle Tom and Eliza's son Harry despite her maternal pleas of his wife. Eliza instinctively grabs Harry and runs away that is describes as "stronger than all was maternal love, wrought into paroxysm of frenzy by the near approaches of a fearful danger." (1856: 71). That is her mother-courage which makes her do it.

When she reaches a river melting ice impossible to pass, the slave catcher hot on her heels, she spirits Harry across:

> . . . nerved with strength such as God only gives to the desperate . . . (S)he vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore and on to the raft of ice beyond. . . . With wild cries and desperate energy she leaped to another and still another cake; -stumbling, -leaping, -slipping, -springing upwards again! Her shoes are gone, - her stockings cut from her feet, - while blood marked every step; but she saw nothing, felt nothing, till dimly, as in a dream, she saw the Ohio side, and a man helping her up the bank. (1856: 86)

Eliza's melodramatic feat in little concern in fact, because it was considered that God donated white Christian mothers with superhuman abilities. As Eliza accepted the nineteenth century mother worship, Stowe fails to show the black women's resistance to slavery in her act. Countless similar stories of heroism by black mothers are documented. These women defended their children against slavery with their strong hatred for it. Their source of strength was not only their maternal instincts but their experiences as slaves. Some, as Margaret Garner did, went so far as to kill their children rather than see their growing under the inhuman conditions of slavocracy. Eliza is unconcerned about the inhumanity of the system in complete. If she had not experienced the sale of her son, she would probably have lived quite happily under the conditions she was born into.

The Elizas even if they really existed, they were certainly not common in the great majority of the black women. They did not, in any case, represent the real experiences of those who toiled under the lash for their masters, worked under hard conditions and protected their families, struggled against slavery, beaten, raped but never subdued. Davis concludes her support for the case of black women as: "It was those women who passed on to their nominally free female descendants a legacy of hard work, perseverance and self reliance, a legacy of tenacity, resistance and insistence on sexual equality – in short, a legacy spelling out standards for a new womanhood." (1981: 29)

4.2. HARRIET JACOBS; A SLAVE MOTHER

Harriet Jacobs as a female slave encounters different kinds of injustices and tortures of slavery. First she is open to be sexually abused because of the white male

supremacy of the system. Very likely to any other slaveholders of the time, Dr. Flint did his best to have Harriet bodily. He wanted make use of his strength both as a slave master and a male. As a woman that would be the most embarrassing and humiliating event that she could live. Even she was thought to be a creature without the right to live according to her own feelings even to have feelings and act as an object to the will of her master Jacobs took some actions against the injustice by Dr. Flint and to avoid relentless fate.

First of all, she starts a relation with another white man Mr. Sands and she knows what she did and did it with deliberate calculation. She even goes one step forward to bear two children for that man. She questions herself by asking: “Why does the slave ever love? Why allow the tendrils of the heart to twine around objects which may at any moment be wrenched away by the hand of violence?” (58) So she already knew that love was impossible under the circumstances of slavery and “damned system of slavery” would not let her live love forever. She uses her action of falling in love and having a sexual relation as a confession and begs for the understanding of the reader. It may seem immoral under normal conditions but she uses it as a tool of escape from a reluctant relation of her master: “This love-dream had been my support through many trails; and I could not bear to run the risk of having it suddenly dissipated.” (60)

It was not in her own hand even to decide the person to love. As a female narrator Jacobs feels and tells the events more sensitively that she includes a lot of emotion and talks about emotion. She looks for the answer to her question when she want to marry the man of her own choice; “Don’t you suppose, sir, that a slave can have some preferences about marrying?” (61)

In America and many other capitalist countries, rape laws were framed to protect the man of the upper classes. What would happen to the working class women was of little concern to the courts. As a result, just a few white men were prosecuted for the sexual violence they have inflicted upon the black women. Even the innocent who seek relief from policemen and judges were offered gas chambers and lifer’s cells. They could find little sympathy from these men in uniforms. The policemen assaulted Black women who suffered their second rape sometimes. In her

book *Women, Race and Class* in the section "Rape, Racism and the Myth of the Black Rapist" Davis tell a story about the black women that:

> Even at the strongest time of civil rights movement in Birmingham, young activists often stated that nothing could protect Black women from being raped by Birmingham police. As recently as December, 1974, in Chicago, 17-year old Black woman reported that she was gang-raped by 10 policemen. Some of the men were suspended, but ultimately, the whole thing was swept under the rug. (1981: 173)

During the early stages of the anti-rape movement, some feminists made serious analysis of special conditions surrounding the black women as rape victims. Gerda Lerner, one of the few white women who wrote on the subject of rape during early 1970s, examined the combination of racism and sexism on Black women. She used the case of Joann Little as an illustration of her point. Little was brought on trial on murder charges in the summer of 1975 as she was accused of killing a white guard in North Carolina jail where she was the only female inmate. When she was making her self defense, she told how she was raped by the guard and how she killed him to defend herself with ice pick he used to threaten her. Throughout the country, she got the support of many individuals and organizations in the black community and within young women's movement. As a result she was acquitted and this was an important victory won by this massive campaign. After she got her freedom, she organized many moving appeals on behalf of a black man named Delbert Tibbs who was accused of raping a white woman and was waiting for his execution in Florida.

Many black woman supported the cause of Tibb's but only a few white women dared to agitate for the freedom of this black man who had been the victim of Southern racism. But those who did not enter anti-rape activities did not mean they were against it. Pioneering black club women before the end of the nineteenth century conducted public protests against sexual abuse. This protest is a full reflection of threat of sexual violence that black women have encountered for eighty years and their struggle against rape. They clearly stood against the white men who found right of access to black women's body because of their economic power.

Slavery consisted of sexual abuse as much as whip and lash. Rape and sexual coercion was a kind of social relation between a slave and a master. In other words

the right declared by the slave masters on the bodies of their female slaves was expressed through sexual relation by force. This was the result of the ruthless economic domination as a hallmark of slavery.

The luckiest fact in Linda's life is may the reality that Dr. Flint does not rape her. He actually had the opportunity to do so but he did not. He finds that right in himself and tells it with his words: "Do you know that I have a right to do as I like with you, -- that I can kill you, if I please?" (162). But this is not what Dr. Flint is really looking for. He wants to have a full domination over Linda, both on her body and soul. Raping, a reluctant force of sex, would mean domination over her body using his man power for a few moment; later he would lose her again. This is not a full domination; he wants her body and soul with her consent because he simply does not demand her body but he want to "legitimate" his domination over her as well. But Linda resists giving herself; "You have tried to kill me, and I wish you had; but you have no right to do as you like with me" (62).

The sexual abuse of slavery was for three generation of woman in Linda's family. Her maternal great grandmother, grandmother and herself were teased by a white man by rape or a personal defense. Linda's aunts and uncles had light skins, or they were mulattos, creating the idea that they probably had a white father. Even her uncle Benjamin was "nearly white".

Paternity carries an important role in the narration of Jacobs to establish the genealogical root as she says: "What tangled skeins are the genealogies of slavery!" (121). Slaveholders here could use African American women and sell their children born from them as easily as they do for their mothers. This shows that there is an indissoluble bar of difference between the races black and white. But this bar is not against the erotic desire in the antebellum concepts of sexuality. The matter is not only the issue of sex or race but what creates difference in reality is the issue of "authority". The love story between a slave owner's daughter and a slave is an evidence for that as she eventually gives him the free papers. According to her observation, she is aware that "the inmates of patriarchal household, including herself, are subject to their father's authority in all things" (80).

The chapter titled “Loophole of Retreat” has shown that when the daughters who exercise the same authority as their father may not overthrow the father, but their repetition of the father’s actions is shameful and disruptive. When Linda is captured in a domestic space she uses a tool of literacy to unsettle Dr. Flint. Yellin and Smith sees this scene in the attic as “madwoman in the attic” trope. She makes Dr. Flint impotent as a master “whose head was bowed down in shame” (1991: 80) this samples the fear of anti-slavery politicians that slave power would endanger their own liberties.

4.2.1. STANDING AGAINST SLAVERY

Her life in the attic is like “a living grave” (223) which puts more emphasis on the description of slavery. Smith describes it: “Yet by the very act of doubling her condition, Jacobs converts that tomb into a womb.” This means she is departed with all her kin even not in reality, she has died out of slavery but stays in the system. This is a kind of suspension between being or not being. This silent grave gives her a voice to cry for liberation, though. This condition even painful, gives her and her children to turn into free beings. This is how Uncle Benjamin and other male figures reached independence through suffering. But she succeeds it without fisticuffs.

Paternal authority gives its sense by the way it locates women in life. Supposedly, the women could not have three things; legal power, willfulness and erotic desire. If we are to consider slavery as curse put both on blacks and white, there is potency that none had existed. In the story of the white slave owner’s daughter and her black lover, the authority of freedom changes hands and the father does not represent freedom anymore. Brent does not want to go on with the inherent paternal privilege and this clear when she says: “I loved my father, but it mortified me to be obliged to bestow his name on my children” (80). This is repeated through the image of the mistress of his father who clasped a gold chain around her daughter’s neck and she reacted: “I thanked her for this kindness; I did not like the emblem. I wanted no chain to be fastened on my daughter, not even if its links were of gold” (121). She connect the name of the father to the material values and self-sustaining fictions of master no matter that her the name of the father has been handed down through the patriarchal system of slavery.

Davies explains the black mother figure as below:

> The historical construction of the Black woman as the "great mother", negatively embedded in the "mammy" figure of Euro-American imagination, is confronted with practical realities of mothering in recent Black women's writing. As consumers of hegemonic popular and literary culture, we are recipients of these contradictory narratives of motherhood. But now, this selflessness off the "mammy" is positioned against or along with a series of deliberate self-constructions by Black women. Motherhood and/or mothering thus become central and defining tropes in black female reconstruction. A conflicting set of possibilities have to be negotiated in reading African-American motherhood and this is the source of beautiful-ugliness… (1999: 135)

At a time, after Uncle Benjamin gains his liberty, he meets his brother Philip (Mark Ramsey) by chance in New York. During their meeting he utters: "I part with all my kind-drod" (42). Later Linda remarks in sorrow that it was proved, they had never heard from him again. Benjamin disappears from the family as if he had been sold to a Georgia trader. Most importantly Benjamin is lost to his mother, Aunt Martha or in her real name Molly Horniblow. This last separation tells a lot about the mother-and-child relation in abolitionist rhetoric and antebellum narrative in general. Here Jacobs prefers not to compare Benjamin's new-found liberty in the North to his slavery in the South but she points out how similar they are structurally. Even she is happy for her uncle that he could escape from being white man's property, she still insists that he is still a loser no matter he gains freedom because he proves the idea of slavocracy that a slave had no real cognizance of a family. All those kin ties for this case the words like uncle, husband, brother, father and son and affective terms upon which "white identity and moral worth" rendered invalid and materially insubstantial. If Linda would go, she would have to part from her kin as well. Her ambivalence about freedom and its relation to the loss and death is clear again when her brother William escapes:

> If you had seen the tears, and heard the sobs, you would have thought the messenger had brought tidings of death instead of freedom. Poor old grandmother felt that she should never see her darling boy again. And I was selfish. I thought more of what I had lost, than of what my brother had gained. A new anxiety began to trouble me. Mr. Sands had expended a good deal of money, and would naturally feel irritated

> by the loss he had incurred. I greatly feared this might injure the prospects of my children, who were now becoming valuable property. I longed to have their emancipation made certain. The more so; because their master and father was now married. I was too familiar with slavery not to know that promises made slaves, though with kind intentions, and sincere at the time, depend upon many contingencies for their fulfillment. (202-203)

There is a strange relation between Dr. Flint and Linda as well. She reports that in one of the letters he wrote to persuade her to return, he wrote that the heart tie between as master and hiss servant was the same that between a mother and her child. In his further declarations he repeatedly refers his desire for Linda in familial model: “I consider you as yet a child” (128). This creates the ideas of incest and pedophilia. Even Jacobs could flee from slavery she could not flee from motherhood.

For Linda, her children are not as said by Carby the fruits of her shame but her link to life. Much of her narrative is based on the idea of “freedom or death” and through that process she tries to make black motherhood more valuable than white purity. Her separation from her children as a specification of a classic slave narrative is not a classical definition for true motherhood, though. When she makes a decision between her role as a mother and choice of freedom Aunt Martha warns him in these words: “Nobody respects a mother who forsakes her children; and if you leave them, you will never have a happy moment . . . and your suffering would be dreadful. Remember poor Benjamin” (139). This reminds Brent that she gives damage to her reputation as she has done before by sacrificing her virtue before and loses the respect of her children for her. These two things are two different but two important issues. She prefers to leave her children voluntarily which shows a very shaky narrative ground. Here she makes a stress on anti-slavery rhetoric and the immortality of slavery’s separation of mother and children.

4.3. A WOMAN STANDING AGAINST THE NORMS OF WHITE RULING CLASS

The injunction Aunt Martha makes reminds her Uncle Benjamin. His memory is more painful than full of liberation and loss. But there is a difference in their social

roles as Brent is already a mother but Uncle Benjamin has no children and does not know how it feels to be a father. He is remembered by the day he was captured, but Linda can be forgotten if she cannot make her story end with self-liberation that would be worth remembering. She makes a remark about her separation from her children for the sake of freedom when she tells she does not want to leave her children especially her daughter to the Free North "without a mother's love to shelter her from the storms of life; almost without memory of a mother! I had a great desire that she should look upon me, before she went, that she might take my image with her in her memory" (210). With this remark, she accepts Aunt Martha's morality. In freedom, former slaves like Linda and her daughter might have to obey the fate determined by the predominant culture and its traditions described for women, which can even be worse than death. Though, Brent has learnt from her experiences that slavery is a fate worse than death. Due to that reason, escape is a risk worth taking not just for men like her uncle but herself and her daughter as well.

But her story follows a different path and it becomes a narrative in which liberty does not require or end up with death. So her desertion becomes a means of devotion. This is again a kind of return to her assertion supporting Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death". She does not want to discredit female experience and maternity while validating the choice made by Uncle Benjamin. Brent is not a white man nor does she have no interest in being one as she illustrates the image of revulsion associated with white man through Dr. Flint and Mr. Sands. Further, she is not a male at all.

Yellin and Carby points out that the passive white heroine of domestic ideology demanded the women's death just like the Patrick Henry model demanded death for the male who could not achieve liberty. This gender role required some frailties that she could not like. On the contrary Aunt Martha succeeds to endure slavery while even nurturing the family tree. She gains her freedom without breaking ties with all her kin. She has her own house, she has the economy to feed and shelter her children and grandchildren, and she makes comment about the wrong doings of white men just as she reminds Dr. Flint that he will go to hell. He may have the potential superiority to sell her grandchildren given by the patriarchal power, but if

we think in terms of his legal immunity from the consequences of his cruelty, she is not at least at his mercy as much as her granddaughter.

By making use of alterations of classic narratives whether told as the story of a heroic slave or a tragic heroine, these are specifically designed to delineating and revising the role of a black mother. Indeed, she does not speak only to women but she speaks to African-American men if not all men as well. Uncle Benjamin reaches freedom though her saying upon his decision to escape: “Go, and break your mother’s heart!” (34) Her words do not make a great effect in his will to escape, but it gives an emotional effect on the scene of his heroic escape. Then, she talks about another story of a slave, Philip, who does not achieve to be a “heroic slave” to become free but comes back to home. He comes to bondage voluntarily but his return includes a return to his family and mother. He tells Benjamin that: “It would kill their mother if he deserted her in her trouble. She had pledged her house, and with difficulty, had raised money to buy him” (41). It was not for Benjamin to let his mother buy his freedom and Brent approved it as well: “The more my mind had become enlightened, the more difficult it was for me to consider myself an article of property” (299).

We still feel how she validates Philip's story:

> The brave old woman still toiled on, hoping to rescue some of her other children. After a while she succeeded in buying Philip. She paid eight hundred dollars and came home with the precious document that secured his freedom. The happy mother and son sat together by the old hearthstone that night, telling how proud they were of each other, and how they would prove to the world that they could take care of themselves, as they had long taken care of others. We all concluded by saying “he that is willing to be a slave, let him be a slave.” (43)

What brings Benjamin to a heroic level is his self determination. But Uncle Philip is somehow different because he may be described as more passive and even feminine. Philip and Martha constitute a different and an alternative definition of identity which relies on dependence and relation. In their connection, taking care of oneself mean taking care of the others. As result, pride and independence comes from the collectivity “we all”. This idea awakens a new alternative version of national identity.

Uncle Philip is not figure of self-reliance in that sense. Jacobs questions the meaning of self reliance through the abandonment of mother and brother. Douglass's famous statement tells that: "You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was a made a man". If being a freeman is denying family ties, his point explains that these are not complete metaphoric opposites. They become "two sides of the coin of a patriarchially determined identity" (Smith, 1994: 151). Smith continues to explain the situation as:

> And if the most obvious lack in such a coin can be characterized as the absence of the African-American woman, what Jacobs makes clear is that Uncle Benjamin loses, too. The narrative of heroic manhood as a tale worth telling, that stuff which Hawthorn extolled in 1862 as the "pristine value" upon which true poetry "broods", becomes a debased fiction. Only in narratives that stress mutuality, where the many can speak in the same voice without a "we" to cannibalize the one, will freedom ring clear. (1994: 151)

When Benjamin was a Boston laborer he gains new experiences that are the demonstrations of the new logic: "Some of the apprentices were Americans, others American-born Irish, and it was offensive to have a 'nigger' among them, after they had been told that he was a 'nigger'. This passage tells about the northern prejudice against the colored. It also shows how the word 'nigger' is offensive and produces insult. So the relations of favor turn out to be the opposite. In fact Benjamin "was liked by the master and was a favorite with his fellow apprentices" until "this at once transferred him into a different being" (279).

Similarly, we had a passage about the definition of the racial insult which was less palpable before. When Brent was hiding from her master, her friend Betty who helped her pronounced that "anathemas over Dr. Flint and all his tribe, every now and then saying, with a chuckling laugh 'Dis nigger's too cute for 'em" (158). Betty shows an evidence of cleverness and uses the word "nigger" out of its ordinary use. In Benjamin's situation, it is taken further to show that the insult of the word "nigger" is based on the contradictions. That is because Benjamin could pass for a man who had no connection with an African blood tie. So his being a man is not regarded by his history and ancestry but by inconsistent seeing of his master and his friends who had even considered him as favorite before.

So the shame put on the word “nigger” becomes meaningless in the cultural system of adjudication if Benjamin, who is black in blood, can be judged as white so easily. Jacobs uses this word as boomerang to bring the source of insult into its own home. According to nineteenth century northern conceptions family values were very significant for the individual merit. So that would not be coherent for a man to deny his family for the sake of being free. If Benjamin denied his being a nigger he would accept the cultural codes of the whites to deny his family and ancestry. That would mean to lose his respect to his mother, father and all African roots. His denial of family, including the female mother figures like Linda, would be to betray these so high valued virtues of American society. Especially refusing the maternity by refusing to be identified as a nigger would support the biggest horror of the southern slavery, the separation of the mother and the child.

Benjamin is so aware that his self-worth relies on his identification with a heritage that would be disparaged by the others. Through his experiences he learns that his identification with his mother cannot be a simple commodity relation as Brent says her “worth is not measurable two-dimensionally in the terms that slaveholders set down – that is by dollars and cents.” (13). Benjamin know well that his worth as an apprentice cannot be reduced to a commodity relation by a word of which meaning is subject to the individual interpretation. He chooses not to deny his being a nigger despite the insults of “the Americans and American-born Irish”. Both his refusal and the repeated terms of “American” and “nigger” shows high family loyalty but highlights the indissoluble linkage between private family and national identity.

Their lives help Jacobs to show that justice, one of the basics of the national pride, depend on refusal of the family connections. So this refusal will be effective on the political ties and their legal consequences. This inconsistent logic in the system of morality and real life in Americans is re-sampling to show how slaveholding has made for moral, cultural and political bankruptcies. Benjamin’s story is the “emblem of mutuality that defines a way round those losses” as Smith sees it. He prefers tenderness for his mother and dependency on his roots rather than assimilation, mutation and false self-reliance.

We see that Jacobs uses the word “master” for the employer of Benjamin in Boston. This is literally a correct use as the skilled-trade apprenticeship system in the Free States called employers “masters”. But his naming in Jacobs's text illustrates the position of Benjamin as freeman; that is the northern version of his southern condition. Over the narrative, we understand how derogatory the word master is in association with Dr. Flint with his public image and private life. Again the word is used with a negative meaning. Southern hierarchal deficiencies are imbricated in the language of north work ethic. The meaning behind the words master and nigger stay the same, Jacobs catch up traditional system continuity. So allows a northern master to see himself so similar to a southern slaveholder: “any man who was originally a Yankee peddler could easily become a slaveholder.” (296)

Jacobs’s narrative shows the need for a new value system to organize the meanings. If validating white norms is to take an insult which has no base, there is no favor in being white at all or as in the word of Smith: “If it takes death to make freedom ring, then freedom has a tinny sound.” Here, the logic is to assert how the key elements of potential meanings are re-written through the “deterministic narrative of mastery” (1994: 154). Smith goes on as: “One might say here that Jacobs’s logic, unlike the cry ‘give me liberty or give me death’, does not see change as suicidally oriented . . . Prefabricated plot lines that have cut off ‘American-born’ Benjamin will map – incommensurate with America’s own utopian, idealistic, sense of itself as inclusive – should stand, then *belonging* to America will mean just that: citizens will be slaves to a system of government that views them as dead things” (1994: 155).

When Uncle Philip is dead and his death is released in the newspaper, he is described as “a good man and a useful citizen”, to which Brent react in the words: “So they called a colored man a citizen! Strange words to be uttered in that region!” (302).

Brent describes her situation in the country by comparing the other lives: “Oppressed Poles and Hungarians could find a safe refuge in that, but there I sat, an oppressed American, not daring to show my face” (298). Theodore Parker said

America had “one series of literary productions that could be written by none but Americans and only here – I mean the Lives the Fugitive Slaves”, and she echoes him when she says to Dr. Flint: “I am a patriot, a lover of my country, and I do this as an act of justice to the laws” (270).

4.3.1. ESCAPE FROM SLAVERY AND LIFE AS A FREE EX-SLAVE

Jacobs’s concept of liberty is generally released in masculinized presentations, though. She sometimes makes a great equation between liberty and masculinity as in the graveyard scene. She takes Patrick Henry’s motto for her own and follows her Uncle Benjamin’s course. She shows the images of heroic images of traditional Americanized male courage as below:

> The graveyard was in the woods, and twilight was coming on . . . A black stump, at the head of my mother’s grave, was all that remained of a tree my father had planted. His grave was marked by a small wooden bearing his name, the letters of which were nearly obliterated. I knelt down and kissed them and poured forth a prayer to God for guidance and support in the perilous step I was about to take. As I passed the wreck of the old meeting house where before Nat Turner’s time the slaves had been allowed to meet for worship, I seemed to hear my father’s voice come from it bidding me not to tarry till I reached freedom or the grave. (138)

We heard her mother’s voice speaking to her at this same spot before but now, at the moment of decision to escape, only the voice of her father is heard. Now the dead mother is mute. Additionally, the voice does not come from the grave as we expect, but from the house of God, from a sacred meeting hall desecrated by slaveholders out of their fear of rebellion. Smith analysis the scene as:

> Neatly conflating political freedom and rebellion (Nat Turner and Patrick Henry), morality (the wrecked but sacred meeting hall), and the written word (her father’s grave marker) with paternal sanction (her father’s voice crying “liberty or death”), Jacobs multiply authorizes a fight for freedom in the “Name of the father” and thus validates a heroic course of action using traditionally paternal emblems that have very specific references to a rebellious African-American context. (1994: 144)

She goes on questioning the passage as:

> Yet even this passage upholds the validity of an ennobled, masculinized fight-and-flight bid for liberty or death, it also scrutinizes the logic that has produced such a pattern. Why does the passage mention Brent's dead mother? Why the comment that the tree her father planted to mark her slave mother's grave had become nothing but a black stump? Might this dead tree be a submerged reference to those (father-lacking) "genealogical trees [that] do not flourish in slavery" (MB/MF, 28) of which Frederick Douglass wrote in 1854? (1994: 144)

We can translate the black stump as eventual survival of African American family trees will be possible by remembering both mother's and father's narratives. In fact this moment represents two halves: give me liberty and give me death. This dichotomous society and gender roles associate each with either sex; liberty with masculinity and death with femininity. The father was actually dead but Jacobs represents even his death as heroic and the voice carries a sacred, rebellious, and liberatory meaning. On the contrary the mother is silenced and her grave has a blasted and unfertile symbol. Through the images drawn here she questions the value of liberty that is muted and denies the feminine. She defends that if the civilization based on "genealogical paternity" as Douglass writes vital cannot be fertile if this is rooted in a feminized and silenced grave.

This scene is translated in different ways as well just like by Hazel Carby. He calls this scene as "a moment of transition from death as preferable to slavery, to the stark polarity of freedom or death". He continues: "The narrative disrupts conventional expectations of the attributes of a heroine . . . by transforming and transcending the central paradigm of death versus virtue. Indeed, women ought not to be judged by standards of morality the denial of which is a constituting factor of enslavement" (1987: 59).

Linda did not expect the jail she was put into without a crime but she was born into. It was just an ill luck that she had to live onto but she had another alternative; not to welcome what life has given her. The first resistance was against the sexual oppression by Dr. Flint. She gains a kind of sexual freedom by resisting the temptations of Dr. Flint and having a relation with a man of her own choice.

Secondly she gives up being a slave and finds a refuge under her grandmother's house; in the garret which she calls "a dismal hole… only nine feet long and seven wide" (172). Her escape from sexual harassment is over her physical discomfort and she makes a choice of her real happiness by expecting a bodily torture of her own choice instead of a deceptive freedom as a mistress of Dr. Flint.

> This continued darkness was oppressive. It seemed horrible to sit or lie in a cramped position day after day, without one gleam of light. Et I would have chosen this, rather than my lot as a slave, though white people considered I an easy one; and it was so compared with the fate of others. I was never cruelly over-worked; I was never lacerated with the whip from head to foot… On the contrary, I had always been kindly treated, and tenderly cared for, until I came into the hands of Dr. Flint. I had never wished for freedom till then… (174)

When Jacobs tries to show the potency of a woman, she uses some masculinized effects. Her characters even sometimes perform manly actions just like the grandmother: "My grandmother was a woman of a high spirit . . . I had been told that she once chased a white gentleman with a loaded pistol, because he insulted one of her daughters" (47). This does not symbolize a similar action to take for the sake of liberty as Linda wants to succeed but it is still a model of courage. This would be normal for a sentimental father to protect the name of her daughter but his time this is a female who takes action. This is an alternative discourse of black womanhood.

> MR. DOUGLASS: When women, because they are women, are haunted down through . . . New York and New Orleans, . . . when their children are torn from their arms, . . . then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot. . .
> A VOICE: Is that not all true about black women?
> MR. DOUGLASS: Yes, yes, yes; it is true of the black women, but not because she is a woman but because she is black. (Meltzer, 1987: 23)

This conversation occurred during the bitter suffrage debates within abolitionist-feminist circles. The abstract of New England ideals that Frederick Douglass adapted, supported his own right to freedom but they would wither in the face of gendered political expediencies and lived "animosities" separating Americans. At the Equal Rights Convention in 1869, he advocated support of the fifteenth amendment despite its lack of provision for women.

The story of Linda Brent is not "the classic story of the triumph of the individual will more a story of a triumphant self-in-relation". Though, she uses a language that is both inside and outside that classic language of individuality. On one hand she shows the validity of Douglass's *Narrative*, on the other hand she shows the importance of gender roles in the politics for national identity and citizenship. We witness how she is shaped in the masculine context of her uncles and son. She presents them but does not allow them to disavow hers. This is like Douglass's approach; to downplay the importance of African-American women's experience just for the sake of expediency.

Linda's achievement of freedom depends upon one's understanding for freedom. She was free of the south slave owner abuse of labor, Dr. Flint's sexual harassment and the pressure of being born into a fan of slavery society. Nevertheless how would the freedom be if it is not in the usual way? She was still longing for a home of herself which is the dream of her life: "The dream of my life is not yet realized. I do not sit with my children in a home of my own. I still long for a hearthstone of my own, however humble…" (302). Maybe a home of her own would give her a "refuge". Because as person whose freedom is *bought* by someone else she still needed to serve a white northerner to lead a life. A shelter with a humble hearthstone represents an escape from social conventions and relations, as well.

During her life of struggles, Jacobs has been a sample of resistance for the pre-destined black life, i.e. pre-destined black woman life. "Her story end with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage" (302). In *Narrative Contracts and Emancipatory Readers: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* Carla Kaplan declares;

> By opposing freedom and marriage she undermines the nineteenth century ideology of marriage as woman's "sacred absolute", the means of her personal fulfillment and the proper end of her life. By suggesting, moreover, that freedom does not have the "usual" meaning for black slave women that it has for free white women she challenges us to think about freedom and agency as specific and contextual, not as abstract and universal, to think about freedom, as she puts it, "not in the usual way". (1993: 93)

The anti-slavery system of North in fact did not work for Jacobs to organize an unseperated life because the facts excluded her like many other blacks from its equalizing, emancipator ideals. In *Incidents,* Jacobs suggests that one cannot take the full advantage of her freedom if not born as a white male. Trading one's life is so embarrassing and degrading that she described her feelings about slave commerce in these words;

> In a few days one came from Mrs. Bruce, informing me that my new master was still searching for me, and that she intended to put an end to this persecution by buying my freedom. I felt grateful for the kindness that prompted this offer, but the idea was not so pleasant to me as might have been expected. The more my mind had become enlightened, the more difficult it was for me to consider myself an article of property; and to pay money to those who had so grievously oppressed me seemed like taking from my sufferings the glory of triumph. I wrote to Mrs. Bruce, thanking her, but saying that being sold from one owner to anther seemed too much like slavery… (299)

Still longing for a house of her own, she was not considered a full citizen of America of America donated with her right to contract, exchange, and trade or own. These are humanistic rights that every person is born into and social relations and practices constitutive of civil society but Harriet Jacobs is derived from hers. Inevitably she feels the pain of exclusion from her rights just because of her skin color. This is even more critical if the person who lives it is a female with two children but without an economical freedom and being an ex-slave. She was already aware of the reality that "according to Southern laws, a slave, being property, can hold no property" (13) even it is a person's unquestionable and unalienable rights as declared in the Declaration of Independence: "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". Ownership makes individuals free and equal. Each individual is both naturally complete in himself and the owner of property is his own person. So a home of her own would mean the truest succession of freedom through owning possessions and 'possessive individualism'.

CONCLUSION

Smith Sidone summarizes that the source of autobiography is the source of life itself and it is the memories lived in life that leads a person the need to utter his/her feelings about what is lived: " The writer of autobiography depends on access to memory to tell a retrospective narrative of the past and to situate the present within that experiential history. Memory is thus both source and authenticator of autobiographical acts" (2001: 16).

As an autobiographical source of writing slave narratives are the memories of those who lived under the system of slavocracy; most of the time pain giving, sympathy arousing stories. In this thesis, the enslavement of the Africans under the system of slavocracy was analyzed in detail to reveal the accuracy of historical truths presented in the narratives written by ex-slaves. These slave narratives are important not only in the sense that they give the chance to the reader to read autobiographies full of struggles of survival but also in the sense that they illuminate the history of a nation. These works of slave narratives evoked a consciousness about the injustices towards a class of people and this resulted with many historically important events. The object of analyzing Harriet Jacobs's slave narrative in detail has been the fact that Jacobs is the most important example of slave narratives written by slave women. Her portrayals of the sufferings of female slaves depict not only the evils of slavery but also demonstrate the double-burden on slave women due to their vulnerability of and helplessness against sexual and physical abuse.

As this discussion attempted to exemplify, slave narratives provide the first hand experiences of slaves. They are very important to reveal the truth about the injustice, inhumanity and the bitter truths embedded in slavery. These narrations are important tools to create a dialogue between blacks and whites. In addition, they initiated open discussions for freedom and gave momentum as well as receiving support from abolitionists. Most whites, especially Northerners, were not aware of the sufferings caused +by white, Christian, supremacist masters over African Americans and through those narrations they realized the facts.

Through a discussion of the experiences in daily life, the experiences of slaves were shown to differ according to gender roles. Female slave narrators indicated that sex was a determining factor for the fate of a slave even the masters did not differentiate the tasks between males and females. On the plantation and on the fields, women very commonly ended up working with their male counterparts. Most of the females performed hunting and trapping, and worked as effectively as men on harvesting. The tasks of women required strength and endurance as well, and they had to put great effort for their survival. Nevertheless, despite the imposed equality on matters of labor that required physical effort, a black woman's place in the social structure of slavery was very different than that of men. Female slaves were responsible to perform domestic duties, in charge of keeping the unity of the black family, and feeding the members of the family to keep them healthy. Due to their heavy responsibilities towards the family, female slaves were the figures of authority in the domestic sphere, which stands in direct contrast to their sexual and physical exploitation outside their communal life. Just like Aunt Martha when there was an air of melancholy or a situation of insecurity, they were the guidance and comfort, shelter and the protector. When they lived happy things, they were the combining body to bring them all to share the joy (Sharpe, 2002: 5).

The aim of this study was to analyze *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* to analyze *Incidents* as a critically important piece of writing to introduce the injustices of slavery of humanity especially on a woman. Even Jacobs did not carry to utter her life story to end up with a literary piece, today it is an important book to see how a nation has lived a great change towards its attitude for another race. In this sense this autobiography is important because it is not only a slave narration of a kind of literature but also a piece of historical document to release the truths of the time. Autobiographical information on how and why she reached her aim of a free life is striking and impressive. The story of Linda Brent is a good presentation to show the systematic victimization of African Americans and gender specified, women under a system created by injustices and ill-treatment.

As it is clearly seen, especially in the female slave narratives, the nature of the slave families was not stable. Because the slave trade was common and the members of the family could be sold or sent away so easily. This means that the

slaves had no control over their own life and no auto control and this forced them to keep the family unified. Despite the reality that a family would hardly be complete all the time, it still carried a great significance in a slave communal life and the role of the women was relatively important. The domestic duties in the plantation gave the females the chance to keep that uniform of family values more beneficially. They could provide clothing, feeding and other materials for life more easily. In this way, the female slaves could achieve the personal fulfillment as a member of the society, a mother or a wife. Most of the time this was not to please their master but it was a personal satisfaction as well.

One of the most important features of a slave woman for the system of slavery was her bearing children. It was positive for both sides. For the family life, it made for the slave woman possible to stay with her family and secondly more children meant more slave for the masters and they were reluctant to sell the fertile female slaves. Nevertheless, it was very common that every female slave had been sexually abused by the master once in her life time. And the result was pregnancy most of the times. The maternal feeling of the women was against bearing a child whose destiny was drawn before birth. It was a worse feeling to give life to a child who would be the subject of inhumane treatment of his or her actual father.

Jacobs's experiences were as common as those of many slave women. His abuses started by whispering foul words in her ears and his tactics became more unendurable. By making life harder for her, he became more overt. He did not allow her to marry another man without regarding his status. Throughout the book, she gives a very proper portrait of a female house slave and her exploitation by her master. Even to keep Harriet away from her wife who became to be suspicious of her husbands' behaviors he built up a cottage for slave girl four miles from town. However, she was determined not give in.

Even though her experiences were very regular, the solution she chose for herself was not that ordinary. She asked at last to get married with a free black man but she was refused and at that point, Jacobs started for her sexual conquest to win freedom at least on her own body. She became sexually involved with a lawyer and got pregnant. She calls this a triumph over her tyrant. She believed such an act would

make her master furious and he would sell her; on the contrary, Dr. Norcom or Flint does not have such an intention which opens a new phase in the life of that slave girl.

After she gave birth to her children, the harassment by Dr. Flint did not end but continued as before. It was getting more intolerable. After a while she learnt Dr. Flint intended to sell her children to plantation, she thought she had to get rid of that exploitation and sorrow. In 1835, after seven years of ill treatment she decided to escape. She was twenty years old when she gave this decision. She found refuge in the houses of various neighbors both black and white and the small garret of her grandmother's house where she spent seven years. This garret was not a suitable place for person to lead a life with nine feet by feet and three feet at its highest point. She lived with the fear of constant detection and she had great impressions of these conditions both on her body and soul. Rats and mice became her constant visitors there; plus there was neither a light nor a flow of air. Hence, her desire for dream of being free was stronger than any other pain or fear she would feel there.

She was using every opportunity she had in that loop hole to make herself and her children free and her literacy worked at that point mostly. In an attempt to make Norcom sell her children she wrote numbers of letters to deceive him. These letters were arranged to show her as if she could succeed to escape north. Her idea was to create the image that she would not come back any time and Norcom would give up and sell her children. Later her children were bought by the lawyer and they started to live in the same house.

In 1842, Harriet Jacobs achieved her own escape by sailing to Philadelphia and from there to New York by train. There she reunited with her daughter and in 1863 she moved to Alexandria, Virginia with her daughter. There they founded a medical care for the victims at Civil War. She established The Jacobs Free Scholl there to increase the literacy amongst her race and supply relief. There they provided black teachers for thee refuges.

Harriet Jacobs, best known as a fugitive female slave author in the American slave narrative genre, her book *Incidents* was actively involved in the slave movements before, after and during the Civil War era. However, until the work of

Professor Jean Fagan Yellin just a little was known about her and she could not get the attention she actually deserved. Her idealism not to give up but fight and her deterministic nature made her symbolic a figure in the slave history and American literature. Much of her book is devoted to her struggle to free herself and her two children from the destiny they were born into. As a woman she carried and important role represent the power of will and awaken a consciousness for the survival of the slaves.

Her primary aim was to attract the attention of the people in the north especially the whites. Throughout the book *Incidents* we as a reader are directed to question ourselves as well. Because encountering the realities sometimes we thought vice versa, the reader is forced to ask in relation to the people we meet in the life of Jacobs. How ideal are we? How competent? Do we use our power for the benefit or harm of the others? How would we act if we had the equal power and condition?

Kaplan puts the Brent's alteration of freedom in these words: ". . . But Brent as we have seen, refuses available modes of freedom: mercantile freedom, freedom through marriage, freedom as a (self)possessive individual. And in so doing, Brent exposes her own categorical exclusion from that ideology and from those rights, an exposure which depends, in large part, upon her deconstruction of 'negotiation' itself, narrative 'negotiation' not expected" (1993: 97).

The most disturbing scene of her narration is the separation of a mother and the children. While the northern women considered themselves as moral guardians of the nation, they were especially afraid of the threat of the slavery on female virtue. As the slave women were denied of the legal protection of the value, she was considered a disturbing factor of Christian moral teaching. Jacobs, throughout the book Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl achieves stir up a moral feeling for the female slave. The reader is made to feel the sorrows, understand the maternal situation of a black woman deeply. Her struggle for freedom becomes more meaningful for the purpose lying beneath.

The first chapter analyzed the historical background of slave experiences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During these periods there have been many

wars and fights for and against the ongoing system. To know the history of the African American was important to understand the emergence and the characteristics of genre called as slave narratives as they are the historical pieces of writings to give light to period in a nations history called as “slavery”. This chapter introduced many critical historical event like Civil War, Dred Scott Case; many important figure like Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X; law including the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments. Also we saw the social structure of the society by analyzing the gender roles in general, how it developed for masters and slaves. Also it was important to see the division itself in the female sex as being a woman would mean different in the south and in the north.

In the second chapter, the source of slave narrations as a literary genre, the description and a brief history of autobiography was given. Coming from autobiographical writing slave narratives became a completely separate and equally important genre in American literature. They are ‘accurate historical accounts’: the first hand documents of blacks’ written by themselves on the first hand. So the autobiographical elements of slave narratives was considered as the notes from history.

The third chapter was on the workings of gender in Jacobs’s narrative. Narrational elements like characterization, time, setting etc. of *Incidents* as a slave narration were taken in hand. Her pseudonymous and highly sentimental narrative reaches its aim to makes not only her story impressive and convincing. Even she was a slave who could not get the chance to read and write literature her God-given talent of narrating makes her story successful and sentimental. The true word choice and the convincing tone of her story makes *Incidents* worth reading.

The forth chapter concentrated on the gender roles in the society. Jacobs was not only a slave but a woman as well and it was important to recognize it to be able to get point better. Being a mother and a woman would mean more than just being slave as the sorrows would be double.

As a female, a mother and a wifes she gave protection for herself and her children. In fact it would not be wrong to evaluate her struggle to escape an attemp to

save her children from their fate. But during her struggle we saw the bodies exploited, female bodies violated twice: they were, in a way, ‘punished’, both for their femininity and skin color. He burdens of women for exploitaitonn was wide: their multiple functions as fieldhands, care-givers, passive and abusable sexual beings made it. Besides, as reproductive properties slave women were much more important because the laws commanded that a child had to follow the state of the mother.

Jacobs differs from those of millions of slave women as Yellin tells because we have papers for her. He defends she becomes the only voice of those millions and she is such an extraordinary voice. She tells a sensational story of being exploited by a white male master. Yellin summarizes the importance of Jacobs with these words:

> We do not know of any woman who was a slave in the South, a fugitive in the South and the North, who wrote a slave narrative and then went back down South to do relief work and establish a school. And she wrote about it all in the Northern press. We just didn’t have that story before; and now we do. (2004: 104)

Jacobs achieves the task of the slave narratives on her behalf to prove that blacks were human. She shows them by her ability to reason, literacy, demonstrating the cause (slavery conditions) and effect (will for freedom) relation, representing her soul and possession of feelings, and her desire to express herself and her struggle in a creative way of expression. She includes all these elements both in content and form. Additionally she just does not represent the actual sides of slavery but the psychology of the system on the people as well.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Linda. (2000). *Autobiography.* Florence, KY, USA: Routledge.

Andrews, William L. (1986). *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Aptheker, Herbert. (1969). *American Negro Slave Revolts.* New York: International Publishers.

Bailey, Beth & Farber David. (1993). *The "Double-V" Campaign in World War II Hawaii: African Americans, Racial Ideology, and Federal Power.* Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University Press.

Barrett, Lindon. (1995). *African-American Slave Narratives: Literacy, the Body, Authority*. New York: Random House, Inc.

Bland, Sterling Lecater (Ed). (2001). *African American Slave Narratives: Anthology, Volume I.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Bland, Sterling Lecater. (Ed). (2001) *African American Slave Narratives: Anthology, Volume I.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Brown, William Wells. (2003). *Clotel.* Paddington: Partridge and Oakey Printers.

Brown, William Wells. (2004). *Narrative of William W. Brown, an American Slave, Written by Himself.* Dublin: Webb and Chapman.

Carby, Hazel. (1987). *Reconstructing Womanhood*. Chicago: Oxford University Press US.

Child, Lydia Maria. (2008). *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans.* New York: John S. Taylor.

Collins, Winfield H. (1918). *The Truth About Lynching and the Negro in the South*. New York: The Neale Publishing Company.

Crafts, Hannah. (2002). *The Bondswoman's Narrative.* New York: Warner Books, Inc.

Crane, Gregg. (2002). *Race, Citizenship, and Law in American Literature.* Port Chester, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, Carol Boyce. (1999). *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject.* New York: Routledge.

Davis, Angela Y. (1981). *Women, Race and Class.* New York: Random House.

Delany, Martin. (1970). *Blake: Or, The Huts of America, a Novel.* Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Doherty, Thomas. (1986). *Harriet Jacobs' Narrative Strategies: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Douglass, Frederick. (2000). *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: an American Slave*. New York: Random House, Inc.

Douglass, Frederick. (2008). *The Heroic Slave*. Radford: Wilder Publications, LLC.

Elkins, Stanley M. (1968). *Slavery; a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Equiano, Olaudah. (2004). *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano Gustavus Vassa, the African*. New York: Random House, Inc.

Escott, Paul D. (1979). *Slavery Remembered : A Record of Twentieth-Century Slave Narratives.* Chapel Hill, NC, USA: University of North Carolina Press.

Feagin, Joe R. (2000). *White Racism.* London, UK: Routledge.

Firestone, Shulamith. (2003). *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Fitzhugh, George. (1998). *Cannibals All!; Slaves without Masters.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Folkenflik, Robert. (1993). *The Culture of Autobiography: Constructions of Self-Representation*. California: Stanford University Press.

Frazier, E. Franklin. (1966). *The Negro Family*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Garrison, Lloyd. (1963). *Liberator*. Canada: Little, Brown & Company.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. (1989) *Figures in Black : Words, Signs, and the Racial Self.* Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

Genovese, Elizabeth Fox. (2006). *African American Voices: The Life Cycle of Slavery*. John Wiley & Sons.

Genovese, Eugene D. (1976). *Roll, Jordan, Roll*. Vintage: Random House Press.

Gray, Richard. (2004). *A History of American Literature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Grayson, William John (2007). *The Hireling and the Slave.* Charleston: Harper and Calvo Printers.

Grimké, Sara Moore. (1998). *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Woman*. Boston: Isaac Knapp.

Grimké, Angelina. (2004). *An Appeal To The Christian Women Of The South*. New York: Kessinger Publishing Co.

Gutman, Herbert. (1977). *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925.* New York: Random House.

Haley, Alex. (2007). *Roots*. New York: Vanguard Press.

Harper, Frances E. W. (1988). *Complete Poems of Frances E. W. Harper.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Harper, Frances E. W. (1996). *Minnie's Sacrifice, Sowing and Reaping, Trial and Triumph*. Landon: Beacon Press.

Harper, William; Hammons, James H.; Simms, William G. (2007). *The Pro-slavery Argument: As Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co.

Hentz, Caroline Lee. (2007). *The Planter's Northern Bride*. Philadelphia: A.Hart, Late Carey & Hart.

Hernton, Calvin. (1992). *Sex and Racism*. New York: Anchor.

Jacobs,Harriet. (2006). *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.* Clayton: Prestwick House, Inc.

Jones, Gayl. (1987). *Corregidora*. Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Jordan, Winthrop D.(Ed). (2003). *Slavery and the American South.* Jackson, MS, USA: University Press of Mississippi.

Kaplan, Carla. (1993). "Narrative Contracts and Emancipatory Readers: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl". *Yale Journal of Criticism*. 6(1). 93-119.

Lerner, Gerda. (1987). *The Creation of Patriarchy.* USA: Oxford University Press.

Marx, Karl . (1998). *Capital*. London: ElecBook.

Meltzer, Milton. (1987). *In Their Own Words*. New York: Harper Collins.

Mungazi, Dickson A. (2000) *Journey to the Promised Land : The African American Struggle for Development since the Civil War*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated.

Nabers, Deak. (2006). *Victory of Law : The Fourteenth Amendment, the Civil War, and American Literature, 1852-1867*. Baltimore, MD, USA: The Johns Hopkins University Press**.**

Nelson, Emmanuel S.(Ed). (2002). *African American Autobiographers : A Sourcebook.* USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated.

Nichols, Charles H., Jr. (1952). *Slave Narratives. Negro History Buletin*. USA: Harvard University Press.

Peterson, Carla L. (1992). *Capitalism, Black (Under)development, and the Production of the African-American Novel in 1850s.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Sanchez-Eppler. Karen. (1998). *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism and the Politics of the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sharpe, Jenny. (2002). *Ghosts of Slavery: A Literary Archaeology of Black Women's Lives.* Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press.

Smith, Sidonie. (2001). *Reading Autobiography : A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives.* Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press.

Smith, Stephanie E. (1994). *Conceived by Liberty: Maternal Figures and Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Smith, Valerie. (1991). *Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narrative*. USA: Harvard University Press.

Stepto, Robert (1991). *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Stowe, Harriet Beacher. (1995). *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Or, Life Among the Lowly*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Edition Limited.

Stowe, Harriet Beacher. (2008). *Dred: A Tale of the Dismal Swamp*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company.

Strickland, Arvarh E.(Editor). (2000). *African American Experience: An Historiographical & Bibliographical Guide.* Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated.

Walvin, James. (1996). *Questioning Slavery.* London, UK: Routledge.

Wells, Ida B. (1996). *Southern Horrors and Other Writings; The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900.* Bedford: St. Martin's.

Wilson, Harriet E. (2005). *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, In A Two-Story White House, North. Showing That Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There.* New York: Penguin Group, Inc.

Woodson, Carter Godwin. (1937). *Negro History Bulletin.* Boston: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.

Wright, W. D. (1998). *Racism Matters.* Westport, CT, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated.

Yellin, Jean Fagan. (2004). *Harriet Jacobs: A Life.* New York: Basic Civitas Book.