

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Tlemcen



Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

**Female Slave Narratives' Discourse in Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*,
Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Gilbert's *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth***

**Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctorate in Literature**

Presented by:

Mr. Seyf Eddine GUETTAIA

Supervised by:

Prof. Wassila HAMZA REGUIG MOURO

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Academic Year: 2022/2023

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*O, ye daughters of Africa, awake! awake! arise! no longer sleep
nor slumber, but distinguish yourselves. Show forth to the world
that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties. O, ye
daughters of Africa! what have ye done to immortalize your
names beyond the grave? what examples have ye set before the
rising generation? what foundation have ye laid for generations
yet unborn?*

Maria W. Stewart (1831)

Statement of Originality

I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely the result of my own investigation and that due reference of acknowledgments is made, whenever necessary. I also certify that this submission contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other institution.

Student's Name: Mr. Seyf Eddine GUETTAIA.

Signature:

Dedication

I dedicate this work to all my family and friends who provided help and support throughout the doctoral run and I cite particularly my parents who never lost confidence in my competencies and always supplied me with their precious prayers, pieces of advice, and unlimited backup and encouragement.

To My brother and sister who accompanied me throughout this long journey.

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A special thanks to the board of examiners, each in their name: Prof. Daoudi Frid, Dr. Fatiha Belmerabet, Dr. Hanane Rebbahi and Dr. Narimene Larbi for the precious time they have invested to read and evaluate this work.

It gives me immense pleasure to express my heartfelt thanks to my teachers whom I learned much from them predominately those belonging to Literature and Civilisation field. I especially mention Prof. Ilhem Serir, Prof. Daoudi Frid, Dr. Omar Rahmoun, Dr. Souad Berbar and Dr. Meryem Mengouchi.

I cannot forget my adorable colleagues as we spent a common journey sharing some memorable moments together precisely Mr. Ameer-Said Zakarya, Mr. Merwan Messaoudi, Miss. Sarah Bensahla Tani and, Miss. Meriem Ayech Hamraoui. Thank you for both your love and support.

Last but not least, to all who contributed in my humble research from near or far.

Abstract

The present research work deals with discourse in three distinct female slave narratives that belong to a similar period (The Antebellum Era). These works did not only deal with writing in general but attempted to unveil what happened to female slaves during such a crucial period in the history of the United States of America. In fact, the central point during the 19th century was for the accounts written by bondsmen as they conquered the slave narratives' genre. Therefore, a shift to female slaves was more than needful particularly that women in general were under a complete domination in the societies. Consequently, the three women writers and tellers wanted to attract the attention of the audience through their accounts which are viewed as their own voice to defend their fellows and to express themselves in the literary field. Therefore, this thesis aims to discuss women's contribution to the narratives of enslavement. Nevertheless, the presence of different forms of this literary genre leads to question their authenticity, and it is actually what this research attempted to answer, by applying discourse analysis on Harriet Jacobs' account entitled *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Olive Gilbert's *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, in order to explore the intensity of their messages. In addition to that, the analysis of the language was more than evident in order to see how close each of these works from the slaves' lives and what they really witnessed at that time. Ultimately, prospecting various testimonies, critics' opinions and writers' elucidations were part of the present work for the purpose of obtaining a complete idea about the most genuine account. As a conclusion, Jacobs, Stowe and Gilbert presented true slave narratives and not just daily life stories. They managed to describe the suffering of a whole category of people. Furthermore, they succeeded to epitomize the struggle of female slaves along with their survival in a racist and patriarchal society by employing female protagonists knocking the doors of the world's recognition and setting the ground for their successors ultimately to write confidently and live freely following their paths.

List of Acronyms

AAVE	African American Vernacular English
SWVE	Southern White Vernacular English

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General Introduction

General Introduction

African American literature has always been viewed as wide and opulent as it is constantly developing, adapting to distinct influences which contribute to its continuity making it persistent till nowadays and having an impact over current writings. It refers to all the body of works written by people from African descendants; predominately those who were enslaved by the white people. The African American literature may refer to violence, torture and the difficulty of life. It started from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century with the notable works of some writers in the example of Phillis Wheatley, then, with the well-known orator Frederick Douglass, and reached the peak during the twentieth century with the Harlem Renaissance and persisted with some major writers such as Toni Morrison, Maya Angelo and Walter Mosley who are considered as top-notch writers in the United States of America. The African American literature tackled some major themes and scouted different issues like equality, slavery, American culture, racism and the African Americans in the American society.

In this vein and in order to grasp American history, it is fundamental to realize that the Americans in the thirteen colonies, first, then, in the United States of America, and for approximately two hundred years brought Africans from their homeland and kept them as well as their descendants in what is known by bondage practising the most severe types of torment. The system is considered as the most shocking phenomenon that the world witnessed so far and actually it affected the whole world and the United States in particular. It is difficult, it is even impossible to imagine a free person separated from his own family at a young age, treated as a commodity and forced to work without earning anything. The slaves were in a total control by and dominance of the whites, they could be sold, kicked, flogged and insulted. The enslaved women suffered from other types of torture worse than the ones practised on men. From sexual abusing to mental oppression, the female slaves had a very long harsh story with slavery.

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In fact, the word slavery encompasses various things in the example of prison, labour, rape, prostitution or even the sale of the human organs. The topic of bondage caused a huge debate. It is no doubt that slavery is harmful and considered as a criminal activity. Nevertheless, it commonly prevailed all around the world from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. No one would accept the situation and the conditions witnessed by the slaves. However, they had no choice but to obey, resist and wait for the suitable opportunity in order to change everything from the roots and make an ending to their status in the different societies.

The African slaves had no stake in the economic system which was the reason of their coming to the New World. Bringing them to work was not only free of charge, but also with no rights, and in addition to all, that they were not treated as the whites because they had no value at that time and this signified a dispersal maybe not the greatest, the widest or the most important one throughout history but assuredly a terrible inhuman activity than ruin the life of numerous people. Bondage and discrimination had a big impact on those who were kept in enslavement for a main reason which is the prohibition of the minimum of their rights. They felt an absence in legal and social status, their private lives did not exist. Yet, the thing which affected the African slaves the most was the absence of the vital right which means simply that they had no control no power and no ruling over their own lives.

The issue of slavery brought the Slave Narratives as a new genre to the world of literature. It encompasses the slaves' lives with all the difficulties, suffering and torture they witnessed during the times of slavery especially in the south where bondage was really spread due to different economic issues. During the 1700's different readers from Boston to London read one of the major works of the genre entitled *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African Slave* published in 1789 and this was the

General Introduction

beginning of the wide-spreading of this literary genre. It takes the form of an autobiography which describes the writer's life as well as the one of the other slaves who were persecuted at that time. As the abolitionist movement became very popular in America, and gained gradual importance, the different slave narratives were proved as tools to show the reality of the society at that time and provided substantial testimonies for the political supporters. For example, the autobiography of Frederick Douglass entitled *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* published in 1845 which had sold approximately 30.000 copies according to some historians in the period before the American Civil War.

Once the Civil War started, other significant works were published such as *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* written by Harriet Jacobs in 1861. The African American female voice proved to be one of the sharpest voices to arise during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet, there has always been a kind of an interrelationship between male superiority and white supremacy regarding the literary tradition throughout the American history. Being a black woman particularly during the Antebellum Era means to live in a double risk of belonging to the lower sex of the inferior race. Women were not only suffering from racial discrimination but also oppressed because of their gender. Therefore, male perspective at that time referred to both genders and yet no one could plain the female iniquity in a patriarchal society. The female African American voice was repressed until the publication of some notable works written by main female writers during the twentieth century in the example of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker with their major doings entitled *Beloved* and *The Color Purple*, respectively. They had broken barriers along with other writers such as Ralph Ellison in looking for the black awareness.

There was an awareness of the black women during the nineteenth century in the United States about their true freedom. They knew that they had to liberate themselves

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from the sexist social order which neglected all human rights for women. These women had participated in both seeking women's rights and racial equality as well. Some of them used their own autobiographies as a tool to reflect their situation first and also to struggle against bondage and oppression. The influence and the power of the nineteenth century black women autobiographies in the United States was literary and socio-political. Among all the literary genres, autobiography is the one that provides itself to both literary and historical approaches. Despite different sociological, political and historical chains, the African American autobiographical women writers of the nineteenth century left some important written records about their struggles for liberty and undertook literary power over their own personal narratives.

The description and the place of the female voice in a male-dominated discourse has created a long and intense debate over time. Various and different studies had asserted that it is a field of huge importance and an issue of worldwide interest regarding particularly African American literature. Numerous critics of the genre have contented the status of a sex-determined voice in the African writings. Nevertheless, many female African writers minimized divergences with men in favour of genderless aesthetic. The aim of the different studies was to ascertain the existence of a female writing rather than to prove the range of its originality.

In this respect, the present research work focuses on the classic slave narratives that belong to the Antebellum period i.e. the pre-civil war era. One of the motivated factors that pushed us to tackle such works is the volition to keep a record of history no matter how horrible and cruel things are and of course the challenge to overcome in order to point out and reveal multiple details in relation to these accounts. One of these is the existence of three different types of the narratives of enslavement back to the nineteenth century which inspires us to make a comparison with all the similarities and differences. The first one is

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the very famous type which authorises the slave him/herself to write their own accounts, the second requires an amanuensis in order to take the responsibility of transmitting the slave's story into a coherent narrative in case of illiteracy as it was the case of the majority. The third type is a distinct one as it is the work of white abolitionists who showed sympathy to the slaves and despised the system of slavery trying to use their pen to defend the rights of this oppressed category of people. Therefore, they wrote fictional works based on true events in order to demonstrate the suffering witnessed by the thralls and gain sympathy from the worldwide audience as these accounts written by some well-known abolitionists contributed in globalising the slaves' case making it a struggle of the truth's advocates against the wicked of bondage.

Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, is an autobiographical narrative by Harriet Jacobs, a former North Carolina slave, published in 1861. Jacobs' autobiography is the most widely-read female antebellum slave narrative. Besides being a story of intrigue and adventure, *Incidents* is a historical document, revealing much about slavery and designed to stir abolitionist sentiment by demonstrating the evils of slavery especially on women.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was one of the most talked about novels of the nineteenth century and is still widely read and discussed today. It achieved wide popularity, particularly among white readers since it was written by a white abolitionist. It was a powerful tool in the abolitionist movement as it encompassed many contrasting views and experiences of slavery within a popularized novel and it is also considered one of the earliest examples of a text advocating women's rights expressing their particular suffering.

Sojourner Truth's and Olive Gilbert's collaboration entitled *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* is the gripping autobiographical account of Sojourner Truth's life as a

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slave in pre-Civil War New York State, and her eventual escape to Freedom. Since Sojourner could neither read nor write, she dictated her story to Olive Gilbert after they met at a Women's Rights rally. It was one of the catalysts for the rise of anti-slavery public opinion in the years leading up to the Civil War and it is considered as a moving and historical document.

Henceforth, the present research work aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Do the female slave narratives written by slaves themselves, dictated to other writers and those written by white abolitionists hold the same discourse (carry the same messages)?
2. What about the female voice in the afore-mentioned works? What type of discourse do these women writers and tellers use in their writings?
3. To what extent are the three selected female slave narratives authentic and reflective of the slaves' case in the Antebellum society?

In order to find expedient answers to the afore-mentioned questions, three hypotheses are suggested:

1. Female Slave narratives written by slaves themselves seem to present a strong and true message to the readers and are perhaps more faithful to reality since they tackle the events from their own life experiences and struggles, unlike dictated works in which there will be interference from the amanuensis and much more with the fictional accounts written by white abolitionists as they maybe display unreal works as they never experienced slavery.

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2. The three distinct female slave narratives seem to present a predominant female voice as we have three female protagonists in which they are the spotlight of the stories, shedding the lights simultaneously on their journey from the phase of being enslaved until obtaining their liberty and focusing perhaps on the main discourses; such as oppression, motherhood and sexual assault, tackling the audience's emotions to gain empathy and hence making these works a key influence to the abolition of bondage.

3. The selected female slaves' tales tend to present a genuine message to the readers reflecting the situation and the conditions lived by bondsmen and women from humiliation to harassment passing by the different means used to get their freedom particularly in the Antebellum era which is considered as a crucial one in the history of the United States.

In this research work, the first interest is to point out the interconnectedness between literature and history through slavery and the distinct slave narratives which changed the history of a nation helping the African Americans to create a unique identity of their own. Moreover, focusing on female slaves who witnessed a double suffering during that period in addition to some women writers who attempted through their pen to create a zone through which it contributed in reversing things to obtain their liberty. The main objective is to compare three different types of the slaves' accounts to determine which one presents a genuine and authentic work far from exaggeration and aggrandizement. Furthermore, it is to find out which of the three female writers and tellers delivered a true and creaky message to the readers which reflected not only the situation of bondswomen but of all the slaves during the pre-civil war period in the United States of America.

Hence, this research is divided into three major chapters. The first one provides the readers with a theoretical framework of the study which is split into three parts. The first section is about history dealing with different events in relation to slavery from the starting point till the Antebellum period and then shedding light on women and how they

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experienced bondage from both perspectives i.e. female slaves and female slave holders. The second one is about literature devoted to different definitions from African American literature to the slave narratives and of the course the feminine voice in these accounts. The third one is about discourse with its different concepts moving to literary discourse analysis and language in female narratives of enslavement.

The second chapter deals with the analysis of the major discourses in the three selected works such as the discourse of slavery, womanhood and motherhood, sexual harassment trying to link the major events, that happened in the United States in this period, to what was produced along with the different strategies and techniques used by the three female writers and tellers. Passages from these works are selected and analysed in order to exhibit what is previously mentioned.

The third chapter focuses on the linguistic side in the chosen slave narratives. It starts with the tone and point of view as major literary elements as they determine the objective of the writers in penning their accounts in order to spot the differences between the three works diving into what distinguishes one from the other. After that, examining the language used in the three works as it differs from one narrative to the other from Standard English to the African American Vernacular English and even the Southern West Vernacular English attempting to investigate the distinct phonological and syntactic features. Finally, closing everything with some concluding remarks in relation to the authenticity of these narratives by gathering different literary critics' opinions as well as the three female writers' arguments to defend their works to determine each one of them displays a genuine message and an accurate discourse to the audience.

Chapter One

From Slavery to (Female)

Slave Narratives

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Chapter One: From Slavery to (Female) Slave Narratives

1.1. Introduction

In order to grasp American history, it is fundamental to realize that the Americans in the thirteen colonies first, then in the United States of America, and for approximately two hundred years, brought Africans from their homeland and kept them as well as their descendants in what is known by bondage practising the most severe types of torment. The system is considered as the most shocking phenomenon that the world witnessed so far and actually it affected the whole world and the United States in particular. It is complicated to visualize the picture of a free family who will potentially live a disunion, compelling its young children to work without earning anything and being treated as mere articles. The slaves were in a total control and dominance of the whites, they could be sold, kicked, flogged and insulted. The enslaved women suffered from other types of torture worse than the ones practised on men. From sexual abusing to mental oppression, the female slaves had a very long harsh story with slavery.

The African slaves had no stake in the economic system which was the reason to their coming to the New World. Bringing them to work was not only free of charge but also with no rights, and in addition to all that, they were not treated as the whites because they had no value at that time and this signified a dispersal maybe not the greatest, the widest or the most important one throughout history, but assuredly a terrible inhuman activity that ruin the life of numerous people. Bondage and discrimination had a big impact on those who were kept in enslavement for a main reason which is the prohibition of the minimum of their rights. They felt an absence in legal and social status, their private lives did not exist. Yet, the thing which affected the African slaves the most was the absence of the vital right which means simply that they had no control no power and no ruling over their own lives.

Chapter One: From Slavery to (Female) Slave Narratives

The issue of slavery brought the Slave Narratives as a new genre to the world of literature. It encompasses the slaves' lives with all the difficulties, suffering and torture they witnessed during the times of slavery especially in the south where bondage was really spread due to different economic issues. During the 1700's different readers from Boston to London had read one of the major works of the genre entitled *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African Slave* published in 1789 and this was actually the starting point that makes the slaves' tales well-known or at least familiar to the audience. It takes the form of an autobiography which describes the writer's life as well as one of the other slaves who were persecuted at that time. As the abolitionist movement became very popular in America and gained importance gradually, the different slave narratives were proved as tools to show the reality of the society at that time and provided substantial testimonies for the political supporters. For example, the autobiography of Frederick Douglass entitled *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* published in 1845 which sold approximately 30.000 copies according to some historians in the period before the American Civil War.

1.2. History of Slavery

Before tackling the history of the phenomenon, understanding the meaning of slavery comes first. So, bondage means simply individuals owned by others who are stronger and who control where they live and at what they work¹. Slavery affected the whole world and had existed in different places throughout history in the example of the Romans, Incas and Aztecs and ancient Greeks who all possessed slaves. Slavery in its current meaning is illegal everywhere although there are some establishments which look like bondage in modern societies.

¹ http://abolition.e2bn.org/slavery_40.html

Chapter One: From Slavery to (Female) Slave Narratives

A slave is a free person, a human being considered as a commodity and obliged to work without gaining anything. Numerous ancient and modern slave societies were based on chattel slavery which is the legal ownership of human beings, not just their labour (Doak, 2006, p.5).

The word slave originated from medieval Latin *sclavus* which not only refers to slaves but also to “slavs” who were some people conquered and sold as slaves during the 800’s. These people were from Eastern Europe.

In the ancient world, slavery rendered mainly economic and military services in the communities. Slaves had different tasks to fulfill for their oppressors. From being household servants for wealthy families to their labour in public works construction and mine work to even agriculture in both Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) and Ancient Greece. A slave was considered as the official and statutory property of another person according to ancient laws and traditions. The power of the owner on his chattel slaves is often unlimited; owners of slaves could resell, free and even kill their slaves without legal restrictions (Welton, 2008, p.57)

Historically speaking, violence is proved as the major characteristic of slavery during which the slave is menaced and in total control through the use of violence. Like so, the master or the slaveholder guarantees that his enthralled will be completely at his conductance and under his authority (Bales, 2004, p.3).

1.2.1. An Overview on Slavery in America

The African Americans have a very long history with the system of slavery. They have passed through different steps, experiences and had to challenge hegemony of their persecutors. Slavery played profoundly an important role in the making of the United States, as the institution grew from the handful of Africans (Horton & Horton, 2005, p.7). Bondage in America started in 1619 when a Dutch ship brought around twenty Africans

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from their homeland ashore in the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia². The Africans brought were from various nations in the example of Ibo, Zulo, Ethiopia, Ashanti and others. People from Africa and before being enslaved had enjoyed liberty and independence. Some had been royalty in their homelands, others had been warriors, and some had led quiet, everyday lives raising their Families (Doak, 2006, p.15).

The sugar plantations originated a world full of cruelty, fatality and brutality for the African slaves. Many European people who possessed slaves lived in their native countries but they recruited overseers who had a major responsibility which is to produce the maximum crop products for the proprietors and hence making the slaves work under inhuman conditions without even rest or feeding. As a result, many new slaves lived less than ten years beyond the beginning of their labour on the plantations (Deford, 2006, p.25).

The African slaves had to fulfil some tasks from felling trees using axes to clearing brushes in order to make farms for the sugarcane. They were harvesting the cane, then smashing it in order to extract a liquid it contained. Then came the boiling process that clarified the liquid and finally crystallized it into sugar (ibid). After finishing their missions, they got back to their homes which supplied indigent sanitation and scarce leisure noting that they worked up until twenty hours a day. As American slavery evolved, an elaborate and enduring mythology about the inferiority of black people was created to legitimate, perpetuate, and defend slavery (Equal Justice Initiative, 2013, p.1).

During the seventeenth century, the British who occupied America at that time relied fully on the indentured servitude. So, they had some hesitation to establish the system of slavery in the new colonies. Slavery during the seventeenth century in America was a legitimate result of the deficiency of labour in the British colonies. As the indentured servants signed contracts to work a set amount of time and in parallel they will find a place

² <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>

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to live and what to eat, everything seemed to work for the colonisers. As part of the contract, after working a certain number of years, Africans would obtain their freedom (Billings, 1991, p.48).

Actually, there were some white indentured servants at that time during which they met with the black servants and worked together. Nevertheless, there was a clear difference in the treatment of the servants. The European (indentured servant) could claim the help of his own government and ask for his deliverance but the African could not because they were blacks, inferior and even their native countries were settled. Consequently, blacks lacked such appeal (Boles, 1984, p.65).

Amid the 1600's, settlers in the Chesapeake area (North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland) started to make important revenues from growing Tobacco in their plantations which demanded more labourers. European indentured servants were the first to work in tobacco plantations. However, they were indebted to some colonial sponsors and then became free. So, the eyes turned to the African slaves who were purchased for life. The laws made slavery legal and stated that because slaves were property, not citizens, they could not own property or make legal contracts, including marriage contracts. They could not testify against white people in court or receive a trial with a jury (Deford, 2006, p.45).

During the second half of the seventeenth century, a terrible transformation, the enslavement of people solely on the basis of race, occurred in the lives of African Americans living in North America (Wood, 1996, p.39). Indentured servitude did not fit the requirements of the British colonisers. Accordingly, they tried a new labour force known by the plantation culture during which slave traders bought and sold these Africans to some owners of large farms named slaveholders or masters making them work and fill a variety of tasks with no mercy to gain the maximum of profits from them. As a

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consequence, slave traders strove to bring additional black people from the source, the African continent which was considered as the major exporter of the slaves.

Slavery continued in America as the country entered a new decisive chapter of its history represented by the American Revolution against the British colonisers during which the African slaves played a huge role in it. Thousands of black Americans had participated in the war. Many of them were active, some won their liberty and others were preys, but throughout the struggle, blacks refused to be mere bystanders and gave their loyalty to the side that seemed to offer the best prospect for freedom³. The war ended with the triumph of the Americans who got their independence after many years of occupation. Soon after and with the help of the founding fathers who are Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and others, the Americans could create their own constitution and establish the United States as an independent country. After the American Revolution, many colonists particularly in the North, where slavery was relatively unimportant to the agricultural economy began to link the oppression of black slaves to their own oppression by the British, and to call for slavery's abolition⁴.

Yet, the American government inaudibly recognized the system of slavery following the American Revolutionary War making a difference in taxation and the representation in the congress counting each slave as three fifths of a person. A few American slaves for their service to the rebels were rewarded with liberty, but the operative word is few. For the most part, slaves who fought for the rebels remained the property of their masters (Dobyns, 2007).

The late eighteenth century witnessed a huge demand for cotton because of the increase in the textile industry in England due to the industrial revolution. Moreover, the

³<https://www.historyisfun.org/learn/learning-center/colonial-america-american-revolution-learning-resources/american-revolution-essays-timelines-images/african-americans-and-the-american-revolution/>

⁴ <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>

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land used to grow tobacco almost exhaustive, the Americans faced an economic crisis particularly in the south where slavery was spread and saw the cotton as a solution to their seizure.

During the 1700's, tobacco was considered as a cash crop as numerous plantations owners were eligible to raise their fortunes by trading tobacco to Africans and Europeans. Slaves planted, harvested, cured and packaged tobacco in an extremely labour intensive process⁵. Snuff-taking and tobacco-smoking had become stylish at that time. Grange proprietors imported huge numbers of slaves to cultivate it, dry the leaves and pack it to be carried to different markets. In 1793, a young schoolteacher named Eli Whitney invented a mechanized device to help in removing the seeds known by the Cotton Gin. The machine was widely copied and there was a transformation from growing tobacco to producing cotton predominately in the South. The relationship between both sides the North and South was under pressure because of their different perception on slavery noting that the South produced 75% of the cotton for the whole world. Southerners believed that the North attacked them because without their cotton English industries will collapse⁵. The domestic trade flourished although the African slave trade was prohibited by the U.S. congress in 1808 and this tripled the slave population in the United States through the next fifty years. When prices fell in the middle of the 18th century, some planters turned to producing rice and sugar cane (Simkin, 1997).

The increase in the need of the slaves came exactly in the same period that the congress interdicted the Atlantic slave trade which prohibited the importation of the slaves from outlandish territories. Thralls became suddenly much more precious. Eli Whitney's innovation was a kind of calamity for the Southerners since it required a large band of labourers shifting through the fields at several times in the growing cycle, hoeing, planting

⁵ <https://freedomcenter.org/content/tobacco-chesapeake>

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and harvesting. The new Southern economy of cotton counted on a tremendous slave labour force. In the early part of the nineteenth century, many Americans believed that the institution of slavery would soon die out of its own accord. And yet it was just about to undergo a profound change that would make it the leading factor of economy of the Antebellum South, the period falling roughly between 1810 and the American Civil War 1861-1865⁶.

Slavery ended after the American Civil War which was considered as the deadliest and the costliest war ever on the American soil. However, the strife to end the system guzzled more than the half of the nineteenth century. The African slaves used to increase the Southern commercial crops in the example of rice, tobacco, sugar and cotton. Slavery was not an inevitable feature of southern agriculture; it was a deliberate choice made by men who sought greater economic returns than they could obtain either from their own labour or from wage labour. The relatively abundant land supply and scarce labour supply made wage labour both expensive and unreliable (Pearson and Robertson, 1991, p.5). Various slaves at that time lived on massive plantations or small farms and many slaveholders possessed fewer than fifty slaves. Bondage was banned in the North during the same period since there was no need to slaves due to new chances for employment, education and property ownership. Yet, racial stereotype continued in the North where there was not still equality in economic and legal rights in order to liberate the thralls.

Masters in the South strove to make their slaves under complete domination and tried to apply a system of restrictive codes run among slaves. They were proscribed from reading and writing and their movement was enclosed. Millions of blacks endured brutal treatment under white overseers and black slave drivers who were determined to get as much labour and, therefore, profit out of the slaves as they could (Deford, 2006, p.80). The

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bns6aKfirjA>

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slaves worked in gangs composed of both men and women. Each one with his or her task driven on by the scourge of the overseer. They could not live a normal family life because they were always under the risk of being sold away from the plantation. They worked for ten to twelve hours a day in the tropical sun, for six days a week. Other enslaved people worked as craftspeople, or servants⁷. The Westward Expansion and the abolition movement later on drove the nation to the bloody Civil War which released nearly four million African slaves. Nevertheless, the legacy of system continued until the Civil Rights Movement which arose one century after the emancipation.

1.2.2. The Antebellum Era

The name is borrowed from Latin origins and it refers to the period before the American Civil War though some historians prolonged it from the creation of the constitution by 1789 until the onset of the Civil War. It was featured by the progressive split between the abolitionist and slavery proponents as well as the increase of the abolitionist movement. During this same time, as the industrial revolution started, the country's economy witnessed a shift in the north paying more attention to manufacturing. The south, on the other hand, stuck to the old habits of relying heavily on agriculture specifically with the cotton boom which made plantations the essence of economy. The distinct annexations and expansions executed by the American government in addition to the Manifest Destiny which succeeded to convince the white Americans in particular that they are superior to others contributed to the widespread of the slavery system back to that epoch.

Life for the American slaves become more varied in the Antebellum Period since slavery had been banned in the Northern States while millions of the thralls suffered a brutal treatment under their masters and oversees.

⁷ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/slavery-antebellum-south>

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In 1850 the North had 3,568 slaves, two-thirds of these living in New Jersey, while the Old South had 2,005,475 (Owens, 1976, p.7). Many slaves chose to escape to the North where the system was abolished or all the way to Canada. Free slaves had the choice to travel North or to stay in the South renting lands from farmers or to live in front of urban zones where labour was available. As a result, Canada added approximately 20,000 blacks to its population over the next decade (Farley, 2000, p.16). The early 1800's witnessed the rise of various manufactures across the South in the example of coal, salt, iron, stone was exploited and gold was mined. Therefore, the need for both free and restrained slaves was increasing. Often, the freed African Americans worked alongside slaves, doing exactly the same work. However, at the end of the day, the free blacks went back to a small house or farm of their own with wages in hand. The slaves returned to the slave quarters with no money (Deford, 2006, p.81).

Life in the quarters was unique. The slaves shared plentiful leisure activities that contradicted their situation as human objects. When the masters' work was done, they ate, sang, prayed, played, talked, quarrelled, made love, hunted, fished, named babies, cleaned house and rested (Kolchin, 1993, p.149). All what they wanted to do was to fill their lives with different enjoyable occupation that would authorize them to override their status as slaves.

The period also saw numerous rebellions done by the slaves who wanted to get rid of their miserable situation. In 1811 and about 40 miles from New Orleans, a mulatto slave named Charles Deslondes took inspiration from the Haitian Revolution seven years ago and attempted to duplicate such revolt. It was labeled The German Coast Uprising or Andry's Revolt from the owner of the plantation Manual Andry where the uprising took place between the 8th and the 10th of January 1811. It engaged about 400 to 500 male and female slaves over the east bank of the Mississippi River north New Orleans. Slaveholders

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feared a Haitian-style uprising partly because blacks outnumbered whites in the region by a ratio of five to one, and in particular because of the large population of free blacks in the area that they assumed would help and support such a revolt (Momodu, 2007, para.2).

The slave rebellion started on January the 8th, 1811 when the leader Deslondes along with approximately 25 slaves assaulted the owner of the plantation and his family. They negligently allowed the master to flee after killing his son brutally. That was a tactical mistake to be sure, but Deslondes and his men had wisely chosen the well-outfitted Andry plantation –a warehouse for the local militia- as the place to begin their revolt. They ransacked the stores and seized uniforms, guns and ammunitions (Gates Jr., 2013). Soon after, the rebels traversed into St. Charles Parish moving to New Orleans. The revolutionists walked following a military style according to eyewitness accounts at that moment. They were waving flags, beating drums and armed with hoes, axes and some of them carried firearms. Other slaves from different plantations joined the revolt and the number increased to around 500 people. Eventually, the revolt ended with two whites killed but more than ninety-five insurgents were murdered giving an inhibition to what is considered as the bloodiest revolt in the American history. (Momodu, 2007, para.5).

There was another slave rebellion which marked the period named Denmark Vesey revolt according to the leader who was a free African American who tried to unite the blacks in an uprising close to Charleston, South Carolina. He purchased his own freedom after winning a lottery. When asked why he did not return to Africa after he had bought his freedom, he replied that “he had not the will, he wanted to stay and see what he could do for his fellow creatures.” (Doak, 2006, p.67). Vesey wanted to enlighten their fellows by pushing them to read passages from the bible especially those about the liberation of the

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Jews in Egypt. Vesey gathered some like-minded slaves around him. He even communicated Haiti's president asking him for military assistance. Planning the uprising to occur during Bastille Day (or French National Day) on July 14, 1822, Vesey hoped to liberate slaves and slay slave owners (Chandler, 2012).

Vesey was betrayed by some house slaves who were in opposition to his plan. They leaked the conspiracy to their masters. The result was terrible since the leaders were jailed and sent to be hung. Moreover, thirty-seven were deported and the court ordered to punish the rest. Denmark Vesey along with five other men were executed on July, 2, 1822 altogether. Although the court had tried to keep the place of execution a secret, many blacks turned up to pay tribute to the failed leader as he went to his death (Doak, 2006, p.70).

The most recognized slave revolt in the American history occurred in 1831 known by Nat Turner's rebellion. He was a self-educated and religious slave. He travelled from house to house with his fellows carrying guns and axes since the dawn of August, 22 in order to murder the whites. The first one killed was the master of Turner along with his family while they were sleeping. Turner's group became larger as other slaves joined the revolt progressively. By the middle of the day on Monday, 22 August, the rebels had killed nearly five dozen whites, making the revolt the deadliest one ever so far, at least in the terms of whites killed, in American history (Breen, 2005, p.1). The revolt was ended after two days as numerous soldiers walked to the scene of the uprising. Blacks found guilty and they were killed whereas the others were decapitated.

On October, 30, Nate Turner was taken to jail to be executed. He considered himself as a valet sent from God in order to strafe the whites for committing a huge sin which is possessing slaves. The leader was hanged on November 11th. This uprising was different from any other because it disseminated fear among slaveholders and it allowed the

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abolitionists to speak out again about the issue of bondage. The revolt had repercussions throughout the South. It became clear to the whites that many slaves were willing to die for freedom. More rigid slave codes and laws were adopted as a result⁸.

When stating slavery and the Antebellum period, we cannot neglect religion which played a significant role in the different phases of the long journey of the slaves to get their freedom. Actually, it was used also from the other side, by the slaveholders in order to justify bondage. Americans used religion to attack or defend slavery in the period from the American Revolution to the Civil War, including religious defences of racism and the Christian explanation for the origin of blacks as the cursed descendants of Canaan (Finkelman, 2016, p.188). Christianity proposed by the slaveholders was different from the one developed for more than four centuries by the first African slaves brought to the new world. Consequently, in many parts of South America, for instance in Georgia, slave had a religion of their own based on their own experience, the experience of God with them and upon various visions and revelations (Okoro, 2012, p.256). The African slaves did not dismiss Christianity. Yet, they artlessly made a modification to make it more than an honest system of belief. Slaves admitted what was brought by the different revivalist, Methodist missionaries and even imitate them. On the other hand, slaves were conscious of the fact that in the new world, the major aim of slave control was to eradicate all forms of African culture, which according to the African-American slave has the capability to unify the slaves and empower them to resist or rebel against their situation of slavery and its perpetrators. Therefore, they expatiated all spiritual and moral energies to keep African beliefs and customs a life and accordingly transmitted them to their descendants (Okoro, 2012, p.257).

⁸ <https://www.historynet.com/antebellum-period>

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Slaves noticed that the presented dummy, detached form of Christianity is not what they were looking for. It was not the expected religion predominately for revolt. It should be fortified with the explosive components of the human longing for liberty and importantly the African religious standpoint. Therefore, there was the emergence and the spread of the Negro black church in the United States. Scheiner (1969) states:

The Negro Church came into being in the history of the United States... first as an invisible institution on the Southern plantation, secondly as a reaction to discrimination in the white churches. It was this latter practice which led many blacks in the Northern Urban centers to organize their own houses of worship (p.94)

Logically, the ultimate object of the slave's prayers was freedom. They always prayed for their liberty in every single meeting. Slaves grasped that Christian gospel was the one made for their freedom and this understanding led them to reject Christianity which was irrelevant to their objective. The Black church represented hope and consolation for the truly believer while it was the core of the society. Born in protest, the black church, prior to the civil war, represented the initial stirring of black rebellion among both the secret religions congregations of the slave community and the openly organized independent black churches and the religious mutual aid societies of Freeman in the North, consequently moving between the two poles of immediate survival and future liberation (Charles, Randal & Stout, 1998, p.72).

Religion is an establishment which provides those who use it for social ameliorations with spiritual and moral powers that no arm could affront and this was the case of religion during the Antebellum era which was used by black people to break all the chains, the obstacles that faced them and left the American community with conscience after the war.

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The various advances in terms of technology along with the religious movement during the Antebellum era had deep influence on the route of the American history, including what was known by the westward expansion from coast to coast. The American citizens shifted from farms to urban areas which caused territorial divisions that ended with the American Civil War. Moreover, the period witnessed the rise of abolitionist, temperance and feminist movement particularly to defend black women who were persecuted and to get the right of voting as men.

1.2.3. Women and Slavery

The system of slavery was a subversive experience for both male and female slaves. However, women endured a different type of bondage. Maybe the tasks given to them were less in comparison to those given to men. Yet, they were seen as real objects made to make pleasure for white men in particular. From physical oppression, sexual abuse to the separation from their children, women saw the dark and bitter face of the institution.

Male and female slaves could not legally be married in any state at that time. They were seen as commodities, so they did not have the right to construct their own families under marriage which was considered as an illegal contract. African American romance and marriage within the context of the institution of slavery could be the most challenging and devastating of slave experiences (Stevenson, 1996, p.226). Everything was beneath the domination of the slaveholder. He had the final word concerning when will they marry and even who. The total control continued after marriage. The master interfered in the slave's life. He decided when the husband and wife could see each other, if they could stay together or not, the destiny of their children and occasionally the number of children they should have. This reality inflicted terrible suffering on enslaved people (Deford, 2006, p.74).

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Men who wanted to marry should ask for the permission of some really known black figures first. When he wanted to launch the process, he must start asking the would-be bride then her kin and the proprietors for sure. “First you picks out de gal you wants, den ax her to marry up with you,” Levi Pollard explained. “[D]en go to Mars en ax him ifen you ken have her. If Mars like dat couple den he says yes” (Stevenson, 1996, p.227). Even though owners and male slaves had much control over the process of marriage, women particularly mothers had their own word too. They were highly respectable and they had significant effects in their families as well as the black community but for only a certain limit as the majority of women suffered from the effects of what is named a patriarchal society back to that period.

The female influence was not acknowledged in the hierarchy of the society. Even so, necessary and effective in the worldview of the slaves, the wisdom and the long years of service along with their knowledge about the history of their community were the backbone for the power and authority of the elderly female slaves. Their supremacy in both family and society was not a supremacy they took lightly or employ niggardly. Ex-slave Philip Coleman, for example, admitted that “there was a likely girl” that he “took a great fancy to” and wanted to marry. According to Coleman, his owner approved of the match and the young woman did too, but the girl's mother “put up so strong [an] objection that the wedding . . . was called off” (ibid).

Slaves during the Antebellum period lived in nuclear (or simple) families, be acknowledged or not composed of the couple and the children who grew up with their mothers and to a smaller extent with their fathers. Family members in this case belonged to the same master. Others lived in near-nuclear families in which the father had a different owner than the mother and children. Both slaves and slave-owners referred to these relationships between men and women as “abroad marriages.” (Williams, 2012). The

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slaves' families were always under the menace of separation. In case of the death of the master, the slaves were doled out among his heirs or sold off to various slave traders. Mothers were taken from their own children to nurse the offspring of their masters and slave children were torn from mothers and brought into the house to be raised alongside the master's sons and daughters (Hallam, 2004). About one-third of the enslaved families endured perpetual separation caused by different auctions which led to the sale of family elements to remote territories. An ex-slave named John Rudd states "If you want to know what unhappiness means, just you stand on the slave block and hear the auctioneer's voice selling you away from the folks you love" (Baker, 2000, p.18).

Enslaved families throughout the south were sizeable. Women gave birth to about seven children during her way of childbearing years. Families were assigned by the master to a cabin, which contained four to seven residents at a certain time. Ann Patton Malone, who examined a sample of 19,329 slaves in Louisiana between 1810 and 1864, found that 73 percent of these slaves lived in simple households, composed either of married couples with or without children, or of single parents with children, and an additional 18.3 percent lived alone; only 8.7 percent of the slaves lived in more complex "multiple", "extended" or "non-nuclear" households (Kolchin, 1993, p.139).

The status and the role of women in slave families were also unique. First, enslaved men had not the same authority over their wives in comparison with free men possessed. Free women lost numerous rights in case of marrying, including the right to own and have an ownership. They became legitimately depended to their partners. Second, female slaves were like enough considered to be "dwelling". They ran away, were sold off, and were hired out far less often than men; in marriages abroad, it was the husbands rather than the wives who typically travelled to visit their families on weekends (Kolchin, 1993, p.141).

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Following the Emancipation Proclamation established by Abraham Lincoln, recently released slaves went back to the south and set different announcements in order to congregate with their families. Male and female slaves and despite the contradictions of their lives as well as the changeable conditions of bondage in the United States, slave men and women proved a determined realization of the importance of family. Whatever advantages slave unions held for an owner, for the enslaved man, woman, or child, the family was an incomparable source of solace and strength and a primary means of survival (Hallam, 2004).

Female slaves practised all kinds of labour during the Antebellum period. There was no clear difference between men and women in terms of work. Nevertheless, working was not only limited to black women at that time. The vast majority of southern women worked. About three-quarters of all white southern families did not own slaves on the eve of the Civil War, and consequently women in these families generally shared with black women the necessity of working (Lockley, 2003, p.102). A small percentage represented by elite white southern women relished a comfortable way of living during that period.

Slavery in the United States was an establishment based on economy and politics in which a group of whites tried to elicit the maximum of working from the enslaved people using force and brutality. The tasks given to women were varied from working on the plantations to different household missions.

Enslaved women woke up from dawn spending around fourteen hours working hard oftentimes beneath a burning sun. In the cotton belt they ploughed fields; dropped seed; and hoed, picked, ginned, and sorted cotton (Jones, 1982, p.240). They also hoed tobacco, set worm barriers and even bounding corn on farms in Kentucky and Virginia. Concerning those who lived in the coastal zones, rice culture was widespread and women should burn the rod from the crop of the previous year. Moreover, other responsibilities such as getting

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rid and drilling grains along with the cultivation and shovelling farms were given to bondswomen. In Louisiana, they implanted sugar cane, drilled and assist to harvest the cane. During the winter, they performed a myriad of tasks necessary on nineteenth-century farms of all kinds: repairing roads, pitching hay, burning brush, and setting up post and rail fences (ibid). Women also worked as domestics from cleaning, cooking, sewing and child rearing. House servants spent time tending to the needs of their plantation mistresses dressing them, combing their hair and preparing their meals. They were on call twenty-four hours a day and spent a great deal of time on their feet (Ramey, 2014). The others baked in their homes different stuffs such as pies in order to sell them to families or bachelors.

Some African women received education during the Antebellum period particularly from their masters which was enormously beneficial for them and assisted them to occupy other positions and do distinct tasks in comparison with the illiterate ones. In order to earn money, black women published some literary works and related their own story with the system of slavery in a form of autobiographies in the example of Sojourner Truth with her very famous work entitled *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Bondswoman of Olden Time*. The genre was named later the Slave Narratives. Nursing was another occupation in which many women worked. Professional training did not exist until after the war, so women learned from experience⁹. The increasing need to work affected both enslaved men and women. Yet, there were some issues which influenced particularly bondswomen.

Both enslaved men and women had a routine life. They spent the day in the plantation or in the masters' houses working from dawn for about twenty hours a day. House slaves might develop skills as midwives, weavers, and cooks and obtain special status within the white and slave communities (Crow, 2006). They suffered from both brutality and torture from the whites. Slaveholders used both psychological coercion and

⁹ <https://aaregistry.org/story/nat-turner-leads-slave-rebellion/>

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physical violence to prevent slaves from disobeying their wishes. The lash, while the most common form of punishment, was effective but not efficient; whippings sometimes left slaves incapacitated or even dead¹⁰. Women witnessed an additional way of sanction which was considered as the obscenest one. African American women had to endure the threat and the practice of sexual exploitation. There were no safeguards to protect them from being sexually stalked, harassed, or raped, or to be used as long-term concubines by masters and overseers¹¹.

Women who worked on the huge plantations started their work when it was still murky. They had breakfast after many hours of labour. They were punished by the overseer if they stopped working or took a rest. Once they make an end to their daily tasks and even though they felt exhausted, other tasks were on their way such as preparing their evening meals, looking after their children but also mending their clothing. Very few could sleep as they had to work again afterwards. Black women as men worked from Monday to Saturday.

Sunday was their day-off over the week. The only holidays they had were Christmas and the fourth of July (The Independence Day). Women lived with their husbands in cabins which were made of hews and were not well constructed. Therefore, the roofs were exposed to rain, wind and snow while the dirty floor transformed into mud. They slept on a stack of cloth since they did not have any furnishings. House slaves on the other hand lived in the farm residence. The space they had for sleeping was near the washer or the kitchen. Because they received the old clothes and shoes of their masters, house slaves had vestures of higher quality compared to women who worked on farms.

¹⁰ <https://www.historycentral.com/Ant/People/Women.html>

¹¹ <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1os2xmaster/chapter/african-americans-in-the-antebellum-united-states/>

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Bondswomen received a bunch of food from the plantations' owners in order to distribute it over their husbands and children to stay alive. It included fat, some bacon and corn. They got also buttermilk, vegetables and bread.

However, many of them particularly children became terribly ill and died because the nourishment given to them was faint in minerals and vitamins in addition to the intense labour. Masters provided medicines for their slaves. However, they preferred herbal cures and often went for it. Female slaves in particular were really known for their medical skills. At that time, the favourite white cure for just about any ailment was bloodletting—the practice of letting the ailing person bleed (Deford, 2006, p. 73). Actually, this knowledge was used as a form of rebellion against the oppressors by poisoning their masters and then escaped.

1.3. African American Literature

Many people said that most notable works were written by the whites. Nevertheless, in the previous 250 years, black authors had participated in some important and spirited doings predominately in the American Literature. These range from early narratives depicting slavery to modern works dealing with the lingering effects of slavery, racism and apartheid¹². Currently, some of the extreme perilous works are written by African Americans. African American literature refers to different writings by Americans from African origins and it is intended to the whites as for the blacks throughout the world.

Historians had debated about the reality of the African American Literature. Some of them said that what characterized it is the way black writers have worked and reworked both consciously and unconsciously myths, traditions, folklore and oratory practices. Others have maintained that African American literary texts are defined by a prolonged engagement with the problem of slavery, a system of labour exploitation that was central to

¹² <https://www.infoplease.com/black-books>

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the development of not only the United States but the whole of the Western world (Warren, 2011, p.2). African American Literature encompasses different literary periods from the colonial period between 1746 to 1810, the Antebellum era (1810-1865), the reconstruction period, the protest movement from 1900 till 1969 and contemporary era (1970-current time). African-American writers are noted for embracing, validating, and proclaiming an America that is diverse, beautiful, and complex (Samuels, 2007, p.9). Various earliest works were written by slaves and abolitionists. During the seventeenth century, the American continent was still shaping its own identity and it witnessed the first Africans brought to the new world in 1619 precisely. Phillis Wheatley was among the transported slaves. She was sold to a Boston trader. At the very beginning, she did not master the English language. Yet and under the guardianship of her proprietors, she could acquire it. She became interested in literature and this pushed her to publish her *Poems on Various subjects* in 1773. In her writings, she focuses on the contrast between slavery and freedom (Jarrett, 2013, p.22).

The colonial period witnessed the development of the African American writings. They represented the confusion of the Africans between their own native cultures and their new identity. In 1700, Sewall stated that “It is likewise most lamentable to think, how in taking Negroes out of Africa, and setting them here, that which God has joined together men do boldly rend asunder; Men from their country, husbands from their wives, parents from children” (Dickson, 2001, p.17).

During the Antebellum era, racism was the major reason which led to the rejection of the African American writings which was known as the Slave Narratives. Notable works in the example of the narratives of Frederick Douglass or Harriet Jacobs were not considered as authentic doings as slavery was widespread at that time. It was with the slave narratives in English that the African imagination made its transition from orality to literacy in North

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America; a transition that may be said to have been signified in the trope of the talking book in the narratives of Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, John Jea, and Olaudah Equiano, whose *The Interesting Narrative* was published in the significant year of 1789 (Irele, 2011, p.135).

The contemporary period started with the civil rights movement and developed due time. Female African American voice emerged during the same era as a result of the women's movement along with the civil rights one. Activists focused on community control of schools, welfare rights, jobs and justice for the poor (Smith & Jones, 2000, p.659). Writers such as James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Darryl Dickson-Carr, Alice Walker and Huston Alfred Baker Jr. represented the elite authors of the period. Since 1970, the American society had altered. New literary genres and other arts had emerged in order to allow the African Americans to represent themselves in the society. Street literature and the Neo-slave narratives along with rap music were considered as a sequel to the fighting of the previous writers and artists.

1.3.1. Slave Narratives

The slave narrative is considered as a literary genre written predominately by former slaves who witnessed the system of slavery with its impurity and imperfection. The written and dictated testimonies of the enslavement of black human beings are what we mean by the phrase, "the slave's narrative". (Davis & Gates Jr, 1985, p.13). In a form of autobiography, the writer of these testimonies recounted his long spiritual and physical journey from slavery to liberty. Slave narratives have been described as the *urtext* of African-American literature, that is to say the primal text of African-American literature (Depardieu, 2003, p.124). In general, the term "slave narratives" refers to two classes. The first one specifies the different projects accomplished in the thirties of the twentieth century with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) which had the aim of gathering the maximum of the slave narratives to serve as record of history. The other group, which

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is summed up by the aggregative term ‘fugitive slave narratives’, comprises 18th and 19th century narratives of fugitive slaves who just managed to escape from the house of bondage, mostly via the Underground Railroad (an illegal network of white abolitionists and free African Americans) (Ženišek, 2002, p.202).

The various autobiographies of fugitive and former slaves dominated the nineteenth century American literature. Approximately sixty-five American slave narratives were published in book or pamphlet form before 1865 (Andrews, 1993, p.78). Unsurprisingly, the autobiographical narratives of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century were considered as substantial tools to unfold discussions between the blacks and the whites about bondage and freedom. The genre was characterized by different features which make it unique and attractive for the readers.

The vertical movement from the south to the north, which symbolized the revival from the pits of Hell to the Garden of Eden; the upward elevation from the debased state of subservience to the status of a freeman; the progress from the subhuman animal-like condition to humanity; as well as the transition from childhood to manhood are, among other themes, paradigmatic motifs to be found in slave narratives (Aje, 2013).

The slave narratives were written under two forms. The slave could write his own testimony alone or he could dictate his story to another one who will take the process of writing and this was the case of Sojourner Truth the former unlettered slave who dictated her narrative to Olive Gilbert. In fact, there is a third form of these accounts known by the slave novel which were kind of fictional stories based on real events written by the white abolitionists. A number of antebellum narratives went through multiple editions and sold in the tens of thousands, far exceeding sales of contemporary works by Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, or Nathaniel Hawthorne. Among the best-selling were *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper from American Slavery* (1837); *Narrative of*

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the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself (1845); *Narrative of William Wells Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (1847) and Solomon Northrup's *Twelve Years a Slave* published in 1853 (Scott, 2017). Both male and female slaves witnessed bondage but each one in his/her own way. They suffered from discrimination, violence and racism during the time of bondage (Bos, 2016, p.8).

Yet and according to historians, female slaves experienced the system in another way in comparison with men. Although the principal aim of these narratives is to seek and desire freedom, male and female slave narratives were dissimilar. Distinctions were detected in their struggles, their opinions on different themes, the style in which the narrative is displayed and the difficulties encountered. As such, differences in life experiences led to differences in theme and style (Heglar, 2001, p.23). Female slaves spoke in their accounts about different things in the example of motherhood, sexual oppression, womanhood and marriage.

Starting from its onset, the various slave narratives have had a marked and an outstanding influence on African-American literary ingenuity. Slave narratives served an ideological purpose, namely to elicit the sympathy of northern readers to the plight of southern slaves as well as to publicize the abolitionist movement (Aje, 2013). It is out of the question to imagine the insane fuzzi of American literature without the tremendous effect of the slave narratives, just like the difficulty of understanding American history separated from the disastrous system of bondage along with its permanent legacy. The influence of slave narratives on American literature should not be underestimated. Harriet Beecher Stowe's enormously popular novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), was directly influenced by a number of slave narratives that Stowe had read before writing her novel (Scott, 2017, para.15).

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The slave narrative genre persists to offer a prosperous duct of inspection particularly for modern writers and readers. To conclude, it is evident that the recognition of the slave narratives as a legitimate genre within American literature is much more than a response to a passing PC fashion and more a reflection of the extent to which the breadth of America's literary and cultural heritage is today informing discourse both in the academy and in the lecture hall (Ženišek, 2002, p.206).

1.3.2. The Slave Novel

The slave novel by definition is a fictional work, an anti-slavery one written by white authors usually abolitionists who were familiar as well with the system of bondage and witnessed it but from another angle. While the genre may seem scandalous, most creators of antebellum fictionalized slave narratives were actually proponents of abolition, who portrayed slavery in a harsh light (Bellows, 2012). The differences between the slave novels and the slave narratives are very few. They both discuss slavery as well as abolitionism which flourished in the United States in the period between 1830 till 1861. Both genres reached their ridge during the same time. The only real difference is that the slave novel was not written by a former slave, and therefore was not a first-hand account of life in slavery (Lystar, 1995, p.34). It is out of question to discuss the slave novel without dissecting its connection with the different slave narratives.

Charles Davis and Henry Louis Gates Jr (1985) stated how difficult it is to define the genre of the slave narratives without bearing in mind its effect on the fictionalized slave narratives;

The matter of defining this genre is complicated by the many novels, printed before 1865, which *imitate* the form of the slave narrative, and pretend to be first-person accounts of bondage in the South. Though an anathema to the historian, these are the very delight of the literary critic,

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since they enable him more readily to discern both the repeated structure of the genre itself and the pervasiveness of these texts as literary models (p.23)

The slave novel or fictionalized slave narratives helped to better grasp the American history as well as the institution of bondage identically as the typical slave narratives were at that time. Fantasy can have the effect of revealing a topic in a way that opens it to a wider audience, which is what these authors used to keep the knowledge of slavery in the light and unburied by time (Moniz, 2014, p.32). The slave novel works talked about sexual abuse, motherhood, society, intelligence and constant bondage which are the same themes discussed in the slave narratives. The effectiveness of these novels in representing slavery and the point of view of slaves often made them useful weapons in the antislavery struggle¹³.

The slave novel is represented by various notable works which were proved as very important and helpful in the African-Americans' quest of freedom. Mattie Griffith Browne's *Autobiography of a Female Slave* (1857) represents the best example of the genre. There are other influential doings in the example of Peter Neilson's *Life and Adventures of Zamba, an African Negro King* (1847), Jabez Delano Hammond's *Life and Opinion of Julius Melbourn* published in 1847, Emily Catharine Pierson's *Jamie Parker, the Fugitive* (1856), and of course the work which was considered as the bestselling piece of literature in the United States during the nineteenth century entitled *Uncle Tom's Cabin* written by Harriet Beecher Stowe and published in 1852.

1.3.3. Slave Narratives' Main Characteristics and Figures

Although each memoir, narrative or autobiography penned by male or female slaves who witnessed the system of slavery considered as fully personal and private. Different

¹³ <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/browne/bio.html>

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scholars in the example of James Olney who found certain features and patterns in common predominately in the Antebellum slave narratives. There, Olney creates a list of almost twenty characteristics that emerged from the slave narrative genre¹⁴. It includes first an inscribed portrait or an image about the topic of the narrative. Also, authenticating testimonials, prefixed or post fixed; poetic epigraphs, snatches of poetry in the text, poems appended; illustrations before, in the middle of, or after the narrative itself (Olney, 1984, p.49).

Moreover, the narrative is disconnected properly by way of emotive speeches to the reader and some passages contained a style that comes from a romance, a venture tale or the novel of passion. Furthermore, the different slaves' narratives contain a bewildering variety of documents-letters to and from the narrator, bills of sale, newspaper clippings, notices of slave auctions and of escaped slaves, certificates of marriage, of manumission, of birth and death, wills, extracts from legal codes that appear before the text, in the text itself, in footnotes, and in appendices (ibid). Additionally, these accounts include different essays, anti-slavery orations and sermons that were dealt with at the end to prove the post-narrative activities of the teller. Charles Davis and Henry Louis Gates Jr (1985) stated the different common features of the narratives written by the enslaved people. According to them, the vital characteristics of these accounts are as follows:

1. A handful of testimonials and/or one or more prefaces or introductions written either by a white abolitionist friend of the narrator (William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips) or by a white amanuensis/editor/author actually responsible for the text.
2. A first sentence beginning, "I was born . . . ," then specifying a place but not a date of birth.
3. A sketchy account of parentage, often involving a white father.

¹⁴ <https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/samuel-williams-and-his-world/memoir-as-slave-narrative/characteristics-slave-narrative>

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4. Description of a cruel master, mistress, or overseer, details of first observed whipping and numerous subsequent whippings, with women very frequently the victims.

5. An account of one extraordinarily strong, hardworking slave often "pure African" who, because there is no reason for it, refuses to be whipped.

6. Record of the barriers raised against slave literacy and the overwhelming difficulties encountered in learning to read and write.

7. Description of a "Christian" slaveholder (often of one such dying in terror) and the accompanying claim that "Christian" slaveholders are invariably worse than those professing no religion.

8. Description of the amounts and kinds of food and clothing given to slaves, the work required of them, the pattern of a day, a week, a year.

9. Account of a slave auction, of families being separated and destroyed, of distraught mothers clinging to their children as they are torn from them, of slave coffles being driven south.

10. Description of patrols, of failed attempt(s) to escape, of pursuit by men and dogs.

11. Description of successful attempt(s) to escape, lying by during the day, travelling by night guided by the North Star, reception in a free state by Quakers who offer a lavish breakfast and much genial thee/thou conversation.

12. Taking of a new last name (frequently one suggested by a white abolitionist) to accord with new social identity as a free man, but retention of first name as a mark of continuity of individual identity.

13. Reflections on slavery (p.153).

As mentioned before, the different slave narratives took the form of autobiographies. Hence, the works written were the personal testimonies of the genre's writers whether they

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were literate or no. They suffered a lot from the sequels of slavery and wrote their own accounts.

Olaudah Equiano was one of the icons of the genre. He was born in present-day Nigeria in the 1740's. He was hijacked along with his sister by the mid 1750's and taken on a ship into the new world. After a short period of time in Barbados, Equiano was shipped to Virginia and put to work weeding grass and gathering stones¹⁵. He experienced the brutality of the system as he stated in his very famous narrative;

The only comfort we had was in being in one another's arms all that night, and bathing each other with our tears. But alas! We were soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together. The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced; for my sister and I were then separated, while we lay clasped in each other's arms. It was in vain that we besought them not to part us; she was torn from me, and immediately carried away, while I was left in a state of distraction not to be described. I cried and grieved continually; and for several days I did not eat anything but what they forced into my mouth (Equiano, 1789, p.33).

He was bought by a maritime captain named Pascal in 1757 who gave him the name of Gustavus Vassa. During his period in London, he lodged with Pascal's relatives and there mastered reading and writing. He became after that a seaman and steward and could ultimately purchase his liberty before operating with some leading British abolitionists in the example of William Wilberforce (Spigner, 2007, para.4). He published his well-known autobiography entitled *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, The African: Written by Himself* back to 1789. After gaining his liberty, he became active in the

¹⁵ http://abolition.e2bn.org/people_25.html

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abolition movement. He worked with the Sierra Leone project of resettlement where he had to find a good place to live for the newly freed slaves. He defended his fellow Africans by claiming their rights in the House of Commons (para.7).

Frederick Douglass was a leader in this genre. He was born a slave in Talbot County, Maryland in 1818. His mother was a slave named Harriet Bailey and his father was a white man who never knew him. Separated from his mother at a young age, Douglass started a long journey as a slave shifting from a master to another. (Aillo, 2022, p.228). Although still a slave with no rights living in Baltimore, the young Douglass had an immense opportunity to learn how to read and to be educated by Mrs. Sophie Auld, his master's wife. Douglass (1845) said that learning is "the pathway from slavery to freedom" (p. 49). He was terribly whipped by his new master Edward Covey. The experience was really tough for Douglass but it encouraged him to escape from Covey. In 1838, he succeeded to escape via a steamboat and went to New York. He settled after that in Massachusetts where he became a lecturer and activist. Douglass had already acquired oratory skills during bondage by joining a secret debating society club with some friends (Aje, 2013). He met the very famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and worked with him in his weekly journal named *The Liberator*.

He published his narrative entitled *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, written by Himself* in 1845. The narrative went through nine British editions in its first two years (Lee, 2009, p.10).

As the U.S. Civil War drew closer, he expanded his arguments in many speeches, and editorials, publishing another book considered as his second autobiography entitled *My Bondage and My Freedom* ten years after the first (Sundstrom, 2012, p.11). Douglass established his own newspaper *The North Star*. He was a strong example of humanity, reason, and charisma and he challenged with his memorable speeches all the prevalent

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stereotypes at that time which minimize the African Americans. During the Civil Rights Mass Meeting held in Washington D.C on October 22, 1883, Douglass made a powerful ethical case versus bondage by saying “No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck” (Aillo, 2022, p.227).

William Wells Brown was another well-known representative of the genre. He was born in Lexington in 1814. He was sold various times and made multiple escapes until he succeeded in the New Year’s Day in 1834 when he flew in a steamboat to Cincinnati. He adopted as a middle and last name, Wells Brown, the name of the Quaker who helped him in his flight (Brown, 1847, p.105). He began a new journey in challenging the institution of slavery claiming liberty for his fellow African Americans. Brown eventually also became a lecturer on behalf of women's rights and temperance, but it was as a fugitive slave speaking on the evils of slavery that he was best known¹⁶.

He gave different oratories in both Europe and the United States about the evils of bondage and was really active in the abolition movement. In 1847, he was hired as a lecturer for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, moved to Boston, and published the story of his life as a slave and his escape from the South (Cossu-Beaumont & Parfait, 2009). The narrative was entitled *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave* and was followed by two books under the titles of *Three Years in Europe or Places I Have Seen and People I Have Met* and *Clotel, or, the President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States*. With the help of his friends who collected money for him, Brown succeeded to purchase his liberty in 1854 and became supporter of his fellows’ emigration to Haiti.

¹⁶ <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/freedom/text5/equiano.pdf>

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Black women slaves and writers had their own voice, their own suffering and their own works. There are many prominent female slave authors who contributed to the development of the genre particularly in the Antebellum Era.

Sojourner Truth or Isabella was considered as one of the greatest African-American figures during the nineteenth century. Her commitment in claiming the rights of the American citizens predominately women made her the iron American woman at that time. Sojourner Truth, born Isabella in 1797, was the daughter of James and Elizabeth (Betsey) Bomefree, slaves in Ulster County, New York, and she appeared to be of unmixed African ancestry (Painter, 1990, p.3). She passed from different owners since the age of nine. Married to a fellow slave when she was about 18, Isabella bore at least five children in slavery (Andrews, 2003, p.39).

She acquired the Van Wagenen name of the family who set her free. Isabella was gifted with physical strength and a formidable appearance. She was six feet tall, very dark of skin and strong of feature, with a deep and pleasantly resounding voice¹⁷. She was victim of the self-claimed prophet named Matthias who was a cheater at the end. Truth felt that god appointed her to go to the countryside to seek the truth and justice for her fellows. Truth met the white feminist named Olive Gilbert and dictated her story entitled *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* since she was illiterate. In 1851 she stood before a women's rights meeting in Akron, Ohio, and delivered the "Ain't I a Woman?" speech that, for better and for worse, stamped her image on the minds of many white feminists of the time (Andrews, 2003, p.40). She contributed along with her friends like Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists in supporting the passage which guaranteed the rights of vote to the African Americans in the fifteenth Amendment.

¹⁷ <https://familypeacecenter.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SojournerTruth.pdf>

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Harriet Jacobs was also among the icons of the slave narratives. Her story is a unique one. She shed light on the thing bondswomen suffered the most from which is the sexual abuse since she witnessed it with her master. She was born to a slave family. She enjoyed happy family life until the death of her mother (Tanritanir, 2011, p.162). She became the property of her mother's mistress who was kind to her and taught her how to read and sew. After the death of her mistress, Jacobs saw the dark face of the system.

Her mistress was three years old Mary. But the worst thing is that the girls' father began to abuse her sexually while she was just a teenager. From the time she entered the Norcom household until 1842, the year she escaped from slavery, Jacobs struggled to evade the sexual victimization that Dr. Norcom intended to be her fate. (Andrews, 2003, p.199). After being hidden about seven years in a crawl space in the house of her grandmother, she eventually succeeded to escape from her master with the aid of her family and friends to Philadelphia and then to New York. Harriet Jacobs started to evoke some realities regarding her life as a slave and the sexual assault she was exposed to after she gathered huge support from both abolitionists and feminists. Her story was proved as too controversial regarding its content for the readers' average. Nevertheless, in 1861, her narrative *entitled Incidents in the life of a Slave Girl* had finally seen the light after being printed and publicized by a Boston publisher.

The Slave Novel had its figures as well. It was represented by different white abolitionist in the example of Mattie Griffith or Harriet Beecher Stowe who had a significant role in challenging the spreading awareness among the white people particularly about the evils of the system.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's life demonstrates how ordinary people can do when they saw something wrong. She was born in 1811 in a small town called Litchfield. Her mother named Roxana Beecher, died when Harriet was a mere child of five years old. Her father

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was a really famous preacher in the pre-war era. Starting from the age of nine, she began to write weekly essays. At the age of thirteen and during the annual school show, Stowe gained the honour of having her composition read publicly. Her father liked a lot this composition and asked about the author. When the answer came, “Your daughter, sir,” Stowe experienced what she later called “the proudest moment of my life” (Cross, 1961, p. 399).

Although she was talented in painting all her life, her real amusement and profession was to paint using words. Stowe was married to Calvin Ellis who was a professor and biblical scholar and encouraged her to become a real literary woman. When the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law the following year implicated the North in just such family separations, Stowe began writing *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Hedrick, 2000). Her well known novel had an incredible success selling more than 300.000 in the United States and was even praised by the critics. The success of her work led Stowe to the glory and made people grasp more the brutality of slavery. She wrote another anti-slavery novel entitled *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* published in 1856. Rooted in common sense, democratic values, and her own experience as a woman and a mother, her views mirrored and appealed to those of the plain average. (Hedrick, 2000).

1.3.4. The Feminine Voice in the Accounts of Enslavement

Women had been under men’s control for centuries. In the early nineteenth century, the dominant understanding of gender claimed that women were the guardians of virtue and the spiritual heads of the home. Women were expected to be pious, pure, submissive, and domestic, and to pass these virtues on to their children because of the evangelical movement in America¹⁸. However, things changed progressively and women were released from the chains of male domination and their voices were clearly heard in the entire world.

¹⁸ <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1ay/chapter/womens-rights-in-antebellum-america/>

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Female slaves faced a harder case since they endured the brutality of slavery along with male's control.

It is important to acknowledge that many of these moments have been started by African American women who risked their lives and reputations to expose the abuses of men (Richmond, 2018). Bondswomen suffered a lot as mentioned before from their unjust separation with their children to the sexual and moral oppression. They had experienced a different type of slavery from that of men, a harsher one. At the beginning and with no legal protection and no one to confide in, silence for the sake of survival, was the only option (Smiley, 2015, p.5). The masters served of this situation to rape women and their daughters while bondsmen were unable to protect their families from such things. Even if a woman seemed agreeable to the situation, in reality she had no choice (Okoro, 2012, p.253).

Hence, the slave narratives were their voices. For instance, the aim of Harriet Jacobs in writing her own narrative was;

to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two million of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse...Only by experience can anyone realize how deep, and dark, and foul is that pit of abominations. (Jacobs, 1861, p.6).

She even staked her own repute by revealing such facts but she wanted to make her voice along with the one of persecuted women to the whole world. Jacobs' case was not exceptional since many bondswomen suffered from the same thing and actually they discussed the issue of the sexual assault to prove that it was common and recurrent. Different bondswomen unmasked their oppressors in the courtroom. The case of Celia, who murdered her master in June, 23, 1855 and told her story in Missouri courtroom. The

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date also marks a personal moment of one enslaved woman's resistance to slavery's shameful body politics (Kennedy, 2019).

In fact, there were other major cases in the example of Margaret Garner, an enslaved woman from Kentucky who tried, with her husband and children, to escape to freedom in 1856 told a packed courtroom in Cincinnati, Ohio about the abuse she and her mother had endured at the hands of the Gaines men (Richmond, 2018, para.8). Her courage in telling facts of her life and her agony as well attracted the author Toni Morrison who broadly grounded her very famous novel entitled *Beloved* on the story of Garner. African American female slaves have been combating with the institution of slavery for over two centuries hoping that their voices will be heard. White women's privilege does not insulate them from sexual assault, but African American women face both sexual assault and the erasure of their pain by white women whose voices drown out or discount the experiences of minority women (Richmond, 2018).

1.4. Discourse in the Slave Narratives

Before shedding light on Slave narratives' discourse, we need to define the term first along with the relationship between literature and language in addition to literary discourse analysis as an interdisciplinary method of anatomizing different pieces of literature in the example of the different Slave Narratives which are part of them. Eventually, there will be a complete understanding of the case.

1.4.1. Defining Discourse

Discourse by definition from Cambridge dictionary refers to communication be it speech or writing or a linguistic unit (such as a conversation or story) larger than a sentence. This definition is very important to know the function of Discourse analysis and its relation with literature. According to scholar Teun Van Dijk, the most vocational definition of discourse contains specific concentration on the practical use of language in a

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communicative situation. A discourse analyst is essentially interested in "who uses language, how, why and when" (van Dijk, 1997, p.3). Hence and starting from Van Dijk's quote, discourse analysis' definition comes around. Discourse analysts do what people in their everyday experience of language do instinctively and largely unconsciously: notice patterning of language in use and the circumstances (participants, situations, purposes, outcomes) with which these are typically associated (Trappes-Lomax, 2004, p.133).

Discourse Analysis is also termed as discourse studies since it is not restricted to an analysing method such as content analysis. It has also paramount theoretical target. And because the study of discourse manifests itself in virtually all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, it is appropriate to speak of a new 'cross-discipline' or even a 'trans-discipline'¹⁹. Discourse analysis started in the domain of psychology followed by linguistics, sociology and literary theory and it is persisting to evolve and extend to reach additional branches such as psychology, communication, anthropology and education. This diversity and modernity are proved as a positive characteristic of the domain. It is not bound by any single discipline, which means that there is a rich infusion of ideas and methods across disciplines. Nor is it committed to traditions of the past; indeed, many discourse analysts are rebels and innovators within their own home disciplines who have moved out to join other like-minded researchers (Bavelas, Kenwood & Phillips, 2000, p.103). That is why Wood and Kroger (2000) clarified that the existence of several kinds of discourse analysis is undoubtedly due to the developing nature of the field as well as to its diverse disciplinary origins (p.18).

1.4.2. Discourse and Literature

It is familiar among language faculties and departments that there is no relation from any kind between linguistics and literary studies and the two fields are proved to be

¹⁹ <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/The%20study%20of%20discourse.pdf>

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different. Even the interactivity between them is seen as really finite. Instead, the two domains have differed so fundamentally in their traditional conceptions and directions that immediate interaction has been difficult on purely logistic grounds (De Beaugrande, 1993, p.423).

The relationship between literature and linguistics was peaceful until the sixties. The scholars who commented on old texts had recourse to philology to study lexicon or grammar. Others used linguistics for a “stylistic” outlook on texts (Maingueneau, 2010, p.148). Roman Jakobson (1960) stated the link between literary studies and linguistics in a paper by saying “If there are some critics who still doubt the competence of linguistics to embrace the field of poetics, I privately believe that the poetic incompetence of some bigoted linguists has been mistaken for an inadequacy of the linguistic science itself. All of us here, however, definitely realize that a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unacquainted with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms (p.377).

Michel Foucault’s major contribution to current thought was his own depiction of power as something used, exerted and exposed by persons and does not belong to a chosen group of people or controlling class. This notion of power, which opposes the old models which identified it with specific social classes or groups, moves away from the idea that identities are fixed, stable, and clearly defined, allowing for a conception of individuals as vehicles who have the ability to transmit power (Foucault, 1980, p.72).

As a result, autobiography can be recognized as an element of strength, a device which was used by individuals to become an instrument of change, by which they structured their own discourses and so come through the popular inclination to standardize discourses. This was the case of the different slave narratives which were used as means of struggle against slavery. The power of slaves’ discourse made these accounts unique in

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form and content and notable elements of change predominately during the Antebellum era to face bondage. Foucault's interest was not only centred upon the discursive practices of society, but also on the non-discursive practices which accompanied those discourses of truth (Diaz, 2009, p.90).

1.4.3. Major Discourses in Female Slave Narratives

Male and female slaves discovered that they were stuck in a terrible system which forbade them from the least of their rights including taking decisions about their future, liberty and private life. They needed to renovate their own themselves as people and an entire race since they were suppressed by their oppressors and endured moral and cultural trauma. The following quote epitomizes everything "The Master says we are all free, but it don't mean we is white. And it don't mean we is equal" (George King, 1930, quoted in Baker & Baker, 1996, 238).

The French social theorist and literary critic Michel Foucault (2003) gave an illustration to his readers of the power of these discourses and how they could form the community;

At this point, we have all those biological-racist discourses of degeneracy, but also all those institutions within the social body which make the discourse of race struggle function as a principle of exclusion and segregation and, ultimately, as a way of normalizing society (p.61).

There are other ways which demonstrate the power of the racial discourse and how it affected both enslaved men and women particularly during the nineteenth century since this discourse was predominant at that time and the masters used it for their sake. This demarcation of race was made continually, in more subtle ways, such as always referring to the enslaved as "darkies" or "niggers" which were terms that whites reserved for people of colour (Lee, 2012).

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There was an incident of the same discourse that happened when the father of former slave Robert Glenn had been bought by a new master. The owner wanted to remind the slave of his real position in a different way “You think you are white do you? Now just to show you are black, I will not let you have your son at any price” (Berlin, 1998, p.284). The key to challenge oppression and to obtain liberty was in how the slaves could be educated, how to acquire language. This was the issue for the first generation of the African slaves who were brought using force from their homeland, persecuted and forced to work in inhuman conditions. Without the right linguistic skills that the slaves were deprived of from the start, due to a lack of education, it was incredibly hard for them to be heard. If someone is speechless, without words, they cannot voice themselves (Lahure, 2013, p.14).

The slaves were almost ruined by the whites physically and morally. They were dehumanized just because they were distinct in terms of the skin colour from them. Moreover, bondsmen and women suffered terribly from the hierarchy of the plantation, the master’s brutality, family disruption etc... William Wells Brown and his mother had experienced an incident which proved the domination of the master over his slaves when she was compelled to change the name of her son from William to Sandford just because the master’s nephew named William as well came to live in his uncle’s plantation. Brown was daily whipped because of his resistance and his tenacity to clutch to his real name. He minded how he “was not only hunting for liberty, but also hunting for a name” (Brown, 1847, p.97). They also witnessed emotional and bodily assault specifically women and children. Olive Gilbert recounted how Sojourner Truth faced a savage lashing just because she did not understand how to cook potato since she spoke Dutch and her new owner talked English “He whipped her till the flesh was deeply lacerated, and the blood streamed from her wounds- and the scars remain to the present day, to testify to the fact” (Gilbert,

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1850, p.26). Frederick Douglass (1845) also recalled how “often [...] awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks” of his aunt being whipped “upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood” (p.6).

Various scenes from the slave narratives denote how thralls suffered a lot in the society. They have tried to express their anger, woe and the pain caused by their oppressors under their unique mother tongue noting that the majority of these accounts are factual and credible. Through their genuine language the readers can grasp what it meant to be considered a piece of property that could be bought and sold, an object whose sole purpose and function was to make life more comfortable for the master and his family, but also how black people consciously struggled to maintain their dignity and humanity, and their moral and cultural integrity despite the general cruelty, inhumanity and degradation of slavery in American society (Gibson, 2018).

Female slaves in particular witnessed a different experience of the system in comparison with males. What is worse is that all women at that time were seen inferior to men. Hence, being a bondswoman means a double suffering in a racist and patriarchal society. These things were clearly stated in the different slave narratives written by female slaves during the Antebellum period.

1.4.3.1. Torture/Oppression

The African American women’s lives were marked by the issue of slavery in which they were brutally tortured and oppressed by their masters. In recent years, scholars have begun to pay more attention to issues of gender in their study of slavery and claim that female slaves faced additional burdens and even more challenges than some of the male slaves (Ramey, 2014). They came from societies terrorised by extreme cruelty. They have survived to write, teach, and sing about it, and they have much to teach us, especially in the areas of attainment, or retribution and reconciliation (Blea, 2003, p.93).

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The nineteenth century female slave narratives are more than personal accounts. They represented the voice of the oppressed women in the shadow of a controlling American white community. Johnnie M. Stover (2003) talked about the major suffering of bondswomen stated in different slave narratives by saying “When I refer to "black women autobiographers" in this particular context, I am noting those black women who wrote public texts representing their resistance to the oppressions of enslavement” (p.134).

Enslaved black women were never seen as human beings with specific rights and a certain value but merely chattel. African American women were excluded from the definition of women (Carby, 1987, p.6). Bondswomen were forced to do quite the same tasks as men in different plantations in addition to the households’ tasks from cleaning, washing clothes, setting tables and greeting guests. Women in urban spaces sold their wares as hucksters at local markets, laboured as seamstresses and laundresses, and worked with men in brickmaking factories and as body servants (Ramey & Parker, 2018, p.157). In case of a refusal, female slaves witnessed the most severe kinds of torture in order to force them to obey the orders of their masters.

Various scenes from the Antebellum slave narratives demonstrate oppression and torments over bondswomen. Frederick Douglass recalled the cruelty of his aunt’s master named captain Anthony over her since he was attracted by Hester’s fairness and he became really angry when he saw her talking to a bondsman. Douglass was shocked when discovering the torture her aunt’s experienced by saying:

I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember anything. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood- stained gate, the entrance to the hell of

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slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it (Douglass, 1845, p.5).

William Wells Brown described another kind of oppression, the moral and emotional one in his narrative when he recounted an incident happened between his master named Mr. Walker and a newly slave woman bought by the master. Her child was crying most of the day because of hunger and this made the master very outrageous. Brown said:

In the morning, just as we were about to start, the child again commenced crying. Walker stepped up to her, and told her to give the child to him. The mother tremblingly obeyed. He took the child by one arm, as you would a cat by the leg, walked into the house, and said to the lady, “Madam, I will make a present of this little nigger; it keeps such a noise that I can’t bear it (Brown, 1847, p.49).

Sojourner Truth talked in her narrative about the slave auctions as a form of oppression and described it as “a terrible affair to its victims, and its incidents and consequences are graven on their hearts as with a pen of burning steel” (Gilbert, 1850, p.24). She also spoke about her master’s treatment to his slaves including her. She referred to cattle as she mentioned Mr. Dumont who “treated his slaves with all the consideration he did his other animals” (Gilbert, 1850, p.30). Finally, she described the torture of her master John Nealy and how he considerably lashed her “with a bundle of rods, prepared in the embers, and bound together with cords” (Gilbert, 1850, p.25).

Harriet Jacobs was the perfect example of oppression through her narrative entitled *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. She experienced oppression in the form of racism and sexual exploitation. She described how it was easy to rape a black woman since she belonged to an inferior race. Such incidents were seen as non-sense in the southern

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community. She stated “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 fiends who bear the shape of men” (Jacobs, 1861, p.45). She even got rid from her situation which includes mistreatment and hitting. She wanted her liberty or death instead since the moral and physical oppression she witnessed was painful. She uttered “Give me liberty, or give me death.” (Jacobs, 1861, p.52).

The discourse of oppression and torture was not the only one which characterized both the female slave’s life and their narratives. Religion, faithfulness, sexual assault and family disruption are also paramount discourses which shape the power of these accounts.

1.4.3.2. Sexual Harassment

Sexual abuse was the most horrible thing that female slaves suffered from predominantly in the antebellum era and it was clearly mentioned in different slave narratives as it affected various enslaved families and the whole American society. Slave plantation and, specifically, sexual violence- understood not only as a form of sexual deviance but central to the very definition of it- established whiteness as the requisite racial category for heteronormative qualification even before slavery's formal end (Abdur-Rahman, 2006, p.226).

This issue became familiar in the United States at that time to the point of not attracting any attention by the U.S government. In fact, Sexism was an integral part of the social and political order white colonizers brought with them from their European homelands, and it was to have a grave impact on the fate of enslaved black women (Hooks, 1982, p.15).

Bondswomen experienced the brutality of slavery from childhood. Nevertheless, it was not the end but only the onset of suffering. As they progressed from childhood into

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adulthood, the complexities of the female slave experience as a young woman, a wife, and as a victim of sexual abuse were clearly manifested in the nineteenth century (Schroeder, 2003, p.25). During the Antebellum period, the definitive locations for practising outlaw sexual attitudes were the quarters and the plantations. More than simply a condition of black women's experience under slavery, rape serves as a useful paradigm for assessing and describing the position and experience of black people in total under slavery's brutal regime (Abdur-Rahman, 2006, p.230).

The women's silence towards such acts was never a sign of satisfaction but of inability, the silence of the oppressed who could not do anything against a wrongful institution which robbed their lowest rights. Since a child's freedom was tied to mother's status, if an enslaved mother gave birth, the child would also be enslaved – regardless of the father's status. Thus, sexual abuse by the master might be followed nine months later by more chattel property added to the estate (Harris, 2017).

There was a high average of sexual harassment over female slaves in the Antebellum era. Historians have estimated that at least 58% of all enslaved women between 15 and 30 years of age were sexually assaulted by white men during the antebellum period (Stapleton, 2014, para.1). What is worse is that the white women's reaction over their husbands' act helped the spread of racism and sexism in their community. White women reacted to sexual violence perpetrated against enslaved black women by their husbands in a variety of ways including ignoring or denying the behaviour, divorcing their husbands, or punishing the enslaved black women who were sexually victimized (ibid). The institution of bondage not only dismissed the claims of the female slaves to spousal and familial bonds but also forbade them from the basic rights including sexual choice and physical anatomy.

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The slave narratives as they were considered a mirror of what the slaves' witnessed during the time of slavery, denounced robustly the sexual abuse over women. Different writers of the genre described the evils of such acts as well as its physical, moral and emotional sequels.

Harriet Jacobs was a victim of sexual harassment by her master named Dr. Flint who never let her live a normal life until his death. Various passages from her narrative demonstrated how he abused her. He began whispering scandalous words in her ears. This attitude is called by psychologists an inappropriate sexualization, which encourages a child to interpret her own value primarily in sexual terms" (Kerber, Kesler-Harris & Kish, 1995, p.135). Linda Brent or Jacobs understood her master's intentions. However, she was afraid from the effect of resisting him. She stated "He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things" (Jacobs, 1861, p.39). The master forced her to have a sexual relationship with him when he told her that "he was going to build a small house for me, in a secluded place, four miles away from the town. I shuddered; but I was constrained to listen" (Jacobs, 1861, p.77). By the death of Dr. Flint, Linda ended decades of fear and persecution.

Elizabeth Keckley experienced also harassment by the white school master named Mr. Bingham who was ordered by her mistress. She recounted the details of the sexual abuse in her narrative entitled *Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* by saying "I was eighteen years of age, was a woman fully developed, and yet this man coolly bade me take down my dress" (Keckley, 2017, p.33). She tried to resist but she ended by submitting to the abuse of Mr. Bingham "Then he picked up a raw-hide, and began to play it freely over my shoulders" (Keckley, 2017, p.34). She was forced again to have sex with another white man whose name she did not mention

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[...] For four years a white man—I spare the world his name—had base designs upon me. I do not care to dwell upon this subject, for it is one that is fraught with pain. Suffice it to say, that he persecuted me for four years, and I—I—became a mother (Keckley, 2017, p.39).

Isabella Bomefree or Sojourner Truth experienced a sexual abuse but in silence since according to her, some events are so unaccountable or unreasonable that they are not for the public ear (Crawford, 2002, p.26). So, historians assume that even if Truth did not mention harassment explicitly in her narratives, she was really abused by John Dumont, her former master. She was even a sexual tool between the hands of Mrs. Sally Dumont, her mistress. Painter (1997) said “The sexual abuse came from her mistress Sally Dumont, and Truth could tell about it only obliquely, in scattered pages in her Narrative. Truth spoke straightforwardly about most of her suffering in slavery, but only vaguely about this” (P.16). Finally, Frederick Douglass and when describing the whipping executed on his aunt named Hester, he also meant sexual abuse while his aunt remained defenceless and impotent against the will of her master;

He took her into the kitchen, and stripped her from neck to waist, leaving her neck, shoulders, and back, entirely naked. He then told her to cross her hands, calling her at the same time ad d b - h. After crossing her hands, he tied them with a strong rope, and led her to a stool under a large hook in the joist, put in for the purpose. He made her get upon the stool, and tied her hands to the hook. She now stood fair for his infernal purpose. Her arms were stretched up at their full length, so that she stood upon the ends of her toes (Douglass, 1845, p.4).

The discourse of sexuality during the Antebellum era was prevalent and the aforementioned passages were just tiny samples of the torture and agony female slaves

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witnessed in their extended journey to challenge hegemony and towards their dream which is liberty.

1.4.3.3. Womanhood and Motherhood

During the Antebellum period, slave women were the most affected by the evils of slavery as Jacobs stated "Slavery is a terrible thing for men; but it is far more terrible for women" (Jacobs, 1861, p.86). Women were expected to be wives and mothers (for slave women, often mothers to their own children as well as their masters' children), and there was little room for negotiation of those duties (Masterson, 2013, p.1). They experienced the struggle of motherhood and womanhood devaluation at that time since most female slaves were mothers, who had to witness their children being sold to different owners (Bos, 2016, p.8). Moreover, they were sexually exploited by their masters who caused terrible psychological results to them.

Womanhood was an important topic covered in female slave narratives since the position of women in general during the nineteenth century was the heart of attention. In fact, the ideal of an American true woman during the antebellum period was coined by four cardinal virtues of the Victorian Age: piety, purity, domesticity and submissiveness (Welter, 1966, p.152). During the nineteenth century, the cult of true womanhood was represented by ladies from middle and high-class. Even poor women could achieve this position in the Victorian society. Therefore, an enslaved woman in Antebellum America could not have any prospect to live up to this position. In fact, the features of being a true antebellum woman were divided into four cardinal virtues: piety, purity, domesticity and submissiveness (ibid).

The most important point in woman's virtue was the ratio of devotion and religion. It was seen as the "source of a woman's strength" and symbolized a "gift given by God and nature" (Bos, 2016, p.9). Talking about history, a woman should be born Christian and of

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course her behaviour must be gentle and blameless. In the American society, a woman who lost her virginity before the wedding was not seen as a true woman. After “bestowing her greatest treasure upon her husband she became completely dependent upon him without any legal or emotional existence of her own” (Welter, 1966, p.154-155). So, the principles were very strict concerning women’s demeanour at that time. In terms of the attribute of domesticity, every woman should be proud of it since her home was considered as a cheerful place where the woman herself gained a much higher prestige (Frintrop, 2014). In addition to that, the concept of motherhood increased a woman’s status and symbolized a “climax of happiness” (Welter, 1966, p.171). The household field for female slaves in the southern society was restricted by the system of bondage which was featured by labour and production.

Concerning the last attribute, submissiveness, women who were living according to the Victorian model of true womanhood should act passively since men served as protectors of the family (Frintrop, 2014). The case of enslaved women was different since they were obliged to be docile because they were women and thralls as well. The concept of true womanhood was culturally determined by powerful white men who used that cultural construct to judge a woman (Welter, 1966, p.152). White women had better conditions even if they were dependent to men since they were not stuck in the issue of slavery. The situation of the female slaves was much more complicated. They were confined in a double persecution: being a woman which means inferiority in comparison to men, and being a slave which means an object for their oppressors.

Motherhood and womanhood were among the major concepts mentioned in different female slave narratives. Harriet Jacobs presented her issue in different passages in her narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Harriet Jacobs represented her fears when she gave birth to Ellen when she said “As I held her in my arms, I thought how well it

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would be for her if she never waked up” (Jacobs, 1861, p.87). Linda had the chance to escape from Dr. Flint but she thought about the future of her children. She could not let them alone facing the brutality of slavery and this represented the struggle of motherhood. She stated:

I could have made my escape alone; but it was more for my helpless children than for myself that I longed for freedom. Though the boon would have been precious to me, above all price, I would not have taken it at the expense of leaving them in slavery (Jacobs, 1861, p.89).

There is also a significant passage which demonstrates how a slave woman loved and cared for their children. Linda did not care for her own position, for her the most important thing is the life and the future of her infants. Thus, she was so happy when the father of her children purchased them “Whatever slavery might do to me, it could not shackle my children” (Jacobs, 1861, p.93).

Mary Prince also experienced the difficulties of a slave woman since she was obliged to be pregnant from her master Mr. D because if she did not, he would whip her to death. In her narrative, it becomes clear that the “discourses of womanhood, marriage, motherhood, the family, and domesticity were integral to the female slave experience” (Barron, 2009, p. 53). Sojourner Truth was the example of both motherhood and womanhood. She suffered a lot for her children even most of them were taken from her unjustly. She was working on the plantation and her children along with her

When Isabella went to the field to work, she used to put her infant in a basket, tying a rope to each handle, and suspending the basket to a branch of a tree, set another small child to swing it. It was thus secure from reptiles and was easily administered to, and even lulled to sleep (Gilbert, 1850, p.38).

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She also taught her children the right morals and this was the role of a true woman and mother:

I have already alluded to her care not to teach her children to steal, by her example; and she says, with groanings that cannot be written, 'The Lord only knows how many times I let my children go hungry, rather than take secretly the bread I liked not to ask for.' All parents who annul their preceptive teachings by their daily practices would do well to profit by her example. (Gilbert, 1850, p.37).

Female slaves endured numerous tribulations and experienced distinct forms of suffering headed by an affliction in their femininity and their own children. Yet, this served as a huge cataleptic for them to challenge the constraints and demonstrated through their narratives that they had the courage and the boldness to defend themselves and do whatever they could for the sake of their children.

1.5. Language in the Female Slaves' Tales

The Narratives of enslavement are unique in their genre so that we can find several aspects to focus on in such works. They are famous for instance with the notion of orality or even with their dialect knowing that it differs largely from language even though borrowed from the French language. The term dialect appeared first time in the era of Renaissance as a learned loan from Greek while language is older as it replaced both words "speech" and "tongue" back into Middle English (Haugen, 922).

The black Language is often described as Ebonics which was first coined in 1973 by American Professor Robert Williams as he attempted to describe the African American speech as "Black Sound" and this term actually succeeded in making scholars and linguistic amateurs to avoid some tacky connotations in the example of "Nonstandard Negro English". Right after that, another term appears to describe the Black English

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known as The African American Vernacular English by the Oakland school board which suggested that AAVE had its own rules and structure (Pullum, 1999, p.43).

The slaves' accounts rhetoric is too vast as distinct male and female slaves were inspired by both their experience under the system of slavery and their will to record the cruelties they encountered. The aim was to shed the light on their situation and of course to be kept as historical documents for the new generations to know well about their lives and the sacrifice they made to seek liberty and equality in the society. The slave narratives were products of a specific time and specific places which shaped the African American identity in the first place. Consequently, a unique language as American Historian Lawrence Levine declares: "it is a *mélange* of accuracy and fantasy, of sensitivity and stereotype, of empathy and racism" (Jones, 1999, p.114) while he was examining the nineteenth century trends in literature.

As we are tackling three different forms of the Slave Narratives, the language used varies from Standard English to dialect. At the same time, numerous distinctions between Ebonics and Standard English are noticeable in linguistics. First, they are both different but scarcely related systems in linguistics which prevail in the African American linguistic stock. Moreover, what distinguished the Standard American English from the Vernacular one is the regulation as the standard average resists to different linguistic shifts in addition of holding unique phonology and grammar rules as Chambers (1989) described it as "more restricted or tightly constrained in the grammar and phonology (p.246).

To that extent, we can notice that the AAVE breaks the linguistic and grammar rule as it gives certain freedom to the speaker to alter and even making some deviations regardless to the standard norms due to several social elements. This results in making the African American Vernacular English involving a collection of overlapping linguistic, social and psychological factors (Wolfram, p.204).

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The Black English contains several linguistic, phonological and grammatical features. For instance, some semantics protraction to some words which existed in English such as busted for “ugly person”, trendy “fashionable person”, honkey “white person” and cool for “someone who is brilliant and exhilarating” (Urban Dictionary). In addition to that, AAVE is characterized by different changes from Standard English which makes it a unique dialect. Among the main characteristics of this dialect we can find shifts in terms of phonology in the example of the intrusive /r/, unstressed syllable deletion and the monophthongization or grammar such as the multiple negation, double modals and the subject-verb agreement.

1.6. Conclusion

In order to put the research in a substantial and fixed theme which is the different female slave narratives, this first chapter was devoted to historicizing slavery and slave narratives as well. Bondage was a horrible system for humanity and a stigma for the African slaves who found themselves stuck in an institution that made them work and live under cruel conditions just to make profits from them. At the very beginning, only few African people have reached the American land on a Dutch ship dating back to 1619. Soon after, the colonisers saw these Africans as a cheaper source than their indentured servants who came from mostly from Europe. As a result, they started to employ them on their fields. Because the plan worked well, six to seven million slaves were brought to America according to historians. The sugar plantations created a brutal, deadly world for the African slaves. They also caused much unease among the whites, who rightfully feared murderous uprisings of the blacks they kept in slavery (Deford, 2006, p.24).

After the end of the American Revolution, the system continued as the white Americans considered it as decisive since it is economically beneficial particularly in the southern states where there were huge plantations. So, the slave trade became prominent

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which caused harm for the African slaves. Families were separated and violence was the tool to restrain the thralls. Black slaves worked in the tobacco fields during the seventeenth and the eighteenth century and cotton afterwards since it became really important in the domain of industry with the coming of the industrial revolution.

The Antebellum period in the United States was crucial in the journey of the slaves since it came before the American Civil war (1861-1865) during which they witnessed the darkest side of bondage. Whippings, insults and sexual abuse were among different things executed on slaves. Despite the rise of the abolitionist movement and different slave rebellions along with different runaways, the system continued predominately in the south since the northern states abolished slavery after changing their economic plans. Consequently, this pushed different free and fugitive slaves to write their personal accounts known as the slave narratives. This encouraged different white abolitionists to write another version of the genre, some fictional stories based on real facts and by the way, these testimonies contributed a lot in helping the African slaves to challenge the dominance and the oppression of their masters which caused an emancipation later on.

The slave narratives are the testimonies of the African slaves in which they related their own stories with the system of slavery. The genre was predominant in the nineteenth century and it was substantial in creating a national debate over bondage and its evils in the United States. It took the format of an autobiography and it can be written by the slave himself/herself or dictated to another one who took the process of penning the work in case of the illiteracy of the slave. The genre contained specific features and had its major figures in the example of Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Jacobs. Actually, the genre was the major contributor in the developing of the African American literature and paved the way for the next generations of writers to pen other versions of this literary genre.

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Since the focus is to point out the discourse in different female slave narratives as bondswomen experienced a different suffering from the one of slave men from the unjust separation with their husbands and children, sexual harassment, the struggle of motherhood and the devaluation of womanhood, we started by defining discourse analysis and its relation with literature since it will be used in analysing the three different female slave narratives following with the major discourses in the narratives of the enslaved women.

The following chapter will deal with discourse analysis of Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Olive Gilbert's *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. It is considered as a practical part will focus on the major discourses in the three selected works as well as an attempt to cover the linguistic side in each of them.

Chapter II

Voice of Bondswomen: Fundamental Discourses in the Chosen Slaves' Accounts

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Chapter Two: Voice of Bondswomen: Fundamental Discourses in the Chosen Slaves' Accounts

2.1. Introduction

The narratives of enslavement encompass one of the most effective mores in American literature, materializing the form, discourses and themes of utmost debatable pieces of writing in the American history. These accounts, either written by the slave himself, dictated orally or written by different abolitionists have nearly similar purposes, stories, plans to be released from bondage and even quite the same endings. Usually, Antebellum slave narratives characterize life under slavery as an extravagant social, intellectual and spiritual distress. Most slave narratives portray a process by which the narrator realizes the injustices and dangers facing him or her, tries to resist them—sometimes physically, sometimes through deceit or verbal opposition—but eventually resolves to risk everything for the sake of freedom (Andrews, 2010).

Nevertheless, speaking about the female slave narratives particularly, few differences are noticed in how bondswomen expressed everything they experienced, starting from the woe caused by system over them especially that their situation was way worse than men at that time, and this makes the difference between the distinct forms of the genre and influenced the authenticity of the works as well. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the main discourses in the selected narratives and attempt to conduct an analysis by which we highlight the differences principally in the matter of faithfulness and sharpness of the messages delivered to the audience beginning with torture and oppression as principal discourses followed by resistance and freedom.

Before digging into discourse analysis, the summary of each narrative should be provided as it is substantial to facilitate the task for the readers of this research work to grasp what the stories are about along with main events and turning points in each of them.

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2.2. Works' Summaries

The three narratives of Jacobs, Stowe, and the Gilbert/Truth collaboration represent an epoch, a symbol of women's works of art. These accounts are different from each other in terms of many aspects but have a similar aim. That is why and before the phase of analysis, summaries are of great benefit for the readers to discover such writings.

2.2.1. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

The Autobiography evokes the story of a former slave named Harriet Jacobs in which she recalls her lengthy journey from being a slave to acquiring her freedom with all the issues, dilemmas, and agonies she witnessed. The work opens up with an introduction of the female slave writer through which she expounds the reasons behind revealing some delicate and private details of her life even if she preferred to keep them reserved at the beginning. Then, a preface by the abolitionist and writer named Lydia Maria Child who confirms the authenticity of the events narrated and written by Jacobs who actually used the pseudonym of Linda Brent instead of her real name since she felt ashamed of such incidents in her life and because she was afraid to be recognized and then killed by some people mentioned in her work.

The story begins with Linda as a happy child living with her father and mother under one roof of a kind mistress. She did not recognize that she is beneath the chains of a system which will humiliate and depress her. The death of her parents and mistress was a turning point in her life. She then knew that she was a slave saying: "I was now old enough to begin to think of the future; and again and again I asked myself what they would do with me" (p.10). She received an answer soon after when she was given to the sister of her mistress as a servant for her daughter of the Flint's and here starts the terrible period of her life.

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Dr. Flint was a wealthy, harsh and lustful master. He pursued her from a place to another, whispering filthy things in her ears, sending her grimy notes and even promised to build a remote cabin far from the sights of his wife to convince Linda to have a sexual relationship with him. She fought and resisted his advances. Nevertheless, he tried each time with her using different methods “Sometimes he had stormy, terrific ways, that made his victims tremble; sometimes he assumed a gentleness that he thought must surely subdue” (p.30). She only had her grandmother to protect her as she was a free woman. Yet, Dr. Flint became obsessed with Linda and wanted her as soon as possible which pushes her to be involved in a disgraceful thing but an obligatory one according to her in order to gain more protection and freedom from her master.

Linda met a white unmarried man named Mr. Sands. She had the opportunity to speak to him different times about her agonies with her master. She also felt him interested with her. Therefore, she came up with an idea. She got involved a love affair with Mr. Sands in order to displease her master and then decide to sell her. Linda was also quite sure that her lover will buy her especially that she had two children with him called Benny and Ellen. The plan was working well but her master was a malicious man. He said that she will never be sold and her children will be his properties.

Linda’s dream about liberty was broken down. In fact, she became worried about her children as well who grew up with a gloomy future as slaves especially that their father who purchased them before had not released them in addition to the continuous threats of Dr. Flint who gave her two choices as he states: ‘If you agree to what I am about to propose, you and they shall be free.... But I must let you know there are two sides to my proposition; if you reject the bright side, you will be obliged to take the dark one. You must either accept my offer, or you and your children shall be sent to your young master's plantation’ (p.93).

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At this point, Linda was compelled to think about a new plan to defend herself and children from the claws of her master. She escaped first to the house of a white woman who was a friend of her grandmother and concealed there. Dr. Flint looked for her day and night and the place she was hidden in became menacing. Linda then hides in a small space below the roof of her grandmother's house and demanded her friends to spread false news that she escaped to the north. Linda spent seven years in the attic trying to read and looked on her children remotely. Nevertheless, the longer she remained there, the more it degraded her health. It was 'horrible to sit or lie in a cramped position day after day, without one gleam of light' (p.128). During her risky disappearance, her lover was married and became a member in the American congress. He even took Ellen to Washington to the house of his cousin to look after her. Linda realized that Mr. Sands had not a real intention to free her children and decided to follow them to the northern soil.

A plan for escape had been set by her friend Peter. She escaped via a ship through Philadelphia and then New York with the help of a friendly captain. Linda's first task as a free woman was to find her daughter Ellen who lived in the house of Mrs. Hobbs the cousin of Mr. Sands. She finally had an emotional meeting with Ellen. Benny remained with her grandmother until they will find another plan to make him join the rest. Soon after, Linda obtained a job as a nurse for the Bruces. She always praised their humanity and kindness towards her. Dr. Flint did not surrender and continually sent letters to Linda saying that she will be treated. She was concerned particularly about her son but she was relieved when she heard that he was sent to the north accompanied by William.

This part focused on Linda's life in the north with some incidents about the prejudice over the black race and how bad they were treated by the northerners too. Linda claimed her daughter Ellen to live with her. Mrs. Hobbs finally accepted and the mother, daughter along with son went to Boston where Linda managed to live with a friend and share costs.

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Time passed and Mrs. Bruce died. This was a huge loss for the protagonist since she found a truly humane and warm heart unlike the majority of the whites she met. Mr. Bruce had married again having a new baby. He asked Linda to return as a nurse another time. She accepted letting Ellen with her friend and Benny in a boarding institution.

The government passed the Fugitive Slave Act which caused a total terror for Linda especially the thought of being recaptured and brought back to Dr. Flint. She did not have another choice except to relate her story to Mrs. Bruce telling her that she is a fugitive slave. Mrs. Bruce helped her for an escape letting her baby with her as a sort of protection. Linda went to New England and returned after the withdrawal of the search. Dr. Flint died a moment after but the story was not over as Emily now nineteen years old claimed her as she is her actual mistress and Linda continue to live in fear. Yet, there was a dose of hope as the financial situation of Emily and her husband was degraded. Mrs. Bruce offered to purchase Linda's liberty and Emily accepted making an end to years of torments and agony. In the end of the narrative, the protagonist recounted the death of her grandmother and uncle and expressed her hope to have a house of her own in the near future as she continued to work for Mrs. Bruce with all the devotion and love.

2.2.2. Uncle Tom's Cabin

Harriet Beecher Stowe's work deals with a collection of sketches depicting the cruelty and the suffering faced by the African Slaves in the American society. The novel does not really reflect its title. The focus is not only on Uncle Tom but on distinct characters as there are various heroes and villains in the work.

The story starts with a portrayal of Mr. Shelby's plantation and then a discussion between him and a slave trader named Mr. Haley. They were negotiating the selling of some of Shelby's slaves as he fell on debts. Uncle Tom, the faithful and wise slave belonged to the list of sale as he was 'a large, broad- chested, powerfully- made man, of a

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full glossy black, and a face whose truly African features were characterized by an expression of grave and steady good sense, united with much kindness and benevolence' (p. 32).

On the other side, the writer describes a separated couple living under slavery composed of George Harris, the intelligent slave who received an awful treatment by his master and who lived far from his wife and Eliza, the beautiful and faithful servant of Mrs. Shelby who lived with her son Harry. She was doing her usual household tasks when she heard the conversation of Mr. Shelby and Mr. Haley and figured out that her son will be sold along Uncle Tom. She directly decided to escape in the middle of the night as her horrible nightmare was to see her Harry separated from her unjustly. So, she had the plan to go to Canada as her husband told her about his plan to escape there too. She had no idea whether she will meet her husband another time or not. All what she thought about is her son's safety. Mr. Haley came to take his properties and discovered the escapade of Eliza. He became outraged and followed her with his slave catchers as they saw her 'as she vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore, on to the raft of ice beyond' (p.81) and succeeded to cross the Ohio River when she was aided by Mr. Symmes who guided her to the house of Senator Bird who ironically was against the help of the slaves. Nevertheless, he changed his idea as he heard Eliza's story and provided food and dwelling for her.

Uncle Tom on the other hand, refused to escape and make his master in a trouble with a trader. Mr. Haley is back to Shelby's home deceived and furious as he failed in catching Eliza. All the slaves in the plantation were in dismal but this could not change anything as the trader managed to take Uncle Tom with him in a steamboat. On their way to New Orleans, Tom met a little girl named Evangeline and there was an immediate chemistry between them. He also saved her from drowning as 'by some sudden movement, the little one suddenly lost her balance and fell sheer over the side of the boat into the

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water' (p.194). After that, Little Eva convinced her father named Augustine St. Clare to buy him to become her personal servant and this changed the destination and fate of Uncle Tom as new trials were about to launch.

Tom found Mr. St. Clare's home very friendly and agreeable. He became a coachman for the family and spent a good time there surrounded by Eva who was loved by all the people particularly her family and even the slaves as they found her a pure angelic little girl. Tom's satisfaction does not persist for a long time as he saw Eva's health in regression. Her 'little hands had grown thinner, and her skin more transparent, and her breath shorter; and how, when she ran or played in the garden, as she once could for hours, she became soon so tired and languid'(p.340). She succeeded in convincing her father to free all the slaves including Uncle Tom. When the latter heard the news, he became as a flying bird willing to return to his wife and children. Yet, Eva was dead of consumption. Augustine was mournful after the loss of his daughter and soon was killed as he was interfering in a tavern brawl without freeing his slaves. Uncle Tom's dreams about liberty were ruined as Mr. St. Clare's wife named Mary who was a selfish and cruel woman decided to sell all the slaves in an auction. Uncle Tom fell in the hands of Simon Legree who was a ruthless and dishonourable slave owner. The latter bought the poor slave and became his new master.

Meanwhile, George Harris in disguise succeeded in escaping from his master and quickly found out that his wife had escaped too willing to go to Canada but she was concealed in the home of the Quackers who were known of helping the defenceless slaves to escape. George managed to join his family and together started to prepare their bolt for freedom. The family along with two other escaped slaves had been driven from a place to another to reach the wharf. Yet, some slave catchers pursued them and an altercation started between them caused the injury of one of the pursuers. The generosity of George

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and Eliza forced them to take the wounded man to be treated. As an answer to this kindness, he recommended Eliza to be disguised so that they could cross safely to Canada and that is what happened. Freedom became a reality after long years of agony and the family 'stood still till the boat had cleared; and then, with tears and embrace, the husband and wife, with their wondering child in their arms, knelt down and lifted up their hearts to God!' (p.505).

Tom contrarily faced another destiny while he became the property of the murderer Simon Legree. Kicking and beating with and without reason. But Uncle Tom never lost faith and confidence in God and continued to hope for better days. He met a slave named Cassy who was a sex toy for Legree and heard her awful story. They became friends along with fifteen years old Emmeline who had been bought and separated from her mother. The two slave women decided one day to escape. Cassy had a good plan and asked Uncle Tom to join them. He refused but he encouraged them to do so. The idea was that they will conceal themselves in the garret of Legree while the master will think they had escaped. Once he lost hope to find them, they will go for real. Legree asked Tom about their place and the latter did not want to answer. The master became furious and beat him to death.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shelby died and his son George who was closely related to Uncle Tom came to acquire his freedom as he had promised him years ago. However, it was late as Tom had fainted. There was an emotional encountering between the two that ended by the death of Uncle Tom. George took Uncle Tom and buried him so that at least he will be honoured at his death. On his way back, he met the family of George Harris along with Cassy, Emmeline and Madame de Thoux. Eliza discovered that Cassy is her mother while George found his sister Madame de Thoux. Harriet Beecher Stowe ended her work with different lessons acquired from the incidents evoked to the readers about the evils of slavery.

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2.2.3. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*

The dictated narrative evokes the story of Isabella AKA Sojourner Truth from childhood as a slave till after getting her liberty passing from various memorable events of her life. Isabella was born a slave living with her parents James and Betsey and numerous brothers and sisters who she could not count as she was illiterate. She belonged to Colonel Ardinburgh her very first master who she did not recall anything about him. She was born in Ulster County in the north of the United States and she could only speak Dutch as the family she belonged to were part of the low Dutch.

After the death of the first master, the whole family became the legal property of his son named Charles Ardinburgh who did not live a lot as he died eight years after. Here the family became under the threat of the auction and that is what happened as the heirs decided to sell the children. Isabella found herself separated from her mother and father knowing that she was only nine years old. Because she was young, Isabella was struck off, for the sum of one hundred dollars, to one John Nealy, of Ulster County, New York; and she had the impression that in this sale she was connected with a lot of sheep (p.26). New trials of the young girl had commenced with her new master. The latter was cruel towards her seizing each opportunity to whip and kick her severely and she had actually a problem of communication with the Nealy's as she spoke only Dutch and they talked only English. Hence, she was rebuked, humiliated and lashed by her master each time she failed in doing the tasks given to her correctly as she could not understand.

Isabella lived in turmoil with John Nealy. She, at that time, began to know God in a better way trying to follow the religious instructions of her mother. She prayed and asked for a better place where she can find peace and she was always confident that God will answer her prayers. A moment after, a fisherman named Scriver came and bought her from John Nealy. She was happy as she saw that God sent her a new master as a rescue. She

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described the period she spent with him as relatively good in comparison with the previous one but it was not the thing she looked for. 'It was a life that suits her well for the time—being as devoid of hardship or terror as it was of improvement; a need which had not yet become a want' (p.29). Isabella did not stand so long with Scriver since he accepted to sell her to John Dumont by 1810.

New experiences of the protagonist had been launched with her new master. John Dumont trusted Isabella and this made her do anything to please him. She admired him and tried to be at the height of his expectations to the point of making the other slaves mock her. Isabella was married to another slave named Thomas who had two previous wives but separated from him as they were sold because the marriage of the slaves was not recognized in the American society. The couple lived together and had five children. As the law of banning slavery in New York appeared, John Dumont promised Isabella that 'if she would do well, and be faithful, he would give her 'free papers,' one year before she was legally free by statute' (p.39). Once came the appointed period, he refused to free her and Isabella decided to escape as a result.

She said she asked God when and where she will go and she had a thought that she should leave before dawn to a white man whom she knew before, called Levi Rowe. He guided her to the house of Isaac Van Vagner who welcomed her with a great hospitality. Dumont found out that Isabella is gone and followed her to the new place she was in asking her to return. She said to him 'No, I *won't* go back with you.' He said, 'Well, I shall take the *child*.' This also was as stoutly negative (p.43). Here, Isaac Van Vagner interfered and proposed to buy Isabella's last year of service from Dumont and the latter agreed. Van Vagner was the last master of our protagonist. He was a kind and generous man. He said to Isabella to stop calling him master and in return she acquired his family name to become Isabella Van Vagner.

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Before leaving John Dumont, Isabella figured out that he sold her five years old son Peter to a southern man named Solomon Gedney. Actually, there was a law in the north which protected the young slaves and forbade their sale to another state. As a result and once freed, Isabella took her case to the American courts. She got the help of some lawyers to become the first African American woman to win a case against a white man in the United States and succeeded in recovering her son.

Isabella had her own understanding of religion. She tried to improve herself in this field by joining the African Methodist Church and after that a group called “the kingdom” supervised by Elijah Pierson. She became her housekeeper and met Robert Matthews or “Prophet Matthias” as he called himself. She believed in him and became one of his followers as he was a charismatic person. He had the art of convincing people and could deceit many of them. At the end she discovered that all what he said was a lie. She felt cheated especially that she was accused of helping Matthias in killing and stealing someone. To this point, she said she was called by the spirit to leave New York and travel east changing her name from Isabella to Sojourner Truth as she will look for truth in terms of religion and justice for the black race.

Because she was illiterate, she asked some people to read the bible for her but she faced a problem since adults read for her and interfered with some commentaries. Sojourner Truth felt that this is not helpful and changed to children who read directly the passage various times without giving their point of view about that. Truth became a preacher telling people about her views and thoughts about God and Jesus. She had a unique way of speaking and an original tone ‘never provoked a laugh, but often were the whole audience melted into tears by her touching stories’ (p.114).

Sojourner Truth met Olive Gilbert in the Northampton Association where they agreed to collaborate for her narrative. The task was to produce something genuine and

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attractive so that it will have a commercial success as many of the slave narratives at that time. Truth was rewarded as her work became one of the most prominent accounts. She was able to buy a home for her own and spend the rest of her life in a relative leisure. Olive Gilbert ended the work with a short note about Sojourner Truth as one of the female influencers who brought the slaves' case and concerns to another level. Her devotion and faithfulness need to be acknowledged and people should take care of her as she did for distinct ones all along her life.

2.3. Oppression and Torture in the Three Works

When reading the three narratives, both torture and oppression are clearly noticed in numerous parts of them. It is a common aspect of the slaves' tales in general and in Jacobs', Stowe's and Gilbert's particularly as they wished to shed the light on how female slaves were treated under such system.

2.3.1. Oppression

Black women were stuck in an exploitative system which humiliated, undervalued and oppressed them. Dissimilar to bondsmen who suffered as well from distinct types of oppression and torture as well, female slaves underwent a painful mistreatment by which they were brutalized by their masters who viewed them as sexual toys and this was part of their daily life routine. They were raped and forced into sexual roles that threatened to undermine their self-respect and their emotional autonomy (Ellison, 1983, p.56).

In addition to that, bondswomen witnessed dehumanization be it in their masters' homes or in different auctions and warehouses and were attributed to the most atrocious names and tokens and sometimes were obliged to do awful things just to satisfy their masters and mistresses. Everything mentioned go hand in hand with the principle of bondage which considered the slaves as a commodity which should be at the disposal and the will of the oppressors whenever they wanted.

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2.3.1.1. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Multiple scenes in the different slave narratives and substantially in the selected works portray the suffering and the injustice witnessed by the slaves. Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was the leading work in defying orthodox ideas about slavery and liberty. The African American figure tried to give a genuine image of what the slaves predominately women had endured through her pen.

2.3.1.1.1. Suffering

Harriet Jacobs depicted the hardships and the pain sustained by the slaves in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* in various passages that will be analysed in the following lines.

Jacobs (1861) deals emphatically with inequity and the anguish witnessed by the African slaves as it was a paramount part of her account. For example, when she compares between the life of a slave girl and a white one who were playing together with a joyous laughter in their faces when she says:

I turned sadly away from the lovely sight. I foresaw the inevitable blight that would fall on the little slave's heart. I knew how soon her laughter would be changed to sighs. The fair child grew up to be a still fairer woman. From childhood to womanhood her pathway was blooming with flowers, and overarched by a sunny sky. Scarcely one day of her life had been clouded when the sun rose on her happy bridal morning. How had those years dealt with her slave sister, the little playmate of her childhood? She, also, was very beautiful; but the flowers and sunshine of love were not for her. She drank the cup of sin, and shame, and misery, whereof her persecuted race are compelled to drink (p.32, 33)

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Jacobs here expects the suffering will the slave girl witness making her life a reference as she bears a lot more than she could afford because of the system that prohibits her from the least thing she can have in the life which is to live in peace. The female slave writer used a metaphor to express the agony of the little black girl who according to her drank a cup of sin and shame instead of wine which is imbibed in celebrations when people are living moments of cheerfulness. She also employed the word “scarcely” to reveal to the readers how the life of the little white girl will be in the future which indicates a life almost free from pain and torment.

Another scene from Jacobs’ work reveals the suffering of the slaves and it was actually related to a historical event that happened in the South of the United States named the Nate Turner rebellion in 1831 and was viewed as the most effective revolt. Even if it was finished by the death of the leader, it arose the slaves’ souls for freedom. The result of this incident was severe over them since it scared the whites who wanted to answer by imposing new rigid laws and taking the male and female slaves be bound or free kicking and whipping them even for no reason. The writer gives a vivid example about that:

One black man, who had not fortitude to endure scourging, promised to give information about the conspiracy. But it turned out that he knew nothing at all. He had not even heard the name of Nat Turner. The poor fellow had, however, made up a story, which augmented his own sufferings and those of the colored people (Jacobs, 1861, p.74).

Jacobs discussed this incident in details to prove that the suffering witnessed by the slaves was more than people can imagine and this black man was only an example of millions at that time. He was obliged to lie just to save himself from the anguish he was experiencing. Through this passage, it is realizable that the writer catches sight of this incident. The event seems familiar to her particularly after the use of the expression “The

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poor fellow had, however, made up a story". She knows well about the man and the impulse that pushes him to say untruth things to the patrols.

Slaves in general witnessed distinct types of suffering and the following excerpt is related to the children of Linda (Harriet Jacobs) who were about to go to the north with their father and Linda's lover named Mr. Sands after buying them using a mediator. When Dr. Flint discovered the trick, he became outraged and wanted to take back the children. Linda became confused about the future of Benny and Ellen as she states:

So, then, after all I had endured for their sakes, my poor children were between two fires; between my old master and their new master! And I was powerless. There was no protecting arm of the law for me to invoke (Jacobs, 1861, p.154).

Harriet Jacobs criticized first the law which allowed such things like buying and selling people unjustly. What is worse is that feeling of inability, weakness. She says "I was powerless". She expresses the agony of a mother who cannot decide the destiny of her children. She cannot even discuss or interfere since there is no law to protect her.

2.3.1.1.2. Humiliation

Part of the slaves' lives is the feeling of humiliation that chases them. Their masters' dishonour, insult and attempt to embarrass them in almost each situation. Female slaves predominately were demeaned severely more than men since the majority of them were completely controlled unlike men who resisted from time to time. Numerous parts from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* deal with humiliation as it belongs to oppression.

The narrative took the form of an autobiography in which Jacobs relates her arduous passage from slavery to freedom. Being enslaved means being humiliated and therefore Linda describes how she was abased. The work confers also about other slaves who witnessed similar incidents. The first extract is about Linda receiving the news of her

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father's death as she wanted to attend the funeral. Nevertheless, things did not go as she expected and wanted, she said:

I thought I should be allowed to go to my father's house the next morning; but I was ordered to go for flowers, that my mistress's house might be decorated for an evening party. I spent the day gathering flowers and weaving them into festoons, while the dead body of my father was lying within a mile of me. What cared my owners for that? he was merely a piece of property (Jacobs, 1861, p.12)

There is nothing more difficult than being prohibited from the burial of the parents. The details given in this passage by Jacobs indicate that it was something memorable, she felt humiliated by the master who simply did not care about her father. She was also humiliated by the system which does not give any importance to a race that is viewed as inferior. It does not even recognize them as she finishes the passage by stating "he was merely a piece of property". In addition to that, the writer gives two paradoxical and intertwined images when she was collecting and organizing flowers for a party while her sights, heart and soul were one mile from her in the father's funeral. Jacobs wants to express jumbled feelings that she experienced to the audience to make them live her story.

Linda witnessed a distinct incident with her mistress Mrs. Flint but with the same feeling of indignity as she got new pair of shoes which she needed particularly in the snowy weather during that time as she portrays in the following passage:

My grandmother had taken my old shoes, and replaced them with a new pair. I needed them; for several inches of snow had fallen, and it still continued to fall. When I walked through Mrs. Flint's room, their creaking grated harshly on her refined nerves. She called me to her, and asked what I had about me that made such a horrid noise. I told her it was

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my new shoes. "Take them off," said she; "and if you put them on again, I'll throw them into the fire." I took them off, and my stockings also. She then sent me a long distance, on an errand. As I went through the snow, my bare feet tingled. That night I was very hoarse; and I went to bed thinking the next day would find me sick, perhaps dead (Jacobs, 1861, p. 21,22).

The life of the female slave was always under threat, that is what characterized slavery. Linda was obliged to afford the humiliation of her mistress just to not disturb her with the creaking of her shoes and this pushes her to go for the mission shoeless. The lengthiness and the details presented are a reference that this event was one of the cruellest she has ever experienced. Jacobs' description of the incident and her use of words were suitable to the situation she was living in and this gives the opportunity to the reader to be indulged in the account.

Linda was exposed once more to humiliation with her biggest oppressor named Dr. Flint who tried each time to impose his authority saying each time that she was his property and he had the right to do whatever he wanted with her. As any young girl, Linda fell in love with a black man from the vicinity who wanted to marry her but when her master finds out about that he started to demean her in the worst way possible as she states:

Never let me hear that fellow's name mentioned again. If I ever know of your speaking to him, I will cowhide you both; and if I catch him lurking about my premises, I will shoot him as soon as I would a dog. Do you hear what I say? (Jacobs, 1861, p.44).

Marriage for a female slave is fully forbidden. Dr. Flint wanted simply to have Linda as sexual tool. He was scared to find her loving and maybe exchanging letters with another man as he knew that she could read and write. So, a mixture of feelings caught him from

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jealousy to madness and it is well transmitted in this passage by Harriet Jacobs. The way he menaced her as well as her lover indicates that he was jealous and outraged at the same time since he wanted her only for him and at his disposal.

Jacobs (1861) wanted to express the feeling she had after Dr. Flint's abasement and menace by saying: "Reader, did you ever hate? I hope not. I never did but once; and I trust I never shall again. Somebody has called it "the atmosphere of hell;" and I believe it is so" (p.44). Being deprived from choosing your destiny and stuck in a kind of labyrinth labelled slavery pushed Linda to feel herself living hell on earth. That feeling of hating someone from the bottom of your heart and soul proved the indignity she witnessed. That was the message she wanted to deliver promptly to the audience.

Last chosen scene took place in the north and exactly in Rockaway-New York where Linda was with her kind mistress named Mrs. Bruce sitting in the hotel while supper was about to be served. Here, Harriet Jacobs (1861) tackled the issue of prejudice and racism against the black people:

I was the only nurse tinged with the blood of Africa ... A young man, who had the ordering of things, took the circuit of the table two or three times, and finally pointed me to a seat at the lower end of it. As there was but one chair, I sat down and took the child in my lap. Whereupon the young man came to me and said, in the blandest manner possible, "Will you please to seat the little girl in the chair, and stand behind it and feed her? After they have done, you will be shown to the kitchen, where you will have a good supper (p.196).

The purpose of the writer in relating this incident is simply to point out the humiliation she suffers from in the north where it is not supposed to find such things. She started by mentioning that she was the only black person among all and then the problems

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started until it reached the climax when the young man ordered her to stand up in order to feed the baby of her mistress and then to be sent to the kitchen to eat alone. She was abased and dehumanized only because she was a black person. Once again, the use of words and style was appropriate to the event. She explained the way this young man spoke to her by employing the expression “blandest manner possible” as if he viewed her as something hideous yet was obliged to talk to her just because of his job which requires kindness with all people.

Harriet Jacobs mentioned other persons from her friends and relatives who witnessed quite the same destiny and experienced humiliation likewise. Among them, there is Nancy who is Linda’s Grand-Aunt and who served in Dr. Flint’s house as well in a way or another. Nancy’s incidents were invoked in one whole chapter in the account. Yet, the chosen scene shows how a slave can be easily abased and the results are exhibited in this passage:

She had always slept on the floor in the entry, near Mrs. Flint's chamber door, that she might be within call. When she was married, she was told she might have the use of a small room in an out-house ... But on the wedding evening, the bride was ordered to her old post on the entry floor. Mrs. Flint, at that time, had no children; but she was expecting to be a mother, and if she should want a drink of water in the night, what could she do without her slave to bring it? So my aunt was compelled to lie at her door, until one midnight she was forced to leave, to give premature birth to a child (Jacobs, 1861, p.160).

The passage contains multiple things from suffering and torment to humiliation when a person is obliged to sleep on the floor near the room’s entry. Aunt Nancy had no choice except obeying her mistress’ orders otherwise she could be whipped or separated from her

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husband. Harriet Jacobs mentioned an important thing to make the reader imagine the situation which is “the weeding evening”. The female slave writer wants to say that Mrs. Flint does not even respect or understand a bride’s first day of marriage and deprived her from cheerfulness to make sure she will be at her disposal. Jacobs’ description of Nancy’s suffering consequence is intense when she mentions that she never had children all her life. Her aim as all the writers of the slave narratives is to criminalize the system of slavery and by focusing on situations as the afore-mentioned and conveying such messages to the audience, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* becomes one of the unrivalled works in the slave narrative genre.

As previously indicated, humiliation was a common thing which affected the African slaves. Hence, it is logical that Jacobs deals with other incidents of other persons who suffered as her from this matter. The First scene is about the cook who is a female slave in Dr. Flint’s house. She was responsible for preparing dishes for the family. The event was testified by Linda as she was present there by stating:

The cook never sent a dinner to his table without fear and trembling; for if there happened to be a dish not to his liking, he would either order her to be whipped, or compel her to eat every mouthful of it in his presence. The poor, hungry creature might not have objected to eating it; but she did object to having her master cram it down her throat till she choked (Jacobs, 1861, p.15).

The passage describes well the situation of the slaves and what happened to the cook is among thousands of scenes witnessed every single day. Harriet Jacobs denoted the abasement of the cook and how Dr. Flint obliged her to eat if he does not find it agreeable until she throttled. Moreover, the writer portrays a female slave daily life using proper

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words in the example of fear, trembling, whippings and the fact of compelling her of doing something against her will.

Another incident happens in the vicinity. Harriet Jacobs was able to describe it well as she said. Actually, she devotes one whole chapter to depict scattered cases of the slaves' suffering. The selected extract includes women in a wealthy man's plantation and the disgrace they experienced:

Women are considered of no value, unless they continually increase their owner's stock. They are put on a par with animals. This same master shot a woman through the head, who had run away and been brought back to him. No one called him to account for it (Jacobs, 1861, p.55).

Equalizing human beings and animals is the cruellest thing the female slaves can ever bear. They were easily dehumanized. Sleeping with animals and eating similar food as well. This is humiliation in the very true sense of word as Jacobs wants to convey to the readers. When they want to get away, they will face their inevitable fate which is death.

Jacobs' *Incidents in the life of a Slave Girl* does not deal with female slaves only. Multiple parts of it contain bondsmen's oppression including her brother and relatives as well. The next incident features a slave called James who lived in the same neighbourhood with Linda. She described his life and what he had endured from his ruthless master. James tried to escape but he was caught and whipped severely. He was put in jail with only bread and water to eat until he was dead. The slave was not only humiliated in his life but in his demise too as she states:

When the press was unscrewed, the dead body was found partly eaten by rats and vermin ... They put him into a rough box, and buried him with less feeling than would have been manifested for an old house dog. Nobody asked any questions. He was a slave; and the feeling was that the

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master had a right to do what he pleased with his own property. And what did he care for the value of a slave? He had hundreds of them (Jacobs, 1861, p.54).

The writer's description of the dead body and the burial as well gives a complete and clear image about what the slave undergoes in his life and death too. Once more, she compares the feeling for a slave's death with an old dog's one. She also ends the chapter by asking a question and replying directly on it as if she wants to say that the answer does not need any reflection. Here, Jacobs conveys an intense message to the readers about the thralls' case who were suffering and humiliated in silence. Moreover, she addresses an indirect call for all people to interfere against the injustice over the slaves.

2.3.1.2. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

This work is viewed as another type of the slave narratives which was well-known during the Antebellum period. As all abolitionists, Harriet Beecher Stowe tries to depict the consequences of slavery over the black race by writing a fictional account based on true events as she declares. Her work contains also several images of oppression and torture experienced by the main characters as it will be displayed in the subsequent lines.

2.3.1.2.1. Slavery and Racism

Suffering, persecution and the brutalization witnessed by the slaves come from the idea of superiority of their oppressors in which racism and slavery are the main causes of. Therefore, Harriet Beecher Stowe shed light on these discourses. The passages chosen for analysis will show the sharpness of her messages to the audience in comparison with Harriet Jacobs particularly especially that two female writers experienced slavery but through different angles, different conditions. In addition to that, Stowe does not focus only on female slaves in her work. She deals with the hardships of both men and women

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because as an abolitionist, her goal is to criminalize the system along with gaining empathy for the slaves' case for the purpose of emancipating bondage in the United States.

Mr. Harris is the master of George Harris, the intelligent slave who recalls through the work how he was tyrannized by his master. Mr. Harris was portrayed as a brute and oppressive man who tries sometimes by jealousy to degrade his slave as it is shown in the following passage when George invented a machine for cleaning the hemp since he was working in a manufactory. Once he knew about that, Mr. Harris abased George and wanted to take him back. The dialogue between the master and the manufacturer shows everything:

“We would be willing, sir, to increase the rate of compensation.”

“No object at all, sir. I don't need to hire any of my hands out, unless I've a mind to.” “But, sir, he seems peculiarly adapted to this business.”

“Dare say he may be; never was much adapted to anything that I set him about, I'll be bound.”

“But only think of his inventing this machine,” interposed one of the workmen, rather unluckily.

“O yes!—a machine for saving work, is it? He'd invent that, I'll be bound; let a nigger alone for that, any time. They are all labor- saving machines themselves, every one of 'em. No, he shall tramp!” (Stowe, 1852, p.20).

Harriet Beecher Stowe expressed in this excerpt the grudge and the hatred of Mr. Harris over his slave George after inventing the machine. He not only refuses to extend the period of his work in the manufactory but he humiliates him in front of the workmen. He speaks about George in a sharp and severe way so that the reader can easily know how he despises him, how he wants to demean him and the whole black race as well by saying that

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“they are all labor- saving machines themselves, every one of ’em” without neglecting the word “nigger” which is a racist one. The writer’s message through this passage is clear and suitable to her objectives about what she wants to deliver to the audience.

Next extract is featuring the same characters. Nevertheless, George was recalling this time the afflictions witnessed with his master to Mr. Willson:

But now what? Why, now comes my master, takes me right away from my work, and my friends, and all I like, and grinds me down into the very dirt! And why? Because, he says, I forgot who I was; he says, to teach me that I am only a nigger! After all, and last of all, he comes between me and my wife, and says I shall give her up, and live with another woman. And all this your laws give him power to do, in spite of God or man (Stowe, 1852, p.149).

George is whimpering and protesting about the indignity he faces from Mr. Harris who wants to kill everything good in him including his feelings and the love for his wife. His power allows him to interfere in the life of his slaves in the way he wants. He was wondering, exclaiming why all these things are happening to him. Harriet Beecher Stowe manages to transmit the feelings of George to the readers using the correct words and even the right punctuation with multiple breaks after each sentence. The reader can guess and feel the agonies and the humiliations he witnesses. The writer goes actually far from that by criticizing the society and government’s laws which gives power and authority to the whites. She wants to put a pressure on that so that the audience could see the injustice of the American laws during that period.

Closely to those who practised the slave trading in the auctions, Mr. Haley is characterized as an inhuman trader who only cares about his business. He can commit small and huge rigidities over the slaves because he considered them as “subhuman”.

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Multiple scenes from Uncle Tom's Cabin depict the humiliation of the southern thrall dealer. For example, when he was at the slave auction and before he buys any of the slaves, he started by examining them in the worst way ever as it is portrayed by Stowe (1852):

Haley here forced his way into the group, walked up to the old man, pulled his mouth open and looked in, felt of his teeth, made him stand and straighten himself, bend his back, and perform various evolutions to show his muscles; and then passed on to the next, and put him through the same trial. Walking up last to the boy, he felt of his arms, straightened his hands, and looked at his fingers, and made him jump, to show his agility (p.157).

Considering the slave as a commodity is cruel. Harriet Beecher Stowe described the incident as if she was present paying attention to the delicate details as the traders were famous of doing such things and this is actually part of the humiliation the slaves were exposed to in their daily life.

There is another scene which shows the racism and the abasement of Mr. Haley over the slaves when he accomplished the deal with Mr. Shelby for uncle Tom and wanted to take him. Here, he starts to give his instruction to Tom as it is stated in the following passage:

Now, I tell ye what, Tom," said Haley, as he came up to the wagon, and threw in the hand- cuffs, "I mean to start fa'r with ye, as I gen'ally do with my niggers; and I'll tell ye now, to begin with, you treat me fa'r, and I'll treat you fa'r; I an't never hard on my niggers. Calculates to do the best for 'em I can. Now, ye see, you'd better jest settle down comfortable, and not be tryin' no tricks; because nigger's tricks of all sorts I'm up to, and it's no use. If niggers is quiet, and don't try to get off,

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they has good times with me; and if they don't, why, it's thar fault, and not mine. (p.136).

Harriet Beecher Stowe tries to portray the contradiction and the hypocrisy of the slave trader who pretends to be kind and fair with his slaves whereas he is buying and selling them as if they are objects. He says that he treats them good while he put cuffs on their hands and feet. Moreover, the writer intentionally focused on the word “nigger” as Haley repeats it more than three times since it is the way he talks. She wants to show that he is racist and his concern is only about business and he never cared about the black people as he never viewed them as human beings.

White people were divided during slavery period as some despised it to the extreme and the others supported it heavily. This was actually the case of Marie St. Clare as Stowe portrays her as a selfish southern white woman. She does not have any human kindness predominately for her slaves as she was enjoying each time she humiliated them and does not miss the chance to show her superiority and racism over the black race. There are many incidents in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that show what is mentioned previously. First example is when she had a conversation with her daughter Eva and Ophelia the cousin of her husband about her black servant named Mammy. Marie was outrageous about her and starts to show racism and abasement as it is mentioned in the subsequent lines:

.... “I advised her to take up with somebody else; but no—she wouldn't. Mammy has a kind of obstinacy about her, in spots, that everybody don't see as I do.” “Has she children?” said Miss Ophelia. “Yes; she has two.” “I suppose she feels the separation from them?” “Well, of course, I couldn't bring them. They were little dirty things—I couldn't have them about; and, besides, they took up too much of her time; but I believe that

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Mammy has always kept up a sort of sulkiness about this” (Stowe, 1852, p.222).

Marie St. Clare deprives her servant from her husband and children and advises her to be with someone else as if it is very simple. She described the children as little dirty things which is a clear racism towards the black race. Harriet Beecher Stowe wants to deliver an intense message to the readers about the attitude of the female slave holders who misprize the African slaves and try to seize any opportunity to humiliate them.

Marie does not stop at this level but goes far from that. Actually, a whole chapter of Stowe’s work is allotted to Mrs. St. Clare’s opinions about the slaves. The next selected passage is still in the same conversation between her and Ophelia when they speak about the situation of Mammy as an example of the other slaves:

“Don’t you believe that the Lord made them of one blood with us?” said Miss Ophelia, shortly. “No, indeed, not I! A pretty story, truly! They are a degraded race.” “ Don’t you think they’ve got immortal souls?” said Miss Ophelia, with increasing indignation. “O, well,” said Marie, yawning, “that, of course—nobody doubts that. But as to put ting them on any sort of equality with us, you know, as if we could be compared, why, it’s impossible! Now, St. Clare really has talked to me as if keeping Mammy from her husband was like keeping me from mine. There’s no comparing in this way. Mammy couldn’t have the feelings that I should. It’s a different thing altogether,—of course, it is,—and yet St. Clare pretends not to see it. And just as if Mammy could love her little dirty babies as I love Eva!” (Stowe, 1852, p.228).

Marie St. Clare was comparing Mammy’s situation with hers. She simply said at the beginning that the slaves are a mean race. Right after that, she shows the superiority of the

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whites over the black by saying that equality is forbidden. Her feelings and love for her husband and Eva are not the same as Mammy's. Stowe considers her work as a mirror of what was happening at that time in the southern society. She also tried to be realistic by portraying Miss Ophelia as a human white woman who at least cared about the slaves' case as she came from the Northern society. Here, the writer wants to convey a hidden message that people of the North were at the least generous and friendly comparing to the southerners.

Last selected incident about Marie is when she wants to punish her other maid named Rosa by sending her to be unclothed and scourged by men in the whipping establishment because she speaks out with her which is viewed by Mrs. St. Clare as sassy. Ophelia wants to interfere and present some help for the servant and here a dialogue commenced between the two ladies:

“I came to speak with you about poor Rosa.” Marie’s eyes were open wide enough now, and a flush rose to her sallow cheeks, as she answered, sharply, “Well, what about her?” “She is very sorry for her fault.” “She is, is she? she’ll be sorrier, before I’ve done with her! I’ve endured that child’s impudence long enough; and now I’ll bring her down,—I’ll make her lie in the dust!” “But could not you punish her some other way,—some way that would be less shameful?” “I mean to shame her; that’s just what I want.... “But, Cousin, consider that, if you destroy delicacy and a sense of shame in a young girl, you deprave her very fast.” “Delicacy!” said Marie, with a scornful laugh,—“a fine word for such as she! I’ll teach her, with all her airs, that she’s no better than the raggedest black wench that walks the streets! She’ll take no more airs with me!” (Stowe, 1852, p.420).

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This passage contains a great deal of cursing and abasing the young Rosa. She does not accept the request of Ophelia for giving her a shameless rebuke and insists on the fifteen lashes. Harriet Beecher Stowe uses different adjectives on the lips of Marie St. Clare in the example of raggedest black and scornful laugh to show to the reader how hard-hearted she is, how she despises these creatures, how she views them as nothing and how she enjoys humiliating them. Moreover, her description of Marie when she hears of the maid's servant name seems real and suitable to her character in order to show her anger and abhorrence towards Rosa. In fact, this excerpt is an illustration of the discourse of slavery and humiliation.

The discourse of slavery, racism and humiliation is not limited to the aforementioned figures. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is full of different incidents and people who suffered from abasement and racism or others who put them into practice over the slaves even if they were against bondage such as Miss Ophelia who came from a northern society which is well known of despising the system of slavery. Although she tries to be polite and affectionate to everyone and even if she is against bondage, different scenes depict a different image about her as it mentioned in this initial excerpt:

“Eva flew from one to another, shaking hands and kissing, in a way that Miss Ophelia afterwards declared fairly turned her stomach. “Well!” said Miss Ophelia, “you southern children can do something that I couldn’t.” “What, now, pray?” said St. Clare. “Well, I want to be kind to everybody, and I wouldn’t have anything hurt; but as to kissing—” “Niggers,” said St. Clare, “that you’re not up to,—hey?” “Yes, that’s it. How can she?” (Stowe, 1852, p.216).

The fact that kissing a human being makes another one wants to throw up means simply an act of racism. Miss Ophelia who is portrayed by Stowe as pious and abolitionist

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could not hide her feeling of revulsion while seeing that scene. The writer wants to show to the readers that although belonging to an anti-slavery society does not mean that you are not racist over the black race. Miss Ophelia is a mere example of many others who have this hidden face and who consider the African slaves as an inferior strain. This is a sharp message to the audience that maybe slavery only exists in the South. Yet, racism subsists in the whole American soil.

There is another extract which describes Miss Ophelia's abhorrence and disgust from being surrounded by slaves in Augustine St. Clare's house particularly when he buys Topsy; a young turbulent slave girl and bring her to his house to be educated by his cousin. Stowe (1852) expresses the disagreement of Miss Ophelia about this decision when she says:

“Topsy, this is your new mistress. I'm going to give you up to her; see now that you behave yourself.”

“Now, Augustine, what upon earth is this for?” said Miss Ophelia. “Your house is so full of these little plagues, now, that a body can't set down their foot without treading on 'em. I get up in the morning, and find one asleep behind the door, and see one black head poking out from under the table, one lying on the door- mat,—and they are mopping and mowing and grinning between all the railings, and tumbling over the kitchen floor! What on earth did you want to bring this one for?” (p.311).

Ophelia expresses her malaise being with the “little plagues” in one house. Actually, this expression is an abasement of the slaves. The acuity she talks with and the severe words used give the audience the impression that she only pretends to be kind with the slaves. However, the reality was that she holds prejudice against them and she wishes never meeting or being around them. In fact, this is the message that the writer wants to

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deliver. The majority of Americans at that time viewed the slaves as inferior even those who defended their case. Harriet Beecher Stowe uncovers this dark side that most people do not know. This is probably her aim behind penning this work.

2.3.1.2.2. Family Separation

Abasement is not only embodied in insulting or making fun of the slaves. Causing a separation between a husband and his wife is another way to humiliate them. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* includes multiple scenes of family detachments either by buying them in the auctions and ware houses or by the will of the slave holder who wants each time to impose his authority over his or her slaves pushed by racism and the system of slavery which gives them power over the whole black race.

First excerpt is about the protagonist Uncle Tom and his family separation once he was about to be sold by long time humane master Mr. Shelby who was compelled to do it to Mr. Haley. Aunt Chloe, his wife expressed her anger from the master who decides to sell it without caring about his or her feelings, without considering the children who will live with the absence of a father when she says:

Mas'r never ought ter left it so that ye could be took for his debts. Ye've arm him all he gets for ye, twice over. He owed ye yer freedom, and ought ter gin 't to yer years ago. Mebbe he can't help himself now, but I feel it's wrong. Nothing can't beat that ar out o' me. Sich a faithful crittur as ye've been,—and allers sot his business 'fore yer own every way,—and reckoned on him more than yer own wife and chil'en! Them as sells heart's love and heart's blood, to get out thar scrapes, de Lord'll be up to'em! (Stowe, 1852, p.125)

The writer expresses the shock that catches Uncle Tom's Family and particularly his wife who could not believe that her husband will easily be sold. She does not feel any

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gratitude of Mr. Shelby for Tom as he does not look for other solutions and goes directly to sell him. She starts to blame him using the unique African dialect and in fact this is an interesting point that will be analysed afterwards. Stowe succeeded in indulging the audience into her work using different dialects from the African to the southern one so that people who read the slave novel view a great deal of reality in it. Stowe shows humiliation in this passage in the fact that Aunt Chloe blames Mr. Shelby secretly and could not do anything when he is present because there is no one who could protect her even Uncle Tom.

There is another selected extract which shows how family separation is a disgrace for the slaves. The event is featuring George and his wife Eliza as he told her that they maybe will not meet again as his Master insists of parting him from her as he states:

“Well, lately Mas’r has been saying that he was a fool to let me marry off the place; that he hates Mr. Shelby and all his tribe, because they are proud, and hold their heads up above him, and that I’ve got proud notions from you; and he says he won’t let me come here anymore, and that I shall take a wife and settle down on his place. At first, he only scolded and grumbled these things; but yesterday he told me that I should take Mina for a wife, and settle down in a cabin with her, or he would sell me down river.” “Why—but you were married to me, by the minister, as much as if you’d been a white man!” said Eliza, simply. “ Don’t you know a slave can’t be married? There is no law in this country for that; I can’t hold you for my wife, if he chooses to part us. That’s why I wish I’d never seen you,—why I wish I’d never been born” (Stowe, 1852, p.27).

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Harriet Beecher Stowe depicts the humiliation George felt as he could do nothing for himself or his wife. He also felt that he could not decide about his family's destiny. His master decides whenever he wants to part him from his wife and child easily because he has the power by law. This agony pushes him to wish he neither had never been born nor seen his wife and child. This is an intense message from the writer by which she wants to show how even the sacred link was never calculated and valued as well. Stowe focuses also on the law as she repeats it several times in her work as if she considers it as the major reason for the slaves' suffering since it gives authority for the white masters over the black people.

Last chosen extract is about Cassy the former sex slave of Mr. Butler and the actual one of Mr. Legree as she recalls her past to Emmeline. The writer exposes through her work the sexual abuse witnessed by a female slave which was known however unusual to be described at that time. Stowe (1852) gives the readers flashbacks about Cassy particularly how she was parted from her children by saying:

He took me to ride, one day, and when I came home, they were nowhere to be found! He told me he had sold them; he showed me the money, the price of their blood. Then it seemed as if all good forsook me. I raved and cursed,—cursed God and man.... One day, I was out walking, and passed by the calaboose; I saw a crowd about the gate, and heard a child's voice,— and suddenly my Henry broke away from two or three men who were holding him, and ran, screaming, and caught my dress.... I tried to beg and plead,—they only laughed; the poor boy screamed and looked into my face, and held on to me, until, in tearing him off, they tore the skirt of my dress half away; and they carried him in, screaming 'Mother! mother! mother! mother! (p.477).

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The flashbacks given by the writer were well detailed so that the readers could really imagine them and feel that the event narrated is true. She also uses metaphor when she says “the price of their blood” which means her children price. She was humiliated being a sex slave for Butler and also in the way she lost her children. Once again, Stowe proves how bondswomen and families in general were seen as nothing for the white masters who bought, sold and part them whatever and whenever they want.

2.3.1.2.3. Dehumanization of the Slaves

As mentioned previously, the African slaves experienced different kinds of humiliation. It was common as part of the system to consider them as nothing and to remove the human qualities from them either when they talk to them or in their attitude towards them. Harriet Beecher Stowe enriched the discourse of oppression by shedding the light on this spot. Multiple passages portray the slaves' dehumanization. For example, when George recalls his past to Mr. Wilson as he expresses the life he was witnessing when he was young with his old master by stating:

....no father, no mother, no sister, not a living soul that cared for me more than a dog; nothing but whipping, scolding, starving. Why, sir, I've been so hungry that I have been glad to take the bones they threw to their dogs (Stowe, 1852, p.148).

Although the passage is short, but it is meaningful as it discusses the torment a human being can experience until he will be viewed as an animal living its life and sharing its food as well from hunger. Stowe consciously makes these events a centre of attention and uses sharp adjectives and expressions in her descriptions in order to touch the selected audience to whom the work is intended.

During the same conversation, George and once he was about to escape describes how risky it will be and what could happen to him in case of catching him:

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There isn't, on earth, a living soul to care if I die," he added, drawing his breath hard, and speaking with a great effort,—“I shall be kicked out and buried like a dog, and nobody'll think of it a day after,—only my poor wife! Poor soul! she'll mourn and grieve (Stowe, 1852, p.152).

The life of a slave is full of anguish and this is what Stowe is trying to say on the lips of George who knew well that he endures the life of an animal and that no one cares about him if he will be beaten, broken and dead as a result. He also describes his wife Eliza as a “poor soul” since she can do nothing for him or even for her. All what she is able to do is to cry and regret as they were living the same situation.

Next incident is about the young slave girl Topsy who was dehumanized but in another way as Stowe (1852) describes how Miss Ophelia found her stealing her scarlet shawl:

“Topsy!” she would say, when at the end of all patience, “what does make you act so?” “Dunno, Missis,—I specs cause I 's so wicked!” “I don't know anything what I shall do with you, Topsy.” “Law, Missis, you must whip me; my old Missis allers whipped me. I an't used to workin' unless I gets whipped.” “Why, Topsy, I don't want to whip you. You can do well, if you've a mind to; what is the reason you won't?” “Laws, Missis, I 's used to whippin'; I specs it's good for me.” (p.324)

Topsy became used to whippings as animals so that she could not do anything good without being lashed. She also views herself as a wicked person as she said using a weird deviant dialect. In fact, Stowe succeeded in comparing two children in the same age but living different lives using language. Topsy who cannot speak a clear and clean language in comparison to Evangeline the daughter of St. Clare who was an educated girl and who reads the bible and writes letters in an excellent way despite her age. Topsy's case as well

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as many other children are victims of the system which gives authority to masters to raise the young slaves using oral and physical violence instead of educating and providing the best conditions to them the way they did with their children. These evils of bondage are the main concern of the writer of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* especially that she was one of the abolitionists who wanted to change the slaves' fate and fought for the emancipation of bondage.

2.3.1.3. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*

This account is distinct from the two previous ones since it includes the life of Sojourner Truth the fearless female slave. However and though it is an autobiography, it is written by Olive Gilbert because of Truth's illiteracy. It is also different in terms of its content and the things it is dealing with. First of all, it is the only work of the three which speaks about slavery in the north. Moreover, while the two other accounts recount the whole journey from slavery to liberty talking about agony, torment and suffering, Sojourner Truth's work focuses more on her spiritual life i.e. her relation with God, how to be faithful, how religion saved her from the claws of bondage etc... So, there are few details about the discourse of oppression as Gilbert (1850) specifies, "there are some hard things that crossed Isabella's life while she was in slavery, that she has no desire to publish, for various reasons" (p.81).

Therefore, the religious discourse is crushing in this work. Nevertheless, among the very few excerpts about the moral persecution and humiliation in which Sojourner Truth had endured in slavery, there is a prominent example when she was in Mr. Dumont's house and had some troubles with a white servant especially that she could not understand English before but only Dutch. This causes a problem to her as she recalls:

...the potatoes that Isabel cooked for breakfast assumed a dingy, dirty look. Her mistress blamed her severely, asking her master to observe 'a

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fine specimen of Bell's work!'—adding, 'it is the way *all* her work is done.'
Her master scolded also this time, and commanded her to be more careful
in future (Gilbert, 1850, p.31)

Although Isabella was roughly rebuked by her master and mistress because of the dirty look of the cooked potatoes, the event appears completely ordinary as if a father and a mother blame their child. No specified words which express agony or humiliation even if Gilbert mentions that the event contains abasement as she said: “On the night of Isabella’s humiliation” (p.32). This means that Sojourner Truth along with her amanuensis omit consciously some of the parts and actually this was referenced in the account:

From this source arose a long series of trials in the life of our heroine, which we must pass over in silence; some from motives of delicacy, and others, because the relation of them might inflict undeserved pain on some now living, whom Isabel remembers only with esteem and love; therefore, the reader will not be surprised if our narrative appears somewhat tame at this point, and may rest assured that it is not for want of facts, as the most thrilling incidents of this portion of her life are from various motives suppressed (Gilbert, 1850, p.30).

The whole narrative’s aim is to show how grateful, how kind and tolerant was the protagonist even with those who oppressed her to the point of cancelling some genuine parts from her life so that she avoids causing pain to them and in fact this remarkably influences the authenticity of the work. Truth and Gilbert and through this passage want to display the greatness of God and how he could make the oppressed triumph against injustice as it is mentioned here:

One comparatively trifling incident she wishes related, as it made a deep impression on her mind at the time—showing, as *she* thinks, how God

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shields the innocent, and causes them to triumph over their enemies, and also how she stood between master and mistress. (Gilbert, 1850, p.30)

As a result, this leads us to deduce that multiple parts of the work do not include Isabel's or Truth's detailed story with slavery but her piety and journey to discover Christianity and God's obedience. Therefore and as mentioned before, the religious discourse is dominating over other discourses in this narrative.

2.3.2. Torture

The discourse of torture was prevalent in the selected female slave narratives as it was something heavily reliable to the system of slavery. The three women writers and tellers express each one in her way the corporal pain, physical abuse and the trauma bondswomen had experienced at that time. Yet, it is not only limited to female slaves since they deal also about masters' brutal treatment of bondsmen as well.

2.3.2.1. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

It is true that Jacobs' narrative focused on sexual harassment as it took a huge space on it. Yet, the work never omit other forms of humiliation in the example of physical violence particularly from the masters over their slaves as well as the moral pain caused by such treatment.

2.3.2.1.1. Physical Violation and Masters' Cruelty

Harriet Jacobs' work is full of events and passages that contain physical violence over male and female slaves as she wants to portray the cruelty of the whites over a defenceless race and the consequences of such acts on them. This part will include scenes about the slaves' suffering from whippings and beatings along with some atrocious characters in the account to have a visible analysis of Jacobs' discourse.

Dr Flint, the southern physician is described as a decayed and perverse villain who tries literally everything with Linda to convince her to have a sexual relationship with him.

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Yet, his cruelty exceeds her to other slaves for different reasons. Harriet Jacobs and as she had lived in Dr. Flint's house testifies some incidents. For example, when a slave was brought to town and ordered to be taken to the workhouse by the master and bound waiting for the punishment because he had disputed with his wife after giving birth of a fair child and went very far by accusing the master of being his father. Jacobs' (1861) recalls this event by saying, "I shall never forget that night. Never before, in my life, had I heard hundreds of blows fall, in succession, on a human being. His piteous groans, and his "O, pray don't, massa," rang in my ear for months afterwards" (p.15).

The female slave writer was present during this incident. She depicts the unlimited strikes over the slave along with the inarticulate sound caused by the pain he witnessed. Harriet Jacobs expressed her fears and piety for the black man confirming at the same time that the sequels of such accident continue to pursue her for months. She still remembers his words which reflect the significance of this fact.

Jacobs portrays Mr. Litch as another severe and bloody white master who possesses a large number of slaves to work in his huge plantation. Since he is a wealthy man, many of his crimes over the slaves were masked and covered. The writer described a particular one as she states:

Various were the punishments resorted to. A favorite one was to tie a rope round a man's body, and suspend him from the ground. A fire was kindled over him, from which was suspended a piece of fat pork. As this cooked, the scalding drops of fat continually fell on the bare flesh (Jacobs, 1861, p.51).

The readers are indulged in the story just by the detailed description of Jacobs concerning the torment and the brutality the slave viewed. This was another way of committing cruelties far from whippings and strikes. She wants to say that Mr. Litch

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enjoys the torment he practises over the slaves and that is the reason he pushes him to vary the types the styles of punishment. The female slave writer and by pointing out these scenes in particular, succeeded in her task by putting the slaves' case under the spotlight as the discourse of torture is the most substantial in attracting the readers especially the abolitionists at that time to the crimes perpetrated over the whole black race.

Mr Conant is Mr. Litch's and Dr. Flint's neighbour. He is portrayed as having practically the same spirit, same prejudice and similar ideas in committing cruelties over the slaves. Harriet Jacobs (1861) describes an incident among different ones she testifies showing the savagery of the white master and physical pain the slave had to endure:

He returned from town one evening in a partial state of intoxication. His body servant gave him some offence. He was divested of his clothes, except his shirt, whipped, and tied to a large tree in front of the house. It was a stormy night in winter. The wind blew bitterly cold, and the boughs of the old tree crackled under falling sleet. A member of the family, fearing he would freeze to death, begged that he might be taken down; but the master would not relent. He remained there three hours; and, when he was cut down, he was more dead than alive (p.52).

Jacobs and from this passage wants to show how the slaves were literally nothing except objects for the masters. They never cared about them, in contrary they went for humiliation as well as terrible ways of torment as the aforementioned example. The slave and according to the writer did nothing to deserve such punishment and despite the coldness and the branches falling on him which aggravated the situation, Mr. Conant never thought about the servant since he knew he had many of him and he could own others if he wanted. Jacobs allotted a whole chapter in her account to portray different sketches in her neighbourhood to answer people who accuse the slaves particularly the writers in

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exaggerating in their depiction of the white masters. She wants to say that she witnessed and testified these shocking scenes and this actually contributed a lot in making her work among the most authentic and trustworthy slave narratives.

The discourse of torture is not limited to some cruel white masters. Harriet Jacobs tries also to portray the suffering of different slaves by recounting their stories and incidents. First excerpt is about James who was described before in the suffering part. James and as the majority of the slaves suffered from torment and savagery of his master until he tried to escape and caught to finish his life in agony and died afterwards. The subsequent lines portray the brutality he witnessed in details as Jacobs (1861) says:

Therefore, he decided, after the overseer should have whipped him to his satisfaction, to have him placed between the screws of the cotton gin, to stay as long as he had been in the woods. This wretched creature was cut with the whip from his head to his feet, then washed with strong brine, to prevent the flesh from mortifying, and make it heal sooner than it otherwise would (p.54)

The writer and through the whole account describes various ways of torturing the slaves as if she wants to say that even in torture, the white masters enjoy in creating and varying styles of tormenting them. She also describes the passivity of the slave by using words such as “wretched” to show that he cannot do anything to respond to the savagery he experienced. In the same vein, she employs the word “satisfaction” to depict the powerful side, the masters, who order and do whatever they please with the slave. Harriet Jacobs uses metaphor again when she says “the wretched creature was cut with the whip...” in order to say that the lashes he underwent were really painful to the point of feeling his flesh cut out.

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There is another selected extract which demonstrates the whipping post created only for giving severe lashes for the slaves sent by their masters there. Harriet Jacobs (1862) describes the suffering of both male and female slaves there by stating:

Just at the back of the court-house and in front of the jail is a whipping post, where I have seen men and women stripped, and struck from fifteen to one hundred times and more. Some whose backs were cut to pieces were washed down with strong brine or brandy; this is done to increase pain. But the cruellest torture is backing; the hands are crossed and tied, then taken over the knee and pinned by running a stick between the arms and the legs, which tightens the skin and renders the slave as helpless as a child (p.256).

The whipping house was terrible according to the writer as it combines suffering, humiliation and torture for the slaves. The fact of seeing men and women naked from head to toe is a shame. She once more mentions the method of using brandy or the brine in order to make the pain more intense. She uses simile to compare the slaves after being tied and crossed to a powerless child who is unable to move or to do things. The writers' mind and soul were haunted by those scenes. The way she narrates the details along with the sharp messages delivered makes the readers indulged in the passage as they feel the degradation male and female slaves endured.

2.3.2.1.2. Sexual Assault

Sexual Harassment is part of torture which affected female slaves predominately. They were seen as sex slaves by their masters so they could do whatever they pleased with them without any protection neither from their husbands nor from the law which authorizes everything when it comes to slaves. Many bondswomen were abused by being raped or compelled into an extramarital life as Linda's experience with Dr. Flint. *Incidents in the*

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Life of a Slave Girl deals with the discourse of harassment and presents different scenes about it. First example is about Dr. Flint who was portrayed by Jacobs as the example of the master who uses the slaves for his own desire particularly with Linda who pleases him and tries once and twice to convince her to have a sexual relationship with him. First passage describes first encounter with abuse when she was only fifteen years old as she was ignorant about it:

He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of...But he was my master. I was compelled to live under the same roof with him ... He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things (Jacobs, 1861, p.30).

Harriet Jacobs expresses her agony and shame about Dr. Flint's doings as he started to harass her from her young age. He destructs her purity with foul and filthy images and tries to seize the opportunity to make her under the disposal of his pleasure. She also conveys her passivity and inability to change things as she was a slave and a young girl at the same time by citing words such as "compelled" or "property". In addition to that, the use of metaphor is clearly seen in Jacobs' account as she states in this passage "He peopled my mind with unclean images" as Dr. Flint filled her mind with sinful and impure pictures. The writer wants to say that she felt these ideas and images dwelled in her mind as the physician spoke about them each time. This intensity in her message gives the readers an idea about her suffering and how she was tortured mentally as this destroyed the virtues and the principles embedded in her.

Dr. Flint never stopped trying with Linda as he had a tremendous desire for her. He forbade her to marry her lover who was also a slave and came up with a new plan as a way to force her into a kind of cohabitation as Jacobs (1861) states:

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Dr. Flint contrived a new plan. He seemed to have an idea that my fear of my mistress was his greatest obstacle. In the blandest tones, he told me that he was going to build a small house for me, in a secluded place, four miles away from the town. I shuddered; but I was constrained to listen, while he talked of his intention to give me a home of my own, and to make a lady of me (p.59).

Harriet Jacobs gives details about Dr. Flint's new idea and project in building a remote house far from his wife's sight and jealousy. He wants to feel at ease with Linda. He had the intention of making her his sex toy. Jacobs expresses her disgust from the way he proposes to her his plan and her fears about the future and his intentions towards her. She conveys her inability again which was a reflection to all female slaves' life as he said "I was constrained to listen.." since no one could protect her from him. The agony she felt was colossal because the abuse is each woman's heaviest nightmare and as she was a slave, the torment she witnessed was twice an ordinary woman can have.

Harriet Jacobs' narrative does not speak only about her experience with assault. The account deals also with some sketches featuring other female slaves who suffered as Linda from the abuse. A notable example is about a slave family who lived with a kind mistress. They were living a comfortable life in comparison to the other slaves, having their own lodging and they were educated as well. Soon, things had changed with the marriage of the mistress with a rough man who claimed them as his property. The agony of this family commenced. Harry, the father tried to escape but he was captured and put in jail. His daughters faced the fate of the majority of female slaves as it is mentioned in the subsequent lines:

One little girl, two young to be of service to her master, was left with the wretched mother. The other three were carried to their master's

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plantation. The eldest soon became a mother; and, when the slaveholder's wife looked at the babe, she wept bitterly. She knew that her own husband had violated the purity she had so carefully inculcated. She had a second child by her master, and then he sold her and his offspring to his brother. She bore two children to the brother, and was sold again (Jacobs, 1861, p.56).

Harry's eldest daughter, and as portrayed by Jacobs, had endured the sexual abuse as she was raped twice from her master and his brother as well and had children with them both. The word "violate" used by the writer has a double meaning. The purity and virtues removed from the slave girl and of course the true sense of word. The slave got raped by her masters. Harry's daughter experienced the separation from her parents and children as well when she was sold after her masters were fed up. The sharpness and the sorrow in Jacobs' message give the readers an idea and an image about what happened to the female slaves who witnessed a double suffering as they were women and slaves as well. By focusing on such sketches, Harriet Jacobs succeeded in her aim which is to gain empathy for the slaves' case and fetch an aid for the black race to make an end to the agony of centuries.

2.3.2.2. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

As a well-known anti-slavery figure, Harriet Beecher Stowe never hesitate to demonstrate the brutality and the extortion experienced by the slaves and this by the way was done on purpose because she wanted to record such incidents no matter how evil and atrocious they are.

2.3.2.2.1. Physical Violence and Inequity

Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* portrays as well the torment in its different types not only on female slaves but on men as well. The work is full of scenes featuring harsh

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enslavers and resistless slaves who witnessed violence and injustice. This part also will include an analysis of the discourse of torture through different characters.

Stowe portrays Simon Legree as the villain of the work. He is a bloody, dreadful and evil man who was the last master of Uncle Tom. As he enjoys torturing his slaves, various passages describe Legree's doings over the black slaves. For instance, when he orders Uncle Tom to whip a female slave called Cassy because she could not fill her basket of cotton, Tom refused the order and here Legree became outraged and commenced an unusual punishment as it is mentioned in the following excerpt:

I mean to promote ye, and make a driver of ye; and to- night ye may jest as well begin to get yer hand in. Now, ye jest take this yer gal and flog her; ye've seen enough on 't to know how." "I beg Mas'r's pardon," said Tom; "hopes Mas'r won't set me at that. It's what I an't used to,—never did,—and can't do, no way possible." "Ye'll larn a pretty smart chance of things ye never did know, before I've done with ye!" said Legree, taking up a cowhide, and striking Tom a heavy blow across the cheek, and following up the in fliction by a shower of blows (Stowe, 1852, p.465)

Simon Legree is a sadist character who wants everything to be done as he orders. The language used in the passage explains many important things. First, the master's anger after the refusal of Tom which he considers as a challenge to his authority. Also, Tom's rejection of his master's order despite the punishment he will face. Moreover, strikes and blows which were considered as a lesson that Legree wants to teach to Uncle Tom. Finally, the cowhide and the shower of blows as Stowe defined them using a metaphor. The message delivered is substantial. The writer wants to alarm the audience that persons as Legree definitely existed once you give them power and authority over the others.

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The majority of Legree's scenes of torture are with Uncle Tom. He constantly tortured him as he refused to obey his orders. There is another notable extract in the work when Cassy and Emmeline escaped from Legree's house. Uncle Tom knew about their place where they were hidden. However, he refused to tell his master and here Simon Legree burst from anger as it is indicated:

Well, Tom!" said Legree, walking up, and seizing him grimly by the collar of his coat, and speaking through his teeth, in a paroxysm of determined rage, "do you know I've made up my mind to kill you?" "It's very likely, Mas'r," said Tom, calmly...with seven- fold vehemence; and Legree, foaming with rage, smote his victim to the ground. Scenes of blood and cruelty are shocking to our ear and heart. What man has nerve to do, man has not nerve to hear (Stowe, 1852, p.538).

Simon Legree could not bear the sights of challenge in the eyes of his slave as he failed to impose his authority. The last thing remains for him is beating Uncle Tom to death and this was the case with the cruellest manner ever as Stowe explains. The writer portrays the scene in details as if she was present, the way Legree speaks through his teeth, his rage and Tom's serenity make the readers involved in the story believing it is authentic.

Expressing torture does not mean that you should always show the number of whippings or the ways slaves were tortured. Harriet Beecher Stowe chooses another manner to express the brutality Tom had endured through her language. She said first that the violence Legree stroke Tom was "seven-fold" which means that it was enormous. She said also that the scenes of brutality were shocking to the ear, mind and heart letting the readers imagine how rough and horrific they were and this is a powerful message sent to the audience to feel the agony of millions as Uncle Tom who was only a reflection to what the slaves had witnessed.

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Henrique, another character, is the nephew of Augustine St. Clare. He is similar in attitude to his father; the brother of Augustine being well-known of having a prejudice against the black race and considering them as inferior and hence properties for them. There is a notable incident depicted by Stowe in her work featuring Henrique and his young slave named Dodo while he was on a horse ride with his cousin Evangeline. Henrique accused his slave of not rubbing his horse and once he answered stating that it is the horse that got the dust on his self by accident, the enslaver became furious on his own slave and started a rough rebuke as Stowe (1852) writes:

“You rascal, shut your mouth!” said Henrique, violently raising his riding- whip. “How dare you speak?”

“Mas’r Henrique!—” he began.

Henrique struck him across the face with his riding- whip, and, seizing one of his arms, forced him on to his knees, and beat him till he was out of breath. “There, you impudent dog! Now will you learn not to answer back when I speak to you? Take the horse back, and clean him properly. I’ll teach you your place!” (p.346).

The passage is meaningful as Stowe wants to show how the little boy grew as the parents are. Henrique is clearly typical to his father Alfred in seeing the slaves as their submissive commodities. He wants to impose his authority and show it to his cousin Eva as he was attracted to her. This extract combines both corporal and verbal torture starting by calling Dodo a dog and rascal. The merciless way when he raised his whip and how he beat him demonstrates prejudice and racism he got over his slave.

The message behind such incident is to show how a child can be easily affected by parents. She wants to say to the slaveholders to stop teaching and firming the ideas and belief of slavery to their children who will be the next generation. As an abolitionist,

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Harriet Beecher Stowe's aim was to push the government to emancipate slavery in the whole United States and it goes through presenting examples about young enslavers like Henrique and how they are influenced by their parents' ideas. She denounced such doings shedding light on the discourse of torture in order to finish up with bondage and open a new chapter in which all human beings will be equal.

Similarly to Jacobs' work, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* deals also with the issue of women abuse through the story of Cassy who was as previously mentioned as sex slave for multiple white men as she was compelled in being so. Cassy actually fell in love with a white man who purchased her and promised to make her a lady but never married or released her from slavery. She had two children with him. Yet, he sold her to his cousin (Mr. Butler) who never ceased to abuse her. Here, her agony commenced as he had her children under his authority:

I gave up, for my hands were tied. He had my children;—whenever I resisted his will anywhere, he would talk about selling them, and he made me as submissive as he desired... He made me submit; he made me be peaceable (Stowe, 1852, p.477).

Sexual abuse was well known during the times of slavery. Stowe evokes this issue and how a woman becomes a sexual tool for the enslavers. She describes the passivity and the surrender of Cassy using words in the example of submissive twice since she was incapable to defend herself and the children as well. He abused her as he pleased making her amicable as well as he had power and total control over her. She said her hands were tied and this is slavery which moves with obligation and harsh choices. Her hands were not tied actually in this expression. Stowe uses it figuratively to refer to the submission of Cassy because of the children to refer to the torture of mind before the body she had endured. The passage is expressive as the writer presents to the readers a different type of

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torment besides whipping and hitting practised over the female slaves which was an uncommon subject to deal with in literary works. Yet, it was efficient to present it to the audience to make them aware about the terrors of slavery.

2.3.2.3. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*

Like any slave narrative, Truth and Gilbert's work contains also various excerpts of whippings and hitting. The female slave with her amanuensis expresses the consequences of such doings on the slaves, their agony and sometimes their inability to change their destiny.

2.3.2.3.1. Corporal Harm

Truth spoke about herself being a slave and enduring physical violation as well as testifying distinct incidents about other slaves.

This first passage is about Truth recalling her life to Gilbert with her enslaver John Nealy who was a ruthless person. She had a problem of communication with her master and mistress as she spoke only Dutch and the Nealy's talked English. In many times she was sent for something to bring finally a different thing until his master could not bear and decided to punish her as Gilbert (1850) states:

One Sunday morning, in particular, she was told to go to the barn; on going there, she found her master with a bundle of rods, prepared in the embers, and bound together with cords. When he had tied her hands together before her, he gave her the most cruel whipping she was ever tortured with.....And now,' she says, 'when I hear 'em tell of whipping women on the bare flesh, it makes my flesh crawl....she continues, 'what a way is this of treating human beings? (p.26-27).

Truth and Gilbert evoke how harsh was her master in his whipping and how memorable this event was as well. The details given with the corporal and moral scars left

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behind make the audience feel the torture she had endured. The passage was ended by a question from Sojourner Truth which can also be seen as an exclamation about the treatment of the slaves. This expression can be viewed also as an irony since there is a difference between what she said and the intense message she wants to transmit to the audience.

Another extract featuring Sojourner Truth was speaking about the torture she witnessed. This time with another enslaver; John Dumont who she portrays him as a humane master. Here, a conversation was launched between the female slave and the amanuensis about the treatment she received from him while she was enslaved; “I asked her if her master, Dumont, ever whipped her? She answered, 'Oh yes, he sometimes whipped me soundly, though never cruelly. And the most severe whipping he ever give me was because *I* was cruel to a cat” (Gilbert, 1850, p.33).

This extract seems strangely different from the first one in terms of intensity of the message delivered and it can be viewed from different angles. Truth’s words concerning John Dumont expose certain naivety and passivity as well. Maybe because she was only fifteen years old at that time, so she was not fully aware about the travails of the system. There is another interpretation of this passage. Maybe and because she viewed him as a kind master who inspires confidence and trust for her, these whippings were viewed as nothing for her especially that she lived for a long time in his house and possibly, she became biased to him. Perhaps, there was a misunderstanding of Truth’s words and thoughts especially that she was an illiterate which pushed Olive Gilbert to write such an idea knowing that the credibility of the work was always questionable. Last standing probability is what was said by Sojourner Truth is the reality. She does not want to generalize leaving that impression to the readers that every master should be rough and rude to his slaves even though a kind master never whipped or treated human beings that

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way. Overall, the passage leaves the prospects open for distinct interpretations and questions as well.

The torture faced by the protagonist was not the only thing mentioned in the narrative. There are various scenes featuring other slaves who experienced torment as the majority of the slaves. Sojourner Truth testified some of the incidents that will be invoked in the subsequent lines.

First example is about Robert or Bob; the lover of Isabella who wants to marry her. He was a slave in the neighbourhood who belonged to a rude and severe master. He forbade him to visit and marry her because he had some problems with John Dumont; the enslaver of Isabella. Robert never stopped his visits to his lover. Once his master found out about it, he was enraged and pursued him along with his young master. As soon as he was caught, Bob got the cruellest punishment ever as Gilbert (1850) states:

At the same time, they both fell upon him like tigers, beating him with the heavy ends of their canes, bruising and mangling his head and face in the most awful manner, and causing the blood, which streamed from his wounds, to cover him like a slaughtered beast, constituting him a most shocking spectacle (p.35).

There are many stories similar to the one of Robert and Isabella as the slaves did not possess authority over themselves and their fate was always between the hands of their masters. Robert ended by taking a wife from the plantation of his master and was obliged to leave his lover alone as his enslaver wished. Isabella witnessed this incident from the window as Olive Gilbert mentions. Perhaps, that is why too many details are mentioned about the way they stroke him. The language used, the simile as well comes probably from Olive Gilbert and not Sojourner since she belonged first to the Dutch and even after learning English, she never had the eloquence without neglecting that she was unlettered.

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Hence, there is an involvement from the amanuensis not in the details maybe but in adding figures of speech and changing the words dictated by Sojourner Truth.

A further leading scene mentioned by Truth depicts the torture witnessed by another slave. His name is Ned and he belonged to a master named Charles Brodhead who promised the slave to see his wife once the harvest was over. Ned did his best and worked the whole day to have this opportunity. Once the harvest was over, his master refused to let him go. Ned did not stop and he was still waiting for a positive reply. Nevertheless, he got something else as the writer states:

His master asked him if he intended going, and on his replying 'yes,' took up a sled-stick that lay near him, and gave him such a blow on the head as broke his skull, killing him dead on the spot. The poor colored people all felt struck down by the blow.' Ah! and well they might. Yet it was but one of a long series of bloody, and other most effectual blows, struck against their liberty and their lives (Gilbert, 1850, p.40).

Ned was another example of multiple African slaves who faced the same destiny; a murder for claiming their minimal right. Truth's manner in recounting such events was remarkable. Unlike the last passage, this one seems genuine to her personality and language as well. The audience could feel her soul and core in dictating such an incident. Her anger and sigh using "Ah !" about the agony of a whole race is also transmitted into words in the extract. Everything makes the readers indulge in the story and realize how terrible slavery was for both men and women and this is in fact the particularity of the three selected works which were written and dictated by three women. Yet, they evoked the torment, affliction and the suffering of both sexes as what they had faced concerns both of them and as liberty was the aim of a whole class and race.

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2.3.2.3.2. Sojourner Truth's Experience of the Assault

As mentioned before, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* was a kind of tame in which the female slave does not want to relate some details “from motives of delicacy” or for not causing unwarranted pain for those who were involved in the work. One of these specifics is the sexual abuse she witnessed while she was a slave. Truth does not speak about it explicitly. However, multiple coded messages and hidden information about the account proves that sexuality was part of her life as the majority of female slaves if not all at that time.

Sojourner Truth had five different masters. Nonetheless, the one who she talked and mentioned the most is John Dumont. Her devotion and overstated sympathy for him leaves many requests. The tension existed between Isabella and her mistress was inexplicable in the narrative. Yet, excessive jealousy from the mistress towards the black slave for sexual reasons is clearly proved in general. Jacobs and Truth had a similar situation. Nevertheless, while Jacobs rejected Dr. Fint's demands for another white man, Isabella seemingly accepted her master's advances. Surely, this will not influence the reputation she had since many female slaves endured the same thing and were more or less compelled to accept. However, this affects a little bit the authenticity of the narrative. Furthermore, Isabella confesses different times that she loves her master Dumont to the point of seeing him “God”. She tries to do anything to please him and make him satisfied of her work. He also trusts her saying “that wench (pointing to Isabel) ‘is better to me than a man’” (p.33).

Sojourner Truth faces sexual harassment another time in the house of Scriver, her former master as well. She portrays him as rough and uneducated fisherman. He also owns a tavern in which she was working in. It is true that Isabella does not face the same torture as she witnessed with John Nealy. Yet, she experienced a wild external life serving men and distilling alcohol. She lived in the house of the fisherman with his three unmarried

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sons and with no daughters. Isabella never states anything about the abuse she witnessed there. On the contrary, Olive Gilbert only mentions that Truth had an “unimproved” life while she was in the house of Scriver. She also professes that “instead of improving at this place, she retrograded” (p.29).

As a result, we can say that Young Sojourner Truth lived in a very suitable environment for sexual abuse and this supports the previously deduced ideas. Surely, what happened to Sojourner Truth did not and will not influence the reputation she had since many female slaves endured the same thing and were more or less compelled to accept such things. However, this affects a little bit the authenticity and veracity of the narrative since both Truth and Gilbert suppress and avert some substantial details about Truth’s life.

2.4. Female Resistance and Freedom in the Three Selected Works

Resistance and freedom are leading discourses in the three slavery works. The female writers and tellers give them priority and importance as any suffering and torment witnessed by the slaves need an answer to it, that reaction which was rare at the time of bondage. In order to discuss how bondswomen were opposing and battling for their freedom and how each writer portrays this, the analysis will include the three heroines of the three works named respectively: Linda Brent, Eliza Harris, Isabella Van Vagner.

2.4.1. Using the Female Body to Open the Prospect of Liberty

Harriet Jacobs evokes the sexual abuse over female slaves through her story. She was continually pursued by her lustful master named Dr. Flint whether through innuendo, seduction or intimidation (Garfield, 1994, p.150). Under such conditions, Linda goes for a kind of an extramarital affair with another white man (Mr. Sands) in order to seek protection and freedom as well as she states:

I knew nothing would enrage Dr. Flint so much as to know that I favored another; and it was something to triumph over my tyrant even in that

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small way. I thought he would revenge himself by selling me, and I was sure my friend, Mr. Sands, would buy me. He was a man of more generosity and feeling than my master, and I thought my freedom could be easily obtained from him (Jacobs, 1861, p.61).

She had two children with Mr Sands and succeeded more a less to avoid the worst which is to be raped by her master. However, it costs a huge sacrifice of her purity, chastity and the morals implanted by her grandmother. She even felt dishonour and disgraced as she said, “And now, reader, I come to a period in my unhappy life, which I would gladly forget if I could. The remembrance fills me with sorrow and shame” (Jacobs, 1861, p.59)

Throughout the whole narrative, Harriet Jacobs asserts the agonies, awkwardness and the obstacles of female slaves during the period of slavery. Her focus on the sexual abuse she and various enslaved women faced is a sharp political viewpoint. In addition to that, it is a personal experiment of the impossibility of being perfect, achieving moral virtues without painful sacrificing. Jacobs declares that life and conditions oblige a person sometimes to do things incompatible to his beliefs and attitudes as she employed the strategy of using her body to protect herself and gain liberty even she confesses that this is one of the worst memories she kept when she was enslaved. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is a long journey from disgrace to self-esteem.

2.4.2. Bravery and Patience as Keys to Freedom

Resistance and Freedom are leading notions in Stowe’s work. The slaves want to free themselves from the chains of bondage. They share the same aim with the abolitionists who want to present their aid in order to emancipate the system. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* displays various characters who were involved in similar incidents, suffering and fate. Nevertheless, the way they fought and looked for their liberty was uneven. Unlike Uncle Tom, Eliza Harris changed and evolved through the story. At the beginning and because of

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her master and mistress' treatment, she was kind of passive and satisfied of her destiny. So, when her husband George complained about slavery and what he was experiencing with his master, she never ceased to reassure him that the things will change.

“O, now, dear George, that is really wicked! I know how you feel about losing your place in the factory, and you have a hard master; but pray be patient, and perhaps something—” “Patient!” said he, interrupting her; “haven’t I been patient? Did I say a word when he came and took me away, for no earthly reason, from the place where everybody was kind to me? I’d paid him truly every cent of my earnings,—and they all say I worked well.” “Well, it is dreadful,” said Eliza; “but, after all, he is your master, you know.” (Stowe, 1852, p.24)

This short passage shows the passivity of Eliza as many slaves who felt incapable of changing their destiny. Therefore, they finished their lives as enslaved even if they knew it is terrible and disgracing. There was no reaction as Eliza who confessed that the suffering her husband witnessed was dreadful. However, he must obey as he is his master.

Things changed for Eliza once she heard that his “kind” master is willing to sell her son Harry to a slave trader. Here, she gathered all the courage and undauntedness in order to free herself and her child from the calamity of slavery. Stowe wants to say that the transformation in Eliza’s mind from a passive and submissive character to a selfless and brave woman is due to her maternal affection. She did not hesitate to take her child and leave the house of Mr. Shelby. Afterwards, Stowe (1850) presents probably the most prominent escapade scene in nineteenth century American Literature as Eliza tried to run away from the slave catchers:

With one wild cry and flying leap, she vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore, on to the raft of ice beyond.... With wild cries and

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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 (p.81-82).

Despite the fact that the scene seems unrealistic and impossible to be executed, it reflects what a female slave can do for the sake of her children. Eliza was only an example of various enslaved women. There is a sharp message that Harriet Beecher Stowe wants to convey to the audience. She wants to say that courage and fearlessness are not limited to bondsmen. Sometimes, the reaction came from female slaves in the example of Eliza who took risks to obtain her own freedom along with her child's too while the yielding of Uncle Tom to his fate leads to a tragic ending.

2.4.3. Piety and Faithfulness to be Released from Bondage

As mentioned previously, this account is a whole religious journey of Isabella. Throughout the whole story, she felt God by her side helping her in each matter of her life including freedom as well. Sojourner Truth was well known as a true Christian inspired by different discussions with God and swept by the vision and the shadow of Jesus Christ. She had a unique way to worship God absorbed from her mother which consists of building a sanctuary in forest. It is actually one of the African traditions by which they can feel themselves achieving telepathic thoughts with God.

There are three notable scenes by which Isabella felt helped by God and Jesus to get her liberty or at least being released from agonies and torments witnessed before. The first one is when she faced torture and rough attitude from her former master John Nealy who whipped her harshly and continually. So, she said she conversed with the soul of her father sent by God asking him for a safe and better place to live since she could not bear the

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suffering she was enduring. Her prayers were answered according to her as it is mentioned in the following extract:

She followed him to the gate, and unburdened her heart to him, inquiring if he could not do something to get her a new and better place... He promised to do all he could, and they parted. But, every day, as long as the snow lasted, (for there was snow on the ground at the time,) she returned to the spot where they separated, and walking in the tracks her father had made in the snow, repeated her prayer that 'God would help her father get her a new and better place'. A long time had not elapsed, when a fisherman by the name of Scriver appeared at Mr. Nealy's, and inquired of Isabel 'if she would like to go and live with him.' She eagerly answered 'Yes,' and nothing doubting but he was sent in answer to her prayer (Gilbert, 1850, p.28).

There is another scene featuring Isabella and another master named John Dumont who promised to free her from slavery as the state had passed the law of abolishing slavery there. However, he refused to do so on the appointed date and here she decided to escape from him. Isabella felt consulted and even guided by God to leave her master and acquired her liberty although she liked and worked only to please him before. She was confused telling herself how she could escape and where she will go. Suddenly, the answers were received as the writer states:

She 'told God she was afraid to go in the night, and in the day everybody would see her.' At length, the thought came to her that she could leave just before the day dawned, and get out of the neighborhood where she was known before the people were much astir. 'Yes,' said she, fervently, 'that's a good thought! Thank you, God, for *that* thought! ...She sat down,

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fed her infant, and again turning her thoughts to God, her only help, she prayed him to direct her to some safe asylum. And soon it occurred to her, that there was a man living somewhere in the direction she had been pursuing, by the name of Levi Rowe, whom she had known, and who, she thought, would be likely to befriend her (Gilbert, 1850, p.41).

The final incident is different from the previous ones as it was a turning point in the life of the protagonist. It was a second freedom as Isabella states and the actual birth of Sojourner Truth. It happened after her emancipation when she moved from Ulster County to New York City as she met Robert Matthews who called himself Matthias the prophet. He took advantage of her as she became his personal maid. She believed him, his ideas and attitudes. She thought he was Jesus Christ. However, “Father Matthias” was only a liar and Isabella was accused of helping him in committing a robbery and killing. Though she was proved innocent, Isabella made a definite decision as it is mentioned in the following lines:

Her next decision was, that she must leave the city; it was no place for her; yea, she felt called in spirit to leave it, and to travel east and lecture....about an hour before she left, she informed Mrs. Whiting, the woman of the house where she was stopping, that her name was no longer Isabella, but SOJOURNER; and that she was going east. And to her inquiry, 'What are you going east for?' her answer was, 'The Spirit calls me there, and I must go. (Gilbert, 1850, p.99-100).

Sojourner Truth wants to say that God helped her in leaving the city which seems as a “second Sodom” for her. In fact, Sodom and Gomorrah were two sinful cities mentioned in the New Testament. They were destroyed because of their wickedness. Hence, New York and because of what happened there resembled to Sodom for the protagonist, Isabella said that the spirit ordered her to change her name to Sojourner Truth and her mission is to

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teach people to embrace Jesus, abstain from iniquities and looking for truth in terms of Christianity and justice for her fellow African slaves.

2.5. Conclusion

The second chapter has been an endeavour to peer into central discourses in the selected female slave narratives during the Antebellum period in order to determine the sharpness of the message conveyed to the audience.

The discourse of torture is clearly displayed in the narratives as it is reliable to the system of slavery. Harriet Jacobs shows in her account various sketches of different slaves who faced severe moral and physical torture. Same thing with Harriet Beecher Stowe as her aim was to depict these images. She never hesitates to demonstrate how harsh slavery was at that time in addition to intense messages whenever it was possible to give her opinion. The narrative of Sojourner Truth was a little bit different, as the work focused more on a spiritual and religious journey of the protagonist and therefore, there were not many things to deliver concerning the torture she faced except very few scenes. Moreover, Olive Gilbert emphasizes that Sojourner Truth had a lot to narrate about her agony and torment she witnessed while she was a slave but she refused to cause harm for some people from motives of delicacy. As a result, the narrative seems kind of tamed in this respect.

As torture was evoked, it was inevitable to deal with the discourse of resistance and freedom according to the three female writers and tellers. The focus in this part was on female characters and how they could combat and support to acquire their liberty in the image of the protagonists. Each one of them had a unique way to fight for getting liberty as aims justify means. Harriet Jacobs and for the purpose of gaining protection and avoiding harassment from her master, chooses to be indulged in an extramarital affair with another white man. She wants to use her body which was a means of attraction for her master to be an arm in getting her liberty even if she confirms that it was disgraceful but life is about

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making choices. Harriet Beecher Stowe goes to another way as she narrated the story of Eliza describing her bravery and patience as she went from passivity to empowerment because she wanted to defend herself and her child. Eliza never loses hope for a better future and that is what pushes her to challenge the obstacles she had faced to finish by meeting her husband and her mother and being free at last. Sojourner Truth was a true Christian woman as she relied on God in every step she made throughout her life. Acquiring freedom does not escape from the rule. When her master did not respect his promise, Isabella goes to God asking what she should do and how she is going to escape and she said that she had a thought which guided her to the home of Isaac Van Vagner who protected and freed her later on.

The subsequent chapter will deal with discourse analysis of the three works allotted particularly for womanhood and motherhood in addition to the tone and dialect use in each of the selected narratives to have an integral analysis. This current second chapter serves as a practical part to what has been discussed throughout the first one.

Chapter III

Genuine or Phony: Language, Literary Elements & Originality of the Three Selected Female Slave Narratives

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3.1. Introduction

Dialect is the way a particular category of people is speaking. It can rely on different factors in the example of a given culture or where and how individuals were raised. The African American identity affects its literature which makes it unique in its genre as several writers implemented distinct forms of oral traditions such as the native African dialect in order to reinforce and authenticate their works. The Slave Narratives did not escape from the norm. Nevertheless, these narratives were not limited to a certain dialect as they contained other distinct ones too.

Tone and narrative point of view are substantial features in the slaves' accounts as they determine the relationship between the teller and the reader. The choice of point of view is the choice of who is responsible for telling the story, who talks to the reader. It may be a narrator outside the work (omniscient point of view); a narrator inside the work, telling the story from a limited omniscient or first-person point of view; or apparently no one (Diasamidze, 2014, p.161). Even though it seems easy to define the slave narratives' tone and point of view, the distinct types of the genre make them more expansive than it looked alike.

The previous chapter attempted to deal with the main discourses in the three narratives of enslavement throughout an analysis for the purpose of discussing the intensity and the authenticity of the female writers and tellers' messages to the audience.

This one will be a continuity of the discourse analysis tackling womanhood and motherhood in Jacobs', Stowe's and Truth's works and then dealing with the tone as well as the point of view of each narrative in order to shape each female writer's method, vision and position in writing the account moving to dialect as a way to express the hardships of the slaves taking into consideration each writer and teller status as well as the narrative type. At the end of the chapter, a comparative study will be included in the form of

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concluding remarks in order to discuss the sharpness of the messages conveyed by the writers as well as the authenticity of the three female slave tales.

3.2. Womanhood and Motherhood in the Works of Jacobs, Stowe and Truth / Gilbert

The three works depicted the discourses of womanhood and motherhood distinctly as they are three different types of the slave narratives. Hence, this affected the message delivered to the readers. Narrating a story while you do not belong to that category of people differs largely from speaking about daily practices you are encountering and prescribing your own account is dissimilar to dictate it to a collaborator. Furthermore, Harriet Jacobs was not living the same conditions as Harriet Beecher Stowe for instance. So, the notion of womanhood and motherhood differs from a work to another. In their narratives, slave women redefine womanhood as a complex individualized incorporation of gender, spirit, courage and physical existence (Herka, 2002, p.14). Motherhood on the other hand was portrayed particularly in the scope of facing a myriad of challenges in order to fulfil the needs of their children as well as protecting them by every means from being sold and separated from them.

3.2.1. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Harriet Jacobs' narrative was packed of numerous scenes describing womanhood and motherhood. The female slave writer tried to display a woman and a mother's bravery, value and anguish for her children through distinct characters for the purpose of drawing attention to the oppressed bondswomen in Antebellum America.

3.2.1.1. Aunt Martha

Aunt Martha was described as the pillar and the backbone of Linda's family as she was a mother for both children and grandchildren too. She took the responsibility of taking care of the whole family and protecting them from any sort of dangers. So, no wonder that

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she was one of the main characters in the narrative. Jacobs (1861) characterizes woman's power and strong personality of her grandmother as she says:

...she was a woman of a high spirit. She was usually very quiet in her demeanor; but if her indignation was once roused, it was not very easily quelled. I had been told that she once chased a white gentleman with a loaded pistol, because he insulted one of her daughters...her presence in the neighborhood was some protection to me (p.32).

Jacobs' portrayal of her grandmother shows a lot of respect and significance as she was a woman of actions rather than utterances. Giving that story about Aunt Martha is a sign of protection, of what could this woman do for the sake of her children and this is actually true womanhood and motherhood according to the writer.

There is another excerpt which proves her grandmother's status in the neighbourhood to the point of making Dr. Flint afraid of her once she entered 'to see a second blow dealt' (Jacobs, 1861, p.61). Here the writer continues about Aunt Martha:

...she was not a woman to let such an outrage, in her own house, go unrebuked. The doctor undertook to explain that I had been insolent. Her indignant feelings rose higher and higher, and finally boiled over in words. "Get out of my house!" she exclaimed. "Go home, and take care of your wife and children, and you will have enough to do, without watching my family (Jacobs, 1861, p.91)

The majority of the slaves were under the oppression of their masters even though after getting their freedom. That fear, the distinct hardships and torture they had endured still prohibit them from having a total control of their own lives. This was not the case of Aunt Martha who turned her previous sufferings to a kind of ferocity as she defended her children and especially Linda who was living a nightmare in Dr. Flint's house exposed to

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pressure and assault. The way her grandmother spoke shows her power and value. She even ejected him out of her home in a degrading manner as she was warning him not to get closer to Linda again. Here, Aunt Martha did not care about being a former slave speaking to a white master. Equality was clearly shown or more specifically imposed by Linda's grandmother.

Within the same scene, the conflict intensified between Dr. Flint and Aunt Martha and it was another opportunity for the narrative's writer to show her grandmother's vigorousness and boldness when it comes to defend the members of her family by saying:

She grew more and more excited as she went on. I tell you what, Dr. Flint," said she, "you ain't got many more years to live, and you'd better be saying your prayers. It will take 'em all, and more too, to wash the dirt off your soul. Do you know whom you are talking to?" he exclaimed. She replied, "Yes, I know very well who I am talking to (Jacobs, 1861, p.92)

Outrage, threatening and insult were the major contents behind grandmother's sayings. Aunt Martha menaced Dr. Flint indirectly that her patience will be nearly over and his life will be in a real danger. She goes more than that to the point of advising him to start praying in order to wash his grimy and evil soul. Intimidation was also clear in the grandmother's speech which pushes Dr. Flint to recede a little bit. He tried to show his authority by reminding her that she is talking with a white master but with no vain as she did not even care neither about his gender nor his status. Jacobs' wanted to say that slave women, black mothers really existed in a patriarchal and unjust society which shows them as only commodities or sexual tools between the hands of white masters.

Motherhood is characterized by certain features in the example of love and sacrifice for the children to the point of prohibiting herself for their sake. Aunt Martha was a mother

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for her children and for the orphan grandchildren. She tried to secure them a good life as an indemnity for their deprivation of their own mother. Jacobs' (1861) felt 'indebted to her for all my comforts, spiritual or temporal. It was her labor that supplied my scanty wardrobe' (p.13). The female slave writer shows her gratitude to Aunt Martha for everything she did for her mentally and bodily. She also recognized her grandmother's suffering for all her children as she said, "...she (Aunt Martha) asked permission of her mistress to bake crackers at night, after all the household work was done; and she obtained leave to do it, provided she would clothe herself and her children from the profits" (p.8). This short passage indicates Martha's sacrifice to guarantee the necessities of life for the children as she was working during the day doing the household tasks for her mistress and all the night for cooking the crackers. Harriet Jacobs tried to answer indirectly the allegations of the white people who doubted on slave mothers and strived to make a difference between a white mother's feelings and a black one as the latter was seen as an object in the Antebellum society. The distinct scenes of this narrative served as a reaction and a proof of the black mother existence.

Linda was raised in her Aunt Martha's arms along with her brother and uncles too. She continues her grandmother's portrayal as she states:

It was a beautiful faith, coming from a mother who could not call her children her own. But I, and Benjamin, her youngest boy, condemned it. We reasoned that it was much more the will of God that we should be situated as she was. We longed for a home like hers. There we always found sweet balsam for our troubles. She was so loving, so sympathizing! She always met us with a smile, and listened with patience to all our sorrows. She spoke so hopefully, that unconsciously the clouds gave place to sunshine (Jacobs, 1861, p.19)

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All grandmother's features and qualities are a mother's ones. The female writer wanted to say that Aunt Martha's love was similar to her mother's and she was thankful to God and his faith that she lived by her side. The use of simile as she compares her hopeful words to a sky which turned from cloudy to shiny says everything. Aunt Martha was literally the gift of God for Linda and her own shelter.

Jacobs' (1861) sayings about her grandmother were confirmed in different scenes of the narrative in the example of her unconditioned help for her grandchildren as she decided to escape to the north when

She came in with a small bag of money, which she wanted me to take. I begged her to keep a part of it, at least, to pay for Benny's being sent to the north; but she insisted, while her tears were falling fast, that I should take the whole. "You may be sick among strangers," she said, "and they would send you to the poorhouse to die." Ah, that good grandmother!
(p.174)

The whole excerpt was an emotional one expressing Aunt Martha's love and sacrifice. Tears were falling from their eyes, a combination of sorrow and delight mixed with a relief in Linda's expression 'Ah, that good grandmother!' since she was glad of her infinite help and the opportunity she had to escape but upset and doleful with the imminent separation from her mentor and model in life. This part confirmed once more the uniformity of a grandmother's love with her mother. Aunt Martha gave Linda all the money she had because in order to guarantee that nothing will be missing for her. Through the whole work, Harriet Jacobs never stopped praising and recognizing the grace of having such grandmother as she considered her as the main contributor for her freedom.

Aunt Martha did all what she could not only for Linda but for all her (own) children. Multiple parts from the account described a mother's suffering and sacrifice particularly

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with Benjamin, her youngest son as he tried to escape from his master and put in prison as a punishment. Harriet Jacobs (1861) wonders if someone could

have seen that mother clinging to her child, when they fastened the irons upon his wrists;... have heard her heart-rending groans, and seen her bloodshot eyes wander wildly from face to face, vainly pleading for mercy; have witnessed that scene as I saw it, you would exclaim, Slavery is damnable! (p.26)

The woman writer portrays the scene that she witnessed. The feelings of a mother opposite to her son's hardships. The separation of children from their mothers was a common element in the system of slavery. Showing the torture and the pain of Aunt Martha while she was about losing her child is interesting to put the readers in the right position to imagine themselves in her place. Even though the scene seems to be too emotional and exaggerated, the writer's aim was to transmit the sentiments of her grandmother to challenge the prevailing beliefs of characterizing the female slave mothers with no feelings and of course to emphasize on slavery as a squalid and despicable institution in order to gain sympathy for the slaves' case from the audience whom the narrative was destined to.

As Jacobs (1861) exhibits a mother's anguish, she also described the bravery and the audacity of Aunt Martha as she did not even discourage and tried to recover her son rapidly as she states:

She had had an interview with the trader for the purpose of ascertaining if Benjamin could be purchased. She was told it was impossible, as he had given bonds not to sell him till he was out of the state. He promised that he would not sell him till he reached New Orleans. With a strong arm and unvaried trust, my grandmother began her work of love. Benjamin must

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be free. If she succeeded, she knew they would still be separated; but the sacrifice was not too great. Day and night she labored. The trader's price would treble that he gave; but she was not discouraged (p.26)

After surpassing the trauma of losing her son. Aunt Martha started rapidly to think about how she could minimize the damage as she knew that she will be separated from her son in all cases but at least securing his liberty which was fundamental. Here, the writer shows clearly womanhood and motherhood in two distinct scenes into the same event. From a mother's pain, hardship to courage, boldness and sacrifice in order to see her son free at last. All these elements shaped the maternal identity even though it was never easy within bondage as George Cunningham (1989) explains, "within the domain of slavery, gender or culturally derived notions of man- and womanhood do not exist" (p.117). The brutality of the system ruined the notions linked to 'woman' and 'mother' to the point of asking 'what is motherhood for a woman deprived of the ability to care for and protect her child? How are we to conceptualize maternal identity under conditions of enslavement?' (Li, 2006, p.14).

Harriet Jacobs and through *Incidents* strove to face the stereotypes concerning female slave mothers' relations with their children and their ability to protect them from dangers as many of black women were unable to keep their families united because of slavery. The female slave writer through the various scenes featuring herself and Aunt Martha as well exhibited motherhood and womanhood as means of resistance against the tyranny of bondage underlining motherly feelings transformed into actions and attitudes to secure a carefree life for children despite the fact of being surrounded by the murk of slavery.

3.2.1.2. Linda Brent

The discourses of womanhood and motherhood were portrayed plainly in the different events witnessed by the protagonist who was in quest for freedom as well as her

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children's too. Things were quite impossible as she was a female slave prohibited from her rights including the possession of her own children. The following scenes and through analysis will show how Harriet Jacobs tried to deliver mother's sentiments and a woman rigidity in a male-dominated society facing all the chains and the obstacles drawn particularly by the terrors of slavery.

The first event is extracted from chapter twenty-one entitled "The Loophole of Retreat" where Linda was hiding in the very small garret at her grandmothers' house. Linda was living in a total darkness in which she 'could not turn on the other without hitting the roof' (Jacobs, 128, p.128). She could listen to her children's noise but unable to speak to them. Here, the writer describes her anguish as she sacrificed for getting liberty for herself and the children too when she states:

I heard the voices of my children. There was joy and there was sadness in the sound. It made my tears flow. How I longed to speak to them! I was eager to look on their faces; but there was no hole, no crack, through which I could peep (p.128)

Harriet Jacobs portrays the worst feeling a mother could have which is to have the opportunity to see and speak to your own children but incapable to do it. She describes it as a paradoxical sentiment. Joy outside but sorrow inside. The darkness she was living in along with fear of being exposed made it harder for her. This nostalgia and pressure over the mother's heart and brain as well as the desire of having freedom and a new chapter of life made her tears drifted. There is a substantial message behind the bondswoman writer to deliver that a black woman also suffers and cries for her children.

There is another important excerpt which displays how a slave mother could risk everything for the sake of her children as the father of Linda's children (Mr. Sands) was about to go to Washington. Linda left the garret and asked him 'Stop one moment, and let

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me speak for my children'. (Jacobs, 1861, p.140). Linda exposed herself to him knowing that no one is notified about her place of concealment and the first thing she said is to speak about the children. The conversation proceeded as the writer points out:

Why do you come here? Is it possible you risk yourself in this house?... I merely said, "I thought you would come to bid grandmother good bye, and so I came here to speak a few words to you about emancipating my children. Many changes may take place during the six months you are gone to Washington, and it does not seem right for you to expose them to the risk of such changes. I want nothing for myself; all I ask is, that you will free my children, or authorize some friend to do it, before you go (p.140).

Even Mr. Sands could not understand why Linda exposed herself to a huge risk to speak about the children. He was also stereotyped by the similar thought of the majority of white people at that time. That a female slave is a mere object with no feelings and could be separated easily from her children. So, seeing her in front of him while she did not even care about the consequences of revealing herself in front of him especially that he became a member in the congress was a kind of shock. Linda asked him to emancipate the children as it was all what she wanted. She was in a real danger where she was searched everywhere by her master but she favoured her children's sake rather than hers and this is another evidence about a slave mother's sacrifice and suffering in contrary to the common convictions particularly in Antebellum America.

Linda succeeded in securing a departure to the north for her little girl Ellen as she sent her to Mrs. Sands' sister to be raised and educated until she will go to her afterwards. Yet, she could not let her go without peeping at her maybe for the last time as a slave woman's life was constantly in danger. Harriet Jacobs (1861) described her meeting with

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Ellen after nearly five years to the point of making her wondering ‘You really are my mother?’ (p.156) as she was only an infant when her mother concealed herself. A moment after, Linda gave her daughter a mother’s advices as she said:

I exhorted her to be a good child, to try to please the people where she was going, and that God would raise her up friends. I told her to say her prayers, and remember always to pray for her poor mother, and that God would permit us to meet again (p.157)

The writer revealed her mother’s role while she was teaching Ellen ideal manners and trust and pray to God for a better future for both of them. Harriet Jacobs wanted to say that motherhood is not simply sacrificing and suffering for the children’s sake but instructing them about life, decency and religion.

The meeting ended as Ellen slept and here Linda “hugged her close to her throbbing heart; and tears, too sad for such young eyes to shed, flowed down her cheeks, as she gave her last kiss” (p.157). She proceeds: ‘When I got back to my den, I threw myself on the bed and wept there alone in the darkness. It seemed as if my heart would burst (ibid).

Jacobs evokes the difficulty of the farewell moment between a mother and daughter predominately with the conditions imposed by bondage. A female slave mother witnessed different hardships and challenges. She cried heavily because of the separation from her daughter and because of the future which is gloomy as nothing is guaranteed as you belonged to the slaves. She was afraid that this will be the last encounter with her loved Ellen. The bondswoman writer intended to report a message and address a call to the audience behind this scene. She wanted to say how hard to live in doubt, constant fear and torn family bonds within the system of slavery, she moreover calls the white people consciousness to imagine themselves in her place. Maybe, this will help them realize the

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intricacy a female slave mother was put in and the challenges to fulfil while living under a hurtful institution.

Harriet Jacobs' narrative shed light on the female slave's life and was considered as their own voice to express the anguish and the pain endured while living under bondage. As the writer tackled the issue of motherhood and family separations to evoke what a bondswoman could bear for the sake of her children, it is evident that womanhood will be inspected as well through distinct incidents to exhibit the courage and strength in opposing stereotypes and hegemony embodied predominately in their masters.

Multiple scenes in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* presented women attitudes and struggles via different characters in the account including Linda as she was speaking about herself as the core of the whole story. The first excerpt shows the protagonist patience and temerity as she was told by Dr. Flint not to speak once more with her lover as she wanted to marry a free black man. The conversation progresses as the master said "If you must have a husband, you may take up with one of my slaves" (Jacobs, 1861, p.43). Linda answered "Don't you suppose, sir, that a slave can have some preference about marrying? Do you suppose that all men are alike to her?" (ibid). The protagonist's answer was a decisive one and a challenge to the white masters' belief at that time. She calls to have her own liberty, to choose to prefer the one who she wanted to live with. Harriet Jacobs desired to show to the audience that there is no difference between a female slave and a white woman as they both are human beings possessing feelings and total freedom in preferring suitable men to be married with. The answer shocked Dr. Flint as he exclaimed "How dare you tell me so!" he added, "I supposed you thought more of yourself; that you felt above the insults of such puppies." (p.44). Here comes another jolting answer from Linda as she said:

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If he is a puppy I am a puppy, for we are both of the negro race. It is right and honorable for us to love each other. The man you call a puppy never insulted me, sir; and he would not love me if he did not believe me to be a virtuous woman. (Jacobs, 1861, p.44).

The challenging tone in replying the master was evident. Harriet Jacobs shows a great deal of serenity and wisdom in emphasizing about the slave's right to marry each other. She answered his insult with an indirect one as she shows pride to belong to the black race and being a righteous woman not as Dr. Flint thought and this is a keen message addressed to the readers that a female slave is virtuous, autonomous and sensitive just like a white woman. No one would judge a bondswoman by the color of the skin and deprive them from their innate rights.

There is another scene which shows womanhood in Jacobs' narrative while she was in a distinct conversation with Dr. Flint as he promised her a light labor, a home and freedom in return to yield and have a sexual relationship with him. He gave her time to think. On the decisive day, she replied:

"I am ready to go to the plantation, sir," I replied.

Have you thought how important your decision is to your children?" said he. I told him I had. "Very well. Go to the plantation, and my curse go with you," he replied. "Your boy shall be put to work, and he shall soon be sold; and your girl shall be raised for the purpose of selling well. Go your own ways!" He left the room with curses, not to be repeated" (Jacobs, 1861, p.94)

Again, Linda shows reluctance to her master as she wanted him to understand that she will not do anything out of her own will even though she was living in oppression and facing injustice. She was in readiness to bear all the consequences of her decision but most

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importantly showing to all the white people that a slave girl is neither an object nor a sexual toy to be controlled and dominated. This idea is confirmed by the writer herself as she states:

I had my secret hopes; but I must fight my battle alone. I had a woman's pride, and a mother's love for my children; and I resolved that out of the darkness of this hour a brighter dawn should rise for them. My master had power and law on his side; I had a determined will. There is might in each (p.94)

There is a lucid accent and an obvious note conveyed to the audience as she resembled darkness and dawn by slavery and liberty respectively. She had high hopes and confident not only about her case but for all her fellow slaves. The discourse of womanhood is clearly seen as she displayed her ego and ultimate volition to impose a distinct fate materialized in obtaining freedom no matter how long it will take.

The discourse of womanhood was not exclusively depicted in Linda's incidents with her master. Other scenes from the narrative displayed how the protagonist could express her dignity and the dangers she could face to obtain liberty for herself and her children as well.

The first excerpt is when Linda was about to escape and before getting a place on a vessel. She was compelled to hide between bamboos in the swamp surrounded by the snakes. Nevertheless, this never makes her horrified as she thought that "being surrounded by snakes is more bearable than being enslaved...And even those large, venomous snakes were less dreadful to my imagination than the white men in that community called civilized" (Jacobs, 1861, p.126). Here, she shows her ultimate will for freedom no matter what it will cost in addition to her fearlessness in challenging the white community by criticizing them explicitly as she exhibits throughout her work that white people could be

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everything except being civilized as all the incidents she had endured demonstrated the opposite. Shedding light on such things open the gates for the audience to see the dark side of what is called civilization.

The second scene took place in the north where Linda could escape at last and found other troubles waiting for her even after the death of Dr. Flint as the Fugitive Slave Law was established by the American Government which requires the capture of any fugitive slave be it man or woman and brought him back to his own master. Mr. Dodge who was the husband of Dr. Flint's daughter claimed his property (Linda) as he tried to collect some money from buying her as he was in conversation with Linda's friend:

"Where's that negro girl, that belongs to my wife?" "What girl, sir?"
"You know well enough. I mean Linda, that ran away from Dr. Flint's plantation, some years ago. I dare say you've seen her, and know where she is." "Yes, sir, I've seen her, and know where she is. She is out of your reach, sir". "Tell me where she is, or bring her to me, and I will give her a chance to buy her freedom." "I don't think it would be of any use, sir. I have heard her say she would go to the ends of the earth, rather than pay any man or woman for her freedom, because she thinks she has a right to it" (Jacobs, 1861, p.221).

Harriet Jacobs shows her dignity and ego in refusing being paid as she thought that she was born free and getting liberty is her own right and not a favour from anyone else. The same idea was confirmed as Mrs. Bruce, the lady who helped Linda by every single means attempted to purchase her from Mr. Dodge. Yet, she had another idea as she states:

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

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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 another seemed too much like slavery; that such a great obligation could not be easily cancelled; and that I preferred to go to my brother in California (p.223)

Linda faced the dangers to get her own freedom and she was never ready to go back into slavery and sacrificed her achievement even in his own thought and hence shows the readers that a slave woman was not a property but a free human being with rights and duties to fulfil. This was a call to emancipate all the thralls making an end to the prevailing belief of seeing them as only objects as a new chapter should begin with new ideas and perspective towards them.

3.2.1.3. Other Characters

Womanhood and motherhood were not limited on the narrative's main characters. Harriet Jacobs' work contains multiple portrayals of female slave mothers struggling along with women kindness and support whether they were black or whites. The following excerpts will elucidate such discourses in some scenes featuring distinct characters.

The first selected part is about Aunt Nancy who was a second mother for Linda and tried to do her utmost in order to encourage her to escape and obtain her own liberty. The scene shows a mother's anguish and distress after losing children as she 'had two feeble babes, one of whom died in few days, and the other in few weeks' (Jacobs, 1861, p.161) because she 'was employed as night-nurse to Mrs. Flint's children. Finally, toiling all day, and being deprived of rest at night, completely broke down her constitution, and Dr. Flint declared it was impossible she could ever become the mother of a living child' (p.160). The writer displays how the loss of children ruined her Aunt as the latter said "I wish it

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could have lived," she said; "it is not the will of God that any of my children should live. But I will try to be fit to meet their little spirits in heaven" (p.161)

Harriet Jacobs demonstrated a deep sorrow in her Aunt's sayings and linked it directly to bondage as she was obliged to work day and night for the leisure of her master and mistress. The female slave writer wanted to go back to the issue of seeing the slaves as nothing but tools and objects made to satisfy the whites as they always saw them inferior and this was an example of how they differentiate a white mother from a slave one. The first found everything guaranteed so that she will be healthy and fit to bear children and the second deprived from minimal things to the point of diminishing her health. Jacobs and through what her Aunt said shows in other words that there will be judgement and good life in God's heaven and the slave's case resolution is and will be between God's hands.

The second excerpt shows the kindness and help of some white women and this is basically one of the narrative's strengths as it was not subjective in portraying all the white characters as bad and evil towards the slave. The work contains several cases where Linda got aid from white women in the example of the lady who accepted to conceal her before hiding in her grandmother's loophole. She was one of Aunt Martha's acquaintances and wanted to know about Linda's case saying "Come, Aunt Martha," said the kind lady, "tell me all about it. Perhaps I can do something to help you" (Jacobs, 1861, p.111). The writer proceeds in her description as she states:

She was unlike the majority of slaveholders' wives. My grandmother looked earnestly at her. Something in the expression of her face said "Trust me!" and she did trust her. She listened attentively to the details of my story, and sat thinking for a while. At last she said, "Aunt Martha, I pity you both. If you think there is any chance of Linda's getting to the Free States, I will conceal her for a time (ibid)

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Harriet Jacobs wanted indirectly to say that true womanhood is not only found in black women but in some kind and courteous whites too. This one had ladylike manners and sense of responsibility and assistance as she provided support for the slave woman. She pays tribute to her describing her as different from the majority of female slaveholders and such confession is an evidence of recognition for that lady's help and objectivity in her portrayal as well.

Another scene which shows a similar thing is featuring Mrs. Bruce who was mentioned earlier as the one who helped Linda in New York providing her a job and purchasing her freedom as well. Yet, there is another part from the narrative which displays Mrs. Bruce womanhood as she risked distinct dangers to carry a fugitive slave in her house. She had a relative who warns her from

Violating the laws of her country; and asked her if she was aware of the penalty. She replied, "I am very well aware of it. It is imprisonment and one thousand dollars fine. Shame on my country that it is so! I am ready to incur the penalty. I will go to the state's prison, rather than have any poor victim torn from my house, to be carried back to slavery (Jacobs, 1861, p.216)

The writer's portrayal of Mrs. Bruce seems unrealistic as it is difficult to find someone who averts a country's system. But such figures did exist even in Antebellum America.

Harriet Jacobs depicts the bravery and fearlessness of the lady who wanted to do everything for her sake to the point of never caring about going to jail in return of saving a helpless' life. Doing such a thing in such a community was rare at that time. The bondswoman writer admits later on that this attitude meant a lot to her and brought tears to her eyes as she recalled it.

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3.2.2. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

The slave novel holds the same features as the narratives of enslavement as it is a branch derived from it and hence similar discourses. Harriet Beecher Stowe tried to depict womanhood and motherhood in her work emulating realistic characters but comes from her knowledge about the institution of slavery in the southern community of the United States and hardships faced by the female slaves there.

3.2.2.1. Eliza

Eliza was the main example of motherhood in the slave novel of Harriet Beecher Stowe as she challenges multiple dangers to keep her son a part from being enslaved and also to save her family from the evil of slavery. There are several parts which display a mother's suffering and sacrifice for her child in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the example of that one when she discovered the bargain of Mr. Shelby (her master) with Mr. Haley the slave trader about selling her child (Harry) in order to fulfil her debts. The abolitionist writer describes the attitude of a defenceless mother as "Pale, shivering, with rigid features and compressed lips" (Stowe, 1852, p.50) once figuring out that her son will be sold.

The woman writer continues as she exhibits the mother's love and protecting side as Eliza says "Poor boy! poor fellow!" said Eliza; "they have sold you! but your mother will save you yet!" (p.51). Eliza knew well about the peril she will encounter but was determined to protect her child whatever it would cost. Within the same scene, Harriet Beecher Stowe's evokes motherhood distinctly as she displays Eliza's preparations to escape from her master's house as she states:

Hastily folding and directing this, she went to a drawer and made up a little package of clothing for her boy... she did not forget to put in the little package one or two of his favorite toys, reserving a gayly painted parrot to amuse him, when she should be called on to awaken him (ibid).

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Eliza and even with the tremendous stress and trouble she was facing, did not forget to please her child and brings him his preferable toys. The woman writer sent a message to the audience that even a slave mother knows exceedingly how to educate and how to deal with her children contrary to the common belief at that time which degraded the female slave mother. Stowe wanted to say that a mother will always be a mother with the same feelings, passion and affection towards her children. The same idea was characterized by the writer as Eliza was in conversation with Harry as he asked her where they will go. His mother answered:

A wicked man was coming to take little Harry away from his mother, and carry him 'way off in the dark; but mother won't let him—she's going to put on her little boy's cap and coat, and run off with him, so the ugly man can't catch him (p.52).

The way she talked with her child and how she describes the situation is a hidden message which means that slave mothers are not savage but sensitive and tender. Eliza did not want to raise the suspects of Harry despite the risky situation they will confront. Stowe plays on the audience's chord as she asked them indirectly to feel the sacrifice of the mother and call them to stay away of the prevailing prejudices about slave mothers. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1852) portrays a mother's sacrifice throughout her well-known excerpt once Eliza was nearly caught by Mr. Haley when

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 (p.82).

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The scene seems inordinate as it is quite impossible to cross the river leaping from side to side to reach the other side and flee from the stalkers but it gave an important idea of how a mother could do everything for the sake of her children to the point of realizing the impossible. The aim of portraying such a scene is to depict the transformation of a slave mother from being defenceless and feeble to vigorous under slavery and powerful to protect her own children.

3.2.2.2. Mrs. Shelby

The majority of the scenes featuring Mrs. Shelby were epitomized in displaying womanhood and ladylike ethics in helping the poor slaves. The first scene describes the aid she provided to Eliza in proposing to sell her own watch to save money and hence prohibiting the selling of Harry to Mr Haley as Stowe (1852) points out:

Mrs. Shelby, hurriedly and abstractedly fingering her gold watch,—“I haven’t any jewelry of any amount,” she added, thoughtfully; “but would not this watch do something?—it was an expensive one, when it was bought. If I could only at least save Eliza’s child, I would sacrifice anything I have (p.52).

Mrs. Shelby wanted to do her best to protect Harry from being enslaved as she feels mother’s love and the necessity to do something for Eliza. Stowe’s idea is quite the same of Harriet Jacobs as they did not want to generalize the hatred of the white people for the black race. Some individuals as Mrs. Shelby or Mrs. Bruce represented the bright spot and hope to reach the white audience and to make them feel the suffering of a certain category of people for the purpose to gain sympathy for the slaves’ case.

Mrs. Shelby joined the church from her early age and tried to handle everything in her house following Christianity. As bondage was against the principles of her religion, she did not hesitate to criticize the institution describing it as “a God’s curse on the master and

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a curse to the slave!” (p.48). The Christian-like portrayal of slavery expresses the idea of the writer as well because Harriet Beecher Stowe was a pious woman and an abolitionist as well. As a result, the majority of Mrs. Shelby’s ideas come from hers and this made her take the matters from the view of religion more than anything else but without neglecting her dissatisfaction about slavery as she proceeds, “I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil. It is a sin to hold a slave under laws like ours,—I always felt it was” (p49).

This is also nearly a similar idea to the one of Jacobs which represents some white people’s recognition that slavery is awful and a disaster on a whole race. This is one of the aims of such works, to make evidence of the iniquity of such system and to show sympathy and dissatisfaction of some people such as Mrs. Shelby about life under bondage. Nevertheless, Mrs. Shelby and contrary to Mrs. Bruce gives an impression of inability to change the fate of the slaves even though she was never with slavery. For instance, when she asked her husband about why he would sell Tom answering her that he “will bring the highest some of any,—that’s why. I could choose another, if you say so” (p.47). Mr. Shelby proceeds as he confessed that “The fellow (Mr. Haley) made me a high bid on Eliza... I didn’t listen to it, a moment,—out of regard to your feelings, I wouldn’t,—so give me some credit” (ibid). Here, Mrs. Shelby retreated as she states, “My dear, said Mrs. Shelby, recollecting herself, “forgive me. I have been hasty. I was surprised, and entirely unprepared for this (p.48). Eliza was the personal servant of Mrs. Shelby, so once she knew that she was not going to be sold she felt a kind of relief and hence contentment of the actual situation. The passivity was demonstrated in Mrs. Shelby saying despite the feeling of sympathy for the others including Uncle Tom and this reflected in a way Stowe’s ideas on slavery and this reinforced some critics’ ideas about her that will be discussed later on.

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Eliza had escaped. As Mr. Haley was in her pursuit, Mrs. Shelby tried her best at least to waste time to hinder him from catching her servant as she told another servant named Sam to make time as she states:

Well, Sam, you are to go with Mr. Haley, to show him the road, and help him. Be careful of the horses, Sam; you know Jerry (the horse) was a little lame last week; don't ride them too fast. Mrs. Shelby spoke the last words with a low voice, and strong emphasis (Stowe, 1852, p.62).

The woman writer portrays the indirect help provided by Mrs. Shelby to Eliza as she implemented her authority to keep her as far as possible from Haley's sight. Woman values as well as will and intelligence of the female slaveholder to protect her servant from the trader were depicted in this small passage. Harriet Beecher Stowe stuck to the same idea in showing the religious white women as wise, kind and sensitive as they felt the agony and the pain caused by the institution of slavery reflecting the author's ideas to show Christian women as a gift sent from God to help the defenceless in their tribulation.

3.2.2.3. Miss Ophelia

St. Clare's cousin is another example provided by the writer as one of the white women who despised the system and tried to fix everything regarding the slaves' case in her cousin's house. Yet, there is a difference between Mrs. Shelby and Miss Ophelia as the latter comes from the north where the majority disagree with slavery and here is a hidden message from Harriet Beecher Stowe to the audience that northerners handled the issue better than those in the south, knowing that the author herself is a native northerner.

There are distinct excerpts which exhibit womanhood in Miss Ophelia's attitudes in the example of her conversation with Mary (Mr. St. Clare's wife) about slavery and the situation of the slaves as the latter insulted and degraded them saying "they are a degraded race" (Stowe, 1852, p.228). Miss Ophelia answered in a shortened but effective way

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“Don’t you believe that the Lord made them of one blood with us?... don’t you think they’ve got immortal souls?” said Miss Ophelia, with increasing indignation” (ibid).

The woman writer and through Miss Ophelia shows how intelligently she answered on Mary’s racist sayings towards the slaves. She even demonstrated her anger as she was talking which means that she was against the system of slavery. Stowe here displays also the north vs south concept through what a northern woman thought about slavery in comparison to the southern one particularly during the period which preceded the American Civil War where there was an intensified conflict between the two parts over bondage.

Another scene previously mentioned as Mary sent her servant Rosa to the whipping house because she expressed her dissatisfaction in one of her orders. Rosa asked the help of Miss Ophelia as she saw in her the one who could protect her from Mrs. St. Clare’s punishment.

...the honest blood of womanhood, the strong New England blood of liberty, flushed to her cheeks, and throbbbed bitterly in her indignant heart; but, with habitual prudence and self-control, she mastered herself, and, crushing the paper firmly in her hand, she merely said to Rosa, “Sit down, child, while I go to your mistress.” “Shameful! monstrous! outrageous!” she said to herself, as she was crossing the parlor (Stowe, 1852, p.418)

There are multiple things demonstrated in Stowe’s portrayal of Miss Ophelia’s reaction against Rosa’s humiliation. First thing as she used the expression New England blood of liberty. It means simply that the northerners called for liberty and the emancipation of the slaves in contrary to those in the south. The writer glorifies and praises the northern attitudes in a way or another showing how Miss Ophelia got outraged.

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Moreover, womanhood is shown in her manners as she refused Mary's injustice treatment to Rosa and moved directly to speak for her uttering the words shameful and monstrous as an expression of aversion and disgust from Mary's doing and of course from the institution of slavery which allowed such a thing to be done easily.

Miss Ophelia went to speak for Rosa and as Mary refused to even talk about anything regarding her decision, Miss Ophelia and in her concise manner said with energy "You will answer to God for such cruelty!" (p.420)

Miss Ophelia was also a religious woman and speaking about God's role in lifting injustice and oppression from the defenceless is another evidence of the writer's reflections and tendencies. St. Clare's cousin was not afraid in speaking with Mary showing her disagreement to such thing calling it as cruelty. Stowe commonly connected true womanhood to true Christian women who obeyed the lord and followed his instructions displaying Christian women as kind and virtuous.

There is also a different part from Stowe's work which shows womanhood in Miss Ophelia's conduct towards the slaves and this time with Topsy the young slave girl bought by Augustine St. Clare and given to Ophelia in order to be well educated in a northern Christian manner as he said. After sometime, Miss Ophelia came to her cousin and asked for "a deed of gift, or some legal paper." (Stowe, 1852, p.403). The conversation takes another level as St. Clare said:

"I will;" and he sat down, and unfolded a newspaper to read. "But I want it done now," said Miss Ophelia. "What's your hurry?" "Because now is the only time there ever is to do a thing in," said Miss Ophelia. "Come, now, here's paper, pen, and ink; just write a paper. Why, what's the matter?" said he. "Can't you take my word? "I want to make sure of it,"

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said Miss Ophelia. “You may die, or fail, and then Topsy be hustled off to auction, spite of all I can do.” (p.404).

Miss Ophelia’s insistence in having Topsy for real shows her intentions to protect her from chains of the slave auctions as she did not want her to live a harsh life full of torments and anguish. The cousins continued their discussion as St. Clare signed the legal paper and states, “There, now, she’s yours, body and soul,” said St. Clare, handing the paper. “No more mine now than she was before,” Miss Ophelia. “Nobody but God has a right to give her to me; but I can protect her now” (ibid).

Miss Ophelia’s determination in defending Topsy despite her secret prejudice at the beginning towards the young slave girl made her one of the most honest and conscious characters in the story. From the writer’s perspective, Miss Ophelia symbolized virtuosity and hard work. She was also a woman who was racist in another way but recognized her mistake and tried to love the young girl and hence succeeding in obtaining free papers for her so that she will be able to protect her in the best manner. Harriet Beecher Stowe implemented the character of Miss Ophelia to satirize racialism in the southern society and criticize distinct acts against the slaves but also to show that slavery is not the only responsibility of the southerners as the northerners were part of the crisis with their secret racism towards the black race even though they were abolitionists.

3.2.2.4. Other Characters

Womanhood and Motherhood were not limited to the previously mentioned characters in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The abolitionist writer describes different scenes including other characters to show first the difficulty to live in a racial society particularly for slave mothers and the bravery of some women in providing help and showing sympathy for the slaves.

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Mrs. Bird is the wife of Senator Bird who contributed in establishing the Fugitive Slave Act. Mrs. Bird is portrayed as a compassionate woman with a noble heart who despised slavery and showed her desire to break the new law established by the government as she said:

You ought to be ashamed, John! Poor, homeless, houseless creatures! It's a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I'll break it, for one, the first time I get a chance; and I hope I shall have a chance, I do! Things have got to a pretty pass, if a woman can't give a warm supper and a bed to poor, starving creatures, just because they are slaves, and have been abused and oppressed all their lives, poor things! (Stowe, 1852, p.107)

Mrs. Bird criticized her husband for being part of those who signed for the Fugitive Slave Act as it is awful and oppressive for the slave. Stowe demonstrated her anger and dissatisfaction on that law through the character of Mrs. Bird who shed light on the prejudice against the slaves because of their skin colour. At the same time, the writer displayed humanity and womanhood of the northern women who were against the slaves' treatment.

The senator's wife wished a chance to break this monstrous law according to her and the destiny put Eliza in her road as she was directed to Mr. Bird's house asking for protection. Mrs. Bird did not hesitate to provide help and to show good intentions towards Eliza as she stated "Nobody shall hurt you here, poor woman, you are safe; don't be afraid" (Stowe, 182, p.110).

The sureness in Mrs. Bird sayings give the impression of conviction for the readers that the thing she was doing is right and of course safety for Eliza who was ruined and exhausted after her escape and the perils she encountered. Mrs. Bird challenged the law to do something right, something comes from her consciousness. Harriet Beecher Stowe in a

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way called people through such a scene to do the same and break all the laws which oppress the slaves. Mrs. Bird did not hesitate to provide a shelter to the distressed mother who escaped to guarantee a life far from bondage for her child as “A temporary bed was provided for her on the settle, near the fire” (ibid).

After that and in order to make sure of Eliza’s safety, the couple agree to send her to the Quakers who provided help for all the slaves. The subsequent excerpt displays the values of this white woman:

While Eliza was prepared to go, Mrs. Bird “slowly opened the drawer. There were little coats of many a form and pattern, piles of aprons, and rows of small stockings; and even a pair of little shoes... she began, with nervous haste, selecting the plainest and most substantial articles, and gathering them into a bundle (Stowe, 1852, p.117).

Mrs. Bird felt a mother’s love as she gave the most precious clothes of her recently dead child named Henry to little Harry as she answered her children:

My dear boys, she said, softly and earnestly, “if our dear, loving little Henry looks down from heaven, he would be glad to have us do this. I could not find it in my heart to give them away to any common person—to anybody that was happy; but I give them to a mother more heart-broken and sorrowful than I am; and I hope God will send his blessings with them! (ibid)

The whole excerpt displayed how noble was Mrs. Bird despite the pain of her lost child. She felt the anguish of a mother whose only concern in to defend her child. So, she helped her with the worthy things in her house to show mother and woman values. The scene also is a stand in Stowe’s case as she had recently lost her child before writing *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. She wanted to exhibit her awareness and feeling for the misfortune of losing

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a child and sympathized with the slave mothers who lost and were constantly separated from their children.

Womanhood was not limited to white characters in Stowe's novel. Multiple parts showed how black women played a substantial role in supporting a whole family in the example of Aunt Chloe who is a secondary character but an important one. She had a conversation with Mrs. Shelby about a proposition to work as a confectioner in Louisville as she said "I was thinking of dat ar very thing; cause I shouldn't need no clothes, nor shoes, nor nothin,—I could save every cent (Stowe, 1852, p.333). Aunt Chloe proceeds as she talked with George (Mrs. Shelby's son) "I'm gwine, Mas'r George,— gwine to have four dollars a week; and Missis is gwine to lay it all up, to buy back my old man agin!" (ibid).

Aunt Chloe tried to sacrifice everything to work very far from home just to use the wage she will receive to redeem her husband (Uncle Tom). Harriet Beecher Stowe pays tribute to all the slave women who did not lose hope in meeting again with their husbands. The sacrifice and the unlimited aid provided by Aunt Chloe is an example of multiple bondswomen who do similar things and more than that. Stowe wanted to say that the black women in contrary to the prevailing belief of the majority of people and showing respect to these women who after all maintains faith for a better future.

The discourse of womanhood is also presented in another form depicting the story of Cassy who is a minor, but a substantial character in Stowe's novel, as she tried to shed light on the life of a female slave who suffered from betrayal and multiple sexual abuses nearly ten years before Harriet Jacobs published her own autobiography evoking the same topic within her own story. Moreover, showing fearlessness and pride of such a character who was inspired by Uncle Tom to consider a distinct method to obtain her liberty with Emmeline. The following scene displays how she used her intelligence and own influence

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on Simon Legree (her master) to get rid from his persecution as Stowe (1852) said: “This influence had become more harassing and decided, since partial insanity had given a strange, weird, unsettled cast to all her words and language” (p.522). Cassy composed a Ghost Story so that she will succeed in hallucinating Legree as they were in conversation:

“You don’t believe in ghosts, do you, Cass?”... “No matter what I believe,” said Cassy, sullenly. “Fellows used to try to frighten me with their yarns at sea,” said Legree. “Never come it round me that way. I’m too tough for any such trash, tell ye... “Them noises was nothing but rats and the wind,” said Legree... Cassy kept her glittering eyes fixed on Legree, as she spoke, and he stared at her like a man in the nightmare. For some reason or other, a vague horror fell on him; while Cassy, with a keen, sneering glitter in her eyes, stood looking at him” (p.525)

Harriet Beecher Stowe shows the intelligence of a black slave who faced distinct ways of abuse and suffering in the past. But at the end succeeded in making him afraid and hence dispersed him to seize the opportunity to escape. Not only is Cassy's power over Legree sexual, but the manner in which she wields her power over Legree is precisely the manner in which he wields his over her (Lant, 1987, p.66). Finally, Cassy had her vengeance and triumph over her master as she ‘enters Legree's mind and drives him to his eventual death by drinking’ (p.68).

The whole purpose from the passage is to display slave women power and cleverness to turn the situations to their favour once the desire of liberty is present and this is one of the main points in the slaves’ accounts.

3.2.3. The Narrative of Sojourner Truth

Before dealing with Sojourner Truth’s account, two important points should be pointed out. The work belonged to the category of dictated accounts and deals with Slavery

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in the north which was way different from what was happening in the south. This explains in a way the lack of scenes including the main discourses found in the majority of the slave narratives. Nevertheless, motherhood and womanhood were displayed in some parts that will be analysed in the succeeding lines.

3.2.3.1. Isabella (Sojourner Truth)

Womanhood and Motherhood were depicted largely in Isabella herself as she is the centre of the account. Unlike the two previous works, this one deals largely with the protagonist without giving much details to the other characters who were very few in comparison to the two other narratives and most of them were her former masters in which we follow the story of Isabella moving from one master to another until obtaining her freedom by 1827. That is why the analysis will be focused in extracting the discourses of womanhood and motherhood in some scenes including Sojourner Truth and her mother.

The first excerpt is about Mau-Mau Bet or Betsy the mother of Isabella who was crying heavily. Isabella asked her about the reason of such a thing. Her mother answered “I am thinking of your brothers and sisters that have been sold away from me.’. And she would proceed to detail many circumstances respecting them (Gilbert, 1850, p.17).

Truth recalls a mother’s suffering and a common thing within the system of slavery. She demonstrated the pain of a slave mother and the feeling of inability to change the children’s fate. There was a message sent to the audience that an enslaved mother had nothing to do except tears falling from her eyes and memories about the lost children hither and thither. Also, Olive Gilbert used a simple and efficient style to transmit Truth’s sayings so that the message conveyed will be significant.

The account evoked, also, how Mau-Mau Bet educated her children as the writer said “She taught them to kneel and say the Lord’s prayer... She entreated them to refrain from lying and stealing” (Gilbert, 1850, p.17). There is here the same message and the same

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answer found in the majority of the slaves' accounts to the whites' stereotypes accusing the slaves as savage and uncivilized. The sagacity portrayed in the way Isabella's mother educated her children is a response to the whites' prevailing belief at that time.

The same idea is characterized in Isabella's way of raising her children as she was inspired by her mother's instructions to have "a sense of honesty, that, when she had become a mother, she would sometimes whip her child when it cried to her for bread, rather than give it a piece secretly, lest it should learn to take what was not its own!" (Gilbert, 1850, p.34)

Truth wanted to show to all people who doubt about the slaves' education that despite all the anguish endured under the system of bondage, she tried to educate her children righteously to the point of letting her children angry instead of stealing or taking a piece of bread which did not belong to her. Olive Gilbert and through what Truth had said wanted to deliver a significant idea to the readers that a slave mother possessed the basis of education despite an institution which deprived them from their humanity. The main aim of writing such work is to answer all the accusations and prejudices against the slaves showing to all people that the slaves really exist even with the troubles lived in slavery. Sojourner Truth shed light on her sacrifice with her children as Gilbert states:

When Isabella went to the field to work, she used to put her infant in a basket, tying a rope to each handle, and suspending the basket to a branch of a tree, set another small child to swing it. It was thus secure from reptiles, and was easily administered to (Gilbert, 1850, p.38).

The main purpose in exhibiting this incident is to depict the slave mother's sense of protection for the children. Isabella was busy at work but never neglected her children as she was carrying them and toiling simultaneously. The details given by the amanuensis presented an idea to the readers about the magnitude of suffering of a mother for the

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children's sake. In addition to that, showing a slave mother as a victim of a system that never stopped to harass them showing at the same time their existence and answering all the denunciations and prejudices against them in a patriarchal oppressive society.

Womanhood is widely revealed in *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* through several parts including the protagonist and how she confronted several incidents being gentle and wise as she was commonly characterized displaying jointly female slave manners and values to resolve distinct situations.

The Northern States responsible decided to emancipate all the slaves there by 1828. Isabella was part of those people who would take their liberty. Her master named John Dumont promised her that he will free her one year before the specified date but when she asked for freedom in the appointed day, he refused and remained inflexible. Isabella took a final decision to escape from him but she “inwardly determined that she would remain quietly with him only until she had spun his wool - about one hundred pounds - and then she would leave him” (Gilbert, 1850, p.39)

The writer shows the faithfulness and honest nature of Isabella as she wanted to complete her task till the end though Mr. Dumont had not held his promise towards her. Isabella felt a kind of guiltiness as she “had a badly diseased hand, which greatly diminished her usefulness” (p.38). As a result and even with the master's treatment, she decided to complete her task before escaping. Olive Gilbert displayed the kindness of the protagonist but at the same time conveyed a message to the audience that the majority of the slaves possessed similar qualities as Isabella. This was a call from the writer to involve the readers to the slaves' good nature asking them indirectly not to judge them according to prejudice and stereotypes.

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Sojourner Truth had escaped finally to the home of Van Vagner who never entered the business of buying and selling slaves. Her master appeared right after and a conversation was engaged between them:

“Well, Bell (Isabella), so you’ve run away from me.’ ‘No, I did not run away; I walked away by day-light, and all because you had promised me a year of my time.’ His reply was, ‘You must go back with me.’ Her decisive answer was ‘No, I won’t go back with you” (Gilbert, 1850, p.43)

Isabella’s determination in refusing to go back demonstrates her fearlessness and high desire for freedom which is the ultimate goal of a whole race. She even disregarded and underestimated him as she said that she walked by day-light and this to her is not viewed as an escape. Sojourner Truth is well known as a spontaneous and tenacious woman and that is why the writer employed the word decisive. Gilbert desired to display black woman power and her status in an oppressive society. In addition to show the anguish faced by the female slave, this account is considered among the firsts which strove to show black feminism under the system of slavery.

Sojourner Truth took her liberty legally and moved directly to recover her son who was sold from her as she was a slave by Mrs. Dumont. Isabella asked her former mistress about the place of her child and was faced by an underestimation and mockery. Isabella answered

...in tones of deep determination__ ‘I’ll have my child again” ‘Have your child again!’ repeated her mistress__ her tones with big contempt, and scorning the absurd idea of getting him. ‘How can you get him? Have you any money? ‘No, I have no money, but God has enough, or what’s better! And I’ll have my child again (Gilbert, 1850, p.45).

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The details provided by Gilbert in this excerpt are an evidence of Truth's piousness as she was characterized with her faithfulness to God and of course to show the unlimited confidence she had in recovering her child. The writer glorified and praised Isabella's stoutness making it an example of multiple black women who did the impossible to defend their own rights as well as their children too.

Isabella and after getting her liberty began a new adventure, changing her own name and became a preacher travelling in distinct northern states and attending various religious meetings. Olive Gilbert recounted a significant incident where they were in a camp meeting disturbed suddenly by a group of tumultuous young men. Truth felt herself in a real danger as she was the only one who belonged to the black race in the meeting. But soon after, she gathered her strength and used her talent in singing religious hymns to restrain them from harming the others and here she said:

“Children, I have talked and sung to you, as you asked me; and now I have a request to make of you: will you grant it?’ ‘Yes, yes, yes,’ resounded from every quarter. ‘Well, it is this,’ she answered: ‘if I will sing one more hymn for you, will you then go away, and leave us this night in peace?’ ‘Yes, yes,’ came faintly, ‘I repeat my request once more,’ said she, ‘and I want you all to answer.’ And she reiterated the words again. This time a long, loud ‘Yes— yes—yes,’ came up, as from the multitudinous mouth of the entire mob” (Gilbert, 1850, p.119)

Olive Gilbert displays once more the courage of a black woman in challenging the rioters as she succeeded to defend the whole assembly from being disturbed and harmed too. Sojourner Truth asserts that she was armed by her faithfulness to God and in addition her wisdom in dealing with a delicate situation. Boldness and bravery are main qualities of

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a real woman and that what pushes the writer to recall such event as she wanted to show true womanhood in a black woman during a crucial period in American history.

3.3. Tone and Narrative's Point of View

There is a close relationship between the tone and the point of view in literature as they provide the author's stand toward a given subject. Depicting a given tone requires to go beyond an exact understanding of the writer's ideas. You have to infer it from the connotative values of the words, from the details included, and, of course, from the writer's point of view or attitude ("The phrase point of view", 2013, p.248). Hence, tone and point of view go hand in hand and are viewed as key elements to examine and analyse a piece of writing.

As the majority of slave narratives are taking the shape of autobiographies, readers think that it is easy to determine their tone and point of view. As pointed out before, multiple types of the genre took place. From a dictated story to the slave novel which gives the slaves accounts a different dimension and various dissimilarities concerning the two literary elements.

3.3.1. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Harriet Jacobs' autobiography was highly inspired by the sentimental novel techniques and principles. The writer used the sentimental novel conventions in distinct methods in order to reveal or express some marked events in her life.

3.3.1.1. Jacobs' Critical and Melodramatic Tone

Jacobs implements the sentimental novel in exposing her sexual vulnerability as the narratives of enslavements could not display sufficiently such situation. American scholar Valerie Smith (1988) declares that "in the sentimental novel, the heroine aspired to chastity and hoped for marriage and family, whereas Jacobs was in a situation in which neither chastity nor family or marriage could be achieved because she was a slave" (xxxix). Thus,

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Jacobs places herself as a victim of her master (Dr. Flint) who constantly abused her, her lover (Mr. Sands) who promised her liberty and a good life and never kept his promise and of course of the institution of slavery which allowed such things to happen for a defenceless woman. The writer's portrayal matched perfectly the conventions of the sentimental novel presenting women as weak and unprotected. Moreover, it is aligned with gaining sympathy of the white audience in particular which was the main purpose in writing this work.

Jacobs' *Incidents* opens out in a melodramatic world usually supported by the idea of a virtuous vs. wicked mother and tautness between slavery and liberty. Jacobs' discourse is constructed through exclamations, rhetorical questions, addresses to the reader, and subjective adjectives, which created a melodramatic tone (Vivanco, 2003). There is a significant example which shows the female writer's melodrama employment:

What does he know of the half-starved wretches toiling from dawn till dark on the plantations? of mothers shrieking for their children, torn from their arms by slave-traders? of young girls dragged down into moral filth? of pools of blood around the whipping post? of hounds trained to tear human flesh? of men screwed into cotton gins to die? (Jacobs, 1861, p.83).

Another example is exhibited by the writer in chapter twenty-three "Still in Prison" as she describes a bondswoman anguish as she made an end to her life to get rid from being in continuous suffering as Jacobs (1861) states:

Another time I saw a woman rush wildly by, pursued by two men. She was a slave, the wet nurse of her mistress's children. For some trifling offence her mistress ordered her to be stripped and whipped. To escape

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the degradation and the torture, she rushed to the river, jumped in, and ended her wrongs in death (p.136)

It is true that Harriet Jacobs used a lot the melodramatic tone. However, the fact that she recounted true events and dealt with real characters detached her work from the sentimental novel which relies heavily on fictional characters and unrealistic events. There is another reason which proves why *Incidents* is separated from the sentimental novel as Jacobs dared and narrated her loss of virginity which is an uncommon thing in sentimental novels. In addition to that, Jacobs (1861) implemented various exclamations as an emotional call to the audience. Many examples from the narrative show what is previously mentioned:

“O, virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave” (p.61).

O, what days and nights of fear and sorrow that man caused me! 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 hearts for my sisters who are still in bondage, suffering as I once suffered (p.32).

Furthermore, the writer never hesitated to use the critical tone in denouncing the institution of slavery with all the consequences over the slaves in order to make the reader delve into the hardships faced by a whole race using from time to time some attractive, sharp adage in the example of “Hot weather brings out snakes and slaveholders” (p.194) or “Cruelty is c contagious in uncivilized communities” (p.52).

3.3.1.2. First Person ‘Central’ Narrator

Basically, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* took the real form of a slave account. It is a presented autobiography of Harriet Jacobs with a front subtitle “Written by Herself”

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which gives evidence about the work's authenticity. In other words, everything narrated is under the responsibility of the writer.

As a result, the whole events are narrated from the personal perspective of Linda or Harriet Jacobs. So, there is a clear employment of the first-person point of view (central narrator) which means that the author is the main character in his/her own work. The Iranian writer Jamal Mirsadeghi (1987) gives another name for the central narrator as he states "If this "I" is the protagonist of the story, he is called "hero-narrator" (p.461). Hence, Harriet Jacobs controls every single detail on her narrative and reinforces the message conveyed to the audience. Implementing the first-person point of view allows Jacobs as well to 'direct the reader's attention and control the sources of information' (Diasamidze, 2014, p.161).

Harriet Jacobs affirms that her work is a personal and genuine account. For this, she never provides acuteness about her master and clues about what her grandmother or uncles were doing far from her. To sum up, she did not display any sort of information that she was not personally acquainted with.

She used the personal pronoun "I" every single time to confirm her status as a centre of events as she was doing her personal show. In addition to that, the female slave writer innovates a character to symbolise herself. We call it as retrospective as she tried to present distinct interpretations and cogitations as she goes back to the past. This gives her the opportunity to forebode what will happen to her next. For example, when she recalled her childhood as she states "Those were happy days-too happy to last. The slave child had no thought for the morrow; but there came that blight, which too surely waits on every human being born to be a chattel" (Jacobs, 1861, p.9).

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On the other hand, Jacobs was able to correct bluffy facts given to her in the past from her present position. For instance, when she recollected an information told to her by a slaveholder about her runaway friend that

besought him to take her back to her master, for she was literally dying of starvation; that many days she had only one cold potato to eat, and at other times could get nothing at all. He said he refused to take her, because he knew her master would not thank him for bringing such a miserable wretch to his house (p.48).

She answers right after:

This whole story was false. I afterwards staid with that friend in New York, and found her in comfortable circumstances. She had never thought of such a thing as wishing to go back to slavery. Many of the slaves believe such stories, and think it is not worth while to exchange slavery for such a hard kind of freedom. (p.49)

What makes *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* a unique and authentic slavery account is the writer's framing of a story which talked about herself but in a different way. There was the use of the first-person point of view to affirm that all the events and incidents were really witnessed by the protagonist. But the reader will have the feeling that Jacobs is telling the story of someone else and she did actually as she embodies her identity in Linda Brent who is viewed as a typical personage of female slavery.

3.3.2. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Stowe's work took another form of the slaves' account as it was considered as a distinct type of these narratives called by the slave novel. This narrative share quite the same tone as the previous one but the events are narrated from a different point of view. The next few paragraphs will portray what is already stated.

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3.3.2.1. Sentimentality Excess

Similarly to Jacobs, who was inspired by the sentimental novel, Harriet Beecher Stowe relies deeply on its principles and style to portray the pain and tribulations endured by the slaves in the south. This in a way caused controversy over her work as her opponents argued about the story and the characters as fictitious ones and hence the events presented by the abolitionist writer were too melodramatic and exaggerated in comparison to reality.

Jacobs' *Incidents* and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* share the same techniques of sentimentality and counted on the readers' emotions to gain sympathy for the slaves' case as Stowe (1852) asserts that her main purpose in writing her work was to "awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race" (p.2). Multiple examples from the novel show how some scenes were portrayed in way which goes beyond reality. For instance, in Tom's description as "pious, the gentle, domestic heart, which, woe for them! has been a peculiar characteristic of his unhappy race (Stowe, 1852, p.124). The writer constantly repeated Tom's attributions because she wanted to show "that African Americans had souls and a spiritual dimension and to oppose the affront to Christianity represented by slavery" (Noble, 1997, p.298) instead of exhibiting his desire for freedom. Another example in the melodramatic exaggeration showing Uncle Tom's steadiness to the point of becoming passive as Cassy proposed to him to join her to escape. Here, Tom answered:

O, Misse Cassy!" said Tom, throwing himself before her, "for the dear Lord's sake that died for ye, don't sell your precious soul to the devil, that way! Nothing but evil will come of it. The Lord hasn't called us to wrath. We must suffer, and wait his time (Stowe, 1852, p.516).

Harriet Beecher Stowe wanted to characterize Uncle Tom as a virtuous and pious man once more to the point of accepting his awful position and wait for death. He fails to

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do what a minor character (Cassy) achieves and this increased the negative voices of objection especially from black readers who certainly preferred that Stowe displayed the bravery and strong desire of the protagonist to escape regarding his life at Legree's plantation rather than describing him as a mere good Christian. A part from Uncle Tom, the writer's melodramatic tone redundancy encompasses the events depicted in the example of Eva's death which was portrayed in a Christ-like way as she states:

It is impossible to describe the scene... Eva had been unusually bright and cheerful, that afternoon, and had sat raised in her bed, and looked over all her little trinkets and precious things...But at midnight,—strange, mystic hour!—when the veil between the frail present and the eternal future grows thin,—then came the messenger!.. On the face of the child, however, there was no ghastly imprint, —only a high and almost sublime expression,—the overshadowing presence of spiritual natures, the dawning of immortal life in that childish soul...A bright, a glorious smile passed over her face, and she said, brokenly,—“O! love,—joy,—peace!” gave one sigh and passed from death unto life! (Stowe, 1852, p.384,385).

In addition to melodrama, Harriet Beecher Stowe implemented the serious tone as well as she wanted to denounce sharply slavery and educate people about the dangers and harm caused by this system. The writer repeated several times that no matter how long it takes, God's judgement will come. The satiric tone infiltrates the serious and critical ones as she shows her explicit hatred to bondage stating in one of her quotes:

This I take to be about what slavery is. I defy anybody on earth to read our slave-code, as it stands in our law-books, and make anything else of

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it. Talk of the abuses of slavery! Humbug! The thing itself is the essence of all abuse (Stowe, 1852, p.290)

Another example as she describes the warehouse:

A slave warehouse! Perhaps some of my readers conjure up horrible visions of such a place. They fancy some foul, obscure den ... you shall be courteously entreated to call and examine, and shall find an abundance of husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, and young children, to be “sold separately, or in lots to suit the convenience of the purchaser (Stowe, 1852, p.426).

The abolitionist writer makes a satire with a little bit of mockery on the politician who did not react to emancipate the slaves. In contrary, establishing new laws which add the salt to the wound in reference Mr. Bird, who enables The Fugitive Slave Act being a member in the American Parliament as she said:

How sublimely he had sat with his hands in his pockets, and scouted all sentimental weakness of those who would put the welfare of a few miserable fugitives before great state interests! He was as bold as a lion about it, and “mightily convinced” not only himself, but everybody that heard him;—but then his idea of a fugitive was only an idea of the letters that spell the word (Stowe, 1852, p.118)

Though *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is highly praised by different critics and viewed as the sparkle of the American Civil War as Ann Douglas (1981) states “No woman before or since Stowe has so successfully written a novel designed to stir up the nation in the cause of the major issue of the day” (p.13). Also, using the different techniques of the sentimental novel is never considered as an unfavourable concern. Nevertheless, exaggerating in sentimentality to the point of showing distinct black characters as naïve,

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passive and submissive was the point which gathers the dissatisfaction and frustration of the critiques. Harriet Beecher Stowe and in order to attract the readers and gain compassion for the slaves' situation portrays subconsciously maybe in some parts of her work Tom as goofy and slow and Topsy as heathenish just to make the audience feel sorry for this category of people. This, in a way, took *Uncle Tom's Cabin* into the zone of stereotypes and caricatures as well which explains the severe criticism the woman writer had received.

3.3.2.2. Stowe's Multiple Voiced Narrator

Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* does not belong to the conventional slave narratives. It does not take the shape of an autobiography as well. Hence, the absence of the first-person point of view is quite noticeable. However, we cannot say the abolitionist writer is a quite one though the events are mostly told from the third person. Harriet Beecher Stowe intervenes in the narrative often, sometimes commenting on or speaking to characters and action within the story, and sometimes stepping outside of the narrative to speak directly to the audience (Reaugh, 2018, p.1). So, there is a shift from time to time from the third to the second person omniscient narrator as various excerpts from the slave novel explain better the writer's infiltration. For instance, when Lucy was told by Haley that her child is sold. Stowe (1852) described here the pain caused by such information in the third person point of view as she states, "The wild look of anguish and utter despair that the woman cast on him might have disturbed one less practised; but he was used to it. He had seen that same look hundreds of times" (p.170). The writer comments on this scene with an ironic manner about the dilemma of slavery addressing directly the American audience as she said, "you can get used to such things, too, my friend; and it is the great object of recent efforts to make our whole northern community used to them, for the glory of the Union...like other

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supporters of our peculiar institution” (ibid). Another significant scene shows the same as she was exhibiting Tom’s death scene:

It was but a moment. There was one hesitating pause,—one irresolute, relenting thrill,—and the spirit of evil came back, with sevenfold vehemence; and Legree, foaming with rage, smote his victim to the ground. Scenes of blood and cruelty are shocking to our ear and heart (Stowe, 1852, p.538)

Harriet Beecher Stowe intervenes again showing her dissatisfaction and anger on the government which let such things happen as she states:

What man has nerve to do, man has not nerve to hear... there was One whose suffering changed an instrument of torture, degradation and shame, into a symbol of glory, honor, and immortal life; and, where His spirit is, neither degrading stripes, nor blood, nor insults (ibid)

The writer’s comment is a reflection of what was happening in the American Society at that time. In other words, Stowe wanted to say that even the most imaginary incidents of her novel are representations of bondage. At the same time, glorifying the slaves making them symbols of people who sacrificed their lives for the sake of a whole race.

In addition to that, the writer endeavoured to get closer from the audience and actually Coleman (2008) calls this voice “his voice is “remarkably supple,” able to play “the local colorist,” “the humorist,” “the ethnographer,” and also the preacher of “passionate intensity” all within the same text (p.271) which means in other words that we have a multi-voiced narrator.

American Scholar Robyn Warhol (1986) thinks that the multi-voiced narrator suits Stowe’s novel in presenting a variety of roles, “but each of those roles still relies on the audience as part of the exchange, thereby creating a hoop of identification among the

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narrator, characters, and audience” (p.813) to show her sensibility and sentimentality to the readers as she portrays Eva’s death linking this with her private life.

I shall never go there, papa;—I am going to a better country. O, do believe me!... St. Clare closed his lips, and stood gloomily eying the long, beautiful curls, which, as they were separated from the child’s head, were laid, one by one, in her lap. (Stowe, 1852, p.375).

Harriet Beecher Stowe displays full engagement and involvement of the readers in this scene, especially after her recent loss of a child, to confirm that she can feel the anguish and the pain of the parents, as Barbara Hochman (2004) argues, “while Stowe may have believed that a dying child was indeed going to ‘a better country,’ she knew from her own experience that there was no death without suffering” (p.148).

While Warhol believed that the multi voiced narrator is created specifically to identify a close relationship with the audience and gain their sympathy, its function exceeds that to be an ironic and sarcastic at once.

Harriet Beecher Stowe describes a notable scene in chapter twenty-two as Marie was in conversation with her daughter Eva who wishes to have her mother’s jewels to sell them in order to free the slaves and insists that they should learn from the bible as she said:

“I’d sell them, and buy a place in the free states, and take all our people there, and hire teachers, to teach them to read and write...I’d teach them to read their own Bible, and write their own letters, and read letters that are written to them,” said Eva, steadily. “I know, mamma, it does come very hard on them that they can’t do these things. Tom feels it—Mammy does,—a great many of them do. I think it’s wrong” (Stowe, 1852, p.343)

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The mother answers, “Come, come, Eva; you are only a child! You don’t know anything about these things,” said Marie; “besides, your talking makes my head ache” (p.344)

The readers know that Marie is selfish as she never cared neither for the slaves nor for her own daughter. Here, Stowe comments on the scene in a sarcastic voice as she states, “Marie always had a head-ache on hand for any conversation that did not exactly suit her” (ibid)

Stowe criticized in a sarcastic manner how Marie tried to escape every subject which makes her feel uncomfortable by inventing her constant headaches. It is a kind of tacit joke between Stowe and the readers striving as it is pointed out before to decrease the boundaries between the writer and the audience.

The abolitionist writer implements a multi voiced narrator to create a solid bond with her readers particularly that she was narrating an imaginary story even though based on true events according to her. However, she knew well that “neither her facts nor her arguments would be new to readers...in a sense they were all too familiar” (Hochman, 2005, p.143). Thus, this affects the writer-readers relationship because as Reaugh (2018) affirms, “if the narrator gets too close to the reader, the reader may instinctively pull back, thus rejecting any engagement in the “sentiment” of the sentimental novel (p.6). Consequently, the multi voiced narrator in Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* gathers much more criticism than the scholars and readers interest.

3.3.3. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*

Before digging into the tone and the point of view of *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, two points of great importance must be taken into consideration. Primarily, Sojourner Truth experienced slavery in the Northern States and was released years before the southern slaves. Secondly, she was an analphabetic and sought for an amanuensis to

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help her in the process of writing. As a consequence, the work was narrated from two different perspectives and this affects in some way the tone and surely the narrative's point of view.

3.3.3.1. Various Tones in Exhibiting the Tale of Sojourner Truth

Truth's account is written following a distinct way of transmitting utterances into phrases to write an autobiography. Olive Gilbert relied on long conversations rather than interviews as she was close to Sojourner Truth. As Gilbert strove to write something authentic, she followed the protagonist from her childhood until after getting her liberty to become the iconic figure. Hence, the tone changed according to the phase of life lived by Isabella or Truth. From the serious to the wistful and critical one in depicting the images of a slave's life passing by the worshipful one to demonstrate Truth's religious faithfulness and ending by the sentimental one as a substantial principle and major objective in writing the slave narratives.

Different examples from the account show what is previously mentioned. First of all, Truth and Gilbert emphasize in exhibiting the hardships of the slaves. Here, the serious tone prevails strongly in addition to the sad and despair especially in the first chapters of this work. For instance, when there was a description of the cellar in which the slaves lived in. Gilbert (1850) said that Truth

...shudders, even now, as she goes back in memory, and revisits this cellar, and sees its inmates, of both sexes and all ages, sleeping on those damp boards, like the horse, with a little straw and a blanket; and she wonders not at the rheumatisms, and fever-sores, and palsies, that distorted the limbs and racked the bodies of those fellow-slaves in after-life (p.14).

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Both the narrator and writer used the serious tone as they speak about the slaves' dwelling and the mental and physical harm caused by such place to the point of making Sojourner Truth shudder from horror even after getting her liberty.

Same tone is used as she recalled the whipping of her former master John Nealy. Gilbert (1850) wrote on the tongue of Truth, "When I hear 'em tell of whipping women on the bare flesh, it makes my flesh crawl, and my very hair rise on my head ! Oh ! my God !" she continues, ' what a way is this of treating human beings" (p.27)

The tone changes a little bit particularly on the events which show her faithfulness to God. Both Gilbert and Truth wanted to transmit to the readers the religious side of Isabella. Thus, there was a shift to the worshipful tone. To confirm the idea, two previously significant incidents will be cited. The first one when she attempted to recover her son after discovering his illegal sale to the south. An important conversation turned between Mrs. Dumont and Isabella as the latter was sure of being again with her child. Truth said: "I'll have my child again". Gilbert (1850) made a comment to give an idea to the audience about the protagonist's piousness as she states: "These words were pronounced in the most slow, solemn and determined measure and manner" (p.45). She proceeds: "And in speaking of it, she (Isabella) says, 'Oh, my God ! I know'd I'd have him again. I was sure God would help me to get him. Why, I felt so tall within — I felt as if the power of a nation was with me !'" (ibid)

The second event while she was in a religious camp meeting in Northampton when a group of rioters came suddenly to disturb. Truth was afraid at the beginning as she was the only black woman in the meeting but recollected herself and decided to face them armed with her religious faithfulness. Olive Gilbert was present and could give her testimony but preferred to let Truth describe her inner feelings as she said,

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I know I am a servant of the living God. I'll go to the rescue, and the Lord shall go with and protect me, ' Oh,' said she, ' I felt as if I had three hearts! and that they were so large, my body could hardly hold them! (Gilbert, 1850, p.116).

Sojourner Truth's account shares sentimentality as one of its main tones with the previous works. The writer's aim is to address the readers' emotions to realize the ultimate goal in putting slavery on the spotlight to attract the attention of people from ordinary ones to politicians to gain empathy and support from them and make an end to the slaves' nightmare.

Two particular excerpts were chosen to explain that idea and both have a relation with Isabella's father named James. The first incident shows his suffering once his wife Mau-Mau Bet was gone and buried. James was speaking in a loud voice expressing his deep sadness and sigh as Truth recounts:

I am so old, and so helpless. What is to become of me ? I can't do anything more — my children are all gone, and here I am left helpless and alone.' ' And then, as I was taking leave of him,' said his daughter, in relating it, ' he raised his voice, and cried aloud like a child — Oh, how he did Cry ! I hear it now — and remember it as well as if it were but yesterday — poor old man!!! (Gilbert, 1850, p.22)

The second incident shed the light on how awful was the death of James as Truth said, “this faithful slave, this deserted wreck of humanity, was found on his miserable pallet, frozen and stiff m death. The kind angel had come at last, and relieved him of the many miseries. That his fellow-man had heaped upon him” (Gilbert, 1850, p.25). The writer made her own comment right after as she wants to penetrate the feelings of the readers to make them more involved in the story and most importantly to seek their

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sympathy as she said, “Yes, he had died, chilled and starved, with none to speak a kindly word, or do a kindly deed for him, in that last dread hour of need” (ibid).

3.3.2.2. Truth and Gilbert Collaboration: The Shift from the Third to the First-Person Point of View

Sojourner Truth was an illiterate woman and many of the readers thought that her voice will be silent throughout her work. Actually, Olive Gilbert was criticized by some critics who described her editing as selective and this muted Truth’s own voice in some parts. Nevertheless, Sojourner Truth was smart and could defy her deficiency of education. As previously pointed out, Olive Gilbert relied on conversations instead of making interviews in collecting information from Truth as they were friends. Thus, Truth maintains authority throughout the Narrative and instead of having power over the piece, Gilbert understands the tensions of being editor and makes the choice to present the text as a conversation between them (Salie, 2019, p.6).

The point of view belonged predominately to Sojourner Truth while Olive Gilbert made a little interference to clarify some incidents and add personal opinions on certain subjects in third person point of view. What is interesting is that the writer was prudent and precise in doing short commentaries in the narrative as she attempted to make the audience feel that the distinct incidents were written by Truth herself. She was also clear in mentioning the parts in which she comments on to the readers. For example, when she speaks about Truth’s manner in listening scripture she employed first the expression “I had forgotten to mention, in its proper place, a very important fact” (Gilbert, 1850, p.108). She continues by saying,

When she was examining the Scriptures, she wished to hear them without comment...if she employed adult persons to read them to her, and she asked them to read a passage over again, they invariably commenced to

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explain, by giving her their version of it... In consequence, substituted children in their stead (Gilbert, 1850, p.108).

Paul Eakin (1992) discusses Lejeune's theory concerning autobiographies as he emphasizes that the autobiographical pact requires “the narrator as the “protagonist” of the narrative and expresses how Gilbert and Truth’s partnership challenges conventional ideas of how we read life narratives (p.24)

Therefore, the collaboration between the narrator and the amanuensis takes the narrative to another dimension as it “combines elements of biography and autobiography or memoir and may be read as a representation of two lives in a genre that conventionally depicts a single life” (Salie, 2019, p.9). American scholar and literary critic Jean Humez calls *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* as a “collaborative project” rather than a dictated autobiography as he said,

This text, despite its use of a narrator's voice to summarize events in a third person narrative and to insert editorial opinions and judgments within the narrative, has sometimes been called a “dictated autobiography”. I would prefer to acknowledge its thoroughly collaborative production process by calling it a “mediated” or “facilitated” autobiography (Humez, 1996, p.30)

Nevertheless, what makes the narrative receiving a harsh criticism particularly over the point of “authenticity” is that feeling of disagreement between the perspectives of the narrator and the writer of the account emitted to the audience. Various times, Olive Gilbert tries in a way to vindicate and precise that some of the ideas are told according to Truth’s point of view and as she wanted to say that she did not agree of them. Here, kind of two uneven voices are noticeable. Though we can see it as an evidence of integrity from the amanuensis to mention those passages, yet, we cannot deny or at least pervade ourselves

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from doubting about Gilbert's ability to change some of the protagonist's ideas. American critic Jeffrey Stewart (1991) comments on this point in her introduction of the new edition of *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* stating that Gilbert was "trapped in her paternalistic view of slaves" and "unable to respect Sojourner's moral and spiritual sensibilities" (x,xl). This quotation represents an explicit doubt on whose voice was more commanding and also what some of the critics think about the narrative.

We will now give some examples that display tension between Truth and Gilbert over some subjects to support this idea. For instance, when they were having a conversation about Dumont Family as Gilbert asked her some of questions concerning them as she stated,

Had Mrs. Dumont possessed that vein of kindness and consideration for the slaves, so perceptible in her husband's character, Isabella would have been as comfortable here, as one had best be, if one must be a slave. ... But Mrs. Dumont, who had been born and educated in a non-slaveholding family ... could not have any patience with the creeping gait, the dull understanding, or see any cause for the listless manners and careless slovenly habits of the poor downtrodden outcast. ... From this source arose a long series of trials in the life of our heroine, which we must pass over in silence; some from motives of delicacy, and others, because the relation of them might inflict undeserved pain on some now living, whom Isabel remembers only with esteem and love; therefore the reader will not be surprised if our narrative appears somewhat tame at this point, and may rest assured that it is not for want of facts, as the most thrilling incidents of this portion of her life are from various motives suppressed (Gilbert, 1850, p.29,30)

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Here, we can clearly notice two distinct perspectives of the writer and narrator. Olive Gilbert with her role as an abolitionist asked these sorts of questions on purpose to display more of the brutalities Truth had endured while she was a slave especially to the white audience. Whereas, reluctance is shown from Sojourner Truth as she tried to escape to demonstrate only their good manners and values. This pushed Gilbert to say it implicitly that she could not understand Truth's attitude saying that maybe she wanted to hide such incidents to protect Mr. Dumont family by avoiding to open such delicate subjects or as it was pointed out before to keep her sexual relationship with Mr. Dumont out of regards and utterances.

Another example which shows tension between the writer and the narrator is when dealing with motherhood. There is an enormous difference in the way each one of them perceives it particularly in the first parts of the account. For instance, when Isabella declared that "she was whipping her child or let him cry rather than giving him a piece of bread secretly" (Gilbert, 1850, p.34). Gilbert's voice expressed her worry in the information she was recording it. She implements the apostrophe describing the hypocrisy of the masters' religion before recording Truth's personal view concerning her attitude. After displaying the protagonist's opinion, Gilbert (1850) tries to interpret it differently into a correct behaviour in being faithful and true to God as she states on the tongue of Isabella

Yet Isabella glories in the fact that she was faithful and true to her master; she says, 'It made me true to my God' - meaning, that it helped to form in her a character that loved truth, and hated a lie, and had saved her from the bitter pains and fears that are sure to follow in the wake of insincerity and hypocrisy (p.35).

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Truth and Gilbert's difference in perspective of motherhood is embodied in another example as the writer tries to defend several times Isabella and her relationship with her children as well as her inability to secure a home for them after getting her freedom looking for reasons such as poverty and low wage she took to justify the infirmity as she said, "... a home, around whose sacred hearthstone she could collect her family, as they gradually emerged from the prisonhouse of bondage ... a sunny home, where good influences cluster, and bad ones are carefully excluded" (Gilbert, 1850, p.72)

Gilbert (1850) persists in her attempt to protect Truth from the charge of failing in guaranteeing a home for the children in a sidelong editorial. Moreover, the writer declares that "Isabella's children are now of an age to know good from evil, and may easily inform themselves on any point where they may yet be in doubt... for it is now their turn to do the work, and bear the burdens of life, as all must bear them in turn, as the wheel of life rolls on" (ibid).

The writer wanted to say that this is the responsibility of Truth's children to work and help their old mother securing for her a comfortable life in her last years. However, Sojourner Truth and later in the account removed her responsibility as a mother by avoiding to blame herself concerning the children's experience such as the one of her son Peter as he was member with a gang of robbers in New York. Isabella abandons him in a way pushing him into a seafaring life affirming that the letters she received from him from time to time were the last things she saw from him in this world as no proof of his fate were mentioned afterwards in the work. Moreover, even with the cold and divergent relationship with her children, Sojourner Truth describes and esteems her attitude as a mother as qualified as she states,

Oh,' she says, 'how little did I know myself of the best ways to instruct and counsel them. Yet I did the best I then knew, when with them. I took

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them to the religious meetings; I talked to, and prayed for and with them; when they did wrong, I scolded at and whipped them (Gilbert, 1850, p.73)

To conclude, we can say that Sojourner Truth along with Olive Gilbert had presented a distinct narrative of enslavement in terms of themes proposed and the modern collaboration which resulted a new way of interpreting these works. Nevertheless, the hidden discord between the writer and the narrator on viewing some subjects from distinct perspectives paved the way to different critics to have this incertitude about the prevailing voice in *the Narrative*. Truth and Gilbert's account received criticism from literary scholars who affirm that it would have been preferable written and narrated in first person point of view such as Jacobs' *Incidents* so that it leaves no room for suspecting the account's genuineness.

3.4. Language as a Decisive Aspect in the Female Slave Narratives' Discourse

As there is a close relationship between the slaves' experience and the language, it is noticeable that distinct sources have influenced the way the male and female slave writers and tellers penned their tales along with distinct white abolitionists who contributed in writing the slave novel. We have to mention that "the elements of style that we encounter in the contemporary black essay and autobiography have their origin in the slave narratives: concrete diction, exact imagery, irony, sardonic humor, satire, understatement, polemics, caricature" (Butterfield, 1972, p.72) in addition to dialect which will take a considerable attention in the following analysis.

3.4.1. Jacobs' Dialect Employment as a Rhetorical Blueprint

Harriet Jacobs' language throughout *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is simple but engaging simultaneously as it gives the readers the impression of not reading a book but rather a deep conversation with the former female slave herself.

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The writer was direct in her language, straight to the point as she knew well her aim as well as the destined audience for her account. She was not brilliant in symbolism or metaphors but conveyed her message perfectly through distinct dialogues and anecdotes and this was among the positive points which gather praise from literary critics. For instance, her natural and plain introduction supports the previous idea as she states, “I WAS BORN A slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away” (Jacobs, 1861, p.7), and then moved directly to an introduction about her parents breaks or intervals and this is basically one important element of the direct style of writing.

As we previously pointed out, Jacobs knew for whom her narrative was destined and thus she tried to address the readers directly using direct appeals as a stylistic element in her work. There is a significant example which displays what is said. After presenting herself, her family and of course giving a kind of foretelling about the gloomy time to come, Jacobs (1861) shifts directly to speak to the audience and blaming them in a way of being passive as an attempt to gain their empathy as she states,

In view of these things, why are ye silent, ye free men and women of the north? Why do your tongues falter in maintenance of the right? Would that I had more ability! But my heart is so full, and my pen is so weak! There are noble men and women who plead for us, striving to help those who cannot help themselves (p.33)

Jacobs also makes the same direct addresses to the readers after narrating an evocative incident showing cruelty or the oppression she encountered to make the readers more indulged in her story revealing at the same time her experience under slavery. The best example to present is taken from eight named the lover as Dr. Flint constantly abused her and he even menaced to kill the free black man who was in love with her. Jacobs wanted to express her indignation towards her master. At the same time, exposing her case

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as one of thousands who suffer and were prohibited from the minimum as she said, “Reader, did you ever hate? I hope not. I never did but once; and I trust I never shall again. Somebody has called it “the atmosphere of hell” and I believe it is so” (Jacobs, 1861, p.44)

One of the stylistic features that make Jacobs’ account unique is the use of the periodic sentences. It is originated from ancient Greek figurative language and it is “a sentence that, by leaving the completion of its main clause to the end, produces the effect of suspense” (Dictionary.com). There is an example which displays the use of periodic sentences as Linda recounted a vivid scene in while she was on road to Rockaway along with Mrs. Bruce keeping the main idea (prejudice of the whites) till the end as she said,

Being in servitude to the Anglo-Saxon race, I was not put into a "Jim Crow car," on our way to Rockaway, neither was I invited to ride through the streets on the top of trunks in a truck; but everywhere I found the same manifestations of that cruel prejudice, which so discourages the feelings, and represses the energies of the colored people (Jacobs, 1861, p.196).

The female slave writer’s employment of periodic sentences is nothing but a clear evidence of her culture and linguistic skill. Moreover, to show her authority as she wants to confirm to the audience that everything is written and narrated is hers from head to toe proving at the same time the originality of her narrative.

Harriet Jacobs’ *Incident in the Life of a Slave Girl* is different from other slaves’ accounts be in its scope or the intricacy in the dialect employment particularly in comparison with the narratives which preceded it. As it was mentioned before, Jacobs’ narrative shares different characteristics;

Particularly significant is its relationship to fictional slave narratives by white abolitionists such as *the Autobiography of a Female Slave* by

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Mattie Griffith and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for this employ dialect quite liberally but differs substantially from these works in several important (Tricomi, 2006, p.620).

This narrative is written in the first-person point of view and mainly in Standard English for two important reasons. The first one is to show the author's literacy and her ability to write a personal account in clean and fluid style. The second one is to facilitate the task of the readers knowing that the work was intended mainly for the white audience. Jacobs' use of dialect was clearly noticed as very selective. The female slave writer,

Jacobs also exempts herself and her family from dialectal speech, but she depicts her friend Sally, Betty the cook, and the mischievous housemaid Jenny? all from the town of Edenton like Jacobs herself? speaking with varying degrees of dialect. Old Uncle Fred and Luke too, the childhood acquaintance and the escaped slave whom Jacobs meets in New York, also speak in black dialect. Yet, for all this, Fanny another slave friend from Edenton, speaks perfectly Standard English (Tricomi, 2006, p.621)

This makes the audience and distinct critics question the reason behind such doing.

The Negro dialect use in Jacobs' narrative is eminent precisely in its body as there are different characters using it but in distinct degrees and manners as well. For instance, Betty's speeches represent her personality as an acumen and cheery slave who spreads confidence and security particularly as she was responsible for Linda's concealment in her mistress' house as she said, "Honey, now you is safe. Dem devils ain't coming to search dis house. When I get you into missis' safe place, I will bring some nice supper. I specs you need it after all dis skeering" (Jacobs, 1861, p.112). She proceeds later on, "If dey did know whar you are, dey won't know now. Dey'll be disapinted dis time. Dat's all I got to

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say. If dey comes rummagin 'mong my tings, dey'll get one bressed sarssin from dis 'ere nigger” (p.115)

Luke also spoke one of the intense dialects in the account as he recounted to Linda his escape to New York as well as the way he robbed his former master as Jacobs (1861) states:

I tuk car fur dat. I'd bin workin all my days fur dem cussed whites, an got no ay but kicks and cuffs. So I tought dis nigger had a right to money nuff to bring him to de Free States. Massa Henry he lib till ebery body vish him dead; an ven he did die, I knowed de debbil would hab him, an wouldn't vant him to bring his money Tong too. So I tuk some of his bills, and put 'em in de pock of his ole trousers. An ven he was buried, dis nigger ask fur dem ole trousers, an dey gub 'em to me.... You see I din't steal it; dey gub it to me (p.215)

The heavy dialect spoken by Luke represents his situation characterized by the lack of moral education as Jacobs (1861) said, “This is a fair specimen of how the moral sense is educated by slavery” (ibid). Later on and even though she did not agree on Luke’s at somehow, Jacobs’ justified his doing linking it with what he had seen under slavery as she states “poor, ignorant, much-abused Luke, in thinking he had a right to that money, as a portion of his unpaid wages” (p.216).

Uncle Fred is another example of a character employing dialect. He was characterized as a child-like and pious slave. The following passage will depict how much his way of speaking is different from that Luke’s or Betty’s as the writer said:

God. White man is got all de sense. He can larn easy. It ain't easy for ole black man like me. I only wants to read dis book, dat I may know how to live; den I hab no fear 'bout dying." I tried to encourage him by speaking

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of the rapid progress he had made. "Hab patience, child," he replied. "I larns slow." [...] One day, when he had recited unusually well, I said, "Uncle Fred, how do you manage to get your lessons so well?" "Lord bress you, chile," he replied. "You nebber gibs me a les? son dat I don't pray to God to help me to understan' what I spells and what I reads. And he does help me, chile. Bress his holy name! (Jacobs, 1861, p.81,82).

Uncle Fred was looking to read the Bible and this requires the fully mastering of reading. Despite Fred's illiteracy, his dialect is way different than the two previous characters as he was speaking the language that comes from his spirit and that is why we noticed a kind of spiritual, wise and even kind of poetic speech.

Harriet Jacobs knew well the meaning of being literate and the benefit of addressing a white audience using Standard English to depict the evils and the cruelties of slavery making her work easier to feel and grasp. She "distinguished her own speech from the black dialect of most other Edenton slaves because she recognized her own educational journey as a process of enlightenment" (Tricomi, 2006, p.629). Nevertheless, this never blocked her from feeling for her fellow black people silencing some voices who accused her of separating herself from them both ideologically and sentimentally. Moreover, her selective dialect employment never affects the authenticity of her narrative. In contrary, it gives power and sharpness to the message she was trying to convey regarding both the intended audience and the nature of the subject discussed in her work.

3.4.2. Stowe's Quest of Originality: Usage of AAVE and SWVE

Stowe's *Uncle Tom's cabin* is an abolitionist fictitious narrative. As the name indicates, its aim is to depict slavery as well as contributing in making an end to this oppressive institution by awaking the consciousness of people especially the whites and raising the black people's voice. That is why it contains distinct lessons and sermons as the

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writer was trying to say that the abolition of slavery is each one's responsibility. Hence, she was delivering this message through a writing style which varies from the hopeful to the preachy one using wise words and kind of religious language.

The abolitionist writer employs the monologue which "signifies a long speech uttered by someone who has too much to say" (Mirriam-Webster Dictionary). These long sequences are clearly viewed in the characters' description of their situations and the commentary given on such matters with no interruption from the others. Two significant monologues will be given as examples to explain the idea. The first one includes Marie St. Clare as she was giving her opinion about her personal servant Mammy as she states:

Now, Mammy has a sort of goodness," said Marie; "she's smooth and respectful, but she's selfish at heart. Now, she never will be done fidgeting and worrying about that husband of hers. You see, when I was married and came to live here, of course, I had to bring her with me, and her husband my father couldn't spare. He was a blacksmith, and, of course, very necessary; and I thought and said, at the time, that Mammy and he had better give each other up, as it wasn't likely to be convenient for them ever to live together again. I wish, now, I'd insisted on it, and married Mammy to somebody else; but I was foolish and indulgent, and didn't want to insist. I told Mammy, at the time, that she mustn't ever expect to see him more than once or twice in her life again, for the air of father's place doesn't agree with my health, and I can't go there; and I advised her to take up with somebody else; but no—she wouldn't. Mammy has a kind of obstinacy about her, in spots, that everybody don't see as I do (Stowe, 1852, p.222)

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There is another example of monologue as Cassy recounted her life to uncle Tom describing her childhood as well as her parents before becoming a slave shifting from a master to the other saying the following:

You see me now,” she said, speaking to Tom very rapidly; “see what I am! Well, I was brought up in luxury; the first I remember is, playing about, when I was a child, in splendid parlors;—when I was kept dressed up like a doll, and company and visitors used to praise me. There was a garden opening from the saloon windows; and there I used to play hide-and-go-seek, under the orange-trees, with my brothers and sisters... My mother was a slave woman, and my father had always meant to set me free; but he had not done it, and so I was set down in the list. I’d always known who I was, but never thought much about it. Nobody ever expects that a strong, healthy man is going to die. My father was a well man only four hours before he died;—it was one of the first cholera cases in New Orleans. The day after the funeral, my father’s wife took her children, and went up to her father’s plantation (Stowe, 1852, p.472,473)

As she was striving to make her work closer to reality, Harriet Beecher Stowe was careful in employing dialect that suits each character taking into consideration the racial, historical and sociological aspects. For this, she used significantly the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and the Southern White Vernacular English (SWVE) in order to give power and accuracy to her discourse as well as authenticity for her work.

In order to move forward to the main examples of AAVE and SWVE usage in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, we need to introduce both terms thoroughly so that we will have a complete view about the dialect spoken in Stowe’s novel.

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African American Vernacular English is a dialect spoken by people who came from the African continent to the United States being slaves at the beginning but that speech continues with their descendants afterwards. Nowadays, it is spoken in all parts of America but it started mostly in the south where slavery was prevailing at that time. Dandy (1991) states that “the language is alive and well and is spoken everywhere African Americans reside in America” (p.12).

A debate was raised over the origin of AAVE because the information is restricted on this point. Some scholars argue that this dialect comes from creole which is “a language that develops from a pidgin; it is the mother tongue that originates from contact between two languages” (Lewis, 2008, p.159). Other researchers suggest the general idea of many people that it is originated from the Africans who immigrated to America and worked as slaves in the period between the seventeenth century and the nineteenth. To these days, the origin of AAVE is still being researched and discussed; hence, there is no definite answer to the origin of AAVE (Anggreeni, 2018, p.118).

Though the term African American Vernacular English is the canonical one, distinct labels for the same term were utilized in the example of Black communications, Negro English, Negro Dialect, Black English and Ebonics derived from ebony which represents the black ethnicity.

On the other hand, The Southern White Vernacular English is defined as one of the various American dialects spoken particularly by the white people from European descendant and this is the major difference between the SWVE and the AAVE.

Distinct European colonies have settled in America starting from its discovery centuries ago which resulted in a development in a variety of speeches similarly to AAVE. Hence, we can say that the SWVE is a combination of different settlers’ language influence in addition to the Native American language as “English settlers were obviously

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in contact with Native Americans” (Skopkova, 2014, p.12) and this in a way explains the origins of the SWVE.

Various scholars resemble the two dialects. Mufwene (2003) states” The similarities between AAVE and AWSE are real. Non-Southerners have even often remarked that they were unable to determine whether a speaker was black or white unless they saw them” (p.64). Thus, they share similar syntactic and phonological features previously pointed out.

The AAVE and SWVE are clearly noticeable in the speeches of two particular characters. Aunt Chloe who was portrayed as “A round, black, shining face is her with whole plump countenance beams with satisfaction and contentment makes her universally acknowledged as the first cook of the neighbourhood” (Stowe, 1852, p.31), and Mr. Haley the slave trader described as “coarse, commonplace features, and that swaggering air of pretension which marks a low man who is trying to elbow his way upward in the world” (p.5).

Multiple examples from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* display the use of these two dialects. We will begin with Aunt Chloe and her Ebonics employment. The writer attributes largely the AAVE to Uncle Tom’s wife considering her illiteracy at the same time. So, a difference could be seen between her dialect and the one of George Harris for instance who was described as “handsome and manly... He talked fluently that his master began to feel an uneasy consciousness of inferiority” (p. 19). Thus, the level of education and as Jacobs’ *Incidents* is of great importance in distinguishing the language of a character from the other even though they belonged to the same race.

We state the distinct examples of Aunt Chloe dialect employment in two different tables. One will include the different phonological features and the second will comprise the syntactic features for dialect representation.

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Table 1 will represent the phonological features in Stowe's work to show the AAVE usage by Aunt Chloe.

Aunt Chloe		
Phonological Features	Words	Examples From Stowe's Work
Monophthongization	Clear → clar	and never get clar , if ye do dat fashion.
	Chairs → cheers	What we's to do for cheers , now.
Unstressed Syllable Deletion	Expected → spected	And he couldn't be spected to think so much of poor Tom.
	Ashamed → shamed	an't yer shamed ?
	Appears → 'pears	' pears like 't will be so much more interestin.
Intrusive /r/	Saucy → sarcy	I got kinder sarcy .
	Always → allers	and allers sot his business 'fore yer own every way.

Table 2 will contain the non-standard grammar in Aunt Chloe's speeches

Aunt Chloe	
Syntactic Features	Examples from Stowe's work
Lack of Subject-Verb Agreement	I keeps What they is Little children is enjoying You's goin'
Multiple Negation	Not sayin' nothin' Never couldn' see That an't nothin' else left They warn't no harm

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Table 3 will expose the phonological features of the SWVE employed by Mr. Hale

Mr. Haley		
Phonological Features	Words	Examples From Stowe's Work
Monophthongization	Their → thar Clear → clar	I'll take every cent out of him, if you an't thar . they'd be glad to get clar on 'em; but they aren't
Unstressed Syllable Deletion	Expecting → 'spectin' Obliged → 'bliged	Tan't, you know, as if it was white folks, that's brought up in the way of ' spectin ' to keep their children and wives, and all that. I bought him cheap off a man that was ' bliged to sell out.
Intrusive /r/	Always → allers Kind of → kinder Fellows → fellers	you allers did trade far with me, Tom, and was up to yer word. It kinder makes my blood run cold to think on 't I never could do things up the way some fellers manage the business.

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Table 4 next will contain non-standard grammar in Mr. Haley’s speeches

Mr. Haley	
Syntactic Features	Examples from Stowe’s work
Lack of Subject-Verb Agreement	I calculates Young uns is heaps of trouble There are Tom Locker We’s all got souls
Multiple Negation	Nobody never comes I never said nothin’ The family an’t nothin’ Don’t see no mercy

The similarity between AAVE and SWVE in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is clearly remarkable as the tables above indicate. This is a point that led Harriet Beecher Stowe to receive severe criticism from distinct scholars. American professor Tremaine McDowell (1931) criticizes the writer’s dialect use saying that “it is not the exact recording of negro speech” and it is thus “notably faulty” (p.325). He moves farther than that as he described Stowe’s dialect employment as “inconsistent” (p.322) asserting that “due to this constant resemblance between the speech of her whites and that of her blacks, Mrs. Stowe is often unable to make adequate distinction between the two” (p.323), triggering the accusations of Stowe’s opponents on her work’s originality saying that she was lacking knowledge about the slave’s life especially that she is a native northerner. McDowell’s opinion was answered years later by other scholars such as sociolinguist Allison Burkette (2001) who said that

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McDowell's further remarks on the linguistic features that Stowe uses to characterize the speech of her African characters, though they might be a source of humour for the present-day sociolinguist as recent studies in African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) and investigation into the origins of AAVE have suggested a close relationship between AAVE and Southern White Vernacular English (SWVE) as a result of the sociohistorical context in which AAVE began (p.159).

Burkette relies on the latest sociohistorical studies to confirm her arguments' integrities such as the one done by Bailey, Maynor and Cukor-Avilla (1991) who "suggest that the speech of blacks and whites in the antebellum South was similar as AAVE and SWVE went through a period of parallel development due to the social and historical circumstances present at that time" (p.104).

Stowe's dialect use in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, though rejected by several critics in the past, proves adequacy and accuracy in the features elucidated. We should not neglect that the writer defends robustly her work in another book entitled *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* confirming that everything she narrated was based on true genuine events. Consequently, Burkette (2001) comes up with the following conclusion "No matter what her religious, moral, abolitionist or racist intentions and implications might be, empirical evidence shows her use of literary dialect to be largely accurate" (p.168).

3.4.3. Gilbert's Heavily Reliance on Standard English in Truth's Account

Sojourner Truth was somehow literate in Dutch which is in a way her original language. Yet, she rather preferred English as a language for her narrative and employed Gilbert mostly for her "more polished style" or because a white writer would "give her story a more authoritative voice" (Humez, 1996, p.31).

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Truth tried to collaborate with several well-known white writers in the example of Frances Cane or even Harriet Beecher Stowe who both attempted to employ dialect in order to give a kind of originality and power to the account. Unlike the two previous ones, Olive Gilbert did not implement dialect and substituted it with pure Standard English in Truth's work maybe for modern audience. However, this decision reflects an admiration and esteem to Truth's rhetoric as she said:

The impressions made by Isabella on her auditors, when moved by lofty or deep feeling, can never be transmitted to paper, (to use the words of another,) till by some Daguerrian art, we are enabled to transfer the look, the gesture, the tones of voice, in connection with the quaint, yet fit expressions used, and the spirit-stirring animation that, at such a time, pervades all she says (Gilbert, 1850, p.45).

As this narrative tries to challenge the conventions to be viewed as a collaborative project rather than only a dictated narrative, Olive Gilbert language throughout the work was influenced by other aspects instead of dialect's employment.

The amanuensis was highly inspired by the romantic principles and this was clearly seen in celebrating nature as she portrays the protagonist's experience with it stating that "the meeting was in the open fields – the full moon shed its saddened light over all" (Gilbert, 1850, p.116).

American author Helen Thomas (2004) resembles the expression "open fields" to *The Prelude* of William Wordsworth when he said, "To the open field I told / A prophesy; poetic numbers came" (p.107). It is a symbol of liberty in comparison to "the confined spaces of her early lodgings, and represents her later "open[ness]" to learning new technologies, such as photography and welcoming new audiences and friends on her journey" (Salie, 2019, p.24).

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Furthermore, the different conversations gathered both the protagonist and the amanuensis refer to nature's celebration as if it symbolizes a "shared aesthetic interest" (Salie, 2019, p.25). Truth's own language along with Gilbert's choice of words reminds us of Romantic poetry as it is seen in the following example:

An' finally somethin' spoke out in me an' said, '*This is Jesus!*' An I spoke out with all my might, an' says I, '*This is Jesus!* Glory be to God! An' then the whole world grew bright, an' the trees they waved an' waved in glory, an' every little bit 'o stone on the ground shone like glass. (Gilbert, 1850, p.158)

Despite the Romantic effect on Gilbert's writing style, the quotation above shows some dialect features such as the substitution of the final unstressed [n] for [ɪ] in the example of "somethin' as well as an' to display Truth's voice in her own narrative.

The language used in *the Narrative of Sojourner Truth* is nothing but a confirmation of its difference in comparison with similar works written in the same period of time. It displays the volition of both Truth and Gilbert to produce a different narrative of enslavement which challenged customs to reach the maximum of readers. Nevertheless, avoiding dialect implement was received with kind of negative commentary from some critics on the work's authenticity as the language highly inspired by Romantic aspects seems "overacted and artificial" and maybe unsuitable to the discourse of the slave narratives.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

This section will include some observations according to what have been pointed out in this research work along with some commentaries from literary critics over the three selected works to determine their authenticity.

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The three slaves' accounts were published within the same era, carrying the same messages, similar aims and nearly the same discourses. Nevertheless, the work written and narrated by the same person differs from that one dictated or even an "imaginary" one based on true events. Thus, three different perspectives which trigger the debate over the message delivered to the audience, its sharpness and closeness to reality as the three works were successful in attracting generations of readers to that literary genre and being kept as a recording of history evoking one of the most delicate periods in the American history.

3.5.1. Jacobs' Identity and Authorship Debate

Once *Incidents* was published, many opponents including critics doubted over its originality as Jacobs' was hiding her true identity as well as the other characters in her narrative. In addition to that, she adopts various elements of the sentimental novel but as Karen Sanchez-Eppler and Jean Feagan Yellin have suggested, creating a sentimental antislavery discourse was coherent with white middle-class women's social role. Stowe belonged to this trend (Bourrier, 2004, p.32). The writer tried to substitute this deficiency by confirming multiple times that her work is perfectly genuine. For instance, when she said: "Reader, I draw no imaginary pictures of southern homes. I am telling you the plain truth. Yet when victims make their escape from this wild beast of Slavery" (Jacobs, 1861, p.39). Another example which proves the same as she states: "IN CONCLUDING THIS SHORT statement of my experience of slavery, I beg the reader to remember that I am not writing of what I have heard, but of what I have seen, and of what I defy the world to prove false (p.254).

Yet, this was insufficient in convincing different historians who questioned the narrative's authenticity. Vernon Loggins (1931) was sceptic regarding the different slave narratives published in the period between 1840 till 1865 including Stowe's work accusing

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it as arranged and written by editor Lydia Maria Child as he states “Linda Brent’s story... is fairly readable, probably because of the ‘editing’ of Lydia Maria Child” (p.228).

The same viewpoint was embraced by another historian named Arna Bontemps (1969) who called *Incidents* as “edited and arranged by the well-known Lydia Maria Child” (p.xv). John Blassingame (1979) assumed *Incidents* as the work of Child adding that it is “too melodramatic; miscegenation and cruelty, outrage virtue, unrequited love and planter licentiousness appeared on practically every page” (p.373). He also claimed the work as “not credible” (p.233).

The debate over Jacobs’ account was not finished till 1981 as critic Jean Feagan Yellin proves its originality by displaying the letters written by the author to the New York Tribune years before the writing of the work and giving it to the editor. Finally, most of historians and scholars recognized the authenticity of *Incidents* in the example of Joanne Braxton (1986) who “began to ask the kind of questions that allow for a continued study of the importance of both Harriet Jacobs as well as *Incidents*” (p.384).

3.5.2. Uncle Tom’s Cabin Controversy over Authenticity

Harriet Beecher Stowe was facing distinct constraints after *Uncle Tom’s Cabin’s* release most predominately the charges came from the southern audience and literary critics too that her work was spreading propaganda and presented an inaccurate image of the southern community.

The abolitionist writer wants to answer by publishing a companion book entitled *A Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1853 in which she defends her previous works from the critical attacks trying to convince the audience that the written data was genuine. Before that, Stowe devoted the whole final chapter to explain the original background of the story giving arguments to support her ideas. She began by assuring the readers that “The separate incidents that compose the narrative are, to a very great extent, authentic,

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occurring, many of them, either under her own observation, or that of her personal friends” (Stowe, 1852, p.573). Same thing with the story of Prue as it was a testimony of her brother as she said “The story of “old Prue,” in the second volume, was an incident that fell under the personal observation of a brother of the writer” (p.574). Simon Legree is also Henry Ward Beecher’s witness as he said “He actually made me feel of his fist, which was like a blacksmith’s hammer, or a nodule of iron, telling me that it was ‘calloused with knocking down niggers” (ibid).

Eliza’s very famous scene which received harsh criticism of being too exaggerated is authentic according to the writer as she states “The incident of the mother’s crossing the Ohio River on the ice is a well-known fact” (p.573). Furthermore, she affirmed that the stories of Cassy, Emmeline and Augustine St. Clare have their parallels as she mentioned similar stories of them. Finally, Uncle Tom’s story is a portrayal of several virtuous characters according to Stowe. She mentioned one of them in particular “Josiah Henson” who was not well-known in American History. The writer and in order to give weight and validity to her discourse used the word “sketches” as “it provided the reader with a very immediate graphic vision of a culture” (Garrait-Bourrier, 2004, p.35).

Nevertheless, the work contains some illogical facts that even the writer could not find a justification for them. She said that the story of the woman who crossed the river was a true one but without giving the real source which leaves a space to doubt, same thing with the story of St. Clare in which three out four of his own ones including his family was inaccurate. Also and though her message delivered was a strong one with political challenges, it contains a great extent of religious exasperation. Garrait-Bourrier (2004) states “Stowe is more detached from the realities of slavery because she wants above all to convey a religious message, which is not an easy task in such a context” (p.36).

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This leads to the idea of the slaves' description as satisfied with their status and life to show their virtues through Eliza who lived far from her husband but a kind of contented as it is God's will according to her. In the same context, we mention Uncle Tom who even refused to escape with Cassy preferring to wait for his fate instead. All these remarks affect the work's authenticity despite being the bestselling piece of literature in the United States and a major contributor in the onset of the American Civil War.

3.5.3. Truth/Gilbert's Doubtful Cooperation

Truth's and Gilbert's work faced criticism from several historians and literary critics for being a dictated narrative. Many of them wondered about the accuracy of such events, the interference of the amanuensis. For instance, Nell Irvin Painter (2000) criticised explicitly Truth's account along with other similar works as she states "Many other narratives by women who had been enslaved (for example, Sojourner Truth) had been dictated to amanuenses whose roles diluted the authenticity of the texts" (p.ix).

What makes this idea reasonable is the lack of evidences that these are the real words transcribed by Sojourner Truth to Gilbert. Distinct readers have a problem with this point as they could not know exactly the reliability of the story as there was heavy emphasis on religious incidents which make the audience feel that this is only an interpretation of certain parts of her life. Moreover, some events seem unreal at a great extent. For instance, when Truth was returning home and a policeman stopped her asking for her name. Truth "paused, struck her cane firmly upon the ground, drew herself up to her greatest height, and in a loud, deep, voice deliberately answered " *I am that I am.*" The frightened policeman vanished, and she concluded her walk without farther questioning" (Gilbert, 1850, p.311)

In addition to that and in order to defend her work, Sojourner Truth relied on testifying letters written by some of her former masters and some people whom she

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encountered in her religious journey to confirm the genuineness of some events. Basically, they are not considered as adequate to take the narrative out of the bad notices' cycle as it enters both the audience and critics in a state of confusion and suspicion regarding this collaboration.

3.6. Conclusion

The female slaves experienced a double anguish as women in general were oppressed in a patriarchal society back to that epoch. Bondswomen were long time stereotyped and stripped from their identity and status. Revealing their own experiences was an opportunity to re-frame how they were represented and a tool to resist against injustice and brutality as Carby (1987) states:

In slave narratives written by black women the authors placed in the foreground their active roles as historical agents as opposed to passive subjects; represented as acting their own visions, they are seen to take decisions over their own lives. They document their sufferings and brutal treatment but in a context that is also the story of resistance to that brutality (p.36)

Briefly, their accounts were an occasion to display their voice to the whole audience changing how they were perceived previously.

The female slave narratives were a substantial tool to provide an adequate interpretation for the life of the slaves in general. Consequently, these female writers and tellers tended to “fill in the large gaps in African American and women’s history through these accounts” (Yee, 1992, p.2). Additionally, the different women writers in the Antebellum Period developed the ideals of domesticity, joined social and political clubs and shed light on the society’s treatment so that they could elucidate the meaning of black womanhood.

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The aim of this chapter was to show the distinct viewpoints of three female writers and tellers regarding womanhood and motherhood as one of the main discourses of the slaves' accounts. Moreover, to determine the tone and point of view of each work in order to set the distinct similarities and the major differences between the works of Jacobs', Stowe, and Truth and Gilbert, and depicting their voices and what they wanted to say. The language and dialect employment took a significant space in the third chapter as both are important to exhibit the sharpness of the messages conveyed to the audience taking into consideration the uniqueness of each narrative in terms of type, position of the writer and where the events occurred as they affect the writer's discourse. The final section of this chapter was a kind of outcome which gathers what was previously mentioned in addition to some remarks to discuss the authenticity of the three female slave narratives by setting their strength points along with their weaknesses.

To conclude, we can say through what has been evoked that the accounts of the Antebellum period and though the differences in the type (autobiography, dictated autobiography, slave novel) as well as the writing style, share the same outlines, principles and aims as they intended to shed light on what was considered as the human's biggest "offence" on earth. As going deeper into the three works, we could at least come up with a result concerning the originality of these accounts and the intensity of their discourses. Without detracting the value of the works of Stowe along with Truth and Gilbert, it is Jacobs' *Incidents* which convinced in giving a plain image of a genuine slave account starting from the shape to the message delivered as it succeeded to break the boundaries between the writer and the readers, imposing itself as a valid account and a recognized document for this generation and the ones to come afterwards.

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Literature and history go constantly hand in hand which open a zone of correspondence displayed multiple times to demonstrate this close relationship. This was the main motive to tackle the slave narratives and their essential role to struggle against the system of slavery which was the spark that paved the way to different former slaves and many abolitionists to introduce this new genre into the literary world.

The narratives of enslavement started by the late seventeenth century but they became prominent during the Antebellum period which witnessed an unusual activity resulted in various works particularly with the public support of the abolitionists who began writing about the slaves and their right to be free and then integrated into the American society. In this respect, the era opened a wide gate to distinct literary productions in which the slaves' tales took a huge part of them, caused a significant change even in the shape of these works knowing that they took the form of an autobiography in general. Nevertheless, we have seen a sort of a variety in terms of type as there were also some dictated autobiographies and also some fictional works on the basis of true events labelled as the slave novel. We have also noticed that many literary critics and amateurs focused mainly on bondsmen with many examples like Frederick Douglass, Olaudah Equiano and Solomon Northop. Thus, making a shift and switching to female slaves was more than substantial in order to put them into the spotlight especially that they were facing a double suffering from their masters as well as the whole society.

In this research work, a comparison was made between three different accounts entitled respectively *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* written by Harriet Jacobs, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe and *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* which is a collaboration between the protagonist and her amanuensis named Olive Gilbert relatively to the message presented to the readers in terms of the intensity, authenticity and

faithfulness to reality as they normally reflected what happened to them and their fellows alike.

Henceforth, this required a discourse analysis in order to reveal and uncover the maximum of details to enrich this academic work by answering the afore-mentioned research questions. In addition to that, this study attempted also to make an additional comparison between three different types of the slave narratives and hence various discourses to be inspected through which came the leading purpose of the present humble project.

The three selected female writers and tellers tackled central themes and discourses in their works; some of them were similar being commonly triggered in the different slaves' tales and others distinguished. However, the main objective is not to spot the dissimilarities but to unveil how each one of them portrayed the major discourses to the audience trying simultaneously to investigate about the reasons and even some external factors which contributed in making their accounts presented that way as we are dealing with three distinct types of the slave narratives.

Consequently, though the majority think that these accounts are quite alike, the selected works have offered a variety in the way they shed ~~the~~ light on the major discourses which make this comparison a paramount one. As a former female slave, Harriet Jacobs' entered the literary world with her opus *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* which broke the silence of the bondswomen as she triggered explicitly the sexual assault. In addition to that, Jacobs did not neglect other discourses such as womanhood and motherhood, slavery as well as humiliation giving examples of other slaves who witnessed a similar destiny. Moreover, she was truly inspired by the techniques of the sentimental novel which opens up a melodramatic world on the basis of the idea of the virtuous vs. the weak. Finally, the level of education played a significant role focusing on the discourse

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itself rather than concentrating on literary devices. This in a way helped her to convey clear and significant message employing direct appeals and anecdotes giving the audience the impression of reading a deep conversation.

Harriet Beecher Stowe on the other hand was an intellectual woman who had known distinct languages, techniques and methods which affected her work especially that it belongs to the slave novel which is another form of the slaves' tales. One of the similarities between Jacobs and Stowe is the embracement of the sentimental novel as the latter relies heavily on its principles but with a sort of excess in terms of the melodramatic tone particularly with the use of distinct literary devices and some passive portrayals and which make the black characters of the work seen as submissive and naïve being the point that disappointed the literary critics the most. Stowe's work is not conventional as it is not an autobiography and hence the events are told from third person point of view but we could see some interference from her in the different dialogues trying to comment or clarifying some points. In respect of the language and to make her novel similar to the slaves' tales, the abolitionist writer employed a lot dialect including the AAVE for black characters and SWVE for the southern whites with their distinct features and deviations which adds an effect of genuinity to her novel.

The illiterate former female slave named Sojourner Truth strove to release her narrative with the help of Olive Gilbert who took that process of penning the account. They both wanted something different but fully authentic which will last with the coming generations. That is why they followed a serious tone in dealing with the different tribulations and the suffering our protagonist had witnessed infiltrated by a sentimentality employment as the main aim of the narrative was to gain sympathy of the readers. The work is a collaboration and thus we have a shift from first to third point of view and though it belonged the most to Sojourner Truth, the amanuensis' involvement was noticeable with

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some comments and interferences which changed sometimes the direction of the narrative, but was helpful in shaping the work as a friendly conversation rather than an ordinary interview. Olive Gilbert relied on Standard English and this was nothing but a proof that she wanted to tackle the maximum of readers making the account a universal opus.

The originality of the slave narratives in general have always been questionable as they were doubted by various literary critics in being exaggerated in terms of the events narrated. Therefore, dealing with the discourse in the selected accounts requires a focus on the authenticity and the accuracy of these works. Harriet Jacobs and though she hid her true identity as she named the protagonist Linda Brent, presented an identical and convincing narrative to the readers. It was faithful to the classic type i.e. an autobiography which exhibited clearly her suffering particularly from the sexual assault by her former master.

After its release, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was exposed to multiple accusations being a controversial work despite its huge success as many doubted about its authenticity. This pushed Harriet Beecher Stowe to publish another book entitled *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* in which she defended the previous one by explaining the source of background stories of the characters. Nevertheless, many critics have found plenty of the details and events somehow illogic and unreal which affected plainly their review knowing this work belongs to the slave novel which was also another factor of the critics' rejection or doubt about its originality.

Truth's and Gilbert's narrative faced similar criticism as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* including the lack of evidences from the protagonist to the amanuensis, some illogical events and of course Gilbert's interference in the work. Sojourner Truth attempted to defend her work by counting on distinct testifying letters from her former masters and people who knew her during the long journey she had but it was not convincing. Finally,

General Conclusion

the Narrative of Sojourner Truth is considered as a worthy account, beautifully written and deserving to be read, but it did not respond to the authenticity's criteria as it left multiple questions behind, including whether the end product was what Sojourner Truth wanted or what Gilbert wanted taking into account the protagonist's illiteracy and hardships in transmitting her ideas correctly and this really had an impact on the general audience's and critics' minds as they read the account.

A research about literature and history proves to be a broad idea which necessitates inspection and being conscious that the present research work does not set an integral analysis in relation to female slave narratives' discourse, it hopes to open the gate for other researchers to scout new ideas in reference to the theme discussed.

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