



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



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**African American Fiction between Black Artistic Rendition
and White Canonical Interpretation: A Case Study Colson
Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad***

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Literature and
Civilisation

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2021-2022

Acknowledgment

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor Mrs.Harrache for her unconditional support and guidance. Despite her loaded schedule, she did not hesitate to aid and inspire us in many ways .We would like also to thank Dr.Arslane for his precious time to provide us with fruitful books and sources. Our greatest gratitude goes to our greatest friendship in our academic parcours which would never been as dense and funny without our support to each other .Finally to all the people who contributed in a way or another in the production and the completion of this work, we are utterly grateful.

Dedication

To our moms

...and to all the people we love....

Abstract

African American struggle has been a consistent and ticklish subject in both history and literature for hundreds of years. This study aims to demonstrate how this struggle has been experienced through the accounts of the life of some former slave Abolitionists, which in their turn inspired the Neo-Slave Narratives .The authors of Neo-Slave Narratives like Whitehead centres on the lives of former slaves in antebellum North America, but it is usually fictional. Thus, Whitehead's work the Underground Railroad has been discussed individually in order to re-read past slavery and to contribute something new to the subject. The work is sufficient to approximate the experiences of the ancestors as well as to point out the reality of a country where black bodies have never, ever, really been truly free.

Résumé

La lutte Afro-Américaine est un sujet constant et délicat dans l'histoire et la littérature depuis des centaines d'années. Cette étude vise à montrer comment cette lutte a été vécue à travers les récits de vie de certains anciens abolitionnistes esclavagistes, qui ont à leur tour inspiré les Récits néo-esclavagistes, mais c'est généralement fictif. Ainsi, l'œuvre de Whitehead 'Le chemin de fer clandestin' a été discutée individuellement afin de relire l'esclavage passé et d'apporter quelque chose de nouveau au sujet. Le travail est suffisant pour se rapprocher des expériences des ancêtres ainsi que pour souligner la réalité d'un pays où les corps noirs n'ont jamais, jamais, vraiment été vraiment libres.

ملخص

لمئات السنين , لطالما كان نضال الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي موضوعًا ثابتًا ودقيقًا في كل من التاريخ والأدب. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح هذا الصراع من خلال روايات تجربة و حياة بعض دعاة إلغاء العبودية السابقين، والتي بدورها ألهمت روايات العبيد الجدد في أمريكا الشمالية ، لكنها عادة ما تكون خيالية. وهكذا ، تمت مناقشة عمل وايتهايد بعنوان 'سكة حديد تحت الأرض' بشكل فردي من أجل إعادة قراءة العبودية السابقة والمساهمة بشيء جديد في هذا الموضوع. العمل كافٍ لتقريب تجارب الأسلاف وكذلك للإشارة إلى حقيقة بلد لم تكن فيه الأجساد السوداء أبدًا حرة حقًا.

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Introduction

The idea of America as a “Herrenvolk republic” made the myth of race, thus race is nothing but a whited sepulchre. And rather than just being a historical fact, the creation myth of race is the product of collective imagination. African American under slavery and in a Herrenvolk democracy rationalized inequities after slavery faced impermeable racial caste system. Writers of Original Slave Narratives such Olaudah, Phillis, Douglass, Harriet, Du Bois, Barnett, Baldwin, Malcolm, living through racism, and even Neo-slave narrators such Butler, Morrison and Whitehead, rediscovering the meaning of freedom and standing before his or her society, they were not only able to reflect what is true and shocking but also what might have been or what might still be. Since great writers most of the time reveals significant dimensions of the history society, cultures, and especially personalities of the people about whom they write. For if we were only left to the empirical investigation of historians and social scientist, the development of our knowledge of history would be far less imaginative and complete.

This thesis will deal with an American postmodern novel by Colson Whitehead, *the Underground Railroad*. Colson an American author known for innovative novels that explore social themes, including racism, while often incorporating fantastical elements. He was the first writer to win Pulitzer Prize for consecutive books: one of them is *The Underground Railroad* (2016) and *The Nickel Boys* (2019). At first glance you will think that “*The Underground Railroad*” is being set in the antebellum South, and is based on a true story, Colson portrays the story of a young slave named Cora who escapes a plantation in Georgia and makes a long, arduous journey across several states while being pursued by a dogged slave catcher named Ridgeway. IN this research, our objective is to examine how and to what extent have the authors like Colson Whitehead of Post-millennium Neo-Slave Narrative genre continued and/or expanded the revisionist purposes of re-writing history? We shed light

on the importance of how a hallmark of American history such racism stills affect the American society, As America is far from egalitarian nation stratification between race, class, and gender. We also aim to re-think current racial dynamics in America and unravel them in fresh new way. *Underground Railroad* kicks up enough funk to provoke a major paradigm shift in research on Black experience. This book changes the ways we understand Black and white Americans, especially how they experience and define themselves to tell a unique American story.

In terms of structure, this thesis will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will serve as a theoretical framework to introduce the Original Slave Narrative and Neo-Slave Narrative and their main aspects, furthermore this work attempts to uniquely combining history and literature or presenting literature as history. As such, the study richly adds to our understanding of the black experience, and followed by an examination of black writers experiences, from the era of colonialism and slavery with Olaudah and wheatley to the horrors of plantation slavery in Harriet Jacob's North Carolina and of abolitionism and the Underground Railroad as witnessed in the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* ,and then moves on to the civil rights movements with prominent authors Du bois ,Wells ,Malcolm and Baldwin ...and finally with the authors like Butler, Morrison and Colson whitehead of the Post-millennium Neo-Slave Narrative genre. This ambition examination opens up a Pandora's Box of American history and the tragedy and transformation of African American.

The second chapter will analyze *The Underground Railroad*, presented as a literal train to freedom and in each state Georgia (the Origin), South Carolina (We both lived in a bubble!)...the journey toward freedom (North),new themes are discussed and new ideas are revealed .In addition, the novel is analyzed to determine to what extent it meets the

characteristics of the slave narrative that Olney has described in his outline . And we will examine what characteristics of Neo-Slave narrative genre can be found in the novel.

The third chapter is theoretical study of the novel in question. It adapts two literary theories; Psychoanalysis and cross-cultural, the psychoanalytical approach aims to examine the psyche of multiple characters and their real thoughts by uncovering their insecurities, desires and anxieties. We also talk about the Great Spirit that exists within each character, which keeps them humans deep inside even through their cruel journey to freedom. In addition we touch upon the emotional life of the characters by differentiating between black and white in all aspects of life even the sexual one.

The cross-cultural approach focuses on the historical events in new literary way, by moving through places and looking for freedom. The tunnel map spreads across the North to the South all the way to Canada. Whitehead reveals the truth of slavery by awakening past events and embodies them in his novel, and by moving from fantasy to reality, making the subway embodied in the reader's memory.

Chapter One

The Slave Narratives: the Oppressed people voices

It is impossible for me, on paper, to describe the feelings of a slave. The love of liberty is as deep in their breasts as in other men's. They are as sensitive under wrongs and sufferings, notwithstanding their apparent submission. And I doubt not their white masters, under Algerine oppression, would be as submissive as they are. When men of any color find they must submit to wrong, and that there is no escape, the color of the skin does not create any difference.

ANDREW JACKSON.

It is impossible to imagine the American literature without the immense impact of slave narratives, just as it is not possible to understand a hodgepodge American history, and a present detached from the dark institution of slavery and its niggling legacies.

The slave narratives were the elusive power in facing stereotypes of white supremacy propaganda used to justify slavery, through the message of the abolitionists' motto - "Am I not a man and a brother?", and later, 'Am I not a woman and a sister'-to undo the images used to demean and to denigrate people of African descent as not fully human. They are articulated not only in the fugitive/master debate, but are also expressed in and relevant to female/ male perspectives on history.

1.1. The Slave narrative genre:

From 1760 to the end of the Civil War, approximately one hundred autobiographies of fugitive or former slaves appeared (Andrews668). Penned by people of African descent, Muslims who wrote in Arabic, the Cuban poet Juan Francisco Manzano, and handful white American sailors taken captive by North African pirates (668), offering a diversity of voices.

Generally, a slave narrative is defined as a first person narration of a person who is unfairly enslaved under inhumane conditions (Bland 6). However, the slave narratives can be divided into non-fugitive and fugitive narratives, the latter being tales of slaves that escape from slavery to freedom (Bland 13), mostly via the Underground Railroad.

The first actual slave narrative is often considered to be Olaudah Equiano's *The interesting narratives of the life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. According to Carretta, Equiano "established all of the major conventions reproduced in the vast majority of nineteenth- and twentieth-century factual and fictional African American slave narratives" (44).

Later the genre focused on the exposure of the hypocrisy of the cruelty on Southern Plantations, the daily life of slaves, and the exposure of the hypocrisy of Southern Christianity (Gould 19). And with Harriet's *Incidents in the life of a slave girl*, the topic of sexual abuse and the special predicament of slave women came into focus as well (Sinanan 77).

1.1.2. Key Elements

According to American critic James Olney, the narratives of enslavement are considered as "unique production" (46). What is the shape as well as the nature of these tales? And whether they belong to history, literature, or polemical writing. What comes next will attempt to answer the aforementioned queries.

1.1.2.1. The Form

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most of the accounts belonged to the "abolitionist literature" and took the form of an autobiography penned by male and female slaves, to portray the actuality of African American identity from the slave's point of view (Gallego 141).

During the Antebellum period, many slaves were writing about their personal experience and various African American Narratives were published and succeeded in bringing interest among all the readers. Many white people also were writing about their interpretation of the slave experience (Lystar 21). These stories were fictional works, the events were fictional based on true stories, while the events that occurred in the different slave narratives were proved genuine as they are the personal experiences of the slaves. Harriet Jacobs wrote a slave narrative in the style of a domestic fiction novel of the nineteenth century, Mattie Griffith attempted to write the same type of book. But the fact that she was white made it a slave novel, not a slave narrative (Lystar 21).

1.1.2.2. Main Characteristics

The narratives of enslavement share common characteristics which shaped the genre and depicted the evils of bondage on the slaves along with their families, in addition to their conditions and treatment by their masters.

Unlike autobiography in general, these narratives focused on a typical objective reality, targeting coherence and intended audience .to reveal the truth of slavery and so to bring about its abolition (Olney 52). Benjamin Soskis in his review of *Bondwoman's Narrative* by Hannah Crafts states that : 'The narratives' ambitions ranged uneasily between the literary and the propagandistic, the autobiographical and the documentary' (Soskis 40). He distinguishes between the evangelical model of the slave narrative, exposing the author's private truth as more emotional and intense, and the legalistic model of the slave narrative, portraying objective truth and tends to be less passionate.

Almost all slave narratives followed a specific outline, an account of how the individual slave moved from bondage to freedom .Olney constructed a "master outline" for a slave narrative. The majority of the narratives contained a standard opening "I was born", which is a hallmark in the nineteenth century's accounts. Of course, the slave narratives' writers argue

that the events narrated are factual and truthful and that they all happened to the narrator, but this is a second-stage argument; before the claim of truthfulness is the simple, existential claim: "I exist". Photographs, portraits, signatures, authenticating letters all make the same claim: "This man exists" (Olney 52).

The different slave autobiographies specified only the place of birth, not the date, a description of cruel master with details of whippings, a story of a hardworking, strong, authentic African slave, accounts of auctions where the slave was transformed to a piece of property that could be easily bought and sold. Finally, a description of different kinds of food along with the work required for the thralls. This is followed by an account of how the slave escaped, how he had to evade patrols, and how he was welcomed in the North. The slave narrative can use a tone that resembles that of an adventure story, sometimes addressing the reader directly (Olney 152).

Written by himself or herself marked the narratives of Equiano, Grimes, Douglass, Wells Brown, Bib, and Harriet..., identifying a slave narrator as literate and capable of independent literary expression. And was a powerful weapon to combat a key proslavery myth, which held that slaves were unself-conscious and incapable of mastering the arts of literacy when many whites had had little or no schooling and literacy was a marker of social prestige and economic power.

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the slave narratives was what Robert Louis Gates calls ‘collective utterance’ (987), the slave was at the same time speaking on behalf of hundreds of other oppressed brothers and sisters in bonds. Thus, the plot was more important than the character, it was about the “protagonist’s journey of transformation from object to subject” (Bell, “*Beloved*” 10). It is for the same reason that the objectivity of the narrative was also very important (Bell, “*Beloved*” 10). Emotional pain was usually an important element more than physical pain. Since the latter could suppress other elements of the story, it could also make the white reader look upon the protagonist merely as a subject in pain, rather than a fellow human being who experienced other emotions aside from pain (Vint 244).

1.2. The Neo-Slave Narrative genre

The narratives which were carried out in the thirties of the 20th century are generally associated with the Works Progress Administration, in particular the Federal Writers’ Project. During the Great Depression of the 1930s roughly 2,300 testimonies of former slaves were orally recorded by the Federal Writers Project for the Slave Narrative Collection (Nash 243). They were meant to provide a sociological material, and were obviously non-literary in form. The slave narratives remained important as they had a hopeful tone right after the Civil War but became less optimistic during the Long Depression of the years from 1873 to 1896. New decampment towards these accounts highly influenced modern African American narratives and most of them used elements of the slave narrative when publishing their first works. Novels such as Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* from 1937 and Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* from 1952 were part of a new form of the slave narrative genre called the Neo-Slave Narrative. Rushdy marked this genre by dividing it in the periods before and after 1966, in the same year, Margaret Walker published *Jubilee*, a novel that is seen as

the embodiment of the “transition between the modern and contemporary history of neo-slave narrative” (Rushdy534).

1.2.1. Origin and Emergence

Neo-Slave Narratives refer to the literary genre of contemporary narratives of slavery that emerge primarily after World War II, particularly flourishing in the late 1960s and 1970s. These works expressed the psychological, social, and economic consequences of bondage because and even with the Emancipation Proclamation penned by Abraham Lincoln, the African Americans still suffered from the effects of a destructive system.

Various literary critics define the term Neo-Slave Narratives. Sofia Muñoz-Valdivieso provides insight into the formation of the term "Neo-Slave Narrative." She states, "Bernard Bell created the term 'neo-slave narratives' to refer to the fictions about slavery that began to appear in the US in the sixties and seventies, and he defined them as 'residually oral, modern narratives of escape from bondage to freedom' (43). While Rushdy concentrates on the form of the genre while defining it. He states, "What I call 'Neo-slave narratives,' that is, contemporary novels that assume the form, adopt the conventions, and take on the first-person voice of the antebellum slave narrative" (588).

Neo-Slave Narratives were influenced by both the civil rights and the black movement. The writers, who themselves were culturally formed during the sixties, commented via the neo-slave narrative genre on the mistakes of the New Left and Black Power Movement and those movements' hopes for the future (Rushdy5). African-American history scholars, for example John Hope Franklin, who regarded the “‘narratives’ [as] an important source for the study of slavery in America” (Nichols 162). They and other scholars such as Jesse Lemisch, claimed that the history was not only recorded by the elite, which regarded as atypical, but also by the people of lower classes who had experienced it too, and that history should be written from the bottom up. Barton J. Bernstein’s *Towards a new past*, published in

1968, is a well known example of this new method of writing history (Kraditor 529). They renewed their interest in the Original Slave Narrative genre since the slaves' culture had been considered as vital in the psychological as well as physical resistance of the slaves to their masters. Thus, the method of writing history from the bottom up and the scholars' new methods and views concerning slavery and history created a turning point in African-American culture. white author William Styron's *Confessions of Nat Turner*, which was written from the slave's perspective was regarded by Rushdy as "the sixties' most representative novel", though perhaps mostly because it had slavery as its topic (Rushdy 4, 6). *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* by Ernest J. Gaines, which "exemplifies the links between slavery and the sixties by having its protagonist live out both epochs" (Rushdy 6), was another key work and both novels give fictionalized, personal accounts of slavery history and have links to the political and cultural ideologies of the sixties (Rushdy6).

1.2.2. The aim of the genre

Since 2000 there has been an increase in the emergence of studies on the Neo-Slave Narrative genre, Christine Levecq and Timothy A. Spaulding address questions such as why the genre is still so popular and what its deeper meaning. Ashraf H.A. Rushdy, one of the most prominent scholars on Neo-Slave Narratives, contribute to the improved understanding of the genre by adopting Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the "field of cultural production «in his book *Neo-slave Narratives: Studies in the Social Logic of a Literary Form* (8), a theory which view literary works as autonomous from the social conditions of their production, circulation, and consumption, and the mimetic model, according to which literature directly reflects these conditions, and the field of cultural production itself characterized by power relationships among its different constituents . Hence, the concept of 'field 'can be used to explain how the politics of society can influence the production of literature, In the case of Neo-Slave Narratives, the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement were the

politics fuel which cleared the way for the historians of the New Left, who in their turn influenced the newfound popularity of the slave narrative genre. And the genre itself also indebted to other literary genres such as the Antebellum Slave Narratives, Postbellum Slave Narratives and Abolitionist Fiction. Furthermore, the power relationship can be demonstrated in the resemblance shared between the Neo-slave Narratives and the Antebellum Slave Narratives. Octavia Butler, author of *Kindred* (1979), and Toni Morrison, author of *Beloved* (1987), and many of these writers feel that although the Neo-Slave narratives closely resemble the Antebellum Slave Narratives, since both of them aim to keep the discussion about slavery alive. Morrison, said that her duty as a novelist, was to write about “proceedings too terrible to relate” (Moody 640). She wishes, amongst other things, to fill certain gaps in our understanding of history by writing novels about slavery. Since some aspects of slave life that the historical antebellum slave narratives could almost never address, such as romance between African Americans. Both, Butler and Morrison renovated the form of the antebellum slave to serve their contemporary goals and connect with their contemporary readers.

1.2.3. Characteristics and new Topics

According to Rushdy, “Neo-slave narratives are modern or contemporary fictional works substantially concerned with depicting the experience or the effect of new world slavery” (533). In a novel, a fictional slave is used as a subject or narrator, and in some cases the narrator has predecessors who witnessed slavery and suffered from it.

There are two kinds of neo-slave narratives: the historical novels that are set in the antebellum South and the social realist or magical realist novels that are set in the post-reconstruction era or 20th/21st century America (Namradja.15). They share slavery as a common central theme and an aspect of history still suffering from its effects. The first one follows the old slave narratives most precisely in the antebellum period and varies with the

narrator's viewpoint from the first to the third-person perspective—the second one shaped by the novels, which tackle the consequences of bondage on contemporary Americans. In fact, there is a third sub-genre that is authentic and has an original format and was formed right after the Civil Rights period. It recounts the family's experiments with enslavement, and it is considered a novel of remembered descendants.

In general, the Neo-Slave narratives follow the ancient slave culture since it was substantial in forming the slaves' identity and, of course, a principal element in the narratives of enslavement during the nineteenth century. The slave culture kept the slaves from becoming enslaved in their minds, even though physically they were (Rushdy533). The different authors used folk-talks, songs, and religious texts in their works, giving the slave culture an additional didactic function. Moreover, contemporary writers merge conventional methods of storytelling with African folklore. That movement away from realism is specific for neo-slave narratives because they are not restrained by the necessity to write 'the truth' and provide the reader with proof (Vint.243). In fact, realism is the best style to use when writing historical fiction, since authenticity and objectivity only complicate the view on the past, Shockley observes an “explosion of historical poems by African-Americans», these poems are written in a variety of styles, but have in common that they try to deal with a painful aspect of African-American history through imagination (Shockley 792).

The Neo-Slave Narratives do not necessarily have to follow the traditional methods of writing slave narratives, for instance romance was not a part of the slave narratives. The slaves were forbidden to show romance, since that would suggest that the slaves actually had human feelings and thus were human. Even in marriage, the slave owners would not allow emotion, but rather looked upon the institution of marriage as a way to control their slaves (Robinson 44). The slaves were used for breeding and any matrimonial status was usually disregarded by the slave owners, which meant that slaves sometimes had to have intercourse

with someone else than their spouse, in order to produce offspring. The second reason, romance would show the reader how the slave could be human despite slavery, and Romance was occasionally discussed, but only if it served the abolitionists' cause (Robinson 42). They wanted the readers to see how the ex- slaves were denied their humanity and by ignoring the romance subject, the abolitionists tried to make it appear as if loving relationships were impossible for the pitiful slaves. Obviously this does not mean that the slaves did not have romantic relations; it just meant that they hide them in their narratives. Zora Neale Hurston warned that white people would never think of the African-American people as humans without the element of romance in their (fictional) lives (Robinson 44). For instance, Hurston gave her protagonist Janie such a full love life in the modern slave narrative *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. During the 1960s the African-American writers were able to speak about black romance and thus affirm their human emotions even more (Robinson 44).

Another new topic, sexuality amongst slaves, which was highlighted during the 1960s. As said above, the slaves deprived from romance were seen as livestock that could be used for breeding. For Beaulieu women were "under a double bondage", because they had to work in the fields and as sexual objects (Campbell 244). In the past few decades rape has been reinterpreted as a form of exerting power rather than a sexual lust. Furthermore, laws have been changed to acknowledge the crimes of rape in war (Sagawa & Robbins 3). For female African -American authors rape was considered a taboo, and it was taken as an unfit subject for literature that might be read by women. And when these authors did manage to incorporate rape into their slave narratives, the subject would be regarded as proof of the author's lack of morale, Sojourner Truth was a prominent example where Thomas Pringle's Narrative left out certain accusations towards her "sexual depravity". The African-American female was often accused of being nymphomaniacal and seductive, which legitimated white men's sexual abuse. The neo-slave narratives can show readers that sex between African

Americans was not only animalistic, but could come from human emotions. In addition, the contemporary neo-slave narratives can touch on a critical topic such as abortion. The issue of sexual agency is not only important as an argument against slavery, but also for “women as an oppressed group” (Vint 24).

Gender issues play an essential role in the Neo-Slave Narratives predominately in women's works. In the classic slave narratives, women experienced a different form of slavery from men, and hence the transition from bondage to freedom was distinct as well. For males, everything started with literacy, moving to identity, and then liberty. Female slaves' three phases were as follows: family, identity, and freedom, of course. The neo-slave narratives have broken with that tradition, starting with Walker's *Jubilee*, which reinvigorated the slave narrative genre. Walker sheds light on everyday aspects of female slaves' life, which had long been disregarded (Leveeq 136).the neo-slave narrative genre celebrates “the heroic status of the enslaved mother” and thereby offer a chance to redeem the wrongs towards African American women, romance, and sexuality, since the genre can provide readers with accounts of aspects of slavery that the antebellum slave narratives could not. Aside from that, fiction “will not give us the whole story about social justice, but it can be a bridge both to a vision of justice and to the social enactment of that vision” (Nussbaum 12). Telling the slave stories in neoform provides a method to resist the injustice of maintaining errors in history, or forgetting history altogether (Sagawa and Robbins 1).

Key Differences in the historical experience of American space

2.1. Anglo-American literary canon and early nationalist historiography

The white supremacist ideology pervades Eurocentric depictions of New World spaces; North America was not spared from settler ideologies. In Pratt's analysis, deep possession of overseas territory begins with aggressive systems of knowledge formation (Cartesian geometry, Linnaean taxonomy) in which “universal” concept precedes local fact. European

appropriations of the Americas was well under way by the close of the seventeenth century, spurred by seaboard agriculture, mineral extraction, slave trade, and fur trade, as well as by French, Spanish, and British ambitions to expand the empire. Assimilation of American flora, fauna, geography, and climatology to the schema of natural history occurs in writings of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson intended to promote inland settlement during the late colonial and early national periods. Their observations, along with those of like-minded theorists of continental expansion, provide the philosophical foundation for what John O'Sullivan in 1845 would identify as the nation's "manifest destiny". As Franklin and Jefferson envisioned it *avant la lettre*, such destiny was emphatically agrarian and unequivocally white. To read such texts as Franklin's "*Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind*" (1751) and Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) in view of the actual racial diversity of eighteenth-century British America is to be impressed by the extent to which leading thinkers imagined a monochrome Anglo-American empire (aligned with Great Britain or not) and the ethnic exclusion required for its realization.

2.1.1. White literary practice: America as Herrenvolek Republic

2.1.1.1. Benjamin Franklin of course an Abolitionist but...!

That few in public affairs act from a mere view of the good of their country, what-ever they may pretend; and tho' their actings being real good to their country, yet men primarily considered their own and their country's interest was united and did not act from a principle of benevolence.

Benjamin Franklin

A re-examination of the real Benjamin Franklin becomes necessary when one considers how his essay "*Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind*" has impacted modern society. He argues that it is the role of the English colonist to fulfil North America's agrarian destiny by subjecting the continent's expanse to ownership and cultivation. A laboring class

that might otherwise languish in cities, unable to marry and procreate abundantly and thus reverse a statistical trend, by which deaths outweigh births, may buy land cheaply and produce children who will supply the labour to work the land. This progeny in turn will marry, procreate, and repeat the pattern, contributing to the long-term project of subduing the continent, full settlement of which in Franklin's projection "will require many Ages." A slaveholder himself, Franklin deprecates slavery on economic as well as ethical grounds, although his chief moral objection concerns what he sees as its tendency to corrupt the work ethic of whites who assume the master position: "Slaves. . . pejorate the Families that use them; the white Children become proud, disgusted with Labour, and being educated in Idleness, are unfit to get a Living by Industry." Toward the end of the essay, Franklin makes clear that his vision of a white North America is as much based on aesthetic preference as economic and moral grounds. Rejecting, among other people of color, even those Europeans "of what we call a swarthy Complexion" (curiously, the list includes Swedes, Russians, and Germans as well as French, Spanish, and Italians), he would restrict the population to Anglo-Saxons, who

Make the principal Body of White People on the Face of the Earth. I could wish their Numbers were increased. And while we are, as I may call it, Scouring our Planet, by clearing America of Woods, and so making this Side of our Globe reflect a brighter Light to the Eyes of Inhabitants in Mars or Venus, why should we in the Sight of Superior Beings, darken its People? Why increase the Sons of Africa, by planting them in America, where we have so fair an Opportunity, by excluding all Blacks and Tawneys, of increasing the lovely White and Red? But perhaps I am partial to the Complexion of my Country, for such Kind of Partiality is natural to Mankind. (Franklin 255-256)

“Red” in this context does not refer to Native Americans. Whereas in *“Increase of Mankind”* Franklin conceives the indigenous population as a hunting society that could probably subsist on the margins of white settlement, in *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* he envisions their disappearance entirely. Dismayed by the spectacle of drunkenness among natives he meets on the Pennsylvania frontier for the purposes of establishing settlement boundaries (his party having brought a propitiatory supply of rum to the occasion), he conjectures that alcohol may serve a higher purpose: “If it be the Design of Providence to extirpate these Savages in order to make room for the Cultivators of the Earth, it seems not improbable that Rum may be the appointed Means.”(125). It is thus that Franklin contributes to the doctrine of the vanishing Indian.

Franklin’s essay portrays a nation engineered using biopower to create a haven of white European. His essay is one voice among many that sought to engineer a white populace. This rhetoric continues in today’s racial divide with Trump as the front man “to make America great again.” America is far from egalitarian nation stratification between race, class, and gender is a hallmark of American history.

2.1.1.2. Jefferson a Virginia liberal slaveholder and Cooper’s interpretation

In Notes on the state of Virginia, Jefferson visualized the transformation of Virginia from a rigidly hierarchical slave society, to a post-emancipation Herrenvolk democracy with principles identical with those of Franklin. Jefferson’s inquiry into Africans and African-descended peoples never moves beyond a matter of white obsession, namely the question of what makes black people black, whether it proceeds from the color of blood, the color of bile? (Jefferson 149) .Jefferson concedes in effect that black is unknowable in proportion as black is not white: “Is this difference,” he asks, “of no importance? Is it not the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races? (Jefferson 149).Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in the

one, preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immovable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race?"(Jefferson 149). From color Jefferson proceeds to feature, exalting the "flowing hair" and "more elegant symmetry of form" of the idealized Anglo- Saxon body over what he perceives as the animal- like appearance of blacks, citing as proof what he alleges to be "their own judgment in favour of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the Oran- ootan for the black women over those of his own species."(Jefferson 149).

Besides casting black people as decidedly subhuman, also brands them as territorial outsiders: although the orangutan is a Southeast Asian– Oceanian species, Jefferson and his readers would chiefly associate nonhuman primates with Africa. From phenotypical feature he proceeds to cite other alleged black differences from the white norm: a tendency to sweat more and urinate less, a greater libido and an ability to function on less sleep than white people require, memory on par with that of whites but weaker capacities of reason, a dull imagination and an affective life ruled by intense but transient emotion. Emphasizing the carnal nature of such emotion, he questions the capacity of black people to form genuinely loving attachments.

For Jefferson, differences between white and black are irreconcilable given the toxicity of the historic master- slave relationship: "Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race."(Jefferson 152). Jefferson has set a program of gradual liberation and exportation of all slaves, "to declare them a free and independent people, and extend to them our alliance and protection" (Jefferson 152). In a country of their own somewhere in West Africa, their place to be taken in North America by a free white

labor force selectively recruited from Europe while the nation awaits a population increase from the established Anglo- Saxon stock. As vast as the American continent may be, to forestall an inevitable apocalyptic confrontation, Jefferson recommends that an oceanic distance separate black from white. He thought that such separation is mutually desirable, and that manumitted people will want to depart rather than share even so expansive a space as North America affords: “If a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labour for another.”(Jefferson 152).He concludes that political atonement cannot be achieved— that a parting of ways is the only cure for an understandable but insoluble enmity.

As with Franklin, and for aesthetic preference rooted in Anglo- Saxon ethnic narcissism factors , Jefferson recommended exclusions pertain not only to those of African ancestry (Native Americans being likely to disappear naturally) but also to potential immigrants from those parts of Europe unacquainted with if not hostile to republican principles. .For Jefferson as for Franklin, who would exclude even “swarthy” Europeans from nations of Protestant persuasion, race goes well beyond black and white. “Language, religion, politics, and genetics all play a part. Nearly every canonical Anglo- American author would reaffirm some variation of Jefferson’s vision of a Protestant, antimonarchical, agrarian America in the decades before the Civil War.”(William 17). *In The Prairie* (1827), James Fennimore Cooper restates the argument Franklin and Jefferson make with respect to continental settlement and occupation. Cooper observes in his opening passage,

Had made us the masters of a belt of fertile country, which, in the revolutions of the day, might have become the property of a rival nation. It gave us sole command of the great thoroughfare of the interior, and placed the countless tribes of savages, who lay along our borders, entirely within our controul; it reconciled conflicting rights, and quieted national distrusts;

it opened a thousand avenues to the inland trade, and to the waters of the Pacific; and, if ever time or necessity shall require a peaceful division of this vast empire, it assures us a neighbor that will possess our language, our religion, our institutions, and it is also to be hoped, our sense of political justice .

For Cooper as for Franklin and Jefferson, an American nation is not well served by diversity. Rather than affording room for a plurality of peoples, languages, and cultures, North America's vastness provides the strongest argument that the continent should be the preserve of a dominant ethnic monoculture. Memory of the rival claims of Catholic monarchical Spain and France contributes no doubt to this fear of difference: in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Cooper would remind his readership of the bloody confrontations associated with the War of Empire and the foolishness of trusting even so refined a specimen of French civilization as the Marquis de Saint-Veran. But the novel also warns of the perils of diversity within the citizenry's predominantly white genome and offers Cora Munroe, who inherits from her mother a fractional and scarcely "visible" African ancestry, as an example of the sad complications of the mixed-race individual. In killing her off and thus depriving Uncas (who must also die) of a worthy mate—worthy, that is, if such a union did not further a trend toward miscegenation—he exalts the memory of the Mohicans even as he documents their genealogy's extinction. Cora and Uncas exemplify high intelligence, astute decision-making, and physical courage, but it is the pure-white weak younger sister, Alice, and the genteel, belatedly war-hardened Southerner, Duncan Hayward, who survive to marry and populate the land.

2.2. Afro- American literary tradition

The so-called Abolitionist literature aimed to counteract a series of derogatory and racist images to portray the actuality of African American identity from the slave's point of

view. In so doing, this literature brings a new sense of reality based on an altered concept of history in opposition to the so-called «White» version of it. Such rewriting of history is also reader-oriented. Henry Louis Gates Jr. Observes in *The Signifying Monkey: a Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* “can be read as successive attempts to create a new narrative space for representing the recurring referent of Afro- American literature, the so-called Black Experience.”(41).

2.2.1. The Black Signifying Space and Voices of Resistance

2.2.1.1. Voices from the Global South: Wheatley and Olaudah Equiano

Phillis Wheatley and Olaudah Equiano are foundational contributors to the slave testimony in English, but neither qualifies as “fugitive” as that term is usually understood. Neither tells a story of harrowing and climactic escape. Both challenge the ontological status of persons who officially exist only as objects; by virtue of that challenge, both remain in perpetual flight from an objectification that turns on visible racial difference. Both raise the question of how Africans in varying conditions of liberation are to lead a life in the slave-regime West, where their presence signifies a limited number of narrative explanations, both portray the Plight of individuals situated between cultures, deprived of the option to return home— people for whom “home” in an ordinary sense can no longer be said to exist. Both invite consideration of the degree to which acculturation perpetuates bondage irrespective of legal emancipation.

Notwithstanding the support such writers enjoyed among a white evangelical community internally divided into anti- and proslavery camps, majority response to an emerging English literature of color was predictably condescending and dismissive. In Jefferson’s analysis, the African’s typically pietistic and emotive utterance betrays a lack of intellect and invention, for him “Religion indeed has produced a Phyllis Whately,” he remarks, misspelling her name, “but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the

dignity of criticism. The heroes of *the Dunciad* are to her, as Hercules to the author of that poem.”⁵ Anticipating a future emancipation of America’s enslaved population, Jefferson endorsed the idea of educational programs aimed at black people, even if he never actively worked toward their implementation.⁶ But his writing on black intellectual pursuit consistently rejects the possibility that African- descended people could meet, much less exceed, European standards of achievement.

Both Wheatley and Equiano appear to offer the rare, vital, testimonial link between Africa and the European Old and New Worlds. Both wrote for readerships that perceived them as having crossed from a pagan Africa to a Christian Europe and America. Both were obliged to confront the paradox that Christendom’s incursion into their non- Christian worlds.

Wheatley’s best- known and most controversial poem, whose first line builds upon the reader’s assumed familiarity with an antislavery view—that cruelty is an active agent in any such extraction of Africans from their homelands:

’Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land, Taught my benighted soul to
understand That there’s a God, that there’s a Saviour too: Once I redemption
neither sought nor knew. Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
“Their colour is a diabolic die.” Remember, Christians, Negros, black as
Cain, May be refin’d, and join th’ angelic train. (53)

The first four lines deploy an argument to which Wheatley would have been exposed as the member of a pious slaveholding household affiliated with an Anglo- American Methodist community that comprised both pro- and antislavery advocates. Very likely, it would have been difficult for her to say anything regarding her Middle Passage experience without first acknowledging that Providence has operated in conjunction with a blind humanity’s fallen economy to put her and other Africans in the geographical and spiritual position to seek and know redemption. But Wheatley does not thereby deny that cruelty also brings her and fellow

“Negros” from Africa and it is by virtue of the first four lines that she secures the platform from which to deliver the admonition of lines 5 through 8, beginning with the imperative “Remember.” Addressing forgetful and implicitly white Christian readers, Wheatley upbraids those who, on the basis of color prejudice, deny the African’s spiritual capacity and redemptive opportunity, and she does so by exposing what her argument represents as the white person’s false binary: Christians (white), Negros (pagan). To deny the African’s spiritual capacity is to consign the Negro to hard earthly labor and death of the immortal soul. In line 9, Wheatley’s double consciousness works through double entendre: “Negros, black as Cain” is a not overly subtle reference to the sugar plantations, far to the south of Boston but worked by bodies as black as that of the Boston maidservant, producing cane destined in refinement to appear in the Christian household as white table sugar. The last line suggests that redemption does involve “whitening,” that black Africans, once Christianized, become white angels, but here again Wheatley is working within the constraints of a Western symbology: black/dark associated with evil, white/light signifying good. The thesis that black people are fortunate to be delivered from Africa remains intact but not without Wheatley calling out the white betrayal of Christian doctrine. Grounded in her black perspective recognition of white error and hypocrisy, she thus incarnates a paradoxical authority.

The portrait of Olaudah Equiano that appears as the frontispiece in all nine editions of *The Interesting Narrative* published during his lifetime features an African of middle years dressed from an eighteenth-century English gentleman’s wardrobe— a white cravat cascading through an open-necked buff waistcoat surmounted by a dark greatcoat. His posture is erect and his mien sober, and he holds a Bible open to Acts 4:12: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” a verse that will figure prominently in chapter 10, toward the end of his account of what he represents as his one true born-again conversion. Accosting any who

should open the book, his eyes peer out from the oval frame as though to prompt readers to reflect upon their own spiritual fortunes. Equiano commissioned the miniaturist William Denton to paint this elaborately staged likeness, and its placement across from the title page indicates the degree to which he sought not only to take command over his public image but also to confront his white British readership with the arresting spectacle of exotic strangeness in familiar garb: an emissary from another world who has made himself at home as much in the sartorial as in the spiritual ways of the British evangelical gentry. The class markings of his costume contrast with those of Wheatley in her frontispiece portrait, which depict her in the humble dress of a maidservant, although any female servant who holds a pen must arrest the eighteenth-century reader's attention, and a black "servant" even more so. Like Wheatley before him, Equiano has something to say concerning the condition of those he has come to live among: Europeans with whom, "under heaven," he shares a temporal geography that culminates in a transcendent eternal home where human hierarchies cease. Like Wheatley, too, he purports to speak as the naturalized alien whose journey from pagan lands to the very center of enlightened Christendom confers an authority that native-born, passive recipients of the Gospel, prone to err in their disdain for a non white humanity and in their unreflecting support of the slave trade, may not possess.

In reading Wheatley's poems and Equiano's prose, one must be aware of the forces that have all but succeeded in silencing what they have to say in order justly to appreciate the moments of assertion and resistance they are able to inscribe in the tongue circumstance compelled them to acquire.

2.2.1.2. David Walker: Boston's fiery anti-slavery writer, and the spiritual autobiography's of: Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs

David Walker, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Jacobs all write from the perspective of individuals who have migrated from microcosms in which both enslaved and free people of

color are subject to forced position, structured vigilance, and unchecked abuse. The son of a free black woman, Walker was able to migrate north without becoming a fugitive. As sermon and manifesto, he prefers the Appeal to represent an expository treatment of the oppression of black people rather than a narrative of Walker's own journey from the Carolinas to Boston, which could be detected in the beginning with the first sentence of Walker's preamble:

Having travelled over a considerable portion of these United States, and having, in the course of my travels, taken the most accurate observations of things as they exist—the result of my observations has warranted the full and unshakable conviction, that we, (coloured people of these United States,) are the most degraded, wretched, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began; and I pray God that none like us ever may live again until time shall be no more. (1)

The nonspecific reference to his travels and the withholding of anything like a distinction between bondsman and freeman contribute to his argument that the condition of African Americans is firmly founded in racial identity irrespective of person and place. He claims: "America is more our country, than it is the whites ['] — we have enriched it with our blood and tears. The greatest riches in all America have arisen from our blood and tears: — and will they drive us from our property and homes, which we have earned with our blood?" (65). The Appeal is fascinating from a geographic perspective in that it speaks to a much oppressed people bound in rural isolated areas where freedom to move and settle is radically abridged even as it presents a claim to the land that surpasses that of the white plantation gentry. In this regard Walker anticipated a motif that reappears in the work of many black authors, most memorably in lines toward the end of *The Souls of Black Folk*, where Du Bois accosts the white reader thus: "Your country? How came it yours? Before the Pilgrims landed we were here."⁹

In his bid to counteract what he looks upon as the formidable threat of ethnic expulsion under the ostensibly benign cover of colonizing West Africa and founding a black, self-governing republic, Walker implores his black audience not to be deceived and to enter into a consciousness of American space as black space. Mindful, however, that his text (beyond the readership his title names) will be intercepted and read by whites, most of whom will prove hostile, while a few perhaps may harbor some sympathy or anxiety that he might productively engage, he holds out the possibility that white and black people can coexist and co-occupy land within a common set of cartographic coordinates. Do white people wish to do right by the principles they profess as Christians? Do they wish to avoid a violent physical confrontation with an aggrieved people? “Throw away your fears and prejudices then, and enlighten us and treat us like men,” he enjoins the white reader, “and we will like you more than we do now hate you, and tell us now no more about colonization, for America is as much our country, as it is yours. — Treat us like men, and there is no danger but we will all live in peace and happiness together. For we are not like you, hard hearted, unmerciful, and unforgiving. What a happy country this will be, if the whites will listen” (70). As to the possible result of his speaking thus freely and forcefully: “I do not only expect to be held up to the public as an ignorant, impudent and restless disturber of the public peace” but also “perhaps put in prison or to death, for giving a superficial exposition of our miseries, and exposing tyrants” (2). Here, as in so many other African American geographies, the prison cell looms as a probable destiny.

For readers in the twenty-first century, the status of Douglass’s writing as time-sensitive political intervention is understandably obscured by the long time abolition of chattel slavery, and although enduring issues of racial injustice, along with the Narrative’s literary merit, amply sustain interest in this work, readers today must actively imagine the intensities associated with its initial appearance. The spatial politics of *The Narrative of the Life of*

Frederick Douglass, *An American Slave, Written by Himself* begins with the title, which announces to a white, predominantly Northern audience that the text concerns the exotic experience of a black person who has escaped the slave South and who has likewise escaped the unlettered state associated with enslavement and blackness generally. As one who has written his own narrative, Douglass distinguishes himself from the mass of enslaved or formerly enslaved people by having entered—in addition to the free-state North—the republic of letters. The Narrative's full title calls attention to the fact that illiteracy figured as a presumed component of the enslaved person's existential condition. If, as a rule, to be black was to be enslaved, to be black was likewise to be illiterate. Douglass's first book presents Frederick Douglass as the exception that proves the rule.

For his part, the Douglass who speaks in the Narrative expresses little concern for his personal safety. He conveys the conviction that he has escaped enslavement once and for all and will die before anyone succeeds in dragging him back to his legal owner. In contrast with the Frederick Douglass of Garrison's preface and Phillips's letter, the first-person Douglass of the Narrative performs as one whose self-possession (literally and figuratively) is beyond question. From the first paragraph forward he writes of his former condition as though viewing it through a telescope and prompts the reader to take instruction as he presents the spectacle of his life as a slave. The highly wrought first paragraph introduces the reader to a narrator who combines irony with indignation and who establishes right away the patterns by which this story will be told:

I WAS born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus

ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting- time, harvest- time, cherry- time, spring- time, or fall- time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood. The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege. I was not allowed to make any inquiries of my master concerning it. He deemed all such inquiries on the part of a slave improper and impertinent, and evidence of a restless spirit. The nearest estimate I can give makes me now between twenty- seven and twenty- eight years of age. I come to this, from hearing my master say, sometime during 1835, I was about seventeen years old. (15)

This paragraph and chapter 1 as a whole reflect a familiarity with life narratives such as *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* that open with birth, parentage, and genealogy.¹⁵ In keeping with period conventions of biography and autobiography, Douglass likewise begins with the circumstances of his birth, as this provides a first opportunity to discuss how the norms of slave life differ from the norms of his white readership. He can state where he was born and assist the reader in locating the remote site on a map. But he is unable to say when he was born, which prevents him (as he would have his reader notice) from fulfilling normal autobiographical genre expectations. In emphasizing the unknown status of this datum, he inaugurates one of his major themes: to be enslaved is to be subject to enforced ignorance and cognitive quite as much as social death. Of the paragraph's eleven sentences, eight concern the unresolved mystery of his date of birth, how the "want of information" is a common feature of slave life, how he suffered as a child from this suppression of knowledge, and how his natural curiosity marked him, a subject ever under slaveholder surveillance, as possessing a "restless spirit"— a person ill suited to stay in place. A white autobiographer

might state place and date of birth in one sentence. Douglass counts on his readership to note that it requires a whole paragraph for him to explain why he can cite place but not date. In the paragraphs that follow, he will similarly demonstrate that he can state the facts of his maternity, but paternity for him remains a mystery that requires a sociological disquisition. The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, and Written by Himself relies throughout on that most common of narrative metaphors: life- as- journey. Writing in a Protestant literary tradition for which *The Pilgrim's Progress* provides the paradigm and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* its American secularization, the journey trope comprises motifs of losing and recovering one's way, condemnation and redemption, descent to hell and ascent to heaven, as well as dystopian embarkation and utopian arrival. "It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty— to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom" (37– 38). Douglass presents this moment as his first intimation that a path out exists. It follows his recognition that power proceeds not so much from brute force as from a social hypothesis put into practice, ideologies by which some people are assigned active while others are assigned passive roles. Once one understands how one came to be enslaved, one can set about plotting escape.

the geographies that Harriet Jacobs develops in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* from the female perspective of Jacobs's alter ego, Linda Brent, and the female's enhanced consciousness of possessing a permeable body. In following Linda's career as a slave, we are introduced to many instances of microcosmic space, all of which are subject to white male intrusion. The interiors of built structures figure prominently: the two- parent "comfortable home" of earliest memory, the cabin Dr. Flint proposes to build in order to isolate Linda in

concubinage, the grandmother's house of fragile sanctuary, the cellars and attic bedrooms that serve as way stations in Linda's flight, the jail to which her brothers are confined following aborted attempts to escape and to which her children are likewise confined in the process of being sold, the garret in which she reposes for seven years, the ship's hold in which she escapes from the South, the temporary lodgings she finds in Northern cities in abolitionist safe homes or residences of Northern employers who take on the risk of harboring her, and finally the longed- for but still unachieved "hearthstone" with which the narrative concludes.³⁰ This immersion in the microcosmic sites of Southern enslavement and Northern fugitive slave life takes place within the macrocosmic slave- state and free- state frame of reference.

As the testimony of one destined to be perceived as a "fallen woman," Jacobs's narrative engages periodically in self- deprecatory gestures but aims to speak to a female readership from a position of gender commonality, if not social equality, and to assume an authority that can credibly formulate moral imperatives leading to political action In the book's first appeal to its readership, Linda speaks for herself and in doing so confesses her reluctance to tell her story: "It would have been more pleasant to me to have been silent about my own history"

(1). Far from emphasizing the personal dimensions of that history, she disavows any wish to excite sympathy for my own sufferings. But I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse. I want to add my testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the Free States what Slavery really is. Only by experience can anyone realize how deep, and dark, and foul is that pit of abominations. (1– 2)

This paragraph cites regional differentiation, "women of the North" and "women at the South," without reference to the color line. Women of both regions comprised by the

macrocosmic national geography have in common vulnerabilities that attach to gender; commonality of victimhood (rampant in the South but a frequent if unacknowledged occurrence in the North) accordingly is greater than racial difference, particularly since, as Jacobs will emphasize, many of the enslaved have such a preponderance of Anglo- Saxon ancestry that they can pass for white. The attenuation of such racial difference as would place a “black” author at an unbridgeable distance from a “white” reader is reinforced in Child’s conspicuously short introduction, in which she explains why she has assisted in the publication of a book containing “indelicate” sexual material:

I do this for the sake of my sisters in bondage, who are suffering wrongs so foul, that our ears are too delicate to listen to them. I do it with the hope of arousing conscientious and reflecting women at the North to a sense of their duty in the exertion of moral influence on the question of Slavery, on all possible occasions.

I do it with the hope that every man who reads this narrative will swear solemnly before God that, so far as he has power to prevent it, no fugitive from Slavery shall ever be sent back to suffer in that loathsome den of corruption and cruelty(4).

Sisterhood, in Child’s fervent conclusion to her remarks, knows no color line. And although enslaved “women at the South” were far more susceptible to abuse than women of the North, Child undoubtedly writes with the recognition that abuse is far from unknown among white middle- class women who supposedly live among patriarchal safeguards; such practical knowledge of sexual vulnerability as they must certainly possess might motivate such women to come to the aid of their enslaved sisters. Child’s allusion to male readers in the last sentence acknowledges that men have a power to take direct political action that women do not, but in exerting “moral influence” within the home circle, the wife, sister, or mother might open a conversation of far- reaching consequence.

From first to last, Linda Brent focuses her reader's attention on what it is like to function as a self-respecting human subject among constraints imposed by a legal status that defines her as a commodity susceptible to immediate sale in addition to all manner of physical exploitation. The innocence of her first six years consists in her blissful ignorance of that status: "I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise" (5). Her status as a conditionally free human being is reinforced by the fact that she still lives unequally as Mrs. Bruce's protégé, dependent on the white woman's charitable disposition. The stigma of unwed motherhood continues to haunt her. "Reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage" (201). The line serves to juxtapose the narrative arc of *Incidents* with that of *Jane Eyre* and Jane's status as foster child, governess, young woman potentially compromised at the hands of an older married man, and her final reward for steadfastness: "Reader, I married him." But if, in juxtaposition, Linda is a Jane whom fortune has failed, she is more permanently a Bertha Mason Rochester, confined to the categories reserved for women marked by color and scandal.⁴² Like Bertha, Linda lives a life of exile; her last thoughts concern her "tender memories of my good old grandmother, like light, fleecy clouds floating over a dark and troubled sea" (201), a sea she has crossed in her flight north from a home to which she cannot imagine returning, at least while slavery persists, and in any event never again to see her grandmother, who is now deceased.

2.2.1.3. Domestic Uplift and Escape Abroad: W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett

Among African American authors of first-person testimonies that build on the slave narrative genre, Ida B. Wells-Barnett and W. E. B. Du Bois do much to frame for succeeding generations the postslavery and post-Reconstruction predicament of black people and the confined geographies of a second-class citizenship. Booker T. Washington concedes from the female perspective of Jacobs's alter ego, Linda Brent, and the female's enhanced consciousness of possessing a permeable body. In following Linda's career as a slave, we are

introduced to many instances of microcosmic space, all of which are subject to white male intrusion that public performance— both oral and written— serves as the veil behind which he curates his knowledge of cruelty and privation. Such moments are fleeting: his persona ever reverts to the thesis that the history of African American grievance is best put aside as the black community sets its shoulder to the wheel of a common national purpose, contributing to the great democratic experiment even as it defers expectation of political participation and economic recompense, and even as it maintains its distance from, and invisibility to, the majority white citizenry. By contrast, W. E. B. Du Bois begins a career of first- person testimony by proposing that literary expression can lift the veil and attenuate the color line to the degree that it makes audible “the striving in the souls of black folk.”²² If the first of what would prove to be his four exercises in memoir writing succeeds in bringing a white readership closer to an oppressed people’s experience than *Up from Slavery* ever does, it is because Du Bois, unlike Washington, not only itemizes the exceptional suffering of black people in America but begins by addressing that suffering’s invisibility in a post-Reconstruction nation devoted to industrial development, material acquisition, and imperial expansion. Du Bois does not structure his story as a South- to- North migration— on the contrary, he gravitate to the Deep South, as to the site of compelling need as well as, by numbers, a viable black nationhood.

Six years older than W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells- Barnett shared with her male contemporaries the challenge of navigating a post- Civil War America in which racial geographies were subject to abrupt and lethal vicissitude. As a woman who rose to leadership in the national ant lynching campaign and as a feminist who contested black as well as white patriarchal oppression, Wells- Barnett pursued paths independent of those mapped out by Du Bois. Born into slavery the year before the Emancipation Proclamation, Wells- Barnett possesses no direct memory of the condition of bondage ,like Douglass and Jacobs, Wells-

Barnett appeals to the reader's consensus belief in the inviolability of the nuclear family home, domestic space that whites and blacks alike might agree to defend (in the phrase Malcolm X would give special currency) "by any means necessary."¹⁹ Like Douglass and Jacobs before her, she describes the hardships of exile. As "my mind went back to the scenes of the struggle," she writes of her refugee status when it became clear that she might forfeit her life in returning to Memphis, "to the thought of the friends who were scattered throughout the country, a feeling of loneliness and homesickness for the days and the friends that were gone came over me and I felt the tears coming" (79)

Although Wells- Barnett writes glowingly of the fulfilment she experienced as a mother of four children, thereby endorsing traditional models of a woman's procreative role, Crusade for Justice also records her advocacy of female suffrage and the resistance she faced among her male civil rights colleagues to the idea of enfranchising women.

Although freedom for black people begins, in Wells- Barnett's account, only when the South has been left behind, she fully understands that the North operates as well on the principle of racial apartheid. Early in her Chicago residence she witnessed the nearly complete erasure of a black presence in the exclusionary history showcased at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, in protest of which she authored three of the six chapters, plus preface and epilogue, of a pamphlet titled *Reasons Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*.²¹ Nor does the North provide a safe haven from white rage that vents itself in ritual lynching, examples of which include well- publicized incidents in Springfield and East Saint Louis and lesser- known atrocities such as occur when a black teenager drowns while bathing in Lake Michigan after having been set upon by a group of white boys pelting him with stones. As we have seen, in African American migration narratives, the familiar binaries slave/free and South/North are liable to collapse, with

persecutions extending and freedoms denied north of the old slave South. For Wells- Barnett, however, “North” retains a relative value as a signifier of safety and freedom.

In *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892), Wells- Barnett documents instances of consenting relations between white women and black men that the white patriarchy insistently construes as capital rape even as it refrains from prosecuting flagrant instances of white male ravishment of black women and girls.¹⁶ *Southern Horrors* depicts a scandalous cartography in which white women of genteel as well as impoverished class origin invite black men into their bedrooms, highlighting interracial encounters that occur every day in domestic space conventionally regarded as rigidly segregated— segregated, that is, except when the white male or female sees fit to admit the black party to the white sexual arena or abruptly intrude upon the black domicile, a pattern familiar to readers of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

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2.2.1.4. Notes from Underground: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Malcolm X

Wright, Baldwin, and Malcolm X attest on occasion to the pleasures of voluntary travel, but the flight motif occupies a central place in the work of all four, and the history of African American displacement (the South- to- North mass migration but also the mythic Middle Passage) informs their representations of twentieth- century black mobility. Each embraces a degree of expatriation: whereas Wright and Baldwin become permanent residents of France, the New York City of Ellison and Malcolm X is a world apart from the rural, white supremacist South and Midwest of their respective origins. Wright in *Black Boy* (1945) and Ellison in *Invisible Man* (1952) generate texts that clearly reprise the paradigm of the (male) slave narrative as established by Douglass, in which the first- person narrator recounts his flight from South to North but depicts, more emphatically, an internal emancipation from a condition of ignorance and intimidation to a state of recognition and defiance, a transformation that culminates in the literary performance of the life story. *Black Boy* qualifies as autobiography, whereas *Invisible Man* is overtly fictive, however much it may parallel Ellison’s own migratory and self-educative history. Although *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* revises the South- to- North plot as it locates the sites of early- life oppression in Nebraska and Michigan, it embeds Malcolm’s path within those of his Grenada- born mother and Georgia-born father. Like Wells- Barnett, moreover, Malcolm demonstrates that the rural Midwest is not substantially different from the rural South as a locus of racial terrorism. As writers- in- exile, all develop their own ways of invoking and inscribing readers on either side of the color line as well as across regional and national borders. All four authors cultivate geographies in which narrator and reader may achieve tentative contiguity, although here we should insist on readers (plural), inasmuch as texts attesting to conflictive experience cannot

help but divide readerships, even if such division is necessary to establish the clarity requisite to a possible reconciliation.

Wright's sense of having been "cast out of the world" and of residing in an inescapable "No Man's Land" achieves further articulation in "The Man Who Lived Underground," a story that channels Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* while invoking the literature and history of the Underground Railroad. An allegorical supplement to *Black Boy*, the story tracks an (initially) anonymous black man in flight from the police on a subterranean journey through the sewers and cellars of the urban North. In the process of this journey the protagonist gains new perspective on the quotidian scenes and crimes of his city and critical knowledge of the world he has occupied all his life, a world that has indoctrinated him in its monetized priorities even as it has assigned him a place of servility and disesteem. In the cave to which he hauls the booty of his raid on the jewellery store safe, he comes to understand the fundamental worthlessness of what he and his fellow citizens conventionally value and the guilt they all share for perpetuating a system of mutual degradation. Emancipated from values that have never benefited him personally, he looks upon his fellow citizens with pity. Such knowledge compels him to express himself, to speak to the aboveground world as prophet and, if necessary, martyr.

Beginning with the first sentence, "I've got to hide, he told himself,"¹⁹ the narration hovers between first and third person. In accompanying the protagonist into the municipal sewer, the reader is drawn into spaces of civic abjection and must map, with the fugitive, the system of passageways that treacherously slope to darkness and death but that also touch the foundations of social life among a maze of porous border-works. At no point in the story are we encouraged to believe that the protagonist will discover an escape route, a corridor that will lead to a place of freedom. Rather, the liberation he experiences resides in his recognition of the deluded nature of the lives he witnesses from below, delusions without

which no one can survive, as he discovers when he attempts to share his illumination with the very policemen who arrested him and extracted from him a false confession. To the extent that the story is told in a first- person voice, we are privy to the protagonist's cognitive process, first, as he fights to maintain his balance in the rushing water, and then as he discovers the old disused channels and the walls that only partially separate the sewer from the living city. We share his struggle to identify everyday sounds and sights amid the strangeness of approaching a familiar world from the consciousness of death the sewer represents. And after he has brought jewels, cash, a meat cleaver, a radio, a gun, and a typewriter into his below- ground den, we witness his first literary efforts, the typing out of the first line of a story, lifted though it is from such pulp fiction as Wright consumed in his own first discovery of letters.

As a follower of Garvey, Malcolm's father concedes that North America is not the appointed place for people of African descent. "He believed, as did Marcus Garvey, that freedom, independence and self- respect could never be achieved by the Negro in America, and that therefore the Negro should leave America to the white man and return to his African land of origin" (2) . At the same time Malcolm writes that, in moving to the countryside outside of Lansing, Michigan, "my father wanted to find a place where he could raise our own food and perhaps build a business" inasmuch as "Garvey stressed becoming independent of the white man" (3). Realistically, one might sooner achieve a life of independence within hostile American territory than fulfil the mythic aspiration of a return to Africa. During the period of the family's comparatively self- subsistent existence in rural Michigan, the child Malcolm receives permission to cultivate his own "little plot" (8), and his memory of this activity provides a glimpse into his personality on the rare occasion in which he is not subject to some present or imminent harassment. Prior to his hajj and the experience, in Mecca, of oneness with fellow Muslims, Allah, and the creation, his recollection of tending his garden

in the solitude of the land 3 counts as the one moment in the Autobiography when he depicts himself as at home, terrestrially and cosmically: “Sometimes when I had everything straight and clean for my things to grow, I would lie down on my back between two rows, and I would gaze up in the blue sky at the clouds moving and think all kinds of things” (9). In *Black Boy* (*American Hunger*), a narrative similarly scant of childhood joys, Wright likewise associates peace and contentment with solitary moments in garden settings— as though to emphasize the innocence poor black children manage to preserve despite their exposure to violence and privation.

Nine months older than Malcolm X and a half generation younger than Wright and Ellison, James Baldwin differ from all three in that his life begins in the urban North. Citing what he calls Wright’s “odyssey” (the trajectory of Malcolm X fit the same epic template), Baldwin reflects, “I have not, in my own flesh, travelled, and paid the price of such a journey, from the Deep South to Chicago to New York to Paris.”³⁷ He makes this concession in 1961, a moment when the civil rights movement was directing national attention to a stridently white supremacist South. Although Baldwin’s cartography cannot be framed in hard departures and definitive arrivals, he has much to say about his own journey and the costs incurred to stay or to leave. Flight, from Harlem to Greenwich Village or from the United States to Europe, is a recurrent theme in much of his memoir writing, but a Harlem remembered and a Harlem revisited likewise recurrently engross his attention. His several accounts of sojourning in Europe culminate in the recognition that the black American expatriate is never free of a troubled heritage and that character (white or black) formed on American soil cannot assimilate to Europe or Africa. Saint- Paul- de- Vence may have become his permanent residence and the site of his last days, but as distant as southern France is from Harlem, Baldwin would describe himself in the late essay “The Price of the Ticket” (1985) as “mysteriously shipwrecked forever, in the Great New World” (842).

Baldwin articulates his black American birthright. Speaking as one whose pursuit of genealogical origins is “abruptly arrested by the signature on the bill of sale which served as the entrance paper for his ancestor” (125), he specifies that birthright in “Princes and Powers” (1957), an essay that first appears in *Encounter* and later in *Nobody Knows My Name*:

We had been born in a society, which, in a way quite inconceivable for Africans, and no longer real for Europeans, was open, and, in a sense which has nothing to do with justice or injustice, was free. It was a society, in short, in which nothing was fixed and we had therefore been born to a greater number of possibilities, wretched as these possibilities seemed at the instant of our birth. Moreover, the land of our father’s exile had been made, by that travail, our home. . . . [N]othing, in any case, could take away our title to the land which we, too, had purchased with our blood. (147)

Rejecting Paris as refuge except in fantasy, he establishes the closest thing to a permanent residence in the south of France, meanwhile affirming the inalienable relationship of African Americans to European Americans as well as to the continent on which the national mixed-race destiny is to be settled. Thus he speaks, in “Princes and Powers,” of “our title to the land which we, too, had purchased with our blood” (147), a phrase that finds an echo in everyone from David Walker, Martin Delany, and Frederick Douglass to W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Malcolm X, and Toni Morrison.⁴¹ In “The Price of the Ticket” (1985) he could reaffirm, further, that “Europe has never been, and cannot be, a useful or valid touchstone for the American experience because America is not, and never can be, white” (836). But the United States nevertheless does not yet afford the conditions of what to Baldwin is a sustainable residence, and in that same essay, written in France, he declares, “My diaspora continues, the end is not in sight” (841). Diaspora for Baldwin is double, North America figuring as a secondary originary scene.

2.2.1.5. Next Worlds: Toni Morrison and Octavia Butler

Born a half- generation and continent apart, the biggest names in African American literature: Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison and famous contributors to a literature flourishing that dates from the waning years of the civil rights era. Coinciding with the emergence of the Black Power, Black Arts, and Black Studies movements, narratives of this period frequently offer renewal vision of black experience in the New World. The historical sweep of works such as *Jubilee* (1966), *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971), *Corregidora* (1975), *Roots* (1976), *The Chaneyville Incident* (1981), *The Pittsburgh Cycle* (1982– 2005), *Dessa Rose* (1986), and *Middle Passage* (1990) ,all together, elicit a closer view of the paths by which generations of black people, bond and free, have migrated across the face of North America, and the countergeographies with which they have met entrapment, exclusion, and the threat of extermination. *Kindred* (1979) and *Beloved* (1987), two works prominently among the list of titles that collectively define the neo- slave narrative— a genre that, as Colson Whitehead’s *The Underground Railroad* (2016) demonstrates. Retains its relevance well into the twenty- first century. But neo- slave motifs are not limited to narratives that invoke the past in the manner of historical fiction. In contrast with Wright, Ellison, Malcolm X, and Baldwin, Morrison and Butler address the theme of black displacement with pointed reference to female experience— specifically, the complications that pregnancy and motherhood impose on the fugitive condition. Both authors differentiate a comparatively light- footed male nomadism from a typically burdened female embarkation, and both create female characters who seek necessary stasis. Yet each develops memorable protagonists (Pilate Dead, Sethe Garner, Dana Franklin, Lauren Oya Olamina, and Asha Vere) whose identities emerge as resourceful at- risk travelers.

For Morrison, the ghost dimensions or death spaces that environ, haunt, taunt, and support the living; *Beloved* (1987) famously transports the reader to the postslavery past in

the decade following Emancipation. In her preface to the 2004 Vintage edition, Toni Morrison describes what she wished to accomplish by *Beloved's* vertiginous opening lines: “I wanted the reader to be kidnapped, thrown ruthlessly into an alien environment as the first step into a shared experience with the book’s population— just as the characters were snatched from one place to another, from any place to any other, without preparation or defense. Morrison begins each of the novel’s three parts by escorting the reader up to and then across its threshold: “124 was spiteful” (3), “124 was loud” (199), “124 was quiet” (281). Given that the house serves not only as the point of arrival and departure in a material world subject to the uncertain geographies of slave and free state but also as an interchange between past and present, domain of the dead and sphere of the living— a world, in sum, that knows neither spatial nor temporal boundaries— the “environment” Morrison cites extends in all directions, even within the strict borders of the house and its outbuildings. As a matter of author/reader cartography, Morrison wishes to “kidnap” and plunge the reader into what she is able to reconstruct of slave and ex- slave subjectivity: a complex of memory/ (re)memory, defense mechanism, and affective response, mind embedded in the scarred and violated body. That subjectivity pertains to Sethe, Denver, Beloved, Paul D, Ella, and Stamp Paid (among others) individually, but it transcends any one personality to comprise all who lived in bondage under conditions of perpetual transfer or abduction and whose lives and deaths have been lost beyond anyone’s capacity to remember— a subjectivity whose passage to oblivion Morrison invokes when she inscribes the book to “Sixty Million and more.”

For Butler, the topographies of a slave past but also those of a catastrophic future in which the will to survive compels the search for extraterrestrial escape routes. In *Kindred*, Los Angeles exemplifies contemporary metropolitan America— so removed in time and space from the rural slave past and so caught up in continuous self- reinvention as to make amnesia an existential condition, notwithstanding the “slave market” to which Dana willingly

subjects herself as a temporary worker, supporting by day her nocturnal endeavors as a novelist. In *Parable of the Sower*, Under the duress of a changing climate and consolidation of authoritarian rule, American society is dominated by those who have amassed great wealth and who have positioned themselves to exploit and enslave its more vulnerable citizens. Amid these dystopian conditions, *Parable* introduces us to Lauren Oya Olamina, a black, middle-class teenager who leads a comparatively protected life within her neighbourhood's enclosure but whose peculiar disability—hyperempathy syndrome—causes her to experience the symptoms of bodies experiencing states of pleasure and pain, although in her world pain is the far more common sensation. Lauren's first-person testimony records, among other trials, her response to the hordes of street people leading horrific lives in the full light of day. The novel's insistent visualization of social abjection— a homeless populace whose bodies exhibit mutilated limbs and festering wounds— challenges readers to reimagine and remap their own relation to bodies that suffer under regimes of domination and exploitation, disparities of power and privilege with which any reader possessing leisure (space, time) to read and reflect is, as the narrative urges one to recognize, structurally complicit.

Chapter two

Colson Whitehead's 'Underground Railroad' is A Literal Train to Freedom

I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say — I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.

Harriet Tubman

Kathryn Schultz writes: "That story, like so many that we tell about our nation's past, has a tricky relationship to the truth: not quite wrong, but simplified; not quite a myth, but mythologized."

The Underground Railroad —the resistance to enslavement through escape and flight— Wherever slavery existed, there were efforts to escape. Olson Whitehead's eighth work; a Neo-Slave Narrative and the first of his novels that deals with the issue of slavery directly. The novel takes inspiration from the real-life underground railroad. Like the original slave narrative this novel describes a slave's escape towards freedom, it is characterized by a deep-set ambivalence toward the American motto of the Pursuit of Happiness. Whitehead aims not only to tell a compelling story, but also to make claims about the situation of African Americans today. By using a fantastic element which is turning the metaphor of the Underground Railroad into a literal train with rails running through America. He sets out to show the unjust and cruel treatment of people of color in the USA through time. Whitehead has compared the episodic structure of *The Underground Railroad* to Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Each place Cora lands is a different experience and according to Whitehead, "the book is rebooting every time the person goes to a different state." The novel covers five primary periods in the life of Cora, Life in Georgia, Life in South Carolina, Life in North Carolina, Journey through Tennessee, Life in Indiana and Beyond. At each of the stops on the runaway slave protagonists' flight, happiness may appear as a trap, happy

endings remain elusive: all temptations to stay and find contentment in way stations are revealed to be illusory.

2.1. The Origin!

The novel starts out in a realist manner, as Whitehead describes the daily cruelty and hardship of slaves' lives in a cotton plantation in mid-nineteenth century, Georgia. Cora the main character is an outcast even among her fellow slaves; she lives in the building that has the lowest social status ascribed to it. The hut called 'Hob' is a place for orphans and as prescribed is a place for "those who had been crippled by the overseers' punishments, [...] those who had lost their wits" (Whitehead 16), she lives there because she refused to give up a little plot of land that her grandmother and her mother had already tended to (Whitehead 19). Ajarry's life foreshadows the stories of her descendants, first through the phenomenon of sexual violence. Members of the slave ship crew rape Ajarry, only a young girl at that point. Later in the novel, both, Mabel daughter of Ajarry and Cora's mother and Cora become victims of rape. The sexual violence that Mabel and Cora experienced was performed by black men; however, the overseer is also prone to sexual violence (Whitehead 25). This aspect reminds the reader of earlier works like Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, which address the special danger for slave women.

Second, Ajarry also exerts a direct and powerful influence over the choices of her granddaughter. Cora rejects Caesar when he asks her to escape with him. She initially refuses: "she said no. This was her grandmother talking" (Whitehead 3). Three weeks later, Cora is whipped for standing up for her friend Chester and the plantation changes owners, She seeks Caesar out and tells him that she wants to escape, she changed her mind about running and said yes: "This time," narration comments, "it was her mother talking" (Whitehead 8).

Cora and Caesar manage to reach the first station of the Underground Railroad; a metaphor of underground network of people turns into a literal underground. When Cora first sees the railroad, she asks where it starts and ends. The local station agent only answers: “Stations are discovered, lines discontinued. You won’t know what waits above until you pull in” (Whitehead 68). And When she asks who built it the station agent asks her “who builds anything in this country?” (Whitehead 67). For her this means that the railroad was built by black people, the very device that will supposedly carry her to freedom was built by black people and not by white abolitionists. Before Cora leaves on her first trip with the Underground Railroad, the station agent says his goodbyes with the following words: “If you want to see what this nation is all about, I always say, you have to ride the rails. Look outside as you speed through, and you’ll find the true face of America” (Whitehead 69). Later, Cora follows the agent’s instructions, but due to the fact that she is going through a tunnel system, she can only see darkness while she travels (Whitehead 70).

2.2. We both lived in a bubble!

After their first ride on the Underground Railroad, Cora and Caesar disembarks in South Carolina ~a city which is uncannily modern compared with the novel’s mid-nineteenth century setting. In the beginning of the chapter, Cora visits the Griffin Building, a skyscraper, it is instantly apparent that Cora has indeed travelled in time when she describes the Griffin building. The first skyscraper in the USA was built in 1885 in Chicago, so the presence of a skyscraper is an anachronism. This “remarkable edifice served as a monument to her profound change in circumstances. She walked down the sidewalk as a free woman” (Whitehead 87).Cora’s fate did change, she is housed in a dormitory, she learns to read and write, and she works for a kind family. Cora is lured into believing that she is safe. She is amazed by the kind treatment she receives from white people around her .Thus, it is never

even mentioned again that Cora and Caesar might feel that they are free, without legally being free. They pose as slaves bought by the state of South Carolina (Whitehead 92).

Cora and Caesar repeatedly have the possibility to take another train on the Underground Railroad to leave South Carolina; yet they are unwilling to leave because of their false sense of safety, they fear that the place they would reach next would be worse, and they are reluctant to give up their new belongings even if they are not valuable (Whitehead 104). South Carolina is de facto a segregated state. The situation in South Carolina becomes increasingly grim as Cora is strongly urged to undergo sterilisation, which is presented positively to her, as a “gift” and a way to “take control over [her] own destiny” (113). which is ironic considering the fact that she is coerced into submitting to the procedure. Later, she learns that experiments on the cures for syphilis are also being conducted on black men without them knowing (Whitehead 121).

Cora’s work as a museum exhibit. Not only is she working in the Museum of Natural Wonders, where mostly taxidermied animals are exhibited (Whitehead 108), she is also denied a voice. She has to stay behind glass, which makes it impossible for her to speak to the visitors (Whitehead 109) and she is not taken seriously when she proposes changes in the setting to make it more realistic (Whitehead 116). She is denied not only her status as a human being, by being shown alongside dead animals, but furthermore, she is denied the authority over her own story. She is made to represent a picture that is shaped and put on display for white people to see, and even though she knows much more about life on a plantation as a slave, her opinion is not valued.

In this chapter, Whitehead exposes that, even though people of color might have lived in relatively good conditions until the middle of the 20th century, they were by no means free, let alone equal to white people. He also shows how people might be blinded by small comforts and how this makes them neglect their instincts and agendas and lures them into

staying in line. Cora and Caesar went on the dangerous journey to be free. Yet, at first, they are unable to see how this new master, namely the government, controls people of color and, just like on the plantation, takes their children away. In sterilizing black people like animals, they are denied their humanity.

This aspect is also visible in Cora's work as a museum exhibit. Not only is she working in the Museum of Natural Wonders, where mostly taxidermied animals are exhibited (Whitehead 108), she is also denied a voice. She has to stay behind glass, which makes it impossible for her to speak to the visitors (Whitehead 109) and she is not taken seriously when she proposes changes in the setting to make it more realistic (Whitehead 116). She is denied not only her status as a human being, by being shown alongside dead animals, but furthermore, she is denied the authority over her own story. She is made to represent a picture that is shaped and put on display for white people to see, and even though she knows much more about life on a plantation as a slave, her opinion is not valued.

This aspect can be read as a critique on the representation of black people by white people. Starting with the slave narratives, the representation of people of color was shaped by white people. Some of these ideas resonate until today. Some still have prejudices about black people, their intelligence, and their behavior. How dangerous these prejudices are manifests itself in the high number of unemployed people of color and the recent rise in police shootings with black victims, which suggests a bias due to deep rooted prejudices within law enforcement (Johnston).

2.3. The horror...

Contrary to her experiences in South Carolina, the situation for people of color is much worse in North Carolina, Cora witnesses a hanging the first day she stays in her hideout. These hangings take place on Fridays in the village park, and they are accompanied by picnics, theatre performances, and merriness and are thus called 'Friday Festival'

(Whitehead 156). And the ones who hid or refused to leave were murdered and hanged along a road that is called ‘the Freedom Trail’ (Whitehead 153). The reader soon learns that the situation is not only very dangerous for Cora, but also for Martin Wells and his wife Ethel, the penalty for white people who help fugitive slaves is indeed death (Whitehead 188). proceedings in the village park (Whitehead 154).

In the North Carolina chapter, Whitehead makes very visible intersexual references to a well-known slave narrative, namely Harriet Jacob’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. In her narrative, Jacobs describes how she hid in her grandmother’s attic for seven years. She describes her hideout as follows: “The garret was only nine feet long and seven wide. The highest part was three feet high [...]” (Jacobs 173). Jacobs also tells her readers that her refuge did not have any windows or holes to let air in until she drilled some herself with a tool of her uncle’s (Jacobs 175). She watches her children and the people in the town square through this hole, which provides her with something to occupy her thoughts with (Jacobs 175).

As for the trope of time travel, the surroundings in which Cora finds herself in North Carolina seem much less advanced than what she experienced in South Carolina. However, the descriptions of mass killings and the display of mutilated bodies remind the reader of a hyperbolic depiction of the time of apartheid, segregation, and Jim Crow laws. Whitehead’s hyperbolic image just goes one step further by not only separating white and black people in the public sphere, but by separating them along state lines.

2.4. The Utopian Black city

After Cora is rescued from Ridgeway by a band of young men, some of them black (Whitehead 225), who take her to the next station where they board an underground train to Indiana (Whitehead 258). In Indiana, she becomes a part of Valentine farm, Valentine farm presents itself as a utopia. She becomes friends with a little girl called Molly, who reminds

her very much of her friendship with Chester (Whitehead 241), She also falls in love with Royal, one of the people who saved her from the slave catcher (Whitehead 304).

In the narrative present at the farm, the dilemma about either going “to places that didn’t share a border with slave states” and starting a new farm there, or staying in Indiana and becoming less of a “target” by rejecting people like Cora, “the runaways, the lost” (Whitehead 249). These debates point out to the historical debates between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois about what the post-slavery future of Black people should look like. Washington believed that “thrift and industry” were key in the process of Black people gaining equality in American society, and that only after those were attained “culture and citizenship” should follow (Bauerlein 107). Du Bois, however, opposed most of Washington’s arguments for the improvement of Black people. In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), he called for the “Talented Tenth”, a group of well-educated “exceptional men” in the Black community, to lead their communities in order to lift up others and thus create better chances for all (Du Bois 189). Moreover, Du Bois argued that Washington’s plans were merely accommodationist and obstructed Black people from gaining “political power” and “civil rights” (39). The two characters in Whitehead’s novel who represent the opposite ends of the debate are Mingo, a former slave who bought his own freedom and that of his family, and Elijah Lander, a wealthy, biracial, freeborn man from Boston who gives abolitionist speeches. Mingo preaches a Washingtonian “gradual approach” for the advancement of Black people, by “proving [their] thrift and intelligence” (284). He believes that an “accommodation” between the people of Valentine farm and the white people in the area should be reached, which will only be possible if the farm starts excluding slave refugees, armed Underground Railroad agents, and those with a criminal past (284). In his view, it is “too late” for some former slaves to be saved (283). Lander is described as being successful, but a rare exception.

2.5. The journey toward freedom

After Cora is taken away from the Valentine farm, she is obliged to show Ridgeway the small Underground Railroad tunnel near her last place of refuge. She manages to injure Ridgeway fatally and escapes on a small handcar (Whitehead 303). When she finally reaches the surface again, she decides to go west with a black man on his wagon (Whitehead 306). The last chapter is called 'the North,' but Cora does not reach the free North, and by sending her West, Whitehead breaks with the expected structure, showing that there is no place for people like her in the North. The North was synonymous to freedom by runaway slaves. Anyhow, the frontier myth, which deals with the notion of going west to build a better life, is generally a white myth (Slotkin 139). Instead of showing his readers a free and happy place within American society, they never learn whether Cora finds freedom in the West or not, he leaves them in the unknown. The free place, which people of color long for, cannot simply be found, but has to be built by means of their personal strength. In the end, we have learned that even Cora's mother Mabel did not reach the free North but was bitten by a snake and died close to the plantation (Whitehead 295).

2.6. Olney's outline of Antebellum Slave Narratives in the Underground Railroad.

The Underground Railroad has many characteristics of the original slave narrative that are described by Olney, but also contains deviations from that format, which is inherent to the neo-slave narrative genre. One of the more obvious deviations is that the story is not told in the first-person voice as Rushdy suggests is typical for neo-slave narratives (Smith 169). Instead, it is told by an omniscient narrator. Whitehead's narrator also leaves Cora's side when he narrates events in the lives of people around her, like Ajarry, Ridgeway, Stevens, Ethel, Caesar, and Mabel. This is a break of the structure that an original slave narrative would assume. Whitehead makes frequent references to the genre of the slave narrative, but,

The Underground Railroad being a work that includes a lot of fantastical elements, he also often breaks that structure.

“If you could pick your birthday, what would it be?” Lovey asked.

“Told you when I was born,” Cora said. She was born in winter. Her mother, Mabel, had complained enough about her hard delivery, the rare frost that morning, the wind howling between the seams in the cabin. How her mother bled for days and Connelly didn’t bother to call the doctor until she looked half a ghost. Occasionally Cora’s mind tricked her and she’d turn the story into one of her memories.

“If you could pick,” Lovey said. “Can’t pick,” Cora said. “It’s decided for you.” “You best fix your mood,” Lovey said. She sped off.

The vague familial history, part of every traditional slave narrative, is also present in the novel, it illustrates the ways in which family, kinship, and heritage are distorted by the institution of slavery. In the chapter about Ethel, the narrator notes that, as a child, Ethel was confused by the connection of enslaved people to their white captors, mistaking it for a familial relation: “Ethel thought that a slave was someone who lived in your house like family but was not family.” Although this is a naïve misunderstanding of the way slavery really operates, it also highlights the way in which enslaved people live among whites in a far more intimate and interpersonally complex way than is often assumed. There are many scenes depicting the traumatic separation of families, particularly mothers separated from their children, which was one of the most common manifestations of the brutality of slavery. Due to this practice and the forced erasure of African identity and language, black people in America were severed from their heritage and often could not trace their familial lineage.

Cora is the heroine of *The Underground Railroad*. She was born on Randall plantation in Georgia to her mother Mabel, and she never knew her father, Grayson, who died before

she was born. Her grandmother, Ajarry, was born in Africa before being kidnapped and brought to America.

The slave identity is susceptible and a crucial element of the slave narrative genre, Cora's own identity is inseparable from her mother's and grandmother's in some ways. When she refuses to run away with Caesar, she says that "it was her grandmother talking"; when she later accepts the invitation, "it was her mother talking." In both cases, Cora's choice is inseparable from the legacies of the women who have preceded her. All of the facets of Cora's identity—the way she comes to understand herself as African, as slave, as runaway, as independent, as isolated—can be traced back to her family.

Within the slaves' quarters on the Randall plantation, Ajarry had claimed for herself a tiny three-square-yard patch of land to farm. This land was passed to Mabel, and then, when Mabel escaped, to Cora. A massive slave named Blake uprooted her garden and built a doghouse for his dog in the space. In retaliation, Cora destroyed the doghouse with a hatchet. Cora's struggle against Blake to keep her tiny plot of land is important for various reasons. First, this land is the only tangible legacy left to Cora by her grandmother and mother. Her struggle to hang on to it is not only a struggle for a few more vegetables to eat each year; it's a fight to hold on to what little sense of history and collective identity she has.

There is always at least one slave, usually male, in a slave narrative that cannot be punished due to his strength. 'Jockey' who is the oldest slave on the plantation and therefore has a certain authority. He is the only slave who gets to celebrate his birthday, which he can declare any day (Whitehead 25).

Moses, when he became a boss on the plantation and gained power over other slaves that Moses became a cruel person. Mabel remembered how Moses, one of the slave bosses, had been raping her, threatening to rape Cora if Mabel refused him.

Blake a slave on the Randall plantation who destroyed Cora's garden to build a doghouse on the plot of land.

Homer is a young black boy who drives Ridgeway's wagon. Ridgeway bought him and immediately freed him, but Homer refuses to leave Ridgeway.

Another element of the antebellum slave narrative is the description of a slave auction. There are many other descriptions of the sales of slaves in the novel which are much like the heartbreaking scenes of auctions that the antebellum slave narratives contained. For example, the history of Cora's grandmother, Ajarry, Ajarry's life is full of tragedy after heartbreaking tragedy: she was born in Africa and kidnapped by slavers as a child, along with the rest of her village. Ajarry's father, who had been kidnapped in a previous raid, was killed by slavers when he wasn't able to march as fast as the other captives. Ajarry was taken to the port city of Ouidah (part of modern-day Benin), where she was sold onto a different ship than the rest of her family. Ajarry tried to take her life twice aboard the ship but was thwarted both times. In Charleston, Ajarry is sold again. She stands naked on the auction block, and eventually a man wearing a pristine white suit purchases her for \$226. The man pinches Ajarry's breasts to check if she is going through puberty. She and the other slaves follow the man's buggy home through the night. Ajarry is sold so many times "you would thought she was cursed." One of her masters goes bankrupt, another dies, and another loses her in a card game. Being sold so many times gives her a keen understanding of the dynamics of different plantations and helps her to survive. Ajarry also learns about how she and other "commodities" are valued and she comes to realize that her value determines her "possibilities." Finally, Ajarry ends up on Randall plantation, once there, she married three times; one of her husbands was sold off of the plantation, and the other two died. The fluctuations of Ajarry's price each time she is sold. This fluctuation heightens the sense of uncertainty in Ajarry's world. Simultaneously, it calls attention to the arbitrariness of the slave trade. The monetary value of

a human life keeps changing not because the value of humanity changes but because money isn't meant to be a measure of human value.

The plot holds the most basic element of a slave narrative: a slave's journey to freedom, several of the chapters start with historically accurate announcements of runaway slaves. Jumps back in time to the night Mabel escaped from the Randall plantation. She left Cora behind with an apology to the sleeping girl, carrying a sack of vegetables dug up from her garden. Tired from running, Mabel rested in a swamp. She savored the feeling of being off the plantation, the feeling of freedom. Suddenly she decided that this taste of freedom was enough for now; she needed to return to the plantation to be with Cora. She began journeying back. She hadn't gotten far before a cottonmouth snake bit her. As she stumbled onward, she felt the poison killing her. Giving up on making it back to the plantation, she lay down on a patch of moss, said, "Here," and disappeared into the swamp. Olney also states that not every attempt to escape is successful, everyone assumes that Mabel escaped successfully and was never caught—which is why she represents such a hopeful figure for Caesar and such a maddening figure for Ridgeway. But in fact, Mabel's freedom lasted only a few hours. Another element of his scheme is the description of an extraordinarily strong slave that cannot be whipped.

Olney states that descriptions of a slave's daily life were typical in the original slave narrative. As pointed out in chapter 1, the daily life of slaves and the makings of their society were of interest to the abolitionists. Slave narratives generally explained the workings of these structures present on a plantation, which were often hidden from white people's eyes. During the entire course of the novel the author adhered faithfully to the structure of the slave narrative, he described Cora's life on the plantation, the events that prompted the decision to leave, as well as the different stations of her perilous journey and the pains she goes through to educate herself.

Every slave narrative contains descriptions of cruelties committed against the slaves. The cruel punishment that is being exposed when Chester is beaten for staining his master's shirt with a single drop of wine is typical for a traditional slave narrative. The political agenda the slave narratives were written to support was the abolition of slavery, whose cruel workings were best exposed by accounts of horrible and unjust punishment as can be seen in Frederick Douglass' *A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*.

Big Anthony A slave who tries to escape the Randall plantation after James's death, Big Anthony is caught, tortured, and burned alive in front of an audience.

Arnold Ridgeway, the slave catcher who dedicates himself to finding Cora, has been a slave catcher since age 14. The son of a blacksmith, Ridgeway wanted a career in which he could excel without being trapped in his father's , he spent most of his time in New York City, strategizing ways to identify and capture former slaves without being stopped by abolitionists. Ridgeway gained a reputation as both effective and brutal. By regarding his slave-catching business as equivalent to blacksmithing, he necessarily argues that the slaves he captures are equivalent to the pieces of metal his father shapes. As the rest of the novel reveals, Ridgeway consistently treats slaves like objects instead of people; he even refers to them by the impersonal pronoun "it" instead of the personal pronouns "he" or "she." During their travels, Ridgeway tells Cora the fate of both Lovey and Caesar. Lovey was returned to the Randall plantation, where she was hanged and impaled. Caesar was jailed in South Carolina and then torn to pieces by an angry mob after rumors spread that he was responsible for the death of a white boy. And when Jasper A captured runaway won't stop singing, Ridgeway gets so annoyed that he kills him.

Under the guise of good health care for free black people, white doctors encourage sterilization and even force it on some. They also secretly collect blood samples to determine people's origins in Africa, hoping to eradicate certain races of African descent so that the

African Americans who remain will be more easily controlled by a white-dominated government. When Cora sees a woman in the street yelling, “They’re taking my babies!”, she is confused at first because she can’t see the kind of violence the woman is describing. But sterilization is a veiled form of the same violence: This woman’s babies really are being taken from her. South Carolina’s “kindness” means that its mistreatment of black people is less noticeable, but mistreatment still exists.

Martin is very worried by her presence, saying she shouldn’t be there. Nonetheless, he gets his wagon and transports Cora to his house. On their way, he stops to show her a gruesome trail of dead black bodies called the “Freedom Trail.” From her hiding place, Cora can see out a window to the public park next door. A few days after her arrival, the town holds a festival in the park. The centrepiece of the festival is the hanging of a runaway slave girl, which the whole town watches and cheers. North Carolina’s inhabitants are now trying to eliminate the black population and rely on white immigrant labor instead. The laws have become increasingly harsh, and nearly every North Carolina town holds public executions such as the ones Cora witnesses, hanging the bodies on display along the Freedom Trail as a warning to others.

Olney makes a distinction between wrongdoers who are ‘regular’ slaveholders and Christian slaveholders, who are often described as worse than the ones who are In A Mercy not religious.

James Randall Old Randall’s older son, James is a more passive plantation manager than his brother, Terrance, and thus is more “humane” despite his lack of interest in his slaves’ humanity. He dies of kidney failure, leaving his half of the plantation to Terrance.

Terrance Randall Old Randall’s younger son. After his father’s death, Terrance manages half the Randall plantation; when James dies, he becomes the sole heir. Terrance is

obsessed with making money as efficiently as possible and is consequently brutal to his slaves. After Cora escapes, he obsesses with catching her. While Cora is living in Indiana, her friend Sam brings news that Terrance has died.

Connelly the overseer of the Randall plantation, an Irishman who enjoys finding “mistresses” among the young slave women.

Ethel considers herself noble and compassionate because she wanted to be a missionary to Africa and because she reads the Bible to Cora. However, she has no interest in Cora’s freedom, and her attitude of racial superiority is part of the same logic that made slavery an accepted part of American society. Throughout the book, examples such as these demonstrate that people who think they are simply “being nice” and are not responsible for the evils of slavery are often still participating in slavery’s continuation. Her family owned a slave named Felice whose daughter, Jasmine, was Ethel’s childhood playmate. When Ethel turned 8 years old, her father forbade her from playing with Jasmine. Jasmine took over her mother’s role as maid when Felice died a few years later. Ethel’s father began regularly raping Jasmine, and Ethel’s mother sold her across town. By then, Ethel no longer felt any sense of a relationship to Jasmine. When she passed Jasmine on the street, they ignored each other. Jasmine gave birth to a son who looked like a “dark mirror” of Ethel, implying —that Jasmine was impregnated by Ethel’s father.

As Olney argues, literacy is an important part of the slave narrative genre, and it is important in *The Underground Railroad* as well. Literacy puts slaves in special positions, which is probably why it is forbidden to teach slaves to read and write (Jones 253). Mrs. Garner a Virginia widow who was Caesar’s first owner and taught him to read, when Caesar was on the Randall plantation, he used to visit the old schoolhouse to read a book he had hidden under the floor. Mr. Fletcher had given him a copy of *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) by Anglo-Irish author Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), and reading it made Caesar feel free for a

time. He liked to watch the other slaves from the window of the schoolhouse as though he weren't one of them.

How does the act of reading, and of literacy, help Cora be free? What might the significance of what she reads suggest about her growing understanding of the world? Cora acquires basic reading and writing skills in a South Carolina classroom, but her many months in the cramped hiding space in North Carolina provide her with ample time to read by herself. She spends most of her time reading almanacs and the Bible. She does not enjoy both types equally: the “contradictions” in the Bible with regard to slavery “vexed her” (182). One passage of the Bible states that slave owners should “be put to death”, while another states “slaves should be submissive to their masters in everything – and be well-pleasing”. Cora discusses these contradictions with Ethel, the wife of the abolitionist who hides Cora in their house, who claims that “where the Scripture condemns slavery, it is not speaking of negro slavery at all” and refuses to discuss the text’s inconsistencies on slavery any further with her. Cora is outraged from Christian’s hypocrisy over slavery. In page 181 Ethel reads to her of “the wilderness stretched for forty year before others found their promised land,” I believe that this is Ethel’s way of telling Cora to continue her journey towards freedom because one day she will find her own promise land.

The act of reading helps Cora keep her mind of what happens outside of the attic of what would happen if she were to be found. By reading the bible she was trying to pass the time in that hot attic, she was trying to forget that there are people outside the house hunting down black people. More than that, she was trying to figure out the meaning of the world around her. Cora slowly began to understand the reasoning behind slavery. But, Cora seems to start doubting freedom when the country is controlled by white people. Furthermore, when reading, she learned new words and what they meant, she even asked Martin the meaning of words when she didn't know them.

2.7. The underground railroad as Neo-Slave Narrative

After its publication, Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (2016) was repeatedly placed in the slave narrative lineage by reviewers: Alex Preston claimed that Whitehead's novel "drawn on traditional testimonies of slaves such as Solomon Northup and Harriet Jacobs.

Vasquez notes that "it touches on historical novels and slave history, but what it does with those genres is striking and imaginative." (as coined by Ishmael Reed (in a 1984 interview), but as a literary category by Bernard W. Bell in the Afro American novel and its tradition (1989), denoting "contemporary novels taking the form that convention takes" of slave tales (Rushdy 3).

Several aspects of the text contribute to this general description primarily plot and character, as the story focuses on a teenage slave girl, Cora, who escapes from the Georgia plantation where she was born and raised despite not being there. In the first-person perspective, the narrator focuses her point of view and adopts many motifs and core events that are typical of conventional slave stories, family and her personally her story; depicting the violence and cruelty of slave owners.

The novel contains many references to later African-American history: female sterilizations and male experimentation are said to have been performed by South Carolina health facilities, reflecting the eugenic laws of the early and mid-20th century and the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, while abolitionist orators Lander and Mingo visiting Valentine's farm in Indiana seem inspired by historical figures such as Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington.

Many of the references point to a later historical period. Yet they introduce the speculative, not simply historical element into the text that scholars like Fain say is Colson Whitehead's trademark. Matthew Dischinger coined the term "speculative satire" to describe

the poetics used by whitehead in the novel (84). Its association with speculative fiction has already been noted by reviewers such as Vasquez, who writes about the "slight deviations from historical fact, places where the underground railroad becomes something much more interesting than a historical novel.

It not only tells us what happened; it also tells us what might have happened." Leise has claimed that the combination of story and fantasy is whitehead's most outstanding quality as a novelist: "openness, particularly about the 'meaning' of the past, is which is what makes whitehead's engagement with history so vivid, if somewhat diffuse' (289).

The legend of the underground railroad tells of intrepid abolitionists who send countless passengers to the promised land of freedom via a well-organized transportation system. The fugitives were often hotly pursued by cruel slavers, and they almost always evaded capture due to the ingenuity and daring of the conductors. Everything was continued with the utmost secrecy. like other recent fictional accounts of the institution, including *ben h*, *Winter's novel Underground Airlines* (2016) or the television series *underground* (2016) by misha green and Joe Pulaski.

Whiteheads draws on traditional lore but modifies a key aspect of it, the refocusing on the escaped slaves themselves rather than the white abolitionists who ran the system. In doing so, whitehead inscribes the underground railroad into the debates about the status and scope of this cultural construction. In a recent review of the underground railroad, kathrynschulz wrote: "this story, like so many we tell about our nation's past, has a delicate relationship with the truth: not entirely false, but simplified; not quite a myth, but mythologized". Considered by many historians to be the most popular American myth since larrygara's the liberty line (1961) uncovered its legendary character, it could serve as an illustration of the combination of the historical and the mythical serve: "although the subway was a reality, much of the material relating to it belongs in the realm of folklore rather than history."

The novel's most openly speculative element is precisely its translation of the underground railroad into a real one network of underground tracks carrying real freight cars run by a secret system of operators and conductors. While recent historical accounts insist that "the picture emerging from recent studies is not the highly organized system with tunnels, codes and clearly defined routes and stations of folklore" (Foner 15), Colson Whitehead's novel does just that. Given the critical appreciation of Whitehead's work and the complex stratification of fact and fantasy present in popular notions of the underground railroad (Gara 17), the working hypothesis for this essay is guided by this explicit, literal rendering of the underground railroad in Whitehead's novel.

In a way that seems symptomatic of Whitehead's general approach to slave narrative convention, Roman reveals or reveals aspects untold in many slave narratives. One could say that this works as a very explicit rendering of details that, as Gara mentions, were elusive most of the time: "few people can provide details when asked about the institution. Specific information is usually crowded out by vague generalizations" (Foner 8). In this sense, the structure of Whitehead's novel can be understood as a filling in of text gaps that are often found in historical texts. The continuous textual dialogue between the underground railroad and the slave narrative tradition thus makes the former work a sort of imprint of earlier tales of fugitive slaves. This essay uses the narratological concept of the "untold" (Warhol) as a central analytical category and examines the interplay between what is explicitly told and the existing gaps in the narrative in the textual context of slave narratives. Furthermore, attention is paid to the logic of narrative linearity by examining two metaphorical fields that seem central to the text: the opposition between surface and underground, often rendered in the rhetorical language of revealing what is hidden, and the herbal metaphors that suggest the branching out of a single act into many.

2.8. The unnarrated in slave narratives

Before addressing the presence in Calson Whitehead, on the railroad, the most important issue of unclassified slaves in historical slave narratives must be addressed. Slave narrative traditions are based on fragile narratives and the balancing of what can be said and what cannot be said. The reasons for excluding slaves are varied and characterized by several differences, including the rule of *liaou*, which prevented them from depicting frankness in its details, or the literary terminology by which we mean the way of language, and its uses in describing their suffering.

Harriet Jacobs recounts moments of her escape from slavery in her novel: "i was going to escape in a ship but i don't remember any other details." (896), tying events in sync with her story, as she stops narrating and opens a gap in her speech, Nat Turner's confession also includes: "time allows you to tell it." (61-260).

This category belongs to the category of the unaccompanied, and is defined as: "the lack of narration about something that happened, can be found in those passages in the narration that does not explicitly tell us what is supposed to have happened, and highlights the narrator's rejection of the narration." (Phelan and Binowitz 7). These examples are what was described by Eric Foner, who collected the parts of the railway novel and described it as a puzzle with pieces that are difficult to retrieve, and also likened it as a detective story of attractive and wonderful stories whose secret is mysterious and we cannot discover it. There are many motives for withholding the narration according to the desire and the goal, as it is found in the stories of the narration of slaves, in particular, as it contradicts the narration about what should be said and what should be hidden, as it requires the narrator to hide the basic and important parts from the reader, and the external circumstances that it prevents him from revealing the truth, and one of the most famous people who excelled in this genre is Frederick Douglass, who created this genre for non-classifiers.

Douglas was opposed to the idea of show-it-all, unlike our western friends and how they demonstrated the underground railroad. Douglas believed that the power to say nothing, as long as Judaism still persists in America, speech can not be free, opens douglasa dedicated to his escape "i shall now make my gentle reader aware of the concluding events of my life as a slave," he says, as he hid the phrase "as a free man" and replaced it with "as a slave in search of freedom." if each of the slaves tells us real facts about the life of the slave and how he escaped, it will be a reason for the involvement of those who help him, intentionally or unintentionally. In front of others, and therefore he insists that the exit to freedom or the way to escape be secret and hidden from everyone, so calson whitehead neglected the phrase underground tunnels, which is intended to be the hidden railway that is stations and barracks to reach the north, which we mean freedom . For Douglas, the underground railroad is a term that should be kept hidden, and that will put everyone at risk, since this problem was revealed in a warning issued by the national anti-slavery standard about the repeated exposure to danger from these publications.

Frederick Douglass explicitly addressed this theory in calson whitehead's the underground railroad, as Cora tells royal: "we're not supposed to talk about what we're doing here.... And our passengers aren't supposed to talk about the railroad, it might offer many people are good at risk, they can talk if they want to, but they don't" (266). In Douglas's novel *"My Bondage And My Freedom"*, Douglas insists on keeping parts of his story hidden and prefers to remain silent about his hidden story, as he says that a slave man has no right to express his news, or to speak by escape, as this represents a great danger to the lives of others, and neither others nor the slave reader have the right to demand such persons. Douglas, in such circumstances, exercises what Jacques derrida calls his "right of absolute reply", that is, his authority within the literary text, does not bear what is written in it, as the stories of slaves always show a lot of tension about their stories or a fear rooted in the shape

of a slave's story, and this includes the writer's life and fights as well, as Olaudah Equiano acknowledges in the opening chapter of his book *The Pleasant Life*: "I think there are very few events in my life, which has not happened to many.....but when I compare my lot to most of my compatriots, I consider myself one of heaven's favourite" (49). This is also evident in the underground railroad, when Cora and Caesar share their events with some other slaves on Randall's plantation, and she keeps the events secret, not even telling the facts to the rest of the slaves or they help others to know the railway line, and they preferred to escape without guiding others. What is attractive about Calson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* is how it interacts with the textual conventions that govern historical slave narratives, as a new slave story, and specifically with the problem of the unclassified in it. Vasquez believes that Whitehead has manipulated the basic ideas: "...to make use of conventions while subverting them for the private purposes of the novel, and this is evident through two strategies in the novel, the clear and amazing narrative assumption to make the subway a real reality, and the transition from fiction to the truth, as he manipulated events and made an analogy underground and made it a real underground train, even when you read the novel, it becomes clear that it is a reality and you begin to imagine this railway and draw a picture of it, as for the second strategy, which is less clear, where the displacement is events in a clear narrative structure.

2.9. Branching out, or narrating the Unnarrated

Bringing closer and narrating those who are not listed and trying to understand what Whitehead is trying to tell and say, how to develop the plot with regard to secret and hidden ideas, and how his text creates a dialogue based on previous narrative conventions that were established in the tradition of slave narration, he analyzes and narrates the descriptive structure of the railways, the novel deals with 12 chapters, each chapter has a title in the name of a flag, these names vary between those that refer to the individual characters in the novel

and those that refer to even numbers. It probably takes a cue from the style used by Toni Morrison in *Paradise* and William Faulkner in *As I Lay Dying*, where it refers to chapters of unequal numbers, from the story's original setting in Georgia to refer to the north, which closes the novel.

Each chapter of this novel plays an important and different role in the overall narrative structure, so that the chapters work to identify the events and places in which the novel occurs and serve as a platform for the following episodes in the tale of Cora, as Vasquez notes: "the novel uses the structure of the episodic tale, each episode meets a new stopping point in the episode." These chapters keep the narrative on track, and help readers understand and assimilate the chapters. The reader is also able to keep the correct trajectory of Cora's life and journey north, focusing on the way the plot emerges from the topography.

According to the theory of Michiko Kakutani for the New York Times: due to its connection with the structure of the narrative, the chapters of the place work on the continuity of the narrative from the narrative side and focus on the third person, who is Cora the main character. And defining the linear meaning that is related to the geographical movement, and according to the place around which the events of the novel revolve, as many slave narratives took one path, which is the way to reach the north, that is freedom, and this is clear in the novels of both Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass, as they use the north as a destination expressing freedom, which all slaves want to reach, which makes the textual and topographical linear identical..... The chapters are poured into one place and aim for one goal, and they are named after the secondary characters, they are linked to the main character Cora, where the novel begins with her grandmother as an opening and ends with her mother Mabel as an epilogue, or according to the other characters participating in the novel, i.e. Secondary characters, such as Ridgway, who represents the first threat to Cora and all the slaves, Caesar, her fellow escapee, or her friend Lavi, who tries to escape with Cora, but fails to do so, and

those who helped her escape like Stephens or Ethel, these sections work to narrate the suffering of the slaves and their tragic lives as slaves, and want that slavery was something that negroes, as well as opponents of the death penalty, suffered from. Like the path of death that Cora sees when she thinks she has reached freedom, but is shocked by the bitter truth while crossing the path of death. Moreover, the narration works to fill in the blanks in the novel, by providing information that Cora cannot provide, and this narrative series intersects with another series, as it presents new events that Cora herself does not know, by recounting unclear events in Cora's novel, since the content of these events is unknown to her, this is another way in which the railways relate to the narration of slave narratives. As readers generally talk about the fates of those who appeared in the novel in an evil or good way and never reappeared,

In most cases, these chapters work on telling the events of a story, or the end of life, these characters are the focus of the reader's focus, the fact that Cora is the only survivor in this novel and that every person who tries to help her or has a connection with her ends his life, he has a link with it in many ways, both historical: as it testifies to the exceptional escape and survival of the survivors, it puts the broader perspective of Cora's failed escape attempts, like Caesar and Lavy. Also in terms of strict narration, where it shows at the end of each chapter that it is a dead end as you think that it is the solution and that it is the end until the conclusion surprises you, as it ends with the death of one of the characters or his non-appearance in the novel again, which was the focus of discussion in the novel.

Narrative structure and the untold in Colson Whitehead's, in conjunction with the slave narrative tradition, it justifies the idea of the "storyline" by providing an ending not typically provided for in other slave narratives. Contrasted with what happens when we read the autobiographies of Northup's, Douglass or Jacobs, where the first-person narrative prevents

some information from being known just because the author himself does not know what became of x or y.

Whitehead lets out what happened to the characters who are related to Cora and fills in a lot of gaps. The quote from Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* in the section devoted to Caesar is most relevant from this perspective: "what became of my companions in the boat, or those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the ship, I cannot say, but conclude that they were all lost" (Whitehead235.13) the same could be said of many of the slaves who lived to tell their own stories. Most importantly, the narrative articulation outlined above enables us to understand the full story of learning of Mabel's supposed success in escaping the plantation at the expense of leaving her child behind, is the psychological trigger for Cora's decision to escape herself. As in the case previously mentioned, Cora is identified by fellow slaves through a sort of metonymic transcription with her as "good luck" mother, who is believed to have been the only slave ever to work on both Randall plantation and Firs Tweg also escaped the slave trader. The Indiana chapter reveals that her mother never lost sight of Cora as she was and asks other escaped slaves living on Valentine's farm if they ever met her.

The vagueness of her story, her lack of narrative closure, is exactly what signals Mabel's escape success, as there is no record of her whereabouts. This is stated very early in the text: "from Mabel there was no sign" (Whitehead41). And that's what makes Cora so special: "he thinks I'm lucky because my mother was the only one" (Whitehead57) when she slips into her mother's role to accept Caesar's request to escape. Of the relationship between the two characters, Whitehead says, "I wanted to address the gap between what we know about our parents and who they really are" (Brooks). Again drawing on the logic of the untold, Whitehead fills that gap by offering readers the story of Mabel's escape route that the novel follows. This chapter of the novel forms the narrative conclusion of Mabel's story, but also reinterprets Cora's personal myth of origin as a false one. In Kelly's analysis of this

episode, Mabel's moment of freedom is rendered "ironic", though not in a rhetorical or postmodern sense, but as "structural, dramatic and tragic" irony brought forth by her belated narrative. Sure, Mabel chose to go back to her child: she was free. At this moment. She had to go back. The girl was waiting for her (Whithead294) after walking the path back to the plantation, she is bitten by a cottonmouth and dies in the swamp. As she will never see her daughter again, her story is left open to Cora, retaining her seductive power as an inspiration to escape. What the reader learns, however, is not only the truth about one of the branching storylines the novel proposes, but also about the meaning of freedom. This is anticipated in the Caesar portion of the novel, as the character reflects on his reading of Gulliver's travels and concludes that the problem with the character lies in his inability to see the value of what he left behind. The episodic, progressive nature of the action is described through Caesar's perspective as an impossible return home: "the white man in the book, Gulliver, roamed from danger to danger, solving each new island, a new dilemma, before he could return home. (Whithead235) for him it seems clear that a sense of home, guided by the bond with Cora, functions as a guiding principle: "had Caesar found his way home, he would never travel to the next one without knowing where he is and what . . . He would find his way home with Cora" (Whithead235). Perhaps on a sentimental note, we could conclude that Whitehead's novel suggests that characters can escape not to places but to people. So Mabel's about-face at the crucial moment in her conquest of freedom comes as a revelation: precisely because she is now free, she can see that she can only flee to Cora, not away from her.

The clearest echo of Toni Morrison's poetics of slavery in *Beloved* can be heard here, as Mabel's conclusion parallels Sethe's that one is free only when one is free to love: 'to get to a place where you could love everything you decided opted not to need permission for desires - well, that was freedom' (Morrison 162).

2.10. The unveiling of underground secrets:

According to Eric Foner, the origin of the phrase “underground railroad” lies in a 1939 Washington newspaper article quoting a slave “who said he hoped to escape on a railroad that went “all the way underground.” (Boston 6). It is well known that Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* makes literally what most people think of as a figure of speech in the words of the slaver Ridgeway. This is an aspect that strikes critics like Dischinger and most reviewers have enjoyed it, beginning with Michiko Kakutani's observation of how Whitehead "transforms it from a metaphor into an actual train carrying refugees north", including references to elevators in the intuitionist, while Preston, on the other hand, describes it as a "steam punk reality," "the great secret enterprise that... The subway is....", emphasizing the "secret" dimension of the concept. Finally, Vasquez describes in detail: the core idea of the novel is as simple as it is daring. The underground railway is not the secret network in Whitehead's novel of passageways and safe houses used by runaway slaves to make their way from their slave-owning states to the free north reach. More precisely it is that, but it is also something else: you open a trapdoor in the safe house or find the entrance to a hidden cave, and you arrive at a real railway, with real locomotives and boxcars and conductors, sometimes complete with benches on the platform.

Whitehead's account of the underground railroad is embedded in ongoing debates about the historical status and cultural significance of this institution. Rather than taking sides as to whether the underground railroad was a systematically organized network operating on a national scale (as Siebert traditionally claimed), a limited but real enterprise run by a few volunteers and activists working in relative isolation, or a cultural construction, mostly from who you were that it couldn't be separated. It would die in sharing” (Foner 266). Whitehead devotes a fair amount of attention to describing each of the stops depicted in the novel, but as for the journey itself, it is usually told through ellipsis. A new station will look like this:

"meanwhile, one station signified a descent of incredibly deep steps and the revelation of character at the next station." (Whitehead 259) this, combined with the idea of characters entering new places, evokes the idea of one magically emerging into a new world.

Interestingly, at the first stop in Georgia, Whitehead points out that the journey itself is obscure and untold when he tells Cora, "if you want to see what this nation is like, you have to go to the driving rails when Cora looks through the slats of the freight car that takes her out of Georgia, she only sees pitch-black darkness: "there was only dark, mile by mile" (Whitehead70), "Become a habit: "on their journeys there was only darkness outside the windows, and it would always be only darkness" (Whitehead70) established in connection with the violence in America - "this nation should not exist, if there is any justice in the world at all, for its foundations are murder, theft and cruelty. Yet here we are".

The darkness is too narrative in the sense that it avoids full disclosure of the trajectories Cora follows in each of her journeys. Moreover, Whitehead uses these breaks as a narrative strategy to reflect the effect the journeys are intended to have on travellers without knowing where they will turn up at the next station. In detailing the details of Cora's journey north, Whitehead appears to be disregarding Douglass' orders to keep the subway under wraps. The narrative reveals pertinent information about the routes travelled, the aid Cora has received, and the locations and features of each leg of her journey, that the functionality of Whitehead's narrative makes this possible and harmless appears, it seems obvious that his characters do not exist beyond the superficiality of their literary phenomenology (Derrida 153). Of biographical, authentic slave stories, a narrative device intended to conceptualize Whitehead's narrative freedom. It is precisely by telling what could not or should not be told in slave narratives that he is able to articulate a second textual strategy aimed at bringing to the fore the problems of the untold and the exceptionality of traditional slave narratives.

Chapter three

The struggle of the main characters to obtain freedom in Colson Whitehead novel *the Underground Railroad*.

This analysis is based on the main characters of the novel, *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead. Where the characters struggle to win the good life without fear, this research presents all kinds of persecution that the characters have been subjected to and how they are treated like dark-skinned people who are classified as slaves. Here we will analyze and discover the data from several aspects, and in multiple styles such as the essential aspects and the theory of oppression forms. After much research and examination, it was found that the main characters are subject to five types of oppression, which are as follows: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. But in the end, we find that the main character succeeded in finding the way to freedom, with the help of internal and external circumstances.

Freedom is a human right from birth. It is rooted in the individual from time immemorial. Therefore, it must be protected and supported by the state and the law, even by the individual and society. Slavery is one of the worst types of systems in the social life. The slave trade spread from the fifteenth century until the middle of the nineteenth century, when the slave trade expanded greatly, and about 9.5 million Africans were brought to the New World across the Atlantic Ocean. The purpose of this slavery was to meet the needs of whites, and since they have a strong physique and strong muscles, and they do not demand high costs for their support, as a result, the number of blacks increased in 1860 in South America, especially in Georgia, reaching 43.7% of the total population. The slaves tried to escape to the north, thinking that they would receive good treatment worthy of human beings according to the law contained in the 13th Amendment in 1865.

Through the novel *The Underground Railroad*, we can discover from it the life of slaves in South America and how the writer depicted this life for us in a very expressive way. Protecting the rights of slaves, insisting on an end to slavery, and helping them escape north and cross the border into Canada, these laws or movement led to the emergence of a network known as the underground railroad. But it was not as easy as we imagine, it contains a lot of risks, as the employers were hiring a client who works as an exorcist and return them to their owners. The novel was published in 2016 by a black American novelist named Colson Whitehead.

The novel revolves around the period of slavery in the nineteenth century, during the industrial revolution that was taking place in America after they invented the cotton machine, especially in South America.

From this perspective, we conclude that they were dependent on agriculture, so the Negroes were working in agriculture, that is, cotton specifically, and they were called the working class, through the suppression of their rights and ill-treatment that was not commensurate with this effort, and without offering any wages.

3.1.The psychology of the Underground Railroad:

Cora played a major role in the *Underground Railroad* novel, and her state and behaviour changed according to the sequence of events, and as the location changed throughout the novel.

The novel “*Underground Railroad*” tells the story of a black girl Cora who has been a slave to the Randall family since birth. Cora’s mother was fourteen when she gave birth. Her mother ran away from the Randall estate, leaving Cora, who was about ten at the time, alone. As a slave in general, Cora suffered harsh treatment. She is often beaten for trivial reasons or even for the pleasure and satisfaction of her employer. Not only the mistreatment of their employer, but also among fellow slaves, they compete with each other and want to rule over

other slaves. Once upon a time, a male slave named Caesar approached her and offered her the chance to escape through the “underground web” together. Caesar invited them to go north for safer survival and, of course, their freedom. Driven by a desire to free herself from the oppression she had suffered, she was determined to flee north. Their escape moved from one city to another to protect themselves. Along the way, she met a variety of people in the area. Until she finally managed to push north, an area where blacks were treated more fairly than in other regions of South America. The main character in Colson Whitehead’s novel *The Underground Railroad* is Cora. This is evident from the intensity of Cora’s presence in the story. Also, Cora is a character experiencing events between other characters in the novel.

The psychological state of the characters varied over time and place, as they were suffering from injustice and this is apparent throughout the novel, and there is an imbalance in the personal balance, through their search for freedom.

They oscillated between sadness and the search for freedom and anger, as the reservoir of their thoughts and memories was filled with the idea of erasing their personality, so the identity element, which is the most important element in the psychological aspect, was non-existent. Their ulterior motives show their behavior as shown in the underground Railroad, their desire to escape through the invisible net, to move from place to place, a desire to breathe the air of freedom. It also affected the fear and panic that employers arouse.

Whites believe that slaves come from evil countries and that they are cursed, so they need guidance, and learn the dominant culture, which is the European culture, and to replace all their principles with it and believe that their fate is that they are insignificant, and adapt to the habits of the whites. Some of them are in a curse that must be rid of them through faith and belief in the God of the Whites.

Like slave in general, Cora shares the same physical characteristics as teenage slave girls, who tend to be thin. Every day they do heavy work in the fields. Their bodies lose weight due to workload and very little food. Corporal punishments inflicted on slaves hurt their bodies. Viewed through the sociological dimension, one can say that as a slave she has no social status. This is because of her life, which depends entirely on her employer. Clothing, food, health rights and even life belong entirely to others.

The language used by slaves is mixed language. Absorption languages of different tribes in Africa. The language is not standardized and official as it is far from standard English. The use of different languages among slaves gave rise to new languages that increasingly undermined their true identities. Furthermore, the language used by slaves also explains that their social status in society was so low.

Psychologically, the character Cora was a slave who maintained her behavior, she was very depressed living as a slave, and didn't want to face cruel punishment from her employer, so she tried to behave as well as possible. Slavery and oppression leave every slave exposed to a great deal of disability, trauma and fear. Cora works as well as possible and avoids the problem as much as possible because the fear fomented by the employers affects the psychological aspect of the character.

This story and its dimensions extend to other horizons, as it specializes in its details about the fugitive slave, we move to Cora's partner, Caesar, who has green eyes that hides a lot behind her, as the whites called him Caesar with strong eyes, he was Cora's companion in the escape process, and he was The mastermind of the escapes, Caesar was a strong, shrewd, wise, and insightful man, as he was the first person to discover a white prankster while they were carrying out a dangerous experiment on the Negroes. Arnold, the slave hunter, caught him, gouged out his eyes, and killed him.

Arnold was a “slave hunter”, a man of strong character, courage, and a reputation in the community. He was the kind of man blacks feared. Arnold was the son of a blacksmith, and he resented the idea of buying blacks and making them slaves. Arnold was opposed to his father as he was an impulsive personality, and he had other interests. Arnold played a big role in the story, and added a special flavour to it, but when we go into his character and delve into it, we notice that he is much better than the whites, as he had a good heart and did not show it to the public, he also believed in the great spirit. Arnold was attached to his deceased mother, he was always visiting her grave. Arnold is an impulsive, angry person, hiding a lot inside him, and his father was not very confident in him, the latter led to anger in Arnold, but he was not the worst in his faction, as he had many features that humanity missed at that time. Many characters played important roles and their psychological state ranged from one personality to another, but they shared the same goals and principles.

3.2. Humanism

The novel in *The underground railroad* featured the humanity present in the characters who played the role of the owner in the novel, controlling the slaves, where they were characterized by cruelty, anger, indifference and injustice, tyranny and enslavement. Also, on the opposite side, humanity did not die for some personalities, as it was the connecting and basic element between slaves and freedom, and it represented the separation between the two.

Should send a thrill of horror [...] through the nerves of civilization and impel the heart of humanity to lofty deeds. So it might, if men had not found a fearful alchemy by which this blood can be transformed into gold, Instead of listening to the cry of agony , they listen to the ring of dollars and stoop down to pick up the coin. (Harper 101)

The meaning of this passage is profit and trading in the bodies of slaves, or as it became called “black gold” or “black cotton”, which has become circulated through generations, as Harper expressed that slavery is a geological axiom about humanity. White

treat the Negroes as unlike humans, they can't do anything, they believe that the man is one thing, and the Negro is something different from him, they think they are cursed by God. This led to the Flowers of the Quakers, a group of people who believed in the inner light, and who were opposed to slavery. The fugitives used code words, such as "warehouses" and "stations", and were run by station managers, and those who contributed money were called "shareholders".

The Quakers campaign to end slavery began in the late 17th century, and they played a large role in the novel *The underground railroad*, instituted the No-Slave Law, petitioned the US Congress to abolish slavery, believing that all human beings were equal, and even campaigned for women's rights, and They defended her.

The first women to support this movement was Lucretia Mott, who forbade the use of cotton cloth and sugar cane, and began to establish women's societies. Emancipation of slavery was illegal in North Carolina in 1774. As the Quakers were very involved in the Underground railroad in the legendary fight against slavery, these brave Quakers played a large role in helping the slaves, they used symbolic phrases when planning and escaping such as "stations" and Fleeing people are "conductors" and those seeking freedom are called "passengers" or "cargo". Of Ochehrhn was Harriet Tolman, where he was credited with editing between 70 and 300 people slaves, and this activity was widespread among the Quakers, especially in North Carolina.

The expression of humanity was something innate and not made. It is in the heart of every person, regardless of skin color, nationality or religion. Humanity is something that was created with the human category. Concepts, and bring about changes in the way of thinking, this is evident through *The Underground Railroad*. Calson Whitehead painted for us a clear and frank picture about every aspect between whites and blacks, and made the term humanity one of the most dominant patterns in the novel as a whole, and sent a message in the hearts of

all readers and moved humanity within them. Calson Whitehead was not shy about presenting a true story about slaves, showing the true face about events in America during the Industrial Revolution, and presenting a fictional slave story that was not shy about the horror of slavery, says Michael Schwab of National Public Radio: “It’s a novel against oblivion.”

3.3. When and where the spirit Moves you:

I believe in living And I believe that seeds grow into sprouts . And sprouts grow into trees . I believe in the magic of the hands . And in the wisdom of the eyes . I believe in rain and tears . And in the blood of infinity .(Assata Shakur 1987).

The spiritual was an expression of faith and a way to pay off all the slaves’ hopes and alleviate their pain. They used spiritual songs as a kind of means to relieve their pressures. During the subway period, spirituality was encoded using maps and strategies to help slaves reach freedom in the northern states and Canada. Some songs gave the inner spirit of the slaves and directed them about when, where and how to escape, and served as an aid to the escape route.

3.3.1.The Great Spirit.

The Great Spirit aligns with Rigway’s Principle, where he believes that it is within each person, and that all people, whether white or black, have their own Great Spirit.

Ridgway was the “father”, an opponent of the concept of slavery, and he was one of the custodians of slaves, so he preferred to call them servants “instead of slaves.” Ridgway is considered one of the people of great humanity. He believes that the Great Spirit flows from everything, and it inhabits the earth, the sky, and everything connected to each other. The young Ridgway was opposed to this idea, as his father was always angry with him, and preferred servants to him, so the feeling of anger and hatred began to grow in Ridgway. His father always said:

You remember when I fell on that big rake in the shed ?

I never seen my own blood before.

I got dizzy . I , uh ... I felt something ...

When I was bleeding ... something like he always talks about ... the Spirit.

But then I ... It didn't last . It didn't stay with me ... What if I can't find it in me again?

What if he can't find it in me ? ...(Whitehead 254)

The father and son were living on a large farm, they tried to avoid each other because they did not agree with each other, and the father Ridgway worked in his workshop in the blacksmithing, but the son was lost and had no work and the latter made his father resent him and Always employed on him, Ridgway had servants of black skin and treated them with kindness and freedom beyond any white person we have encountered thus far, and the latter made him a deranged person in front of others of his sex who considered him mentally ill.

Spirituality is a type of music that was created by Africans in the United States of America. It is the basis of the musical forms used today, such as: gospel, blues, and jazz..... The term "spiritual" is derived from the King James translation of the Bible to Ephesus: "Speak for yourself In the psalms and chants, and spiritual songs, sing with tenderness in your heart to the Lord." One of the most popular spiritual songs among slaves was secular music. It was popular like sacred music. They had all kinds of music for all occasions. It was popular like sacred music. They had all kinds of music for all occasions. It was their way of expressing their feelings and feelings. About the great spirit within them, whether it is sadness or joy, inspiration or hope, these songs were influenced by African traditions and customs, and were passed down from generation to generation. It became the basis for what is now known as "Negro spirituality". Most of the songs scattered in the novel The underground Railoard was "Go Down Moses", "Steal Away", "Song of The Free"

Also, the songs were expressive of rebellion, to organize secret meetings, and announce the activities of the subway, such as the song Great Camp Meeting, and it was in order to announce when secret gatherings were planned.

The question remains here Is the Great Spirit is the truth or pure fiction and made writer ?

3.3.2. Urban legend or truth:

The concept of the Great Spirit is true, and at odds with different indigenous cultures, as it is ambiguously introduced in Calson Whitehead's *The Underground railroad*, and Father Ridgway's desire to believe in this Great Spirit, or the strength from which he derives, does not appear.

3.4. The emotional life in *The Underground Railroad* :

The feelings and sensations non-existent in the novel of Calson Whitehead, and this is evidence of the absence of humanity, the novel of *The Underground Railroad*, was feelings vary between love and hate, truth and lies, honesty and hypocrisy, but the target was one, the first by white people and by maintaining the idea of owning slaves with a black skin and so for their own ends service, and the second party, they are blacks, who were seeking freedom, and trying to create opportunities along the novel in order to reach good life and beautiful, and full of luxury and get rid of the lives of slaves and injustice. Many of them tried to escape because of the physical and psychological torment caused by the farm owners, and long hours of hard work without getting a decent salary or even compensation. And they were separated in the event of the death of their master, as they occupied part of the estate and must be divided like the rest of the property, so many families separated, and many became dependent on "stations" or "organizations", which are organized ways that developed into the so-called underground railways. And most of them were young people who are able to withstand the rigors of the road and the hardship of travelling, as they spend Miles to get to the North or

Canada The promised Land, and is a destination that must slaves access to it, such as New York, and Massachusetts or Canada, and this requires a lot of time They were lack the food and shelter, or even medical care.

3.2.4. cross Cultural Theory:

3.2.4.1.The legacy of slavery in America in 2020

The United States of America, the “New Nation,” was created by adopting the premise that all travellers are equal. It began as a society of slaves, which we rightly call slavery the “original sin.” Black Americans have not forgotten the tragic and black civil war, which left its mark on society. They also still live in remote areas in the United States of America to this day, and that is why we say about The Underground railroad as a novel against oblivion, forgetting the past that was written Not only on paper, but imprinted in memory and will never be forgotten. The Swedish Observer of Internal Affairs, Gunnar Myrdal, explained that the problem in our democracy remains the problem of race, which is known as the color line. The mentality of differentiating between black and white still prevails to this day.

Slavery has one root, and it is the “Native American Sin.” If we say slaves shows us the first thing the United States of America, and its history of ethnic conflicts, and multiple genes of slavery through generations, and this is apparent in the US colleges, has long been involved and strongly in this history, due to its geographical location and its history, some of them founded by blacks to teach their children and grandchildren. There are also independent colleges that seek to achieve balance and equality, and promote research and studies to understand the genesis of slavery, and some seek to establish strong partnerships in order to understand and discuss the issue of slavery.

Varied legacy of slavery in America, depending on the projects of member institutions and CIC faculty members, students, the community, and all of this exists for the study and discussion of education and the legacy of slavery.

The genetic research project began in the summer of 2021, and the research will continue until the fall of 2022. Legacies of American Slavery is an initiative of the Council of Independent Colleges, in cooperation with the Gilder Lehman Centre for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at the MacMillan Center, Yale University. It is supported by a generous grant from the Mellon Foundation with supplemental funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Slavery is considered the source of the history of the United States of America, in all its aspects, whether social, economic, educational, legal or cultural. We find that she left her mark in all respects and more than ever. In 1961, in an article in the New York "As Much Truth as One Can Bear, James Baldwin noted, that the article contains the goal of symbolic words to cover the sleeping and not wake him up, in the sense to hide the truth and covered, and decorated from abroad such as beating on the shoulder of the sleeping and decorating the bitter reality for him to not see the truth, that is used by American history and is decorating the truth, some lying, and not the right face of the genes of slavery revealed, and to this day show these symptoms, and this phenomenon through a novel Calson Whitehead *The Underground Railroad*,

What is legacy? And how could it be? The historical legacy can be a question posed or even an idea, for example: Why can't we equality between men, and this is clear what kind of men are (the white man and the black man – the negro -). The inheritance can be emotional, and it manifests in customs and traditions, the way of thought, behaviors and psychological patterns, it can also be political, and this appears in voting and political

demonstrations, and also economically, and flourishes in the way of growth, and finally legally and We find this in the courts, and the way of ruling.

During National Black History Month, President Obama indicated that his daughters should know African Americans like Harriet Tubman, and see her not as an ordinary person, but to set an example and be inspired by her, “how ordinary Americans can do extraordinary things.” It has many roles played in addition to being a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad, including a nurse, scout and spy for the Union Army during the Civil War. Her quote: “I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person now I was free. There was such a glory over everything... I felt like I was in heaven.”

The Underground Railroad operated until the 13th amendment to the US constitution banned enslavement in 1865.

3.2.4.2. The united state is a melting of cultures and home to multiple ethnic and racial communities:

Earlier this century, when steamers were calling at American ports and their steerages were filled with European immigrants, a Jew from England named Israel Zangwill wrote a play whose plot was long forgotten but whose central theme was not. His production was titled “The Melting Pot,” and its message still wields tremendous power on the national imagination – the promise that all immigrants can be transformed into Americans, a new alloy born in a melting pot of democracy, liberty and civic responsibility is forged. When the play opened in Washington in 1908, the United States was absorbing the largest influx of immigrants in its history – Irish and Germans, followed by Italians and Eastern Europeans, Catholics and Jews – some 18 million new citizens between 1890 and 1920. Today The United States is experiencing its second great wave of immigration , a movement of people that is having a profound impact on a society that traditionally honors its roots as immigrants while confronting complex and deep – rooted ethnic and racial divisions . Today’s

immigrants do not come from Europe, but predominantly from the developing countries of Asia and Latin America. They are driving demographic change so fast that no ethnic group – including whites of European descent – will make up the majority of the country’s population in the lifetime of today’s teenagers.

According to social historians, demographers and other trend analysts, this shift will severely test the premise of the fabled melting pot, the idea so central to national identity that this country can transform people of all races and backgrounds into “one America”. The best thing they can do, they say, is that the nation will continue to crumble into many separate, disconnected communities, without a shared sense of commonality or purpose, or maybe it will evolve into something in between, a pluralistic society that holds on to some core ideas on citizenship and capitalism, but with little meaningful interaction between groups. The demographic shifts raise other questions about political and economic power. Will that power, now disproportionately held by whites, be shared in the new America? What will happen if the Hispanics the blacks overtake as the nation’s largest minority? “I don’t think most Americans really understand the historical changes that are unfolding before their eyes,” said Peter Salins, an immigration scholar and provost at the State University of New York. “What will we become? Who are we? How will the newcomers fit in – and how will the locals deal with it – that’s the great unknown.” This is the first in a series of articles exploring the impact of the new demographics on American life. Further reports in the coming months will focus on the impact on politics, jobs and social institutions.

Legacy The Underground Railroad operated until the 13th Amendment of the US Constitution, which outlawed enslavement in 1865. Freedom-seekers, free blacks, and the descendants of black loyalists settled throughout British North America. Some lived in all black settlements such as Elgin Settlement and Buxton Mission, Queen’s Bush Settlement

and Dawn Settlement near Dresden, Ontario, and Birchtown and Africville in Nova Scotia. Others chose to live in racially integrated communities in towns and cities.

Early Afro-Canadian settlers were productive and innovative citizens. They cleared and cultivated the land, built houses and raised families. Blacks established a variety of religious, educational, social, and cultural institutions, political groups, and community-building organizations. They founded churches, schools, charities, brotherhoods and two newspapers. During the Underground Railroad era, black men and women possessed and contributed a wide range of skills and abilities. They operated various businesses such as grocery stores, boutique and milliner shops, blacksmiths, a sawmill company, an ice cream company, rental stables, pharmacies, herbal treatment services and carpentry shops, as well as Toronto's first taxi company.

3.2.5. The Inspiring Story of the Underground Railroad:

They risked their lives and their own freedom to help enslaved people escape from bondage and protect them along the route. By some estimates, between 1810 and 1850, the Underground Railroad helped free hundreds of thousands of enslaved people. As the network grew, the railroad metaphor stuck. "Conductors" led escaped enslaved people along routes from place to place. The places where they risked their lives and their own freedom to help enslaved people escape from bondage and protect them along the route.

By some estimates, between 1810 and 1850, the Underground Railroad helped free hundreds of thousands of enslaved people. As the network grew, the railroad metaphor stuck. "Conductors" led escaped enslaved people along routes from place to place. The places that housed the runaways were called "stations" and the people who hid the enslaved people were called "station masters".

The refugees who travelled along the routes were called "passengers" and those who arrived at the safe houses were called "cargo" an organized group. There were people of

many occupations and income levels, including former slaves. According to historical railroad accounts, conductors often posed as enslaved people and snuck the runaways off the plantations. Due to the danger involved in capturing.

Carried out much of their activity at night. Conductors and passengers traveled from shelter to shelter, often with 16-19 kilometres (10-20 miles) between each stop. Lanterns in the windows welcomed them and promised safety. Patrols intent on capturing enslaved humans were often hot on their heels. These images of the Underground Railroad etched themselves in the minds of the nation and won the hearts of writers who told compelling tales of dark, dangerous passages and dramatic escapes of enslaved people.

However, historians studying the railroad struggle to separate truth from myth. A number of prominent historians who have devoted their lives to uncovering the truths about the Underground Railroad contend that much of the activity did not take place in secret, but was conducted openly and in broad daylight. Eric Foner is one of those historians. He dug deep into the history of the railroad and found that although a large network existed that kept its activities secret, the network became so powerful that it pushed the boundaries of its myth. Despite this, the Underground Railroad was at the heart of the abolitionist movement.

The Railroad exacerbated divisions between the North and South, setting the stage for the Civil War.

3.2.5.1. The map.

The Underground Railroad was a network of people working to bring enslaved people from the southern United States to freedom in the northern United States and Canada. The Underground Railroad was the network used by enslaved black Americans to gain their freedom in the 30 years leading up to the Civil War (1860-1865).

Stations were added or removed from the subway as ownership of the house changed. If a new owner supported slavery or if the site was discovered to be a train station, passengers and conductors would have to find a new station. The establishment of stations was done tacitly by word of mouth. Very few people kept records of this clandestine activity to protect homeowners and the refugees who needed help. If caught, fugitive enslaved persons would be forced to return to slavery. People caught helping escaped enslaved people faced arrest and imprisonment.

Southern states that supported slavery to “free” Northern states and Canada. Sometimes Underground Railroad routes were organized by abolitionists, people opposed to slavery. More often, the network consisted of a series of small individual actions to help enslaved refugees. In railroad terminology, those who went south to find enslaved people seeking freedom were called “pilots.” Those who guided enslaved people to safety and freedom were “conductors”. The enslaved people were “passengers”. Where fugitive passengers and conductors could safely hide. Stations were added or removed from the subway as ownership of the house changed. If a new owner supported slavery, or if the site was discovered to be a train station, passengers and conductors were forced to find a new station. The establishment of train stations was completed quietly, by word of mouth. Very few people kept records of these clandestine activities to protect homeowners and the refugees who needed help. If caught, enslaved refugees would be forced to return into slavery. Arrest and prison This applied to people living in states that supported slavery, as people caught helping escaped enslaved people faced arrest and prison had to calculate.

There were many well-used routes stretching west through Ohio to Indiana and Iowa. Others drove north through Pennsylvania and into New England, or through Detroit on their way to Canada.

The reason many refugees went to Canada was because of the Fugitive Slave Acts. The first law, passed in 1793, allowed local governments to arrest escaped enslaved people within the borders of free states and extradite them to their place of origin and to punish anyone who aided the escapees. Some northern states attempted to combat this with personal liberty laws, which were struck down by the Supreme Court in 1842. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was intended to strengthen the earlier law, which was felt by the Southern states to be poorly enforced. This update created harsher penalties and established a system of commissioners being promoted

Fevering owners of enslaved people and resulted in some formerly enslaved people being recaptured. For a fugitive, the northern states were still considered a risk. Meanwhile, Canada offered blacks the freedom to live where they chose, sit on juries, run for public office and more, and extradition efforts had largely failed. Some operators of the Underground Railroad are based in Canada and worked to help the arriving refugees settle down.

The Underground Railroad was a covert and sometimes informal network of routes, shelters, and resources scattered across the country used by enslaved African Americans to gain their freedom. These efforts were often spontaneous, as enslaved people began their journey to freedom without assistance. Many freedom-seekers accomplished their self-emancipation without help. In the 1820s and 1830s, the United States saw increased efforts to help freedom seekers.

Impression of an organized “underground” network. In some cases, the decision to help a freedom seeker may have been a spontaneous reaction. In other cases, notably after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the Underground Railroad was premeditated and organized. Origins of the Subway Enslaved people have always strived for freedom, even in the earliest days of slavery. Colonial North America – including Canada and the northern states of the

US – was heavily involved in the slave trade. Newly enslaved Africans often ran away in groups to establish new communities in remote areas. Slavery also spread to the northern states, making escape more difficult. Before the mid-19th century, Spanish Florida and Mexico were the preferred destinations for many escaping bondage. It was not until the Northern States and Canada passed Emancipation Acts that they became safer targets for freedom, and Canada passed Emancipation Acts that they became safer targets for freedom-seekers.

3.2.5.2. Multiplying The South:

Because SO much of the Underground Railroad's history has been forgotten or intentionally suppressed, its memory has become a myth like few other parts of America's past. Mention of the underground usually evokes an intriguing but vague sense of tunnels, disguises, mysterious codes, and hair-raising escapes. The real story of the Underground Railroad is a highly dramatic epic indeed. But his political and moral importance both in antebellum America and as a forerunner of modern civil rights activism far outweighs his legendary romance.

Aside from sporadic slave rebellions, only the Underground Railroad physically defied the oppressive laws that kept slaves in servitude. As the nation's first major civil disobedience movement since the American Revolution, it engaged thousands of citizens in active subversion of federal law and the prevailing mores of their communities, and affirmed for the first time the principle of personal, active responsibility for people of other rights. Inciting fear and anger in the South and prompting the passage of harsh legislation that undermined the rights of white Americans, the Underground Railroad contributed directly to the Civil War. In addition, many African Americans gained their first experiences in politics and organizational management. And at a time when pro-slavery ideologues were vehemently claiming that blacks were better off in slavery because they lacked the basic intelligence and

even the biological ability to take over themselves, Underground Railroad provided repeated evidence of their courage and their Initiative. The underground and wider abolition. Exercise, of which it was a part, also encouraged nurturing American Feminism: Women were, for the first time, equal participants in a political movement with men who publicly insisted their voices be heard, sought shelter and clothing for fugitive slaves, served as leaders, and risked reprisals against their families. The origins of the Underground Railroad can be traced back to Philadelphia. There, at the turn of the 19th century, perhaps a little earlier, Quaker anti-slavery activists joined forces with free African Americans to escort fugitive slaves, sometimes in disguise, from shelter to shelter and town to town in the Pennsylvania countryside bringing and establishing techniques that would allow this to be used by the underground for decades. Although no single figure founded the Underground Railroad, its most prominent early activist was the Quaker Isaac Tatum Hopper, who was delegated by the local Society of Friends to help newly freed slaves and soon worked with them to help men and women who were still enslaved to help freedom. The origin of the term “underground railroad” is unknown. A probably apocryphal story attributes it to the offhand remark of an anonymous citizen of Ripley, Ohio, who, when asked by slavers where a fugitive had gone, replied that he must have disappeared down “an underground road.” It is more likely that the terminology evolved naturally in the 1830s and 1840s, when the development of the subway coincided with that of the iron railroads, whose language of “stations”, “lines”, “trains”, “passengers” and “Schaffneisten” leaned well on what the U-Bahn had been doing for decades. Underground activities spread from Philadelphia to other Quaker communities in surrounding states. It accelerated dramatically after the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Although this organization, founded by abolitionist editor William Lloyd Garrison and New York businessman Arthur Tappan, was officially limited to public activities, its agents proliferated up north from states founded local branches of the Society,

which in turn often became kindergartens for the more radical Underground Railroad activists. In the North, white activism was often cantered in evangelical churches, whose members opposed slavery on moral grounds. Black activism also developed within African Methodist Episcopal Church congregations and through individual efforts to liberate family members who were still enslaved, and through secular networks of both free and enslaved men and women. By the 1850s, the underground system had evolved into a flexible and interconnected system of thousands of activists that stretched from the upper rims of the South to Canada. The majority of the refugees who managed to reach free territory came from three states with long northern borders: Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky. (West Virginia did not break away from Virginia to become a separate state until 1863.) Slaveholders generally had an exaggerated notion of the underground's reach, but often blamed it for the disappearance of virtually all slaves who ran away anywhere in the South. In December 1859, Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia complained to the state legislature that the underground posed a greater threat to slavery than John Brown's raid, stating, "Our frontier slaves are so liberated from this outer system, from this silent, silent theft that they do not have to take up arms to be freed.

At a time when emancipation seemed subversive and even absurd to most Americans, underground men and women defied society's standards on a daily basis, inspired by a sense of spiritual imperatives, moral conviction, and a wild passion for freedom. Especially in border areas, underground agents faced constant threats of criminal prosecution, personal violence, and possible death. These dangers increased with the passage of a new, draconian refugee slave law as part of the 1850 Compromise. The law imposed severe penalties on anyone who aided runaway slaves, gave local officials the power to compel ordinary citizens to recapture fugitives, and established a network of federal commissioners to oversee the restoration of fugitive slaves to their enduring masters. In the 1850s, approximately 1,000

refugees were brought back south under the law. In many parts of the North, however, the law has been largely ignored. By aggressively carrying the enforcement of “slave power” into northern refugee communities, the law turned many white Americans from political passivity into political abolitionists and underground activists.

As a result, by mid-decade, “underground” was an open fact of local life in the Upper North. Frederick Douglass’s paper, for example, regularly published detailed accounts of underground activity in articles signed by agents themselves. On November 5, 1854, George Debates, one of the Detroit underground leaders, reported: “Within the last ten or fifteen days, fifty-three first-class passengers have landed at this point on the express train from the South. We expect ten more tonight.” .” In December 1855, Douglass himself reported from Syracuse that “Three bouncy, fat Negroes have boarded the train of the Underground Railroad, and are now safe in the Queen’s dominions to double track this road, as business grows very large—more than »[2] can be done on a single one.

In practice, the underground was a model of living democracy, operating in most areas with a minimum of central leadership and a maximum of grass-roots participation, with a single strategic target: any fugitive slave who asked for help. While the transportation of refugees was the central purpose of the underground, it also included a broader infrastructure of itinerant preachers, carters and peddlers who carried messages south for the underground, slaves who themselves had never fled but provided them with information on routes of escape from the it did, sailors and ship’s stewards who hid runaways on their ships, lawyers willing to defend fugitives and those accused of harbouring them, businessmen who provided needed funds, and an even larger circle of family members , friends , and fellow community members who, while they may never have been personally involved in illegal activities, protected those who did and enabled them to continue their work. Where danger was imminent and slavery strong, as in the Ohio River Valley, few involved in the underground

knew the names of collaborators more distant than the nearest town or two. “The way of working was not uniform, but adapted to the needs of the individual case,” as Isaac Beck, subway station manager in southern Ohio, put it. “There was no regular organization, no constitution, no officials, no laws or agreements or rules save the ‘Golden Rule,’ and every man did what he thought fit in his own eyes.”

Popular modern myths link the Underground Railroad to the widespread use of tunnels to facilitate the movement of refugees, so-called “quilt maps” by which freedom-seekers were said to find their way north, and the use of songs as a common device, to deliver messages to would-be freedom seekers. There is no documentary evidence of the use of quilts as maps; Most if not all quilt patterns that purportedly represent secret directions have been dated after the Civil War. Likewise, virtually no purpose-built tunnels demonstrably used by the subway have been found. A possible exception is the recent discovery of a short crawlspace leading to a dry cistern at the home of radical abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, suggesting it may have been used to hide fugitives. Harriet Tubman would occasionally use excerpts from well-known hymns to notify potential “passengers” of their arrival. Whipper sent refugees from Columbia, Pennsylvania straight to the Canadian border, hidden in special compartments of his fleet of freight cars, while to the west, refugees arriving from Missouri could be put on a train in western Illinois in the morning and be in Canada by nightfall on the same day.

Existing documents make it clear that refugee flows can vary greatly from route to route and from year to year. Thomas Garrett, stationmaster at Wilmington, Delaware, admitted in court in 1848 to having helped more than 1,400 freedom seekers since he began his underground work in 1822, an average of fifty-six a year. Between 1848 and 1854 he assisted another 450, an average of 75 a year, and by 1860 he claimed to have assisted a total of 2,750, an average of 225 years before the Civil War put an end to his work. Reports from

different parts of the country , although fragmentary , indicate that underground traffic was nearing a peak in the middle of the decade . Between mid-1854 and early 1855, the all-black (and mostly female) Committee of Nine, which oversaw underground work in Cleveland, Ohio, was sending two hundred and seventy-five refugees to Canada, an average of one a day, while the Syracuse Journal reported in October 1855 that since By January about 140 refugees had passed through the city, averaging a little less than one every two days. The Detroit Vigilance Committee, possibly the busiest in the United States, reported 1,043 fugitives entering Canada from May 1855 to January 1856, an average of 130 per month. Estimates of the total number of refugees supported by the underground between 1830 and 1860 range from 70,000 to 100,000, of whom perhaps a third or a quarter were shipped to Canada. (Although often referred to as “on the Canada road,” most of the refugees settled in the northern states, where they felt safe and found work.) Adding in the often-neglected 1800-1830 period raises the figure somewhat but it is unlikely that the subway carried more than 150,000 passengers at most, and possibly far fewer.

It is similarly difficult for many to determine how Americans were involved with the Underground Railroad. Its first historian, Wilbur Siebert, in his seminal 1898 work *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*, identified around 3,000 individuals by name, almost all white males. But he didn't take into account the large numbers of African Americans, a majority of whom may have risked their lives to help refugees, or the fact that women who provided refugees with food, clothing, and advice were as much a part of the system as their husbands. There were also numerous support staff, such as lawyers, businessmen, and clothing suppliers who, although they did not house or take away refugees, were essential to the operation of the system. Probably many times the number estimated by Siebert actually worked closely together in the subway.

The most famous subway activist is, of course, Harriet Tubman, who led more than 70 men and women from Maryland's East Coast to freedom. Many other Underground Railroad leaders in addition to those already mentioned in this paper await full credit. Connecticut-born African-American journalist David Ruggles founded New York City's Underground Railroad in the 1830s. George de Baptiste, a barber and businessman, ran a primarily African-American underground network in southern Indiana and later helped establish one of the underground's most successful operations in Detroit. Levi Coffin, a North Carolina-born Quaker, created networks in eastern Indiana and southern Ohio and supported thousands of refugees in his 40-year underground career. Coffin often worked with Laura Haviland, a Michigan-based Quaker who sheltered and educated refugees in her hometown and secretly explored the Ohio River crossings. Fiery minister John Rankin anchored a network of Presbyterian churchmen in southern Ohio and more than once defended his home on the Ohio River from attacks by mob slaves. In upstate New York, Gerrit Smith, one of the wealthiest men in America, provided financing for much underground activity around the United States, and sheltered fugitives at his Peterboro home. Not far from there, Frederick Douglass, most famous as an orator and editor, also ran an underground station from his home in Rochester, New York.

The importance of the Underground Railroad cannot be judged by numbers alone, or even by the inspirational quality of its saga of dramatic escapes, recaptures, and exploits of individual bravery. The underground arose in an America where democracy belonged to whites alone, and where free and enslaved blacks lived in conditions that had more in common with what is now called totalitarianism than many Americans care to admit. Along with the broader abolitionist movement, the Underground Railroad forced Americans to think in new ways about the nation's history of political compromise with slavery and to recognize that all Americans—white and black alike—were in some sense tied to the fate of the slave.

Without the confrontational activists of the underground, the abolitionist movement might never have become more than a giant lecture hall in which honest white Americans could comfortably agree that slavery is evil.

Aside from the lives saved, perhaps the underground's greatest achievement was the creation of a truly free zone of interracial activity, where blacks not only ran complex logistical and financial operations, but in some places oversaw support networks that included white men and women on the due because of their skin color did not have a special status. Underground, blacks and whites discovered each other for the first time as allies in a common struggle and learned to depend on one another, not as master on slave or child on parent, but as comrades in a war most Americans were not doing but even knowing about had started.

Responses in the South to the growing number of escaped slaves ranged from anger to political retaliation. Large rewards were offered to runaways, and many people, anxious to make money or avoid offending powerful slaveholders, turned in runaway slaves. The US government also got involved.

The Underground Railroad ran both south and north. For enslaved people in Texas, refuge in Canada must have seemed incredibly far away. Fortunately, slavery was also illegal in Mexico. Researchers estimate that 5,000 to 10,000 people escaped bondage to Mexico, says Maria Hammack, who is writing her dissertation on the subject at the University of Texas at Austin. But she believes the real number could be even higher. "These were secret routes, and if you got caught, you were killed and lynched, so most people didn't keep a lot of records," says Hammack, There is evidence that Tejanos, or Mexicans in Texas, acted as "conductors" on the southern route, helping people get to Mexico. In addition, Hammack has also identified a black woman and two white men who helped enslaved labourers escape and attempted to find homes for them in Mexico.

Mexico abolished slavery in 1829 while Texas was still part of the country, which in part led to white, slave-owning immigrants fighting for independence in the Texas Revolution. After establishing the Republic of Texas in 1836, they made slavery legal again, and it remained legal when Texas joined the United States as a state in 1845.

Enslaved people in Texas were aware that there was a country to the south where they could find varying degrees of freedom (although debt bondage existed in Mexico, this was not the same as slavery). Hammack has discovered a runaway named Tom who has been enslaved by Sam Houston. Houston was a President of the Republic of Texas who fought in the Texas Revolution. When Tom crossed the border, he joined the Mexican military that Houston had fought. How organized the southern “” was is unclear. Hammack says some enslaved people may have made their way to Mexico unaided. Other evidence suggests that Tejanos, particularly poor Tejanos, played a role in helping refugees get to Mexico.

Hammack and researcher Roseanne Bacha-Garza also identified a mixed-race family from Alabama who moved to south Texas near the Rio Grande and helped enslaved people flee to Mexico. The woman, Matilda Hicks, was a formerly enslaved woman. Her husband, Nathaniel Jackson, was the son of the man on whose plantation she had previously worked. Also, some northern abolitionists travelled south to help enslaved people reach Mexico.

Slave owners knew that enslaved people were fleeing to Mexico, and the US tried to get Mexico to sign a fugitive slave treaty. Just as the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 had forced free states to bring refugees back to the South, the US wanted Mexico to bring escaped enslaved people back to the US. But Mexico refused to sign such a treaty, insisting that all enslaved people were free when they set foot on Mexican soil. Despite this, some US owners of enslaved people still hired slavers to illegally kidnap refugees in Mexico.

How organized the southern “underground” was is unclear. Hammack says some enslaved people may have made their way to Mexico unaided. Other evidence suggests that Tejanos, particularly poor Tejanos, played a role in helping refugees get to Mexico.

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“ I have come across abolitionists from the north who were going to Mexico to petition Mexico to allow them to buy land to establish colonies for runaway slaves and free blacks , “ Hammock says . In the early 1830s , Quaker abolitionist Benjamin Lundy “ was actively petitioning the Mexican government to allow for colonies to be established for , I guess what we would consider now , refugees . “

3.6. The Underground Railroad to Canada.

3.6.1. Everywhere below Canada, Every Where is the South:

April 2011 marked the 150th anniversary of the start of the American Civil War, a conflict entangled in the issue of slavery. Citizens of what later became Canada were long involved in helping fugitive slaves escape from the slave-holding southern states via the Underground Railroad. In the mid-1800s, a hidden network of men and women, white and black, worked with escaped slaves to free them in northern United States and Canada. Although scholars warn that stories of the Underground Railroad have been exaggerated in popular history (between 60,000 and 75,000), an estimated 30,000 slaves entered Canada this way.

While Canadians are often proud of their historic support for the more progressive anti-slavery Union, British support for the North has never been taken for granted. And

before we Canadians go overboard and pat ourselves on the back for coming to the rescue of fugitive slaves, a University of Winnipeg professor reminds us of slaves who once fled British North American colonies to the United States.

“ It was not at all clear at the beginning that Great Britain and other European nations would shun the Confederacy , “ said U of W history professor Garin Burbank.

In the early days of the North-South conflict, both sides vied for the support of Britain and other European powers. And while abolitionists worked hard to denounce the ills of slavery, Britain had only severed its ties to the practice a few decades earlier. In addition, many European nations depended on the cotton produced by the southern slave states. Pretty hard.

Some English Quebecers felt connected to wealthy Southern planters and harbored Confederate sympathies, Burbank said.

“ Southerners often spent their summers in Quebec , Montreal and the eastern townships to escape the southern heat “.

He said :”There were some Englishmen in Montreal who believed that the planters in the South were some sort of American equivalent of British aristocrats, so there was at least some sympathy for the South in Montreal.”

But when the Emancipation Proclamation came into play, which freed all slaves in one of the rebellious Confederate states, Britain finally had to choose sides.

Burbank said : “ Once the Lincoln cabinet issued the Emancipation Proclamation , then it became virtually impossible for any European power to say they were now going to recognize a confederacy that still supported human slavery” .

And when it comes to taking pride in leading slaves to freedom, some scholars say Canada is not as deserving as popular legend suggests. Historians Larry Gara and Robin Winks contend that the image of the subway propagated by abolitionists and their

descendants was grossly exaggerated. Gara says that the number of slaves helped by the railroad has been exaggerated, and that large numbers of refugees actually escaped of their own accord.

In fact, slaves from British North American colonies once fled south to the United States, Burbank said. Loyalists from southern colonies brought slaves to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. He said that there were instances of slaves fleeing south to Vermont, where slavery had been abolished by the 1790s, while the British colonies did not abolish the practice until the 1830s. When it comes to taking sides, Canada's role in the American Civil War seems to have been more complicated than some would like to believe.

The Underground Railroad was a secret network of abolitionists (people who wanted to abolish slavery). They helped African Americans escape from enslavement in the American South to the free northern states or Canada. The Underground Railroad was the largest anti-slavery movement in North America. It brought between 30,000 and 40,000 refugees to British North America (now Canada).

Offered help to fleeing slaves. Its ranks included free blacks, fellow enslaved people, white and indigenous sympathizers, Quakers, Methodists, Baptists, urban dwellers and farmers, men and women, Americans and Canadians.

3.6.2. Ways to the Promised Land

The paths taken to get to freedom were called "lines". The route network passed through 14 northern states and two British North American colonies – Upper Canada and Lower Canada. At the end of the line was "heaven" or "the promised land" which was free land in Canada or the northern states. "The gourd" referred to the constellation of the Big Dipper, which points to the Pole Star, a guiding star for freedom-seekers heading north. The journey was very dangerous. Many made the treacherous journey on foot. Freedom seekers were also transported in wagons, carriages, on horses and in some cases by train. But the

subway didn't only run overland. Passengers also travelled by boat...across lakes, seas, and rivers. They often travelled at night and rested during the day.

Conclusion

Throughout the novel, Whitehead repeatedly affirms that freedom and equality for people of color has not been achieved. Cora experiences relative progress and modern technology in South Carolina, which reminds the reader of the first half of the 20th century. As the story progresses, she also experiences total dystopia in North Carolina, which can be described as a hyperbolic portrayal of the segregation era and Jim Crow laws. Additionally, spending time at Indiana's Valentine Farm introduces her to a community vaguely reminiscent of the Civil Rights era and reminiscent of the Black Nationalist movement. In all these different places and times, Whitehead shows that there is no freedom, let alone equality, for people of color. He shows that even if the situation initially seems pleasant to Cora, which is the case in South Carolina and on the Valentine farm, that little bit of happiness is ultimately corrupted by either white people on the outside or black people in the community. By far the most significant part of Whitehead's novel, however, is its ending. By refusing to show a happy North where people of color can be free, Whitehead hints that such a place may not exist. In doing so, he encourages the reader to ponder whether there is such a place in today's society or whether today's black experience is more of an illusion of freedom, as Cora experiences again and again in the novel. Also of note is the fact that Whitehead has Cora move west instead of north in the last chapter of the novel. In the American context, "going west" means building something new, creating an ideal that an individual or a community in the wild yearns for. This westward movement in the novel also supports the notion that Whitehead doubts the existence of a free place. Instead, he implies that this vacant place has yet to be built and not discovered. It is this element of the unknown that gives the novel a distinctive atmosphere. Whitehead never explains how the Underground Railroad works or where it begins and ends. In addition, he does not reveal whether Cora really reaches the West or what the West is like. The unknown in his novel is accepted and embraced. A place

will be allocated. Finally, Whitehead describes the situation for people of color as continuing badly over time. No doubt there are chapters in the novel, such as 'North Carolina', where the situation seems worse than in others. However, the fact remains that in every chapter of the novel people of color are unwanted, unfree and unequal. Whitehead participates with his novel and manages to show how persistent the ideas of race and the resulting cruelty are by showing what forms they can take in the different eras that his novel appeals to Whitehead, who invites both black and white readers to critically review the situation of African Americans in the United States today. He seems quite pessimistic on the issue, even if Whitehead's novel does not specifically call for political action on racial equality issues, it does manage to expose cruelty and inequality and is sure to be inspirational and eye-opening to readers around the world for its unique makeup and compelling storyline.

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Ashraf H. Rushdy , who has written a monograph on the genre entitled *Neo - Slave Narratives* (1999) , is stricter in his definition by limiting it to texts which " take on the first - person voice of the antebellum slave narrative " (3) . Bernard W. Bell , on the other hand , focuses on novels which " combine elements of fable , legend , and slave narrative to protest racism and justify the deeds , struggles , migrations , and spirit of black people " (285) . It is my contention that Whitehead's novel fits perfectly into Bell's description , through its combination of references and structures invoking antebellum slave narratives with elements from speculative fiction or magical realism .

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